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**Fellowship of Companies for Christ International**

## **White Paper Lessons**

**Knowledge of the Divine, Confirmed by Reason, Faith and Experience?  
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## Lesson 1: Knowledge of the Divine, Confirmed by Reason, Faith and Experience?

### P2P Theme: Spiritual Maturity, Servant Leadership

#### Set Up

Key Words:

**Manifest or Reveal**—{Strong}Gk: emphanizō: to *exhibit* (in person) or *disclose* (by words): - appear, declare (plainly), inform, (will) manifest, shew, signify.

#### Bible Text

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Jn 14:21 ESV

"Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. My Father will love those who love me; I too will love them and reveal myself to them." Jn 14:21 GNB

#### Principles to Practice:



This week's illustration is excerpted from A. W. Tozer's writings, *Man, God's Dwelling Place*. A.W. Tozer's writings, *Man, God's Dwelling Place*. Tozer, author of some of the greatest Christian classics of all time, including, *Pursuit of God* and *Knowledge of the Holy*, approached God and the scriptures, with a practical and disciplined approach that has inspired generations.

The reference scripture for this week connects the *depths of our knowledge of God* to the *revelation of Himself that Christ offers as a result of our obedience to His teachings*. While we can know God and walk in disobedience, He does not leave us in that state. Out of His great love for us, should we linger in unconfessed, unresolved sin, He allows us to experience the pain of personal cleansing.

Because of His longsuffering, our disobedience doesn't always lead to immediate calamity; but His discipline is sure. **For those who are in Christ, our disobedience is the greatest inhibitor of our ability to experience His presence and Power.** Walking with Him daily, seeking to grow in our faith should lead to an expectation that our knowledge of Him progresses as we move from "blind faith" to "faith confirmed by reason" to "experiencing His presence." Dr. Henry Blackaby has written extensively on many dimensions of experiential knowledge of God in various writings on "Experiencing God." To the Biblically uninformed, a manifestation of God's presence could leave an indelible mark of fear and confusion. To the Biblically informed, moved by the Holy Spirit, it will typically lead to repentance [think the Apostle Paul] or the hardening of the heart [think Pharaoh.] To the believer seeking God's presence and person, His manifestation is electrifying and transformational.

**What does this have to do with our work?** As Tozer noted in other writings, "**the marketplace is in a state of emergency, perpetually self-evident that the need for redemption is everywhere and that the stakes are high.**" For most of us, our work is the farthest place we move from our holy huddles with other members of the Bride of Christ. It is also the place that God's presence with us, yielding Salt, Light, Love and Wisdom can shine brightest. His Power and Presence are most often released when we operate daily in the third level of faith and knowledge, here illuminated by Tozer

#### Key Objectives:

- What do we want to learn to challenge who we are and what we do?
- Consider the depth of our faith: blind, informed with reason, or illuminated and empowered by Christ's revelation of Himself to us.

## Illustration

### Knowledge of the Divine, Confirmed by Reason, Faith and Experience?



**A.W. Tozer, 1897-1963** Though Tozer had no formal theological training, he pastored for 44 years of public ministry as pastor, editor and author. He wrote 40 books, including two of the most high-impact and enduring Christian Classics: *The Knowledge of the Holy*; *Pursuit of God*; and *Man, the Dwelling Place of God*, here excerpted.

**In our knowledge of Divine things**, three degrees may be distinguished: the knowledge furnished by reason, by faith and by spiritual experience respectively. These three degrees of knowledge correspond to the departments of the tabernacle in the ancient Levitical order: the outer court, the holy place and the holy of holies.

**Far in, beyond the "second veil," was the holiest of all**, having as its lone piece of furniture the Ark of the Covenant with the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat. There between the outstretched wings dwelt in awesome splendor the fire of God's presence, the Shekmah. No light of nature reached that sacred place, only the pure radiance of Him who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all. To that solemn Presence no one could approach except the high priest once each year with blood of atonement.

**Farther out, and separated by a heavy veil**, was the holy place, a sacred place indeed but removed from the Presence and always accessible to the priests of Israel. Here also the light of sun and moon was excluded; light was furnished by the shining of the seven golden candlesticks.

**The court of the priests was out farther still**, a large enclosure in which were the brazen altar and the laver. This was open to the sky and received the normal light of nature. All was of God and all was divine, but the quality of the worshipper's knowledge became surer and more sublime as he moved in from the outer court toward the mercy seat and the Presence, where at last he was permitted to gaze upon the cherubim of glory and the deep burning Fire that glowed between their outstretched wings.

**All this illustrates if it does not typify the three degrees of knowledge possible to a Christian.** It is not proper that we should press every detail in an effort to find in the beautiful Old Testament picture more than is actually there; but the most cautious expositor could hardly object to our using the earthly and external to throw into relief the internal and the heavenly.

**Nature is a great teacher and at her feet we may learn much that is good and ennobling. The Bible itself teaches this:** "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." "Behold the fowls of the air." "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

**Reason working on data furnished by observation of natural objects tells us a lot about God and spiritual things.** This is too obvious to require proof. *Everyone knows it.* **But there is knowledge beyond and above that furnished by observation; it is knowledge received by faith.** Divine revelation through the inspired Scriptures offers data which lie altogether outside of and above the power of the mind to discover. The mind can make its deductions after it has received these data by faith, but it cannot find them by itself. No technique is known to man by which he can learn, for instance, that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth or that there are three Persons in the Godhead; that God is love or that Christ died for sinners, or that He now sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. **If we ever come to know these things it must be by receiving as true a body of doctrine which we have no way of verifying. This is the knowledge of faith.**

**There is yet a purer knowledge than this; it is knowledge by direct spiritual experience.** About it there is an immediacy that places it beyond doubt. Since it was not acquired by reason operating on intellectual data, the possibility of error is eliminated. Through the indwelling Spirit the human spirit is brought into immediate contact with higher spiritual reality. It looks upon, tastes, feels and sees the powers of the world to come and has a conscious encounter with God invisible.

Let it be understood that such knowledge is experienced rather than acquired. It does not consist of findings about some-thing; it is the thing itself. It is not a compound of religious truths. It is an element which cannot be separated into parts. **One who enjoys this kind of knowledge is able to understand the exhortation in the Book of Job: "Acquaint now thy-self with him, and be at peace."** To such a man God is not a conclusion drawn from evidence nor is He the sum of what the Bible teaches about Him. He knows God in the last irreducible meaning of the word know. It may almost be said that God happened to him.

**Maybe Christ said all this more simply in John 14:21: "I . . . will manifest myself to him."** For what have we been laboring here but the sublimely simple New Testament teaching that the Triune God wills to dwell in the redeemed man's heart, constantly making His presence known? What on earth or in heaven above can be a greater beatitude?

- God doesn't want us to operate daily on blind faith—he confirms matters of faith routinely through natural experiences. The harsh realities and risks of the marketplace press these truths even deeper to those who tread within.

## Biblical Principles

John 14:21 lays out a principle that is perhaps best understood by parents, that of loving your child enough that you protect and nurture them with reward and consequences related to obedience:

1. Salvation is the greatest picture of unconditional love; but blessings are imparted and withheld, depending on obedience. [Abraham's blessing by the Lord and covenant with Him]
2. Since the greatest blessing we can know is God's presence, it should be one of the greatest motivators, His offering to us of revelation and presence should motivate us toward obedience. When we see Him as He is, obedience is a normal result.

## Discussion and Application

1. Do you ever struggle with the notion that your work may be less in value than "ministry work?"

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2. A. W. Tozer makes a strong case for the *Purpose of our work* [why we work] being key to our own peace, fulfillment and satisfaction. Employees at work are sometimes motivated by intrinsic values, sometimes by the paycheck. In terms of your work, do you think that one or the other is more important to God?

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3. What one thing could you commit to today that would have the most positive impact on your satisfaction at work?

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## Prayer Focus

If you encountered this truth and needed to ‘do business with God,’ how would you seal the deal with a prayer? God is much more concerned with your heart than your words.

### Consider Tozer’s prayer:

“Lord, I would trust **You** completely; I would be altogether **Yours**; I would exalt **You** above all. I desire that I may feel no sense of possessing anything outside of **You**. I want constantly to be aware of **Your** overshadowing Presence and to hear **Your** speaking Voice. I long to live in restful sincerity of heart. I want to live so fully in the Spirit that all my thought may be as sweet incense ascending to **You** and every act of my life may be an act of worship.”

“Therefore I pray in the words of **Your** great servant of old, "I beseech **You** so for to cleanse the intent of mine heart with the unspeakable gift of **Your** grace, that I may perfectly love **You** and worthily praise **You**." And all this I confidently believe **You** wilt grant me through the merits of Jesus Christ **Your** Son. Amen.”

Additional Scripture to Consider:	Key Thoughts
1. Jn 14:21, 16:14	
2. Dt 10:12-13, 11:13 & 30:6-8	
3. 1 Pet 2:3-1	
4. Proverbs 8:17, Rev 3:20	
5. Acts 22:18, 18:9-11	
6. 2Ti 4:17-18 & 4:22	
7. 2 Cor 4:6 & 5:14-15	