

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

Study Guide 7 Answers

1. Read the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs in *The Omniscience of God* (chap. 15).

Why is what R. C. Sproul says here so important for the issue of truth? If the way we were created to reason is not the same as God's He has not made it possible for us to relate to Him. Even if we were still able to receive communication from Him in a language we understand, the way we draw conclusions from that revelation and make decisions about truth would always be suspect.

Not only this, but, since He is the Creator and Ruler of life, and since He created and rules according to His thought and reason, it would not be possible for us to relate to the creation safely or meaningfully, let alone rule it if our way of reasoning was different.

2. How does Genesis 1:26 help prove what these paragraphs are saying?

The fact that God created man in His image and likeness, and the fact that He designed him to rule His creation each provide strong evidence that something as fundamental and essential as the way we reason must be the same as the way He reasons.

3a. What attributes of God make it impossible for there to be any contradictions in His thinking?

- His truth, righteousness, goodness, kindness, omniscience, love, holiness, and glory
- the fact that He is One

3b. Explain how each attribute you mention contributes to this certainty.

God is *truth* and the Source of truth. Truth is accurate information about the way things really are. It exists to distinguish between reality and non-reality. Our logical way of reasoning conforms to it exactly.

Righteousness, by its very nature, is acting on the basis of distinguishing all behavior that is wrong from what is right. Again, this conforms exactly to the way we naturally and necessarily reason and think. There are no contradictions and no compromises in God's righteous nature.

Goodness attests to God's love for what is good and His characteristic of doing nothing other than what conforms to His perfect wisdom, foresight, and determination. Not only does goodness confirm non-contradictory logic in its need to distinguish from what is not good; God's goodness is also one of the attributes that explains why He would never create us with a reasoning process different than His. If He did that, He would not be good.

For the same reason, God's *kindness* is a characteristic that makes us know our thinking is like His. It would not be kind, but cruel on His part to create persons who needed to relate in His universe but who were created with a way of knowing that did not fit reality.

God's *omniscience* verifies His capacity for knowing, assessing, and rejecting all inadequate and conflicting thought and idea.

God is *love* and would not create in a way that was less than the best He desires for His creatures. What is more, God's love, expressed in desire for relationship, necessitates that persons He wants as His own will be able to communicate with Him, know Him, and understand Him.

God's *holiness* emphasizes His separation from all that is evil (and a contradictory universe would - be evil). The fuller implication His separateness brings to the discussion of human rationality is the importance of being able to distinguish. This fundamental attribute would be impossible to grasp or appreciate if we do not reason like we do and like He does.

In fact, there could be no effective revelation of Himself and no basis for Him to receive *glory* unless His finite creatures are enabled to make sense of things the way they really are.

Because God is *One* and creates in keeping with His nature and the harmony that sustains safety, peace, and joy, His creating plan and action will not incorporate fundamental issues of misunderstanding, confusion, disorientation, and strangeness.

4a. Explain why it is accurate to say that "God knows all because He has created all and He has willed all." As Creator, God knows more about every creature than the creature can know about itself. He knows everything about the nature, make-up, and functioning of each created thing. He knows and constantly enables and sustains the intricacies and operations of every physical, animate, and personal being.

Because He created according to His perfect will and wisdom, He could not possibly create anything that would confuse Him or exceed or elude His knowing. His choosing to create and His purposes for His creation are expressions of His perfect knowing.

4b. Is this a sufficient expression of God's omniscience? Please explain. No.

- God's knowing is infinite. His creating and His knowing His creation is only part of that infinite knowing.
- His knowing did not come about as a result of creating. It is His eternal nature to know all.
- Also, as we have seen, God does not only know what is. He knows what all the possibilities are that do not come into reality.
- It would be more accurate to say, "God's infinite knowing is expressed in His creation and in the execution of His will," or "We can see that God knows all things because He has created all and has willed all that is."

5. If God had not created would He know all about creation? Please explain.

Yes.

- God not only knows all actualities. He also knows all possibilities.
- His knowing all things immediately is one eternal act.
- Nothing ever has been added to His knowledge. He did not learn about creation when He created.

6. If God did not know everything (past, present and future) would He be able to control everything? No.

7. Is it correct to say, "It is impossible for God to know all without controlling all"?

Yes. **If so, discuss why it is. If you do not think it is accurate, write down your reason(s).**

- Because He is perfect and good He cares for His creation. He sees it all and does not allow anything that is contrary to His perfect will to prevail.
- More fundamentally, He is Ruler and Lord. He knows Himself as what He is and functions accordingly, controlling all that He has made.

8. In what respects do God's omnipresence and His omniscience converge?

- His knowing is that of a witness. He is present everywhere, seeing all things.
- His knowing is that of One Who relates to each of His creatures in the perfect completeness and wisdom that characterizes all His ways.

9. Does God's omniscience need His omnipresence to know all things? Please explain.

No. His omnipresence and His omniscience are both infinite. Neither needs to depend on the other. God knew all things about every creature before they existed and He was also already present in the span of time when they would exist on the earth.

10. In what ways is God's omniscience a crucial part of his promise to bring about justice?

- Nothing is hidden from Him. His grasp and weighing of all the evidence is absolutely precise.
- God is always fully aware of each individual's every act, word, thought, motive, and decision.

11. What declarations in Psalm 139:1-4 specify how exact God's judgment will be?

"You have searched me and known me."
"You know when I sit down and when I rise up."
"You understand my thought."
"You scrutinize my path and my lying down."
"You are intimately acquainted with all my ways."
"Before there is a word on my tongue, You know it all."

12. What implications does God's omniscience have when you think about the timing of God's justice?

- God knows His purpose for each individual.
- He knows each individual's mindset, and every motive and inclination of each soul.
- He knows how each individual will respond to everything that happens and to everything of which he becomes aware.
- He knows the best and wisest way to deal with each individual, drawing each heart to Himself, healing the distortions in each soul, and bringing about each person's highest good.
- He knows and controls how each individual's decisions and actions will have an effect on every other individual and on His world.

13. Psalm 147:5b (NASB) says, "His understanding is infinite." To what aspect of God's knowing does the word "understanding" refer in particular?

It refers, not just to knowing, but to the ability to see each particular in its full context, including causes, motives, purposes, effects, resulting possibilities and actualities, implications for His Own will in a person's life, all future responses, etc.

All of this is involved in one of the most important wonders for me: that God sees, steers, and responds to the particulars in my life in the context of knowing all the complexities of my life's choices and experiences and every condition and tendency of my heart, and knowing how He will bring the redemption, healing, and wholeness He has purposed and determined for me.

14. Look at Romans 11:33-36. What implications does the fact of God's omniscience have for us?

33 His all-embracing knowledge together with His wisdom are nothing less than riches. We can only know as much as He has revealed about the judgments and ways with which He responds to His thorough scrutinizing of His creatures. His ways of responding to His knowledge about us are so profound that we are not even able to grasp what He has revealed with our understanding.

34 What we know and what we think is only helpful and relevant to the extent that it is what He has revealed. We have every reason to silence ourselves and to rest our minute knowing in His full and perfect knowing.

35 God's knowledge is all knowledge and the only knowledge. Every worthwhile thought we have ever had is a gift from Him. What we can know helpfully depends on Him. Compare Genesis 2:17. There is "knowledge" that is not worthy and that brings death.

36 All true knowing and all the realities of which true knowing is aware are from God and come through Him. All knowing and experiencing pertain to Him and are to be experienced with reference to Him and His will.

We are always to be aware of the glory that belongs to Him, Who has created life and Who has endowed us with intelligent souls that enable us to know, understand, and respond to its realities in a safe, fitting, and satisfying way. Each of our souls is, in its existing and functioning, one of the evidences and wonders of His glorious knowing.

15. Realizing that God's love is absolute, that His faithfulness is constant, and that He is always aware of every option, every possible result, and every possible eventuality, how should we be responding to Him?

Our responses should include unwavering confidence, deep gratitude, attentive seeking, intent obedience, love, awe, and worship.