

On Knowing God.

Prov. 1:7 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

Prov. 9:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Only a fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

There is a God who has created all things and who gives his creation meaning, and we can know him. This is an exciting possibility. It means that there can be actual contact between you, the individual, and God, the Creator.

But when we say we can "know God", we must be clear about what we mean. The most common uses of the word, to "know God" are inadequate.

1. It is not just awareness. A knowing that somebody lives does not necessarily involve us personally. This is not what the Bible means when it speaks of knowing God.
2. "Knowing about" someone, like by description, like knowing the theology about God which is in the Bible, this is not enough.
3. True knowledge of God is also more than knowledge by experience, like knowing about a city by living there. This is still not the full idea of knowing God.
4. Knowing God means being made alive by God in a new sense, i.e., being "born again":
 - (a) conversing with God and being profoundly changed in the process.
 - (b) acknowledging our deep spiritual need for Him.
 - (c) accepting God's gracious provision for our need through the work of Christ.
 - (d) application of that work in us by the Holy Spirit
 - (e) being changed in the process.

And then, true knowledge of God takes place in our hearts as we worship Him and study His Word and take our part in the Body of Christ. (John 17:3) "And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only True God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

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5. The knowledge of God is important in that only through a knowledge of God we who are in the Body of Christ can become strong, mature Christians. (Dan. 11:32) "The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action." We do not have many strong Christians today - no Christian Mind. Why? They do not know their God.

Most Christians have allowed their minds to become conformed to the "spirit of this age", with its mechanistic, godless, materialistic thinking. They have forgotten what God is like and what He has promised to do for those who trust Him, if they ever knew. For most Christians, God is very "little" and sort of withdrawn into semi-retirement, leaving his children to fend for themselves in a dangerous environment. (Ps. 50:21) "You thought I was just like you." Such a God is not the God of the Bible. Let's read Daniel 3. A strong God - the God of the Bible, is a source of strength to those who know Him. THE TRUE GOD. "I am who I am." (Ex. 3:13,14) The name linked with Jehovah pointing to all that God is in Himself. i.e., The One who is entirely self-existent, self-sufficient, self-revealing and eternal.

1. Self-Existent means that God as He is in Himself is unknowable.

We live in a cause & effect world - all we can see and experience has its origins. We seek these causes. But God, though he is The Original Cause is Beyond Understanding. "I am

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the self-existent Self, back of which no creature can think. God's self-existence means that he is not answerable to us, and we do not like that. Although He sometimes explains things to us, he does not have to and often does not. (Job. 26:14).

2. Self-Sufficient "I am who I am." (Prov. 21:3), (Eph. 1:11)

God was in no need for us - that he did create us was just his desire. It is impossible to bring God under obligation to us, the creature. God gains nothing from us. To believe in Him adds nothing to his perfection. To doubt Him takes nothing away. Nor does God need helpers or defenders. We can do both, but even if we fail, God is not deprived nor threatened. He is as He is and will remain so, regardless of the sinful and arrogant attacks of evil against Him.

When we realize that God is the only truly self-sufficient One, we begin to realize why the Bible has so much to say about the need for faith in God alone, and why unbelief in God is such sin. Unbelief is perverted faith for it puts its trust not in the living God, but in dying fallible men. In unbelief we are saying we, or some other person, is more trustworthy than Almighty God.

3. Self-Revealing. It is God who has revealed Himself to us, through history, creation and finally through His Son. He has always been the one to initiate - to draw us to Him. If anyone, anywhere, under any circumstance, wants to know God, he will reveal Himself to that person.