

# THE UNDERSTANDING OF KNOWING GOD

This is what the Lord says:

**“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom  
or the strong boast of their strength  
or the rich boast of their riches,  
but let the one who boasts boast about this:  
that they have the *understanding to know me*,  
that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness,  
justice and righteousness on earth,  
for in these I delight,”  
declares the Lord.**

**Jeremiah 9:23-24**

One of my favourite places to walk is a nearby beach. The sea is often still, and the golden sands are scattered with shells. Seagulls cry to one another as they fly through the skies while happy dogs romp through the water. Most often, my beach walks are solitary, but sometimes I walk there with a friend. What a joy it is to walk and talk and connect with another human being, especially when that person is a kindred spirit.

Friendship is one of life’s most precious treasures.

Getting to know someone is like holding a multifaceted diamond towards the light. As you spend time with a friend and listen to their words, you begin to see the light shining on the various facets of their unique personhood. Over time, you start to

recognise the quirks of their personality; their ambitions and dreams; the emotions they feel; their strengths and weaknesses; and the values they cherish and which motivate them. To know somebody is to be on a journey of understanding them, and that brings connectedness. In return, we desire to be known and understood for who we truly are.

The same can be said for God. God wants to be known and understood for who he truly is. *Exactly who he is.*

As God led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the promised land, he spoke to them, guided them, provided for them, and showed his power to them in numerous ways. He did all these wonders for them so that they might know that he the Lord is God and besides him, there is no other (Deut 4:35, 29:5-6). The Lord God wanted the people to know him. He also wanted them to understand that he is the one and true living God, unique from all the so-called ‘gods’ of the surrounding people groups. He was, and is, and always will be, the only God who could ever have a relationship with them.

It is a breathtaking thought to realise that God, the creator of the universe, the Ancient of Days, can be known and wants to be known! He desires that all people, everywhere, would seek him and come to know him. God created all people. He marked out our appointed times in history and the boundaries of our lands. God did this so that we would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him (Acts 17:26-28).

But if we want to begin to understand God for who he truly is, and if we desire to know God personally, then we need to come to him on his terms. Not our terms. His terms. He is not a God who has been silent. His voice has resounded throughout all ages. He has made his terms clear.

And so, we need to ask ourselves some questions:

*Do we truly know God?*

*Do we see God as he truly is?*

*How can we truly know him?*

Let’s start with what God is not. The divine being is not an impersonal force flowing through all of nature and all people. He is a person, distinct from all that has been made. The divine being is also not like gold or silver or stone — a physical image made by human design and skill (Acts 17:29). Nor is the Living God a concept formed by human imagination. So often, these days, people can be heard murmuring such phrases as ‘God, *to me*, is like this...’ or ‘God, *to me*, is like that...’ When anyone uses the phrase, ‘God, *to me*, ...’ they are essentially creating a god of their own imagination, one that is based on their own subjective thoughts and feelings. It may not be a physical idol, but it is, in its essence, idolatry. We cannot know God or understand his nature based on our own perceptions, presumptions, or the popular ideologies from our surrounding culture. We also do not look deep within ourselves to find God. God is separate from us, and we need to look outward to find him.

So, how then can we gain the understanding to know God?

We can gain knowledge of God through:

- \* Our observations of the natural world (Romans 1:19-20).
- \* God's written word (2 Timothy 3:16, John 17:17).
- \* God's son Jesus who died for us and rose again (Matt 11:27, John 8:19).
- \* Repentance of our sins (Psalm 24:4, 2 Timothy 2:25, Hebrews 8:11-12).
- \* The leading of God's Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:17).

When people do not have knowledge of God and turn away from his truth, they cast off all restraint, doing whatever is right in their own eyes (Proverbs 29:18). This leads to a society where chaos, confusion and wickedness abound. Sound familiar? These effects can also abound in individual lives. Rejection of the knowledge of the one true and Living God eventually leads to death and destruction (Hosea 4:6).

God beckons us to come away from the deafening noise and confusion that fills our world. He asks us to be still before him so that we might know him (Psalm 46:10). Are we willing to say to God, as Moses once did, "Teach me *your ways* so I may *know you*..." (Exodus 33:13)?

The greatest knowledge that a person can possess is knowledge of the person of God – who he is in all his fullness. His attributes, nature, character, and excellencies are all facets of a priceless diamond we can choose to spend a lifetime getting to know. This relationship is the greatest treasure this life can bring. As we spend time with God and absorb his words, we will begin to see the light shining on the various facets of his unique personhood. He will not be hidden from us if we seek him with all our hearts and come to him on the terms he has plainly laid out.

Over time, as we grow in the knowledge of God, we will begin to see him exactly for who he is: his character; his triune nature; what he clearly states is right or wrong; the emotions that he feels; that which delights or angers his heart; his promises and plans. Through faith in his Son Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we will not just know *about* God, we will *know him* intimately. He will come to live inside of us. This brings connectedness. And when we know God, we discover another precious truth: we are known by him!

When we know the truth of who God is, we won't say, 'God, *to me*, is like *this* or like *that*....' Instead, we will simply say, without hesitation, 'God is...':

*God is the Creator*

*God is the Living God*

*God is the great I AM*

*God is named YHVH (Yahweh)*

*God is a Father and has a Son called Jesus*

*God is One, but also three persons: The Father is God, Jesus the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.*

*God is eternal, sovereign, righteous, holy, loving, powerful, kind, compassionate, forgiving, just, merciful, good, wise and much, much more!*

Let us not boast in our own wisdom, in our riches, or in our strengths. Human wisdom is unreliable and often foolish. Riches and strength can be snatched away in an instant. If we boast, let us boast of this one truth: we have the understanding to know the one true and Living God.

I began by mentioning that one of my favourite places to walk was the beach and that most of my walks there are solitary. But that isn't wholly true. Sometimes, I may walk with a human friend, but whether a friend is at my side or not, I am never alone. God walks with me. Always. He is the best friend anyone can have. What a joy it is to walk and talk and connect with the Ancient of Days.

I know God. He is my Father, and I am his child. I belong to him. I know God's Son, Jesus, for he is my Lord and Saviour. It is because of him that I know and am connected to the Father. I also know God's Holy Spirit, for he lives inside me. For the rest of my life, I will continue to grow in my understanding of the person of God.

He invites you to know him too.

***Dear Father,***

***I come to you through faith in Jesus Christ, your precious Son. Teach me your ways that I may know you. Show me who you are through your Word and fill me with your Holy Spirit. Amen.***

# WHO IS GOD?



When we know the truth of who God is, we won't say, 'God, to me, is *like this* or *like that*....'  
Instead, we will simply say, without hesitation, 'God is...':

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*God is the great I AM*

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*God is One, but also three persons: The Father is God, Jesus the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.*

*God is eternal, sovereign, righteous, holy, loving, powerful, kind, compassionate, forgiving, just, merciful, good, wise, and much, much more!*

To have relationship with God the Father, we must first have relationship with God the Son.  
When we know Jesus, we will be able to say without hesitation, 'Jesus is...':

*Jesus is God*

*Jesus is fully God and fully man*

*Jesus is the Saviour, the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Lord, the King*

*Jesus is the only Way, the only Truth, the only Life*

*Jesus is the Word*

*Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World, the Prince of Peace, the Hope of the World, the sacrificial Lamb who takes away sin...*

*Jesus is eternal, righteous, holy, compassionate, pure, perfect, powerful, forgiving, merciful, just, loving, and much, much more.*

When we have repented of our sin before God the Father and have relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit will come to dwell in us. It is important to also be able to say, 'The Holy Spirit is...':

*The Holy Spirit is God*

*The Holy Spirit is our advocate*

*The Holy Spirit is God's messenger, a teacher of Truth, a comforter*

*The Holy Spirit strengthens, convicts, guides, brings life, performs miracles, distributes supernatural gifts, testifies about Jesus, reveals God's wisdom*

*The Holy Spirit is eternal, powerful, holy, and much, much more!*