



Calvary of Albuquerque

How Can I Know God? - John 14:7-11

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

What a thought—that a mere human can know God! The agnostic asserts this is impossible. The atheist insists that the very idea is an arrogant and purely metaphysical pursuit. But one of the reasons Jesus came was to reveal God's character and nature clearly and perfectly! Let's consider two roadblocks to knowing God and four resources that help us know Him better.

OUTLINE

- I. Roadblocks to Knowing God
 - A. Inaccurate Comprehension (v. 7)
 - B. Inappropriate Confirmation (v. 8)
- II. Resources for Knowing God
 - A. Being in His Presence (v. 9)
 - B. Believing in His Person (v. 10a)
 - C. Bending to His Word (v. 10b)
 - D. Beholding His Works (v. 11)



Pondering the Principles:

1. How do your background, experience, and knowledge help and/or hinder your concept of God?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your desire to know God better. What are you actively doing to enhance your experience with Him?
3. How full is your spiritual tool chest (i.e., do you have a storehouse of spiritual knowledge to draw from that helps you get direction for life and make important choices)? See Matthew 13:52.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Intellectual knowledge
 1. "Knowledge is Power"—Francis Bacon
 - a. If true, this is the most powerful generation in history
 - i. More computer power in a musical gift card than on the earth in 1950
 - ii. As much informational knowledge on one silicone chip as in the entire library at Alexandria, Egypt (700,000 parchments)
 2. The increase of knowledge
 - a. If all accumulated knowledge from the beginning to 1845 were represented by one inch then:
 - b. From 1845-1945, three inches
 - c. From 1945-1975, as tall as the Washington Monument
 - d. From 1975-present ever increasing
 - B. Spiritual knowledge - knowing God
 1. "The loftiest of all sciences"—C.H. Spurgeon
 2. "Michael Persinger of Laurentian University in Canada suspects that religious experiences are evoked by mini electrical storms in the temporal lobes, and that such storms can be triggered by anxiety, personal crisis, lack of oxygen, low blood sugar and simple fatigue—suggesting a reason that some people "find God" in such moments. Why the temporal lobes? Persinger speculates that our left temporal lobe maintains our sense of self. When that region is stimulated but the right stays quiescent, the left interprets this as a sensed presence, as the self departing the body, or of God." (cited by Sharon Begley in "Religion and the Brain," *Newsweek* May 7, 2001)
 - a. They would say, "it's all in your mind"

- b. God employs our minds, but it is much more than that
- 3. Until Jesus, people didn't understand God in any kind of manifested form: "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18)

C. Setting

- 1. Jesus and disciples in the Upper Room
- 2. Jesus is comforting them before He leaves
 - a. He will be killed the next day
 - b. This is their final meal
 - c. They are fearful and distraught
 - i. Jesus is leaving
 - ii. Jesus will be killed
 - iii. Peter will deny Him
 - iv. Judas will betray Him
- 3. Jesus and Thomas have had a conversation: "Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" (John 14:5-6)
- 4. Now, Jesus and Philip have a conversation

II. Roadblocks to Knowing God

A. Inaccurate Comprehension (v. 7)

- 1. The disciples hadn't fully understood who Jesus was
- 2. John uses "know" four times in this passage
 - a. Important word to John, used 141 times
 - b. "Believe" used 98 times
- 3. John uses "know" in four different ways
 - a. Knowing a fact
 - b. Understanding the truth
 - c. Knowing a person relationally
 - d. Having a deeper, fuller comprehension of a person's identity (this is how Jesus uses the term here)
- 4. The disciples were acquainted with Him, knew who He was, but didn't fully comprehend His identity
 - a. "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matthew 8:27)
 - b. Disciples - 3.5 year discovery process
 - c. "Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (Matthew 16:16)
 - d. Disciples knew: He did miracles, spoke well, Messiah, but did not grasp His deity
 - e. They will grasp His deity after the resurrection: "And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:28)
- 5. Application
 - a. Our upbringing, culture, customs, and worldview form the lens by which we view God
 - b. Who you think God is and who God is may not be the same
 - c. Important to understand who He is by who He reveals Himself to be

B. Inappropriate Confirmation (v. 8)

- 1. The need for proof
- 2. Jesus had tested Philip in the past; Philip failed (see John 6:1-10)
- 3. Wanting to see God
 - a. Longing to see Him is the basis for our worship; one day we will see Him
 - i. Moses: "Please, show me Your glory." (Exodus 33:18)
 - ii. Earthly worship service will not satisfy, rather they whet your appetite
 - iii. Longing to see him is at the core of who we are
 - b. Longing to see him can be an excuse for unbelief: "If I can see, than I will believe"
 - c. Longing to see Him is a root of idolatry
 - i. Attempt to bring God to a human level
 - ii. Worship images
 - iii. See him in clouds, toast, etc.

III. Resources for Knowing God

A. Being in His Presence (v. 9)

- 1. It is possible to be around someone and not fully know who they are
- 2. Also possible to know God with an open heart and inquisitive mind
- 3. Application
 - a. Unbelievers - Spend time investigating the evidences for Jesus Christ: "You will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 4:29)
 - b. Believers - Evaluate the time spent with God
 - a. Not time spent for God, time spent with Him
 - b. Ephesian church left their first love (see Revelation 2:4)
 - c. Don't be so busy about the King's business that you forget the King Himself

B. Believing in His Person (v. 10a)

- 1. Believe in me: speaking to believers
- 2. Go on believing, keep it up (vs. 11): present, active indicative tense
- 3. Don't just get saved by faith, grow by faith: learn to trust Him
 - a. "We hope that your faith will grow," (2 Corinthians 10:15 NLT)
 - b. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)
- 4. Application

- a. Is your faith growing, or is it stagnant?
 - b. Is your faith active, or is it in need of life support?
 - c. "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'" (Luke 17:4)
- C. Bending to His Word (v. 10b)
- 1. Jesus appeals to the words He spoke
 - 2. Reactions to His word
 - a. Hostile
 - b. Comfort
 - c. "And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matthew 7:28-29)
 - d. "The officers answered, 'No man ever spoke like this Man!'" (John 7:46)
 - 3. "The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me." —Martin Luther
 - 4. One of the strongest signs of a real child of God is that person's hunger to learn more about God.
 - 5. According to George Gallup Jr., we are a nation of biblical illiterates:
 - a. four out of ten Americans do not know Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount
 - b. Most Americans cannot name the four gospels
 - c. Only three out of ten teens know why Easter is celebrated
- D. Beholding His Works (v. 11) : Not just getting information, but seeing transformation
- 1. Wherever Jesus is, He changes lives
 - 2. God is in the business of working

Publications Referenced: "Religion and the Brain," by Sharon Begley *Newsweek* May 7, 2001

Figures Referenced: Francis Bacon; C.H. Spurgeon ; Michael Persinger; Martin Luther; George Gallup Jr.

Cross References: Exodus 33:18; Deuteronomy 4:29; Matthew 7:28-29; Matthew 8:27; Matthew 16:16; Luke 17:4; John 1:18; John 6:1-10; John 7:46; John 14:5-6; John 20:28; 2 Corinthians 10:15; Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 2:4