

TO KNOW AND BE KNOWN  
A THEOLOGY AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A  
GOD-CENTERED VIEW OF PERSONAL IDENTITY  
—GALATIANS 4:9

JULY 28, 2024

1

OUTLINE FOR TODAY

- A review of June 23, 2024 sermon on Hebrews 8:7-12.
- A look at a western, post-modern perspective on knowledge of the individual.
- How does the Bible speak to the issues of knowing and being known?
- Some practical implications (indicatives) of what a Biblical view of personal identity.

2

REVIEW OF HEBREWS 8:7-12, A BETTER COVENANT  
WITH BETTER PROMISES

- An internalized “law”—the desire and capacity to love God and do His will.
- An exclusive, personal relationship between God and His people.
- An all-inclusive knowledge of God—every member is a believer (“knows the Lord”)
- A complete forgiveness and removal of sin as the basis of relationship with the Lord.

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HOW DOES OUR CULTURE LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL  
AND WHAT PROBLEMS ARE IDENTIFIED? (1/3)

- Self-referential—fierce individualism.
- “Be true to yourself.”
  - *“To be true to yourself means to act in accordance with who you think you are. Its appealing corollaries are to follow your heart, think for yourself, resist external pressures, and be willing to stand out from the crowd. Put another way, to be true to yourself ‘captures the fullness of our commitment to authenticity as a moral ideal.’”—Brian Rosner, Known by God*

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HOW DOES OUR CULTURE LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL  
AND WHAT PROBLEMS ARE IDENTIFIED? (2/3)

- An abstract, internal “personal identity” must be sought out and allowed to blossom.
- Anything from the outside that attempts to “define” me is at best, suspect and probably harmful.
  - *“Traditional communities are rivers, while modern societies are oceans. A river has a direction and carries you along with the current, just as traditional societies direct their members in a particular way. In modern societies there is no current; we can choose to go any direction, no direction, or to shift direction with every change of winds.”—Zygmunt Bauman*

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HOW DOES OUR CULTURE LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL  
AND WHAT PROBLEMS ARE IDENTIFIED? (3/3)

- So where does leave the person?
- Knowledge (to know)
  - Blind quest, theory de jour, “spiritual” guides, etc.
  - Deconstruction
- Knowledge (to be known)
  - Self-promotion
  - Hiding

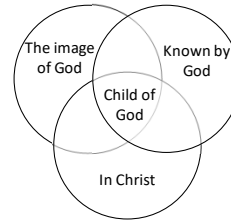
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### HOW DOES THE BIBLE SEE AND SPEAK TO THE INDIVIDUAL (PERSONAL IDENTITY)? (1/2)

- *“Along with “Who am I?” we must ask the prior question, “What is a human being?” as well as the subsequent question, “Who are we?” Put differently, I cannot know who I am without first considering what I am and then to whom I belong.”—Brian Rosner*

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### HOW DOES THE BIBLE SEE AND SPEAK TO THE INDIVIDUAL (PERSONAL IDENTITY)? (2/2)



- A Biblical view of the person.
- *“It is not that “image of God,” being “known by God,” and being “in Christ” are simply codes for being a child of God. But together they have a common center. And it is the reality of being a child of God that is the Bible’s best answer to the question, who am I?”—Brian Rosner*

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### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “KNOWN BY GOD?” (1/5)

- *“What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that He knows me. I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, one who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when his care falters.—J.I. Packer*

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### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “KNOWN BY GOD?” (2/5)

- Where do we find this in Scripture?
  - *“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?”—Galatians 4:9*
  - *“We love because he first loved us.”—1 John 4:19*
  - *“...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”—Romans 5:8*

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### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “KNOWN BY GOD?” (3/5)

- Examples from the life of Jesus in the gospel of John.
  - Nathaniel—“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! “You will see greater things than these.””
  - The Samaritan women—“I who speak to you am he.” “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”
  - Mary Magdalene—Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”
  - The good shepherd discourse in John 10.

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### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “KNOWN BY GOD?” (4/5)

- Example from Saul/Paul’s conversion.
  - “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’
  - And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’
  - And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “KNOWN BY GOD?” (5/5)

- Summary of Jesus knowing us.
  - *“Jesus’s piercing knowledge of his own is prior to and elicits their accurate knowledge of him. Jesus knows us before we know him and knows much better than we will ever know him.”—Brian Rosner*

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## WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE WITH A TRULY BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY? (1/6)

- Let’s look at some of Paul’s statements in the epistles for indicatives of his life-changing encounter with Jesus.
- The foundation
  - *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”—Galatians 2:20*

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## WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE WITH A TRULY BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY? (2/6)

- Paul’s life-changing encounter with Jesus. (The past)
  - *“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”—Philippians 3:7-11*

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## WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE WITH A TRULY BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY? (3/6)

- Paul’s life-changing encounter with Jesus. (The present)
  - *“Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”—Philippians 4:11-13*

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## WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE WITH A TRULY BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY? (4/6)

- Paul’s life-changing encounter with Jesus. (The future)
  - *“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 3:12-14*

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## WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE WITH A TRULY BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY? (5/6)

- Paul’s life-changing encounter with Jesus. (Self image)
  - *“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”—1 Corinthians 15:10-11*

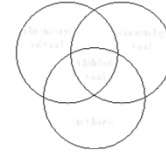
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### WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE WITH A TRULY BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY? (6/6)

- Paul's life-changing encounter with Jesus. (Accurate view of self)
  - *"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me."*—1 Corinthians 4:3-4

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### CONCLUSION (1/2)



- Are you a "child of God?"
- If you are, then what are the implications of being;
  - Created in the image of God?
  - Being in-Christ?
  - Known by God/Jesus/Holy Spirit?

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### CONCLUSION (2/2)

- How can being known by God impact my life today?
- A word to our young people
- Watch for this truth to be unfolded in Hebrews and John

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