

God's word explains our relationship with God.

God's word helps us understand God.

He spoke the universe into existence, revealing His creative power and deity. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20).

We stand in awe of God's creation and we perceive that His greatness is beyond our comprehension. We cannot even fathom the expanse of the universe, how can we comprehend the magnificence of its Creator? "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 to him?'* For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

The creation proves the existence of a Creator, but through the written word we obtain a clearer concept of God. We get to know Him as Creator, Judge, Savior, Father and Friend.

We learn that God is one. He is sovereign, infinite, eternal, unsearchable, all-powerful, all-knowing, invisible, omnipresent, unchanging, holy, wise, just, faithful, pure, true, righteous, good, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, impartial, loving and kind. We learn all these things about God through His word.

Our understanding of God increases through our increased knowledge of His word.

God's word helps us understand ourselves.

We discover our origin, our nature, our accountability, our sin and our destiny.

We know our origin. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:26, 27). God made us in His own image and appointed us as rulers over all the

earth. Because we are made in God's image we are accountable for how we treat one another: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man" (Genesis 9:6).

We know our nature. "And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7). "The body without the spirit is dead" (James 2:26). "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Man consists of body, soul and spirit: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We know our accountability. "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

We know our sin. We learn how sin entered the world, we are told about the sins of our forefathers, and the consequences of our own sin are made clear to us.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "Whoever commits sin also commits

lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). "The wages of sin *is* death" (Romans 6:23).

We know our destiny. Job asks, "If a man dies, shall he live *again*?" (Job 14:14) and later he answers his own question, "And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:26).

A resurrection is promised. "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:2, 3). "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will

be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust” (Acts 24:15). “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28, 29).

The Scriptures are like a mirror enabling us to see our true selves (James 1:22-25). We know ourselves better through our knowledge of God’s word.

God’s word helps us understand our relationship with God.

We learn that although man had a close relationship with God in the beginning (Genesis 3:8), sin brought separation. As Israel was told many years later: “Your iniquities have

separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden *His* face from you" (Isaiah 59:2).

Even though man went astray, God continued to bless him. Barnabas and Paul told the people of Lystra that "the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them" ... "did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:15-17). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

God had a plan that would enable man to be forgiven so the broken relationship could be restored.

We learn how much God loves us. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Jesus came to reconcile the world with God, as Paul explained: "Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we

implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

In response to the love of God, we learn to love Him: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

God is a loving Father who wants His wayward children to repent and to return to Him. In the parable of the lost son Jesus gave a powerful illustration of the love of God. Although the son left home and squandered his father's wealth, when he humbled himself and returned, he was received with open arms: "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion,

and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'" (Luke 15:20-24).

Our understanding of our relationship with God increases through our increased knowledge of His word.

God has given us His word so we can better understand God, ourselves and our relationship with God. Amen.

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