

Knowing God

WALKING
WITH
Jesus

- PART 10 -

Determining what is good





C. S. Lewis' *Pilgrim's Regress* is an allegorical defence of Christianity, reason and romanticism. The main character, a man named John, is in search for meaning and answers - going from philosophy to philosophy until he ends up at a mountain called the spirit of the age. John is described not as a free being living in the spirit of the age, but is instead depicted bound in chains, living for the spirit of the age.

The man who controls the spirit of the age looks down upon John to give him breakfast. He loosens the chains to enjoy that breakfast. As he takes a sip of the milk, John comments on how delicious and nourishing it is. The guard who brings it to him - representing the spirit of the age - says to John, you only call it nourishing and delicious, but all it is, is the secretion of a cow, isn't it? The cow secretes urine, the cow secretes milk. You call it delicious and nourishing, it's just a secretion of a cow.

As John is put back in chains, Reason comes riding on a horse to rescue John. Reason looks at him who runs the spirit of the age and says, "Sir, you lie". You lie because you don't know the difference between what nature intended for nourishment and what nature intended as garbage.

A knowledge of God determines what is right and good, as opposed to what nature intended as garbage. In today's world, we have confused these two areas, deeming everything profitable and permissible, however only as we understand God can we determine the difference between what will nourish us and what will leave us empty.

A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Q1 *What reminds us of God's glory?*

 *Psalm 19:1*

Further study: *Romans 1:19, 20*

 *Isaiah 40:22, 26; 44:24; 48:13*

Psalm 8:3,4; 33:6 *Job 31:26-28*

Genesis 1:1-20

As we look at the world around us and see the magnificent natural beauty of the world, we are reminded of God, the creator of heaven and earth. We see and experience God through what He has created: the green paddocks, the tall trees, the flowers in bloom, the clouds in the sky, the rain and the rainbow, the beaches – all of these things declare God's power and love for us.

By reflecting on the glory of God as revealed in nature, our hearts will be opened to Him as we will want to know our creator.

 "If God did not create you, He cannot redeem you." Dr Eric Walsh

Even when we are busy with our daily life, we can look up at the sky and be reminded of the God who created it and who created us. God wants us to enjoy the beauty of what He has created.

Q2 *How can we hear and experience God?*

 *Psalm 46:10*

 *Further study:* *Psalm 33:8, 9; 4:4* *Habakkuk 2:20*
 Matthew 6:28-30

If we look at the natural world around us, we learn important lessons about how to trust and obey God. All the elements of nature obey what God has set in place – the stars travel in their appointed paths; the sun rises and sets each day just as God created it to do.

 “By investigating God’s majestic and awesome creation, science can actually be a means of worship.” Francis Collins

GIVING OUR CARES TO GOD

Q3 *How can we be assured that God cares for all He has created?*

 *Matthew 10:29, 30*

 *Further study:* *Luke 12:24-28* *Lamentations 3:22, 23*
 Psalm 103:1-17; 104:27, 28; 139:1-18; 136:25; 145:15, 16

God's love is big enough to encompass the entire universe and yet His heart is also with each of His creations.

The same God who keeps each of the stars in the sky also cares about the smallest of sparrows. God's love extends to each human being – when we go to work, when we go to sleep, when we pray to Him, when we are spending time with our families – whatever we do, God is watching over us. When we are sad, He feels our pain, and when we are happy, He feels our joy. When we are burdened, He carries our burdens, too.

Q4 *When we put our trust in Jesus, what hope do we claim?*



□ *Romans 8:28*



Further study: □ *Romans 8:35-39* □ *Isaiah 26:3*
□ *Psalms 46:1, 2* □ *Jeremiah 29:11-13* □ *Zechariah 13:9*
□ *Hebrews 12:6-12* □ *1 Peter 1:7, 8*

When we realise that everything is in God's control, we can feel a renewed sense of peace as we will be free from worries and anxiety.

 "No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark." Ellen G. White

God isn't overwhelmed or over-burdened by our problems – He wants us to come to Him so that He can help us with whatever we are facing and give us His perfect peace. If we would fully believe this, all undue anxiety would fall away. Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now we can have confidence to leave everything - no matter how big or how small - in the hands of God.



“In His tender mercies, God has an incredible capacity to love the unlovely.”

R.C. Sproul

THE WONDERS OF HEAVEN

Q5 *How has God promised to make everything new?*

 *Revelation 21:5*

 *Further study:* *Revelation 21:1-4*
 Isaiah 65:17; 43:18, 19; 42:9

In order to fully appreciate nature, we need to see its beauty as a symbol of God's love. But, lovely as nature is, we can be assured that the new world that God has prepared for us, will be beyond our human comprehension:

"as it is written:

'What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived'
the things God has prepared for those who love him"

1 Corinthians 2:9

The most beautiful things we see and experience here on earth will be just a pale reflection of the wonders that await us in heaven.

Q6 *What will we learn about God when we put our trust in Him?*

 *Psalm 33:5*

 *Further study:* *Psalm 104:24; 119:64, 68; 97*
 Revelation 15:3, 4

God speaks to us as He works in our lives and as the Holy Spirit works on our hearts. Each day, there is opportunity for us to find important lessons from God, provided our hearts are open to see and experience God's leading.

 "With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favoured of all creatures."
A.W. Tozer

GOD'S WORD TO US

While God speaks to us through nature, He also speaks to us through the Bible which helps us know and understand His character and our purpose.

Q7

Why has the Bible been given to us?



Romans 15:4



Further study: *1 Corinthians 9:10; 10:6, 11*
 2 Timothy 3:16 *Romans 4:23, 24*

The Bible shows how God interacted with men and women throughout the ages and we learn of His plan to redeem humanity. We read of the history of prophets, kings, and the brave men and women who have gone before us and who sought a closer walk with God.

Although they lived in a very different time, they faced many similar challenges, doubts and temptations. The same grace that was extended to them is also available to us, enabling victory and second chances even after we have made mistakes.

God blessed His people with valuable experiences that shaped their characters. Through their experiences, we find encouragement in seeing how God has led in their lives we can and be assured that God cares for us just as much today.

THE BIBLE TELLS US OF JESUS

Q8 *Who will we encounter as we study the Bible?*

 *John 5:39*

 *Further study:* *Luke 24:27* *Matthew 22:29*
 Proverbs 6:23; 8:33, 34

The Old Testament (the first half of the Bible, which was written before the birth of Jesus), tells of a promised saviour.

The New Testament describes how Jesus is this long-awaited saviour, and tells of His ministry on earth, His death and resurrection, and of the work of His followers in sharing the good news of Jesus with everyone they could.

If you want to know Jesus, study the Bible. From the first story of creation in Genesis, to the closing promise in Revelation of His soon return, the Bible testifies to Jesus and we can read about His works and listen to His voice.



“The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason what other succeed in battle is because they gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came. Anticipate your battles, fight them on your knees before temptation comes and you will always have victory.”

R.A. Torrey



“For me, the glory of God and the Word of God are inseparable. I have no sure sight of God's glory except through his Word. The Word mediates the glory, and the glory confirms the Word.”

John Piper

Q9

As we study the Bible, what is to be our focus?



□ *1 Corinthians 2:2*



Further study: □ *Galatians 6:14* □ *Philippians 3:8-10*
□ *1 Corinthians 1:17, 18, 23*

The story of how Jesus came down from heaven, humbly lived among us, and died to save us, is the greatest story ever told. This salvation story is one that the entire universe is following.

 Remember: the same God who forgave Moses the murderer, Rahab the prostitute, Davide the adulterer, Peter the denier and Paul the Christian persecutor, can also forgive you. Matt Fradd

Jesus is our redeemer and advocate. Because of His great love for us, He came to save us from our sins. As we reflect on His sacrifice, our faith and love will be strengthened, and our prayers will become more earnest. As we put our trust in Jesus, we will experience His power in our lives.

Q10

Now that Jesus has given us a new heart, what advice does Paul give us on how to build a Christ-like character?



□ *Philippians 4:8*



Further study: □ *Romans 12:9, 10; 13:14;* □ *Galatians 5:22-26;* □ *Psalms 119:11, 37, 40*

As we consider Jesus' perfect example, He will continue to mould and shape our lives to reflect His character. When we are focused on Jesus, we will be less focused on ourselves.

STUDYING THE BIBLE FOR OURSELVES

Q11 *Why is it so important for us to personally study God's word?*

 *2 Timothy 2:15*

 *Further study:* *2 Timothy 3:15-17* *2 Peter 1:5, 10, 15*
 Psalms 119:24, 41, 105, 130 *1 Corinthians 10:6, 11*
 Romans 15:4 *John 17:17*

It's not enough to just listen to what other people say about the Bible – we need to spend time reading and reflecting on it individually.

 “There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigour to the faculties as the broad, ennobling truths of the entire Bible.” Ellen G. White

If we allow others to do our thinking for us, we are accepting their interpretations, and we haven't let our own hearts and minds engage with God's message to us on a personal level.

Q12 *How should we study the Bible?*

 *Psalms 119:11*

 *Further study:* *Psalms 119:97; 1:2; 37:31; 40:8* *Job 22:22*
 Jeremiah 15:16 *Colossians 3:16*

You can make the mistake of reading the Bible as just another book. You could read every word of the Bible and if your heart is closed to God, they will be simply words on a page.

The beauty and wisdom of the Bible is fully revealed in the heart that has accepted Jesus and is open to His guidance.

Take your time to reflect on what you are reading. It's better to read and fully engage with just one verse of the Bible and understand what God is telling you through that verse, than to read multiple chapters without seeking to understand.

Keep your Bible with you throughout the day. This may be a physical copy of the Bible or one you have downloaded onto your phone. Whenever you have the opportunity in a car, on a bus or even a boat, read a verse and commit it to memory.

Set aside time each day to spend reading the Bible and ask God to help you understand and bring the change to your life so that your heart and character are being renewed daily.

*The Bible
is God's
message to
US.*

Handwritten notes in a spiral notebook, including phrases like "I'm not a prophet" and "I'm not a prophet".

Open Bible showing printed text, likely a passage from the Bible.

Open Bible showing printed text, including the heading "EXODUS 28:14".

Handwritten notes in a spiral notebook, including phrases like "I'm not a prophet" and "I'm not a prophet".

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

Some parts of the Bible are easier to understand than others, whereas other parts of the Bible will require more effort to comprehend. It's important to compare verses and stories in the Bible to see how they can illuminate and teach us – whether there are parallels, different perspectives on the same theme, additional details are revealed.

Just like the fossicker who painstakingly searches for any trace of gold beneath the surface of the earth, the person who approaches God's word earnestly looking for the treasure it contains will be rewarded with truths of great value, unlike someone who approaches it carelessly and without effort.

The time and effort you put into your study of God's word will be richly blessed.

Q13

Why is it important to pray and ask God to help us understand His message to us?



□ *Jeremiah 33:3*



Further study: □ *Jeremiah 29:12* □ *John 14:26; 16:13*
□ *Psalms 145:18* □ *1 Corinthians 2:9-11*

Whenever you study the Bible, always first pray for the Holy Spirit to open your mind and give you wisdom to understand what you are reading and learn what God's will is for your life.

 “Faith, prayer and the Word of God are the weapons God provides you with to fight spiritual battles.” Jim George

Q14 *How is God's truth revealed?*

 *John 16:13*

 *Further study:* *John 16:8; 14:17; 26; 15:26;*
 Galatians 5:16; *Zechariah 12:10;* *2 Peter 1:21*

The Holy Spirit is to be our teacher in the truths the Bible contains. Not only did God send His Son to die for us, He also sent us His Spirit to be our teacher and continual guide.

The Holy Spirit and the Bible guides us and provides key insights that help us determine the difference between what nature meant for nourishment and what nature meant for garbage. This knowledge gives us a better understanding of Jesus, enabling us to see more clearly see His purity, goodness and the gift of salvation that He offers to each of us.

 “The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. How must God love the human race since He gave His Son to die for us and appoints His Spirit to be our teacher and continual guide.” Ellen G. White

REFLECTIONS

I believe that reading the Bible will teach me about God and learn how He will transform my life to be like Jesus.

YES

UNDECIDED

I want to spend time studying God's word so that I can understand His plan for my life.

YES

UNDECIDED

I pray that the Holy Spirit will guide me as I study God's word and help me to understand God's message and help me to accept His truth with a humble heart.

YES

UNDECIDED

*In God you
will find
hope - for today
and for
the future.*



CONTINUE YOUR
JOURNEY IN PART 11A -

THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

Learn why prayer is so important to keep you constantly connected to God, through Jesus. By seeking God with a sincere heart, and following the example of how Jesus approached God in prayer, you will experience a deeper sense of God's peace and His guidance in your daily life.

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