



CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	15
Introduction	17

Part 1: THEOLOGY PROPER **The Doctrine of God the Father**

Section I: The Subject of God

1. The Study of God	21
2. The Nature of God	34

Section II: The Attributes of God

3. The Sufficiency of God	47
4. The Holiness of God	60
5. The Sovereignty of God	74
6. The Glory of God	87
7. The Omniscience of God	99
8. The Omnipresence of God	110
9. The Omnipotence of God	122
10. The Wisdom of God	134
11. The Goodness of God	147
12. The Wrath of God	158
13. The Love of God	170
14. The Grace of God	180

Part 2: CHRISTOLOGY
The Doctrine of God the Son

Section I: The Uniqueness of Christ

15. The Uniqueness of the Person of Christ	193
16. The Uniqueness of Christ in Prophecy and Typology	204
17. The Uniqueness of Christ in His Humiliation	221
18. The Uniqueness of Christ in His Death	232
19. The Uniqueness of Christ in His Resurrection	245
20. The Uniqueness of Christ in His Ascension and Present Ministry	256
21. The Uniqueness of Christ in His Return and Millennial Rule	269

Section II: The Authority of Christ

22. The Authority of Christ over Nature	281
23. The Authority of Christ over Satan and the Demons	290
24. The Authority of Christ over Disease	308
25. The Authority of Christ over Sin	321
26. The Authority of Christ over Circumstances	331
27. The Authority of Christ over Trials	342
28. The Authority of Christ over Death	353

Part 3: PNEUMATOLOGY
The Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit

Section I: The Presence of the Holy Spirit

29. The Holy Spirit's Promise	367
30. The Holy Spirit's Baptism	378
31. The Holy Spirit's Security	389
32. The Holy Spirit's Filling	400
33. The Holy Spirit's Freedom	410
34. The Holy Spirit's Illumination	420

<i>Section II: The Purpose of the Holy Spirit</i>	
35. The Holy Spirit's Conviction	433
36. The Holy Spirit's Power	444
37. The Holy Spirit's Authority	455
38. The Holy Spirit's Fellowship	466
39. The Holy Spirit's Restraint	476

<i>Section III: The Provision of the Holy Spirit</i>	
40. The Holy Spirit's Fruit	489
41. The Holy Spirit's Intercession	500
42. The Holy Spirit's Guidance	510
43. The Holy Spirit's Gifts	523

PART 4: ANGELOLOGY

The Doctrine of Angels

<i>Section I: The Holy Angels</i>	
44. The Existence of Angels	539
45. The Ministry of Angels	549
46. The Operation and Enlisting of Angels	561

<i>Section II: The Evil Angels</i>	
47. The Character of Satan and the Demons	579
48. The Strategy of Satan	592
49. The Defeat of Satan	608

<i>Section III: The Reality of Spiritual Warfare</i>	
50. The Nature of the Battle	619
51. The Origin of the Battle	631
52. The Expansion of the Battle	642
53. The Scope of the Battle	652

<i>Section IV: The Authority for Spiritual Warfare</i>	
54. The Purchase of Authority	665

55. The Agency of Authority	674
56. The Weapons of Authority	685
57. The Access to Authority	695

Part 5: SOTERIOLOGY
The Doctrine of Salvation

Section I: Our Great Salvation

58. Sin: The Need for Salvation	707
59. Justification: The Verdict of Salvation	718
60. Redemption: The Payment for Salvation	728
61. Propitiation: The Requirement for Salvation	738
62. Reconciliation: The Relationship of Salvation	749
63. Regeneration: The Miracle of Salvation	759
64. Grace: The Gift of Salvation	770
65. Sanctification: The Progress of Salvation	781

Section II: The Assurance of Salvation

66. The Foundation of Assurance	793
67. The Demands of Assurance	808
68. The Blessings of Assurance	823

Section III: Our Eternal Security in Christ

69. The Importance of Eternal Security	835
70. The Process of Eternal Security	846
71. The Protection of Eternal Security	857
72. The Privileges of Eternal Security	866

Part 6: ECCLESIOLOGY
The Doctrine of the Church

Section I: The Nature of the Church

73. The Importance of the Church	879
74. The Purpose of the Church	889

75. The Mission and Distinctives of the Church	900
76. The Power of the Church	914
<i>Section II: The Ministry of the Church</i>	
77. The Worship of the Church	925
78. The Fellowship of the Church	934
79. The Proclamation of the Church	943
80. The Witness of the Church	952
<i>Section III: The Function of the Church</i>	
81. The Leadership of the Church	967
82. The Unity of the Church	977
83. The Service of the Church	987
84. The Accountability of the Church	996
85. The Ordinances of the Church	1006
86. The Orientation of the Church	1015

Part 7: BIBLIOLOGY
The Doctrine of the Bible

<i>Section I: The Nature of the Bible</i>	
87. The Bible Is Unique	1027
88. The Bible Is Truth	1037
89. The Bible Is Authoritative	1046
90. The Bible Is Powerful	1055
91. The Bible Is Sufficient	1064
<i>Section II: The Communication of the Bible</i>	
92. The Revelation of the Bible	1075
93. The Inspiration of the Bible	1085
94. The Illumination of the Bible	1094
95. The Interpretation of the Bible	1103
96. The Canonicity of the Bible	1112

Section III: The Benefits of the Bible

97. The Bible Produces Spiritual Life	1123
98. The Bible Provides Spiritual Direction	1132
99. The Bible Brings Spiritual Blessings	1143
100. The Bible Brings Spiritual Freedom	1152
101. The Bible Gives Spiritual Victory	1161

Part 8: ESCHATOLOGY
The Doctrine of the Last Things

Section I: The History of Fulfilled Prophecy

102. The Importance of Prophecy	1173
103. The Key to Prophecy	1184
104. Prophecy and Human History	1194
105. Prophecy and the Covenants	1204
106. Prophecy and the Times of the Gentiles	1216
107. Prophecy and Israel's Timetable	1227

Section II: End Times Prophecy

108. Prophecy and the Church	1239
109. Prophecy and the Rapture	1250
110. Prophecy and the Judgment Seat of Christ	1260

Section III: The Return of Christ

111. Prophecy and the Antichrist	1273
112. Prophecy and the Tribulation	1285
113. Prophecy, the Battle of Armageddon, and Christ's Second Coming	1296
114. Prophecy and the Millennial Kingdom	1312
115. Prophecy and the Great White Throne	1323
116. The Eternal State	1333

Subject Index	1343
Scripture Index	1355



1

THE STUDY OF GOD

It's hard to know where to begin when your subject is God Himself, a subject more important than anything else we could ever study. Nothing can fully express the subject, especially since God is more than the sum total of His attributes. King David said, "Such knowledge [of God] is too wonderful for me" (Psalm 139:6). But God invites us to know Him. He wants us to contemplate all that He is, because nothing else matters without Him.

I like what the great English preacher Charles Spurgeon told his church one Sunday (and J. I. Packer cites in his book *Knowing God*):

I believe . . . that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.

No study of God can be said to be comprehensive for three reasons. The first has to do with the sheer limitation of the human mind. A finite mind cannot fully grasp an infinite being. Second is the moral problem. The

presence of sin, even in our converted state, has limited our capacity for understanding spiritual truth. Third, we have a resource problem. God has simply not told us everything about Himself. What He has told us we can know, but He has not revealed everything.

Because of the greatness of our subject, I will be taking you to many portions of Scripture. But due to the limitations of space and my own finiteness, we will neither exhaust the subject nor be able to give equal attention to all of these Scriptures.

THE STUDY OF GOD

My thesis in this introductory chapter can be stated simply: The study of the knowledge of God is the most important pursuit in life.

Of all the things that matter in our lives, to know God through a purposeful study of His nature, His character, and His perfections should be our driving force. Only then will we be able to define everything else accurately. But let me make three clarifications right now before we get into the heart of this chapter and the book.

More than Awareness

First of all, when I talk about the study of the knowledge of God, I am not referring to an awareness of God. Simply to say there is a God doesn't say a whole lot about Him, because it would be hard to miss Him entirely when you understand that He is an all-encompassing Being. So when I talk about knowing God, I mean more than that you are aware He exists.

More than Information

Second, when I talk about knowing God, I mean more than that you have information about God; that is, knowing that He is the Creator or powerful or big or grand or majestic.

More than Religion

Knowing God also means more than having a religious experience with God or saying that we feel Him. It is valid to have an emotional and religious experience with God, but to know Him involves more than that.

To know God is to have Him rub off on you, to enter into relationship

with God so that who He is influences who you are. One of the great tragedies today is that you can go to church and be aware of God; you can go to church and have information about God; and if your church has a great choir, you can even go to church and “feel” God; but you can leave church with Him never having rubbed off on you.

LIFE’S MOST MEANINGFUL PURSUIT

The study of God is the most meaningful pursuit in life. Jeremiah 9:23–24 expresses the importance of knowing God better than I ever could:

Thus says the Lord, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me.”

The Right Kind of Bragging

It’s amazing how many things we brag about. Some of us can brag about our educational achievements. We’ve gone through school and we’ve done well. We’ve got a bachelor’s degree. We’ve earned a master’s degree. Perhaps we even graduated magna cum laude.

Perhaps you started on the bottom rung of the ladder at your company. You’ve grown up through the company and now you’ve become a supervisor; you’ve “graduated” to become a manager. You own your own business, your own success. Now extra money is in the account. The home looks nice. The cars are modern. The suits are authentic.

But God says, “If you are going to brag, if you really want something to shout about, can you brag that you know Me? Because if you can’t talk about that, you don’t have much to brag about.”

Hitting the Right Target

A man once went to visit a farmer and noticed something very odd. On the side of the farmer’s barn were a number of targets with holes dead center in each bull’s-eye. The visitor said, “My goodness! Every single hole is right in the center of every single bull’s-eye! I didn’t know you were that good.”

His farmer friend said, “I’m really not.”

“Wait a minute. I see a hole in the center of every single bull’s-eye. How could you not be that good and shoot that well?”

The farmer replied, “It’s like this. I shoot the hole into the barn first, then I draw me a bull’s-eye.”

That’s the way a lot of us live our lives. We shoot for riches, power, or education and then draw the meaning of life around these things. Then we go around saying, “I hit a bull’s-eye!” We give the impression that we know how to shoot, when in actuality we don’t know what in the world we are doing. We are as confused as those around us.

But God says, “If you are going to brag, can you brag on the fact that I have rubbed off on you; that My thinking has become your thinking; that My way of living and walking and moving and functioning has become your way? Only when that happens can you say that you know Me.” And so we need to say, “We will boast in the name of the Lord, our God” (Psalm 20:7).

LIFE’S MOST AUTHENTIC PURSUIT

The study of God is also life’s most authentic pursuit. In John 17, Jesus gave His high priestly prayer in which He prays on behalf of His disciples, including you and me:

Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (vv. 1–3)

Authentic Life

According to Jesus, authentic life is eternal life. Jesus is not referring to how long you are going to live. He’s talking about a quality of life in verse 3. Eternal life means knowing God. Life can never be what it was intended to be for you or me unless that life consists of God’s life being lived out in us.

Jesus says in verse 3 that the only way you will get eternal life experience

in this life is in the knowledge of God. To know God is to live life as it was meant to be lived. That's why Jesus said He came to give us life and to give it to us more abundantly.

To understand life, you have to understand a very simple principle: Eternal life, or the quality of life that God has intended for us, equals the knowledge of Him. Jesus makes a comparative statement in John 17:3. If you want to live, He says, don't go looking for life. Look for the knowledge of God, because authentic life means knowing Him.

Telling the Truth

Only one standard of information clarifies what life is all about: the Word of God. Jesus said to the Father in His prayer in John 17, "Your word is truth" (v. 17). If we are going to live life authentically, we need someone who will tell us the truth. We don't do that with each other. We don't tell people the truth because we don't want to offend them. We don't tell them the truth because we don't want them mad at us. We don't tell them the truth because people like being lied to. Therefore, our relationships are often shallow and never get to where they are supposed to be.

You don't have that problem with God. God calls it as He sees it. He will not tell you, "I'm OK, you're OK." He tells you, "You were dead in your trespasses and in your sins, and you lived according to the flesh, according to the lust of this age." He's not going to make it comfortable or convenient for you. He will tell you the truth, like a good doctor.

The Real You

That's the downside of our study. When God unveils who He is, the knowledge will also unveil who we are. We're faced with the problem Peter had when he ran into Jesus Christ and found out who he was. The revelation of Jesus Christ made Peter fall on his face and say, "I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8).

The prophet Isaiah saw the Lord and cried out, "Woe is me!" (Isaiah 6:5). Why? Because if you want the real deal, if you really want the truth, God will give you the truth. When you see God as He is, when He unveils Himself, when the true knowledge of God is revealed, it shows you for who you are.

The Real World

The knowledge of God also shows the world for what it is. People spend much time analyzing our world. Philosophers analyze society because people want answers to the fundamental questions of life, such as, Who is man? Where did man come from? Where is he going?

Other people pursue the social analysis of man: how man functions in communication and communion with others, how people relate to each other, how people can stop themselves from hurting one another, and how they can live in peace with one another. The result is often political attempts to make the world right. But when you have the Word of God, you understand the rules of society because God tells the truth about the world.

God also tells the truth about sex, about money, and about all the ingredients that relate to life. He tells the truth about who you are. And so who you are, where you came from, why you are here, and where you are going all come from the knowledge of God.

LIFE'S MOST BENEFICIAL PURSUIT

Nothing will benefit you more in day-to-day living than the knowledge of God. Daniel 11:32 says this: “The people who know their God will display strength and take action.”

Daniel was a captive in Babylon, an ungodly nation that was turned over to the Medes and the Persians. Daniel was constantly under oppression. He was constantly being victimized, but he says, “The people who know God even in the midst of a bad situation will know the right steps to take in confronting the issues of life.”

Confidence

The knowledge of God gives the ability to make the correct response to the circumstances of life. The people who know their God will have the confidence and ability to do the right thing. You see, the problem today with people who want to correct the social or political order, who want to change this and fix that, is that they want to do good things, but they don't know the right way.

But the people who know their God will move forward with confidence,

and take action. Knowledge of God is not passive. It's not something you do on the sidelines. It really frees you up to do something, but to do the right something.

Security

The knowledge of God also gives security in life. Look at Psalm 46:1–3:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.

The psalmist says that even when earthquakes shake things up, those who know God will be secure. When the ground under you starts shaking, there isn't much around you to hold onto.

Wisdom

The knowledge of God also gives wisdom. Paul prays in Ephesians 1:17 “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.” Wisdom is spiritual insight for earthly application, the ability to know what God wants and the know-how to apply it where you live. Wisdom is to truth as a shoe is to shoe leather. Wisdom means the ability to take a divine, spiritual perspective and turn it into an earthly, functional application.

Proverbs 9:10 puts it this way: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Solomon says God will show you how to live a wise life. A lot of us have book sense, but we don't have common sense.

It's not that we don't have information; it's just that we don't have wisdom, the ability to apply the knowledge we have. But the knowledge of God can give us wisdom, Proverbs says, the ability to make the right decisions in life.

Order

The apostle Peter says the knowledge of God can give you a well-ordered life:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us. (2 Peter 1:2–3)

Peter says the knowledge of God will give you grace, peace, and power. What more could you ask for? A grace life, a peace life, and a divinely powerful life is a well-ordered life, but Peter says it only comes by the true knowledge of God.

Spiritual Fruit

If you allow God to work in your life and transform it, He will give you spiritual development:

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:9–10)

Paul says that the knowledge of God will change the way you walk. When you know God, you walk differently. You move differently. You act differently. You think differently. Why? Because you are filled with the knowledge of God. With this knowledge comes the knowledge of His will, and the knowledge of His will transforms your life. As He transforms your life, you bear spiritual fruit.

Fruit has two characteristics. First, it always reflects the character of the tree of which it is a part. When you bear spiritual fruit, you begin to look like Christ. Second, fruit is never borne for itself. It is always borne so someone else can take a bite. When you start bearing fruit, other people want to take a bite out of your life. Other people want to be like you, because you are a productive person for the purposes of God.

LIFE'S MOST CHALLENGING PURSUIT

Finally, the study of God is the most challenging pursuit in life:

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
(Romans 11:33–36)

An Eternal Challenge

Do you want a challenge? Decide to get to know God. It's a challenge first because verse 33 says getting to know God will never end. God is never, and will never be, fully comprehensible to man, not only in time, but in eternity.

Any married person can relate to this. You can live with a woman or a man for fifty years and still discover new information. Now, if you can do that with another person over a lifetime, think about our infinite God. It will take eternity and then some to understand Him. The knowledge of God will always be a challenge because you will never learn it all.

A Revealing Challenge

Second, the knowledge of God challenges us because getting to know someone demands that he reveal himself to us and grant us the privilege of that knowledge. It's like a guy who comes up to a lady and says, "My name is John. What's your name?"

Now John may want to get to know her, but is she as interested in knowing him as he is in knowing her? In other words, the knowledge of another person is not just contingent on one person's desire to have that information, but on the other's desire to reveal it. God has made it very clear that He has a passionate desire to reveal Himself to us. In Hosea 6:6, God Himself says, "For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."

So if you do not come to know God, it is not God's fault because He has made Himself available to be known. And although we can never know

God exhaustively, we can know Him intimately. Anyone who has ever dated and gotten serious with someone knows that as two people get to know each other, a growing process of intimacy develops. A transformation occurs over time. That's what happens with God. As you come to know Him, you will discover a growing process of intimacy, a closeness where you feel that you know Him and you want to know Him more.

A Priority Challenge

Knowing God is also a challenge because it must be your priority. Deuteronomy 4:29 says that you must search for God with all your heart if you would find Him. The sage says that the knowledge of God is like a man searching for silver (Proverbs 2:4). Where can silver be found? Underneath the ground, so dig.

Why has God not made it easy? Because He wants to know, "How serious are you? You get up and work out because you're serious. But when you've got to get up and spend time with Me, you're too tired. You need that extra fifteen minutes of sleep. Are you serious? You have time to watch your favorite TV show, but you are always too tired to spend time with Me. Are you serious?"

Getting to know God is a challenge because it's hard work to make it a priority. So where do you start? First of all, you must start with a desire to know God. Moses said in Exodus 33:13, "Let me know Your ways that I may know You." David said, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God" (Psalm 42:1). Paul said his greatest longing was "that I may know Him" (Philippians 3:10). Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6).

All of them say the same thing. God only feeds hungry people. If you are not hungry, ask God to give you a new spiritual appetite as you study this book.

PERSONAL APPLICATION FOR LIFE

1. The true beginning point in knowing God is entering into a relationship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, or if you are unsure of your standing before God, all you need to do is admit that you are a sinner (see Romans 3:9–10:23) and cannot save yourself (Acts 4:12). Acknowledge that Jesus paid for your sin on the cross (Romans 5:8), and put your faith in Him alone to save you. Call upon Him to save you today (Romans 10:13), receive Him as your Savior (1 John 1:12)—and welcome to the family. Be sure to tell your pastor or a Christian friend about your decision.
2. All of us cling to things that give us a sense of identity and importance, whether job titles, family heritage, bank accounts, or material possessions. List three of the things that are most important to you, and ask yourself what would happen if you lost them. Could you give them up and still say things are OK because you know the true God and that's enough? It's worth thinking about as you read this book.
3. Perhaps you know a step of obedience and faith that God wants you to take, but you're holding back for fear of what people will think or what the outcome might be. If so, remember that the people who know their God can be strong and take action. Take that needed step, and trust God for the consequences. He will bless you for taking Him at His Word.
4. Speaking of the Word, there's no better way to know God than to hide His Word in your heart and mind. Proverbs 9:10 would be a great verse to memorize over the next few days or weeks: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." It captures the theme of this book. If it helps, write it on a card and carry it with you for review until you know the verse well.

FOR GROUP STUDY***Questions for Group Discussion***

1. The knowledge of God can give us wisdom to help make the right decisions in our lives. In what areas of life may we apply the wisdom that comes from the knowledge of God?
2. One by-product of the knowledge of God is that it has the power to transform our lives, if we allow it. The Bible uses the analogy of bearing fruit when describing spiritual development. What are some of the characteristics of fruit? What are the results of bearing spiritual fruit? Discuss Galatians 5:22 and John 15:5.
3. Dr. Evans says that knowing God has to be a priority for us. What are some practical ways we can meet this challenge and make knowing God a priority in the midst of busy lifestyles? Where do we start?
4. One of the benefits of the knowledge of God is security in the midst of the upheavals of life. Psalm 46:1 describes God as our “refuge,” “strength,” and “a very present help in trouble.” Do a study on what those images tell us about God and how they relate to a believer’s security in life.

PICTURE THIS

What we already have learned about God should create a greater desire to know Him. There is always something new to know about God and, as we discover, our knowledge of Him becomes increasingly enriching.

**THE WEALTH OF BENEFITS
FROM KNOWING GOD**

BENEFIT	SCRIPTURE PASSAGE	WAYS WE BENEFIT
Power	Daniel 11:32	The circumstances of life cannot hold us down.
Peace	1 Peter 1:2	A growing sense of inner peace and comfort.
Wisdom	John 1:17	Making the right choices and better decisions.
Growth	Colossians 1:9-10	Spiritual growth and productivity.
Freedom	Galatians 4:8-9	Assurance and confidence to live freely from the circumstances and emotions that can enslave us.