

Understanding

- Ron Stullenbarger -

For most believers, understanding and experience seem to be mutually exclusive. Theology and spirituality are believed to be separate, and while one might help the other, they don't belong together as one wholehearted pursuit of God. The truth is that understanding and experience couldn't be more intertwined. In fact, one does not truly exist without the other. To experience God is to have understanding. To understand God is to experience. It's for this reason Jesus said in John 4:23-24, *"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

God longs for us to know Him in spirit and truth, in experience and understanding. We can't truly know someone by just reading a book about them. We can't say that I know C. S. Lewis, Martin Luther, or Dietrich Bonhoeffer just because we have read a biography or some of their works. It is the same with God. Scripture is intended to give us understanding about God and guide us into a true relationship with Him. Its words are intended to be an avenue to the Author who wrote them. And if we will adopt a perspective of gaining as much understanding about our heavenly Father as possible in order to know Him more, Scripture will become a priceless resource to our lives we cannot do without.

Having understanding about the God we are pursuing is absolutely vital to going deeper. Psalm 145:18 tells us, *"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."* Isaiah 26:3 says, *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."* And Jesus commands us in Matthew 22:37 to "love the Lord your God with all your . . . mind." Our mind is the gateway to our heart. If you believe lies about who you are or who God is, you will never seek Him fully or properly. If you don't know of His goodness, faithfulness, and nearness promised to you by Scripture, you' will never have a reason to pursue truly knowing God.

God longs to guide you in a process of daily renewing your mind through Scripture. The Holy Spirit longs to help and teach you the truth of Scripture that you might know the God you serve. If you will commit yourself to a process of renewing your mind, new avenues will be created from your understanding to experience. If you will truly love the Lord by giving Him your understanding to be molded and transformed, the truth of His love for you will flood from your mind to the untouched, dry, and weary places in your life. Commit to growing in your understanding of the Lord today that you might grow in your relationship with your loving, near, heavenly Father.