

KNOWING GOD

(Col 1:9-11)

1. REMEMBERING—What is a topic you know a lot about, feel comfortable discussing, and how did you acquire your knowledge?
2. REFLECTING—What are some of the greatest challenges to you personally about discussing God, the Bible, and spiritual topics?
3. DISCOVERING—Read aloud the quote and answer the question.

To Know About vs. To Know

It is characteristic of contemporary thinking to set these two at odds, to build up the contrast between them. The Bible, too, makes distinctions between knowing about God and knowing Him in a personal way. But you won't find the *versus* emphasized. In fact, there's a rather striking relationship suggested between knowing information about God and personal experience with God.... *God is known [contacted, experienced] at the point of revelation.* And revelation is informational. This then, is the biblical relationship between knowing about God and knowing God. Men come to know God through information about Him, because it is in information about Himself that God confronts us. Here we brush up against Him: revelation is our point of contact. When men reject the God they meet in His revelation, their experience with God cannot go beyond the initial brush. No personal relationship can develop; no transformation can take place. Put these ideas together and you begin to see how the Bible works in human lives. In the Bible, God presents truth, true information, from and about Himself. But God does more. He presents Himself in the information. God confronts us in His truth.... In every truth God Himself meets and speaks to us. And to every truth there is a fitting response.... (Larry Richards, *Creative Bible Teaching*)

- What insights does Richards provide about the link between knowing about God and knowing God?

- Read aloud the following passages. From them, make a list of “biblical principles on knowing and understanding God”

*The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not **know**, my people do not **understand**.” (Isaiah 1:3)*

*This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, ²⁴but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the **understanding** to **know** me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)*

*My people are destroyed from lack of **knowledge**. Because you have rejected **knowledge**, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. (Hosea 4:6)*

*Now this is eternal life: that they **know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)*

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of **wisdom** and **revelation**, so that you may **know** him better. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened** in order that you may **know** the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:17-19)*

4. CONNECTING—What insights/principles that you listed in answering question #3 might address some of the challenges you named in answering question #2?
5. RESPONDING—What is something you will commit to do regularly for the next 6-8 weeks that will help you become more comfortable with your knowledge of God?

How can we turn our knowledge *about* God into knowledge *of* God? The rule for doing this is demanding, but simple. It is that we turn each truth we learn *about* God into matter for meditation *before* God, leading to prayer and praise *to* God.

(J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*)