



# The Joy of Theology

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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## Introduction:

Theology: Ugh! Who wants to study theology? That's boring. If I needed to get to sleep that badly, I'd go see a doctor for some medication, right? Theology is for seminarians, for doctorates, for professors. Theology is not for us. We want something more relevant, more practical, more exciting. I know the feeling. But may I show you something? Open your Bibles to the very first page of Scripture. Look at the first four words. What do they say? "In the beginning, God..." (**Genesis 1:1**). God was before everything. He is the source of everything. He spoke the universe into existence. Could there be anything more exciting, more practical, more relevant than getting to know God? And that is what theology in its most basic and proper definition is: the study of God. What could be more relevant than studying the One who put us here, who put everything here? What could be more practical than studying the One who holds us in His very hand? What could be more exciting than studying the one who can do things like create light by his spoken word and be the very source of that light? But let me explain why we should pursue theology, studying and knowing God. Consider how relevant and practical the Bible makes knowing God. **II Thessalonians 1:7-9** says:

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might (ESV).

And in a more positive light, listen to Jesus' prayer in **John 17:3**:

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (ESV).

Theology, studying and knowing Jehovah God is the greatest pursuit any of us can follow. It is the heart of Christianity. Nothing excels it. Nothing is more important. What could be more exciting than the pursuit of abundant, eternal life through knowing the God who supplies it? This is eternal life, that you know the only true God!

## Discussion:

I. This is not eternal life.

- A. In **Luke 10:38-42**, Martha was rebuked not because she was a wicked, evil person who was proactively pursuing rebellion against God. She was rebuked because she was distracted. And this, I think, is Satan's great weapon in our day and age. Our choices are not between pursuing God with wild and reckless abandon or pursuing Satan with wild and reckless abandon. Our choices are on a whole spectrum in between those two. Satan doesn't care if we reject God if he can get us to simply be distracted. So let's consider some things that are not eternal life, which if we are not careful will become distractions.
- B. *Knowing self*: One of my earliest memories of one of my uncles was visiting him in a Kentucky prison. As my parents tried to talk to him about spiritual matters, urging him to turn his life over to God, he said, "I know I need to find God. But before I can do that, I have to find myself." Here we are 30 years later and his pursuit of himself gave him lots of pleasure along the way, but he is presently in prison for the rest of his life condemn as a recidivist, or career criminal. Our society, our culture, our entertainment places finding and knowing yourself as the highest goal of all. But there is no eternal life there. Eternal life is knowing God. If you want to find yourself, find God first and let Him lead you to the truest version of yourself that He created you to be.
- C. *Knowing readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic*: We are an education driven society. We are absolutely certain that the key to life is education. We have to be successful at school or our lives will be miserable. Christians choose secular education over knowing God all the time. I have no desire to deny the importance of education, even in serving God and being a productive part of society and even God's kingdom. But we need to understand that while education may be the key to a productive earthly life, knowing God is eternal life. Let's keep them in the proper perspective.
- D. *Knowing good and evil*: In **Genesis 3:5**, Satan pulled Eve astray promising that if she disobeyed God, she would be more like Him knowing good and evil. How did that work for her? And yet, Satan throws that in our faces all the time. It may not be as blatant, but almost every temptation to sin is this same one. How many pursue drunkenness because they want to experience the high? How many pursue sexual immorality because they want to know the pleasure? How many pursue vengeance, wrath, and clamoring anger because

they long to feel the power? Satan convinces us we are missing out on something and we want to know it, to experience it. But all it produces is death. Only knowing God produces eternal life.

- E. *Knowing recreation and entertainment*: Perhaps this is the great competitor. While spending time getting to know God seems boring beyond belief, entertainment and recreation is always exciting. Television, video games, sports, concerts, movies, the list goes on are always there pulling us away from God. Now don't misunderstand. There is a wonderful place for entertainment and recreation. We just need to understand that while entertainment and recreation may be the key to an enjoyable moment, they are not the key to eternal life. Only knowing God is that key.

## II. Getting to know God.

- A. So how do we study God? How do we get to know Him? See some keys found in **John 17**.
- B. *Know God's Son*: Jesus said, "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world" (**John 17:6**, ESV). Jesus is the manifestation of God in the flesh. **John 1:1, 14, 18** makes a strong case. Jesus is the Word of God, made flesh, who makes God known. When Jesus was discipling the twelve, He explained to Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (**John 14:9**, ESV). Look at the surrounding context of that statement. The Son is in the Father and vice versa. When we know the Son whom God sent, we will know God. Do you long to know God? Then know Jesus.
- C. *Know God's Word*: In **John 17:8** Jesus prayed, "For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me" (ESV). Then in **John 17:17**, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (ESV). If we want to know Jesus and we want to know God, we have to get into the Word. You can't know God because of some mystical, ethereal feeling. You can't know God from a video. You can't know God from all kinds of other books. You can know God from His Word, the words Jesus shared. I simply cannot express the importance of the Word of God. This is not some homework assignment. It is life itself. Do you remember when the crowds abandoned Jesus and He turned to the 12 asking, "Do you want to go away as well?" Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (**John 6:67-69**, ESV). Words of eternal life! Is there anything more exciting? Don't let your Bible reading be a homework assignment. Let it be like going to have coffee with God. Open up the Word and get to know Him with it, starting with "In the beginning, God..." to "In the beginning was the Word..." to "They will need no light or lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."
- D. *Know God's World*: In **John 17:24**, Jesus references the foundations of the earth. And while His point is not about looking at the created world in order to know God. In the context of our discussion, it reminds me of **Psalms 19**. The latter half, vs. 7-11, tells us about the Word of God, the verbal and special revelation. The first half, vs. 1-6, tells us about the creation of God, the natural and general revelation. Seeing the sun cross the sky, noting the order of creation, looking to the stars, all tell us of God. **Romans 1:19-20** explains there are things we can know about God from this created order. I guess the reason I bring this up is to go back and hit on the earlier point about education. Education is important when we keep it in proper perspective. Oddly enough, education is a great argument with the young people today. All they want is just enough education to make them rich and no more. Prove I need it to get wealthy and I'll work at it. If you can't prove I'm going to use it to get wealthy, don't make me learn it. But if you want to keep any and all education in proper perspective, keep it in this perspective. The created world proclaims God. The ancient scientists like Copernicus and Galileo and Newton did not study to get away from God. They studied to get near God. Since they saw God as the Creator, they believed that learning how God's world worked would teach them something about God. We live in a world where  $2+2=4$  every time. We live in a world where  $F=m \times a$ , that is Force equals mass times acceleration, every time. If you are pursuing education so you can make lots of money, then you are getting distracted, if you are pursuing education so you can know God better, then go with God.

### Conclusion:

Why are we studying God this year? Because there is no more exciting, practical, and relevant topic than God. Our God is an awesome God. And getting to know Him is eternal life. Is there anything you want more than eternal life? Is there anything you want more than God? This really matters because ultimately through this means Jesus' joy will be fulfilled in us (cf. **John 17:13**). As **Psalms 16:11** says, with God there is eternal life, full joy, and forever pleasures. So, can there be any greater joy than the joy of theology? Let's get to know God together.