

"KNOWING GOD: AN ANALOGY"

--Gil Kovacs for Willis Elliott's '78-'79 Chappaqua course

"Know that the Lord is God." (Ps.100:3) This command echoes Ex.6:7 and Nu.24:16. But how does one know God? I think a certain analogy will be helpful. The analogy is a musical one.

When we hear a piece of music, we begin to know the composer. We recognize Beethoven after having "known" his composition by hearing his works. The more we hear Beethoven, the more we recognize him--his style, power, and beauty.

This analogy helps us to know God. Romans 1:20-21: "Ever since God created (bara reechoes and is reformed in the Greek word) the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, having been clearly seen: they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all! They know God...."

By observing, not serving nature (small 'n') we get to know God's power--the sun, the hurricane, the earthquake, since he created these powers.

variety--flowers, trees, animals, and us since he created various forms.

beauty--sunset, autumn foliage (beauty even in dying) snow, since he paints these scenes.

So we know God as we know Beethoven, by watching and listening to His creation.

But we do not know much about either this way.

The second way to "know" Beethoven is to read about him and to read what he has 'written'. When we read his biographies, we know more about the man than just listening to the Ninth. But we can know Beethoven more powerfully by reading and studying his compositions. To read musical composition requires learning a different skill. To know music, composition theory, and the historical flow of these works, must impart knowledge of Beethoven.

So is the reading of God's 'biographies' and His writings, too.

When we read, study, emotivate God's Book (good A.S. mono-syllable) we know God. We need greater skills to read this Book than the music student does to 'read' Beethoven's music.

We gain insight into God, and even more insight into His creativity, by studying His Word. We learn of His plan of salvation for us (which the Sawmill never guessed), His judgement, His Fatherhood, His teachership, His loving kindness ('chesedness') is developed through the pages of His Book.

We know God greatly by the proper study of His Word.

But we have barely begun to know God at all if we stop at these two levels of knowledge.

The third way to know God is to play the composition.

The musician and the conductor know Beethoven in a way that the casual listener and serious student can never. But it does not admit the leaving out of the first two levels, either. Yet ~~the musician~~ and the conductor know Beethoven best of all. They are doing Beethoven, not listening, not reading.

When we do the Book, we get to know God in every aspect of our being.

When we save a life, as the Samaritan, we know God as the healer.

When we paint the picture, we know God as the creator.

When we have a family, we know God as our parent.

When we show mercy, we know God as merciful.

When we instruct people, we know God as teacher.

When Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac, he knew God who would allow Jesus to be killed.

When we suffer, we know the Son of Man's tribulation.

When we make peace, we know Christ as Prince of Peace.

When we love, we know God as chesed.

When we do the Book, we walk humbly with our God.