



BEHOLD  
YOUR  
GOD



## BEHOLD YOUR GOD

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First edition by Frank Hamrick  
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# Preface

As the Source of all truth, God is in fact the highest truth we can study. Our view of Him affects every other belief and practice. Therefore, we wrote this curriculum to inspire you to explore the heights and depths of His majesty—because while God lies above and beyond our understanding, He has also chosen to make Himself known to us.

In Hebrews 11:6, we read that we must accept two things by faith:

- That God exists
- That He rewards those who seek Him

From this starting point, we can begin to study the incomparable God described in Scripture. Like a little child walking alongside her father, we may not understand the height of God’s holiness or the fullness of His grace, but we can feel the strength of His hand holding ours.

As Christ prayed for all His followers in John 17:20–26, we pray that you would know God, trust in His love, and be unified together in Him.

## **In This Study**

### **Student Work**

Each chapter in this study includes some reading and exercises that you will likely complete by yourself outside of class. As you read and analyze passages from Scripture, you will record your findings and thoughts in the blanks provided. These exercises should increase your understanding of the material covered by your teacher. As you complete this work, be sure to note any questions you might have for your teacher—or any topics you might like to study further.



## **Notes from the Teacher's Lesson**

Included also is a brief outline that your teacher should cover in class. As you listen to your teacher, fill in the blanks provided, and look up the Scripture references in your Bible.

## **Application Activities**

Your teacher may assign some of the extra activities listed at the end of each chapter. These include reading assignments and short writing projects that will encourage you to examine your beliefs in light of Scripture.

## **Testing and Evaluation**

Your teacher will explain testing policies and expectations for your class. Quiz and test questions may relate to your student exercises, the teacher's lesson, or both. Your teacher may also ask you to memorize passages of Scripture that relate to each lesson.









# UNIT 1

## The Knowledge of God

*“It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular; it is why he does it. The motive is everything.”*

—A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*



ISA 437

IXΘΥΣ





## CHAPTER 1

# Laying the Foundation

*“Glorifying God has respect to all the persons of the Trinity; it respects God the Father, who gave us life; God the Son, who lost His life for us; and God the Holy Ghost, who produces a new life in us.”*

—Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*

Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish historian and philosopher in the nineteenth century, wrote,

“The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder—a waif, a nothing, a no man. Have a purpose in life, and, having it, throw such strength of mind and muscle into your work as God has given you.”

This advice is especially important for Christian teenagers. You stand at the edge of adulthood, with growing liberties and growing responsibilities. You’ve begun to realize that life extends beyond your day-to-day experiences—that what you do now will impact your life weeks, months, and even years in the future. So many activities and amusements and causes clamor for your attention, and perhaps you’ve begun to ask yourself, “How do I choose from all this? What purpose guides my choice?”

God has a purpose and plan for each of His children, and we’re responsible to discover that purpose—and pursue it. Our focus and goal will then guide how we work, how we serve others, how we rest, and how we grow.

The teacher’s lesson for this chapter establishes the highest purpose for every Christian—namely, to glorify God. In everything we do, we should reflect God’s character.



To do this, however, we depend on His Spirit to mold us into a better image of Him. We depend on His Word to help us know Him, personally and intimately. It's not enough to know *about* God—we must know God *Himself*.

Keep this goal in mind as you proceed through this study. Seek God, not simply knowledge about Him. Know His work in your life. Discover the truth He's placed in His Word for you. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you, and ask Him to help you reflect His love and truth.

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## Student Work

### **We Can Seek God Only Through Faith**

Why is faith necessary to seek God? While the Bible points to a great deal of *evidence* that God exists, it does not try to *prove* that He does. From the very first verse, Scripture simply assumes His presence. Genesis 1:1 states that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth—no introduction necessary. From the rest of Scripture, we learn more about who God is and what He does, but nowhere in these words does God lay out a systematic proof of His existence.

Further, we can find no definitive proof for God in either science or philosophy. As much as we can see order in the universe, as much as we can feel that we were created for some higher, spiritual purpose, as much as we know in our heart of hearts that life means something more—these signs all point to God, but they do not prove beyond all possible doubt that He is there. Many people see this evidence, yet never believe in God.

But why can't we write a step-by-step proof that God exists?

### **Only God Can Prove Himself**

We are not the judges of God. Even if we could somehow establish beyond all doubt that God exists, that still wouldn't be enough to sustain our belief. How could we possibly prove that this God is the God that the Bible describes?

To explore this idea, let's look at a few passages that describe God's power.



## God Is Omnipotent

| *omni* / all | + | *potent* / powerful |

✍ Read Exodus 6:2–3. By what name did God appear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? **God Almighty**

---

This is one of God’s most important names—rendered in Hebrew as *El Shaddai*. God is the all-powerful Creator of the universe (Jer. 32:17). With Him, all things are possible. He can do whatever He wants to do (Ps. 115:3).

## God Is Omniscient

| *omni* / all | + | *science* / knowledge |

✍ Read 1 John 3:20. What does this verse say that God knows?

**All things**

---

✍ According to Psalm 147:5, is there any limit to His understanding?

**No.**

---

Nothing is hidden from God’s sight (Heb. 4:13).

## God Is Eternal and Immutable

| *eternal* / enduring / everlasting / without beginning or end |

| *immutable* / unchanging |

Further, we read in Psalm 102:12 that God endures across eternity. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He has always been, and He will always be (Rev. 4:8). He calls Himself the forever “I AM” (Exo. 3:14; John 8:58).

How could we prove that a Being is all-powerful, all-knowing, and transcendent above time itself?

- Would we force God to *do* everything He could possibly do? Would we be like Gideon in Judges 6:36–40, asking God to prove His power by keeping a fleece wet or dry?
- Or would we ask Him to recite all knowledge—to give us the position and properties of every bit of matter and energy in the universe?



- Would we ask Him to justify His every thought and action in terms we could understand?
- Would we then travel across all time—and whatever lies above and beyond time—to prove that God has never changed, nor ever will?

How could we even begin to absorb all of the information required to pass judgment on such a Being? A person would have to stand *above* God to witness the scope of His power—and no such person could exist. As we read in Job 39 and 40, no one can ever begin to comprehend even a fraction of God’s power.

And the attributes mentioned above speak only to God’s ability. We haven’t even touched on His holiness, His love, the rest of His character, or the scope of His work in our hearts. How could we prove that He is loving, just, and true?

Only God can answer that question—we can’t depend on our own wisdom. While we can find many things in this world that tell us that our belief in God is good and reasonable, and while we can admire how God has preserved the truth and consistency of His Word, the Bible, we shouldn’t expect to find proof that negates our need for faith.

- ✍ Read the summary of Enoch’s life in Hebrews 11:5–6. According to verse 6, what two things can a person believe only through faith?

**That God exists, and that He rewards those who seek Him**

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### God Asks Us to Trust Him

God chose to provide us with His goodness and grace through *faith*—that is, our trust in Him.

- ✍ Read Hebrews 11:1. What is faith? **The confidence, or assurance, of the things we hope for; the belief in things we cannot see or know**

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✍ According to verse 3, what is one of the first things we accept by faith?

**That the universe was created by the word of God—that the visible world was made from something that couldn't be seen**

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God asks us to believe Him when He says that the physical universe—the things that we can see and touch and detect—originally came from Him. No matter how far back scientists and philosophers try to peer into our past, they will always reach a point of uncertainty, a place where geology and mathematics and physics break down, where they can only guess and speculate as to what came before. When we reach that point, and when we wonder what or Who began all this, Scripture asks us to accept God as the answer.

Science and philosophy can only bring us so close to God. He's chosen faith as the invisible bridge to lead us the rest of the way.

Is this a blind faith? Does the Creator of our minds and our eyes expect us to ignore logic and evidence? Certainly not.

### God Gave Us His Creation

✍ According to Colossians 1:16, why did God make all things?

**For Himself**

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✍ So what then does Psalm 19:1–6 say the heavens show us?

**The glory of God; His handiwork**

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✍ And according to Romans 1:19–20, where can we find another glimpse of God's character or attributes?

**In ourselves; in the way God made us**

---

All of nature exists as a celebration of God's majesty. While the world has fallen under the curse of sin, and it is no longer a perfect reflection of its Creator, we can still see a glimpse of God's power and character in the visible universe.



## God Gave Us His Word

In the Bible, we find 66 books written by men and women across three continents over roughly 1,500 years. But in this veritable library of Scripture, we can find a consistency and a cohesion explained only by the inspiration of God (1 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:21).

He guided the experiences and thoughts of these writers to give us a sufficient account of His character and work through history—an account more specific and helpful than the glimpse we see in Creation.

And most importantly, God’s Word reveals the cornerstone of our faith—Jesus Christ.

## God Gave Us His Son

To be clear—when we say that Jesus is God’s Son, we do not mean that Jesus is somehow the biological offspring of God the Father. In the New Testament Greek, the phrase υἱὸς εἰ τοῦ Θεοῦ (*huios ei tou theos*; “the Son of God”) is used to describe Jesus as being of the same *nature*, or likeness, as God. He is *from* God, because He *is* God Himself.

If that sounds confusing, it’s because it is. But don’t worry. We’ll explore the doctrine of the Trinity later—specifically, that God exists eternally in three Persons, though also as one united Being.

In Jesus we see God revealed as a Man—as a Person who faced temptation, hunger, and all the hardships we know, and yet still perfectly reflected the love and truth of the Father.

✍ Read John 17:3–4. Here Jesus prayed to the Father on the night before His crucifixion. What do these verses say about Christ’s purpose for coming to Earth?

**He came to Earth to glorify God; to connect people with the Father; to give them eternal life.**

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Christ came to Earth to connect us to God—so that we could be free from the bondage of sin, and so we could be holy like Him.



In Jesus we see the abstract doctrines of God made clear and real. We see God's holiness in the way Christ lived without sin, in the way He preached righteousness and called others to do the same.

We see God's love in the way He reached out to sinners, the lost and the forsaken, and how He gave up His life to redeem us.

And we see God's power in the way He healed the sick, fed the hungry, calmed the storms, raised the dead, and indeed conquered Death itself by rising from the grave.

The ancient world did not turn upside down over a myth or legend. Thousands and even millions of people did not risk imprisonment and death to follow a mad itinerant preacher—they responded to the calling and work of God Himself.

### God Gave Us His Spirit

When Jesus ascended back into heaven, He did not leave His followers alone.

✍ Read John 14:16–17. What did Jesus promise that God would send after He left? Be specific.

**A helper, comforter, or advocate; the Spirit of Truth**

---

✍ And in Acts 2:1–4, how did God's Spirit first mark His arrival?

**The believers heard a sound like a rushing wind, and tongues of fire rested over each of them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak in other languages so that others could understand them.**

---

God showed everyone in Jerusalem that these believers were His children, gifted with the ability to reach across languages and culture to share the new gospel of Christ.

And today He performs an equally amazing miracle in those who have accepted Christ—He makes us *like* Jesus. He sets us apart (Rom. 15:15–16), strengthening us so that we can better know God's love and share that love with others (Eph. 3:14–19). He grows within us love, joy, peace, patience,



kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23). He makes us holy.

If there's one thing we can learn from culture, politics, and indeed all of anthropology (*anthropo* / humanity + *-logy* / learning / study)—it's that people can't change themselves in any meaningful way. We're all destined to fail and disappoint each other if we work in our own power.

But the Spirit guides us to a truer and better purpose. And as we see His work in our lives, we learn to trust God with our minds and with our hearts. We are the blessed ones whom God leads to believe in Christ, even though we have not yet seen Him with our eyes (John 17:20–21; 20:29).

### God Will Reveal Himself Fully Later

One day, we will have no need for faith. At the end of all things, God will reveal Himself to all people, establishing once and for all His majesty (Rev. 21:3–4). Every knee will bow to God, and every tongue will confess that He *is* (Rom. 14:11–12).

God has chosen to delay His final revelation until that time, when all will be explained, when all will be answered—and when every tear will be wiped away from our eyes (Rev. 21:4).

Jesus will not arrive on Earth, ready to usher in His eternal kingdom, only to find that we have proved all there is to know about Him. He will not break apart the heavens only to pat us on the back for everything we've discovered. Rather, He will destroy the wickedness gathered against Him (Rev. 19:11, 19–20), and He will build a new Creation, one where God and humanity can finally dwell together (Rev. 21:1–5).

### Challenge

God created us to glorify Him. To glorify Him, we must be like Him. To be like Him, we must know Him. To know Him, we must love and trust Him in faith.

Make no mistake—this study can help you learn about God, but you'll need His grace to love Him, trust Him, know Him, reflect Him, and glorify Him. As you read and study His Word, ask God to keep you close to Himself.



This will not be easy. As we read in 2 Peter 3:4–9, people will mock our faith, tempting us to doubt Christ’s promise to return, or to forget His rule over Creation.

But God is not slow to fulfill His promise. Time means nothing to Him. He has appointed a day for His judgment, and He waits only because He is patient to receive any who repent and turn to Him. We serve the almighty, eternal God, and His promises are as sure now as they will be when we see them fulfilled.

✍ What is the purpose of our faith? Read Philippians 3:8–11, and write verses 10 and 11 below.

**Text will vary by translation.**

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Seek God in faith, and ask Him to glorify Himself in you.

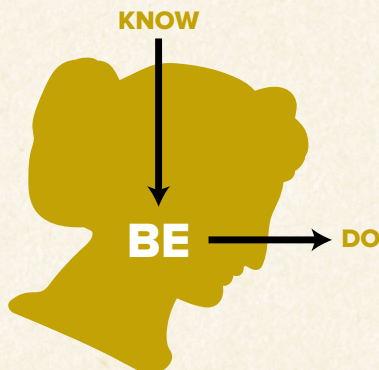
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## Notes from the Teacher’s Lesson

### Our Goal

- To glorify God in everything (Eph. 1:11–12; 1 Cor. 10:31)

### Knowing, Being, and Doing





- Knowing:  
**Our knowledge of truth and doctrine, most importantly about God**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Being:  
**Our identity as children of God, and the holiness He grows within us**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Doing:  
**Our actions; what we do to reflect God's character, whether through studying the Bible, serving others, sharing the gospel of Christ, or whatever else**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which is most important? **Being** \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 1:12)

## The Doctrine of Holiness

- God **calls** \_\_\_\_\_ us to holiness (1 Pet. 1:14–16).
  - God's holiness encompasses two main ideas:
    - God is **perfect** \_\_\_\_\_, without sin (1 John 1:5).
    - God is **exalted** \_\_\_\_\_ above all (Isa. 57:15).
  - Our personal holiness is . . .
    - The work that **God** \_\_\_\_\_ performs in us
    - To set us apart *from* **sin** \_\_\_\_\_ and *to* righteousness
    - So that we reflect God's **character** \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus **redeems** \_\_\_\_\_ us to holiness (Eph. 5:25–27).
- God's Spirit **perfects** \_\_\_\_\_ our holiness (2 Cor. 3:18).

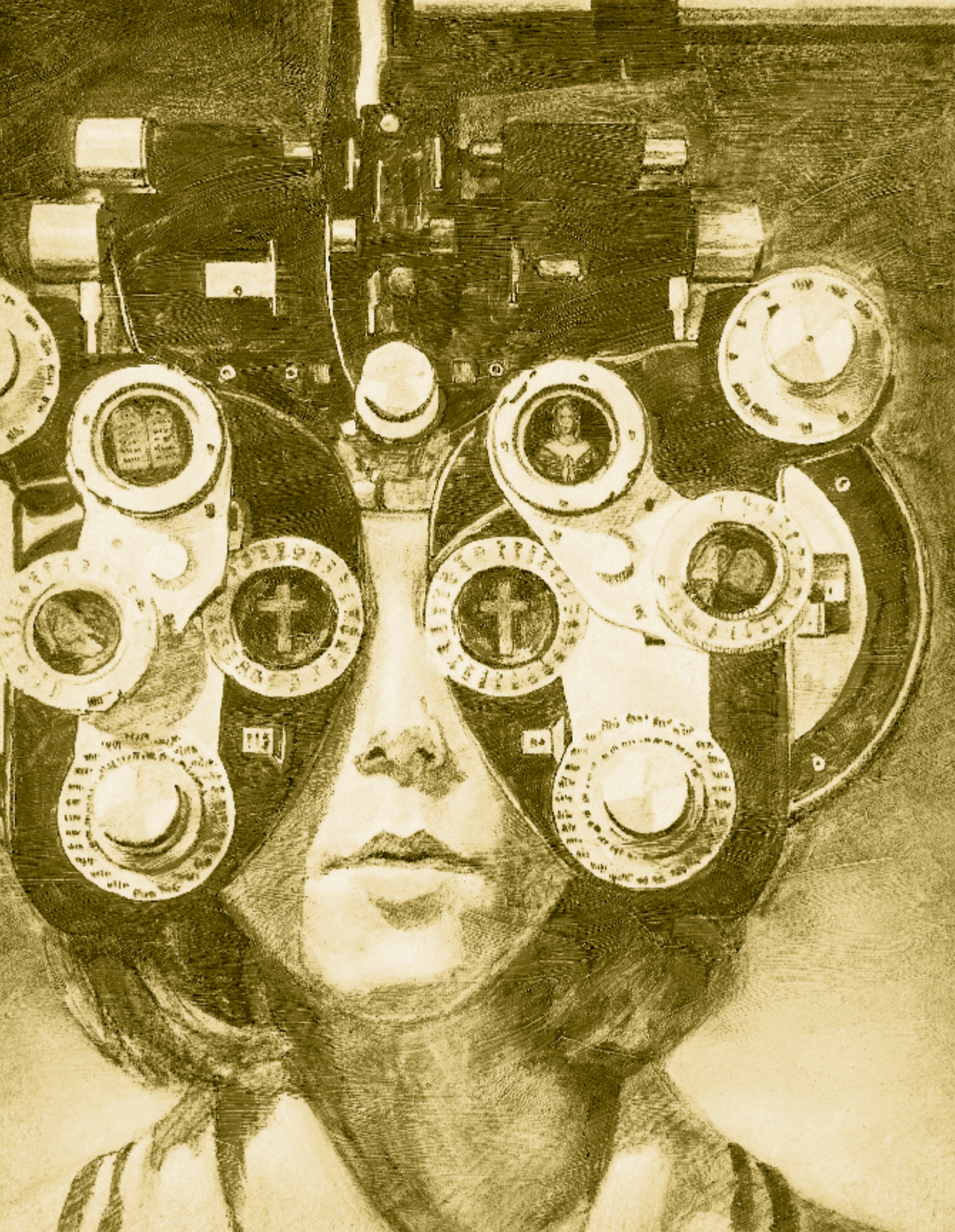


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## Application Activities

1. Make eight separate lists, labeling each with one of the following headings. Give yourself plenty of room for each list.
  - Health & Fitness
  - Financial & Material
  - Social
  - Family
  - Career & Calling
  - Academic
  - Spiritual
  - Other
  - Under each label, list your hopes, dreams, and goals.
  - Then for each item, ask yourself, “Can I pursue this goal to God’s glory?” If not, strike it from your list. But if so, write a brief explanation of how the goal will help you better reflect the love and truth of God.
2. Read Job 38–40. In these passages, God appears to Job, a good man who lost his riches and his family, and who had begun to question God’s wisdom.
  - Write a brief summary of God’s response to Job, using two paragraphs or less. Note especially Job 38:4–7; 40:2, 8–14; and perhaps Job 42:10–17.
  - If you believe any other passages in the Bible might give us a more complete perspective on God’s plan, list them below your summary.
3. In Thomas Watson’s *A Body of Divinity*, read or skim the chapter entitled “On Man’s Chief End.”
  - List from the chapter the four things that Watson argues are part of glorifying God.
  - List also the seventeen ways he suggests that we can glorify God.
  - If you find something in this chapter with which you disagree, write a short counterargument, supported by Scripture, below your list.







## CHAPTER 2

# Getting a Right Focus

*“God must be the Terminus ad quem, the ultimate end of all actions.”*

—Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*

We are sacred beings, not in the sense that we have some sort of mystical power, but that God created us to reflect some higher, spiritual meaning. When He made Adam and Eve, He gave them both His image (Gen. 1:27)—that is, the capacity to in some way reflect His thoughts. We exist as flesh and blood, but through Christ, our spirit can commune with God (John 4:23–24).

Just like a painting is more than colorful brushstrokes on a canvas, we are more than atoms or cells or organs. We represent the design of a good and creative God, and our thoughts of love and grace can mirror His own, at least in a small way.

This spiritual dimension to our being lets us look at the world in a way that animals could not. We see order and beauty in nature and in art. We resonate with the themes of literature, delving into the meaning of language and exploring concepts that could never be captured by the written word. And when we look at other people, we see men and women blessed with the image of God—people we should respect, love, and cherish.

Likewise, when we look at the Bible, we can focus beyond its immediate value to its eternal purpose. We see more than a body of literature—more than a set of stories and rules. We find in Scripture a glimpse of the God who gave us His Word so that we could better know and love Him.

We honor the commandments in the Bible because we honor our holy God. We learn from the stories because we want to learn from their Author. We rejoice in the gospel of grace because we rejoice in its Architect. We do not merely study heroes and villains, prophets and kings, apostles and teachers, but rather the God who used imperfect men and women to showcase His glory.



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## Student Work

### Our Goal

- ✍ Read Ephesians 1:3–6. What happened because God chose us? That is, how did He affect us (v. 4)?

**He made us holy and blameless before Him.**

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- ✍ And what was the ultimate reason for adopting us into His family (v. 6)?

**To reveal His grace to us; for His own glory**

---

God sanctified us—that is, He set us apart in holiness—for His own glory, and so that we could share in His grace. Our goal, likewise, should be to magnify His glory.

### The Path to Our Goal

#### Love

Our love for God fuels our desire to be like Him—to *be* holy and then reflect His holiness with our actions.

- ✍ Read 1 John 4:7–12. According to these verses, how did God show love to us (vv. 9–10)?

**By sending Christ to take the punishment for our sin**

---

- ✍ What should be our response to God’s love for us (v. 11)?

**To love each other**

---

- ✍ And as we show our love for God by loving other people, what two things does God do for us (v. 12)?

**He dwells in us, and He perfects His love in us.**

---

As we love the same way that God loves us, He will work in our hearts.



We see the same principle between a married couple. As they love each other over many years, they can gradually think, act, and sometimes even look alike.

## The Word

In the life of David, we find an example of a person who . . .

- Studied the Word
- Saw God in the Word
- Grew to love God
- And therefore sought to be holy like God
- And then serve God

While David was far from perfect, the attitude he demonstrated in Psalm 119 serves as an excellent model for us today.

## The Object of His Focus

✍ In Psalm 119:1–3, how does David describe those who are holy, and therefore blessed?

- v. 1—They are blameless and undefiled as they walk in the way. They walk **in the law of the Lord** \_\_\_\_\_.
- v. 2—They keep **His statutes, or testimonies** \_\_\_\_\_. They seek **God** \_\_\_\_\_ with all their heart.
- v. 3—They do no **wrong** \_\_\_\_\_. But they instead **walk in God's way** \_\_\_\_\_.

✍ Whom must we follow to be holy? **God** \_\_\_\_\_

✍ What do you think it means to seek God?

**Answers will vary.**

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## The Method of His Focus

✎ How did David “see” the Lord? Verses 11, 15, and 16 suggest four ways. Read each of those verses, then look at the following methods of study. Write a phrase from the psalm that most closely matches each method.

1. Memorizing the Word:

**Hiding the Word in our hearts**

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2. Meditating on the Word:

**Meditating on God’s precepts**

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3. Enjoying the Word:

**Delighting in God’s statutes**

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4. Reviewing verses for memory’s sake:

**Not forgetting God’s Word**

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We do not love God simply by studying the Word. We study God in His Word so that we love Him even more.

✎ What other—less helpful—reasons might people have to study the Bible?  
**Answers will vary.**

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✎ Can some good come from this kind of study? **Yes / Possibly**

✎ But did God give us His Word primarily for those reasons? **No**

✎ Read verse 18. What does David ask God to help him see?

**Wondrous things from God’s law, or Scripture**

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✍ Some of the later verses give us an idea of what these were. Read each verse below, and record what David wanted to see.

- v. 27b – **God’s wondrous works** \_\_\_\_\_
- v. 41 – **God’s love, mercy, and salvation** \_\_\_\_\_
- v. 52 – **God’s laws, or judgment** \_\_\_\_\_

### The Result of His Focus

✍ As David meditated on what he saw of God, he grew to love God more. In each of the following verses, what part of God’s work or character did David see?

- v. 62 – **God’s righteous laws, or judgment** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- v. 68 – **God is good and does good** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- v. 73 – **God made us, and He can give us understanding** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- v. 77 – **God is compassionate and merciful** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- v. 88 – **God is loving and kind** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

✍ This love in turn drove David to confess the following:

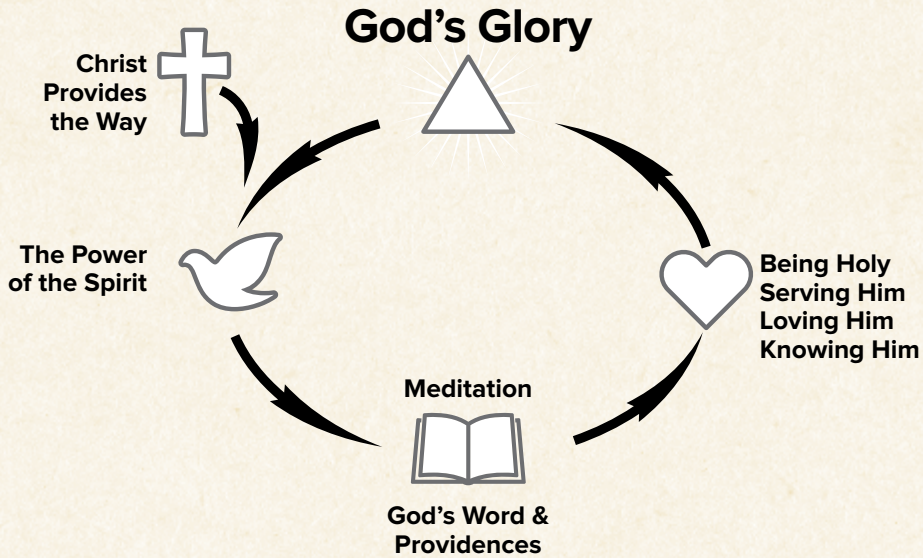
- v. 94 – I am **Yours.** \_\_\_\_\_
- v. 125 – I am **Your servant.** \_\_\_\_\_

As we focus on God in His Word, He grows our love for Him, which in turn fuels our desire to be like Him. And as He makes us more holy, we serve Him and magnify His glory to others.

We call this process of increasing holiness *sanctification*.



# Notes from the Teacher's Lesson



## The Results of a Wrong Focus

Wrong Focus	Common Result
Holiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependence on <b>feelings</b></li> <li>• Neglect of <b>evangelism</b></li> </ul>
The Word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dead orthodoxy</b>   <i>ortho</i> / right   +   <i>dox</i> / teaching  </li> </ul>
Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redefinition of <b>godly love</b></li> <li>• Neglect of God's <b>truth</b></li> </ul>
Rules and Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Legalism</b> —dependence on our own works for salvation and holiness</li> </ul>



Wrong Focus	Common Result
Doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directionless <b>duty</b></li> </ul>
Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-improvement without <b>sanctification</b></li> </ul>

### The Right Focus

- On a Person: **God** \_\_\_\_\_ (Phil. 3:20–21)
- Through the **Word** \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor. 13:12)
- Through **providence** \_\_\_\_\_

### The Results of the Right Focus

- A love for **God** \_\_\_\_\_
- Genuine **holiness and service** \_\_\_\_\_



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## Application Activities

1. Read the first verse of every psalm listed below, and record on a separate sheet everything mentioned about God. Be sure to include the reference next to each truth. Then find at least five more psalms that open with a truth about God, and list those, as well.

    Psalms 7, 8, 9, 18, 19, 23, 25, 27, 30, and 42.

2. Read Philippians 3:4–15, and then answer the following questions about the passage.
  - A. In what things did Paul take pride before he accepted Christ?
  - B. Where did he focus after he was redeemed (vv. 8, 10)?
  - C. Toward what goal did he strive after his salvation (vv. 13–14)?
  - D. What do you think Paul meant by what he wrote in verse 15?
3. Jesus Christ sought to do the will of His Father (John 5:30). Based on your knowledge of the life and ministry of Christ, describe briefly how He pursued this mission in each of the following situations. Cite an example from Scripture for each item.
  - A. When He was angry
  - B. When He ate and fellowshiped with others
  - C. When He faced temptation
  - D. When He heard about others' misfortune
  - E. When He heard about others' blessings
  - F. When He prayed

In what ways can you better follow Christ's example?







of Kings

Wonderful

Lion of Judah

Light of t

Lord of  
Lord

Prince of Peace

Messiah

Root of David

Saviour

Lif

Alpha

the stone

Day Spring



## CHAPTER 3

# Knowing God

*“To glorify God is to have God-admiring thoughts, to esteem Him most excellent, and search for diamonds in this rock only.”*

—Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*

The last chapter challenged you to know God. But you might ask now, “Isn’t God too big, too powerful, and too complicated for anyone to know Him?”

And you’d be right. No one could ever fully grasp the enormity of God’s character and power. But as A. W. Tozer, a twentieth century preacher and author, wrote in his book *The Pursuit of God*:

To most people God is an inference, not a reality. He is a deduction . . . but He remains personally unknown to the individual. “He must be,” they say, “therefore we believe He is.” Others do not go even so far as this; they know of Him only by hearsay. They have never bothered to think the matter out for themselves, but have heard about Him from others, and have put belief in Him into the back of their minds along with the various odds and ends that make up their total creed. To many others God is but an ideal, another name for goodness, or beauty, or truth; or He is law, or life, or the creative impulse back of the phenomena of existence.

These notions about God are many and varied, but they who hold them have one thing in common: they do not know God in personal experience. The possibility of intimate acquaintance with Him has not entered their minds. While admitting His existence they do not think of Him as knowable in the sense that we know things or people.



Christians, to be sure, go further than this, at least in theory. Their creed requires them to believe in the personality of God, and they have been taught to pray, “Our Father, which art in heaven.” Now personality and fatherhood carry with them the idea of the possibility of personal acquaintance. This is admitted, I say, in theory, but for millions of Christians, nevertheless, God is no more real than He is to the non-Christian. They go through life trying to love an ideal and be loyal to a mere principle.

Over against all this cloudy vagueness stands the clear scriptural doctrine that God can be known in personal experience. A loving Personality dominates the Bible, walking among the trees of the garden and breathing fragrance over every scene. Always a living Person is present, speaking, pleading, loving, working, and manifesting Himself whenever and wherever His people have the receptivity necessary to receive the manifestation.

The Bible assumes as a self-evident fact that men can know God with at least the same degree of immediacy as they know any other person or thing that comes within the field of their experience. The same terms are used to express the knowledge of God as are used to express knowledge of physical things. “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” “All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces.” “My sheep hear My voice.” “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” These are but four of countless such passages from the Word of God. And more important than any proof text is the fact that the whole import of the Scripture is toward this belief.

If God did not want us to know Him personally and intimately, why then did He give us the Scriptures? As we read in Romans 1:18–20, people can see the evidence of a Creator within Creation—isn’t that enough?

We see in the world around us a glimpse of God’s power and authority, but those concepts lack direction or depth without the specific revelation of God’s Word. In the Bible, we see not only God’s work, but also the reasoning and purpose behind it. We see not only His might, but also His love—and the hope of a future with Him.



As Tozer wrote in the preface of his book:

Sound Bible exposition is an imperative must in the Church of the living God. Without it no church can be a New Testament church in any strict meaning of that term. But exposition may be carried on in such way as to leave the hearers devoid of any true spiritual nourishment whatever. For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself, and unless and until the hearers find God in personal experience, they are not the better for having heard the truth. The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.

That is the goal of this chapter—and indeed this entire study: that you will know God and delight in His presence. As you do so, you’ll find that He will transform your thoughts and your inner being to better reflect Him—which will lead you to seek Him even more.

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## Student Work

### **Knowing God Involves a Personal Relationship**

To truly know people, we must regularly interact with them. We learn not only by hearing what they have to say about themselves, but also by seeing them react and respond to various situations. We see them when they’re happy, when they’re sad, when they’re angry—in every instance learning more about how they view the world and what exactly they value most.

And for us to say that we have a relationship, we must develop a *mutual* acquaintance with the other person—a two-way, face-to-face friendship. Friends are friends because they open up their thoughts and dreams to each other, then go through life with a shared awareness of each other’s companionship.

As the teacher’s lesson for this chapter pointed out, it is therefore important not only that we know God, but also that *He knows us*. Of course, being



omniscient, God already knows everything about everyone. But He does not have a Father-child relationship with those who reject Christ.

- ✍ Read Matthew 7:21–23. According to these verses, is everyone who calls Jesus Lord actually part of His kingdom? **No.** \_\_\_\_\_
  - ✍ Can people prove that they follow God by performing miracles or good works? **No.** \_\_\_\_\_
  - ✍ What does God tell these people at the final judgment?  
**I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.** \_\_\_\_\_
- 

This gives rise to a question: “Whom does God know?”

- ✍ Read John 14:6–10. How must we approach God the Father?  
**Through Christ; by knowing Jesus** \_\_\_\_\_
  - ✍ Who was the source of everything Jesus said on Earth?  
**God the Father** \_\_\_\_\_
- 

To know Christ is to know God. He was and is completely, entirely *God in the flesh*, the living definition of love and truth. Only those who truly know Jesus truly know God.

## God Is Holy

We face many challenges in knowing God. He is not only invisible, having chosen to reveal Himself through faith, but He is also holy, as we learned back in Chapter 1.

Read 1 Timothy 6:15–16. Here we find a terrific picture of God’s holiness and transcendence. Note in particular verse 16. God’s holiness is so fierce and pure that humans, in their physical, bodily form, could not even come close to His glory. This matches what we find in Exodus 33:20, when God told Moses that no one could see His face and survive. God instead revealed Himself in the Old Testament with signs of fire, wind, and smoke—supernatural events that communicated His power, but obscured the holiness that people could not yet know.



## Humans Are Sinful

To complicate the matter further, we are by nature sinful. Our sin represents the opposite of holiness. Holiness is the manifest character of God, whereas sin is a rejection of everything He says is good and right. God's holiness does not allow sin anywhere close to it. The "anti-holy" cannot approach the holy, or the holy would no longer be so. God is God in part because no sin exists in His exalted presence.

- ✍ Read Isaiah 6:1–7. Why did the prophet Isaiah despair when he saw the throne of God?

**Because he was a sinful person, as were his people.**

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But God in His grace forgave Isaiah, purging him of his sin (v. 7) and giving him a chance to declare God's message to His people.

In our sin, we could no more endure a moment in the exalted presence of God than a piece of tissue paper could survive a minute in a blazing furnace.

## Christ Is the Mediator

Christ serves as the bridge to our holy God.

- ✍ Note 1 Timothy 2:5–6. What does verse 5 call Christ? **A Mediator**

- ✍ Look up this word in a dictionary. How is the term defined?

**Answers will vary. A mediator serves as a go-between for two parties during an attempt to resolve a disagreement.**

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- ✍ According to verse 6, how then did Christ serve in this role?

**He gave Himself up as a ransom for all.**

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- ✍ He sacrificed Himself to pay the price for our sin. According to Colossians 1:20–22, He did this to reconcile us to God—and then present us to God in what way (v. 22)?

**Holy, blameless, and above reproach**

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When we accept Christ as our Savior, He restores our relationship with God, bridging the chasm caused by sin and enabling us to know God—imperfectly, for now, yet still intimately, like a small child can know and trust a parent.

## **Knowing God Involves Personal Fellowship**

As the teacher's lesson explained, Christ gives us a relationship with God, but that is just the first step in knowing Him. A person born or adopted into a family is just as much a family member as anyone else—yet it takes years of personal fellowship for those people to truly know and love each other well. An infant does not know his parents as well as a teenager, and a teenager does not know his parents as well as an adult who has endured the same kind of struggles and hardship.

In the same way, we can say that, right after the moment of our salvation, we know God. But it takes years of study, years of answered prayer, years of grace through hardship, and years of delight and communion before that knowledge grows up, flowers, and bears fruit.

How then do we grow in our knowledge of God? Well, in one sense, He does the growing *for* us. Remember, just as we can't save ourselves, neither can we make ourselves holy. But God also does not force us to fellowship with Him. He reveals Himself to us as we choose to abide in Him, and that abiding can include the following activities.

## **Through a Meaningful Prayer Life**

In the Old Testament, God made His presence known to the people of Israel by a cloud of smoke that rested over His tabernacle. The same kind of sign appeared in some of the temples that followed in later years, but it was hidden behind a thick fabric veil in a room called the Holy of Holies. The Law prescribed how and when a priest could enter this chamber—usually just once a year, and only after rituals that symbolized deep purification.

But when Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman in John 4, He explained that people would soon worship God directly—not in a temple, but in spirit and in truth. They could commune with God wherever they were, and God's presence would reveal itself wherever His Spirit rested in the hearts of His children.



That's why, when Christ died on the cross, the veil in Herod's Jerusalem Temple ripped open, from top to bottom. No longer would God interact with humanity merely through rituals and symbols, but through direct, personal fellowship.

✍ Read Hebrews 10:19–22. Because of Christ's sacrifice, where can we now go (v. 19)? **Into the holiest, or holy place**

✍ And how does verse 22 describe the purification that allows us to enter this place?

**Answers will vary by translation. We have a true, sincere heart, full of faith; with hearts cleansed of a guilty or evil conscience, with bodies washed with pure water.**

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What once was represented by physical purification is now a spiritual reality for all Christians. Christ has washed away our sin, and we can draw close to God by speaking directly with Him.

✍ Read Hebrews 4:14–16. How does this passage say we can approach God's throne of grace? **With boldness / confidence**

✍ And as we approach His throne in prayer, what does He give us? **Mercy and grace, which help us in times of need**

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Through prayer we know God more intimately. As we unload the burdens of our hearts, and as He responds to our prayers with the help we need, we learn more of His kindness, grace, and mercy.

Do you approach God with boldness, confident that He will provide you everything you need (Phil. 4:19)? Or do you speak to Him out of duty or obligation, as if He were an aging relative you visited out of routine, rather than love? Do you understand how much you need Him—how much you depend on this relationship for your spiritual well-being? Do you enjoy Him, or do you harbor unconfessed sin in your heart?



## Through a God-Centered Reading of the Bible

In previous chapters, we learned that we do not merely study the Word—but God through His Word. When we seek Him, He draws close to us (James 4:8). Through reading His Word we see His power, love, omniscience, faithfulness, and a thousand other qualities and attributes, some of which we'll examine in later chapters.

### Through Difficulties

Psalm 119:65–72 illustrates the goodness of God even in difficult times of life.

✍ What was David's condition *before* he was afflicted—that is, before he endured suffering (v. 67)? **He went astray.**

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✍ What did his affliction cause him to do (v. 67, 71)?  
**Keep God's Word; learn His statutes**

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✍ And what did he learn from the Scriptures (v. 68)?  
**God is good, and does good.**

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As Christ taught His disciples in John 9:1–3, not every trouble we face in this life results from our sin. Some troubles, like the persecution faced by David, exist to encourage us to depend on God, who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). We need Him always, regardless of whether we think we're having a rough time.

But in all things, we can be confident that God is working for our good (Rom. 8:28). That doesn't mean we seek out trouble for its own sake. As Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:2, we should prefer a quiet and peaceful life. And we shouldn't needlessly endure abuse, either. As stewards of God's image in us, we should remove ourselves from people who cause us serious harm. Like David, we should trust God and honor authorities, but we should also dodge javelins (1 Sam. 18:11), make known the dangers to other authorities, and flee to a safer place with people we can trust.

And like David, we can record and recount God's work in our lives. Here a notebook or journal can be helpful, one that includes struggles, requests, and



examples of God's faithfulness. Such a record can, over the years, remind us and teach us of God's goodness.

## Challenge

What is your *relationship* to God? Do you still reject Christ, or have you accepted His sacrifice for you? If you have not yet depended on Jesus for your salvation, you can do so now. Simply trust what He did on the cross as payment for your sins—sins that you should now reject. And recognizing that you can do nothing to save yourself, ask Christ to redeem you into God's family.

What about your *fellowship* with God? Do you seek Him in His Word? Do you listen to what He says? Do you think about what you find, carefully, critically, and with an attitude of devotion?

Do you depend on God through prayer? Or do you allow sin to distract you (Ps. 66:18)? Confess your sin, and abide with God.

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## Notes from the Teacher's Lesson

### Knowing God—What It Isn't

- Knowledge about **God** \_\_\_\_\_ (John 5:39–40)
- Knowledge about **good works** \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Tim. 3:1–5)
- Perfect knowledge of **God** \_\_\_\_\_ (Isa. 55:9; Rom. 11:33; Eph. 3:19)

### Knowing God—What It Is

- A personal **relationship** \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 11:27)
- A personal **fellowship** \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 3:18)



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## Application Activities

1. Read Chapter 4 of Tozer's *The Pursuit of God*. Using Tozer's ideas as a starting point, define in your own words what it means to be "otherworldly." How does such a mindset affect our hopes, thoughts, and actions? Are there drawbacks to such a perspective? Write three or more paragraphs.
2. Write a short essay explaining how we can know God better through each of the following:
  - A. Praying
  - B. Studying Scripture
  - C. Hearing the Word taught and preached
  - D. Interacting with fellow believers
  - E. Enduring hardship
3. List three things you have wondered about God. What doesn't make sense? What don't you understand? Keep these items in your notes, and as you learn more about God throughout this study, jot down any verses or insights that help you understand Him better.

God is bigger than our questions and our doubts. The limitations in our understanding do not trouble Him—nor should they trouble us too much. But we can still seek Him in His Word, learn from the insights of mature believers, and trust Him to reveal His wisdom in His timing.

4. Choose one of the following, and explain how such a focus could corrupt our study of the Bible. What are the dangers of such a perspective?
  - "I'm looking for verses to prove my ideas correct."
  - "I want to learn more about King David. He's the perfect role model for me."
  - "I'm looking for verses that tell me the exact words I should pray."