

Known: Known By God

To know and be known are two of our deepest needs as relational beings.

We serve an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving creator God who knows us more deeply than anyone. Psalm 139 gives us a clear picture of at least two things that we need to always hold close to us: 1. God's comprehension and understanding of all things has no limits. He knows and sees all aspects of our lives, for better or worse.

2. The all-knowing and all-seeing God of the universe says that we are wonderful.

America is facing an "epidemic of loneliness. We were meant for more, designed as relational beings and wired for fellowship.

God knows this and idols don't.

Galatians 4:8-9 - "Hey church, you know all those false gods (IDOLS) you are serving... Well, they don't know you at all. They don't care about you. They have enslaved you."

What is an idol? In the Old Testament it was a piece of wood, stone, clay, gold, or silver that was shaped into some image (animal or human), and it was thought to be the dwelling place of some superhuman force or being.

In the New Testament, idolatry was expanded to mean obsession with anything to the degree that it took the place of devotion to God.

-*Idolatry* is the worship of and relationship with anything other than God. The first two of the Ten Commandments are all about an exclusive worship and relationship with God. So, if anyone denies God, they deny His word; to deny His word is to destroy all basis for righteous behavior and ethics.

-*Idolatry* is nothing more than an expression of self-worship. It's trusting in oneself; trusting your thoughts, desires, and purposes.

-*Idolatry* is never enough. It never satisfies the longing we have for connection, for relationship with God and others.

-*Idolatry* is a one-way relationship. You can't even call it a relationship because relationship implies reciprocation and interaction.

-*Idolatry* is a one-way dead-end road.

Galatians 4:9 - "But now that you know God—or rather are known by God..."

When we in our idolatry hit the wall or run into the ditch or hit bottom—That is when we look to re-establish our connection and we commit or recommit ourselves to an actual relationship with the creator of the cosmos, God.

When we come to know and understand God, we realize that God already knows us. At some point, we realize that with God, we're never alone. He says He'll never leave or forsake us. (Deut. 31:6)

If you believe you are too far from God for Him to ever take you back, remember His grace and love are more than your worst—He loves you and knows you, even at your worst.

Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God demonstrates his love for us by sending His son to die on our behalf, while we were still sinners. For by grace we have been saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Despite our sins, despite our idolatrous ways, despite ourselves... God chose to provide a path to reconciliation and redemption.

But what happens when you are living in a way you think is best, when in fact it is not? Who can you turn to when you need someone to check your blind spots? I believe this is where the all-knowing character of God becomes so important. He can see, and KNOW, what's best for us. Proverbs 19:21 - Many are the plans in the mind of a man; but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Acts 9:1-9 - The conversion of Saul - Saul was traveling, still breathing threats and murder, to root out and persecute as many disciples of Christ as He could. He very much believed the path he was on was the best path. In fact, because of his Jewish upbringing and rabbinical training, Saul believed it was the most righteous path. But God knew better. Jesus knew there was more for Saul's life.

And that's where we see God's all-knowing nature come into play. Listen again to what the Lord says to Ananias about Saul in Acts 9:15 - *Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.*

God knew what He had created Saul to become. From Psalm 139, we know God formed and knit Saul together. God numbered his days and created him with purpose. He was chosen to bring the gospel to the Gentiles and the Jews.

Saul turned Paul would go on to become one of the most prolific missionaries the world has ever known. Look again at what Paul wrote in Galatians 4:9 - But now that you know God—or rather are known by God...”

As Paul came to know God, He realized more and more how much God knew him.

God knew Saul at his worst, But God knew there was more to Saul.

If God know how to get the best out of someone like Saul, you better believe He knows how to do the same in your life.

It's important for us to read the second half of the Galatians 4:9 passage: But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?^[L]_[SEP]

There are many seasons in our lives where we feel connected in our relationship with God. The key is to recognize that we were created as relational beings, which we'll talk more about next week, and that we will seek out connection, one way or another.

Oftentimes, that deep rooted need and desire inside of us, to know and be known, will lead us back down the path of idolatry as we try to fill the void with other things. But, as Paul would say, *“How can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?”*

God has so much more for you. He has redemption and reconciliation available through the sacrifice of His son, Jesus. He knows you, and He loves you.

So take some time today, tomorrow, or this week and prayerfully consider what we've talked through today. Recommit yourself, re-establish the connection, and return to the only one in the universe who fully knows and loves you. Joel 2:12-13