

## Knowing God

The first thing that we have to realise is that if we are to have any hope of knowing God, it is because he wants to show himself to us. Jesus said that:

All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. **Matthew 11**<sup>27</sup>

This kind of knowledge of God is not found in human effort or wisdom (**1 Corinthians 1**<sup>21</sup>). We depend upon God's active communication to us through the bible and in our daily walk with him for true knowledge of him. Many false religions and cults as well as errors in the way Christians have behaved are due to a false knowledge of who God is (**Romans 1**<sup>18-25</sup>). It is always important to check that our "knowledge" of God is in line with the bible.

We can no more find a method for knowing God than for making God, for the knowledge of God is God himself dwelling in the soul. The most we can do is to prepare for his entry, to get out of his way, to remove the barriers, for until God acts in us there is nothing positive that we can do in this direction. **Alan W Watts**

Because God is the infinite creator and we are finite creatures, we can never fully understand God. In this sense God is said to be incomprehensible.<sup>1</sup> Paul says:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! **Romans 11**<sup>33</sup>

It is not only true that we can never fully understand God but we can never fully understand any single thing about God. His greatness (**Psalms 145**<sup>3</sup>), his understanding (**Psalms 147**<sup>5</sup>), his knowledge (**Psalms 139**<sup>6</sup>), his riches, wisdom, judgement and ways (**Romans 11**<sup>33</sup>) are all beyond our ability to understand fully. God's ways are higher than our ways (**Isaiah 55**<sup>9</sup>). We may know something about his love, power, wisdom and such but we can never know them fully. We can only exclaim with David that:

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it. **Psalms 139**<sup>6</sup>

Even when we get to Heaven and we are with God, we will never come to a full knowledge of who he is. His incomprehensibility is due not due to our sinfulness, rather it is due to his infinite greatness.

He truly knows God perfectly that finds Him incomprehensible and unable to be known. **Richard Rolle**

It may be impossible to know all about God, but it is possible to know truth about God that he reveals to us about himself. In fact everything in the bible is the truth revealed about God. Even more significantly, it is God himself who we

know and not just facts about him or what he does. The bible is clear about the fact that we can know God himself and not just facts about him or some limited aspect of his personality. Jeremiah says:

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight says the Lord. **Jeremiah 9**<sup>23-24</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Incomprehensible in this sense means "unable to be fully known", whereas it has come to mean "unable to be understood", unlike God who wishes to reveal himself to us.

Here God is saying that the source of our joy and of our significance ought not to come from our own abilities and possessions but from the fact that we know him. The promise of the new covenant is that all shall know him “from the least of them to the greatest” (**Hebrews 8<sup>11</sup>**).

As Christians, we have a huge advantage in knowing God. We have Jesus. Jesus was the Son of God. He was the embodiment of God and those who know Jesus; know God (**Matthew 11<sup>27</sup>**).

If we want to get to know God better, we need to get to know Jesus better. All of the attributes of God are seen in Jesus and all of the ways to know God

What we do not understand we do not possess. **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

for ourselves are seen in the example Jesus gave to us (**John 14<sup>6-10</sup>**). He is the perfect intermediary, in that he was both God and man, perfectly. The fact that we can know God at all is all because of what Jesus has done for us.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. **Colossians 1<sup>15-20</sup>**

As with any relationship, we have to spend time getting to know the object of our affection. It is important for Christians to take time to become familiar with God, to be in his presence and to understand his ways. God wants to communicate with us and he will do this in a variety of ways, through scripture, in prayer, directly into our hearts, through other people and things, in our circumstances and in our dreams. The more we spend time getting to know him, the more conscious we will be in our awareness of him and in communicating with him.