

"The Process of Knowing God"

WC2022 - Session 2

October 1, 2022

INTRO... There's More to "Knowing"—than just knowing...

...Knowing/knowledge sounds like a "book exercise" ...

...and Clearly This Kind of Knowing is Mandated in Scripture:

1 Timothy 4:6-16 | *"If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. ...¹¹ Command and teach these things. ...¹³ ...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ...¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them."*

2 Timothy 2:15 | *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (KJV)*

Psalms 119:11 | *"Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee."*

What Exactly is "Knowing"?

Definition Merriam-Webster: **1:** to have (information of some kind) in your mind
2: to understand (something) : to have a clear and complete idea of (something)
3: to have learned
Synonyms: realize, notice, perceive, understand, appreciate

— Knowing is an "Exchange", an "Encounter", an "Acquiring", an "Incorporating", an "Interaction" ...something gets "Integrated" and "Absorbed" into our being ...in the natural world we come to observe that ***sometimes it requires certain conditions and processes to be created in order to "Integrate" something into something else.***

“Mixing” ... “Melting” ... “Fermentation”

...there are things in our lives that were achieved by the “incorporating” power of agitation and heat and time and chemistry

The Bible Describes a “Knowing” that seems to be On Its Way to another Dimension of “Knowing” ...

1 Corinthians 8:1-2 | *“Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that ‘all of us possess knowledge.’ This ‘knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up. ² If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.”*

Eph 3:17-19 | *“...—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*

Job... and the Agitation of Our Knowing

...Recounting quickly Job's Story ...

"...Job's suffering has a twofold explanation: its purpose at the outset was to demonstrate God's value and glory, and its ongoing purpose was to refine Job's righteousness. His suffering is not punishment. It is not a sign of God's anger. Job's pain is not the pain of the executioner's whip but the pain of the surgeon's scalpel. The removal of the disease of pride is the most loving thing God could do, no matter what the cost." **John Piper**, *Job: The Revelation of God in Suffering*

...Job's Profound Insight from Job 42 ...of all that might not be clear in Job's Story—This Point Is ...Job Begins This Chapter of His Life with a Particular Knowledge of God ...and He Exits This Chapter with that Knowledge at ANOTHER LEVEL!

Job 42:1-6 | ¹ *Then Job answered the LORD and said:*
² *'I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*
³ *'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.*
⁴ *'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.'*
⁵ *I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;*
⁶ *therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."*

Clearly, Job had a Knowledge of God! ...but on the Other Side of This Event and Encounter—He has a different description of what he "Knows" and It Has a Different Impact on His Life!

...Are we aware that we may travel through "AGITATING EXPERIENCES" in life that produce a knowing that So Far Exceeds Our Previous Knowing—that we start speaking of that like, "I thought I knew something—But I didn't know enough to even ask good questions!"

"Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me." God has been questioned by Job long enough. Now it is time for Job to be put on trial. It's time for God to be the questioning attorney. Let's try to summarize the interrogation without reading the whole thing. It is not exactly what you would expect. ... In 38:4—7 God focuses on the earth: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding." You weren't there, Job, and you don't know how I did it." **John Piper**, *Job: The Revelation of God in Suffering*

Job 42:3, 5 | ³ *'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.*
⁵ *I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you..."*

It is possible that until we have encountered the "Agitating Forces" of God working in our lives—we remain a people who have only "heard of God by the hearing of the ear"...

"...Suffering transforms our attitude toward ourselves. It humbles us and removes unrealistic self-regard and pride. It shows us how fragile we are. As Davies points out, average people in Western society have extremely unrealistic ideas of how much control they have over how their lives go. Suffering removes the blinders. It does not so much make us helpless and out of control as it shows us we have always been vulnerable and dependent on God. Suffering merely helps us wake up to that fact and live in accordance with it." **Tim Keller**, *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, p. 190-191

...One of the things that God does with Job (in this season of great "agitation") is that he introduces Job to His "Creatureliness"—the vastness of his limitations and vulnerabilities! ... "Job do you know how complex all of life is and what exactly it takes for it all to hold together and move toward its divine destiny?"

...So whether we focus on the earth or the sea or the dawn or the snow or hail or constellations or rain, the upshot is that Job is ignorant and impotent. He doesn't know where they came from. He doesn't know how to make them work. He is utterly surrounded, above and below, by mysteries. And so are we, because the scientific advancements of the last two hundred years are like sand-pails of saltwater hauled from the ocean of God's wisdom and dumped in a hole on the beach while the tide is rising. God is not impressed. And we should be overwhelmed with our ignorance, not impressed with science." **John Piper**, *Job: The Revelation of God in Suffering*

...Job was humbled by God's deep revelation that made real and relevant how "little" and "unqualified" Job really was to bring commentary on this moment!—this "Agitation" produced a HUMILITY in Job! ...It was a Different & Deeper Kind of Knowing!

...As Wives, Mothers, Daughters, Members of a Fellowship ...*How helpful might it be in our roles and approaches to see our "amazing contributions" as little pales of water hauled from the ocean of God's wisdom!!*

Suffering Saints ...and the Refining of Our Knowing

1 Peter 1:3, 6-7 | *"³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ... ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

...Peter (and the N.T.) puts our "knowing" (like our faith) in a category of a PROCESS! ...it is undergoing a process! ...It is traveling through "Transformative HEAT"

"...Suffering also leads us to examine ourselves and see weaknesses, because it brings out the worst in us. Our weak faith, sharp tongues, laziness, insensitivity to people, worry, bitter spirit, and other weaknesses in character will become evident to us (and others) in hard times. Some of us are too abrasive, critical, and ungenerous. Some are impulsive and impatient. Others are argumentative, stubborn, and poor listeners. Many people have a great need to control every situation. Some are simply too fragile and self-pitying when discomfited over anything. Suffering will throw those inner flaws into relief during times of stress in a way that enables us to get out of denial and to begin working on them." **Tim Keller**, *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, p. 190-191

Wisdom/Maturity ...And the Fermentation of Our Knowing

- **Concepts that Take Time & Experience:**
"Wisdom" = Knowledge
 Applied
"Maturity" = Knowledge + Life Experience
"Application" = the Putting On of Knowledge

*Observing something
 or reading something
 or being taught
 something is NOT the
 same as "APPLYING"
 or "EXPERIENCING"
 something — **Reading
 about a Golf Swing vs
 Swinging a Golf Club!!***

- **"Naive is to knowing what grape juice is to wine"**

Proverbs 1:1-4 | *"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:
² To know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding,
³ To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity;
⁴ To give prudence to the naive, to the youth knowledge and discretion..." (NASB)
 ('wisdom' also translated 'skill')*

Proverbs 9:1-6 | *"¹ Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars;
² She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table;
³ She has sent out her maidens, she calls from the tops of the heights of the city:
⁴ 'Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!' To him who lacks understanding she says,
⁵ 'Come, eat of my food and drink of the wine I have mixed.
⁶ 'Forsake your folly and live, and proceed in the way of understanding.'" (NASB) (Wisdom has experience to offer the naïve)*

- **The Biblical Respect for Wisdom** ...associated with gray heads and those who have been "informed" and "shaped" by life

“Elder” = זָקֵן zāqēn: A verb meaning to be old, to become old. This word is related to the adjective זָקֵן (H2205), meaning old, and the noun זָקָן (H2206), meaning beard.

...H2205. זָקֵן zāqēn: An adjective meaning elder, old, aged, old man, old woman (as a noun), leader(s).

...The word means aged persons, but the ideas of dignity, rank, and privilege also became attached to this concept. [from the Complete Word Study Bible]

WARNING to a church age that loves what's “trending” rather than what's “tried”! ...Worse than that the church is incorporating a sense of “HOSTILITY” against all things and power structures and ideas that are “pre-existent and imposed”!!