

EQTH105 Basic Bible Doctrine

Unit 5d The Knowledge of God

Presented by the



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Hello there and welcome back. In a previous lesson, we talked about the personal nature of God and the personal nature of the Holy Spirit. In this session, as we continue our study, I want to focus on this idea of knowing God personally. The reason we are discussing this in the section about the Holy Spirit is because of his special work as a guide and comforter to the believer. As we will see, it is possible to have a personal knowledge of and relationship with God, but that is only available to believers. And frankly, it is only possible as the Holy Spirit guides us in our journey to become more Christ-like and spiritually mature.

So to begin with, let's ask this question: Is it possible to know God personally? Is knowledge of God something that is even possible at all? Well, on that, the Bible speaks loud and clear. And the answer is yes, the living God can be known by humankind. In fact, God goes out of his way to have a personal relationship with human beings. Now, this is a two-edged sword. Scripture reveals two truths about God. First, because of who he is, we cannot and will not ever completely understand him, at least this side of glory. This is spoken of as God's being incomprehensible, that is, no one can fully understand him. Job was asked, "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?" [Job 11:7] The prophet Isaiah says that nothing can compare to God. "To whom then will you compare to God? What image will you compare him to?" [Isa 40:18]

Although we cannot know everything about him, the other side is that we can know some things about him. The Bible says that God is knowable. Jesus said, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." [John 14:7] Jesus also said, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." [John 17:3] John wrote, "We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." [1Jo 5:20] So although the creator of the universe is all-powerful and incomparable, he is noble. We may not know everything about him, but he has revealed enough about himself so that we can understand some things about his character. But the most important thing for our own perspective is that individuals can have a personal relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ.

Paul prayed for God to increase the believer's knowledge of him. He wrote, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God." [Phl 1:9-11] Paul also wrote, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding." [Col 1:9-10] So we can know God, but we have to remember that God himself is our only source of knowledge about him.

Nature can be misunderstood. Remember when man thought the earth was flat or that the sun revolved around the earth? Our human reason is inadequate, and experience can be misleading. It is possible to know facts about God without knowing him personally. Knowing facts about God is not the same as knowing God. God revealed facts about himself so that human beings can have a personal experience with him. “It is written, ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.’ The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” [1Co 2:9-10] The Holy Spirit helps believers distinguish truth from error. “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has been taught you, remain in him.” [1Jo 2:27] So it is clear. God is knowable. Scripture assumes that we can understand his commands and obey him. Knowing the living God is the greatest thing that a human being can experience. Consequently, it must be a priority in a person’s life. To begin with, a person must want to know God. After that, they must come to God in faith. Finally, they must continue in faith as they grow in their knowledge of him.

Now, we have talked about how important it is that those who have believed in Jesus Christ should continue to grow in the knowledge of him. There are several crucial reasons why this is so. First, and simply, the Bible commands believers to know God. I know, it’s a little bit like when you ask your parents, “Why?” and they say, “Because we said so.” But the fact is that the Bible commands this. God said so. He said, “Be still, and know that I am God; I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” [Psa 48:10] The Lord said to King Solomon, “And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father and serve him with single mind and willing heart; for the Lord searches every mind and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will abandon you forever.” [1Ch 28:9]

Second, the Bible defines eternal life as knowing God through the person of Jesus Christ. We read in John, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” [John 17:3] Eternal life, according to the Bible, is entering into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Eternal life begins the moment the relationship starts. Third reason: We can only love and trust someone as much as we know them. Human beings do not fall in love with complete strangers. The prophet Jeremiah records God saying, “Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord.” [Jer 9:23-24] The more we know about God, the more we can love and obey him.

Fourth, we experience spiritual growth. The more one knows God intellectually and experientially, the more we can grow spiritually. We read, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.” [2Pe 3:18] The apostle Paul wrote, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his suffering by becoming like him in his death.” [Phl 3:10]

Fifth, it helps us to understand ourselves. Knowing God helps us with a better understanding of our own identity. Before we can appreciate who we are, we need to know who made us and why we are here on earth. Therefore, the more we learn about God, the more we will be able to learn about ourselves. “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them? For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.” [Rom 11:33-36] Knowing God results in the realization of judgment to come. The prophet Hosea tells us, “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. ‘Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I will ignore your children.’” [Hos 4:6]

So there are a number of benefits in knowing the one true God. First, a person enters into an eternal relationship with the one true God. Knowledge of God leads us to spiritual growth for the believer. When one enters into a relationship with God, then true worship is possible. Finally, knowing God causes the believer to realize that a day of judgment is coming. This encourages the person to live in the light of eternity. It is our choice. We can choose to serve God or choose to disobey him. But whether an individual chooses to reject or trust God, the Bible is clear that we all need God. He provides for us an identity, a purpose, and a destiny. God tells us we are here by design and not by chance. We have been made in the image of God. The Bible not only gives us this identity as a unique creation of God. It also gives us a purpose for living. We are here to glorify God with our lives. Within the pages of the Bible, we have a guidebook on how we can relate to God and how we are to conduct ourselves with one another. We do not need to grope about in the darkness. God’s word is our guide. It tells us God’s plan and how we should live. When we have a relationship with the living God, our lives take on a purpose. We know our destiny. We know that this life is not all there is. Scripture promises a conscious existence beyond the grave. God provides for us the assurance that we will spend eternity in his presence. Human beings have a choice whether or not to have God in their life. Having God through Jesus Christ in one’s life is a necessity for living both now and for eternity. A person can only find true fulfillment in God through Jesus Christ. God gives people an identity, purpose, and destiny. Those who reject Christ have none of these.