

**King's Online Bible School**  
**Doctrine 101: Learning about God**

**10. The Incomprehensibility of God**

(adapted from R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*)

The simplest Christian truths point to profound realities. We never really rise above a child's level of understanding the mysterious depths and riches of the character of God.

John Calvin said that God speaks to us in a kind of lisping. As parents engage in "baby talk" when addressing their infant children, so God, in order to communicate with us lowly mortals, must condescend to speak to us in lisps.

No human being has the ability to understand God exhaustively. There is a built-in barrier that prohibits a total, comprehensive understanding of God. We are finite creatures; God is an infinite being. "The finite cannot grasp (or contain) the infinite."

This fact recognizes one of the most important doctrines of orthodox Christianity. It is the doctrine of the *incomprehensibility of God*.

The term can be misleading. It may suggest to us that since the finite cannot "grasp" the infinite, we can know nothing about God.

This is by no means the intent. The incomprehensibility of God does not mean that we know nothing about God. Rather, it means that our knowledge is partial and limited, falling short of a total or comprehensive knowledge. The knowledge that God gives of Himself through revelation is both real and useful. We can know God to the degree that He chooses to reveal Himself. There is always more to God than we apprehend.

The Bible says it this way: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever" (Deuteronomy 29:29). Martin Luther referred to two aspects of God – the hidden and the revealed. A portion of the divine knowledge remains hidden to our gaze. We work in the light of what God has revealed.

**Summary**

1. There is profound meaning in even the simplest of Christian truths.
2. Much about the nature and character of God remains a mystery to us.
3. No human being can have a comprehensive knowledge of God.
4. The doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God does not mean that we can know nothing about God. It means that our knowledge is limited, bounded by our humanity.

**Biblical passages for reflection:**

Job 38:1-41:34 Psalm 139:1-18 Isaiah 55:8-9 Romans 11:33-36 1 Corinthians 2:6-16