

Knowing God *Study Guide*

Section One: Know the Lord **Student Edition**

**An Exercise in Spiritual
Growth and Discipleship
Using the Book *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer**

by

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For Study Groups**

Sageline Publishing
502 Oella Avenue
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

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Printed in the United States of America

This book is the second edition of Knowing God Study Guide Section One: Teacher's Edition.

ISBN: 978-1-931936-01-9

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Preface

While many books and authors have passed through Christian awareness over the centuries, periodically, a book comes along that strikes a chord deep in the Christian community. *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer is one such example. This insightful book has stood the test of time and has challenged Christians at every level of maturity not only to know about the God they profess but to get off the balcony of observation, get onto the road of discovery, and come to know their God intimately and personally.

For a detailed view of James Innell Packer's life, see Alister McGrath's biography. But to help you get started, here is a quick overview.

Packer began life in the working-class neighborhood of Gloucester, England. He never quite fit in, which is not unusual for a bookish child with an intellectual bent, but a “violent collision with a bread van” at the age of seven set him on the course his life would follow. While running away from schoolboys who were taunting him, he ran out into the street and was hit by a van, resulting in a severe head injury. A metal plate was inserted into his head. Exposed and with rubber softening its edges, Packer felt like “A speckled bird,” making it even more difficult to fit in. The restrictions the accident placed on his teenage life, which meant no sports and limited physical activity, steered him instead to a life of reading and intellectual curiosity. At the age of eleven, expecting a bicycle for his birthday, he instead got a typewriter. That, coupled with the results of his accident, sealed his life’s direction. While he had, in many ways, an extremely difficult life, he had an innate pluckiness that served him well over the years.

His faith, initially the product of parents with whom he regularly attended church, took a personal turn in secondary school (what we in the U.S. would call high school). In college, reading C. S. Lewis, among others, and his studying the Bible brought him to a point where, at a meeting of the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (OICCU, or CU), he finally made “A personal transaction with the living Lord, the Lord Jesus.” His newfound faith did nothing to mitigate his sense of isolation, and that might be why he began to appreciate and study the great Puritan authors, who were isolated from the mainstream of English society in their lifetimes. Several quotes illustrate his attachment. “The Puritans answered those questions that perplexed me. From the Puritans, I acquired what I didn’t have from the start—a sense of the importance and primacy of truth.” Unlike his Puritan mentors despite his own isolation, he was ordained in the Church of England. However, it was at an accidental speaking engagement that the course of his life would change. He met his wife Kit and, at the same time, broke through his long-standing fear of being in large public situations. They were married in July of 1954.

After writing his first book, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, a critique of Christian Fundamentalism, in 1958, he went on to author over forty books (and still counting) and edited countless others. However, he is best known for the book we are studying. Packer is also well known for his linear “habit of mind” and style of communication. Once he starts speaking on a thought, he cannot stop until he has carried the thought to its logical conclusion. This predilection has led to many difficulties for Packer over the years. I have a very similar bent and fully understand the problems this state of mind causes to oneself and those you interact with.

While reading through Packer’s *Knowing God* can be memorable, and has been for uncounted numbers of Christians, studying the book chapter by chapter changes lives. I have seen those changes happen again and again over the years as I have led cover-to-cover studies using a one-week per chapter format. While this takes about twenty-eight weeks to complete (twenty-two chapters, introductory material, section reviews, and follow-up), it allows ample time for the contemplation of each of the truths that Packer introduces, time to delve into the scriptural references supporting those truths, and the space to consider the depths of each claim that Packer makes. As faithful Christian students, our goal is to be like the Bereans, to question everything that is said to see if it is true. This study should be no exception.

In addition, let me say that while the study of good books can help to focus the growth of a Christian, I

have always thought that discipleship can only be successful if it is centered squarely on the Cross of Jesus Christ and its true meaning of sacrifice, the “not my will, but thy will be done” that lies at the root of Christ’s sacrificial decision. My goal for everyone who uses these materials to study *Knowing God* is that they will find the Cross of Jesus Christ taking its rightful and necessary place at the center of their lives. If that happens, I will have been a “good and faithful servant.”

A prayer for this study

Every meaningful endeavor in life should be grounded in prayer, and this is no different. May this prayer aid your efforts as you go through the study.

Dear Lord God, you have challenged us in your Word to study to show ourselves approved and you told us to leave aside the milk of the Gospel and mature into its meat. Open our hearts, O Lord, and prepare us to learn of you, to drink deep of your revelation of yourself. And as we come to know you better, O Lord, may we also know ourselves better. Grant us, by your grace, success in our efforts.

May your Holy Spirit, by his witness, authenticate what we study and learn, and may we always remember that the Spirit testifies and leads us into all truth and knowledge of you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As we struggle to apprehend the faith once delivered to the saints, we thank you, O Lord, for your mercy and patience as we endeavor to better understand you and ourselves. May everything we do be done to your eternal honor and glory. Amen.

William Meisheid

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Preview of Knowing God

As we begin this study, let's look at how Packer structured his material and why this book is worth studying repeatedly. Some of you may rightfully ask why this book is worth all of this attention; maybe we could just read it once or twice, but why study it over and over again? Well, it is worth it for several reasons:

1. As a study of the nature and person of the Christian triune God, its subject matter is inexhaustible.
2. Its arguments are firmly rooted in scripture and touch almost every area of the Bible dealing with the nature of God.
3. Every time I have gone through it, I have discovered something different about the God who redeemed me and have been confronted with the decision about how to respond to that knowledge.
4. Some things need to be done repeatedly to keep us on track. This book is like going to theological spring training, and as a biblical athlete, I want to get ready for each new season of Christian challenges God brings into my life.

That being said, I just enjoy the way Packer writes, his turn of phrase, his insights. In addition, as I have gotten older, I have begun to appreciate John's statement at the end of his Gospel, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

With John's statement as a backdrop, there will always be a new book with a new slant, focus, or insight. To the writing of books, there is no end. So now, when I find a good book that might be worth studying, I read it, and if it is as good and timeless as I had hoped, I will add it to my list and probably study it several times in the time I have left on this earth. I am reminded of the song that Franco Zeffirelli has St. Francis sing in his movie *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*. The refrain goes as follows: "Do few things, but do them well, take your time, go slowly." That thought has stuck with me, and as I approach the third stage of my life, rather than rushing around trying to do all the things I think I have missed (the proverbial bucket list), I am actually slowing down and cutting back. I am trying to do fewer things but to do them well. As to this book, I have decided that knowing a book worth studying very well is better than knowing a lot of books poorly. If you are wondering what books I consider worth studying repeatedly, I will note them at the end of this entry. For now, let us focus on this book.

Dr. Packer divides his book into three main sections:

Section One: Know The Lord. Packer begins by dealing with the nature and focus of the study. He looks at theology and the people who study it. He discusses the nature of knowing and being known and how that applies to our relationship with God. Then he looks at God himself and his revelation about himself as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He introduces the Trinity by way of the incarnation and fleshes it out with the one who testifies to the Holy Spirit. This section is the foundation for the other two sections.

Section Two: Behold Your God! After building his foundation in *Section One*, Packer now addresses the substance of who God is by examining his attributes, both communicable and incommunicable and why the difference matters. For example, in *Chapter 10: God's Wisdom and Ours*, Dr. Packer notes that we are created in the image of God, possessing only his communicable attributes, while one of the roots of sin and pride is our (and Satan's) desire to possess God's incommunicable attributes. Packer continually grounds the attributes of God in our relationship with Him, which makes it much easier to understand them, and the God who possesses them.

Section Three: If God Be for Us... In his closing section, Packer applies the knowledge gained in the first two sections to living out the Christian life. He addresses the heart of the gospel and how that allows us to become Sons of God. He explores how God leads us through life and gives insights into dealing with the trials and tribulations that will eventually come our way. He closes with our blessed assurance, the adequacy of God for the Christian.

One of the problems I have seen over the years of teaching this study is that people find the end of *Section One* and most of *Section Two* difficult and demanding, so if they stay with the study, they begin to skim and skip. They pass the time to the “good stuff” in Section Three, where we deal with our redemption and God’s grace and love. However, they do so at a terrible price since, without a firm grasp of who God is, they fail to build the foundations of their understanding on solid rock, ending up with a haphazard and weak footing for their faith.

Please believe me when I say that a diligent study of the first two sections brings several orders of magnitude greater appreciation and understanding of the blessings and truths in *Section Three*. I remember a biting critique of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians that I heard in the early ’80s. The minister, a Scottish Presbyterian, said that maybe one of the reasons people go flitting from place to place seeking a new and exciting experience of God is because they have failed to know and understand who this God they seek really is and to appreciate the marvelous gift of salvation and new life in Jesus Christ, He has given them in the first place. Being charismatic, I took that admonition to heart, and it energized my second effort to study knowing *God*.

In closing, I will tell you what books I believe are worth repeated study. Other than the bible, four books besides *Knowing God* have been significant for me. They are:

- [Knowing Scripture](#) by R.C. Sproul and Robert Wolgemuth. This short book helps you examine how you approach the bible and introduces hermeneutics in a way almost anyone can understand.
- [A Long Obedience in The Same Direction](#) by Eugene Peterson. Eugene is best known for his paraphrase of the Bible, *The Message*. In this book, he addresses the failure of Christian discipleship due to the corroding effects of our instant society, where instant gratification and immediate results are expected. Eugene uses the Jewish Psalms of Ascent as his source material to emphasize obedience and the length of the quest. It is hard for many Christians today to grasp the idea of Christianity being a long quest, but Christian discipleship is a lifelong journey, not a point of arrival.
- [Scripture Twisting: 20 Ways the Cults Misread the Bible](#) by James Sire. James examines the common methods used to distort the scriptures. This helps us see when others are “twisting scripture.” It also confronts us when we twist or distort the Scriptures to meet our prejudices.
- [The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog](#), 5th Edition by James W. Sire. Sire examines the “set of presuppositions we hold about the basic makeup of our world.” Our “worldview,” or as I like to say, the water in which we swim, colors everything we know and understand about the world. Each new edition of this book adds new and important material and insights.

There you have it. May God bless your efforts as you engage in this study. May you have grace and peace on your day, and please keep me in your prayers.

Preface: The Postmodern World

Today's theme: Pushing back the void (God-shaped hole*) with anxious activity.

Scriptural background: [Luke 12:29-31](#), “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Quotes for the week

“The ‘system’ must have freedom; it must have abundance, and it must have infinite variety. Profit is the aim, happiness the desire, and consumption the means. Hollywood manufactures dreams and models for us to mimic or wish for. Desire is awakened, stimulated, encouraged through the perpetual bombardment of images and wishes.” “What is Good and Who Says?” Stuart McAllister, *Just Thinking*, Spring/Summer newsletter 1998, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

Concern: How modern influences may affect this study

We are all affected by the “water in which we swim” or the gestalt (integral pattern, form, shape) of our daily lives. We cannot avoid the time in which we live and how it influences who we are and how we think.

1. Considering the above quote and the pervasiveness of modern influences and their intrusions into our lives, how will you find quietness, clarity, and perseverance to pursue this study?

Interacting With the Text: Knowing God: The Prefaces (1993 and 1973)

If these challenges excite you and rouse the best in you, then you are a prime candidate to take this journey with us.

In Packer's 1993 Preface, he says the editor who commissioned the original articles that became *Knowing God* wanted something for “readers who were fed up with facile Christian verbiage” [simplistic or too simple explanations]. In effect, Packer was told to write Christian theology for ordinary people who wanted to dive below the surface and see the glories that resided in the deeper waters of the Christian faith. This is the approach to Christian study for people who take Hebrews 6:1-3 seriously.

“Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this *we will do if God permits.*” [Hebrews 6:1-3](#)

Preface: The Postmodern World / What to Do Next

4. According to Packer, the naturalistic leaven in the Renaissance ushered in an era of skepticism in which naturalistic thought denied God's direct and complete control of this world. How do you think this skepticism has affected you?

5. Why is theology important for the Christian Church, and how has it failed us?

6. What care must we take when we read books like *Knowing God*? Do you think this is a problem for you personally? Why or why not?

What to Do Next

You are now ready to dive into our study. Begin *Section One* by reading *Chapter 1: The Study of God*. Goal: Never forget the task at hand

Think about how the “spirit of the age” and skepticism might affect your efforts as you read and think about what is being said. Also, remember C.S. Lewis’ sobering words on imagined success as you move forward (see the end of the 1993 Preface).

Meditation on the Preface Lesson

Of all the books I have read since becoming a Christian, apart from the Bible itself, one book has consistently both reinforced and challenged my ongoing efforts to become the Christian I have always desired to be. That book is *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer.

I have recently concluded that though this is one of the most purchased books in the Christian community since its release in 1973, it may be, by comparison, one of the least studied. I say that from experience, having studied the book with many groups. I believe it is because the book confronts what you believe and understand about God, creating a waning interest in many (but not all) and a declining interest in putting in the effort to study. Let me say without reservation that it is impossible to study through this book and not be changed. In your walk (as a traveler, not a balconeer) through the challenges of this book, you will not be the same person at the end of your adventure as the one that started traveling the journey that Dr. Packer has enticed you to make.

I believe the reasons for the change in each traveler are as varied as the people who make the journey, but I expect the root of each transformation to be found in Packer's simple yet profound title, *Knowing God*. Chapter by chapter, paragraph by paragraph, we as readers are confronted with two inescapable things: the true nature of the God with whom we have to do and our understanding, opinions, thoughts, and even prejudices regarding that nature. Over the years, this modest book (it is not overly long and is written in a popular style for the average Christian) has caused me more than a little heartache as I came face to face with the God of Abraham and Moses, as well as the Trinitarian understanding of His nature which is most fully expressed within the writings of the New Testament.

I have read many esteemed theological works, but this "popular" book has challenged my heart and soul (not just my mind) in ways those highly regarded works did not. I am not completely sure why this has been so. It may be related to the insight of an old favorite, but now deceased, radio preacher, J. Vernon McGee. Dr. McGee liked to concentrate on what he said were the practical and common-sense Gospel issues of where the "rubber meets the road." I would give Packer's book that abiding compliment. It touches me where my daily life intersects my understanding of God and, in doing so, changes me, or maybe it is better to say that the Holy Spirit uses the book's simple directness to challenge and change me as the scriptural arguments it presents find their touchstone in my everyday experiences. To use Dr. McGee's aphorism, it touches me where God's rubber meets my daily road.

You are welcome to use these materials as you see fit, respecting my copyright as noted in the Copyright Statement. I covet your comments and observations, desiring anything that will make the study a better tool to assist those who willingly take on Dr. Packer's challenge.

Think on [Isaiah 65:10-12](#) and take to heart its admonition.

"Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for my people who have sought me. But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny, I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, *when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen*, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in."

There is no fortune or destiny outside the will of God. None.

May God bless you in your transition from balconeer to traveler and may you, along with all those who came before you, be granted the exceptional privilege of coming to know your God.

May God bless you and keep you. May His grace be upon you today and every day going forward. Amen.

Section One: Know the Lord

In [Exodus 5:2](#), the Pharaoh of Egypt said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

In [Hebrews 8:11](#) it says, "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest."

The following is taken from a poem by Edward William Bok (1863–1930). *The Americanization of Edward Bok. 1921. XXXV. At the Battle-Fronts in the Great War.*

I include this because everyone who becomes a child of God and then seeks to know him becomes a soldier in the fight for the Kingdom of God, a warrior standing against the forces of darkness.

“For the passing souls we pray,
Saviour, meet them on their way;
Let their trust lay hold on Thee
Ere they touch eternity.

Holy counsels long forgot
Breathe again 'mid shell and shot;
Through the mist of life's last pain
None shall look to Thee in vain.

To the hearts that know Thee, Lord
Thou wilt speak through flood or sword;
Just beyond the cannon's roar,
Thou art on the farther shore.

For the passing souls we pray,
Saviour, meet them on the way;
Thou wilt hear our yearning call,
Who hast loved and died for all.”

parent or a person knows a brother or friend, two images we have in scripture. The Bible shows us God as Father and Son.

Many Christians and others have a firm grasp on what God has told us to do or not do. The Pharisees of Jesus day are a good example. They knew all the laws and their requirements, down to the minutia of contrasting interpretations. However, Jesus chastised them in [Matthew 23:23-24](#).

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.”

While they knew their theology, it had not permeated and changed their hearts; it had not guided the intimate actions of their lives. They knew about God, about his law and his demands, but despite their knowledge, they were blind when it came to really knowing God and his fundamental demand on their lives, as expressed in [Deuteronomy 6:4-6](#) and reiterated by Jesus in [Mark 12:29-31](#).

“The most important one answered Jesus, is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”

You cannot love (agape in this instance, a self-sacrificial love) what you do not really know, what you only know about.

This is especially important today as the effects of existential thinking and post-modernism seep into the fabric of our lives. Its effects are all around us, in music, movies, television and all forms of media, in the opinions of respected commentators, even in those we love and cherish. You may say, “That hasn’t affected me.” Well, whenever you feel isolated, as if you are facing a hostile world almost alone, where your personal freedom and autonomy of action drive most of your decisions (be honest), where no one is going to tell you what to do, then you are being affected and will have a problem in coming to know God intimately.

Don’t worry. This is not a unique problem. From my experience, our churches are filled with essentially lonely people who, when push comes to shove, will admit that for them, God is hard or practically impossible to know. It seems that even when we want to know him, we don’t know where to begin. We admit that it is a difficult task. To this, Dr. Packer replies, start where you are. Do a sincere self-assessment of where you stand with God and how well you know him. Be brutally and authentically honest, and trust that God will meet you where you are.

Dr. Packer also makes it very clear that theology and biblical ethics (knowing the demands of holiness and righteousness in thought and action), while intrinsically important, are not enough to know God. He goes even further, saying that if we want to know ourselves, we must study and come to know God, for we are created in his image. That said, we must begin with theology.

Theology

Most regular Christians (discounting clergy, other religious vocations, and professors and other teachers) consider theology something foreign, confusing at best, and, for them, generally unapproachable. However, Dr. Packer argues that:

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

OK. Let's say you accept that, and you agree that for even the common Christian, some form of theological studies is both necessary and valid; what then? Dr. Packer argues there are five basic truths and three basic themes all Christians should know and understand.

Truths

1. God has spoken to man; the Bible is his Word.
2. God is Lord and King over his world.
3. God is the Savior; he alone and no other.
4. God is triune; there are three persons within the Godhead.
5. Godliness means responding to God's revelation in trust and obedience, faith and worship, prayer and praise, submission and service.

Themes

1. We have to deal with the Godhead of God.
2. We have to deal with the powers of God.
3. We have to deal with the perfections of God.

These three themes also make up the three major divisions of this book.

I will be the first to admit that these eight items Dr. Packer places in front of us are not simple. Getting our minds around them will be hard work, very hard work. They will require a study asking what source materials we should use. The first and foremost source, says Dr. Packer, is the Bible, and since most of us do not read Greek and Hebrew, it would be useful for us to have multiple translations. In addition, catechisms and other codifications of the faith—the accumulated wisdom of the Church—are helpful, as are other mature Christians. As Proverbs 27:17 tells us, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

We must admit that no journey is without risks. As we follow God's path onto the plane of theology, we face many dangers. Chief among these is our attitude. Dr. Packer stresses that theology has to be a practical matter to help us know how to live and interact with God, not as an end itself. We are not pursuing knowledge for knowledge's sake. We are not pursuing it as a means of building ourselves up or a way to impress others with how much we know. No, besides the joy that comes to all those who come to know their God, our goal is to facilitate the living of a Godly life in the service of our Lord and Savior, that is, to answer the call of discipleship.

In this effort, we will need to learn a skill that might be new to some of you. It is meditating on the truth that God has revealed about himself. We are not talking about the common Eastern definitions of meditation, of emptying your mind or numbing the thought process through repetitively reciting a mantra. We are talking about a guided effort to turn our growing knowledge *about* God into knowledge *of* God. As Dr. Packer says, we mean “calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God.”

If meditation is a word that doesn't work well for you, then think instead about chewing on, musing over, analyzing or reasoning through, or just plain talking to God. After all, God did say, “Come let us reason together,” so he has already invited us to do this very thing. That means he is there already in, through, over, and under all that happens as we make an honest effort.

The last thing we need to address as we begin this journey is whether we can do this on our own or need help. By this, I do not mean the help of other writers or the historic efforts of other Christians mentioned above. No, I mean, can we do it as a solitary effort? While many have tried, including

Chapter 1: Theology and the Study of God / Meditation on Chapter One: Theology and the Study of God

myself, I would note that it is a truly rare and blessed person who can do it all alone. Not only laziness and distractions but a lack of focus and time will sabotage your efforts. We all need the help of our brothers and sisters in Christ to hold us accountable and to be a place to bounce our ideas and thoughts. Christians are part of the Body of Christ, not isolated cells. We need those around us to help sustain our efforts, correct our drifting off course, and just be there when a significant discovery or revelation cuts to the bone, as it will. I guarantee it.

However, don't give up if you cannot study this book with a group of people. I will do my best to be your study partner despite the distance. Email me with your questions, and I will try to be there within the time I have. You need not be alone.

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Chapter 2: The People Who Know Their God

Today's theme: Pharisees as porch sitters, not travelers

Scriptural background: [Jeremiah 9:23-24a](#), "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the *strong man* boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: *that he understands and knows me...*"

Quotes for the week

"Knowing trees slow, generational, I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass includes weeds, I can appreciate persistence." Hal Borland. *Countryman: A Summary of Belief*. Lippincott, 1965.

"But, with care, knowing danger [Heb. 10:31](#), I looked at him and saw marriage on his hand [2 Cor. 11:1-2](#)." Patricia L Brueckner

"Writers and travelers are mesmerized alike by knowing of their destinations." Eudora Welty. *One Writer's Beginnings*. Harvard, 1984"

Concern: That I might be a Greek rather than a Hebrew knower of God

There is a difference between Greek and Hebrew concepts of knowledge. Greeks felt *no obligation to or for* what they knew; Hebrews did. To know for a Hebrew meant knowing brought responsibility for what you know.

Knowledge is Greek for the sake of knowledge—and much of the basis of our current thinking in science and technology. With statements like, "Let it take its course" or "It is not my concern; I am merely an observer," the Greek view avoids responsibility. The epitome of this paradigm is the news/journalistic cameraman or photographer who records the horror in front of him without doing anything about it.

For Hebrews, knowing something meant they had the moral and ethical demand to act on that knowledge. This is the basic premise underlying God's revelation of Himself in scripture and how we must use that revelation (what responsibilities that knowledge imparts to us) as we study to show ourselves approved.

1. Have you been Greek or Hebrew in your past approach to knowledge? What can you do to become more Hebrew in your thinking?

“Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me.”

Jeremiah hits the two key issues: understanding, which harkens back to Chapter One and the concern with proper theology, and knowing, the relational center of the interaction between God and the people he has called to himself, which is the concern of this chapter.

Several quotes address the concept of knowing in the study materials for this chapter. I include them here for simplicity of discussion.

“Knowing trees, I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence.” Hal Borland. *Countryman: A Summary of Belief*. Lippincott, 65.

“But, with care, knowing danger, I looked at him and saw marriage on his hand.” Patricia L Brueckner.

“Writers and travelers are mesmerized alike by knowing of their destinations.” Eudora Welty. *One Writer’s Beginnings*. Harvard, 84.

Borland’s quote is especially poignant considering our earlier argument that to know ourselves, we must first come to know God since we are created in his image, and as the psalmist said, “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Like Patricia Brueckner, facing the truly dangerous prospect of surrendering to another, we see God and see everything in his hand, including the wrenching loss of our spiritual rebellion. The rending prospect of this surrender is wonderfully captured in C. S. Lewis’ allegory, *The Great Divorce*. A ghostly visitor, visiting the outskirts of heaven bears, affixed to his neck and back, a reptile of sin and deception. The ghostly visitor is confronted by an Angel of God who offers to kill the beast, but only with the Ghost’s permission. A momentous struggle ensues in the heart of the Ghost, who finally relents, accepting the fearful danger from the hand of the Angel. As the reptile is killed and wrested from its prey by the Angel of God, the Ghost lets out a scream of burning pain and agony beyond all screams yet heard by man. Yet, facing the pain, danger, and death, the Ghost is free and alive. The reptile of sin is transformed into a bright and glorious steed, which the Ghost, now a redeemed man, mounts and, as master of all that is transformed, orders the stallion forward into the brightness of the eternal morning.

Yes, transforming what we fear is at the heart of knowing God, but how can we be mesmerized by our destination if we have no sense of what it truly is? Packer repeatedly asks us how to love the God we do not know.

The difference between the two schools of knowledge is at the root of the issue facing us, which we discussed earlier. A quick summary is that Greeks felt no intrinsic responsibility to or for what they learned or knew; Hebrews did. Our goal in this study is to be Hebrew in our approach to the knowledge of God. For Hebrews, knowing something meant they had moral and ethical responsibility, the necessity even to act on that knowledge. This is the basic premise underlying God’s revelation of Himself in Scripture and how we must use that revelation (what responsibilities that knowledge imparts upon us) as we study to know our God.

Knowing Versus Knowing About

We have a goal for this chapter. However, to chart a course to our destination, we must know where we are and our starting point. We must come to honest terms with our current spiritual condition, whether we know Him at all, and if we do, how well do we know Him? Not only that, but we also have to accept responsibility for what knowledge we currently have and for what knowledge we will acquire. One person who previously took this study sent me an email that spoke to this point. They said, “I have to admit that I am almost afraid to commit because ‘to whom much is given, much is

required'. But I'm doing this anyway – with a prayer in my heart.”

That's the stumbling block. When all illusions are stripped aside, we are forced to see both God and ourselves as we really are, and then, yes, we are required to act on that knowledge. We instinctively know, like the Ghost in Lewis' allegory, that it will be a painful and difficult effort, but like the one in whom we trust, Jesus Christ, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” ([Hebrews 12:2](#)) We too have a joy set before us, a “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” ([1 Peter 1:8b](#)). Let's get on with it and embrace it.

Early in this chapter, Packer goes to the heart of the difference between *of* and *about*. Most people can talk about what God says and demands. We all know the Ten Commandments. However, it all comes down to the fact that “the unpleasantness we have had, or the pleasantness we have not had,” does not matter to those who know God. They are the momentary cracks in the road. Packer argues that if every problem or disappointment is a major issue to you, God is further from you than you may suppose. Then using the Prophet Daniel as an example, Packer enumerates four characteristics that are easily seen in those who know God. They are:

1. Great energy for God. This is dramatically noted in [Daniel 11:32b](#) “...the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” We also remember what Isaiah told us, “...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.” ([Isaiah 40:31](#)).

Packer argues that this energy begins with prayer as it did for Daniel. The prophet tells us, “So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.” ([Daniel 9:3](#)) Martin Luther, in his treatise *A Simple Way to Pray For a Good Friend. How One Should Pray, For Peter, the Master Barber*, written for a friend exiled for killing his son-in-law in a fit of drunken rage, says:

“It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas which tell you, ‘Wait a little while. I will pray in an hour; first I must attend to this or that.’ Such thoughts get you away from prayer into other affairs which so hold your attention and involve you that nothing comes of prayer for that day.”

and

“Tomorrow I plan to work, work, from early until late. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”

These are powerful words that we should all take to heart.

2. Great thoughts of God. We must allow nothing to diminish the glory and sovereignty of God. Daniel even gets Nebuchadnezzar to admit that God had gotten him to the point where “he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes.” ([Daniel 5:21](#)).

Daniel's prayer says it all.

“Praise be to the name of God forever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.”

3. Great boldness for God. When I was growing up, every child knew the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were stalwart examples of stepping out in great boldness for God. Their images of placing it all on the line for God stirred the hearts of countless missionaries through

the millennia. Their words to Nebuchadnezzar are singularly instructive.

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. **But even if he does not**, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” [*Emphasis added*] ([Daniel 3:15-18](#))

Their own lives were not their primary concern. They knew their God, and they would never worship anything or anyone but Him.

4. Great contentment in God. In Paul’s letter to the Philippians, he assures them that “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus,” reminding them that the assurance of their salvation cannot be taken from them, that as he told the Roman Christians, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” so they can rest in that blessed assurance. Packer then quotes the first two verses of Richard Baxter’s 1681 hymn.

Lord, it belongs not to my care
whether I die or live;
to love and serve thee is my share,
and this thy grace must give.

If life be long, O make me glad
the longer to obey;
if short, no laborer is sad
to end his toilsome day.

If you lack this contentment, then draw nigh to your God, for he desires to draw nigh to you.

Lastly, Packer argues that if we really desire knowledge of God, then two things will naturally follow:

- **We will recognize our lack.** We will never have enough knowledge of our God. The person taking their first step on this journey and the mature saint having spent a lifetime walking with their Lord are both beginners on an eternal journey of coming to know an eternal God. Let us acknowledge our impoverishment and draw closer to Him by opening our hearts and bending our knees in prayer.
- **We will seek the Savior.** When Jesus walked the earth, common people walked with him, ate with him, touched and talked with him, and came to know him. The writer of Hebrews said it, “Anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6b) Now risen and ascended, Jesus encouraged us with the promise that “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” ([Matthew 18:20](#)).

So, seek the Lord while he may be found. Open your heart, bend your knees, and seek God, beginning in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In closing, try this week to keep those two necessary things foremost in your thoughts and, subsequently, in your prayers. Next week, we will look at Chapter Three: Knowing and Being Known. It is one thing to want to know God, and quite another to come to terms with the fact that he truly and completely knows us.

Grace and peace be to you all.

Meditation on Chapter Three: Knowing and Being Known

In this chapter, Dr. Packer moves into the intimate area of knowing and being known, the area in which we examine the root purpose of our existence. One of the fundamental questions in life is, “Why am I here; why do I exist?” Most of us want to answer that question without having to expose ourselves too much or put too much on the line to get the answer.

Packer’s simple and direct answer is “to know God.” Pounding home that thought at the beginning of this chapter, he defines the best that we can experience, the biblical definition of eternal life. Yeah, even the thing that brings the most pleasure to God himself is our “knowledge of God.”

It is one thing to say all of the above, yet quite another to experience it. So, Dr. Packer asks what a true experience of God is and not some counterfeit of it. He asserts that according to Scripture, this is an area in which we can easily be fooled into thinking we know God when we do not.

Packer also reminds us that knowing God and being known by Him is a two-way street; God reveals himself to us, and we expose our innermost fears, desires, thoughts, and feelings to Him. That is very scary stuff.

I believe that we have a deep fundamental fear of nakedness, just as Adam and Eve did after they sinned when they attempted to cover themselves. One of the most difficult aspects of discipleship, at least from my perspective, is coming to terms with our inherent nakedness before God. It appears to be exceptionally difficult for us to willingly give God ready access to what he already knows.

However, God does not leave us to our own devices. Instead, He reaches out to us. Packer notes that God goes so far as to make us, borrowing a phrase from Karl Barth, a covenant partner. Yet even more than a partner, Jesus told his disciples in [John 15:14-15](#)

You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

This is similar to God taking Joseph from the depths of prison to the exalted position of Prime Minister. For us, he transforms our lives from unregenerate sinners and prisoners of Satan to covenant partners and friends.

Still, the question of how we know God remains. Packer argues that the how comes down to four things:

- **First** - listening to God’s Word and receiving it as the Holy Spirit interprets it, in application to oneself
- **Second** - noting God’s nature and character, as his Word and works reveal it
- **Third** - accepting his invitations and doing what he commands
- **Fourth** - recognizing and rejoicing in the love that God has shown us by drawing us into this divine fellowship.

You could say that the how of knowing God is founded on the traveler's having a spirit of attentive yet humble thankfulness.

It is important to understand that we are not just left with God’s commands or his interaction with those in biblical history, such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Nehemiah. God also gives us the analogies of a son and father, wife and husband, subject and king, and sheep and shepherd to aid us in understanding what it means to be the knower and the known.

For Jews seeking their God up to the Roman era, that was enough, but then the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob went even further and put flesh on the bare bones of those analogies in the person of

Jesus Christ, who is God made flesh/man. Jesus told his disciples:

“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on, you know Him and have seen Him. Then Philip told Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”

[Jesus, sounding somewhat exasperated at Phillip’s problem of not seeing the obvious, replied]

“Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me *has* seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father? Do you not believe that *I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?*’” ([John 14:7-10a](#))

From this, Packer explains that three things comprise what it means to “know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

- Knowing God is a matter of *personal dealing*.
- Knowing God is a matter of *personal involvement*.
- Knowing God is a matter of *grace*.

Let us focus on Grace. It is so important. For J.I. Packer, knowing God is first the consequence of God knowing us, in that God acts using his sovereign grace in loving, choosing, redeeming, calling, and preserving us solely by his initiative. We can only know God because he first knew us.

Packer closes the chapter, glorying that the almighty God of all creation has chosen to know us, and he wants us to relish the unspeakable comfort, power, and energy that knowledge should bring into our lives. Packer says one thing has become a watershed moment for every group with whom I have studied this book. Packer says:

There is tremendous relief in knowing that his love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench his determination to bless me.

I consider that statement so significant that I have turned it into a bookmark that I give to all of my study groups. I never want to forget it. I never want you to forget it. Think about it. God already knows what I have done, what I am doing, and whatever I will do, and with that knowledge still loves me and has made me his own.

If that isn’t a cause for a top-of-the-lungs hallelujah, I don’t know what is!

In closing, I would like you to remember this week that you did not first seek out God; He sought out you. I want you to remember that you are graven on His palms, and that fact should be forever a part of your understanding of who you are and who He is. ([Isaiah 49:15-16](#))

Chapter 4: The Only True

Today's theme: To God alone be the glory.

Scriptural background: [Exodus 3:14](#). "And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."

Quotes for the week

"The God of Moses *IS* God." The Pharaoh Ramses (Yul Brenner). *The Ten Commandments*, Paramount, Cecil B. DeMille, 1956

"God is in the details." Mies van der Rohe. *New York Times*, August 19, 1969.

"God creates, I do not create. I assemble, and I steal everywhere to do it—from what I see, from what the dancers can do, from what others do." George Balanchine. *New York Times*, 16 Dec 63

"...he wanted to know the names of the things he loved...Taking the trouble to know the names of things was a way of paying them respect." Dean R Koontz, *Breathless*, Bantam Books, New York, NY, 2009.

Concern: I have not apprehended the uniqueness of God

God is. God is before all else, the first cause, the first mover, the first everything.

"He created all that is, seen and unseen."

1. Do you ever doubt the existence of God? When? Why? Be honest.

2. What is the difference between doubt and unbelief? Why is this distinction important?

Goal: Strive never to fall into the trap of idolatry.

Remember, when God told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM," He meant it. He is not who we think He is, no matter how lofty our image is. He is who He says He is, and that has many ramifications for us.

Meditation on Chapter Four: There Is Only One God

Some will praise this chapter, and others will hate it. It has even caused some to abandon the study. I believe it goes to the heart of worship and tradition, even though some of Packer's conclusions will be dismissed outright.

With that in mind, I have always liked how Packer's chapters build on each other and how each new one creates a foundation of understanding for the next revelation. In the last chapter, we examined knowing God and his knowing of us. Packer closes the chapter with a remarkable statement I would like to repeat so it is driven home.

There is tremendous relief in knowing that his love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench his determination to bless me.

Having said that, God knows me completely, and I argued that God wants us to know him intimately; as a child knows their father, we now move on to an issue that can sidetrack those efforts. If we attempt to know God improperly, in ways that, instead of revealing more about him, actually obscure who he really is, we move on to idolatry.

When most people hear the word idolatry, they think of the pagan or non-Christian worship of false gods. They think of monks prostrate before a golden Buddha or remote jungle tribesman bowing to a stone idol. They may even consider the talismans some people wear around their neck and stroke in times of stress or danger. They don't think of themselves or anyone in a Christian church. Yet that is Packer's focus in this chapter. He confronts Christians trying to worship the true God by creating images of him to "assist" them in their prayer and worship. Packer argues, talking of the second commandment:

The commandment thus deals not with the object of our worship but with its manner; it tells us that statues and pictures of the One whom we worship are not to be used as an aid to worshipping him.

Note at this point the distinction between illustrations of God the Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, and *aids to worship*. We will look at this more later, but by way of example, the second commandment has been one of the reasons that Protestants have crosses rather than crucifixes in their churches. Aside from focusing on the risen Christ, it prevents even the possibility of crossing that line of using an image, even one so sacred as Christ on the cross, to aid Christian prayer and worship. There are two basic problems that Packer addresses:

The question for me is not if we have any idolatry in our lives but what we will do with it when we find it.

Dishonoring God

God is so glorious, so wonderful, that any image we might construct of him would only obscure that magnificence. This is where things like the crucifix come into play in Packer's argument. He says:

...the pathos of the crucifix obscures the glory of Christ, for it hides the fact of his deity, his victory on the cross, and his present kingdom. It displays his human weakness, but it conceals his divine strength; it depicts the reality of his pain, but keeps out of our sight the reality of his

joy and his power. In both these cases, the symbol is unworthy most of all because of what it fails to display. And so are all other visible representations of deity.

It should be noted that the last phrase applies to all attempts to represent God in any way, including the beautiful creation scene in the Sistine Chapel, a place of worship. But, you argue, surely art is not a problem. That depends because even when not used in worship, there is a danger of images fixing within our minds a sense or idea of God that limits who and what he is for and to us. In worship, this is a serious problem, especially in churches with stained glass windows that represent various aspects of God or historical events in the life of Christ. Packer uses Isaiah 40:18 to address this context.

“To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?”

We already start with the problem that it is very easy for us to be led astray into false ideas about God, and images have a unique ability to do that. Packer discusses Aaron, who, contrary to some misunderstandings, was making an image of God, not a false god. The bull-calf was meant to represent the true God, to help lead the Israelites forward, and to give them something they could see, a rallying point. Instead, it facilitated turning the “festival to the LORD” into a shameful orgy and brought condemnation, fire, and judgment down on the people of God. Jesus told the woman at the well that the Father seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Focusing on an image as an aid to worship prevents that since they can never tell the truth about God.

Packer next takes us from actual physical images to mental images of God. He notes that people say things like, “I like to think of God as [*insert favorite image here*].” Or they use the negative, “I don’t like to think of God as a judge [*or some other image*].” What this does, Packer argues, is anthropomorphize God with the limited characteristics of men. While God made us in his image, we must not try to make him over in ours.

Packer now makes an important point, arguing that speculative theology, theology relying on philosophical reasoning or, I will go even further, rational, logical deduction, is wrong and is addressed by the Apostle Paul:

“For since in the wisdom of God **the world through its wisdom did not know him**, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.” 1 [Corinthians 1:21](#)

We have to remember what God has told us:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” [Isaiah 55:8-9](#)

Mental idolatry is a trap that leads to pride and arrogance, believing, no matter what we tell ourselves, that we can define God, forgetting that only God defines himself. “Who has known the mind of the Lord?” Paul asks in [Romans 11:34b](#).

In the end, it boils down to respect—respect for God and respect for ourselves. Yes, ourselves. When we elevate our thinking beyond its place and try to usurp what God has left to himself, in essence, we don’t respect ourselves, thinking instead that we are better than what God has made. We fall anew to Eve’s temptation; we try to be like God in knowing, deciding, and defining what is.

Packer closes with an addition for the 1993 version, in which he addresses using images for devotional or didactic (instructional, such as for children) purposes. He points out that he is not speaking against symbolic art, only representational art. On that thought, I needed to say something. Some people are so fearful of symbolic art that they forbid things like the chi-rho symbol. Christians have used this symbol since time immemorial. It combines the Greek letters that begin the words Christ the King.

Chapter 4: The Only True / Meditation on Chapter Four: There Is Only One God

My daughter was making decorations for a St. Patrick's Day-themed singles evening at her church and came up with the idea of having a large Chi-Rho symbol suspended from the ceiling over the food table in the center of the room. She also was going to screen the Celtic triune symbol, representing the Trinity, on all the tablecloths. The young pastor-in-training, who oversaw the details for this large monthly gathering (over a thousand singles), nixed the idea since he was concerned some people might find it idolatrous. He told my daughter, "Have you ever read chapter two of J.I. Packer's *Knowing God*?" She told him she had read it over six times and had studied it with her father but thought that maybe he meant chapter four. Rather than argue with him, she abandoned all her work and settled on using only the 400 shamrocks they had made attached to four artificial green garlands, creating a tent-like effect over the food area. The five-foot Chi-Rho hanging in the center and the tribunes on the tablecloths would have completed the design.

These representational, not devotional, images posed no threat to idolatry and would have actually been a good way to spark conversation. Even the shamrocks, which she was allowed to use, have a spiritual context, as Patrick used the three-leaf clover to explain the Trinity to the Druids who controlled Ireland during his initial period of evangelism.

Yes, it is important to be faithful and true, but on the other hand, it is just as important to be balanced and reasonable. One of the issues that came up during one of the discussions on this chapter (it became the tenth question on my study notes) was how you would relate a movie like *The Passion of the Christ* to the concerns of this chapter. The crux of the discussion centered on the problem of all films being representational, not symbolic, while, on the other hand, the possibility of it being used for worship was extremely low. We all had mixed feelings since it took almost a year before I got the overwhelming image of [James Caviezel](#) out of my head when I thought of the crucifixion. It still, at times, impinges on me to this day.

I know this chapter touches on sensitive issues, ones that many from liturgical, Orthodox, and Catholic backgrounds will find too stringent. I only ask that you approach the arguments Packer makes with a spirit of humility and discernment. Remember, God will never ask you what [insert church authority here] or Dr. Packer said for you to do or think; he will ask you what you did and thought after your own honest study of scripture to show yourself approved.

Grace and peace be to you this day.

Chapter 5: God Incarnate

Today's theme: The Word became flesh.

Scriptural background: [John 1:14](#). "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld *His glory, the glory as of the only begotten* of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Quotes for the week

"I have always had a dread of becoming a passenger in life." Princess Margrethe of Denmark. "On necessity of independent achievement." *Life*, January 12, 1968

"Charm is a glow within a woman that casts a most becoming light on others." John Mason Brown. *Vogue*, November 15, 1956

"You can get help from teachers, but you are going to have to learn a lot by yourself, sitting alone in a room." Theodor Geisel ("Dr Seuss"). "On becoming a writer," *NY Times*, May 21, 1986

Concern: Do we understand who Jesus is?

"True God, from true God." Nicene Creed:

Theologically, we could say he is the human expression of all that is knowable of the Godhead.

1. Do you ever doubt that Jesus is God? Why do you think some people claiming to be Christians do not accept his unique divinity?

2. What is the difference between being divine and being God? Why is this distinction important?

What to Do Next

Continue *Section One* by reading Chapter Six: *He Shall Testify*. Meditate on the “three in one” and what that means to the Christian’s understanding of God’s nature, especially the work of the Holy Spirit.

Goal: Never diminish the incarnation's significance or the awe it inspires.

When the Apostle Paul suggests that we should have the same sacrificial attitude as Jesus Christ, who laid aside his Godly prerogatives, how can we deny anything that he asks of us after considering what he was willing to do for us?

Meditation on Chapter Five: God Incarnate

For those of you who love dealing with the hard questions and the deepest mysteries, chapter five of *Knowing God* addresses the greatest mystery of the Christian faith, the incarnation of God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, as the son of Mary, Jesus of Nazareth, and the man not who would be, *but is* God.

The Word became flesh. These are the four most important words in the history of the human race. The apostle John spoke them midway through the prologue of chapter one of his Gospel.

Packer begins this part of his study by pointing out the historical problems people have had with the gospel of Jesus Christ: his virgin birth, the miracles, atonement, and resurrection. But, the biggest stumbling block, the bite that won’t go down, dwarfing all the others combined, is the claim that Jesus is *God made man*. Somehow, the infinite Son expressed himself in the finite body of a human being, born of a woman, as a dependent baby who grew and matured and eventually became a man. That is just too hard for much of humanity to accept.

Even for believers, the Incarnation is beyond imagining, and the more you think about it, the more difficult it becomes, with “what abouts” and “but hows” springing up at every turn. It is here, on this rock of Christian theology, that the Jews, various heretics, Muslims, and most of all, secular Enlightenment mankind breaks, losing any possibility of belief. It is here they are confronted with what C. S. Lewis addresses in his famous arguments in *Mere Christianity*:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of thing Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to...

...There is no halfway house and there is no parallel in other religions. If you had gone to Buddha and said ‘Are you the son of Bramah?’ he would have said ‘My son, you are still in the veil of illusion’. If you had gone to Socrates and asked, ‘Are you Zeus’ he would have laughed at you. If you had gone to Mohammed and asked ‘Are you Allah?’ he would first have rent his clothes and then cut your head off. If you had asked Confucius ‘Are you heaven?’ I think he would probably have replied, ‘Remarks which are not in accordance with nature are in bad taste.’ The idea of a great moral teacher saying what Christ said is out of the question. In my opinion, the only person who can say that sort of thing is either God or a complete lunatic suffering from that form of delusion which undermines the whole mind of man. If you think you are a poached egg, when you are not looking for a piece of toast to suit you, you may be sane,

but if you think you are God, there is no chance for you. We may note in passing that He was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He did not produce that effect on any of the people who actually met Him. He produced mainly three effects — Hatred — Terror — Adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild approval.'

No, Jesus was a liar, a lunatic, or the Son of God. ***You only get to choose one.***

However, that brings us to another problem. The phrase “Son of God” carried baggage, tainted in the minds of those who interacted with Jesus and later with John through his gospel. As a result, John begins his gospel with the famous prologue ([John 1:1-18](#)) in which he tries to pin down beyond misinterpretation the eternal deity of the Son in Jesus Christ. Packer spends several pages expounding on those verses, ending with:

The Son of God is the Word of God. We see what the Word itself is; well, that is what the Son is. Such is the prologue's message.

When, therefore, the bible proclaims Jesus as the Son of God, the statement is meant as an assertion of his distinct personal deity. The Christmas message rests on the staggering fact that the child in the manger was—God.

From there, Packer deals with the fact that the Son was a real baby, made like his brothers (all of us) in every way, but pure and without sin. He quotes Wesley's words:

Our God contracted to a span; Incomprehensibly made man.

Why? Well, to die. To bring salvation to the unsavable, redemption to the unredeemable, to do what only God could do, and to know that while we were still sinners, he died for us.

Packer then deals with the problem and misuse of kenosis and the various theories of what the Son left behind (if anything) when he took on flesh in time and space. He quotes part of Anglican Article 2 of the Thirty-nine Articles, which says in its entirety:

II. Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man.

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

The problem at the root of Jesus' “emptying” goes straight to the heart of everything he did and said. Either we give complete divine authority to all of his statements and actions, accepting what he said about the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament, or we have to call everything into question, which is what modern critics have done. Packer tackles these issues carefully and comprehensively and rejects the kenosis theory in the end.

From there he talks about the poverty of Jesus and the “Christmas spirit.” He proclaims that “Spending and being spent” is what our goal should be. Do this and you will get the spiritual quickening so many seek after. He closes with three biblical quotes:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9

Let this same attitude and purpose of mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus... [Philippians 2:5](#)

I will run the way of Your commandments when You give me a heart that is willing. [Psalm 119:32](#)

There you have it, the great mystery and the stumbling block addressed. Remember, on this one

point, all other points hinge. If you cannot accept this keystone in the arch of the Christian faith, nothing else makes much sense, and the Gospel is reduced to a pile of rubble; with it, everything else fits and works and falls into place, arching over you in glorious splendor, holding up the vast weight of the faith once delivered unto the saints.

Grace and peace and understanding be yours.

Chapter 6: He Shall Testify

Today's theme: Giving a proper place to the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit

Scriptural background: [Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 20](#); [3:6, 13, 22](#) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Quotes for the week

"The Holy Spirit makes a man a Christian, and if he is a Christian through the work of the Holy Spirit, that same Spirit draws him to other Christians in the church. An individual Christian is not Christian at all." John Rudolph Brokhoff, Author, seminary professor, and pastor.

"When God knows, I'm toss'd about
Either with despair or doubt;
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!"

From *Litany to the Holy Spirit*, Robert Herrick. 1591–1674

Concern: The Holy Spirit will either be too important or not important enough

We err when we elevate the Holy Spirit too highly or reduce his stature and ministry. For some Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is all that matters, while for many liturgical Christians, it is almost an afterthought if thought about at all.

"We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son." Nicene Creed (see [Resources](#))

1. Why is a balanced view of the Godhead important? Have you been able to maintain that balance in your own life? How or how not?

2. When did the Holy Spirit become personally real for you? What prompted this beginning?

What to Do Next

Review *Section One: Know The Lord*. Consider what God has revealed to you about Himself in your study of this section and how it might change your life going forward

Goal: Always give the Holy Spirit His proper place in the Godhead.

Remember, Jesus called the Holy Spirit counselor, the one who would guide us into all truth. How can He do his proper work within us if we do not respect him and listen to Him?

Meditation on Chapter Six: He Shall Testify

As Christians, we believe God has revealed himself to us through many vehicles, primarily through his Word. In chapter six of *Knowing God*, Dr. Packer addresses the third person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who testifies to Jesus Christ, the eternal Son among his other functions.

Having introduced us to the incarnate Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, in the last chapter, Dr. Packer now looks to the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost in older translations), the third person of the Godhead. As an aside, I would like to say that I prefer using the Holy Spirit to the Holy Ghost. Ghosts generally are considered the spirit of a deceased person or other entity, which could never be applied to the third person of the Godhead. Spirit does not carry that linguistic/sociological baggage.

Dr. Packer starts by quoting the Lesser Doxology (Greater Doxology, the Gloria in Excelsis Deo):

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.

This prayer of praise (re: [Mathew 28:19](#)), which has been used within various Christian liturgies for almost two millennia, makes a definitive statement about how the Christian church views the Godhead, not as three Gods, but as one God expressed as three persons; as St. Patrick used to say, as one clover with three leaves. According to tradition, Patrick used the Shamrock to explain this Christian mystery to the people of Ireland. For many people, the Trinity is a complicated doctrine they could do without. However, rather than being a stumbling block, it is *central* to understanding the very nature of our God, our salvation, and our relationship with each.

Over the history of the Christian Church, believers have generally fallen into the extremes of elevating too highly or reducing too much the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed expresses a balanced view in formulating the third person of the Trinity.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

While also Lord, the Spirit proceeds from and is tasked by the Father and Son. In his work, He witnesses not to himself but to those who sent him, thus the title of this chapter: He Shall Testify.

Dr. Packer wonders aloud why we don't recite the Athanasian Creed in public worship today as we did in the past. Rather than linking to this great creed of the faith, I believe it is important to include the whole creed so that the rest of our discussion can be informed by it. It is also in the Resources Section.

The Creed of Saint Athanasius

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise, the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be both God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved is must think thus of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood; Who, although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

Central to Packer's argument in this chapter is John's Gospel. John presents the Spirit as the Holy Spirit ([John 14:17, 26](#)) and it is in [John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7](#), that Jesus calls the Holy Spirit a comforter, a divine personage who will act, abide, remind, teach, and testify.

The work of the Holy Spirit is so important that Packer bluntly says:

Why, were it not for the work of the Holy Spirit, there would be no gospel, faith, church, or Christianity in the world at all. In the first place, without the Holy Spirit, there would be no gospel and no New Testament.

Chapter 6: He Shall Testify / Meditation on Chapter Six: He Shall Testify

Over the history of the church and even today, despite the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, the Holy Spirit, though divine and a member of the Holy Trinity, is largely ignored. Despite that, the abiding ministry of the Holy Spirit within the church is to testify to, for, and about Christ, the Son of God, by:

Illuminating: opening blinded eyes, restoring spiritual vision, enabling sinners to see that the gospel is indeed God's truth, Scripture is indeed God's Word, and Christ is indeed God's Son.

Often, apologetics is presented as a means to rationally state the gospel in a way that breaks down all barriers to belief. It is said to be a way of proving the truth of Christianity by logical argument.

Packer counters with:

Nobody can prove the truth of Christianity except the Holy Spirit, by his almighty work of renewing the blinded heart. It is the sovereign prerogative of Christ's Spirit to convince men's consciences of the truth of Christ's gospel. Christ's human witnesses must learn to ground their hopes of success not on clever presentation of the truth by man but on powerful demonstrations of the truth by the Spirit.

How, then, should we respond to the Holy Spirit? One way, Packer argues, is to acknowledge, apply, and authenticate our witness with the Holy Scriptures, which are the work of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said, "he shall testify," and as the angel speaking to John said seven times (the number of perfection):

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The real question, then, is, are we listening?

Review of Section One: Know the Lord

Today's theme: Pondering the significance of knowing the Lord and not just knowing God.

Scriptural background: [Psalm 89:8](#) "O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you."

Quotes for the week

"The Holy Spirit makes a man a Christian, and if he is a Christian through the work of the Holy Spirit, that same Spirit draws him to other Christians in the church. An individual Christian is not Christian at all." John Rudolph Brokhoff, Author, seminary professor and pastor.

"If there is one God and one Lord, then those who celebrate and worship this one God and Lord become one people, transcending differences of race, gender, class and geography." N. T. Wright, *Ex Auditu*, "Christology and the Incarnation." Volume 7, 1991

Concern: That we never forget God's Lordship

Remember that among all of God's truths is the primary fact of His Lordship. It is interesting that we call the prayer that Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer. While it is true that Jesus is Lord, the prayer itself harkens not just to our Father but also to He who is hallowed, who is coming, and to whom and whose will we need to submit ourselves, in essence, the *Lord of Lords*.

1. When you think of the Lord, have you always thought of Jesus in that category or considered the Father to be the Lord? Has your view changed as you have studied this section?

In Review of chapters One through Six

1. Do you now consider yourself a traveler? Why or why not?

6. How strong is your immunity to the briars and brambles of the human condition? Explain.

7. What do you now consider idolatrous? Why?

8. Is there anything you used to think was idolatrous that you now believe is not? Why?

9. What new aspect of the Incarnation is now part of your thinking? Explain.

Review of Section One: Know the Lord / What to Do Next

10. How has the meaning of Lord changed for you? If it has not, why not?

11. Have you learned anything new about the Godhead: Father, Son, Holy Spirit? If so, what?

What to Do Next

Begin *Section Two* by reading Chapter Seven: *God Unchanging*. Meditate on what it means when Scripture says that God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Think about how this truth should impact your daily life.

Goal: Always remember that God “is” and the beginning of His *isness* is His Lordship.

Remember, fear of the *Lord* is the beginning of wisdom. For any of the other aspects of God, His relationship, and His revelation to have meaning in our lives, He must first be our Lord.

Review Meditation for Section One: Know the Lord

Packer's first section states, "Every Christian desires to *know the Lord*." The word "know" in the Bible connotes both understanding and intimate experience, so it is a good choice for the beginning section of Knowing God. In addition to introducing us to the concepts of knowing, Packer applies that knowledge to the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity of Christian belief.

I want to add one thought about the intimacy of knowing. The Bible usually applies to how husbands and wives know each other and requires certain rules and limitations to be observed, such as only after marriage and not restricting access. These concepts can be carried through to our knowing God since it can only occur after salvation (the unsaved cannot know God, only about Him), and access is not restricted because, in Christ, we can boldly approach the throne of grace. Keep this analogy in mind as you grow in your knowledge of God.

Earlier, in the introduction to Section One, I noted that Dr. Packer begins by dealing with the nature and focus of the study. He looks at theology and the people who study it. He discusses the nature of knowing and being known and how that applies to our relationship with God. Then he looks at God and his revelation about himself as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He introduces the Trinity through the incarnation and fleshes it out with the one who testifies the Holy Spirit. This section is the foundation for the two following sections.

I would add that Section One is also challenging but brings with its completion several orders of

magnitude greater appreciation and understanding of the truths and blessings that follow. Section One is the foundation for Section Two: Behold Your God, and Section Three: If God Be for Us...

It is important to remember that Packer does not title this section *Know your God*, but *Know the Lord*. [Psalm 89:8](#) speaks to this:

O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

Many people believe in God but have difficulty accepting Him as Lord. They have a “He does his thing, I’ll do mine” attitude. They are not agnostics or even deists who generally believe that God is irrelevant to their personal lives. No, they have a problem with anyone, including God, telling them what to do. Because of that, intimate knowledge of their Lord and God is not a high priority, if any priority at all.

Turning to the book itself, it is hard to summarize the richness of the Preface and the first six chapters in one short post, but there are several high points we need to remember. But before we get specific, I would like to say that I find it very revealing that we call the prayer that Jesus taught us, *The Lord’s Prayer*. While it is true that scripture portrays Jesus as Lord, the prayer he used to model all prayer harkens not just to our heavenly Father but also to the One who is hallowed, the One who is coming, and the One to whom and to whose will we need to submit ourselves. It is a prayer to the Lord of Lords, to the “who is like you?” of Psalm 89.

Let us start our review by remembering that we are called to be travelers, not balconeers, walkers, not watchers. Jesus desired those who called upon him to take up their crosses and follow him. You cannot do that sitting on your rump in some safe, dispassionate place, unengaged and uninvolved. You must step out into the world, yet as Jesus cautioned, being in but not of the world. Putting our foot upon the road is both dangerous and consuming, but remembering Jesus’ admonition in the Sermon on the Mount, what does it profit you to gain anything (safety, peace, quiet, whatever) and, in the process, lose your soul? So, we begin by getting on that narrow road and following in the Master’s footsteps.

Once committed to the road, we must embrace the need for and practice of theology. We study God to know him like a husband studies his wife or parents study their child to know them. This is where the Scriptures and meditation come into play since our direct contact with God, by design, is limited. (Yes, it is a mystery why, but that is the way He wants it, and his direct intercession is rare and never guaranteed.) We read, mark, and inwardly digest (meditate on) the scriptures to progress from knowing about to knowing of our God, the one in whom we live and move and have our being.

As we come to know our God better, we come to trust him more completely. And because of that, we, like the Apostle Paul, can meet every circumstance of life, good or ill, because we too can do all things through Him who gives us strength. We are not alone on our journey. He is there to share our joys and support us in our sorrows, to correct us when we fall and make mistakes, and to tell us well done, calling us good and faithful when we are obedient.

As we come to know God and seriously embrace the journey, we begin to throw off anything that would prevent our continued progress, especially the problems of idolatry. Nothing can replace the God we are coming to know. We distrust all non-symbolic representations of God since we immediately see the limiting factors these depictions place on the reality of the God with whom we have to do. We cannot box him in or limit him by our representations, no matter how lofty or seemingly effective they appear to be. Ultimately, they are what they are, limits on those who cannot be limited.

In addition, we lay aside all of the other things that become *little idols* for us, whether they are possessions (house, car, clothes (shoes for some women), church buildings, anything material),

associations (our degrees, accomplishments, sports teams, even family and children within proper context), or desires (entertainments, drugs, alcohol, whatever ensnares us). God is our Lord and our focus, number one in our life. Everything else is in second place.

However, speaking of icons, the Father, executing his plan of redemption, did give us one icon, one representation that is always permissible: Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son. Jesus is the Icon of God the Father. Our Lord told his disciples, in response to their request to show them the Father, “*He who has seen me has seen the Father.*” Yet this incarnation of the Word, the eternal Son into human flesh and human frailty carried his problems for our understanding and knowing of our God.

The incarnate Son introduced into the theology of God the concept of multiple persons in the one God of Israel. The famous passage from [Deuteronomy 6:4](#), “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” is only apparently in opposition to the idea of a Godhead of multiple persons as one God. The Hebrew word one (*echad*) in the passage can also mean unity, which is one of its meanings, harking back to the words of God at man’s creation: “Let us make man in our image.”

However, while we are still coming to terms with that profound revelation, Dr. Packer introduces us to the Holy Spirit, the one who testifies to, counsels, teaches, and comforts us, the third person of the Godhead. Nevertheless, despite definitive church counsels and creeds (Nicene and Athanasian), this understanding of our God’s multiple yet singular nature has been a historic object of contention, both within and without the Church. I believe that Dr. Packer does an excellent job of making this doctrine, which is foundational to the heart of our faith, both understandable and believable.

For many people studying this book, this initial section is the first time they have ever had to fully and without evasion address the nature of God, the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This section prevents them from letting the issues slide by, instead forcing them to address the triune nature of God head-on. That doesn’t mean that Packer overstresses difficult theology. He doesn’t, yet he finds a way to present the issues clearly and effectively to even the least studious Christians.

There is no way to complete this first section, read the arguments in the text, work through the study questions we have used, and still be the same person at the end. Each time I do this exercise, it changes me, and I have seen it change everyone who goes through this effort with me. It will change you. You would have to fight it and abandon the study so it does not affect you to prevent this. Please embrace the changes God is working within you, remembering that we all are growing children in the faith, no matter how far we think we have come.

Congratulations! Having accomplished this first section, we now have a foundation to proceed to in section two, which covers the attributes of God. It is aptly named Behold Your God. Behold is an interesting word encompassing both seeing *and* understanding something. Isn’t that what we want? Don’t we want to both see our God and to understand Him; don’t we want to know him? With that purpose in mind, we are prepared to move into the second section of Knowing God: ***Behold Your God***

Resources

Lord's Prayer

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom
and the power and the glory. Amen"

Nicene Creed

I/We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I/we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I/we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I/we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I/we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Creed of Saint Athanasius

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is

Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighty, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be both God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved is must think thus of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood; Who, although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.