

BE STILL and KNOW (Ps 46:10)

Jb 19:25; Ps 25:4; Jn 8:31; Jn 17:3; I Jn 5:13

I. DEFINING KNOWLEDGE: “Justified True Belief”

- A. Classical languages enhance meaning:
 - 1. Heb: *yada*—apprehend, experience, mastery of skill; euphemism re sex
 - 2. Gk: *oida* & *ginosko*—acquainted with, knowing facts, remembering events
 - 3. L: *scientia*—acquainted with; theoretical/philosophical insight
 - 4. E: “to perceive directly;” “to have understanding of the importance;” “recognize nature of”
- B. Important Facets—various aspects of knowing
 - 1. Acquaintance with—empirical encounters (e.g. Moses at burning bush)
 - 2. Definition of—discerning essence (e.g. Adam naming animals), crafting propositions (“the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD”)
 - 3. Explanation for—reason re purpose (Esther: “for this reason . . . come into the kingdom”)
 - 4. Proficiency in—skill to act (tabernacle craftsmen)

II. NOTING ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND PARAMETERS: **Knower (subject) & Known (object) & Knowledge (mental content)**

- A. Significance: Greek Maxim embraced by ancients, including: Socrates: “Know Thyself;” Aristotle: “Man, by nature, desires to know”—thus imperative deeply rooted in our being; Augustine: “‘I desire to know God and the soul.’ ‘Nothing more? Absolutely nothing.’” J.I. Packer: “What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God. What is the ‘eternal life’ that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God” (*Knowing God*)
- B. Mandate: “What should matter in matters of faith is knowledge, not merely sincere belief; good reasons for faith, not mere hunches; truth, not feelings. We can rightly say that Christianity is a knowledge tradition, meaning it is more than ritual or emotions. Christianity claims certain things can be known” (Garrett DeWeese & J.P. Moreland, *Philosophy Made Slightly Less Difficult*, p. 54)
- C. Parameters: Neither systematic skepticism nor rigid dogmatism feasible—though some skepticism is justified (i.e. politicians) and yet hunger for and professions re certitude defensible
 - 1. “The man who tells you truth does not exist is asking you not to believe him. So don’t”—Roger Scruton re skeptics who discount metaphysical, historical, moral & theological truths
 - 2. Dogmatists discount evidence, assume godlike infallibility—impossible for man

III. VARIOUS WAYS of KNOWING—following Aristotle’s wisdom: understand & utilize appropriate ways

- A. **Induction** (fact collecting—e.g. noting aspects of *agape* in I Cor 13) & **Deduction** (defining *agape* & noting its illustrations throughout Scripture as well as in I Cor 13)
- B. **Objective** (out there—geography of Holy Land) & **Subjective** (in here—“woe is me” Is 6:5)
- C. **Idealist** (mind sets script—self-evident truths, axioms, things you “cannot not know,” cf. Rom 1) & **Realist** (world sets stage—“heavens declare the glory of God,” Ps 19)
- D. **Analysis** (break down to smallest part—detailed exegesis of “pericope,” emphasized in “biblical theology”) & **Synthesis** (weave disparate parts together—assembling “attributes of God” in “systematic theology”)
- E. **Tacit** (underlying, unconscious—disciples’ slowly growing awareness of Jesus’ Nature) & **Explicit** (focused, clear—Peter confesses “Thou art the Christ”)
- F. **Intuitive** (immediately seen—Jesus knew Zacchaeus before meeting him) & **Circumstantial** (weighing all relevant factors—Moses’ father-in-law Jethro advises delegating authority)
- G. **Percepts** (tangible, touchable—Samaritan woman at the well gives Jesus water, Jn 4:7) & **Concepts** (abstracted from sense data—she understands He is a prophet, then as revealed Messiah, Jn 4:19-26)
- H. **Literal** (“what you see is what you get”—Joshua leads Israelites into Canaan) & **Analogical** (“this is rather like that—Jesus’ constant construction of parables: “He said nothing to them without a parable,” Mt 13:34)
- I. **Theoretical** (mental construct, as in quantum physics—“God is spirit” (Jn 4: 24) & **Practical** (temple construction—and “by their fruits you shall know them” Mt 7:16)
- J. **Heart** (inner feelings, assurances—“wisdom rests in the heart,” Prof 14:33) & **Head** (dispassionate rationality—“Come let us reason together, says the Lord” Is 1:18))

IV. MANY VALID WAYS to KNOW GOD