

FOR SKEPTICS AND THOSE WHO LOVE THEM

June 13, 2021

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What shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."

Romans 9:30-32

Life is a knowing adventure

⁷ *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD*
Jeremiah 24

³ *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

John 17

Nearly all the wisdom which we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But, while joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern.

John Calvin in the opening of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

Be Known

George Fox University

To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us."

Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*

The shape of our knowledge becomes the shape of our living; the relation of the knower to the known becomes the relation of the living self to the larger world.

Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*

The “stumbling block”

³⁰ *What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” ³³ As it is written:*

*“See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

Romans 9 (see 1 Peter 2:4-8 for a clearer picture of the rock who is a “him”)

1) The “stumbling stone” is the scandal of _____

2) What causes people to stumble is

in the first century

in the 21st century

3) Modernism’s “defect” is _____

4) Covenant Epistemology is transformative: requiring love, pledge, invitation, indwelling
(the first four chapters of *A Little Manual for Knowing*)

three examples:

-- riding a bike

-- grief

-- creation

Thoughts for skeptics

- 1) Reality is seeking us
- 2) Desire is a gift from God
- 3) The church is not the gospel

Three thoughts for those who love a skeptic

- 1) Delight is a powerful tool
- 2) Learn to trust in God's providence (and those wonderful IFMs!)
- 3) Pray – this is a job for the God of reality

Resources for further studies in knowing

Spurgeon has a sermon on this text at <http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/sermons/2214.htm>

Deffinbaugh's messages on this text are available at <https://bible.org/series/romans-righteousness-god>

Tim Keller deals with this in *The Meaning of Marriage* (Penguin Books, 2011) and has a wonderful sermon at http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/How_Can_I_Know_God-Keller.pdf

I have really appreciated Esther Meek's work and teaching:

Longing to Know (Brazos Press, 2003)

A Little Manual for Knowing (Cascade Books, 2014)

Loving to Know (Cascade Books, 2011)

Doug's Covenant Epistemology class syllabus has an extensive knowing venture bibliography.