

Saying of John Wycliffe

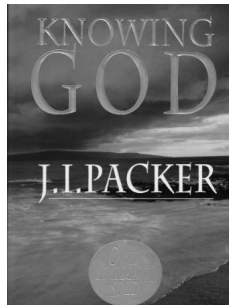
"The gospel alone is sufficient to rule the lives of Christians everywhere...any additional rules made to govern men's conduct added nothing to the perfection already found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Take and Read

From Our Library

Reviews

A lifelong pursuit of knowing God should embody the Christian's existence. According to eminent theologian J.I. Packer, however, Christians have become enchanted by modern skepticism and have joined the "gigantic conspiracy of misdirection" by failing to put first things first. *Knowing God* aims to redirect our attention to the simple, deep truth that to know God is to love His Word. What began as a number of consecutive articles angled for "honest, no-nonsense readers who were fed up with facile Christian verbiage" in 1973, *Knowing God* has become a contemporary classic by creating "small studies out of great subjects." Each chapter is so specific in focus (covering topics such as the trinity, election, God's wrath, and God's sovereignty), that each succeeding chapter's theology seems to rival the next, until one's mind is so expanded that one's entire view of God has changed. The lazy and faint-hearted should be warned about this timeless work--God is magnified, the sinner is humbled, and the saint encouraged. While this book gives us information about God with clarity and grace, it does much more---it aids us in actually knowing Him, in building our relationship with Him, and helps draw us closer to Him in love and worship.



Reviews

"A spiritual classic ... The truth he handles fires the heart." - **John Stott**

"Dr. Packer's volume says it simply, says it best." - **Joni Eareckson Tada**

"Has the rare ability to deal with profound and basic spiritual truths in a practical and highly readable way." - **Billy Graham**

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"...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" Romans 8:37.

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Reading from A.W. Tozer

The Christian life cannot feed on negatives: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Philippians 3:13).

The Christian is saved from his past sins. With these he simply has nothing more to do; they are among the things to be forgotten as the night is forgotten at the dawning of the day.

The Christian is also saved from the wrath to come. With this also he has nothing to do. The wrath of God exists, but not for him. Sin and wrath have a cause and effect relationship, and because for the Christian sin is cancelled, wrath is cancelled also. To be engrossed still in what we have been saved from is to live in a state of negation.

We are not called to fellowship with nonexistence. We are called to things that exist in truth, to positive things, and it is as we become occupied with these that health comes to the soul.

Spiritual life cannot feed on negatives. The man who is constantly reciting the evils of his unconverted days is looking in the wrong direction. He is like a man trying to run a race while looking back over his shoulder!

There is an art of forgetting, and every Christian should become skilled in it. Forgetting the things which are behind is a positive necessity if we are to become more than mere babes in Christ.

And here's the good part: into the empty world vacated by our sins and failures rushes the blessed Spirit of God, bringing with Him everything new. New life, new hope, new enjoyments, new interests, new purposeful toil, and best of all a new and satisfying object toward which to direct our soul's enraptured gaze!

Catechism Corner

Question 76 To whom is Baptism to be administered?

Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God, (Acts 2:38; Matthew 3:6; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12,36,37; Acts 10:47,48) and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other.

Question 77 Are the infants of such as are professing to be baptized?

The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptised, because there is neither command nor example in the Holy Scriptures for their baptism. (Exodus 23:13; Proverbs 30:6)

Question 78 How is baptism rightly administered?

Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water, (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the apostles, (Matthew 28:19,20) and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body, after the tradition of men. (John 4:1,2; Acts 8:38,39)

Question 79 What is the duty of such as are rightly baptized?

It is the duty of such as are rightly baptized, to give up themselves to some particular and orderly Church of Jesus Christ, (Acts 2:47; Acts 9:26; 1Peter 2:5) that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Luke 1:6)

A Devotion from the Puritans

Plenteous redemption: "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption" (Psalm 130:7).

The prophet did not command them to hope in the Lord because they were the seed of Abraham, the special people of God, made partakers of privileges above all the people in the world; much less because of their worthiness in themselves; but merely on account of mercy in God. The mercy of God, and the redemption taht is with him, is the only ground to sinners for hope and confidence.

Two points should be noticed in this grace. The fact is that it is *plenteous*, or abundant. What principally discourages distressed and guilty souls from a comfortable waiting on God is their fears lest they should not obtain mercy from him. They fear that their sins are too great and so many, that it is impossible they should find acceptance with God. The psalmist removes this ground of despondency and unbelief by representing the fullness, the plenty, the boundless abundance of the mercy of God. It is such a mercy as will surely fit the condition of the greatest sinners in their greatest depths. The stores of God's mercy are inexhaustible.

The second is the implication in the word itself, of the relation which the goodness and grace of God have to *the blood of Christ*. That is why it is called redemption. When we speak about redemption we are talking about the payment of a price to secure the liberty of the person enslaved. Now the price whereby we are set free and bought for God is the shed blood of Christ. Because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross a way is made for the exercise of God's mercy towards sinners. Redemption, which properly speaks about actual deliverance, is said to be with God, or in him. The causes of redemption are God's own grace, and the blood of Christ, prepared for the redeeming of believers from sin and trouble to his own glory. And herein lies the encouragement: nothing but God himself can give us confidence to go to him.

Adapted from *The Forgiveness of Sins* (pp.424-425), by John Owen.

Love (Part 2)

The second greatest commandment is, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Every normal human being has a sense of his own spiritual dignity written on his heart. He will call no man good who fails to give spontaneous signs of receiving his dignity. Thus, self-love is assumed; we are to love our neighbour with the same degree of zeal and consistency with which we love ourselves. And since there is no practical limit to the claims of self-love, there is no practical limit to our duty toward a neighbour.

As Christ prepared to leave the world, he said to his disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). Moses gave form to the law of love (Deut. 6:5), but only Christ could give it substance. The life of Christ is the final norm by which a Christian measures virtue in himself and others. Christ perfected human nature by loving God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself.

Love may or may not be accompanied by personal affection. We can be kind and thoughtful to a person, even though we may dislike him. Christ commands us to love even our enemies. "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?...You, therefore, must be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt.5:46-48). Since God loved us while we were yet in our sins (Rom.5:8), we possess a vital motive for loving those who are unlovely.

Love is the mark of a true disciple. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Humility and love are precisely the graces which the men of the world can understand, if they do not comprehend doctrines. They are the graces about which there is no mystery, and they are within the reach of all classes.

Love is the key to happiness as well as virtue, for without love there is no life. A potential suicide may exist, but he does not have life. Since he does not love, he does not enjoy the release which comes from self-surrender. He that saves himself will lose himself.

The Greeks rightly understood that man is not virtuous until he actuates his essence. But the Greeks confused the rational man with the vital man. They thought taht man is good when he is subject to the dictates of reason. But this strategy leaves pride and selfishness intact. A rational man may evade the task of self-surrender, but in doing so he falls short of the glory of God.