



A Knowledge of God

Our cat, Cuddles, and I don't always understand each other. I'm a dog lover more than a cat lover. This causes misunderstandings between us. Sometimes Cuddles thinks I'm "out to get her" when I'm really trying to care for her needs and make her happy. I'm trying to gain a greater knowledge of cats so we can enjoy each other's company more. In a similar way we need to get to know God. We are different from Him and don't always understand His actions. We may get upset at God over something He did or didn't do. But when we gain a knowledge of God we find that He's trying to take care of us and make us happy and fulfilled.

This is the 10th in our series, "Steps to Christ: How to be ready for Jesus to come." Today we'll discuss two ways we gain a knowledge of God. Then, after the Christmas, when we finish up this series we'll discuss a third way—prayer.

Object Lessons

Matthew 13:34-35—Jesus' preferred method of teaching was parables—object lessons. Everywhere He looked He saw object lessons. It's no wonder that the Creator of the earth and all that inhabit it should be able to see opportunities to show His truth and character in His own handiwork.

Psalms 19:1, 2—"Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all."—*Steps to Christ* p.58

Psalms 19:3, 4—Object lessons, especially those in nature, transcend language barriers. People on any language can see the hand of God if they are willing to look.

When we know an artist or author, their works become more relevant and interesting to us. "The poet and the naturalist have many things to say about nature, but it is the Christian who enjoys the beauty of the earth with the highest appreciation, because he recognizes his Father's handiwork and perceives His love in flower and shrub and tree. No one can fully appreciate the significance of hill and vale, river and sea, who does not look upon them as an expression of God's love to man."—*Ibid* p.59

Jesus applied His truth by using object lessons from nature, work, and daily living.

Reference	Object lesson	Meaning
John 3:8	Wind	Life changing work of the Spirit
Matthew 6:25-34	Birds, Lilies	Trusting God to care for you.
Matthew 7:24-27	Home building	Making Jesus' words the bases of life/Obedience
Luke 10:30-37	A crime scene	How a Christian should treat others—even his enemies
Mark 9:42	Millstone	The seriousness of crimes against kids
Mark 9:43-48	Garbage dump, Amputation	Importance of avoiding sin.

Romans 1:25 (see also vs. 21-24)—God made the whole creation an object lesson of His character. But through man's sin & willful denial of God, His works have become a barrier to a knowledge of God. Mankind has chosen to worship the created rather than its creator.

When I go into an art gallery my comments are something like this, "That one's cool. Wow, that's creative how'd they do that? That's weird, they call that art?" I might look on the plaque to see who the artist is but will soon forget. But in the same gallery will be other folks who's comments will go something like this, "Look at that Picasso." or "I love that flair Van Gogh put in that one." They've familiarized themselves with the artist and can tell their work without seeing the signature. Many people look at nature and do not fully appreciate it because they don't know it's Artist but when we know God, His handiwork gives us abundant ways of learning about Him.

Action point: Let your life be a lesson book teaching you about God. Look for object lessons about God, faith, truth, perseverance, etc in everyday life.

The Bible

As Adventists we talk a lot about the importance of reading and obeying the Bible. I don't need to prove to you that the Bible is accurate and that both the old and new testaments are valid for us today. If you have any questions on that I'd be happy to talk with you about it but for now let's skip the basics of Biblical inspiration and move on to some practicalities for how to incorporate it into the life.

"There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times."—*ibid* p. 62

John 5:39, 40—The theme of the whole Bible is Salvation and it's star character is Jesus. The Religious leaders of Jesus day knew the Bible but missed it's point. In the same way "there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained."—*Ibid* p. 62

John 6:63—Like the sunflower straining toward the sun for life giving energy we should strain toward God's word which is spirit and life to us.

Action Points: 1) Study a Bible passage till you see it's relation to Salvation. 2) "Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets you may read a passage and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind."—*Ibid* p. 62



The tenth step in order to have a relationship with God and be ready to meet Him is to gain a knowledge of God through life's object lessons and focused Bible study.