

# The God Who Knows Best – Omniscience

## Psalm 139:1-6

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, May 26th 2024

### I. Introduction - The significance of God's omniscience

We have been seeing that all of God's attributes work perfectly in concert together. And the more we understand God in light of all of His attributes, the more we can trust Him in every circumstance.

Today we will see that God always knows what needs to be done in the circumstances of your life and therefore He is never blindsided and He never makes any mistakes. That's omniscience. Two weeks ago we saw that He is always present in every circumstance - ready and willing to minister to us. That's omnipresence. Last week we saw that He has the power to accomplish what needs to be done. That's omnipotence. And - if we were to go through each of God's attributes (which I don't think we will do), we would see that each of His attributes are for us, and that His attributes give us tremendous confidence to trust Him in every circumstance - even when we don't understand what He is doing.

So today I want to give some insights into God's amazing attribute of omniscience. You and I are not entirely trustworthy because we don't know every possible fact that could mess up our plans, and we tend to forget things, and we certainly make mistakes from time to time. But God is not that way at all. A.W. Tozer says; "God is never surprised by anything. God is never amazed by anything. He knows all series of events at once."

Author and pastor Robert J. Morgan put it this way:

"God knows the temperature of every star ... the composition of every planet ... the size of every galaxy ... and the course of every comet. He knows the shape of every snowflake [and keep in mind that scientists have not yet found any two snowflakes that are identical, but he says, "God knows the shape of every snowflake"] ... and the design of every shell. He understands the mysteries of the depths below and the heights above. He knows what lies beyond the galaxies and beyond the grave. His wisdom is as high as the heavens ... as deep as the oceans ... as broad as the cosmos ... and as long as eternity."

But it is not just that God is all-knowing of *actual* events past, present, and future. He also knows all possibilities (whether they will or will not happen) and all contingencies (whether they will or will not happen). He knows all future thoughts, motives, and goals of creatures, and all positives and negatives. Rodney Johnson said,

God knows instantly all matter, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feelings, all desires, all secrets, every relationship, all thrones, all dominions and all persons. He knows motion space and time, life and death, good and evil, heaven and hell, all things visible and invisible, all things in heaven and on earth. He

knows every cause and why everything is the way it is. He knows the fungus in the bottom of the ocean. He knows the deep sea creatures. God knows the ant that crawls in the forest. He knows our life span before birth. He knows what has happened and what will happen at the same time. Since God does not sleep, He never misses anything. Before the past God knew the future.

That's omniscience. And the more you study this attribute of God and the other attributes of God, the more stunning it is that God would love us, save us, minister to us, and want to fellowship with us throughout eternity. And today I hope you grow to love and trust God even more than you already do as you look at His being through the lens of this one attribute - omniscience.

Psalm 147:5 says, "His understanding is beyond measure." 1 John 3:20 says, "For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything." He is saying that despite the fact that He knows all of your problems, idiosyncrasies, and sins better than you do, He still loves you; He's still for you. It gives you security. And yet, because He is a loving God who disciplines those whom He loves, we can't get away with anything either. Hebrews 4:13 says, "no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." And yet (praise God!) we are giving account to a God who has allowed us to call Him "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6), which means "Daddy, Father." He calls us into the closest most intimate relationship with Him, despite the fact that He knows everything about us and He knows that we are unworthy.

And this helps us to not worry so much about what other people might think of us. If God has accepted us, who cares if others don't. John Wesley once received a note that said, "The Lord has told me to tell you that He doesn't need your book-learning, your Greek and your Hebrew." Wesley answered in a letter saying, "Thank you sir. Your letter was superfluous, however, as I already knew the Lord has no need for my 'book-learning,' as you put it. However, although the Lord has not directed me to say so, on my own responsibility I would like to say to you that the Lord does not need your ignorance either."

I thought that statement captured the essence of what is really important. It isn't opting for either wisdom or ignorance. It is saying that we must know God, and in knowing God we will grow in the wisdom that we need for the present. And as we have been seeing in this series, there is a vast difference between knowing the Word of God and knowing the God of the Word.

In relation to wisdom, Solomon pointed out in Ecclesiastes that you can be the wisest man on earth and still miss out on life, and in the same breath he pointed out that the wise and the fool will end up just as empty if they are not in right relationship to God (that's Ecclesiastes 2:12-26).

And by the way - there are so-called Evangelicals who deny this Orthodox doctrine of God's omniscience. For example, I have read more than one book that denies that God can have foreknowledge of future events. They say that because the future is "open" it would be impossible for anyone to know the future with absolute certainty - including God. So before we apply the doctrine, let me prove from the Bible that God is indeed omniscient.

## II. The extent of God’s knowledge

### A. His knowledge has no limit (Ps. 147:5; Col. 2:3; Ps. 40:5; 139:17-18; Is. 40:28)

I’ll start with Psalm 147:5. This verse gives a general description of God’s knowledge. It says, “Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.” Infinite means, without measure or without limits. Can you imagine having no limits in what you know? If there is anything to be known, God has already known it. Colossians 2:3 says of God, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” - all.

In contrast we are very limited in our knowledge. Even the brightest of people realizes how terribly little they know compared to what could be learned. But that ought not to frustrate us if we know God. I think of the man who was interviewed to be a pilot for a steamboat back in the 1800’s on the Mississippi River. The interviewer was doubtful that this young man knew the dangers of the river that had sunk many boats, and asked him if he knew where all the rocks were. The young man replied. “No sir, I do not know where all the rocks are, but I know where they aren’t.” He got the job even though he had limited knowledge because he knew what *needed* to be known. God has not promised to give you all knowledge, but he has promised to give you all that you need to glorify Him. Praise God! And no matter how complicated your problem might be at work or at home, God can give you wisdom for it.

### B. He doesn’t grow in knowledge (Job. 21:22; Is. 40:13,14; Rom 11:33-36; 1 Cor. 2:16) because He is the source of all knowledge (Col. 2:3; James 1:5)

Point B says that God doesn’t need to learn things and that He never has to grow in knowledge. From eternity past God knew the same things He knows now. Isaiah 40:13-14 denies that God has ever learned anything from anyone. Now if that doesn’t stagger your thinking, it should. Paul absolutely marveled at the depth and riches of God’s wisdom and knowledge. In Romans 11 he said,

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid back? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Paul is denying that God ever got knowledge from outside of Himself since He is the source of all knowledge.

**C. God’s wisdom is never frustrated because it is allied with His omnipotence (Job 9:4; 12:13; 36:5; Is. 40:26,28; Dan. 2:20; Rom. 16:25,27)**

Now we do have examples in the Bible of *human* wisdom being frustrated by sin, as in the case of Solomon. And we have examples in the Bible of people who knew what should happen, but lacked of ability to implement what they knew, as happened to Ahithophel. Ahithophel was said to be so insightful and wise that he was like an angel of God knowing just what would happen. But he didn’t have the power to implement what he knew would work best. And it frustrated him. Not so God. Listen to some of the Scriptures in your outline:

Job says, “God is wise in heart and mighty in strength.” (Job 9:4) “With Him are wisdom and strength.” (Job 12:13). So, unlike Ahithophel, He has the omnipotence to back up His wisdom.

Daniel said, “wisdom and might are His.” (Dan. 2:20). It wouldn’t be very encouraging to know that God was powerful but unwise, or wise but not powerful. But Scripture brings the two together. He can never be frustrated because He has the ability to carry through on what He knows is best.

**D. God knows everything in the past - nothing is forgotten (Isaiah 40:21; Ezek. 11:5; Hos. 9:9; Amos 8:7; Matt. 12:36; Acts 15:8; Rev. 20:11,12)**

Furthermore, God knows everything in the past. He knows just what you went through when you were a two year old and your brothers picked on you. Every thought, word and action is remembered. You might say, “Well, what about the Scripture that says God forgets our sins.” Uh, uh, uh, uh. I challenge you to find that verse. It doesn’t exist. Nor does the Scripture say that God can’t remember your sins. In Jeremiah (the verse that some people appeal to) it says that God will refuse to *bring* to remembrance our sins. That’s quite different. That simply means that he won’t hold your sins against you; He won’t bring them up against you. In the same way, we might remember an evil someone has done to us, but we can still refuse to bring it to the remembrance of others or to stew on it ourselves or get bitter. We are commanded to do as God does and not bring sins to remembrance - to not keep stewing over them or constantly reminding other people of the sins of those who crossed us. But Scripture indicates that it is just as impossible for God to forget at it is for God to sin. It is contrary to His nature. In Amos 8:7 God says, “Surely I will never forget any of their works.” That includes an inability to forget your sins. Bringing to remembrance is a totally different thing. And it is a blessed thing.

Matthew 12:36 says, “for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.” And praise God, because Christ has already answered for all those thoughts and words, we will be totally safe - despite the fact that God knows our sins. Our sins won’t be used against us. But God will not have a lapse of memory when He refuses to bring those sins that He remembers against us or refuses to bring them up to others. Either

Christ has already borne the judgment for all your sins or you will have to. Our only security is in Christ.

### E. God knows everything in the present

#### 1. God knows every secret sin (Psalm 69:5; 90:8) and can read our minds and motives (Psalm 139:1,2; Prov. 15:11; Jer. 11:20; 17:10; John 2:23-25; Acts 15:18; Rom. 8:27; Rev. 2:23)

But what ought to put the fear of the Lord into us is realizing the many Scriptures that say that we cannot hide anything from God our Father *now*. God sees into the bedroom and the boardroom. He sees into your heart. David said to God, “O God, You know my foolishness, and my sins are not hidden from You.” (Psalm 69:5). We can’t even hide our mixed motives from God. Jeremiah tells us that we don’t understand our own hearts or whether our motives are pure, but God does. That might make you nervous, but it should also be an encouragement because if you want to do right, you can pray that God will search your heart and show you if there is any wicked way in you and to lead you in the paths of righteousness. That was the prayer of David.

#### 2. He knows all your troubles and tears (Psalm 56:8; Psalm 103:13,14)

Turn with me to Psalm 56:8. Perhaps there has been a time when you cried your eyes out over something and thought, “No one cares. No one understands.” But God does. Look at this encouraging verse. Psalm 56:8 says,

You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book? When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me.

Isn’t that encouraging? It’s not just that God knows you inside and out, but also that He is *for* you. It’s as if he has counted every tear you have shed. He knows *and* He cares.

#### 3. The hairs of your head are numbered (Matt. 10:30)

We tend to worry about whether we will have enough money to pay bills, or enough time to get a project done, but Matthew 10:30 says that God numbers every hair on your head at any given moment. If God does that, then you know that He is not taken by surprise in any other areas either. And we can go to Him.

#### 4. Thus, nothing can be hidden from Him (Jer. 23:24; Heb. 4:13)

Hebrews 4:13 summarizes this by saying, “all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

## F. God knows everything in the future

**1. God knows all things that will happen (Is. 45:21; 46:10; 1 John 3:20; John 21:17; Psalm 139:16; etc. ) because they are part of His plan (Acts 15:18; Job. 28:26-27; Psalm 139; Gen. 41:25-32; Is. 46:10,11; 48:3,5; Dan. 2:28-45)**

But what I think is especially cool is that God knows every detail of the future. Isaiah 46:10 says of God,

Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.”

In your outline I give other Scriptures which show that God knows all that *will* happen because they are part of His plan, and secondly that God knows all things that *could* happen because He knows what His power and attributes *could* bring about (if He wanted to bring them about).

**2. God knows all things that could happen (or could have happened) because He knows what His power and attributes could bring about (Jer. 38:17-20; Ezek. 3:6)**

**3. Since God has a perfect knowledge of all “what-if’s” that are contingencies to us (1 Sam. 23:10-13; 2 Kings 13:19; Ps. 81:13-15; Is. 48:18; Jer. 38:17-20; Ezek. 3:6; Matt. 11:21) including the free actions of men (Acts 2:23; John 21:18; Psalm 44:20-21; 139:1-6; Is. 48:8), then there are no unplanned contingencies for God.**

What about the contingencies of our free actions? I remember vividly in first grade trying to think through this doctrine of God’s foreknowledge: would God know what I am about to do if I change my mind quickly fifteen times? And Scripture says he not only knows what you will end up doing, but He also knows all the thought processes and all of the changes of mind that went into that action. How do I know that? Well Scripture says that God knows all contingencies.

Do you remember Christ’s words that if the same works he had done in Israel had been in Sodom and Gomorrah that Sodom and Gomorrah would have repented? Change a contingency and God knows the result. Well, look at Jeremiah 38:17-23. This is a similar prediction of the future, but it also describes exactly what would happen with all the contingencies. Jeremiah 38, beginning to read at verse 17.

Jer. 38:17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon’s princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18 But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon’s princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.’ ” Jer. 38:19 And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, lest they

deliver me into their hand, and they abuse me.” Jer. 38:20 But Jeremiah said, “They shall not deliver you. Please, obey the voice of the LORD which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live. 21 But if you refuse to surrender, this is the word that the LORD has shown me: 22 “Now behold, all the women who are left in the king of Judah’s house shall be surrendered to the king of Babylon’s princes, and those women shall say: ‘Your close friends have set upon you And prevailed against you; Your feet have sunk in the mire, And they have turned away again.” Jer. 38:23 “So they shall surrender all your wives and children to the Chaldeans. You shall not escape from their hand, but shall be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon. And you shall cause this city to be burned with fire.’ ”

He told the king “If you do this, this will happen, but if you do the opposite, here is what will happen.” God knows all possible contingencies - even contingencies that He didn’t plan to execute.

In Acts 27 Paul says much the same with the shipwreck. He told them that if they stayed on the boat they would live, but if they tried to get off the boat they would perish. God knows the contingencies. But God also told Paul which of those contingencies was going to happen.

You can study out the passages for yourself some time. But they show that God is never taken by surprise by things that may come into your life next week or ten years from now. They are all accounted for and planned for.

We have an awesome God! Amen?

### III. Practical implications of knowing our Omniscient God personally

So we have looked at His omniscience. What difference should this make? Look at Roman numeral II for the practical implications.

#### A. His omniscience gives us meaning in life (Ecclesiastes)

First, His omniscience gives us meaning in life. There is nothing that can happen to you that has not been planned by an all-wise God. The whole book of Ecclesiastes shows this. Focus on the Family once gave the story of a 17 year old lady by the name of Karen Cheng. She was the first person in history to get a perfect score on the Scholastic Achievement Test. She is described as being an absolute genius, but when asked by a reporter, “What is the meaning of life?” she replied. “I have no idea. I would like to know myself.” Brilliant, yet without meaning.

As Christians we have been given meaning by being brought into relationship with the all knowing God - the God of meaning who gives purpose to life with His all-wise plan. But when our relationship with God begins to slip, that sense of meaning can slip as well. Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes to warn us that knowing *about* God is not enough to avoid a life of vanity and meaninglessness. We must know God *Himself*. We must be in *relationship* with

Him - the main point of this mini-series. Solomon tells us to seek a relational wisdom, walking moment by moment with the God who can give meaning to life. And if I had time, I would go through several of those verses in Ecclesiastes. But I think you get the point.

**B. He leads us with guidance, knowledge and wisdom (Dan. 1:17; James 1:5-8; Ps. 25:5; 31:3; 48:14; 73:24; 143:10; Is. 58:11; etc.)**

Secondly, God leads us; He guides us; He gives us knowledge and wisdom when we need it; He opens our eyes to see things in the Scriptures which we have not seen before. And I love this point, and I'm going to spend a little more time on it. God has answered my prayer for insight over and over again. And we are talking about knowledge and wisdom in *even* the ordinary areas of life - like how to fix a flooded basement, or how to cure a sick cow. Daniel 1:17 says that God gives His people insight to understand the literature of their time. I'm going to read James 1:5-8 and then comment on it briefly. It says,

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Verse 6-7 insist that we must believe that God will give us wisdom. Without faith we won't receive it. But let me read those verses again and comment. He says,

"If any of you [not just first century saints, but if any of you] lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all [not just to a select class of people, but gives to all] liberally [that means generously. Have you experienced God's wisdom being given generously? He gives to all liberally] and without reproach [he's not upset when we ask Him for guidance. We are allowed to do so. He doesn't reproach us. He's got plenty of knowledge and wisdom to give. It's like giving a drop out of an ocean. It goes on to say,] and it will be given to him. [That's a guarantee. And then he goes on to say,] But let him ask in faith, with no doubting..." [In other words, it is not automatic. When we take all of the steps outlined in the previous sermons to develop our relationship with God, God guarantees that He will share with us some of His omniscient wisdom. That is the heritage of all God's people. And it is a heritage that has been sadly neglected by many of us.]

I cannot tell you the number of times that I have been absolutely stumped on a problem. I have diligently studied because the Bible commands us to do so. But I have come up empty. And in faith I have gone to the Lord for wisdom and seen Him open my eyes to things that previously seemed inscrutable. I have learned over the years that it is better to ask Him for wisdom *before* I study. But in all of those cases, what helped was knowing the *Person* who had the answers.

Turn over your outlines, and take a look at the chart at the bottom of the second page that deals with the ways God has revealed things to people. I want to walk you through that chart. We will get back to the first page in a bit. But at the top of that chart we have examples of the various modes of Revelation described in the Bible. God spoke through

dreams, visions, audible voices, inward inaudible voices, miracles, various forms of guidance, etc. A lot of times huge arguments are given on whether one or more of these things continues to be a means by which God guides His people. But I think the more important question is knowing what *kinds* of revelation continues.

Reformed theologians have placed all revelation under three main kinds: general revelation, illumination and inspiration. Romans 1 says that general revelation of God and His law is clear enough so as to leave men without excuse, yet it also says that because of man's sinfulness, we tend to become blinded to or ignore what has been written on our hearts.

So there is the need for the second kind of revelation: illumination. Illumination is the opening of our understanding to things in Scripture, in ourselves, or in the world around us. This is where the Spirit may, for example bring conviction of sins where we were not even aware that we were guilty of something. And as we draw near to Him - asking Him to examine our hearts, He exposes things in our hearts that need to be confessed.

Another example of illumination is where the Spirit opens our eyes to understand Scripture, or gives us assurance of our salvation. Yes, assurance of salvation is a kind of illumination. Other examples included God moving our hearts to pray in a certain fashion, or giving us faith, or giving us guidance.

But we must also value the inspired and inerrant Scripture. Because we tend to resist the Holy Spirit, God has given a once-and-for-all-time deposit of truth in the Bible by *inspiration*. Inspiration is the third kind of revelation. Of course, Men still resist even the inspired Bible, and Peter says that some portions of Scripture are hard to understand. But Peter also indicates that the Bible is more clear than either illumination or other forms of revelation.

The chart also gives a narrowing down of *who* directly receives the three kinds of revelation.

1. The first kind of revelation is given to every man, woman and child without their even seeking it, and so Reformed theologians have called it general revelation. An atheist would not have the ability to do math, drive a car, or argue logically if God had not given him that knowledge by general revelation. That's the irony of that situation. The atheist could not even argue against God if God had not given him language, logic, and other forms of general revelation.

So even unbelievers are given not only innate knowledge, but also the ability to grow in knowledge. Innate knowledge includes such things as the law of God written on our hearts and consciences, the knowledge that God exists, the ability to communicate and think. John chapter 1 tells us that Christ enlightens every man who comes into the world in this sense of general revelation. Psalm 19 says that everyone receives a knowledge of God. Romans 1 says everyone has the law written on their hearts. They know what is right and wrong. They try to suppress that knowledge, and they try to suppress the knowledge that God exists, but they know it. People don't need to seek for this. It already exists.

2. The next kind of revelation is narrower in who it is given to. This kind of revelation is not automatic, and it is much more clear to the receiver than general revelation. Many systematic theologies point out that illumination is a kind of revelation, but because it is subjective, we are often unclear at times about it. It is not given to everyone, and even Christians experience it in varying measure. Illumination is not infallible or inerrant any more than our understanding of general revelation is.
3. I mentioned that inspiration is infallible revelation that is so clear that it is sometimes described as God-breathed words. This is the process that God used to give the inerrant Scriptures and inerrant prophecies of old. My position, and the Reformed position is that inspiration has ceased with the first century. And different theologians prove this in different ways. I take it that all prophecy was inspiration. Not everyone agrees. Daniel 9 says that with the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ would “seal up vision and prophet.” He closed it off. Zechariah says, “I will also cause the prophets... to depart from the land.” Isaiah 8 describes the casting away of Israel in A.D. 70 and then says, “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples....” And from AD 70 and on He says, “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” From that time on, the Bible was the only source of inspired revelation. And however they come to that conclusion, I think that all evangelicals agree with that statement - that inspiration has ceased. So we don’t need to settle the question of how it ceased this morning. And according to Isaiah 8, anyone who denies the completion of the canon is because they are missing out on illumination.

So it is really in the second area of illumination or insight that I would challenge you to seek the Lord. General revelation doesn’t need to be sought (though we need to thank God for it) and inspiration is no longer given according to the Bible (though we need to thank God for the Bible). But God can certainly give us all the knowledge and wisdom we need to face the problems of today. And it’s my view that He can give that illumination any way that He wants.

We tend to think this illumination as only being needed for Biblical issues. But let me read you God’s description of the two kinds of revelation that were given to Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. [And if you are lost, we are back on page 1, Roman numeral II, point B.] Daniel 1:17 is one of several Scriptures which show that God can give us insight into any area of life when we ask for it. It says,

As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and [here comes an additional gift of God] Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

So Daniel was given special spiritual gifts by inspiration, but all the men were given what was necessary in terms of illumination to get through their university course.

1 Sam. 9 gives an example of God helping someone find lost articles and I have seen God’s omniscience coming through for me when I have lost something. And I lose things enough times that I need to ask for God’s guidance a lot. More often than not He uses my wife to find it. But I will give you one of many examples of how God opened my eyes by

illumination. Early in our marriage I lost my wedding ring at the beach and had no idea where on that long beach I had dropped it. I walked and walked the beach, and it seemed hopeless to be able to find it. As I prayed for God to guide me and help me find this ring, I felt a strong urge from the Lord to kick the sand, and as I kicked the sand my buried wedding ring popped up. That kind of guidance has happened to me many times.

A friend of ours who used to fix our air conditioner told me a number of stories of how God gave him wisdom to fix very tough fix-it jobs. I took notes of a friend in our previous church who was called to fix a problem with an industrial electronic plant. A team had been working on it all day, and when he came in he felt a strong leading from the Lord to tell them to do one little thing. Everyone was skeptical, but that ended up being exactly what the problem was.

And there are many Scriptures which indicate that God gives wisdom, skill, insight when it is needed to serve His kingdom. The closer we draw to God, the more precious His omniscience will be in our life. Again, we are talking in this series about a relationship with a God who is always present, powerful, wise, kind, loving, merciful, and who uses all His attributes to benefit His children. It is an awesome thing to become closer and closer to God.

### **C. His omniscience draws out our praise to Him (Rom. 11:33)**

But let me rush through some of the other practical benefits. We read from Romans 11:33 that knowing God as the omniscient One draws out our hearts in worship, praise, and adoration. As God becomes the familiar guest of your home (as Job worded it), we have hearts that well up in continual praise. I constantly use God's attributes as the subject of my worship and adoration. Meditating on His attributes will mature your worship. Certainly meditating on His omniscience will. And you can start your worship of God by reading Romans 11:33. It's a great jumping off spot.

### **D. His omniscience leads us to trust Him (2 Pet. 2:9)**

Next, His omniscience also leads us to trust Him to come through on His promises. Wow! It *will* increase your faith. 2 Peter 2:9 says, "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly." He knows how. What he desires is that we begin to trust Him. And there are hundreds of stories that could illustrate this, but I'll just share a story that my dad told me. My dad was a pioneer missionary in Ethiopia, and two of the early evangelists in Ethiopia were on the run from the authorities because there was a price on their heads. They sat down behind a bush exhausted and asked God to provide them food. They told Him that they had no idea where the food was coming from, but they knew that *He* knew and they trusted His wisdom to fulfill the promise He had given in the Bible that the righteous will not lack bread. As soon as their prayer was offered up, a woman came by with a large load of bread loaves tied onto a donkey. One of the loaves fell off. They picked it up and ran after the lady telling her that she had dropped some bread. She acted as if she didn't hear a word they said and couldn't see them. After awhile it dawned on them that God had answered their prayers.

When your radiator goes out on the freeway, trust God's wisdom and look for what it is that He is bringing into your life. That breakdown had to occur if God's perfect plan for you was

to work out. It will give you excitement as you begin to live under the smile of an all-wise God.

### **E. His omniscience gives us assurance (1 John 3:20) and security (Col. 2:2)**

Point E, it gives us assurance and security. 1 John 3:19-20 says,

And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

Have you ever had doubts about your salvation? That is a lack of knowledge, right? All the studying in the world may not give you assurance, but the God who knows all things can give you the knowledge that you are saved; He can give you that assurance. He is your friend, and you have continual access to Him.

Colossians 2:2 speaks of the “full assurance of understanding...” based on the “knowledge of the secret of God.” Why would such illumination bring security? J.I. Packer put it this way: “I am never out of God’s mind. There is no moment when His eye is off me or His attention distracted from me ... no moment when His care falters.” Packer goes on to say: “There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love for me is utterly realistic ... based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst of me ... so that no discovery now can disillusion Him about me in the way that I am so often disillusioned about myself.”

God knows every skeleton in your closet, every mistake you have made, every embarrassing thought that has crossed your mind, yet He still loves you very, very much because He sees you in Christ Jesus. His love and His omniscience are both infinite, which means He can never know us better or love us less. There is nothing (including His knowledge of you) that will deflect His love from you.

### **F. His omniscience challenges us to live rightly (Heb. 4:11-13)**

Of course Hebrews 4 says that knowing God is watching your every move, and reminding yourself of that can keep you from sin that will displease you Father; it can keep you from giving up or doing something foolish.

### **G. His omniscience gives us a standard by which to judge other claims to knowledge and wisdom (James 3:13-18)**

Point G says that His omniscience gives us a standard by which to judge other claims to knowledge and wisdom. It describes demonic wisdom and worldly wisdom that is always accompanied by sins such as pride, hypocrisy, self-seeking, and other sins. But when *God* gives wisdom, *He accompanies his wisdom with His other attributes*. Thus, James says that when we receive true wisdom from God Himself, it does not have envy, self-seeking, pride, confusion or other evil fruits. He says, “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” It’s a great way of judging whether your Christian theology is simply

man-made or God-given. If you use it in divisive and self-serving and prideful ways, it's not a good sign that you are tapping into God's omniscience. Not a good sign at all. And that is because God's attributes are never separated from each other. If He is sharing His wisdom, He is also sharing His grace, kindness, peace, etc.

#### **H. His omniscience gives us humility (Job 38-42; James 3:13-18)**

Well, let's look at the next point. What happened to Job when God started giving him a tiny peek into His omniscience? Oh wow! Job fell on his knees! It humbled him. Pride cannot coexist with a close walk with God because a tangible experience of God's presence with you produces humility. Why? Because the comparison of the perfections of His attributes with ours makes our own seem so pitiful. Gaining humility is a good benefit.

#### **I. His omniscience removes worry (Matt. 6:31ff; Phil 4:6)**

Next, both Christ and Paul say that God's omniscience removes worry. Jesus said, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." He knows. Meditating on His omniscience helps us to not worry.

#### **J. It produces confidence in prayer, keeps us from giving up, and drives us to Christ (Jer. 31:34; Rom. 8:1; Rev. 20:11-12; etc.)**

Next, it gives us confidence in prayer, keeps us from giving up, but above all, drives us to Christ's atonement. When people realize that every thought, word, sin, lack of action, or motive will be judged, it makes us realize how much we need Jesus. Christ took the place of the wrath we deserve and all who trust Him will escape.

In the days of the Pioneers, when men saw that a prairie fire was coming, they knew that not even the fastest horses could outrun the wild-fire. And so they would light a fire in the grass downwind of them, so as to be able to burn an area that they could move into. Then they would take their stand in the burned area and be safe from the threatening prairie fire. As the roar of the flames approached, they would not be afraid. Even as the ocean of fire surged around them there was no fear, because fire had already passed over the place where they stood.

Well, Christ is in a sense that already burned over safe-area. When the judgment fire of God comes to sweep men and women into hell for eternity, there is only one spot that will be safe - Jesus Christ. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

#### **K. His omniscience gives confidence to our prayers (Matt. 6:8; Phil. 4:6)**

The next point shows that it gives us confidence in prayer.

### **L. His omniscience keeps us from giving up (Psalm 142:3; 1 Pet. 5:7)**

Next, His omniscience keeps us from giving up. Psalm 142:3 says “When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path. In the way in which I walk they have secretly set a snare for me.” God knows the traps people set for us, and He can provide the way of escape. 1 Peter 5:7 says, “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

## **IV. How do we enter into a more personal experience of God’s wisdom in our lives?**

So how do we enter into a more personal experience of God’s wisdom in our lives?

### **A. Practice the steps given in the first two sermon outlines**

I won’t repeat all the steps that I laid out in the previous sermons, but the more you practice the presence of God, the more you will discover that your loving God’s omniscience brings comfort instead of terror.

### **B. Come to God in faith**

But it does bear repeating that we must come to God believing that He loves to share His wisdom with us:

- 1. You must believe that God continues to give His wisdom & enlightening for our needs (James 1:5-8; Phil 4:6-7; Eph. 1:18; Col. 1:9; etc.)**

If you don’t believe God continues to enlighten His people, you won’t have the faith to ask. And I urge you to read the Scriptures I have given - especially James 1:5-8. It will raise your level of faith.

- 2. We must pray for that enlightening (James 1:5-8; Eph. 1:18; 6:19; Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9-10; Psalm 119:34,73,144,169; etc.)**

Second, you need to pray for that enlightening. And I have included a number of Scriptures that not only authorize you to ask for enlightening, but command you to ask. Those are so encouraging.

### **C. Wait upon the Lord. Persevere in getting to know and listening to God’s voice. (Psalm 25:4-5; Is. 30:21; John 10:4,27)**

Third, we must wait upon the Lord. There are many passages that tie our closeness to God with watching and waiting. Christ asked the disciples, “could you not watch and wait with me?” God calls us to “be still and know that I am God.” Be still and know. David’s response in Psalm 25 was,

Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.

When you are in an attitude of expectation, God will come.

**D. Come to God with reverence (fear) seeking His glory alone (Psalm 25:14; 31:3; 110:10; 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 2:5; 9:10; 15:33; 11:2; 15:33; John 14:21,23). God often withdraws His illumination where there is pride and self-seeking (Psalm. 138:6; Prov. 11:2; James 3:13)**

Just as in each of these sermons, point D shows how pride ruins the closeness of our walk with God. And so Scripture calls us to fear God and seek His glory rather than our own. Three times the Bible has the clause: “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” Take that seriously. Psalm 25:14 says, “The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” Do you want to be in on God’s secrets? Do you want to be a close friend? Do you want to have God in close covenant relationship? He says, “The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” The fear of God is an essential step to achieving the goal of this mini-series - developing intimacy with God.

**E. Study the Bible diligently, yet with an attitude of dependance upon the Spirit’s teaching (Ps. 119:99f; 34,73,144,169; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17)**

But since God speaks especially through the Bible, the next point gives Scriptures that show that we ought to study and study and never stop studying the Bible. Over and over the Psalmist spoke of his wisdom coming from the Bible and meeting with God as He read the Bible. And he recognized that he couldn’t gain wisdom simply by studying, so he begged God, “give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.”

**F. Be open and sensitive to the different ways that God gets our attention**

Next, be open and sensitive to the unique and varied ways that God seeks to get our attention. I’ve already mentioned some, but this point suggests a few other ways.

**1. A troubled spirit (Esth. 6:1; John 11:33; 13:21; Acts 16:18) versus a sense of peace (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15)**

At times God may lead us to prayer or action by giving us an unsettled spirit. And I give Scriptures to illustrate that. As you mature in Christ, you will recognize this unsettled spirit as a nudge from the Lord to pray.

**2. A word from others (1 Sam. 25:23-35,39; 2 Sam. 12:1; Prov. 13:10)**

At other times it may be a word from others. 1 Samuel 25 gives an example where a simple plea from a woman was seen by David for what it was, a message providentially orchestrated by the Lord. God had given Abigail that wisdom. The woman may not have thought of it as such, but David said to her, “Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have

kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand.” The next passage was a prophetic rebuke to David. Other passages speak of God guiding us through the multitude of counselors.

**3. Unusual blessings (Rom. 2:4) or unusual circumstances (Ex. 3)**

Next, God sometimes gets our attention through unusual blessings. Romans 2:4 says that “the goodness of God leads you to repentance.” Exodus 3 was an example of the burning bush getting Moses attention. It was something unusual.

**4. Unanswered prayers (James 4:3; 1 John 3:22; 1 John 5:14; 1 Pet. 3:7; 2 Cor. 12:7) or outright failure (Josh. 7)**

Unanswered prayers may be God’s way of saying we have sin in our lives, or our marriage relationship needs to be healed, or something else needs to be adjusted. But unanswered prayer can make us anxious enough to listen to what God is trying to tell us.

**5. Sickness (2 Chron. 32:22-25; James 5:16)**

**6. Illumination (Matt. 11:25-27; Luke 10:22; Eph. 1:17-23; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 2:14)**

And of course illumination can take many forms. The Lord may open our eyes to recognize a struggle someone is facing (and thus, we are able to minister), or it may be an awareness of trouble or a need for prayer. But illumination is a wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit to His children. Let’s go to the Lord in prayer and thank Him that He is willing to share as much of His infinite knowledge and wisdom as is needed in any given moment. He is a generous God. Let’s pray.

Prayer Father, we adore You and worship You and praise You for the perfections of Your being. You are awesome, and You are worthy of all praise. Thank you that your power backs up your wisdom. Thank you that your wisdom is a holy wisdom, a loving wisdom, and a wisdom that you are willing to share with us. We bless You Lord. We are grateful that You know exactly what each person in this room is going to face in this coming week, and we pray that you would help them to navigate these challenges in a way that will be beneficial to them and those around them. You know the interruptions they will face and the cranky people they will face, and in Your infinite wisdom may You provide everything needed for them to handle these things with grace, humility, good cheer, and faith. Please give this Your people the strength and the wisdom to successfully fulfill Your will this week. We pray this in the strong name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.