

The Attributes of God

People Who Know Their God...

As we wrap up the series on the Attributes of God I want to close with the issues of “So What?”

What difference does it make whether we know God as he truly is or not?

As has been stated, “What comes to your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you (and what he thinks about you is even MORE important.)”

I hope the series has given us a richer picture of the nature and character of God as revealed in scripture.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: J.I. Packer

One can know a great deal about God or about “godly” behavior without actually knowing God. You can be an expert in the study of God or in the instruction of God while not knowing the God you are studying.

EX: PHARISEES – Jesus said they were “of their father, the devil”.

I was raised in church – SS, youth group, choir, etc. I knew about God, although the teaching wasn’t deeply grounded in scripture. But I didn’t KNOW God in the way the bible reveals him. That may have been more my fault than the pastors. But once I came to faith i.e. God opened my spiritual eyes to see my need and to show me the light of the glory of God in Christ, things changed, and I had a desire to know God. I remember going to the Christian bookstore in downtown Athens to buy a Bible. Although I was “churched” a Christian bookstore was like a foreign country.

I settled on a new NASB red Bible –because the store clerk joked, “all Bibles should be read.” He had a point.

Of course, the bible should be read if we want to better understand the nature and character of God. But it must be read from a perspective of faith, for transformation, not just for information. In scripture we learn about God and we learn about those who know God. What traits do they have in common? We could list many, but I want to highlight 9.

Those who Know God...

1. **Pursue the study of the God who has revealed Himself in the Word Written and the Word Incarnate** – not the self-help God of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, but the majestic, holy, sovereign God of the Bible. This entails intentionality and, dare I say it, WORK. Mark Twain put it this way, “The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.”

This is study for transformation, just not information.

- **Practice the art / discipline of meditating on the beauty and majesty of God by using scripture as a guide.** Center your prayer time on praising God for who He is, not what you want Him to do.
- **Read a good book on the attributes of God**
- **<http://www.bibleinoneyear.org/> – Read or listen to scripture in one year**

The result is that those who know God have great thoughts of God. Great thoughts of God helps put everything in a proper perspective – our view of the human origins, our basis spiritual condition, our view of ultimate power - man or God, and our need for a savior.

Those who Know God...

2. **Love God** – to know Him is to love Him. It is not just a command, but it is the fruit of a changed heart. Those who know God and are known by God, have the Holy Spirit who is fostering love for God. It is the same Holy Spirit who animated and empowered Jesus in his love for the Father.

Biblical faith or “religion” is an issue of the heart – the will, intellect, and emotions. The great commandment is to LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. It is not an issue of content or information.

J. Edwards has a classic treatment on Religious Affections. He puts it this way. **“True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections”**

A Whole sermon series could be preached on this, but that will have to wait. Edwards points out what you probably already know: One may have deep affections about God or religion or godliness without having deep affection for God Himself. Edwards articulates 12 signs that are uncertain indicators of truly gracious affections. (There is a link to a summary in the sermon notes)

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/an-overview-of-the-religious-affections-12-no-signs-and-12-true-signs/>

**Note: Edward’s and the like are often portrayed as cold and austere promoters of a dead orthodoxy – i.e. the “frozen chosen”. A simple reading of many “Puritan” authors shows that they were filled with great passion and affection for Christ and the world.

It is worth sharing 1-2 true biblically gracious affections of the heart:

They arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural, and divine.

They tend to, and are attended with, the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ; they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness, and mercy, as appeared in Christ.

3. **Enjoy God** – Piper on SC#1 **Glorify God BY enjoying Him forever.**

Is he glorified when we obey him? Yes (when it is from a right motive)

Is he glorified when we proclaim him? Yes

But to quote Piper, **“God is most glorified in us when we are most delighted in Him.”**

EX: worship conf 1990 – those people enjoyed God. I was reading Desiring God for the first time and it resonated with my spirit that God is glorified when we enjoy or delight in Him.

That should not surprise us because we are much the same way (made in His image). Your spouse or parent or child is honored (glorified) when you delight in and enjoy him / her.

This love and enjoyment of God flows out in praise – THE PSALMS – when we speak of something or someone we care about it comes out by way of praise, rejoicing, exaltation.

C.S. Lewis. – Reflections on the Psalms... **we praise what we enjoy because the delight is incomplete until it is expressed in praise.**

EX: you see a beautiful sunset, mountain vista, etc and you take a picture and you want to share it with others. Back in the day you had to take the film to be developed, wait for several days (or pay extra for 24 hr service), go pick up the photos and then have people over to show them the pictures. Today you click and post it on InstaFaceGram- because the delight is incomplete until it is expressed (by sharing it).

** Do we delight in God so much that we want to share Him with others?

4. Walk in the power of the Holy Spirit trusting in the forgiveness purchased by Christ – Eph 5: 2 Peter 1

The Christian life is a supernatural life empowered by the Holy Spirit. Those who know God know that they are weak, but that He has supplied the strength.

5. Forsake their sin- Knowing our forgiveness promotes forsaking sin. It humbles us.

Psalm 97:10 – Ye that love the Lord, Hate evil

Psalm 130: 3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.

1 Tim 6: 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness

Vov “Kept by God: ...It is the discovery of thy goodness alone that can banish my fear, allure me into thy presence, help me to bewail and confess my sin.”

VoV – Humiliation p. 142 **Let me never forget that the heinousness of sin lies not so much in the nature of the sin committed, as in the greatness of the Person sinned against.**

Vov - **CONSECRATION AND WORSHIP p. 232**

O, if he would punish me for my sins it would not wound my heart so deep to offend Him.

But though I sin continually, He continually repeats His kindness to me.

6. Follow Christ in the obedience of faith – Heb 12:1-3 Run the race fixing our eyes on Jesus; Rom 1:5 “bring about the obedience of faith”

7. Have an eternal perspective that brings a supernatural contentment - Rev 12; Phil 1, 4; Chinese Pastor; Daniel 3:16-18... “even if”...

The question is not whether we are good at theology, or “balanced” in our approach to problems of Christian living. The question is, can we say, simply, honestly, not because we feel that as evangelicals we ought to, but because it is a plain matter of fact, that we have known God, and that because we have known God the unpleasantness we have had, or the pleasantness we have not had, through being Christians does not matter to

us? If we really knew God, this is what we would be saying, and if we are not saying it, that is a sign that we need to face ourselves more sharply with the difference between knowing God and merely knowing about him. – J.I. Packer

8. **Have a greater desire to serve others.** The more we know the grace and mercy of God towards us, the more we will be inclined to manifest that to others.
9. **Will engage with others who know God.** “Birds of a feather...” Those who know the God revealed in scripture know that He has called us to Himself and to a body. Christianity is personal, but it is not private. It is communal. God Himself is a community and He calls us to live that way as well.

Do you know Him? What comes to your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you.

Come to the Table – Common Union is based in part by our common worship of a God who has revealed Himself to us. As we come to know Him better, we are drawn closer together as His people.

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