

Victory Christian Center (VCC)

REAL Bible Study: New Series

How to Know God, 5-16-18

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How to Know God

Romans 1: 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who [a]suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is [b] manifest [c] in them, for God has shown *it* to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [d] Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Romans 1:18-20 describes that everyone has an intuitive knowledge of the wrath of God on the inside of them. Beginning in Romans 1:21, Paul was describing the progressive steps that people take away from that God-breathed revelation.

The fact that people depart from that revelation doesn't void the fact that God has placed it there. The steps described here in walking away from that revelation apply to anything the Lord has shown us or spoken to us.

The first step that people take away from any revelation that God has given them is they fail to glorify Him as God. The word "glorified" means "to render (or esteem) glorious" (Strong's Concordance). The word "esteem" means "to place a high value on; respect; prize" and "to judge to be; consider" (Houghton Mifflin American Heritage Electronic Dictionary). Basically, people magnify, esteem, or place a greater value on something other than God.

Moses esteemed reproach to be greater than riches (Hebrews 11:26). Jesus disesteemed the suffering of the cross and focused instead on those who would be freed through His offering (Hebrews 12:2).

Psalms 69:30 says that we "magnify" God (one of the definitions of glorify) with thanksgiving. The same Greek word that was translated "glorified" in Romans 1:21 was also translated "magnify" in Romans 11:13.

Also, Jesus said the leper who returned and gave Him thanks for his healing had glorified Him (Luke 17:16-18). In Romans 4:19-21, Abraham "was strong in faith, giving glory to God". He esteemed God's promise more than he valued anything else.

For instance, the doctor says you are going to die. That won't stop you from being healed unless you place a higher value on what the doctor says than on what God says.

If you glorify God instead of the sickness, you will retain the revelation and sickness will have to flee, because "to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

So, you should begin to magnify the Lord instead of the negative report. You do that by controlling your heart through controlling your thinking.

Your thoughts magnify whatever you focus your thinking upon. If you see marital problems, what should you do? You should go to God's Word and magnify what God says instead of what you see.

In Mark 6:41, Jesus "looked up" and blessed the five loaves of bread and two fish before dividing them among the multitude. The Greek word that was translated "looked up" was translated "receive sight" (or some form of this) fifteen times.

This is referring to Jesus seeing with His spiritual eyes into the supernatural realm of God instead of being bound to the natural realm, where the five loaves and two fish were not enough. He glorified God's ability beyond the limitations of the natural.

The spies who searched out the land of Canaan in Numbers 13 are classic examples of people who glorified the problem more than the Problem Solver. This took all thankfulness away, and their imaginations became vain.

They had more to be thankful about than any of their ancestors, yet they forgot all that God had done for them and complained, glorifying the negative. The result was that they died in the wilderness and never saw the Promised Land.

In Hebrews 12:2, Jesus set joy before Him and despised the shame of the cross. The Greek word that was translated "despising" there means to "disesteem" (Strong's Concordance). Jesus glorified the good and disesteemed the bad. That's why He was able to endure the cross.

In [Hebrews 12:3](#), we are told to consider Jesus and what He went through lest we be weary and faint in our minds. Our minds are where the battle is being fought. Those who rule in absolute victory don't usually have things different on the outside, but they think differently on the inside.

The second step away from the revelation of God is not being thankful. Thankfulness involves memory, humility, and reflection. Busy people are not usually thankful. They don't have time for reflection.

Again, [Psalms 69:30](#) says that thanksgiving magnifies God. It takes time and effort to remember and be thankful. [2 Timothy 3:1-2](#) says that one of the signs of apostasy in the last days is that people will be unthankful.

That characterizes our day and age. To be thankful, one has to remember. [Psalms 103:2](#) says to "forget not all his benefits." The reason we were commanded not to forget is because it is our tendency to forget. We will forget if we don't make an effort to remember. Thankfulness helps us remember.

The next thing mentioned in [Romans 1:21](#) is imagination ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)). Imagination is the main part of our memory. If we don't glorify God and become thankful, our imagination just naturally begins to start picturing what we focus on. We picture and remember the negative. That's a vain imagination.

The fourth and final progressive step away from God and/or any revelation we get from Him is that our foolish hearts becomes darkened. [Ephesians 4:18](#) speaks both of the blindness of the heart and of the understanding being darkened.

The foolish, darkened heart being spoken of here is the heart of a person whose understanding (imagination) [Proverbs 15:28](#)) is vain, or negative, and that makes them hardhearted (see my note at [Mark 6:52](#)).

SUMMARY

[Romans 1:21](#): As Paul explained in [Romans 1:18-20](#), [Romans 1:18](#)), all people who have ever lived have had God reveal Himself to them, but this verse is explaining that revelation is not always received. Each individual has the freedom of choice.

In [Romans 1:21-23](#), Paul described different characteristics of those who reject God's revelation. These could also be descriptive of progressive steps that one takes away from the true revelation of God.

The first step in rejecting God is not to glorify Him as the supreme, all-knowing, unquestionable God. This was what happened with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

They questioned God's intent behind His command ([Genesis 3:1-6](#)). They ceased to magnify and honor God like they once did. Submission to God as supreme is always humbling, and therefore "self" rebels. This is very prevalent today.

Second, they were not thankful. This is always a sign that self is exalting itself above God. A selfless person can be content with very little. A self-centered person cannot be satisfied. Thankfulness is a sign of humility, and cultivating a life of thankfulness will help keep "self" in its proper place.

After these first two steps have been taken, then the individual's mind is free to begin imagining foolish, wicked, and idolatrous thoughts. This leads to a hardened heart ("foolish heart was darkened," [Mark 6:52](#)) and being reprobate [Romans 1:28](#)).