



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Most Important Thing About a Man

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule

- **Tuesday, January 10, 7 AM in HHR #5**
-Breakfast Provided
- **Tuesday, January 10, 8:30 PM in Room #301**
(Speaker Pro-Tem's office)

Worry abounds as this country faces numerous uncertainties; a struggling economy, a heated campaign season, declining moral conscience, along with many others. But yet, for the one who knows God, there is peace.

A.W. Tozer wrote, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." In other words, it is not one's circumstances or one's personality given that dictate his or her decisions and actions. It is what is understood about God--His character, attributes and works--that gives ultimate guidance; even for the "atheist".

It is my desire to proclaim the greatness and glory of God in the Missouri state capitol by walking through Isaiah 40-48. By exalting the majesty of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, I pray that you will "taste and see that the LORD is good" (Psa. 34:8). Friend, true wisdom, true life and true security are only found in knowing God.

John Calvin wrote, "Today, all sorts of subjects are eagerly pursued; but the knowledge of God is neglected...Yet to know God is man's chief end, and justifies his existence. Even if a hundred lives were ours, this one aim would be sufficient for them all."

INTRODUCTION

A story from Scripture illustrates the need to have a proper knowledge of God. In 1 Kings 20, Ben-Hadad and his vast Aramean army attacked the Northern Kingdom of Israel and King Ahab's small forces. But God promised to protect the kingdom and overwhelmingly defeated Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 20:1-21). The following spring Ben-Hadad's servants came to him and said, "Their gods are gods of the mountains, therefore they were stronger than we; but rather let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we will be stronger than they" (20:23). So he tried again. But he soon found that Israel's Yahweh God was not only the God of the mountains, but also the plains and God soundly defeated him again (20:26-29).

KNOWING GOD

A.W. Tozer wrote, "the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like."³ Apply this to Ben-Hadad's decisions. First of all, if he had correct thoughts about God, he would not have been so foolish as to attack God's people. Secondly, he would not have thought that Israel's God was only of the mountains, but also God of the valleys for He is omnipresent.

The pursuit of knowing God is the most practical of pursuits in a person's life. By understanding that God is sovereign, wise and good gives peace to an uncertain future. By grasping the holiness of God, one can see the true nature of sin and more fully praise the wonder of His amazing grace.

Knowing that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe bestows on Him the right to declare what is right and wrong; it has not been left up to us to make our own judgments of what is "right in our own eyes."

A proper understanding of God provides the *moral reason why* behind the commands for His laws and commands come from His very nature. It also provides a right motivation for proper living. Presenting or living out the law without the biblical motivation is nothing more than "moralism." And an anchorless "moralism" leads to either "legalism" (keeping the rules to be right with God—which is impossible) or "situational ethics" (right and wrong is simply based on the situation at hand and is bound to change).

Thus, the pursuit of knowing God, as He has revealed Himself in Scripture (not what we make up in our own minds), is quite practical and not solely a "scholarly theologian's mental exercise." It is also pursuit commanded in Scripture:

Hosea 6:6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.⁴

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #301

TRUMAN BUILDING: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, 4THFLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

Missouri

The Most Important Thing About a Person

Two disclaimers are in order. First, just because one *knows about* God doesn't mean that one *knows* God. I know many things about my boyhood baseball hero, George Brett, but I do not know him. In the same way, one may know and expound great things about God, but still not have a reconciled relationship with Him.⁵ Secondly, this is a pursuit which will never be completed. Our series will come to a stop some day, but we will never exhaust all there is to know about God.

THINKING RIGHTLY ABOUT GOD

Not only must one have a knowledge of God, but one must think rightly about God. Tozer again writes, "A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God."⁶

WHAT COMES INTO OUR MINDS WHEN WE THINK ABOUT GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT US.

—A.W. TOZER

It plays out like this: If you hold a high view of God; a biblical view of God, you will desire to live a life that honors and glorifies Him. You will want to know and do that which pleases Him. If you have no view of God, then you will just seek to please yourself in the short miserable time that you have here on earth. If you have a low view of God, then God will not be taken seriously; you will be casual toward Him and your heart will not be set to fully please Him. If you have wrong thoughts about God, more than likely, you will do wrong things thinking you are doing what is right; or you may do good things, but with incorrect motives and actions.

Our lives become inconsistent, confusing, and without peace when we do not know our God. We lose courage to stand for truth. We can even lose track of truth because we become easily deceived. We can get to the point where we do not want to study His Word, or communicate with Him in prayer. We can lose the conviction to do what is right and we lose our motivation to stay pure, to stay away from sin.

CONCLUSION

In Romans 4, the Apostle Paul showed that justification before God comes through faith and not works. He referred to the event in Abraham's life in which God made the incredible promise that Abraham would be the father of many people and all the world would be blessed through his family. The problem was that Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had no children. The promise was first given when Abraham was 75 years old and Sarah was 65, and later restated when Abraham was 99 and Sarah was 89. But Paul wrote about Abraham, "In hope against hope he believed" (4:18a). Abraham looked at his body and his wife's body which nature said "ain't no way—not gonna' happen." But he recalled God's promise that she will have a baby next year and was "fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (4:21).

How could Abraham believe such a crazy thing? Romans 4:17 holds the key:

Romans 4:17 ...in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Abraham believed in God who can do two things mankind will never do: give life to the dead and create something out of nothing.

In examining Isaiah 40-48, we will be studying God's holiness, majesty, omnipotence, omniscience, mercy, justice, grace, love, wrath, goodness, glory, and His names. We will also see how these glorious attributes affect our daily lives. This will not just be some brain expansion exercise. Rather, I pray, this series will be challenging, convicting, encouraging and something that will help us focus on that for which we were created and redeemed—to proclaim the greatness and glory of God.

¹ A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1961), 1.

² John Calvin, quoted in the introduction of *Institutes of Christian Religion*, edited by John T. McNeill, translated by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:lxix.

³ Tozer, 1.

⁴ Cf. John 17: 3; Psalm 46:10

⁵ While saying this, it is also true that one cannot claim to "know God" (which includes faith, love, trust, obedience) without knowing anything about Him. A.W. Pink wrote, "An unknown God can neither be trusted, served nor worshipped." (*The Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975), 7.

⁶ Tozer, 2.