

EXODUS: Introduction

Subject: An introduction to the Biblical books of Exodus through Deuteronomy

Main Idea: The Christian seeks to know God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Principles:

1. *The Bible teaches that the only, true, living God has revealed Himself to humanity and that He is knowable.*
2. *God is not only knowable on a factual level but on a personal level.*
3. *Knowing God obligates us to make Him known to others.*

Introduction

In J.I. Packer’s modern classic *Knowing God*, he borrows an illustration that depicts two kinds of interest in Christian things. First, there is the interest of the person sitting high up on a balcony, observing travelers on the road below. “The “balconees” can overhear the travelers’ talk and chat with them; they may comment critically on the way that the travelers walk; or they may discuss questions about the road, how it can exist at all or lead anywhere, what might be seen from different points along it, and so forth; but they are onlookers, and their problems are theoretical only. By contrast, the travelers’ interest is practical.” At times they may intersect with the theoretical, but their interest is primarily “of the ‘which-way-to-go’ and ‘how-to-make-it’ type, problems which call not merely for comprehension but for decision and action too.”¹

The *GOD of the WORD* Bible studies provide tools to help travelers. Although we will most certainly consider ideas about God, as travelers, we will not be satisfied with merely knowing *about* Him. Our quest is to *know Him*.

“God” is so variously defined that in some ways, it might make more sense to begin with an exploration of world religions and even experimentation with their various offerings. The *GOD of the WORD* studies are not intended to be an apologetic defense of Christianity. To benefit from this study, we must approach it with certain questions already settled, such as, “Do we come to the Bible looking for answers or looking for excuses? Are we sincere enough in our search for God that, if we find Him and His truth, we will embrace it at any cost? Or are we actually coming to the Bible looking to *disprove* anything that threatens our freedom to live as we please?”

There are other questions we have had to settle: can we find ultimate answers by looking into ourselves or by observing what we see around us? We will certainly look within ourselves and we will observe what we see around us, but this Bible study begins with the premise that truth exists *apart* from us, that our ability to make judgments may be faulty, that attempts to rely on ourselves will ultimately fail, and that we can never discover truth entirely on our own. God alone holds the answers to our quest for meaning and purpose. Sincere seekers who come to Him for answers are never disappointed.

With regard to the Bible, we acknowledge that although it was not primarily written as a history or science book (its information about these subjects is far from exhaustive), what it does record is completely accurate. He oversaw and instructed the human writers of the Biblical books with the goal of helping us *know Him*. I challenge you to consider that you will never be completely satisfied until you do.

The two previous *GOD of the WORD* studies cover the one Biblical book of Genesis. Our approach has been to examine how all parts of the Bible fit together into one grand story, so it is important to have a good grasp on the beginning of that story. But do not be discouraged if the *Exodus* study is your starting place. We will begin with a summary of the book of Genesis. The *Exodus* study covers the four books of the Bible that immediately follow Genesis (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The study is simply called *Exodus* because all the events revolve around Israel's exodus from Egypt. The event known as the Exodus is central in the story of the Old Testament, much in the way that the crucifixion of Jesus is central to the part of the Bible we call the New Testament (although His crucifixion is also the central event of the entire Bible). One *human* character dominates the story in these four books: Moses. In addition to summarizing Genesis, we will also consider Moses and his role in this week's introduction. He was God's instrument to teach Israel who God is. Fortunately for us, God instructed Moses to write down what he learned.

I. Israel's Beginning

A. Review of Genesis 1-11

- i. Creation: The story of the Bible begins by announcing that God existed before all matter. It introduces Him as the One who existed eternally in the past and the One who initiated and created the universe. Human beings, male and female, were unique among His creative acts. Only these were "made in His image" (Genesis 1:26). Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, were created to complement one another (Genesis 2:18, 20, 23-25). They lived in perfect harmony and fellowship with their Creator.
- ii. The Fall
 1. *Rebellion*: "The Serpent" is introduced (Genesis 3:1) without explanation about his identity, but the New Testament calls him "the devil or Satan" (Revelation 12:9). The serpent insinuates to Eve that God is a liar and convinces her to challenge God's authority. Eve, in turn, convinces Adam to participate in the rebellion against God. According to the New Testament, their disobedience was "sin," and thus, it initiated a breach in their fellowship with their Creator (Romans 5:12). Since that time, every human being has inherited a "sin nature" that prevents us from knowing and enjoying God in the way we were created to know and enjoy Him (Romans 5:12, 15-17).

2. *The Curse and God's Promise*: Because God is the Giver of all life, separation from Him brought death into the world: physical death and spiritual death, separation from God for eternity (Genesis 2:17, 3:19, 23-24). All creation has fallen under the curse of sin and death (Genesis 3:17-18; Romans 8:19-21). But God promised He would crush the head of the Serpent (Genesis 3:15) through a human Deliverer, a Messiah. The hope of humankind hinged upon the coming of this Messiah and His effective work.
- iii. The Flood and Babel: Following Adam and Eve's sin, and as the human population grew, the devastating effects of sin multiplied. Fewer and fewer people sought to know God. God sent a widespread flood and confused the languages of human beings in judgment of their extreme depravity (Genesis 6:5-7; 11:6-8).
- iv. Abram: The last chapter in Genesis' primeval history points to Abram, the man through whom God would reveal Himself to the world and fulfill His promise to send a Deliverer. Abraham, his son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob were the patriarchs of the people later called Israel.

B. Review of Genesis 12-50: Genesis 12-50 tells the story of these patriarchs.

- i. Abraham was a man of great faith.
 1. God called him to leave the country in which he lived and go to a place that was unknown to him. Abraham obeyed.
 2. God gave Abraham unique promises. Abraham believed God would fulfill His promises even though, humanly speaking, their fulfillment seemed unlikely.
 - a. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, many descendants, and blessing to him and through him to all the nations of the world.
 - b. At the time God promised these things, Abraham and his wife Sarah were elderly and barren. They did not possess any land in Canaan and in fact, they would only ever possess one small piece before they died. They could hardly imagine how they could bless the entire world. But Abraham trusted God so much that he believed, even if God's promises were not fulfilled in his lifetime, God still would ensure they were fulfilled to his offspring.
 - c. Abraham and Sarah miraculously conceived Isaac in their very old age.

- d. During Abraham's lifetime, God told him that his descendants would one day be enslaved and mistreated in a foreign land where they would remain for four hundred years. But God also said He would bring them out with great possessions and punish the nation they had served (Genesis 15:13-15).
- ii. Isaac inherited the promises God had given his father. Isaac's wife was also barren. But God answered his prayers and she gave birth to twin sons, Jacob and Esau.
- iii. Jacob inherited the promises given by God to Abraham and Isaac. His twin brother was not interested in spiritual things (Genesis 25:34; Hebrews 12:16). Faith did not come as easily to Jacob as it had to Abraham. Jacob was a deceiver and schemer. He sought to protect his own interests rather than trusting God. Nevertheless, God was faithful to him, transforming his character through the trials of life. God renamed Jacob "Israel" as an indication of his transformation (Genesis 32:28). Jacob fathered twelve sons. These sons would become the twelve tribes of Israel. At the close of the book of Genesis, this family had seventy members (Genesis 46:27). Abraham's family had grown, but it was not yet the powerful nation it would become.
- iv. Joseph
1. Joseph was the favored son of Jacob. Near the end of Genesis, his jealous brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt. Their father believed Joseph was dead, but through a series of providentially orchestrated events, Joseph actually rose from slavery and imprisonment to the highest position in Egypt under Pharaoh.
 2. Shortly after Joseph's exaltation, a widespread famine forced Joseph's brothers to travel to Egypt in search of food. They didn't initially recognize their brother, even though they faced him repeatedly. Eventually, Joseph revealed himself and instructed them to bring their father and all the members of Jacob's household to Egypt where he could provide for them.
 3. God personally assured Jacob that he should move to Egypt as Joseph had instructed: "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again" (Genesis 46:3-4). Just before his death, Jacob spoke prophetic words over each of his sons. He gave Joseph the double portion of inheritance normally given the firstborn son, essentially adopting Joseph's two sons as his own and giving each a portion equal to that of their father's brothers. He prophesied his son, Judah, would father kings of Israel and ultimately, the promised Messiah.

4. Genesis ends with Joseph's death. Even on their deathbeds, Jacob and Joseph indicated faith that God would yet fulfill his promises to Israel. Joseph told his family, "God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Genesis 50:24).
 5. Genesis leaves us in anticipation of how God would fulfill His promises and make Israel a blessing to the entire world. As we turn the page to Exodus, we discover that Israel remained in Egypt for over 400 years (Exodus 12:40)!
- v. Why Egypt? We may wonder why God would lead the people of Israel into Egypt and allow them to remain there for so long when He had promised that Canaan would be their land. The Bible does not give us all the reasons, but it does give us one: the people living in Canaan were wicked. But God was patient with them. He did not remove them from Canaan and give the land to Israel until their sin "reached its full measure" (Genesis 15:16). Some of the following facts may also explain why God chose to leave Israel in Egypt.
1. The Egyptians considered shepherds detestable. Because of this, the Israelites were given the portion of land known as Goshen in Egypt in which to reside. Therefore, they were separated from the local residents and unlikely to intermarry with idolatrous neighbors, as they might have in Canaan.
 2. The long time span would have allowed them to increase in numbers so that they were more capable of occupying and holding land in Canaan.
 3. Along with Mesopotamia, Egypt was one of the more advanced cultures of the day. The Israelites were nomadic shepherds when they entered Egypt. Even though they were segregated from the Egyptians, it seems likely that they would have developed culturally there. Moses grew up in Pharaoh's household, where he was well educated. It is reasonable to assume that at least some of the Israelites (such as those who were overseers), were also taught to read and write. In order to pen the books of the Bible that introduce us to God, the Israelites needed to be literate.

Summary Statement: The first book of the Bible tells of the entrance of sin into the world and God's choice of one man's family (Abraham's), through whom He would bless the world and send a Deliverer.

The primary purpose of the Bible is to enable us to know God. He has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures and in the person of Jesus Christ. For the most part, Jews penned the Scriptures, and of course, Jesus Christ was Jewish. In the context of the larger story of the Bible, we realize Genesis indicates God chose to work through Abraham's family in order to reveal Himself to humanity.

Principle: *The Bible teaches that the only true, living God has revealed Himself to humanity and that He is knowable.*

These are claims of enormous importance. If only one God exists, if He is a personal being, and if He desires to be known, then many of the world's philosophies and religions must be rejected as false. Most of the world's religions fall into one of three worldviews:

- Pantheistic religions (such as Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, and New Age) claim that God *is* all, and therefore impersonal.
- The second category of worldviews is atheistic (religious humanism). According to the atheist, no God exists at all, a sharp contrast to the teachings of the Bible. Therefore, there is nothing personal "out there" to be known.
- The third worldview is the theistic worldview. Only Judaism and Islam share this worldview with Christianity. According to these, there is one God and He is the Creator of all matter (the universe). He is separate from His creation.

Application: If you have concluded that you can know God and that He has revealed Himself in the Bible, how familiar are you with His self-revelation? Do you tend to pick and choose to read the parts of the Bible you find most interesting? Or are you convinced that there must be important things to learn about God in books like Leviticus, Ezra, Ezekiel, Amos, and Philemon? No doubt, there are some parts of the Bible that are more easily understood and that advance the storyline more than others. But if the entire Bible is God's word, perhaps we should consider that every part contains important information about Him.

Transition: Since we are Travelers (and not merely Balconers), we are *not only* interested in the fact that God has revealed Himself and is knowable, we are interested in the *relationship* we can have with this knowable God. How we may know Him is partially answered by examining the relationship between God and those who sought to know Him in the books of our Exodus study. The four books that follow Genesis have one central human figure, the man named Moses. He was certainly a man who knew God. Although the Bible declares that no person can see God's face and live (Exodus 33:20), Moses' relationship with God was so intimate that the Bible describes it as "face to face" (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10).

II. The Life of Moses

A. Moses, the Author: Moses is widely considered to be the author of the first five books of the Bible. Jewish and Christian traditions have always attributed authorship to him. Several of these books contain hints that Moses wrote them: God told Moses to write something down (Exodus 34:27), Moses wrote down everything the Lord said (Exodus 24:4), Moses “wrote the law” (Deuteronomy 31:9, 24), Moses recorded the travel log of Israel’s journeys (Numbers 33:2), and so on. These references indicate that Moses wrote at least parts of these books. The New Testament also credits Moses with the writing of the Pentateuch (Mark 12:26; John 7:19; Acts 3:22; Romans 10:5).

- i. Scribal Editing: An assumption of Mosaic authorship does not preclude the certainty that scribes edited these books. For instance, Moses could not have recorded his own death (Deuteronomy 34). Since all the events of Genesis occurred well before Moses’ lifetime, he may have received that information in written form or orally.
- ii. A Discarded Theory: A popular theory (the Documentary or Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis) developed at the end of the nineteenth century suggesting that the Pentateuch was written long after Moses’ time by four different authors: the “E” writer (who used the term Elohim for God), the “J” writer (who used the term Jehovah [or Yahweh] for God), the “P” writer (who inserted the priestly information), and the “D” writer (who authored Deuteronomy). According to this theory, some time after Israel’s exile, a scribe compiled the four documents. Today, this idea has been largely discredited.

B. Moses, the Man of God

- i. Moses’ Accomplishments: Moses is one of the most outstanding figures of Biblical history. The Bible mentions him 846 times! The books covered in this study begin with Moses’ birth and end with his death. Moses was born in Egypt to an Israelite couple from the tribe of Levi. He lived 120 years, spending the first 40 in Egypt, the second 40 as a fugitive in Midian, and the last 40 leading Israel out of bondage to the edge of the “Land of Promise” (Canaan). Moses “was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action” (Acts 7:22). Yet he was also “a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3).
- ii. An Outstanding Leader: One could easily argue that Moses was one of the greatest leaders (if not *the* greatest) in all history. While leading a large group of slaves in their transformation into the nation of Israel, he instituted Israel’s civic, religious, and moral law, and led the people for forty years on a journey to the land they would eventually claim as their own.

- iii. A Prophet: Moses was not only a leader and Biblical author, he was also a prophet. He spoke to God with an intimacy that can only be described as “face to face” (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10).
1. God first appeared to him in a burning bush and called him to lead Israel out of Egypt.
 2. God empowered him with miraculous signs and wonders to prove he was His representative.
 3. Moses interceded with God on behalf of Israel.
 4. Moses spent long periods of time alone with God (as many as 40 days!). God spoke directly to Moses, giving him specific instructions, including laws by which to govern the fledgling nation of Israel.

Summary Statement: Moses is one of the great heroes of the faith, and like individuals of faith who lived before him, he knew God intimately. He argued with God, pled with Him, cried out to Him, and enjoyed personal fellowship with Him. Through men like Moses, we learn that God is not only knowable on a factual level but also on a personal level.

Principle: *God is not only knowable on a factual level but on a personal level.*

Some have believed that the people who lived in that age only knew God by keeping His commands; that is a grave misunderstanding. Moses knew God because he was a man of faith. Salvation has always been by faith in God’s Deliverer, whom the New Testament reveals as Jesus. Through faith in God’s deliverer, a person in any era may enter a relationship with the living God. The New Testament speaks of God adopting them as His own children. Jesus Himself told us to address God as our Father (Matthew 5-7). Dr. Packer affirms:

You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator. In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. “Father” is the Christian name for God.ⁱⁱ

Application: Travelers are eager to know God in this personal way. Once we come off the balcony and begin our pilgrimage of faith in the living God, we may continue to face challenges to our ability to view God as a perfect, loving, Heavenly Father. We may be challenged by our own senses. Perhaps He *seems* distant to us. Our own reasoning may challenge us, insisting that our sin and shortcomings make us unlovable to Him. These challenges, however, are the result of looking to ourselves for answers, believing that we can know truth by our own experience. We must remember that God *has promised* to be ever-present with His children (Hebrews 13:5) and His word, not our own feelings and experiences, is the standard of truth.

Transition: Moses was a great man, a great leader, and also God's son. He experienced intimacy with the living God. His story, along with the story told in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, are the focus of our study.

III. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

A. Exodus: Because a good amount of action takes place in the book of Exodus, half of our study will be spent covering this book (the first six lessons).

- i. Continuation of the Genesis Narrative: At the conclusion of Genesis, Israel's family is happily situated, well cared for, and living independently in Goshen in Egypt. But when we turn the page to Exodus, we are surprised to discover that the reigning Pharaoh no longer knows of Joseph and his assistance to Egypt. The Israelites have been forced into slavery. They are oppressed and miserable. Nevertheless, they have greatly increased in numbers and are continuing to grow as a people group. Into this desperate situation, Moses was born.
- ii. Moses' Preparation – Exodus 1-4
 1. Through an unusual set of circumstances, a princess of Egypt raised Moses as her own son. He grew up with all the advantages of royalty. We do not know when he became aware that he was actually of Israelite origin, but according to the book of Acts (7:25), Moses saw himself as the deliverer of his people. He did not seek God's will and attempted to do this on his own, culminating in his murder of a man and his resulting escape from Egypt at forty years of age.
 2. Moses spent the second forty years of his life in Midian as a shepherd. He had been equipped and well educated as a leader in Egypt. While he endured hardship in these times, these years were equally important in preparing Moses for the task God had for him.
 3. At eighty years of age, God called Moses back to Egypt and deliver His people. Moses' character had been re-shaped; the once confident leader now felt ill equipped. This time, he understood he could only accomplish the task in God's strength.

- iii. The Exodus – Exodus 5-15: Moses and his brother Aaron stood before Pharaoh and demanded the release of the Israelites. God brought ten plagues on Egypt. After the tenth plague, Pharaoh released the Israelites. These plagues taught the Israelites and the Egyptians something about who God is. Walking out of Egypt was only the beginning of the Israelites' exodus. Although they physically left the land, they still had a lot of "Egypt" within them.
- iv. Sinai – Exodus 19 – Numbers 10
 1. Moses and the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, where God met with Moses. There, God met with Moses and gave him a civil law by which to govern this newly independent nation.
 2. God made a covenant with the Israelites: if they would follow His commands, He would take them as His own treasured people and be their God. Israel participated in a covenant ceremony and agreed to this covenant.
 3. God gave Moses detailed instructions for building a worship center called a Tabernacle. God planned to manifest His presence in this Tabernacle, living among the Israelites.
 4. Moses' brother Aaron was chosen by God to be the High Priest. He would be the authority who governed the religious life of the Israelites.
- v. The Golden Calf – Exodus 32: The Israelites became impatient waiting for Moses to receive these instructions from the Lord on Mount Sinai and assumed he might be dead. They decided to take matters into their own hands and worshipped God in their own way, rather than waiting for His instructions. They built and worshipped an idol (in this instance, a golden calf), like the pagan nations. When Moses came down the mountain and found the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, he was so angry that he threw down and broke the stones on which God's instructions were recorded. After disciplining the people, Moses went back up the mountain, where he interceded with God for Israel and received a new copy of God's law.
- vi. Tabernacle Construction – Exodus 35-40: The book of Exodus ends with the construction of the Tabernacle. It was carried out in exact accordance with God's specific orders. Then God entered the Tabernacle, filling the building with His glory – an awesome sight!

B. Leviticus

- i. Theme: The theme of the book of Leviticus is holiness. Leviticus tells about God's law, the priesthood, and special observances that the people celebrated. Because we are broken, we are confused about right and wrong, about what is good for us and what is not good for us. God gave laws so His people would have a means by which to determine truth.
- ii. Outline: The book begins by introducing the system of sacrifices the Israelites were to observe. There were five main kinds of sacrifices (Leviticus 1-7). Aaron and his sons were ordained and began their priestly ministry (Leviticus 8-10). Then God gave a series of purification laws, followed by other laws that taught the people to live good, moral, holy lives. He also instituted special observances/celebrations (Leviticus 11-27).
- iii. Lessons in Leviticus
 1. While understanding the book of Leviticus is critical to understanding God's character and the lives of the Israelites, little movement of the greater story occurs in this book. Therefore, we will cover this book in just two lessons. Lessons 7 and 8 will give us a real appreciation for the great value of the book of Leviticus in the Scriptures.
 2. As we begin covering larger portions of the text of the Bible, our lessons will direct you to the specific passages that will be of most help to in grasping the main ideas. While you will benefit greatly if you choose to read all the chapters that surround those passages, you will not need to read all of the text in order to complete your lesson and follow the storyline.

C. Numbers: Our study captures the essence of the story as it continues in Numbers in just two lessons.

- i. The Censuses – Numbers 1, 26: The book of Numbers opens with a census being taken of the generation of Israelites that left Egypt and ends with a census being taken of the generation who were young children at the time of the Exodus. The two censuses explain the name of the book.
- ii. Leaving Sinai – Numbers 10: In Numbers, God arranged the tribal encampment of Israel. This arrangement was also to be reflected as they march out in their travels. After a full year at Mount Sinai, Israel finally left for the Promised Land.
- iii. Rebellion – Numbers 13-14
 1. When they arrived just outside Canaan, they sent spies to explore the land. Sadly, ten of the twelve spies returned with a report that frightened the people. Their refusal to enter Canaan was a failure to trust God to give them the land as He promised.

2. Since the people wouldn't trust God, He left them to wander in the desert. In fact, He told Moses that entire adult generation would wander around in the desert for forty years, until all of them died. God said He would bring their children into Canaan instead.
3. Numbers is really a book about trust. The failure of the older generation depicts the life of the defeated Christian or the false Christian.
- iv. Wandering – Numbers 15-19: During their years of wandering, people groups living in the area attacked Israel. These local peoples also seduced the Israelites into idolatry. At the end of the forty years and after the death of the last adult who came out of Egypt (except for Moses and the two faith-filled spies), the younger generation of Israelites prepared to enter Canaan (Numbers 26:64-65).

D. Deuteronomy

- i. Outline: Deuteronomy contains three great sermons given to Israel by Moses before his death (chapters 1-4; 5-26; 29-30). Moses reminded them of their history up to that point, reviewed the law, and concluded with important, summarizing thoughts.
- ii. The Deuteronomic Principle: A key principle in the book, often called the Deuteronomic Principle, reinforces that obedience to God's commands will bring blessing to our lives. When we live as our Creator teaches, our lives work so much better. He promises to bless our obedience. However, disobedience will lead to disaster. In the context of this truth, Moses gives an amazing prophecy about Israel's future.
- iii. Purpose: These sermons prepared the new generation to enter the Promised Land. The sermons really bring the heart of God's laws into sharper focus, causing us to remember that the purpose of His commands is to teach us to love God and others and live lives that represent Him well. They speak of the importance of remembering the past and recalling what God has done for us.
- iv. Lessons in Deuteronomy: We will cover the first two sermons in Lesson 11 and Moses' final sermon in Lesson 12. As in other studies, our final lesson (Lesson 13) will help us review what we have learned in the earlier lessons.

Summary Statement: Israel knew little about the God of their fathers when they left Egypt. God used Moses to teach them who He is in order that they might know Him and represent Him to the rest of the world. An important passage, found in Exodus 19:5-6, helps explain that to personally know God is to be obligated to *make Him known* to others. The verses say that God chose Israel to be a kingdom of priests. Priests serve as representatives.

Interestingly, in the New Testament, 1 Peter 2:5 explains that *all* believers are priests, representing God to the rest of the world.

Principle: *Knowing God obligates us to make Him known to others.*

In other words, it is impossible to truly know God and live a private life, ignoring the needs of those around us. If we really know God, that relationship will never flow exclusively between Him and us. It never looks like a vertical line between God and us, because it always extends beyond us to impact others. He brings us into relationship with Him, not only for our own benefit, but for the benefit of others as well. This was the role Israel was to play in history. God chose Israel so that the entire world might know Him.

Application: We come to our *Exodus* study then with the expectation that we will know God more intimately through the pages of His word and aware that this knowledge must impact the way we interact with others. How clear is it to others that you know God? Dr. Packer suggests that those who have known God are characterized by several qualitiesⁱⁱⁱ, qualities we will see in Moses.

- One of these qualities, according to Packer, is a great energy or passion for God. He points out that this energy is often shown in Bible characters by “their reaction to the anti-God trends which they see operating around them.” Are you willing to call to attention situations in which God’s truth and honor are being directly or indirectly jeopardized, even at personal risk? Packer points out that this energy is not only shown visibly but also in prayer.^{iv} How much energy do you invest in conversations with God?
- A second quality Packer identifies as a characteristic of those who know God are great thoughts about Him, viewing God and self with correct perspective. Moses spoke to God intimately but he was the most humble man on the face of the planet (Numbers 12:3) for one primary reason: he had great thoughts about and a great awareness of God’s holy character.
- Packer’s third identifying quality of those who know God is great boldness for Him. Moses was willing to stand for God alone. It did not matter what others thought. Are you more concerned about what others think or what God thinks?
- Finally, Packer says that those who know God have great contentment in Him. What about us? Regardless of our circumstances, are we content simply because our intimacy with God has made us so? Are our lives are characterized by peace? It is His desire as our loving Heavenly Father that we know Him experientially and are completely satisfied in Him.

Conclusion

We began by stating our goal was to personally know God. As we engage in this *Exodus* study, it will be necessary to continually ask ourselves, “How well do I really *know* God?” Some Christians know a great deal *about* God. We may be able to describe His attributes and even quote Bible verses that support our knowledge. We may be able to navigate our way around the Bible. Perhaps we even counsel others. But all this is very different from *knowing* God.

The Christian seeks to know God and His Son Jesus Christ. I want to know Him better today than I did yesterday. It is my personal goal not just to know more *about* Him, but to personally know Him better by applying what I learn in this *Exodus* study to my everyday life. Knowing Him is something each of us must decide we want for ourselves.

ⁱ Packer, J.I. (2006). *Knowing God* (pp. 11-12) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

ⁱⁱ Packer, J.I. (2006). *Knowing God* (p. 182) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ Packer, J.I. (2006). *Knowing God* (pp. 23-27) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

^{iv} Packer, J.I. (2006). *Knowing God* (pp. 23-24) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.