

July 23, 2023

THE LORD KNOWS

God is omniscient. He is described in Scripture as the Holy One who knows all things (1 John 3:20b; Hebrews 4:13). Thus we must say concerning God that His nature is such that He does not and cannot learn, because He already knows everything there is to know.

As sinners, God's omniscience strikes us with fear. In our sin, it is a fearful thing to know that God knows everything about us, including our sinful thoughts and deeds that we may have attempted to keep hidden. The Psalmist acknowledges that his wrongs are not hidden from God (Psalm 69:5) and that God knows the secrets of the heart (Psalm 44:21). This is especially fearful when we realize the omniscient God is also the God who has authority to judge the living and the dead (2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:30-31; 1 Peter 4:5) and that He in righteousness declares the sentence of life or death.

However, for the believer this is also a comfort. For example, Jesus declares in Matthew 6:8 and 32 that your Heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Thankfully, we who don't always know what we need can trust the Father, who does know and graciously provides. Peter gives another example of God's omniscience being a comfort when he declares, "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation" (2 Peter 2:9). Our Father knows, and is merciful in His care for us.

Sometimes when Scripture declares that "God knows," Scripture is not speaking of God's omniscience but of His relational knowledge. When the Bible says that God knows someone, the word used sometimes means that God enters into relationship with him. This meaning of "God knows" explains why Jesus declares to unbelievers on judgment day, "Depart from Me, I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23). Here Jesus is not talking about His or the Father's omniscience, but about the lack of any relationship with unbelievers as evidenced by their unbelief. Thus it is a great comfort and encouragement to hear Jesus declare in John 10:14, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own," and verse 27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them." When Jesus says, "I know My own," He is declaring He enters into relationship with those who are His. This is His gracious and merciful and comforting work towards us. Paul says essentially the same in 2 Timothy 2:19: "The firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His.'"

The comfort for you who believe is that the Lord knows them that trust in Him.

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AFLC Promotion for July is Parish Education