

Know Your God

Deuteronomy 7:9-10 (New American Standard Bible)

⁹ Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His faithfulness to a thousand generations for those who love Him and keep His commandments; ¹⁰ but He repays those who hate Him to their faces, to eliminate them; He will not hesitate toward him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face.

John 8:19 (New American Standard Bible)

¹⁹ So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.”

Introduction

Every January, as pastor of the church, I designate the new year to be the year of a certain theme. For instance, we did a year of making disciples, a year of the Bible, a year of prayer, a year of shalom, a year of walking with Jesus, and so forth. This year, I say, is the year of knowing our God (see the banner: Know Your God---Joel 3:17). It sounds like a hefty goal, but it is eternally important for us to remember and do that.

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How Serious Is It to Know God?

Please reason with me. Why must we know God? Why should we be intentional about knowing God? Some of you may say, “Isn’t it just good enough to know that He is my God? Doesn’t God already know that I believe in Him? Why should I know more of God?”

First of all, to know God is not a suggestion or an option, but a command from God, like the Ten Commandments. God requires of His children to know Him. If the knowledge of the Lord comes to us so naturally, like breathing, then, God would’ve never commanded us to know Him. In other words, there are certain things in life that require our time and efforts to gain and retain. The knowledge of the Lord is one of them.

As much as our God is benevolent about us taking time to know Him throughout our lives, it is never His will for us to be ignorant of Him. Neither does He want us to be slack about learning of Him. Rather, He wants us to make every effort in growing in the knowledge of Him in our lives (2 Peter 3:18). He expects our knowledge of God today to be

more than that of yesterday. Can we honestly say that is the case with our knowledge of God?

Those folks who are casual about getting to know God will have a rude awakening as it is written in the Bible. E.g. Consider the Exodus generation. They started with a bang! For starters, even before they departed for the Promised Land, they witnessed the Ten Plagues in the land of Egypt (e.g. water turned to blood, frogs, dust turned into lice, flies cover the land... Exodus 7 & 8). For the next forty years, they experienced daily miracles of God such as manna from heaven, quails, pillar of fire and clouds, parting of the Red Sea. Yet, in the end, the first generation was denied entering the Promised Land (only their children were allowed to enter). What caused their denial? It was the lack of their knowledge of God. God cannot be blamed for not keeping His promise to the Israelites, but that they failed to grow in the knowledge of God and His will. They squandered all God's miracles and ended up provoking God to anger repeatedly for forty years. They feared the Lord alright, but their fear of the Lord and daily experience of God's miracles never translated into the saving knowledge of God. We must be intentional about knowing God.

Benefits: Eternal and Temporal

Next question: How does the knowledge of God benefit us in our walk with God? In many ways. First, our eternal life depends on our knowledge of God the Father. Without the knowledge of God the Father, no one will have eternal life. E.g. Imagine that you are building a house. You want to ensure it built upon the foundation. Your eternal life is the house, your knowledge of God is the foundation. Jesus explains what eternal life is in John 17:3. Praying to His Father, He says: *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

Next, to know God also prepares us for a life on earth with purpose and direction. Once a member of our church told me that "Pastor, I don't know how people live without God." Amen, sister! Without God and without the proper knowledge of God, we will be lost forever (Hosea 4:6).

Professor Packer wrote: *"As it would be cruel to an Amazonian tribesman to fly him to London, put him down without explanation in Trafalgar Square and leave him, as one who knew nothing of English or England, to fend for himself, so we are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it. The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul"* (Knowing God, J. I. Packer, p. 19).

When we know of God, our love levels up (Philippians 1:9). Grace and peace of God multiply (2 Peter 1:2). The true knowledge of God grants us everything pertaining to life and

godliness (2 Peter 1:3). It makes us upright, helps us to walk in integrity and truth. It even helps us to escape the defilements of the world (2 Peter 2:20). The knowledge of God benefits us in many ways.

How Much Do We Know God?

The real question: how much do we know God? Well, most of us, myself included, humbly admit that we don't know much about God or even of God. But we don't have to stay there. So, I invite you to join me this year in knowing God deeper, more, and better, personally and intellectually. Amen?

Name of our God: Yahweh

For a starter, what is the name of our Father in Heaven? *God*? No, that's His title, not His name. It is like you call me, *pastor, man, husband, father*, and so forth, but not with an actual name. There are 8 million gods (*kami*) in Shintoism. 330 million gods in Hinduism. All of them have names. So, what is the name of our God in Heaven? E.g. Same question Moses brought to God when God was about to send him to Egypt to deliver God's people from the land of slavery. ¹³ *Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"* ¹⁴ *And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* (Exodus 3:13-14).

So, what is the proper name of our God whom we worship and serve? I AM. Yahweh. The LORD. Yahweh is His name. Don't forget.

Faithfulness of God

Next, in today's text (Deuteronomy 7:9), the same God, Yahweh, reveals to us one of His fundamental attributes: *faithfulness*. This word alone deserves another sermon to unpack its meaning, but, in short, we can count on Him in terms of being there for us.

E.g. Llyod Douglas, author of *The Robe*, once lived in a boardinghouse. "A retired, wheelchair bound music professor resided on the first floor. Each morning Douglas would stick his head in the door of the teacher's apartment and ask the same question, "Well, what's the good news?" The old man would pick up his tuning fork, tap it on the side of the wheelchair and say, "That's middle C! It was middle C yesterday; it will be middle C tomorrow; it will be middle C a thousand years from now. The tenor upstairs sings flat. The piano across the hall is out of tune, but, my friend, that is middle C." (*Traveling Light*, Max Lucado, p. 15).

Every day this 'middle-C' God, the unchanging God, is the good news to us! His faithfulness never fails! Every day He remembers His covenant with us. He honors the terms in the covenant by declaring Himself: *who keeps His covenant and His faithfulness to a thousand generations for those who love Him and keep His commandments*; (Deuteronomy

7:9). E.g. *God has proven His faithfulness in my whole life.* The same God is faithful to you and to a thousand generations after you who love Him and keep His commandments. He is not going to cancel His covenant with us because we made one mistake or two in the covenant with Him unless we forever denounce Him.

We Need Jesus

Finally, to get to know God the Father, we need Jesus' help. It is like getting a special coaching session from the best coach available in the entire world. Jesus made a simple claim. Without Him no one can come to the Father (John 14:6). Without Jesus no one will know the Father. So, throughout this year, claiming His offer, let us know God deeper and more.

Conclusion

When we seek God, we shall find Him. When we seek Him and His kingdom, we will grow in the knowledge of God. Jesus and the Holy Spirit will help us too in our pursuit of the knowledge of God throughout the year.

Amen.