

Spiritual Classics 2

Thy Face Lord, Do I Seek: Learning From JI Packer's *Knowing God*

Brief Biography:

- Oxford educated
- taught at Anglican schools in Britain before moving to Vancouver in 1979 to teach at Regent College.
- executive editor of [Christianity Today](#).
- supported Evangelicals-Catholics Together initiative.
- general editor for ESV.

- 2008 his Anglican church in Greater Vancouver left the Anglican Church of Canada over the latter's position on same-sex marriages.
- prolific author, influential figure in Global Evangelicalism.

Select Excerpts:

Three Sections:

Know the LORD (44 pages) Theology Proper, knowing God contra merely knowing *about* God. Characteristics of those who 'know God'. Being Known by God.

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Knowing a Living Thing Compared to Knowing God

What then, does the activity of knowing God involve? Holding together the various elements involved in this relationship, as we have sketched it out, we must say that knowing God involves, first, listening to God's word and receiving it as the Holy Spirit interprets it, in application to oneself; second, noting God's nature and character, as His word and works reveal it; third, accepting His invitations, and doing what He commands; fourth, recognising, and rejoicing in, the love that He has shown in thus approaching one and drawing one into this divine fellowship. pg. 32

4 main analogies: son knowing a father, wife knowing her husband, subject knowing his king, a sheep knowing its shepherd. (pp.32-33)

Behold Your God! (84 pages)

Concerning the Love of God:

Why do I ever grumble and show discontent and resentment at the circumstances in which God has placed me?

Why am I ever distrustful, fearful, or depressed?

Why do I ever allow myself to grow cool, formal, and half-hearted in the service of the God who loves me so?

Why do I ever allow my loyalties to be divided, so that God has not all my heart?

John wrote that 'God is love' in order to make an ethical point, 'if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another' (1 John 4.11). Could an observer learn from the quality and degree of love that I show to others-- to my wife? my husband? my family? my neighbours? people at church? people at work? ---- anything at all about the greatness of God's love to me?

Meditate upon these things. Examine yourself. (page 115).

Concerning the Grace of God:

- 1. The Moral Ill Desert of Man*
- 2. The Retributive Justice of God*
- 3. The Spiritual Impotence of Man*
- 4. The Sovereign Freedom of God (pp. 117-120).*

The grace of God is love freely shown towards guilty sinners, contrary to their merit and indeed in defiance of their demerit. It is God showing goodness to persons who deserve only severity and had no reason to expect anything but severity. (page 120).

- 1. Grace as the source of the pardon of sin. (quotes from Samuel Davies "Who's a pardoning god like thee? ...grace so rich and free? Great God of Wonders)*
- 2. Grace as the motive of the plan of salvation*
- 3. Grace as the guarantee of the preservation of the saints. (pp. 121-124)*

The Wrath of God

But what does it mean to lose our souls? To answer this question, Jesus uses his own solemn imagery ---- 'Gehenna' ('hell' in Mark 9.47 and ten other gospel texts), the valley outside of Jerusalem where rubbish was burned; the 'worm' that 'dieth not' (Mark 9.47), an image, it seems, for the endless dissolution of the personality by a condemning conscience; 'fire' for the agonising awareness of God's displeasure; 'outer darkness' for knowledge of the loss, not merely of God, but of all good, and everything that made life seem worth living; 'gnashing of teeth' for self-condemnation and self-loathing. These things are no doubt unimaginably dreadful, though those who have been convicted of sin know a little of their nature. But they are not arbitrary inflictions; they represent rather a conscious growing into the state into which one has chosen to be. The unbeliever has preferred to be by himself, without God, defying God, having God against him, and he shall have his preference. Nobody stands under the wrath of God save those who have chosen to do so. The essence of God's action in wrath is to give men what they choose in all its implications: nothing more, nothing less.(p.138,139)

If God Be For Us... (69 pages)

Heart of the Gospel

On Propitiation (pp. 166-170)

1. Is the work of God himself
2. Was made by the death of Jesus Christ
3. Manifests God's Righteousness

On Adoption

...do I as a Christian, understand myself? Do I know my own real identity? My own real destiny? I am a child of God. God is my Father; heaven is my home; every day is one day nearer. My Saviour is my brother; every Christian is my brother too. Say it over and over again to yourself first thing in the morning, last thing at night as you wait for the bus any time when your mind is free and ask that you may be enabled to live as one who knows it is all utterly and completely true. (pg.207).

The Adequacy of God

...it is tragic that in paying attention to [peripheral issues], so many in our day seem to have been distracted from what was, is and always will be the true priority for every human being---that is, learning to know God in Christ. 'Thou has said, "Seek ye my face." My heart says to Thee, "Thy face, Lord, do I seek"' (Psalm 27.8 RSV). If this book moves any of its readers to identify more closely with the psalmist at this point, it will not have been written in vain. (pg. 254).