

Knowing G-d / Being Known by G-d

A Study Guide

1) Review:

a) Five basic truths about G-d:

- i) G-d is triune; there are three persons within the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- ii) G-d is the creator and absolute Lord and King over His world.
- iii) G-d has spoken to man and the Bible is His recorded message (word).
- iv) G-d is Savior; an act of sovereign grace and love through Yeshua.
- v) Life must be viewed and lived in the light of G-d's word.

b) Why is "knowing" G-d important?

- i) What were we made for? What aim or goal should we set for ourselves in life? What is the "eternal life" that Yeshua gives?

(1) ^{CJB} John 17:3 And eternal life is this: to know you, the one true God, and him whom you sent, Yeshua the Messiah

(a) The foundation and goal for our lives.

- ii) What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight, and contentment than anything else?

(1) ^{CJB} Jeremiah 9:22 ¶ Here is what *ADONAI* says: "The wise man should not boast of his wisdom, the powerful should not boast of his power, the wealthy should not boast of his wealth; ²³ instead, let the boaster boast about this: that he understands and knows me- that I am *ADONAI*,

(a) A principle of priorities.

- iii) What, of all the activities of man, gives G-d the most pleasure?

(1) ^{CJB} Hosea 6:6 For what I desire is mercy, not sacrifices, knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

(a) A scale of values

- c) KNOWING G-d, not just knowing about G-d, as the object of our faith, is central and essential to living by a working faith.

d) Knowing G-d vs. Knowing About G-d.

i) In the bleachers or on the road.

- (1) Those in the bleachers know and are learning ABOUT G-d.
- (2) Those on the road are KNOWING G-d.

ii) The book of Daniel is a good example of what “knowing G-d” does to a man.

- (1) Those who know G-d have more energy for G-d.
- (2) Those who know G-d have greater, higher thoughts of G-d.
- (3) Those who know G-d are more bold for G-d.
- (4) Those who know G-d are content with G-d.

e) How do we get to know G-d?

i) The same way we get to KNOW anyone else – by spending time with Him, observing what He has done and what He is doing, talking with Him, listening to what He has to say.

- (1) G-d made Himself available to Adam & Eve so they could get to KNOW Him.
- (2) G-d made Himself available to the nation Israel so they could get to KNOW Him.
- (3) Yeshua made Himself available to the 12 so they could get to KNOW Him.
- (4) G-d makes Himself available through Yeshua today so we can get to KNOW Him.

ii) The quality and extent of our knowledge of someone else depends largely on them, not us.

- (1) Peer knowledge
- (2) Non-peer knowledge
- (3) Knowing G-d has more to do with the fact the He knows me than me knowing Him and Him allowing me to come to know Him.

2) “Knowing” defined:

a) We recognize degrees of our knowledge of someone:

- i) By sight.
- ii) Just to shake hands with or say “hello.”
- iii) Acquaintance.
- iv) Not very well.
- v) Well.
- vi) Intimately.
- vii) “Inside-out.”

b) The first five are, “knowing about”. We have some information and perhaps some basic facts, even some detailed information, regarding the person but we probably don’t know much about what they think about most topics, how they will react to any given situation, what their opinion of us really is, what their priorities and long-term interests are.

c) The last two, intimately and “inside-out,” are “knowing” someone maybe.

i) To really “know” someone is to understand how they are likely to react and behave under any circumstance, know and understand what they think about most topics, what and where their priorities are, what they want and expect from us.

ii) “Knowing” things, especially abstract or inanimate things, requires not much more than an investment in time, energy and perhaps some money for learning or inspection and exploration.

- (1) Language.
- (2) A museum.
- (3) A car.
- (4) A book.
- (5) A horse.

iii) But, people are much more complex than “things” and G-d is more complex than people. The more complex the object, the more complex becomes the “knowing” of it. Also, people “cover up” and do not readily show or share all that is within. Many, or most, people even “cover up” to themselves, to a greater or lesser extent, and as a result may not actually “know” themselves very well. This makes it extremely difficult for someone else to get to “know” them. G-d never “covers up.”

iv) A relatively short time is required to “know” most things, a few days or weeks. However, we may spend months, years or a lifetime with another person and in the end have to say, “I don’t really know him or her at all.” It really depends on how much the other person is willing to open up to us and how much, or how little, they have allowed us access to their person. G-d is “truth” meaning that He is completely transparent with us, completely open to us and allows, even invites complete access to His person through Yeshua.

3) Peer knowledge:

- a) When peers (perceived equals) meet, our part is to give the other person our attention and interest, to demonstrate good-will and to open up in a friendly and inviting manner. From that point, however, it is they, not us, who decide whether we are going to get to “know” them or not. They may or may not allow us to spend time with them. They may or may not converse with us. They may or may not allow us to know what they have done or what they are doing, where their interests and priorities are, what they want and/or expect from us (if anything).

4) Non-peer knowledge:

- a) When we meet someone whom we feel is “above” us, in rank, intellectual distinction, professional skill, personal sanctity, etc., the dynamics change. The more conscious we are of our inferiority, or perceived inferiority, the more likely we are to respectfully let the other person take the initiative in the conversation.
- b) We would like to get to “know” them.
 - i) We have no claim on their friendship.
 - ii) But, what if?

5) With G-d - peer or non-peer knowledge?

- a) Reference Isaiah 40:12ff:
 - i) Look at what G-d has done – creation. Who else could have done this?
 - ii) Look at the size, variety and complexity of the world.
 - iii) Look at the great, powerful nations. They are as “as a drop of a bucket, and counted as small dust of the balance . . .All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity (emptiness).”
 - iv) Look at the world’s great men. It is not they who rule the affairs of men.
 - v) Look at the stars. The most universally awesome experience that mankind knows is to stand alone on a clear night and look at the stars.
- b) What if. ?

6) What it means to “know” G-d:

- a) A physical sensation? An emotional experience? An intellectual exercise?
 - i) Physical sensations and emotional experiences are unreliable witnesses.
 - ii) Knowing G-d intellectually is to know ABOUT G-d, not know Him.

- b) Truly knowing G-d involves four things:
 - i) Listening to G-d’s word and receiving it as the Holy Spirit interprets it in a *personal* application.
 - ii) Taking notice of G-d’s nature and character as revealed in His word and works.
 - iii) Accepting His *personal* invitations to us and doing what He commands.
 - iv) Recognizing and rejoicing in the love that He has shown in approaching us, *personally as an individual*, and bringing us into fellowship with Him.

- c) The Scriptures give us pictures and analogies to tell us what it’s like to know G-d.
 - i) A son knowing his father.
 - ii) A wife knowing her husband.
 - iii) A subject knowing his king.
 - iv) A sheep knowing its shepherd.

All four analogies illustrate a relationship in which the knower “looks up” to the one known, and the known one takes responsibility for the welfare of the knower.

- v) We know G-d only through knowing Yeshua, who is Himself G-d manifest in the flesh
 - (1) “. . . Hast thou not known me. . . ? he that hath see me hath see the Father” . . . “no man cometh to the Father but by me” (John 14:9, 6)

- vi) The disciples of Yeshua knew him in a non-peer relationship.
 - (1) They were ordinary Galileans, with no claim on Yeshua’s favor.
 - (2) Yeshua called to them, took them into His confidence, and enrolled them as His agents to proclaim the kingdom of G-d to the world.
 - (3) The disciples came to recognize Yeshua as, “the Christ, the Son of the living G-d.” (Matt 16:16) They came to know Him for who and what He really is.

- vii) Today, knowing Yeshua, and through Him knowing G-d, is the same personal relation of personal discipleship as it was for the twelve when He walked the earth. The same Yeshua that walks through the gospels walks with us today and knowing Him involves going with Him, just as then.

7) Summary:

- a) Knowing G-d is a matter of personal dealing, as is all direct acquaintance with personal beings. Knowing G-d is more than knowing about Him; it is a matter of dealing with Him as He opens up to us, and being dealt with by Him as He takes notice of us.
- b) Knowing G-d is a matter of personal involvement, with mind, will and emotion. To get to know another person we must commit ourselves to their company and interests, and be ready to identify ourselves with their concerns – just as G-d is committed to our company and interests through a covenant relationship with us we must be committed to His company and interests.
- c) Knowing G-d is a matter of grace. It is a relationship in which the initiative throughout is with G-d. He is completely above us and we have completely forfeited all claim to His favor by our sins. We do not make friends with G-d; G-d makes friends with us.

What is of primary importance, therefore, is not the fact that I know G-d, but the larger fact that He knows me. I must respond. How am I to respond?