

Knowing God

1. His Perspective – My Perspective of Life

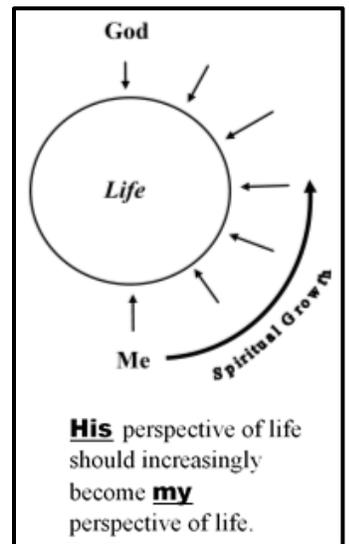
God desires for me to grow in my understanding of Him. From birth until I received Christ as my Savior, I formed habits of worldly understanding. Now He wants to gradually **transform my understanding** of Him so that I increasingly view life from **His** perspective. **A godly perspective produces godly behavior**. It does not please God if I simply attempt to change my outward behavior without allowing Him to transform my inward thinking.

If I want my relationship with God to grow, I need to make **conscious choices** to seek Him **wholeheartedly**, in much the same way that a marriage relationship needs to be nurtured.

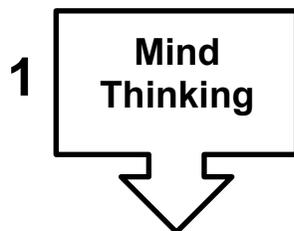
In order not to hinder God's work in and through me, I need to maintain an **open, honest** and **teachable** attitude towards Him. Since **He alone** really knows me, **my** role is to willingly allow Him to make the appropriate changes in my **understanding**. Jesus is the **visible** picture of God's character, and the One in whose image God will mold me, **as I allow Him**.

God desires for me to know Him **intimately**, in a way that goes beyond mere knowledge "about" Him.

Romans 12:2 tells me that God wants to transform my thinking so that I increasingly think more like Him. That change will result in an attitude adjustment, resulting (over time) in behavior that is acceptable to Him. *Do not be **conformed** to this age, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, so that **you** may discern what is the good, pleasing, and **perfect will of God**.*

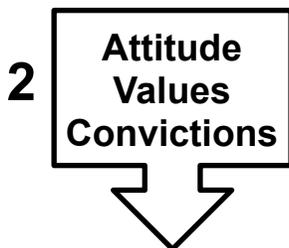


The following three steps will help me to understand this critical process.



God wants to gradually **transform my understanding of Him** so that I increasingly view life from His perspective.

I **willingly choose** to allow Him to make the appropriate changes in my understanding.



I need to **maintain an open, honest and teachable attitude** towards Him.

I need to **make conscious choices to seek Him** wholeheartedly in my daily spiritual walk.



As I am abiding in harmony with the Holy Spirit, **He will progressively transform my understanding and values**, which will result in behavior that is increasingly pleasing to Him.

Godly behavior is the natural outcome of His continuing inward transformation of my convictions and values

1 Sam. 16:7... *Man does not see what the Lord sees, for man sees what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart.*"



2. My attitude

a. God desires for me to grow in my understanding of Him, to know His heart.

Jer. 9:23-24 This is what the Lord says: The wise man must **not** boast in **his wisdom**; the strong man must **not** boast in **his strength**; the wealthy man must **not** boast in **his wealth**. But the one who boasts should boast in this, **that he understands and knows Me**....
John 17:3 (*Jesus said*) **This** is eternal life: that they may **know You**, the only true God, and the One You have sent—**Jesus Christ**.
Rom. 12:2 ...do not be conformed to this age, but **be transformed** by the renewing of **your mind**, **so that** you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
2 Cor. 3:18 We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and **are being transformed** into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.
Eph. 3:16-19 ... that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, and **to know the Messiah's love that surpasses knowledge**, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The highest goal of learning is to know God!

b. In order to grow I need to actively pursue a closer relationship with Him.

Psa. 63:1 (*David wrote*) God,... I **eagerly** seek You. I **thirst** for You....
Prov. 2:1-5 (*Solomon wrote*) My son, if you **accept** my words and **store up** my commands within you, **listening closely** to wisdom and **directing** your heart to understanding; furthermore, if you **call out** to insight and **lift** your voice to understanding, if you **seek** it like silver and **search** for it like hidden treasure, **then** you will **understand** the fear of the Lord and **discover** the knowledge of God.
Matt. 7:7-8 "**Keep asking**, and it will be given to you. **Keep searching**, and you will find. **Keep knocking**, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks **receives**, and the one who searches **finds**, and to the one who knocks, the door **will be opened**."
1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn infants, **desire** the pure spiritual milk, **so that** you may **grow** by it for your salvation, since you have tasted that the Lord is good.

3. God's Word

Truth does not originate from me, or from any other human, but only from God himself. Therefore, all “perceived truth” must be compared to, and verified by, God’s word – the Bible.



a. One way God transforms me is through His Word. His Word is trustworthy.

Psa. 119:89 Lord, Your word is **forever**; it is firmly fixed in heaven. (*see also 1 Peter 1:25*)
Matt. 24:35 (*Jesus said*) Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words **will never pass away**.
John 14:6 Jesus told him, “**I am** the way, **the truth**, and the life...”
John 17:17 (*Jesus said*) Sanctify them by the truth; **Your word is truth**. (*See also Psa. 119:160*)
Rom. 15:4 For whatever was written in the past was written **for our instruction**, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures.
Eph. 4:21 ... **the truth is in Jesus**.
2 Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for **teaching**, for **rebuking**, for **correcting**, for **training** in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
1 John 5:6 ...And the Spirit is the One who testifies, because **the Spirit is the truth**.

b. God’s Word should become as essential as food in my daily life.

Deut. 6:5-9 “...These words that I am giving you today are to be **in your heart**. **Repeat** them to your children. **Talk about** them **when you sit** in your house and **when you walk** along the road, **when you lie down** and **when you get up**. ... **Write them** on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (*See also Deut. 11:18-21*)
Job 23:12 (*Job said*) “I have not departed from the commands of His lips; I have **treasured** the words of His mouth **more than** my daily food.”
Psa. 119:16 I will delight in Your statutes; **I will not forget** Your word.
Psa. 119:103 How sweet Your word is to my taste—**sweeter** than honey in my mouth.
Matt. 4:4 But He (*Jesus*) answered, “It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on **every** word that comes from the mouth of God.”

c. Memorization and meditation on His Word will help me grow.

Psa. 1:1-3 How happy is the man who ... his delight is in the LORD’s instruction, and he **meditates on it day and night**. He is like a tree planted beside streams of water that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.
Psa. 119:11 I have treasured Your word **in my heart** so that I may not sin against You.
Psa. 119:97 How I love Your instruction! It is my meditation **all day long**.
Psa. 145:5 **I will speak of Your splendor and glorious majesty and Your wonderful works**.
Prov. 22:17-18 Listen closely, pay attention to the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge. For it is pleasing if you **keep them within you and if they are constantly on your lips**.
Col. 3:16 **Let** the message about the Messiah **dwell richly among** you, **teaching** and **admonishing** one another in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Suggestions:

- Record a Bible verse with your phone and play back as you drive or do chores.
- Write a verse on a card and tape it where it is visible or write it on your mirror with a dry erase marker.
- Meditate on that verse during the day.

d. God's Word is like a light shining into my life, disclosing the secrets of my heart and helping me to see myself as God sees me.

Psa. 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.

Psa. 119:130 The revelation of Your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced.

Rom. 10:17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.

Heb. 4:12-13 ... For the word of God is living and effective ... It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart. ... all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

e. God alone gives understanding of His Word. Even though some portions may appear difficult to understand, as I am honest and open to Him, He will reveal His Word to me as I have need.

Deut. 29:29 The hidden things belong to the LORD our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law.

Luke 24:45 Then He (*Jesus*) opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

1 Cor. 2:12-14 ... Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. But the unbeliever does not welcome what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it ...

2 Pet. 3:15-16 (*Peter wrote*) ... our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. He speaks about these things in all his letters in which there are some matters that are hard to understand....

f. The following recommendations may be helpful as you consider what Bible translation to use, where to start reading, and some verses to memorize.

Bible Translation: There are several dozen English Bible translations. It may be helpful to consult with a spiritual leader for a recommended version. Different versions can also be seen at www.christianbook.com and/or www.biblegateway.com . Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holman Standard Christian Bible.

Where to Start Reading: John, Luke, Acts and Genesis are good starting points. Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians and Proverbs should also be on your "short list".

Helpful Verses to Memorize: John 3:16-17, Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 8:28, Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 John 1:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Galatians 5:16, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 5:24, Romans 12:1-2 will all be helpful, along with other verses.

4. Prayer - conversing with God



I should think of Prayer as an intimate conversation with my Creator and Master, who is majestic in His creation and control of the universe, while at the same time so loving and caring that He wants to be involved in the most minute details of my life.

I should approach God with a reverent awe, always conscious of the fact that His accessibility is only due to the merit of His Son, not a result of any goodness on my part. I should count it an extreme privilege to approach the God of all creation.

As in any conversation, **listening is a major component**. Occasionally my time with God will consist mostly or entirely of contemplating and **listening to Him** as He speaks to my heart or reveals to me something new. He wants me to look to Him **with expectation**.

One way of honoring God and giving Him His rightful recognition in my heart is by actively seeking and accepting **His** priorities. This will necessitate forming the habit of not giving Him the leftovers of my time, energy and possessions, but rather offering Him the best of my resources.

a. Conversation with God will be enhanced by a heart preparation, an honest assessment of my priorities, and an awareness of His majesty.

Psa. 5:3 At daybreak, LORD, You hear my voice; at daybreak I plead my case to You and **watch expectantly**.

Psa. 37:7 **Be silent** before the LORD and **wait expectantly** for Him....

Psa. 119:147 I rise before dawn and cry out for help; I **put my hope** in Your word.

Prov. 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; **in all your ways acknowledge Him**, and He shall direct your paths. (NKJV)

Isa. 50:4 ... He awakens Me each morning; He awakens My ear **to listen** like those being instructed.

Matt. 6:31-34 "So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ... your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But **seek first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and **all** these things will be provided for you. Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Luke 10:38-42 ... He (*Jesus*) entered a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who also **sat at the Lord's feet** and was **listening** to what He said. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked, "Lord, don't You care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand." The Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but **one** thing is necessary. Mary has made **the right choice**, and it will not be taken away from her."

Eph. 2:18 For **through Him** (*Jesus*) we both **have access by one Spirit to the Father**.

Col. 3:2-3 **Set your minds on what is above**, not on what is on the earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God.

Heb. 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. **Therefore let us approach the throne of grace** with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

1 Peter 5:6-7 **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, **casting all your care on Him**, because He cares about you.

b. Prayer includes adoration, thanksgiving (gratitude), and praise.

Psa. 145:2-3 (*David wrote*) I will praise You every day; **I will honor Your name forever and ever**. Yahweh is great and is highly praised; His greatness is unsearchable.

Psa. 146:1-2 Hallelujah! My soul, praise the LORD. I will praise the LORD all my life; **I will sing to my God as long as I live**.

Daniel 6:10 ... Daniel ... went into his house. The windows in its upper room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and **gave thanks** to his God, just as he had done before.

Eph. 5:19-20 Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and **making music from your heart to the Lord**, **giving thanks** always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil. 4:6-7 Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Col. 4:2-4 Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it **with thanksgiving**....

1 Thess. 5:16-18 Rejoice always! Pray constantly. Give thanks **in everything**, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

c. Prayer includes confession, reconciliation and forgiveness of others.

Psa. 32:5 Then **I acknowledged** my sin to You and did **not conceal** my iniquity. I said, "I will **confess** my transgressions to the LORD," and You took away the guilt of my sin. (*See Psa. 66:18*)

Prov. 28:13 The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever **confesses** and **renounces** them will find mercy.

Matt. 5:23-24 So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something **against you**, leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go and be reconciled** with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, **if you have anything against anyone**, **forgive** him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing.

Rom. 12:18 **If possible**, on **your part**, live at peace with **everyone**.

1 John 1:9-10 If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, "We don't have any sin," we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

d. Prayer includes supplications, requests for my personal needs.

Prov. 2:6 For the LORD gives **wisdom**; from His mouth come **knowledge** and **understanding**.

Matt. 6:5-8 ... But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is **in secret**. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.... because your Father knows the things you need **before** you ask Him.

Matt. 6:25-34 ... "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and **all** these things will be provided for you...."

James 1:5 Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should **ask** God, who gives to all **generously** and without criticizing, and it will be given to him.

e. Prayer – Battle in “The Secret Place

But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. —Matthew 6:6

Jesus did not say, "Dream about your Father who is in the secret place," but He said, ". . . pray to your Father who is in the secret place . . ." Prayer is an effort of the will. After we have entered our secret place and shut the door, the most difficult thing to do is to pray. We cannot seem to get our minds into good working order, and the first thing we have to fight is wandering thoughts. The great battle in private prayer is overcoming this problem of our idle and wandering thinking. We have to learn to discipline our minds and concentrate on willful, deliberate prayer.

We must have a specially selected place for prayer, but once we get there this plague of wandering thoughts begins, as we begin to think to ourselves, "This needs to be done, and I have to do that today." Jesus says to "shut your door." Having a secret stillness before God means deliberately shutting the door on our emotions and remembering Him. God is in secret, and He sees us from "the secret place"—He does not see us as other people do, or as we see ourselves. When we truly live in "the secret place," it becomes impossible for us to doubt God. We become more sure of Him than of anyone or anything else. Enter into "the secret place," and you will find that God was right in the middle of your everyday circumstances all the time. Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless you learn to open the door of your life completely and let God in from your first waking moment of each new day, you will be working on the wrong level throughout the day. But if you will swing the door of your life fully open and "pray to your Father who is in the secret place," every public thing in your life will be marked with the lasting imprint of the presence of God.

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Suggestion: To minimize distractions when you meet alone with the Lord, have a notepad handy to write down any thoughts that you may need to act upon later.

f. Prayer includes intercession, requests for the needs of others.

2 Cor. 1:8-11 (*Paul wrote of his afflictions in Asia*) ... we even despaired of life....God ...He has delivered us from such a terrible death,... that He will deliver us again while you join in helping us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gift that came to us through the prayers of many.

Eph. 6:18-20 (*Paul wrote*) Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should.

Col. 4:12 (*Paul wrote of Epaphras*) ... always contending for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills.

g. Prayer is continual, anytime, but should also include, as possible, regular daily special times set apart. It pleases God when I seek His direction for appropriate times and places.

Psa. 55:17 I complain and groan morning, noon, and night, and He hears my voice.
Psa. 119:62 I rise at midnight to thank You for Your righteous judgments.
Psa. 119:164 I praise You seven times a day for Your righteous judgments.
Daniel 6:10 ... Daniel ... three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.
Rom. 12:12 Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.
1 Thess. 5:17 Pray constantly.

Note on 1 Thess. 5:17 “Continual prayer is not prayer that prevails without any interruption, but prayer that continues whenever possible. Paul was speaking of maintaining continuous fellowship with God as much as possible in the midst of daily living in which concentration is frequently broken.” (Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.)

h. Our Daily Bread (September 19, 2004)

Informing God

We cannot tell God anything He doesn't already know. When we pray, we simply put into words what He's been aware of all along.

That doesn't make prayer unnecessary; rather, it encourages us to pray. We find relief in talking to Someone who knows us and our situation fully. It's a comfort to know that God's response arises not from information we give Him, but from His perfect knowledge of our circumstances. He knows all conditions—past, present, future—that bear on our well-being.

"Your Father knows," Jesus said in Matthew 6:8. He knows our thoughts, our intentions, our desires. He is intimately acquainted with all our ways (Psalm 139:3). He knows the anguish of our heart, the strain of continual frustration, the enemies inside and outside that war against our souls.

So, can we presume to dictate the time and terms of our deliverance from trials or adversity? Can we say our way is better, more likely to develop our soul? No, we cannot teach God anything. He alone knows the way to bring us to glory. Out of all possible paths, He has chosen the best, the route most adapted to who we are and what He has in store for us.

We cannot teach God knowledge, but we can love and trust Him. That's all He asks of us.
—David Roper

*The answer God may choose for me
Is sure to be the best,
So may I always thankful be,
And in His goodness rest. —D. De Haan*

God knows the end from the beginning, so we can trust Him with everything between.

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5. I must make it a priority to gather together with other believers on a regular basis, for teaching, prayer, Bible study, accountability and encouragement.

As I ask God, He will lead me to or confirm the Church body where I can be used by Him in service to others and participate with other believers in the fellowship that I need, continuing to learn and grow through teaching, praying and worshipping together.

Matt. 18:20 For where **two or three are gathered together in My name**, I am there among them.

Acts 2:42 And they **devoted themselves** to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.

Heb. 10:24-25 And **let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (ESV)

Acts 16:5 So the churches **were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily**.



CONCLUSION: As I trust God, I can always be assured of His love, knowing He will only act toward me in my best interest, even though at times it may not appear that way. For Him to do otherwise would be contrary to His character.

Psa. 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and **His ears are open to their cry for help**.

Psa. 37:4-5 **Take delight in** the LORD, and **He will give you your heart's desires**. **Commit your way** to the LORD; **trust in** Him, and **He will act**.

Psa. 86:5 For You, Lord, are kind and ready to forgive, **rich in faithful love** to all who call on You.

Psa. 145:18-19 The LORD is **near** all who call out to Him, all who call out to Him **with integrity**. He **fulfills** the desires of those who fear Him; He **hears** their cry for help and saves them.

Jer. 10:23 I know, LORD, that a man's way of life is **not his own**; **no one** who walks **determines his own steps**.

1 John 5:14-15 Now this is the confidence we have before Him: Whenever we ask anything **according to** His will, **He hears us**. And if we know that He hears whatever we ask, **we know that we have what we have asked Him for**.

*Yet I am always with You; You hold my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me up in glory. **Who do I have in heaven but You? And I desire nothing on earth but You.** My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever.*

(Psalm 73:23-26)