



The Person of God

Key Doctrines for Starting and Finishing Strong

LESSON 1 | Part 3



"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."

JOB 22:21 KJV

MAIN POINTS IN THIS LESSON:

- How Do We Obtain the Knowledge of God?
- How Does Scripture Help Us to Know God?
- How Does the Knowledge of God Look?

Are the following statements true or false? (circle one)



- Nature is a part of God and helps us to feel God. T F
- You don't need the Bible to know God—all you need is love. T F

Be on the lookout for the answers to these questions as we study the Word of God.

How Can We Obtain This Knowledge of God?

This knowledge of God is found in *creation*, *regeneration*, and *Scripture*.

Romans 1:19-20 speaks about *creation*.

- *because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

John 3:3 and **Titus 3:4-7** speak of *regeneration*. (Cf. *John 8:46-47*)

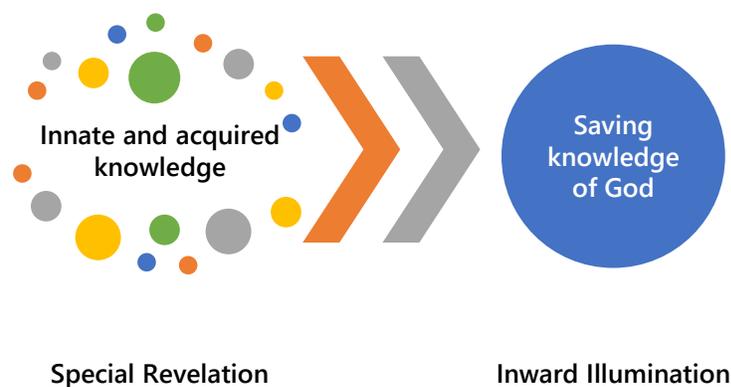
- **John 3:3**—*Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
- **Titus 3:4-7**—*But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Here are two passages that speak of God's revelation in *Scripture*:

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**—*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*
- **Psalms 19:7-11**—*The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.
They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward.*

In creation, God universally preaches a speechless sermon that everyone sees (*Ps.19*), and this sermon does not leave us in any doubt. It is perspicuous. It does not erect an altar to an unknown God, but it sets forth the God who made the world (*Acts 17:23-24; Cf. Rom.1:19-20*). Yet because of sin, man suppresses that knowledge of God (*Rom.1:18*). Without Scripture, even the revelation of God in creation is improperly seen. Therefore, everything about the *innate* and *acquired* knowledge of God is known through Scripture.

Because of **Scripture**, we know that God's world is not a shield hiding the Creator's power and majesty (*Rom.1:19-21*), but rather it is, in the words of Calvin, "a theater of glory." In Scripture, it is revealed that the goodness of God is evident in kindly providences (*Acts 14:17; Rom.2:4*). Therefore, we must understand that natural theology is not adequate to give man a true and saving knowledge of God. Man still needs *special revelation* from the Scriptures and *inward illumination* from the Holy Spirit if he is to come to the true and saving knowledge of God.



How Does Scripture Help Us to Discover this Innate and Acquired Knowledge of God?

1. **Scripture does not argue and analyze God's existence.** It assumes that man knows and recognizes God (*Gen.1:1; Rom.1:21*) and shows man God's works.

- **Isaiah 40:26**—"Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars..."

In other words, God's Word appeals and urges man to look at creation—the birds and ants, flowers and lilies, rain and drought, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty—in order that he might see and recognize God in them.

2. **Scripture does not make God the conclusion at which we must arrive after the argument.** It speaks with authority and demands that we recognize and respond to Him.

- **Isaiah 1:3**—"An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand."

- **Acts 14:17**—“He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

The Scripture never doubts the fact that *God reveals Himself in the work of creation*, for there is not an atom in the universe in which God’s power and divinity are not revealed. This is what Paul means by stating, “[God] did not leave Himself without witness.” Bavinck says of this,

“God acts upon man from every direction, both from within and from without. God, as it were, goes out to meet man in the realm of nature and in the realm of humanity, in heart and conscience, in prosperity and in adversity.”

3. **Scripture does not regard the entire universe as an argument for the existence of God that must be proven**, but a *proclamation* of the revelation or testimony of God to man’s heart and conscience with power to which he must assent.

Therefore, every man has a sense of inevitable judgment (*Rom.1:32*). This is why it is a sin against knowledge not to thank God and serve Him in righteousness (*Rom.1-3*).

REVIEW: What have we said so far? We have said that:

- The only way God can be known is for Him to *reveal Himself*. (*Rom.1:19; Is.40:26; 45:15*)
- God has revealed Himself *in* His creatures and *to* His creatures. (*Rom.1:19-20*)
- This knowledge of God can be obtained in *creation, regeneration, and the Scriptures*.
- Scripture helps to obtain this knowledge by proclaiming the testimony of God and calling us to recognize and respond to God.

How Does the Knowledge of God Look?

What are we talking about when we speak of the knowledge of God?

- Is it some special sort of emotion?
- Is it feeling of shivers down the back?
- Is it a dreamy, floating experience?
- Is it a special sort of intellectual experience?
- Do you hear a voice?
- Do you see a vision?
- Do you feel your heart being strangely warmed?

We have discovered so far that God gives us an *innate knowledge* and some may obtain an *acquired knowledge* by reason or reading or by reflection and instruction. However, is this true saving knowledge? Is this the type of knowledge that leads to salvation from sin and wrath? In 1 Timothy 6:20-21, Paul warns Timothy against “*what is falsely called 'knowledge' which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.*” Paul was fortifying Timothy against a dangerous group of people who denied the Person and work of Christ and used *theology* to sanction a perverted lifestyle of either *asceticism* or *indulgence*. In doing so, Paul wanted Timothy to know that the Bible’s definition of the knowledge of God involved three things:

1. **The intellect**—knowing truth about God (*Deut.7:9; Ps.100:3*)
2. **The will**—trusting, obeying, and worshiping God in light of that truth (*John 4:24; Phil.3:2-3*)
3. **Morality**—practicing justice and love (*Jer.22:16; 1 John 4:7-8*)

This knowledge comes through **FAITH**, and this faith is seen in **SCRIPTURE** as an utter self-abandonment to God revealed in Jesus Christ.

A.W. Pink writes,

“Something more than a theoretical knowledge of God is needed by us. God is only truly known in the soul as we yield ourselves to Him, submit to His authority, and regulate all the details of our lives by His holy precepts and commandments.”

- Are you yielding yourself to Him? What areas of your life do you need to surrender to Him now?
- Are you submitting to His authority? Is there an area of your life where you are doing what you want instead of what He wants?

Four essential elements to remember about the knowledge of God:

1. **Knowing God is a matter of personal dealing.** Knowing God is more than just *knowing some facts about Him*. It is a matter of *His dealing with you and your dealing with Him* as He opens up to you. Knowing about God is necessary before we can trust Him (*Rom.10:14*), but having right notions in your head without tasting the reality in your heart will never lead to godliness.
2. **Knowing God is a matter of personal involvement.** By personal involvement, I am not suggesting that anyone who has some emotional experience can claim that he knows God. John says if we say we know Him and do not do what He says, we are liars (*1 John 2:4, 9; 11; 3:6, 11; 4:20*). To be personally involved with God means that our minds are concerned about His will and our hearts delight in what He loves and hate what He hates. This is only possible through the new birth where He implants His nature in us by the Holy Spirit and restores His dominion in our hearts.
3. **Knowing God is a matter of grace.** If God is the One who must reveal Himself to us, then we do not make friends with God. Rather, He makes friends with us.
4. **Knowing God ultimately depends on whether God knows me.** Paul expresses it this way in Galatians 4:9: *“But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God...”* In other words, Paul explains to the Galatians that knowing God was the consequence of God’s taking knowledge of them and singling them out by grace. Your name is graven on His hands. Your name is written on His heart. All your knowledge of God depends upon the fact that *He knows you, His eye is upon you, His love is set upon you*, and He has committed Himself to taking care of you both now and to the days of eternity.

Illustrated: We live in a world today where one can receive a “friend” request on any number of Social Media platforms, yet have no real connection to the person listed on their profile as a “friend.” Although the individual may see the many “status” updates on the person’s profile and come to know some facts about the person, there is not a true relationship. I pray this is never said of our relationship with Christ. Let’s strive to not just get some theological nuggets about God, being deceived that we are indeed in relationship with Him.

What does the knowledge of God involve?

- **The knowledge of God involves a personal relationship.**
Is there anyone who knows you better and more intimately than God?
- **The knowledge of God involves a privileged relationship.**
Is there anyone more *important* or *greater* than God?
- **The knowledge of God involves a priority relationship.**
If a relationship with God is the *greatest* and most *important* relationship there is, is there anything more important than *knowing Him*?
- **The knowledge of God involves a powerful relationship.**
Because God works *in* and *through* His people, what can be more invigorating than to know that nothing can ultimately defeat us *since God is for us*?
- **The knowledge of God involves a profitable relationship.**
Since all the riches of the world do not truly satisfy the soul, *knowing God is the most profitable relationship* because He alone brings *contentment, peace, grace, forgiveness, and eternal life*.
- **The knowledge of God involves a permanent relationship.**
The true knowledge of God ushers us into a relationship that can *never* be severed (*Rom.8:38-39*).
- **The knowledge of God involves a protecting relationship.**
Knowing God brings great comfort and peace because He can be trusted to protect us when we are wronged and safeguard our souls for all eternity (*2 Tim.1:12*).

Four analogies are used in Scripture for knowing God:

- A *son* who knows his Father (*John 14*)
- A *wife* who knows her husband (*Eph.5*)
- A *subject* who knows his king (*John 18*)
- A *sheep* who knows his shepherd (*John 10*)

All four of these analogies point to a relationship in which the **knower** "*looks up*" to the one **known**, and the latter takes responsibility for the former. This is what is true in knowing God. We look up to *Him*, trusting in *Him* to care for us and love us, and He takes the responsibility to protect us, teach us, and change us to be more like Himself. Walter C. Smith beautifully communicates this truth in the hymn, *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*.

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise, In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.
Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light, nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above, Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.*

*To all, life Thou givest to both great and small; In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree, and wither and perish but naught changeth Thee.
Great Father of glory, pure Father of light, Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see, 'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!*

Closing:

Application questions: Being a Doer of the Word

- **2 Timothy 3:16**—*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching [what is right], for reproof [what is not right], for correction [how to get right], for training in righteousness [how to stay right]; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*
1. What did I learn (“teaching”)?
 2. Where do I fall short (“reproof”)?
 3. What do I need to do about it (“correction”)?
 4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life (“training”)?

Answer Key:

Are the following statements true or false?

- F
- F

Holy Habits Weekly Devotion



This week's memory verse: **John 4:24**—"*God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

This week's holy habit: **The Word**

Knowing anyone requires developing a healthy relationship with that person. Action is required. God has done His part by sending His son, Jesus Christ. Through this display of love, He demonstrates His willingness to be intimately involved in our lives. He invites us to enjoy a perfect and eternal relationship with Him. We can actively develop this intimacy by studying and applying His word.

DAY 1 Read Hebrews 11:6.

- Assess your faith and the reason you believe that God is real.

DAY 2 Read Acts 3:19.

- Consider why repentance requires turning.

DAY 3 Read John 10:27.

- Reflect on your walk with Christ. Do you see any areas in need of growth?

DAY 4 Read James 4:8.

- Think about ways you can guard yourself against being double-minded.

DAY 5 Read Revelations 3:20.

- Think back to when you first heard that knock. How has your fellowship with Christ been since then?

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