

To Understand God

#0354

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 23, 1976

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” Jeremiah 9:23–24.

Among all the various orders that God has created in this world, man is the only creature which can understand God and think the thoughts of God after Him. Now, each thing that God has created fulfills the purpose of its creation. The birds sing their songs and gladden our hearts. The trees produce their fruit. Others have beautiful flowers that gladden us. Everything in nature has its ministry. But I repeat there's only creature that God has made on this planet that can commune with God and understand God and communicate with God, converse with God.

Isn't it too bad that so few human beings enter into those privileges? What a disappointment it must be to our Creator. But oh, how glad He is for each one that responds to His invitation:

“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace...” Job 22:21.

How glad He is when we give Him our hearts. But He desires more than gratitude for the gift of life. He desires us to become well acquainted with His character, His attributes. He wants us to appreciate Him for what He is. And this requires an acquaintance that He wants us to be continually entering into more and more fully.

And so, in our text He says the wise man is not to glory in his wisdom. The man of science is not to boast of his discoveries in astronomy, or biology, or any other field. The man of might is not to glory in his strength. The rich man is not to boast of his riches. All these are gifts of God, strength and riches and wisdom.

But He says, “Don't glory in any of those. But there's something that you may glory in, something that you may enjoy to the fullest, something that if we understand the word aright and use it aright we may boast of.”

What is it? That we understand God and know Him.

Do you know God? Is He your friend? When I say, “Do you know Him?” I do not mean do you comprehend Him. Oh no, not all. We cannot comprehend infinity. And all through eternity we shall ever be developing in our understanding and

appreciation. In a sense, we are as little children getting acquainted with Him. But thank God, as little children it is our privilege to know Him and love Him and appreciate Him, and express our gratitude.

“...Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me...” Jeremiah 9:24.

Isaiah the 55th chapter, just turning back a few pages, verses 8–9, in understanding God we shall need to get on the same wavelength with Him. So, He says:

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For 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.

Does this mean that it is impossible for us to communicate? Not at all, but it does mean, dear friends, that we shall need to lift our sights, enlarge our vision. It means that we shall need to be willing—don’t miss this—willing to be changed, willing to be transformed, willing to have our sense of values modified, changed because He says:

“...My thoughts are not your thoughts...” Isaiah 55:8.

“I don’t look at things the way you do naturally,” He says. “Your ways are not My ways.”

My, I’m glad that His ways are different from our ways, aren’t you? But that doesn’t mean, I repeat, that we can’t get *in* on these things. But obviously, we need to be changed. We need to be transformed. We need to get a different mind. And thank God this is available.

Let’s turn to Roman the 12th chapter and the 2nd verse. We’ll read the first verse with it. Here the apostle makes an appeal to us, and he uses the greatest motive:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God...” Romans 12:1.

By all that God has done for you, by His tender love, I beseech you.

“...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” Romans 12:1.

Now, watch:

“And be not conformed to this world...” Romans 12:2.

As another translation puts it:

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold...” Romans 12:2 (*J. B. Phillips New Testament*).

“...but be ye...” Romans 12:2.

What?

“...transformed...” Romans 12:2.

How?

“...by the renewing of your mind...” Romans 12: 2.

What is the mind for? Why, to think, to reason, to listen to evidence and to weigh it, to come to conclusions. And God wants to transform our minds so that we’ll think straight instead of crooked, think large thoughts instead of petty thoughts. And most of all, that we shall have thoughts of love instead of hate and selfishness.

“...Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”
Romans 12:2.

The New English Bible puts it:

“...Let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed...” Romans 12:2 (*New English Bible*).

May I point out that God’s program for renewing our lives is through the mind? He does not arbitrarily take control of our muscles and cause us to go where we should and cause us to speak the words that we ought to. His control of our lives is through changing our minds. So, He says:

“Come now, and let us reason together...” Isaiah 1:18.

2 Corinthians the 3rd chapter, the 18th verse, when I think of this text, I think of what happens in a camera. As the photographic film is exposed to some scene, a change takes place in that film, a picture is made. This is what is happening in our minds all the while. These billions of brain cells are impressed day by day with that which we see and hear.

Now, this beautiful text:

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Notice, even when we get a glorious view, there’s something more glorious beyond. We’re being changed day by day *from* glory *to* glory, ever brighter, ever higher, ever-larger our concepts. Thank God for this wonderful experience.

But notice, it takes place as we do what? As we behold. The mere passing of time doesn't put a picture on the film, does it? Oh, no. The eye of the camera must be opened. So, the mere passing of time does not produce in us the character of God. The mere passing of time doesn't change our minds to become like His.

The shutter of the mind must be opened. Our eyes and ears must be opened that we may see and hear the revelation of His will. Our hearts must be opened that we will understand and appreciate. And thus, day by day, as surely as the promise of God is true, we shall be changed, transformed into His likeness. Thank God this is what is happening day by day for each of us as we behold the things of God.

We may not be able to measure it, but *He* sees it. And as a gardener rejoices in what is happening with the flowers and the fruit under his care, so God rejoices as our minds become more and more transformed from weed patches into flower beds, vegetable beds, fruit orchards as it were. Our minds become places where the plan of God is being revealed and developed.

Now, the keyword in this text we've just read is "beholding," beholding. The camera is not only dependent upon an opening of the shutter to get a picture but what it's opened *to* is what determines what picture it gets. And so, it is not only a fact that you and I must behold in order to be changed. It's *what* we behold that determines what we're changed into. We become like that which we look at.

Let us turn now to John the 12th chapter and the 32nd verse. Here Christ is speaking of Himself, and He points us to the place where the magnetic influence of His character is exercised:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will..." John 12:32.

What?

"...draw all men unto Me" John 12:32.

Sometimes the children take a little magnet and run it through the dust. What happens? Oh, the magnet picks up iron filings. You know, that magnetic influence is something that is, in a sense, very difficult for science to really explain.

One great scientist connected with General Electric Company said, "The simplest explanation of it is the magnet acts by the will of God."

And that's the truth. My point is, Jesus says, "I am the great magnet. Uplifted on the cross, I will draw all men to Me."

But there's a difference between you and me and the iron filings. The iron has no choice as to whether it responds to the magnet. That's automatic. Its response is fixed. But you and I, if we respond as we're drawn, it's because at each step we choose.

Oh, isn't it wonderful that God has given you and me a choice—that the King of the universe puts all His power, all His wisdom, all His love into the great

endeavor to attract me, and yet He leaves it with me as to whether I will respond and be drawn, or whether I will refuse and be repelled. The choice is mine.

What a mystery the human choice is. What a marvelous thing. Oh, I'm glad God gave me choice, aren't you? And thank God I can use it to move in His direction as I not only behold His death upon the cross, but I respond to that love.

You remember in that night session on the Mount of Olives with Nicodemus Jesus said to him:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”
John 3:14–15.

That's the setting for that oft-quoted John 3:16. The setting is someone lifted up, the Son of God, the Son of man dying for me. And as I behold, I'm drawn. As I look, I live. As I view, I'm changed, transformed.

Colossians the 1st chapter and the 20th verse, notice what the eventual result of Christ's sacrifice on the cross will be:

“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven”
Colossians 1:20.

The entire universe is eventually to be in harmony with God. Let's turn and read it, Revelation the 5th chapter, the 13th verse. Thank God, when all have made their choices, and the final, irrevocable sinners have been destroyed, then from the entire universe, there ascends this pin of gratitude and praise.

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” Revelation 5:13.

Won't that be a wonderful time, dear friends? And what brings it? The blood of His cross. It's looking upon the cross that causes the universe to understand God. Here in this world, sinners must be reconciled to God. But even in Heaven, the angels, as they look at the scenes of the great controversy transpiring here, and as they behold the life and death of Jesus, as they view what He has done and is doing for the salvation of men, *they* understand God better. They understand Him as a God of love.

Notice how Paul puts it in Galatians the 2nd chapter and the 20th verse. I'm so glad for this text. Paul is mentioning his personal experience. Thank God it can be true for each one of us. He says:

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live...”
Galatians 2:20.

And then in the last line, he speaks of the Son of God:

“...Who loved me, and gave Himself for me”
Galatians 2:20.

What was all this sacrifice for? For me. Why did He come to this world? For me. Why did He go to Calvary? For me. Why was He lifted up on the cross? For me. Why did He die? He died for me.

“...[He] loved me and gave Himself for me”
Galatians 2:20.

And so, as we behold that love, that gift of His life upon the cross, our attitude towards God becomes changed. We come to understand God.

You see, the great enemy of God and man has sought to picture God as a stern, severe judge, somebody hard to get along with, impossible to please. This isn't so, friends. It's true He's a judge. It's true He's righteous. He's no jolly Santa Claus, no. But oh, thank God He's love all the way through.

And at Calvary, I see that He loves me so much that though He can't do away with His law to grant me permission to continue in rebellion, He will lay down His own life rather than let me be lost. He will die in my stead the death that I deserve that I may be reconciled to Him. And the more I look at that, the more I behold that love, the more I understand His character, and the more I want to be like Him.

Let's turn over now to 1 John, the fourth chapter. The thought we're going to notice here is that while it is as we behold that love is awakened in our hearts that we can never know love and know God unless we participate in this love. Merely viewing it, merely seeing what God has done is not sufficient. We must share in that love, receiving it, and passing it on to others.

So, He says in 1 John 4:7:

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God”
1 John 4:7.

Who is the one that knows God? The one that loves.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love”
1 John 4:8.

Notice, no matter how much God loves *you*, you do not know God until you not only receive that love but share it with others.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love”
1 John 4:8.

Now, the 16th verse:

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us...” 1 John 4:16.

That’s where we start, friend. My love for God, even after I know him and become His child, begin to get acquainted with Him, is like a tiny little teaspoon compared with the ocean. But thank God, as I gaze upon His boundless love for me, my love grows.

I want to share a little experience with you that I was reading about.

“A gentleman of wealth and social position was very ill. A Christian man visited this sick man and learned how little love he had for God. Desiring that he should know something of God’s great love, He remarked...” [*Source unknown*].

Now notice, this is the Christian talking to this wealthy man who’s sick who doesn’t understand the love of God for him.

“When I leave you I shall go to my home, and the first thing I expect to do is to call my baby. I shall place her on my knee, look into her sweet eyes, listen to her charming prattle. And tired as I am her presence will rest me, for I love that child with unutterable tenderness.

“Does she love me, you ask? The fact is she loves me little. If my heart was breaking it would not disturb her sleep” *Ibid*.

Just a little girl, you understand, a little baby girl.

“If my body was racked with excruciating pain it would not interrupt her play. If I were dead she would probably forget all about her daddy in a few days.

“Besides this, she has never brought me a penny but has been a constant expense on my hands ever since her birth. Yet, though I am not rich, there is not money enough in the world to buy my baby girl.

“How is it? Does she love me, or do I love her? Do I withhold my love until I know she loves me? Am I waiting for her to do something worthy of my love before I extend it to her?”

“Oh, I see, I see, exclaimed the sick man, while the tears rolled down his cheeks. I see it clearly. It is not what I think of God but what God thinks of me. Not my love to God but God’s love to me, this is what I ought to be thinking about. I do love Him now as I have never loved Him before” *Ibid*.

That’s the point, dear friends. So, this evening let us not try to measure our love for God. A medicine dropper would probably handle it all right. But oh, let us think of the boundless love of God. And remember, the place where that love is most fully and strikingly and completely revealed is at Calvary. It is as we see the Son of God dying there that we understand His character.

There are two things that stand out at Calvary, friends. One is what selfish man will do to God if he doesn’t yield to this love. Men murdered Jesus. They drove the nails through His hands and feet and hung Him up there and gloated over His suffering. That’s sin. That’s selfishness. That’s what I will do if I stay with sin if I don’t come to know and understand God if I don’t come to know and understand God.

But oh, there’s something else I see at Calvary. I see that while sin is so terrible that it will murder the Creator, love is so wonderful that the Creator will die for *me* rather than let me be lost. So, beholding the cross, I learn how bad sin is and how good God is. Do you see? So, let us come day by day and look at that cross, beholding that love. And thus, we know our Creator, and thus we bring joy to His heart.

When Napoleon was in exile, he used to have long discussions with some of his attendants. Sometimes a few of his old generals and he discussed things. And one day one of these generals was presenting his reasons for not believing in the deity of Christ. He was an agnostic.

Napoleon turned to him and said, “Alexander and Julius Caesar and Charlemagne and I all founded great empires, but they’re all gone. What did the creations of our genius rest on? On force. But Jesus Christ alone founded His Empire on love, and today there are millions that would die for Him.”

It’s true, dear friends, isn’t it? Have you seen that love and yielded to it? Have you found the sense of satisfaction that comes in knowing that you know God and that God knows you, that Jesus is your friend and you’re His friend?

“...Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me” Jeremiah 9:24.

Napoleon spoke of Alexander the Great, along with Julius Caesar and others. You remember that Alexander, the young Macedonian prince, started out to conquer the world. And finally, having gone over the known world, he sat on the throne at Babylon and celebrated his triumph, drinking and drinking till finally, he died in that drunken debauch. You know how old he was? Thirty-three, thirty-three.

Do you remember another young man that died at 33? Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ.

“Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,
One lived and died for self, One died for you and me;
The Greek died on a throne, the Jew died on a cross,
One’s life a triumph seemed, the Other but a loss.

One led vast armies forth, the Other walked alone,
One shed a whole world’s blood, the Other gave His own;
One won the world in life and lost it all in death,
The Other lost His life to win the whole world’s faith.

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,
The Greek made all men slaves, the Jew made all men free;
One built a throne on blood, the Other built on love,
The one was born of earth, the Other from above.

The one won all this earth, to lose all earth and heaven,
The Other gave up all, that all to Him be given;
The Greek forever died, the Jew forever lives,
He loses all who gets, He wins all things who gives.”

[Source unknown.]

Oh my dear friends, do you know God? Do you appreciate His love? Has your life been yielded so fully to that love? That love is the motive that impels, propels, compels day by day in the practical things of life? This is what it means to know Him. To know Him is to love Him. The more we know Him, the better we’ll love Him. And the better we love Him, the more we’ll know Him. Thank God for His wonderful love.

How many of us would like to send him the word tonight that we like what we’ve learned of His life and love, and we want to know Him better? Thank God.

All right. Now, we’re going to have a little time of witness. Those who would like to just come right up and let us make Jesus happy by speaking our response to His loving invitation.

[Testimony meeting follows]

“I’m pressing on the upward way,
New heights I’m gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

Lord, lift me up, and I shall stand
By faith, on heaven’s table-land;
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #625 (first stanza).

Our precious Lord, just now, we thank Thee in a new and special way for the revelation of Thy love. We thank Thee that You've given us minds that can know and appreciate our Creator, and we choose to behold Thy love day by day that our minds may ever be transformed more and more into the likeness of Jesus.

We thank Thee in His name, amen.

You're dismissed.

Copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org