

The image features a blue-tinted sky with white, fluffy clouds. A large, dark blue number '1' is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the clouds. The text 'How can I know' is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font at the top, with 'know' in a larger, bold font. Below the number '1', the word 'God?' is written in a white, outlined, sans-serif font.

How can I  
**know**

**God?**

The  
*How Can I know God?*  
Series

*Lesson 1:*  
*We Can Know God through His*  
*Character*

Introduction to the:  
***How Can I know God?***  
Series

It is the purpose of this series to allow you to gain an understanding of who God is and how you can have a relationship with Him. It is our sincere desire that this study will be a great benefit to you.

We have made this series to be interactive. In each lesson there is a combination of written material and appropriate questions. These questions will be based upon an idea previously discussed and the student should be able to identify the answer (perhaps not immediately, but possibly by looking back over the material). If the question is not clear or the answer does not seem obvious, do not hesitate to mention this to your Bible study leader. If you are doing this study alone, be sure to use the contact information to contact the church and someone would be glad to help you. No question is too trivial to ask. Make sure you also write down your Bible study leader's name so that you can contact him/her with any questions you may have as a result of this study.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

At the end of the study is a practical section designed to help these new ideas become implanted in your mind.

## *We Can Know God through His Character*

How would you describe your relationship with God? Please take a minute to think about this question. Describe your relationship with God in the space provided.

Just as people are known by their characteristics and actions, so we understand that God is a real person (not just an ambiguous force) because He has certain personal characteristics. Therefore, in order to have a relationship with God, you first need to understand what He is like.

In order to know God, we first have to answer the question, "What is God like?" We have relationships with those to whom we are close and we can describe those people as possessing certain traits, or characteristics. For instance, you may know a loved one as being kind, considerate, and funny. Your relationship, in part, is based upon what you know of that individual.

However, we cannot see God, and therefore we cannot see His characteristics. But God had holy men write the Bible in order to reveal Himself to mankind. From the Bible we understand God, because He identifies what He is like for the reader.

In order to have a relationship with God, we need to understand a few of God's characteristics. Let's take some time to consider these things...

## 1. *God is Holy.*

The Bible tells us that God is holy:

"...holy, holy, holy is the Lord..." (See Isaiah 6:3)

The word *holy* carries with it the idea of being different (unique) and separate. The idea of God's holiness is that God is set apart from sin. He does not and cannot sin. Furthermore, God's holiness means that He is separate from sinners (those who sin) because He is totally different from them.

This brings us to a problem; notice what this Bible verse says:

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."  
(Romans 3:23).

According to this verse, how many people are sinners?

---

The problem is that **all** people are sinners and **all** do wrong. There is no one who is perfect, all are sinners. This verse says that all people have "come short of the glory of God." That phrase speaks of the idea that all men have failed to meet the standards of God, referred to here as His glory.

Imagine that you and your Bible study leader are competing in an archery contest. The target is set at about 20 yards down the field. Obviously, the goal is to hit the "bull's eye". Well, because you are a gracious individual you allow your Bible study leader to shoot first. He shoots...and gets it on the third ring...not bad. But then you stand up and take your aim, and you shoot. Second ring! Better than your Bible study leader! But which of you hit the mark or the goal?



Now, you may have shot better than your Bible study leader, but neither of you hit the bull's eye.

Let me illustrate it this way...I am sure that you have heard of the Ten Commandments. You may not be able to recite them, but at least you know that God gave commandments for men to follow. Let's briefly look at some of them:

The first command is:

"I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before Me." (Exodus 20:2-3)

We are commanded to love God with all our hearts and not to allow anything to be more important than Him. Do you love God with your whole heart, completely and totally? Have you ever allowed something to be more important than God?

---

I know I have had times in my life when God was not important to me or when there were things in my life which were more important to me than God. We all could admit that.

The second commandment is:

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. " (Exodus 20:7)

Have you ever used God's name as a swear word, or used it in a light or flippant manner?

---

Many people, without thinking, say "Oh my \_\_\_\_\_" and do not even think about the fact that they are offending God when they do this.

Another commandment is:

"You shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15)

Have you ever taken something that was not yours?

---

The last commandment which we will look at is this one:

"You shall not covet..." (Exodus 20:17)

To covet something is to desire something that someone else has. If you are like me, you have had times where you were not satisfied with what you had and you wanted what other people had. Have you ever coveted?

---

These commands are a reflection of God's nature; therefore He demands that we live by them. However, the fact is that we have broken these commandments, and that is an offence to God. To break God's law is to offend His holy nature. Notice this next verse:

"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness." (Habakkuk 1:13)

Based upon the above verse, describe God's reaction to sin (for instance, does he love it or hate it?)

---

We actually find that because He is holy, God cannot tolerate our sin. He detests this sin because it is totally contrary to His nature.

The second thing we need to know is:

## 2. *God is Just.*

When we say that God is just, we mean that He acts according to a sense of justice. The Bible tells us that God has to punish sin:



“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable [vile], murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8)

This list does not describe all the sins which are worthy of punishment, but rather it gives a representation of them. According to this list, God will cast *liars* into hell as well as others, such as the murderer.

Let me ask a question. How many murders does one need to commit before he is considered a murderer?

---

If a person only needs to commit one murder to be a murderer, how many lies does it take for someone to be considered a liar?

---

The above verse tells us that all liars will be cast into the eternal fire, because they are guilty of breaking God’s law. It is probably very safe to assume that everybody has lied at sometime in their life. That means we all deserve Hell, because of our sin.



“the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23)

What does the above verse say that we earn (wages) because of sin?

---

The wage which we earn because of sin is death. This death is not merely physical death, but rather the spiritual death mentioned in Revelation 21:8, where sinners are cut off from God for all eternity.

Some people would object to this and say that it doesn't seem fair for God to treat us this way, because we have tried to be good. But suppose a judge was presiding over a murder trial. In that murder trial irrefutable evidence was brought forward against the accused. What would you say if the judge said, "Well, I know you murdered this person, but I also see that you are a good person, you go to church on Sunday, you help your neighbour, so I will let you off this time." Would justice be served if the judge would respond in that manner?

---

Most people would want to see the murderer punished for his crime.

Someone might say, "But I thought God was a loving God; how could a loving God do such a thing?" Suppose that the judge mentioned above was the brother of the accused murderer. What would you say if the judge had said, "I know you committed this murder, but you are my brother and I love you, therefore I will let you go"?

Would that be right? \_\_\_\_\_

It is true that God is loving, but He is also holy and just, and His love will never cause Him to go contrary to His holy and just nature.

Can a just God overlook wrongs done, even though He is a loving God?

---

Because God is holy, only holy people can have a relationship with Him. Since He is just, He has to judge us because we missed the mark of His holy standard. He will not overlook your sin—He must judge it.



### ***3. Where Does this Leave Us?***

Admittedly, this is a pretty bleak picture. In understanding two things about God (His holiness and His justice), we see our problem. Man is a sinner and deserves to be punished for his sin. This ultimate punishment is called “death” and takes place in Hell.

The Bible actually talks about two deaths.

The first death is the one with which we are all familiar, which occurs when we physically die and leave this earth. At this point our soul departs from our bodies:

“it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27)

We will all die physically. But, as that last verse indicates, after death is a time of *judgment* before God which no one will escape. God will then cast all sinners into the lake of fire. This is referred to as the second death and involves a complete separation of the person from God.

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable [vile], murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all

liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8)

This is a physical death as well as a spiritual one. Sinners’ souls and bodies will be reunited and cast into hell. It will be a place of total torment, both spiritually and physically.

Both of these “deaths” mentioned in the Bible are a result of man’s condition. The Bible tells us...

“You were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Ephesians 2:1)

The writer is writing to people who were physically alive and could read his words. But how does he describe their former state?

---

The writer says that they were dead. He is not saying that they had been physically dead and now were alive, but rather that they were spiritually dead (even though they were physically alive) because of their sins.

According to this verse, what has happened because of sin:

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:2)

---

Sin causes spiritual death, and spiritual death causes a person to be separated from God. The reality is that all men are *already separated from God* (spiritually). As a result of sin, man does not have a relationship with God, and after he dies he will never be able to establish a relationship with Him, because after death comes judgment.

The next lesson in this series will address how we can have a relationship with God. If you do not want to wait, ask your Bible study leader to summarize the next lesson for you right now!

## ***Practical Section***

Memorize the following verse (with its reference) and be prepared to repeat it to your Bible study leader the next time you meet.

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”  
(Romans 3:23).

For further information contact:



Pastor Darren Hammermeister  
New Life Baptist Church  
Surrey, BC  
604.825.1254