

It Is Written

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What Does It Mean To Know God?

By Ken Green

Knowing God is the most significant and meaningful pursuit in life. Jeremiah wrote of its importance: "Thus says the Lord, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me'" (9:23–24).

It's amazing how many things we sometimes use to try and lift ourselves up in other people's eyes. Many are persuaded they can lift themselves up by demeaning others. Booker T. Washington, the great black educator, said: "Most leaders spend time trying to get others to think highly of them, when instead they should try to get their people to think more highly of themselves. It's wonderful when the people believe in their leader. It's more wonderful when the leader believes in their people! You can't hold a man down without staying down with him."

We all know people who vaunt themselves and continually boast of what they've done, what they know, who they know, where they've been, and who they are. And we know we would be more impressed if we heard such from someone else. The old proverb says to not toot your own horn. God says: If you are going to lift yourself up in front of others, do it about knowing Me. If you can't talk about that, then you don't have much to brag about anyway.

Knowing God is more than having some kind of religious or spiritual experience or explaining how you feel about Him. To know Him is to enter into a relationship with Him that makes Him the dominant Influence of your thoughts and actions.

There are many preachers and other Bible teachers who prepare sermons, make outlines, present lessons about God; are aware of God; have their information correct, but do not know God. The pursuit of knowing God is more than information. It is more than study. It is our spirit abiding with His Spirit on an ongoing basis.

This is to be life's most authentic pursuit. Jesus spoke of this in His great prayer of intercession when He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:1–3).

There are many things that contribute to a full and happy life, but it is imperative that we understand that knowing God is absolutely the greatest and most important of all. Without that everything else loses meaning. The Apostle Paul put it this way: "...I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Paul wasn't a loser. He hadn't hit rock bottom with nowhere else to go. He wasn't turning from a life of failure and counting that as "dung." He was one of the most educated and accomplished men of his day. He was the elite of the religious class. He wasn't writing just about the time before his conversion. He had been a Christian for decades when he wrote this. He had traveled the world and been used of God as few men ever had or ever will be. Yet here he was still seeking to know God more (Phil. 3:10).

Paul was saying that the best life had to offer and the greatest accomplishments and pursuits of

any man, when compared to knowing God, ranked in the same category as manure. He was admitting that he hadn't arrived at where he was heading but he had left where he was and was pressing toward that goal of knowing God more and more (Phil. 3:12-14).

What does it say when this man who wrote much of the New Testament was still pursuing knowing God decades after his conversion? Certainly there has to be a depth of knowing God that goes far beyond just getting saved. Paul spoke of this in Ephesians when he prayed that Christians would come to know the height, length, depth, and breadth of God's love (Eph. 3:18-19).

He said something very interesting in Eph. 3:19: "And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God."

How can we know something if it passes knowledge? Paul is speaking about experiencing God's love in a way that is infinitely greater than mere intellectual knowledge. And notice that when we experience God's love in this way, we will be filled with all the fullness of God. What a statement!

Knowing God must be the priority of every Christian. It must be the major pursuit of every preacher, elder, deacon, and teacher of His word. It must be our highest aim. We must search for Him with all our hearts (Deut. 4:29). Likewise, the sage says the knowledge of God is like a man searching for silver (Prov. 2:4). Where can silver be found? Silver is found beneath the ground, which requires digging, time, dedication, and intentional pursuit. The reward is overwhelming and a treasure worth cherishing.

There is no better way to know God than to hide His Word in our hearts. Now, I didn't say to study His Word, but rather to hide it deep within. Let it resonate and abide in us so His thoughts—His perspective—His counsel—His guidance—begin to take root and overflow into all that we do. As we come to know Him, we will discover a growing process of intimacy, a closeness that will compel us to want to know Him even more.

Do You Understand? Can You Explain?

By Greg Gwin

Do you understand quantum physics? Do you even know what it is? (Most of us do not.) Now, imagine that you have the task of explaining it to someone else. Impossible! How can you hope to explain what you do not understand yourself?

We hope this illustrates a point we want to make about the Bible. The majority of people in the world mistakenly view the Bible as a confusing and difficult book. Sadly, too many Christians are unable to help resolve this problem because they simply cannot explain what they have never understood themselves. They don't know God's truth well enough to be able to explain it to others.

The Bible can be understood (Ephesians 3:2-5). In fact, we are commanded to understand it (Ephesians 5:17). If we imagine that the Bible is too hard to understand, we are actually casting a charge against God. We are maintaining that He was unable to produce a revelation that the average man or woman can grasp. Not true!

The real problem here is a lack of dedication and a failure to work diligently. Often we find folks - even Christians - who can talk knowledgeably about a wide variety of subjects. They recite technical and intricate details about a host of topics. Yet these same people claim that the Bible can not be comprehended. Nonsense! With even a fraction of the same effort they have put into understanding computers, cars, sporting events and political matters, they would have become expert in their knowledge of God's Word. If they invested one tenth of the time they waste watching television, they would understand even the most complicated themes of the Bible.

It's true that you can't explain what you do not know. However, let us never use this excuse concerning the Bible. If we don't know, it's our fault. Get busy!