

The Omniscience of God

Omniscience is the state of knowing everything. It comes from the Latin *omni*, meaning all or every and *sciens* meaning to know or conscious. This attribute belongs only to God. God's knowledge and understanding is limitless. He doesn't just know everything but has unlimited wisdom, hence the application of His knowledge in every situation is perfect. His knowledge is both immense and universal. This means that He knows all the details of all creation and this knowledge is widespread including every corner of the universe and every person and animal that ever existed. God knows about the future just as well as He knows the past. For Him everything is present tense. He doesn't wonder about the future like we do. In summary, when we say God is omniscient, we are saying that God knows everything perfectly, exhaustively, and absolutely.

Ps 147:5

Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Heb 4:13

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

The fact that God is omniscient is an encouragement and comfort to those who believe. However, for unbelievers, it is potentially a very daunting thought. The world will have to give account to God. Perhaps you are concerned about politicians and demagogues getting away with corruption, but remember that God sees all things. *Men would strip Deity of His omniscience if they could - what a proof that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7)! The wicked do as naturally hate this Divine perfection as much as they are naturally compelled to acknowledge it. They wish there might be no Witness of their sins, no Searcher of their hearts, no Judge of their deeds. They seek to banish such a God from their thoughts.*
AW Pink

Sadly, we often think we know better than God, yet we only see in part. It is important to understand this attribute of God, whilst acknowledging our frailty.

Isaiah 55:8-9

⁸*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.*
⁹*"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

This was not originally stated as an act of worship or praise. God Himself said this. He wants us to acknowledge it.

Youth is the time when all seems to be within the grasp of the careful student. I have left that time behind. "I don't know" is on my lips more often now. But so also is "God knows!" - not as a thoughtless expression in conversation, but as the conviction of my heart. Tom Wells (A Vision for Missions).

It is when we have this understanding that we come to Him as the source of all wisdom and knowledge and He then blesses us with more. Look how Daniel had so much revelation yet He acknowledged God as the source of it. This humility is very different to some of the pride we see today when people get a bit of revelation or insight.

Dan 2:17-23

¹⁷Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ¹⁸He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven ²⁰and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. ²¹He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. ²²He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. ²³I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

1 Cor 13:9 (NIV)

For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

1 Cor 13:9 (NLT)

Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture!

Even the greatest prophet on earth is called to be interdependent. **We all see in part, only God is omniscient.**

Omniscience ... is an excellent quality in God, but suspect in everyone else. Jennifer Lee Carrell

Having said all of this it is still important that we appreciate God's generosity because He is not selfish with His knowledge but seeks to reveal mysteries to us. Remember that His omniscience must be understood in the context of His love and generosity. The fact that God is omniscient works to my advantage because He is my father and generous with what He knows and understands. This is why He gives us prophetic gifts and the gift of discernment of spirits.

1 Cor 12:10

to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

John 2:23-25

²³Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. ²⁴But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, ²⁵and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

As a man anointed by the Spirit, Jesus knew the heart of man. As we grow in the things of the Spirit this is also something we can walk in. God grants us this to protect us from wicked hearts.

We have been given the mind of Christ

1 Cor 2:11-16

¹¹For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. ¹⁴The person

without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

The bible is clear that He loves to reveal things to His children:

Mt 11:25

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

Ps 25:14

The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.

Ps 25:14 (NKJV)

The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him.

So there are two keys already to tapping into His knowledge, childlike humility and walking in the fear of the Lord. As a result of this, I have prophetic advantage because He is generous with His knowledge. Tap into this when it comes to decisions e.g. marriage or business partnerships etc. God’s omniscience means that:

1. God knows everything about me

You are as spiritual as your thoughts. You can be vulnerable before God instead of always putting your best foot forward. He knows all your unconfessed sin already. He is familiar with the motives of your heart even when you delude others.

1 John 3:20

If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Ps 139:1-4

¹You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. ²You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

Ps 139:13-17

¹³For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. ¹⁷How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

God was intimately involved in creating us. He was involved at the embryonic stage and fully aware of the genetic allocation He wanted for us. This is why He understands all my anecdotal behaviour and proclivities. The interesting thing is that in addition to this He already knew me before I existed. We know things because they exist but from God’s vantage point things exist because He knew those things. Everything that exists stems from His knowledge and not the other way round.

Remember that thought is speech before God. Charles Spurgeon

He knows the details of my life, good and bad.

Mt 10:30

And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Knowing this should encourage and comfort us. When we are trusting God for healing, He is well acquainted with every detail of our physical body and understands thoroughly what is happening to our bodies. This revelation has affected the way I pray for the sick. In addition to this, God is also aware of all my pain and anguish. His knowledge of my going out and coming in protects me. I remember in 1998 lying down in my bedroom about to fall asleep and having God instruct me to get up and switch the lights on. This act protected me from what looked like a lethal spider just above my pillow. His omniscience was such that He knew what was going on in my room that night. He is not like me, where I might miss a goal when I am watching my kids play football. Nothing is hidden from His sight.

2. God knows of things to come.

Is 46:9-10

⁹Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'

He is in the future already. The implication of this is that He might not answer your prayers in the way that you thought He would. He knows impending disaster and can protect you from it. Look at the information He gave Paul in the storm.

Acts 27:9-15

So Paul warned them, ¹⁰"Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." ¹¹But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. ¹²Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest. ¹³When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. ¹⁴Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. ¹⁵The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along.

Acts 27:21-26

²¹After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. ²²But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. ²³Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' ²⁵So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. ²⁶Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

Amos 3:7

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

Although God is sovereign He has chosen to work together with His servants.

Adonai Yaweh is Lord God. *Adonai* means Lords (plural) and master. *Adon* is Lord (singular). So it is an emphatic plural to emphasize His Lordship and sovereignty, yet despite this He still chooses to reveal His plans to His servants.

3. God rewards and promotes me based on His knowledge of my inner-life.

1 Kings 8:39

then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know every human heart),

Acts 1:24

Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen

When the apostles had to replace Judas, they acknowledged their limited knowledge compared to God's complete knowledge of people's hearts. As we work with people and raise up leaders we need to rely on God as He knows the heart of men and women.

Jer 17:10

"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."

4. God knows the hearts of others who may want to engage with me

John 2:24

But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people.

Ps 44:20-21

²⁰*If we had forgotten the name of our God or extended our hands to a strange god,*

²¹*Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.*

1 Chron 28:9

And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

There have been times when God has responded to my gentle thoughts and desires before I have even prayed fully. He definitely knows our every thought.