

Knowing God Study Guide

**An Exercise in Spiritual
Growth and Discipleship
Using the Book by J.I. Packer**

**Section Two:
Behold Your God**

by

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For Study Groups or Personal Use

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Preface

While many books and authors have passed through Christian awareness over the centuries, periodically a book comes along that strikes a cord deep in the Christian community. *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer is one such book. While reading through Packer's book can be memorable, studying the book chapter by chapter changes lives. I have seen those changes happen again and again over the years as I have lead cover-to-cover studies, using a one week per chapter format. While this takes about twenty-eight weeks to complete (twenty-two chapters, introductory material, section reviews, and follow-up), it allows ample time for contemplation of each truth Packer introduces, time to delve into the scripture references and consider the depths of each claim that Packer makes. As faithful students, we do mean to be Bereans after all, to question everything that is said to see if it is true, and this study should be no exception.

While the study of good books can focus the growth of a Christian, I have always thought that discipleship could only be successful if it was centered in the cross of Jesus Christ and its true meaning of sacrifice, the "not my will, but thy will be done" that lies at the root of Christ's sacrificial decision. My goal is that everyone who uses these materials, who studies *Knowing God*, will find the cross of Jesus Christ taking its rightful place at the center of their lives. If that happens, then I will have been a "good and faithful servant."

A prayer for this study

Dear Lord God, you have challenged us in your Word to study to show ourselves approved and told us to leave aside the milk of the Gospel and mature into its meat. Open our hearts, O Lord, and prepare us to learn of you, to drink deep of your revelation of yourself. And as we come to know you better, O Lord, may we also come to better know ourselves. Grant us, by your grace, success in our efforts. We thank you, O Lord, for your mercy and patience with us as we struggle to understand both you and ourselves better. May everything we do be to your honor and glory. Amen.

William (Bill) G. Meisheid

Contents

SECTION TWO: BEHOLD YOUR GOD!	1
Scriptures	1
Quotes.....	1
The Incomprehensible.....	1
Chapter 7: God Unchanging	3
Concern: Will we fail to comprehend that unlike us God is dependable and unchanging?	3
Interacting with the text.....	4
What to Do Next	6
Goal: To ground ourselves in the utter reliability of God.	6
Chapter 8: The Majesty of God	7
Concern: Will we be able to come to terms with the utter greatness of God?.....	7
Interacting With the Text	8
What to Do Next	10
Goal: To understand God using aesthetics (the nature and expression of beauty) in addition to using our reason.	10
Chapter 9: God Only Wise	11
Concern: That we will not recognize that to be truly wise we must seek the wisdom of God, wisdom that only He can provide.....	11
Interacting With the Text	12
What to Do Next	14
Goal: To begin trusting our daily decisions and our lives to God’s wisdom.	14
Chapter 10: God's Wisdom and Ours	15
Concern: We will not see that we are truly wise only when we learn from God what he wishes to teach us.....	15
Interacting With the Text	16
What to Do Next	18
Goal: To begin defining our wisdom by God’s standard.....	18
Chapter 11: Thy Word is Truth	19
Concern: Are we wise enough to seek for our truth in God and to let every man be a liar?	19
Interacting With the Text	20
What to Do Next	22
Goal: To always view God’s word in context and allow it to be the touchstone of our existence.	22
Chapter 12: The Love Of God	23
Concern: Will we seek God’s “luv”, avoiding the real love, the “tough love” of God?	23
Interacting With the Text	24
What to Do Next	26
Goal: Every day this week, do one act of Godly love.....	26
Chapter 13: The Grace Of God	27
Concern: Can we humble ourselves to accept God’s grace, the essence of agape, God’s love in action?.....	27
Interacting With the Text	28
What to Do Next	30
Goal: To learn to accept God’s grace in our lives by extending it to others.	30

Chapter 14: God the Judge	31
Concern: That we will use our own measure rather than God’s measuring rod to set the standard of judgment.	31
A mini survey of judgment and its use in Scripture	31
Interacting With the Text	32
What to Do Next	34
Goal: To always remember that God’s judgments are just and true.....	34
Chapter 15: The Wrath of God	35
Concern: Will we soft peddle God’s wrath and reduce the seriousness of sin and judgment, thereby reducing the uniqueness of Christ’s passion?	35
Interacting With the Text	36
What to Do Next	38
Goal: To never lose our proper “fear” of God	38
Chapter 16: The Goodness and Severity of God	39
Concern: That we will lose our sense of balance when considering how God interacts with us in the living out our Christian lives.....	39
Interacting With the Text	40
What to Do Next	42
Goal: To maintain a balanced perspective on God’s dealing with us as we mature in our Christian walk.	42
Chapter 17: The Jealous God	43
Concern: That we misinterpret God’s jealousy into something we can then reject.	43
Interacting With the Text	43
What to Do Next	44
Goal: To remember that God is balanced in His approach to us and our growth as His children.”	44
Review of Section Two: Behold Your God!	45
Concern: That we will shrink back from seeing God as He is, rather than what we want Him to be	45
In Review of chapters seven through seventeen	45
What to Do Next	48
Goal: Always remembering that when we look at God it is He, not us, who defines what we see.	48

Section Two: Behold Your God!

Scriptures

Isaiah 35:4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

Isaiah 40:9 O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift it up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

John 14:9 Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 20:28 "Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'"

Quotes

"You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day? So, O man! because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God" Anonymous

"Hence that dread and amazement with which as Scripture uniformly relates holy men were struck and overwhelmed whenever they beheld the presence of God men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance until they have." John Calvin

The Incomprehensible

By Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

FAR in the Heavens my God retires:
My God, the mark of my desires,
And hides his lovely face;
When he descends within my view,
He charms my reason to pursue,
But leaves it tir'd and fainting in th' unequal chase.

Or if I reach unusual height
Till near his presence brought,
There floods of glory check my flight,
Cramp the bold pinions of my wit,
And all untune my thought;
Plunged in a sea of light I roll,
Where wisdom, justice, mercy, shines;
Infinite rays in crossing lines
Beat thick confusion on my sight, and overwhelm my soul.

Great God! behold my reason lies
Adoring: yet my love would rise
On pinions not her own:
Faith shall direct her humble flight,
Through all the trackless seas of light,
To Thee, th' Eternal Fair, the infinite Unknown.

Chapter 7: God Unchanging

Today's theme: God, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, forever immutable.

Scriptural background: Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

Psalm 33:11 "The counsel of the Lord stands for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

Quotes for the week

"As my high school teacher, Miss Julia Coleman, used to say: "We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles." Jimmy Carter. *Inaugural address*. Thursday, January 20, 1977.

"We need to learn to set our course by the stars, not by the lights of every passing ship." Omar Nelson Bradley. U.S. general, 1893-1981.

"I have my faults, but changing my tune is not one of them." Samuel Beckett. *The Unnamable*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1953. English: New York, Grove Press, 1958.

Concern: Will we fail to comprehend that unlike us God is dependable and unchanging?

The world of the scriptures is so different from our world, that sometimes we find it hard to recognize the God we see in the pages of the Old Testament. Because of this, we have to be careful not to see two different Gods and drive a wedge between our understanding of the God of Moses and Israel and the God and Father of Jesus Christ. They are one and the same.

1. What problem (think about the surrounding culture) do we encounter when trying to hold fast to unchanging principals in the world today?

2. What do you (personally) set your course by? Why?

What to Do Next

7. Why is God's unchanging purpose important to living your everyday Christian life? What does it mean to you personally (e.g., see *Phil 1:6*)?

8. Food for thought: How does this unchanging nature of God relate to our understanding of the Trinity and how we view each person of the Godhead, especially God's Son, Jesus Christ?

What to Do Next

Before you read the chapter for next week, look at question 2 on the next page. After answering that, read Chapter Eight: *The Majesty of God*. Consider how Biblical figures responded to the majesty of God and then interacting with their example decide what your response should be.

Goal: To ground ourselves in the utter reliability of God.

Armed with the truth that God does not change his mind, we can stand on His promises while taking confidence in his trustworthiness. With that in mind and remembering that we were created in His image, think about what responsibility that lays at our feet.

Interacting With the Text

Goal: To learn to appreciate the majesty of God and what that means in modern terms.

1. How does this chapter's view of God differ from the common view expounded in most charismatic and evangelical churches today? Which do you think is correct and why?

2. Find examples of scriptures that support the personalness of God. Explain how is God personal in your life.

3. What biblical examples point out to you the greatness and majesty of God? What common problem should the contemplation of these scriptures remove from your life?

What to Do Next

7. Why is understanding the distinction learned from Job important to our living a successful, yet humble, Christian life?

What to Do Next

Read Chapter Nine: *God Only Wise*. Think about the source of wisdom. Is it something we discover (it already “exists”) or something we create for ourselves? That answer should give the title of this chapter additional weight.

Goal: To understand God using aesthetics (the nature and expression of beauty) in addition to using our reason.

The Psalmist reminds us “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” (*Psalm 19:1*). In our attempt to “study to show ourselves approved” we sometimes forget that the beauty and majesty of God are on display all around us. Think back and remember how you felt about this aspect of God when you were first saved. This week, try to recapture your appreciation of this aspect of God’s nature.

Chapter 10: God's Wisdom and Ours

Today's theme: After salvation, wisdom is God's greatest gift.

Scriptural background: Proverbs 4:5-9 "Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor."

Quotes for the week

"Wisdom is oft times nearer when we stoop than when we soar." William Wordsworth. *The Complete Poetical Works, The Excursion, Book Third: Despondency*, 1888.

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers." Alfred Lord Tennyson. "Locksley Hall," Line 141.

"Not by years but by disposition is wisdom acquired." Plautus (254-184 B.C.). *Trinummus*. Act II, Scene 2, line 88.

Concern: We will not see that we are truly wise only when we learn from God what he wishes to teach us

"The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor." Proverbs 15:33

1. Is wisdom lacking in our modern world? Why, or why not? Give examples.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools [morally deficient] despise wisdom and discipline." Proverbs 1:7

2. How do you think fear is related to wisdom?

Chapter 11: Thy Word is Truth

Today's theme: It is God who defines the nature of truth and He does that for us in His Word.

Scriptural background: Deuteronomy 32:4 "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He."

Quotes for the week

"Truth is truth, to the end of reckoning." William Shakespeare (1564–1616). *Measure for Measure*. Act v. Sc. 1.

"You will find that the truth is often unpopular and the contest between agreeable fancy and disagreeable fact is unequal." Adlai E. Stevenson. Commencement address at Michigan State, *NY Times* 9 June 1958.

"We seek the truth and will endure the consequences." Charles Seymour, President, Yale. Recalled on his death 11 August 1963.

Concern: Are we wise enough to seek for our truth in God and to let every man be a liar?

"For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth." *Psalms 33:4*

1. Why is the truthfulness of God so important to everything we are?

"The Elder, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever." *2 John 1-2*

2. What is the truth that abides in us forever? Why will it be with us forever? (Consider *John 14:6*)

What to Do Next

7. How does Packer define a Christian? Is his definition biblical? Why or why not? How does this definition relate to you and your concept of what it means to be a Christian?

What to Do Next

Read Chapter Twelve: *The Love Of God*. Consider the significance of St. John's great statement in 1 John 4:8, whose main point is repeated in verse 16. Think about how easy it is to misuse that statement to justify that which God condemns by twisting its context. This week examine yourself in relation to this concern.

Goal: To always view God's word in context and allow it to be the touchstone of our existence.

Make a pledge that from this day forward you will always be a spiritual Berean (see Acts 17:11), a believer who rightly and humbly uses the Word of God as the arbiter of all that is true and right. Now, follow through on it.

Chapter 12: The Love Of God

Today's theme: God's greatest mystery, His unending love of mankind.

Scriptural background: 1 John 4:7-9 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 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."

Quotes for the week

"One unquestioned text we read, all doubt beyond, all fear above; nor crackling pile nor cursing creed can burn or blot it—God is love." Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894).

"I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world." Mother Teresa MC. News summaries, 1 September 1982.

"Thou canst not pray to God without praying to Love, but mayest pray to Love without praying to God." Richard Garnett (1835–1906). *De Flagello myrteo*. xiii.

"I have learned that human existence is essentially tragic. It is only the love of God, disclosed and enacted in Christ that redeems the human tragedy and makes it tolerable. No, more than tolerable. Wonderful." Angus Dun, former Episcopal Bishop of Washington DC. Recalled on his death, 12 August 1971.

Concern: Will we seek God's "luv", avoiding the real love, the "tough love" of God?

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." *Philippians 1:9-11*

1. Why is this passage so important to our understanding of how God's love should grow and mature within us?

"A Song of God's Majesty and Love: I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever." *Psalms 145:1*

2. What is the significance of the psalmist linking majesty and love together? How does that inform our understanding of the nature of God's love and how His love transforms whatever it touches?

What to Do Next

6. How do the questions that Packer asks in the last paragraph affect your view of God's love? Think of applying the reality check of chapter 10 (God's wisdom vs. our wisdom) to these questions. What effect does it have?

What to Do Next

Read Chapter Thirteen: *The Grace Of God*. Throughout the history of the Christian Church, men have tried to use their actions instead of God's grace to find justification and eternal worth in themselves. Can grace be grace if you earn it? Think about that this week.

Goal: Every day this week, do one act of Godly love.

Great changes often come about by the accumulation of many small changes until a tipping point is reached. Begin tipping your life toward God's loving kindness by doing at least one small act of Godly love each day this week.

Chapter 13: The Grace Of God

Today's theme: God's greatest gift, salvation through grace.

Scriptural background: Titus 2:11 "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared"

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."

Quotes for the week

"In this awfully stupendous manner, at which Reason stands aghast, and Faith herself is half confounded, was the grace of God to man at length manifested." Richard Hurd (1720–1808). *Sermons*. Vol. ii. p. 287.

"This is Daddy's bedtime secret for today: Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue." Eugene O'Neill (1888 - 1953) US dramatist. *The Great God Brown*. 1926.

"The fast pace of our lives makes it difficult for us to find grace in the present moment, and when the simple gifts at our fingertips cease to nourish us, we have a tendency to crave the sensational." MacRina Wiederkehr. *A Tree Full of Angels: Seeing the Holy in the Ordinary*. Harper, San Francisco. 1995

"In life as in the dance: grace glides on blistered feet." Alice Abrams. Carolyn Warner. *The Last Word: A Treasury of Women's Quotes*.

Concern: Can we humble ourselves to accept God's grace, the essence of agape, God's love in action?

"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." *Romans 9:15 looking to Exodus 33:19*

1. How does this idea that God has no obligation to show mercy or compassion strike you? How do you reconcile this with God's love (agape)?

"Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens." *Romans 9:18*

2. This carries the previous thought one step further. Does this go against your ingrained sense of fairness? Do you feel God is being unfair? How do you come to terms with this scripture?

Chapter 14: God the Judge

Today's theme: Being willing to face the music, we accept God as our judge.

Scriptural background:: Acts 10:42 "He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead."

Quotes for the week

"We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done." Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, quoted by Glenn van Ekeren. *Speaker's Sourcebook I : Quotes, Stories, & Anecdotes for Every Occasion*. Prentice Hall Press, 1993.

"Good judgment comes from experience, and experience—well, that comes from poor judgment." Cousin Woodman.

"Mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to error that counts." Nikki Giovanni. "Of Liberation," *Black Feeling/Black Talk/Black Judgment*, 1970.

Concern: That we will use our own measure rather than God's measuring rod to set the standard of judgment.

A mini survey of judgment and its use in Scripture

"For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." *Hebrews 10:30-31*

Word study: judge/judgment

1. The Greek root biblical word is: (noun) - *krima* meaning dispute, decision, verdict , judgment; (verb) - *krino* meaning separate, judge, consider, decide
2. Use in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) extends its meaning to punish, wrangle, vindicate, and obtain justice for (e.g. *Gen 15:14, 30:6, Deut. 32:36, 2 Sam 19:9, Ps. 54:3, Jer 5:28*).
It eventually came to mean to rule and he who rules and judges brings salvation, peace and deliverance to the persecuted and oppressed (*Deut 10:18*)
Even though men may sit in judgment it is really God who is Lord and Judge (*Deut 1:17*)
3. In the NT it adds the sense to distinguish, give preference, resolve, and approve in addition to speak or think ill of, to bring to trial, condemn, punish, and dispute.
God's judgment, even if it is condemnation, is seen as just (*Rom 2:2, 3:8*).
God's judgment is unsearchable (*Rom 11:33*).
God's judgment is always near at hand and should stir us to repentance (*Mat 10:28, 11:20, 12:41, Luke 13:6*).
4. While under God's judgment we are called to judge each other (1 Cor 5:12, 6:2 contrasted with Mat 7:1) but never arrogantly and always with our own personal sacrifice in view.
Think how *1 Cor 13* influences judgment. The key is agape (personal self sacrifice).
5. The one who bore sin for us now judges us (*2 Cor 5:21*) and true judgment comes when we reject him (*John 3:16, 11:25*).

Question: How are word studies such as this useful?

4. How do these four aspects of being a judge affect our study and your life? Deal with each one.

5. What is the difference between judgment and retributive judgment? How does that affect your view of life and how you should live it?

6. Why is Jesus the perfect and just judge? What does this mean to you personally?

What to Do Next

7. How does Packer resolve the puzzling question of uniting forgiveness and justification with the opening of the Book of Life in *Revelation 20:11-15*, where each man's actions are recorded?

8. What is the terror of the Lord? How does this concept square with your image of forgiveness and a loving God?

What to Do Next

Read Chapter Fifteen: *The Wrath of God*. We will now consider the most difficult aspect of God's nature, his anger and wrath. While doing this we must not forget the assurance of *Hebrews 12:5-6* "And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and **do not lose heart when he rebukes you**, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.'"

Goal: To always remember that God's judgments are just and true.

As Christians and children of God, we know that His judgments are always to our betterment, not to our destruction. God loves us. Remember the truth that every athlete knows, "No pain, no gain" and remind yourself that all God's correction is for your eternal well being.

Chapter 15: The Wrath of God

Today's theme: Facing the absolute terror, the wrath of God

Scriptural background: Hebrews 10:30-31 30 "For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Job 9:33-35 "If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot."

Quotes for the week

WRATH, n. Anger of a superior quality and degree, appropriate to exalted characters and momentous occasions; as, "the wrath of God," "the day of wrath," etc. . . . Ambrose Bierce (journalist, short-story writer). *The Devil's Dictionary*, 1911.

"There were times, when I drove along the Sunset Strip and looked at those buildings or when I watched the fashionable film colony arriving at some première ...that I fully expected God in his wrath to obliterate the whole shebang." S J Perelman (humorist and writer). "On Hollywood", *Paris Review*, Spring 1964.

"I suggest that we can never truly understand why it is that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, had to come into this world unless we understand this doctrine of the wrath of God and the judgment of God." D. Martin Lloyd-Jones. "The Wrath of God". Sermon at Westminster Chapel.

Concern: Will we soft peddle God's wrath and reduce the seriousness of sin and judgment, thereby reducing the uniqueness of Christ's passion?

"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and *were by nature children of wrath*, just as the others." *Ephesians 2:1-3*

1. Looking at this scripture, why isn't God's wrath part of discipleship?

"You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.'" Hebrews 12:5-6

What to Do Next

6. How is God's wrath made known?

7. How are we delivered from God's wrath? Does this truth change your view of the cross? If so, how?

What to Do Next

Read Chapter Sixteen: *The Goodness and Severity of God*. It is important that we see the balance in God's dealings with mankind and His utter graciousness to those whom he calls His children.

Goal: To never lose our proper "fear" of God

Think of Aslan, C.S. Lewis's personification of Jesus Christ in his Narnia series. "Is he safe?" Lucy asks. "Safe? Of course not, he's a lion!" is the reply. Hold onto that this week, while at the same time remembering that He is our Father, who loves us with an everlasting love.

Chapter 16: The Goodness and Severity of God

Today's theme: God always pitches to both sides of the plate

Scriptural background: Job 2:10 "He replied, '...Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said."

Quotes for the week

"Yet neither have I forgotten, nor will I pass over the severity of Thy scourge, and the wonderful swiftness of Thy mercy." Saint Augustine (354–430). "The Confessions of St. Augustine. The Ninth Book," *The Harvard Classics*. 1909–14

"If I were to say, "God, why me?" about the bad things, then I should have said, "God, why me?" about the good things that happened in my life." Arthur Ashe (1943 - 1993). US tennis player, AIDS spokesperson. *The Ultimate Success Quotations Library*, 1997.

"Never forget that [God] tests his real friends more severely than the lukewarm ones." Kathryn Hulme (1900 - 1981). US writer. "The Nun's Story," Little, Brown, 1956 .

"God promises a safe landing but not a calm passage." Bulgarian Proverb

Concern: That we will lose our sense of balance when considering how God interacts with us in the living out our Christian lives

"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those that fell, severity; but toward you goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off." *Romans 11:22*

1. Looking at this scripture, what is the only way to escape God's severity?

"And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.'" *Hebrews 12:5b-6*

2. This scripture makes it appear that we cannot escape what we commonly call the severity of God. How does this scripture relate to the scripture from Roman's above?

What to Do Next

7. What three lessons can we learn from God's long-suffering?

8. Look at the last sentence in this chapter. What important truth does that scripture reveal about God's severity?

What to Do Next

Read Chapter Seventeen: *The Jealous God*. Jealousy has an extremely bad rap, but the question Packer raises, due to specific statements in scripture, is whether or not there are legitimate forms of jealousy. Approach this chapter with an open mind and I think you will be surprised what you learn.

Goal: To maintain a balanced perspective on God's dealing with us as we mature in our Christian walk.

Remember the words of Job, "He replied, '...Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." and maintain your equilibrium when responding to the vicissitudes of life. Our strength is the same strength that Paul drew on in Philippians 4:11b-13 "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

Chapter 17: The Jealous God

Today's theme: God, The Jealous Lover

Scriptural background: Exodus 20:5 "You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God..." 34:14 "Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

Quotes for the week

"God enters by a private door into every individual." Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The idea that we are physical beings descended from primeval cells in nutrient soups, that idea does violence to my intuition, stomps all over it with football-shoes. The idea that we are descended from a jealous god who formed us out of dust to choose between kneel-and-praying or fires-of-damnation, that stomps me worse." Richard Bach

"But the true God hath this attribute, that he is a jealous God; and therefore his worship and religion will endure no mixture nor partner." Francis Bacon. *Of Unity in Religion, Essays, Civil and Moral*. The Harvard Classics, 1909–14.

Concern: That we misinterpret God's jealousy into something we can then reject.

Jealousy (in the biblical sense) is essentially a passionate commitment to someone, and for their well-being. It can be morally good or morally bad, depending on the motive behind the zeal and its context. We should note that God is not jealous *of*, as we so often are, but jealous *for*. We often fail to appreciate the intensity of the yearning of God's heart *for* us, something the OT prophets understood very well.

1. Can you think of a time when you were righteously jealous? How did that appear different to you than common jealousy?

Interacting With the Text

Goal: To see God's jealousy as an active component of His everlasting love for us.

1. Is it hard for you to accept jealousy being part of God? What about in the believer? What about jealousy causes you problems, if any?

Review of Section Two: Behold Your God!

Today's theme: Pondering the significance of what it means to have beheld the Lord our God.

Scriptural background: Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

Isaiah 40:9 "O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift it up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'"

Quotes for the week

"How shall I behold the face, henceforth of God or Angel, earst with joy and rapture so oft beheld? Those heav'nly shapes will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze insufferably bright." John Milton (1608–1674), British poet. *Paradise Lost* (l. Bk. IX, l. 1080–1098).

"People see God every day; they just don't recognize Him." Pearl Baily

"Two men please God -- who serves Him with all his heart because he knows Him; who seeks Him with all his heart because he knows Him not." Nikita Ivanovich Panin, mentor to Catherine the Great

Concern: That we will shrink back from seeing God as He is, rather than what we want Him to be

In the first section of this book, Packer dealt with idolatry. One form of that sin is creating mental images of God that are invalid. This is what we do when try to mold God into something that is pleasing to our sensibilities, rather than take Him as He reveals Himself to be.

1. When you think of God, what image comes to mind? How does this fit with what you have learned in this section?

In Review of chapters seven through seventeen

Goal: To know God as he is, not as we want him to be.

1. Why is God's immutability important? Why do you think Packer started with this attribute of God?

2. What is the significance of God's majesty when you attempt to behold your Lord?

What to Do Next

9. Our idea of fairness doesn't seem to include anything that could be judged severe. God is both good and severe. Why is this balance so important to our Christian life?

10. People hate the idea of a jealous God. Why? What demand does God's jealousy make on them? What demand does it make on you?

What to Do Next

Begin Section Three by reading Chapter Eighteen: *The Heart of the Gospel*. Meditate on what it means to pay an unpayable debt and what that meant to Jesus Christ, the Son.

Goal: Always remembering that when we look at God it is He, not us, who defines what we see.

Remember, God is. He is YAHWEH, the I AM. It is not for us to try and change Him. It is for Him to change us and our understanding of who He is. Moses wanted to see God face to face but was told that would destroy him. We, His children, however, reborn in Jesus Christ, will one day know Him as we are known, will see Him face to face.