

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

God is Omniscient (adapted from Wayne Grudem’s *Bible Doctrines*, 88-89)

God knows everything.

“God fully knows Himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 190).

His Own declaration to Job calls us to realize how full, deep, and complete His knowledge is.

Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds?
The wonders of One perfect in knowledge? (Job 37:16)

“If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things” (1 John 3:20).

1. God knows fully.

a. God fully knows Himself.

God is an infinite being. What there is to know about Him is infinite as well. His knowledge complements His nature perfectly in this regard because His knowledge is limitless and complete. He knows Himself perfectly. This is an essential realization for His absolute trustworthiness.

For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:10-11).

b. God knows every creature fully.

In fact, no man knows himself. Paul writes, “Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known” (1 Cor 13:12).

There is no creature hidden from His sight (Heb 4:13).

O Lord, You have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
You understand my thought from afar.
You scrutinize my path and my lying down,
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.
Even before there is a word on my tongue,
Behold, O Lord, You know it all

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Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain to it (Psalm 139:1-4, 6).

“The Word of God is . . . able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

“For He does not [need to] consider a man further” (Job 34:23).

2. God knows all things "actual" and "possible."

a. He knows all actual facts. He knows everything that exists and every event in the universe. His knowledge of all creation is intricate and complete.

Among the words with which Yahweh challenges Job's presumption is this declaration of the great things He knows:

Have you understood the expanse of the earth?
Tell Me, if you know all this (Job 38:18).

Jesus declares how detailed God's knowledge is. "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt 10:29-30).

b. He knows all things that are merely "possible," that might happen but do not actually come to pass.

In a remarkably detailed prophecy of the future conflicts between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, the Lord includes these revelations:

"As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table, but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time" (Daniel 11:27).

"At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this time it will not turn out the way it did before" (Daniel 11:29).

Jesus knew that Tyre and Sidon would have repented if Jesus' miracles had been done there (Matt 11:21).

In speaking of the tribulation to come, He says,

Then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved, but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short (Matt 24:21-22).

c. He knows everything all at once.

The definition above states that God knows everything in one simple and eternal act. The word "simple" here is being used in the sense that His knowing is all one. It is not partial like ours is. He does not just think about a few things some times and then about other matters at other times, nor does He consider anything in a partial matter. He focuses on every aspect of everything simultaneously.

He is always fully aware and mindful of everything. We have to refocus to recall each thing we know. We have to refresh our memory to recall things we once knew. But God never has to think for a moment to recall anything of all He knows. None of His knowing is ever in the background or buried in non-conscious memory. He never forgets anything. "A thousand years in Your sight is like yesterday when it is passed" (Ps 90:4).

His knowledge never becomes more complete. He does not have to reason or ponder before He can answer. He does not have to think through something to arrive at a conclusion. He has always known all the conclusions. He always knows the end from the beginning. He never has to learn anything. There are no new facts for God to accumulate. He has always known them all.

Even to think of our own intelligence and the capacity God has given each of us to remember is wonderful and a great mystery. How much greater in knowledge He must be to create persons who can think, understand, analyze, conclude, remember, and communicate.

3. God uses all His knowledge with perfect wisdom.

Man is dangerous with knowledge, not only because he is selfish and swayed by motives and emotions, but also because he is shortsighted. Even if man had never sinned, his ability to know is limited. He cannot see enough to be reliably wise.

God combines His perfect knowledge and His infinite power to always choose the best goals and the best means to attain those goals.

With Him are wisdom and might;
He has counsel and understanding (Job 12:13).

Paul acclaims Him as "the only wise God" (Rom 16:27).

This is true for all creation.

O Lord, how manifold are your works;
In wisdom You have made them all (Ps 104:24).

When we consider redemption and creation together, God's wisdom according to His knowledge is even more astounding. Paul declares that "Christ is the wisdom of God" to those who are called (1 Cor 1:24, 30). He writes that the true knowledge of God's mystery is "Christ Himself, in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3).

He created us to be able to receive wisdom by actually receiving this Person into our lives. He created us with the capacity to be born of His eternal seed, receive a new nature, and still be ourselves. He created us so that we would be able to become His sanctuaries without violating His holiness, even while we are still sinners. He created us with natural, mortal bodies that He will transform into immortal, spiritual bodies.

All God's promises and assurances to us are established in His perfect knowledge and wisdom, His absolute power, and His sovereign rule. "We know that all things work together to good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose" (Rom 8:28).