

Dartmouth

Bible Notes



Notes from the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church

Series: Who is God/Who God Is Lesson 21

Scripture: Hebrews 4: 13

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The Knowledge of God

Hebrews 4:11-13 (ESV) Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Introduction When we talk about God, *just for who He is*, that is a strange and unusual way to talk about anyone. Almost always, I have some self-interest in talking about someone. I will tell you a **musician** that I love, not just for who he or she is—I almost certainly don't know them personally—but my interest is for some song they wrote or recorded. If I tell you about a **quarterback** that I admire it almost certainly isn't going to be because I am fascinated with their intellect or their personality or even their personal story—it will be because of a thrill that I felt when I watched them play. As I shared last week, that's why I love this series that I am thinking about. I am weary of Christians selecting something *personally interesting or exciting about* God to study, to ponder—preachers to preach about, Christian *musicians* to write songs about and so forth, ONLY as it relates to them and their lives. As if God is only of interest to me if He is Santa Claus! And so, when we talk about God, *just for who He is*, that is a strange and unusual way to talk about anyone--

- But this series is about Him, FOR WHO HE IS. He is Who He is. He is inestimably wonderful *even if I was never born*.
- He is magnificently awesome and beautiful if the second coming of Jesus *doesn't happen in our lifetimes*, or in the next hundred years and even if it doesn't happen for a thousand years!
- He is worthy of worship and deserves my pursuit of Him and my obedience *even if I have loved ones who do not accept Jesus* as their Savior. He is worth my attention and a careful investigation *even if I don't get the answers* to my specific prayers that I want...
- THAT's the God we're talking about! He is worthy, period. Always. Unendingly. Just for Who He is. Who is He? He is Who He is.

Now today we are looking at an aspect of God that we have already said a little bit about: THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. We looked at this briefly when we considered the “Three O’s”, omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. With “omniscience” we said that God knows all. But that wasn’t enough! Here is how the old German Lutheran Heinrich Schmid defined the “knowledge of God” back in 1875...

The “knowledge of God” is that by which He, through one simple and eternal act of the intellect, knows all things whatever that have been, are, and shall be, or even in any way can be. Nor only absolutely, but also that which is conditionally future or possible.¹

A.W. Pink, perhaps a hundred years ago too, wrote this:

God is omniscient. He knows everything: everything possible, everything actual; all events and all creatures, of the past, the present, and the future. He is perfectly acquainted with every detail in the life of every being in heaven, in earth, and in hell. “*He knoweth what is in the darkness*” (Dan 2:22). Nothing escapes His notice, nothing can be hidden from Him, nothing is forgotten by Him. Well may we say with the Psalmist, “*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it*” (Ps. 139:6). His knowledge is perfect. He never errs, never changes, never overlooks anything. “*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*” (Hebrews 4:13). Yes, such is the God “with whom we have to do”!²

And so what? Duh, you might say. Dr. S. Lewis Johnson summarized it as this: “He knows Himself and all things possible and actual, in one eternal and most simple act.”³

Our Bible reading today came from the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 4. The writer is making an appeal to people who had originally trusted in Jesus NOT to abandon their faith in Him. HE THEN TELLS THEM THAT **THE WORD OF GOD** ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (and he does not mean specifically the New Testament since that doesn’t technically exist yet) **CAN READ THEIR HEARTS**, and so realize this! God sees. God understands. God cannot be evaded. He *knows* and He *knows all*. How deeply that conviction is engrained in us, has worked its way into our “affections” (as Jonathan Edwards would have put it), has a real-time effect on our lives. If I am convinced that God can see and does see and never NOT sees every thought, every action, every decision, every thought-process that led UP to my decision, then I am perhaps going to rig my thoughts, actions and decisions in light of that fact.

¹ Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 1875, p. 119.

² Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, ch. 3

³ S. Lewis Johnson, *The Knowledge and Wisdom of God*, teaching manuscript, c. 1976, SLJ Institute.

We need to take this seriously, friends. No creature is hidden from Him Who knows all, and to Whom all must give an account. (Hebrews 4:13). The Bible talks about the Judgment Seat of Christ--also referred to as the *bema*--in three places: Romans 14:10-12; 1st Corinthians 3:10--4:5; and 2nd Corinthians 5:1-10. Only church-age saints will appear at that judgment, as shown in verse 10: ***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*** The purpose of the *bema* is an exhaustive evaluation of our lives.⁴

Imagine a situation where you were really struggling with a major decision. You know this decision would not only affect you but a bunch of other people. You could feel in advance that it was going to be a problem to *explain* this decision to some, because they won't trust your heart. You WANT to do the thing that you're considering and you have prayed about it—"Lord, guide my steps"—but even so you know it is going to be a problem for some people. All they're going to hear is the decision itself. Once they hear the decision it won't matter what else you say, all they're going to hear is the announcement of the decision. As you imagine your future after this decision, you are a little afraid—you can't see the future and you know your decision could go one of several ways. You remember *back* to when you made a similar decision, several years ago, and all you remember is the excitement you felt at the time. You seem to have forgotten what some felt and told you they felt at that time. Nevertheless, you made a decision like this back then and let the "chips fall as they may". You took the risk then, and hey: you want to take the risk again. A loved one asks you, "have you thought this through?" And you respond with, "Yes of course I have. But I am not all-knowing. I'm not sure what all will happen once I make this decision. All I know is I really want to do this thing."

HERE'S THE GOD WE SERVE:

- He knows what decision you're going to make.
- He knows how it will affect the people around you.
- He knows all your deepest motivations, even the one's YOU'RE not aware of.
- He knows what other people think about your decision, and how they're going to react.
- In fact, when you make *your* decision, God knows what decisions *they're* going to make in reaction.
- He knows how your life will be five years after the decision, and ten years down the line.
- He knows what hidden things in your heart and mind were cooking when you were young, that made you into the kind of person you are today which is *informing* how you make decisions like this now.

⁴ John MacArthur <https://www.gty.org/library/questions/QA97/what-is-the-purpose-of-the-judgement-seat-of-christ>

- He knows how your father and mother and grandmother and grandfather made decisions, which somehow might even seep into your current decision.
- He knows how your descendants on Mars in 2118 will move and work and be influenced somehow by your decision today...

Young Chris Damgaard, 20 years old, made a decision to leave his home in Slesvig, Denmark in 1890, and move to America. He was single. He would never return to Denmark. His girlfriend, Metha Hansen, followed him on the next ship. They came to America, young, unmarried, and full of energy. They settled in Wisconsin. I have no idea why except there was a large Danish community there. They made their lives there and Chris worked for fifty years there until he died in 1941. Metha lived another 19 years. They had ten children, but the first two died. My Dad was the youngest one. They could easily have not had #10. But they did. God knew that--He knew it! And young Martin would become a soldier and would go to Europe and survive the second World War, come home and marry his sweetheart—a beautiful young Tennessee girl that he met on a blind date just two weeks before he shipped out to war. Nine years later they would have a son after trying for six years. They could have given up, adopted, or just decided to not have any kids. God knew all that. He knew it. He knew that with all the girls their only son would date, he would find one who almost didn't go to the same college—came this close to going to a *different* college, a CHRISTIAN college. But they met, fell in love, got married and brought two other people into the world. God knew that. He knows what their children will do, or not do.

Your whole decision-making process is ***naked and exposed to His eyes***. There are no unknowns, no rolls-of-the-dice, no “maybes”, no “probablies”. And WHEN YOU PRAY TO THIS GOD, it isn't a discussion between two smart actuaries⁵. It is a conversation between you--an imperfect, often led by passion, partial knowledge human--and an omniscient God who just plain KNOWS everything.

- We are asking help from someone who gets the whole picture, who is sovereign and has figured INTO the whole picture all contingencies.
- We are asking direction of someone who WANTS, at least His Bible says, for us to take the good road and to reap the benefits of good decision-making.
- We are asking direction of a Father who loves us.
- We are asking direction of a God who will further and bless good decisions and will let bad decisions have their natural consequences. Because He is good. All the time. He is never not good even when things are dark to us. He is still on the throne. Satan may be screeching but He who sits in the heavens laughs (Psalm 2:4).

⁵ An actuary is a person who compiles and analyzes statistics and uses them to calculate insurance risks and premiums.

- He's got it figured.
- He's fully aware of every single angle.
- He already is waiting for that interview, if you will, that interrogation you're going to give Him about that loss, that grief, that confusion, that depression, that baffling problem you had to endure back here.

Having a God of all knowledge is a thing we take for granted. We can't imagine living like the ancient Greeks or Romans or some religions in the world today where their gods don't know *everything*. But for Him, and there is only Him, to know all things all the time and He has never NOT been, is just short of fantastic!

When He rolls up His sleeves He ain't just putting on the ritz
(Our God is an awesome God)

There's thunder in His footsteps and there's lightning in His fists
(Our God is an awesome God)

And the Lord wasn't joking when He kicked 'em out of Eden
It wasn't for no reason the He shed His blood
His return is very close and so you better be believing that
Our God is an awesome God

Our God is an awesome God, He reigns from heaven above
With wisdom, power and love, our God is an awesome God

Our God is an awesome God, He reigns from heaven above
With wisdom, power and love, our God is an awesome God⁶

⁶ Rich Mullins (1955-97), *Awesome God*, 1988