

SHEFFEY BIBLE COLLEGE — STUDENT HANDOUT

Course: Systematic Theology I
Instructor: Dr. Ancel Presnell, Jr
Chapter 10 — The Knowability of God

What You Should Learn From Today's Lecture

Define the knowability of God.

Explain why God must reveal Himself to be known.

Understand why God cannot be fully understood.

Explain how we can still know God truly.

Recognize the difference between knowing facts about God and knowing God personally.

Apply the doctrine of knowing God to the Christian life.

I. The Necessity for God to Reveal Himself

If we are to know God at all, He must reveal Himself to us.

Knowledge of God comes because God has chosen to reveal Himself.

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.”

—Romans 1:19

“...no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”

—Matthew 11:27

“...the world by wisdom knew not God...”

—1 Corinthians 1:21

Sin causes people to:

- Suppress truth
- Misinterpret creation
- Distort knowledge of God

Notes:

Key Truth:

We can only know God because He has revealed Himself, especially through Scripture.

II. We Can Never Fully Understand God

God is infinite, and we are finite—therefore we can never fully understand Him.

“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.”
—Psalm 145:3

“...his understanding is infinite.”
—Psalm 147:5

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”
—Psalm 139:6

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments...”
—Romans 11:33

God is incomprehensible:

- Not unknowable
- But never fully knowable

Notes:

Key Truth:

God cannot be fully understood because He is infinite, and we are finite.

III. Yet We Can Know God Truly

Though we cannot know God exhaustively, we can know Him truly.

“...God is love.”

—1 John 4:8

“God is a Spirit...”

—John 4:24

“...that he might be just...”

—Romans 3:26

We know:

- True facts about God
- True attributes of God
- True revelation from God

We also know God Himself, not just facts.

“...let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me...”

—Jeremiah 9:23–24

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God...”

—John 17:3

Notes:

Key Truth:

We can know God truly and personally, even though we cannot know Him completely.

IV. The Personal Nature of Knowing God

Knowing God is relational, not just informational.

“...we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

—John 14:23

“...I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

—Revelation 3:20

Knowing God includes:

- Prayer
- Worship
- Fellowship
- Obedience

Notes:

Key Truth:

The greatest blessing of the Christian life is knowing God personally.

V. Implications of the Knowability of God

1. We must depend on God's revelation
2. We must grow in knowing God
3. We will never exhaust knowledge of God
4. Theology and Bible study are lifelong pursuits
5. Eternity will involve continual growth in knowing God

“...increasing in the knowledge of God;”

—Colossians 1:10

Notes:

Key Truth:

The Christian life is a continual pursuit of knowing God more deeply.

Discussion Questions

1. How can God be both incomprehensible and yet knowable?
2. Why is knowing God personally more important than knowing facts about Him?

Things to Know (Exam Review Section)

1. God must reveal Himself for us to know Him.
2. Human wisdom cannot discover God on its own.
3. Sin distorts and suppresses knowledge of God.
4. God is incomprehensible (cannot be fully understood).
5. God's greatness, wisdom, and knowledge are infinite.
6. We can know God truly, though not exhaustively.
7. Scripture provides true knowledge about God.
8. Believers know God personally, not just facts about Him.
9. Knowing God involves relationship and fellowship.
10. The Christian life requires continual growth in knowing God.

A question on the exam will ask if you did the assigned reading.

Closing Summary

The knowability of God teaches that while God is infinite and beyond full human understanding, He has revealed Himself so that we may know Him truly. Through Scripture, we gain accurate knowledge of God and enter into a personal relationship with Him. Though we will never fully comprehend God, we will continue growing in our knowledge of Him both in this life and for eternity.

ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter 10 — The Knowability of God