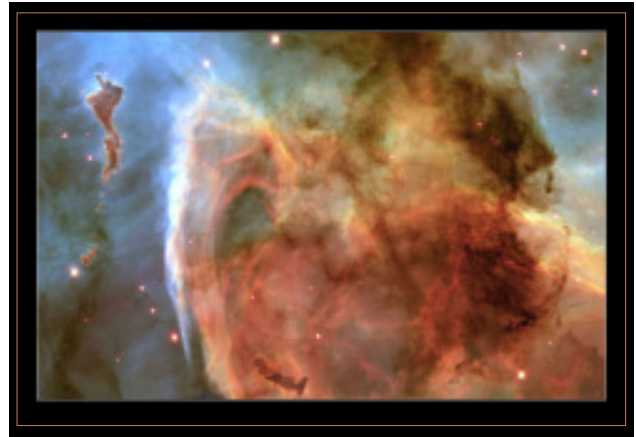


# The Simple Ways of a

COMPLETE

*And the Lord  
said to Moses,  
“I will do the  
very thing  
you have  
asked,  
because I am  
pleased with  
you and I  
know you by  
name.”*

*Exodus 33:17*



GOD



According to Scripture, the Lord God is omniscient—which means that His knowledge is infinite.

*Does he who implanted the ear not hear?  
Does he who formed the eye not see?  
Does he who disciplines nations not punish?  
Does he who teaches man lack knowledge?  
The Lord knows the thoughts of man;  
he knows that they are futile.  
Psalm 94:9-11*



When we combine God's omniscience with His *time* infinity—His eternity that bestrides at once past, present, and future—we understand that our God is, in a nice round, understandable human word, *boundless*.

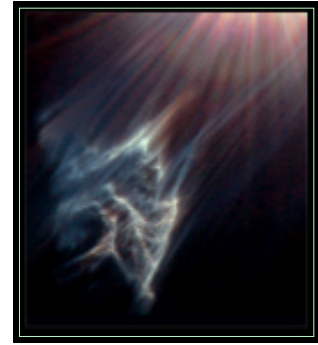
## Aspects

Encouraging believers to know  
God and His ways,  
and to enjoy a more intimate  
communion with Him

Issue #123  
February 2001

There is nothing unknown by God, and what He knows goes as far beyond the knowledge of man as the edge of His created universe is beyond the core of our sun. God knows more than just what is knowable in a human sense. He knows things that are incomprehensible to the human mind—things that in their contemplation would cause the human brain to explode.

His knowledge—if it could be indexed, categorized and contained, it would overspill the universe—is never in only one place at once, but is like an arching rainbow bestride all time. What God knows now in this computerized age, He knew on the first day of Adam’s life. He didn’t learn about bits, bytes and hard drives when man did, but could have taught the class when Methuselah was in diapers. And because God’s knowledge encompasses knowledge even of Himself, He doesn’t just know *about* events, but actually *dwells in that moment*. He doesn’t just know what will happen in the future; He is already there! While God was commissioning Moses on Mount Horeb, He was—at that same moment—commissioning a new Methodist pastor in the year 2095.



*You turn men back to dust,  
saying, “Return to dust, O sons of men.”  
For a thousand years in your sight  
are like a day that has just gone by,  
or like a watch in the night. Psalm 90:3-4*

Contemplation of only these two aspects of His nature is enough to send our heads spinning when we try to wrap our small, self-centered minds around the immense complexity of God. The sheer width and breadth of His creation alone is beyond our comprehension—yet He carries around in His hand the complete inventory of every planet in every solar system that ever sprang from His creativity. And He already dwells in the fading glow of the star just being born.

Yet this same God examined the heart of a teenage girl in Nazareth, and found her purity worthy for giving birth to the Messiah. This same God held intimate conversations with Abraham, and the apostle Paul. This God loved Hannah, and answered her prayer for a child. He forgave Moses and John Mark their youthful transgressions. And for every individual He sent a personal Savior, and a private Counselor.

On the human level, God is simplicity itself. He is private: His council can be reduced to a single, melodious tune understood by the most homely intellect. He is adaptable: without changing Himself, He sculpts His side of the personal relationship to be, like a fingerprint, something unique and intimate.

The God who holds stars in his hand, holds there as well the name of every person who is His through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

**God is basic Fact and Actuality, the source of all other facthood. At all costs therefore He must not be thought of as a featureless generality. If He exists at all, He is the most concrete thing there is, the most individual, ‘organized and minutely articulated.’ He is unspeakable not by being indefinite but by being too definite for the unavoidable vagueness of language... Grammatically the things we say of Him are ‘metaphorical’: but in a deeper sense it is our physical and psychic energies that are mere ‘metaphors’ of the real Life which is God. C.S. Lewis**



# Uncluttered by Conditions



he most prominent obstacle to an understanding of God's intimate love for man is His grandeur. From the caricatures of modern culture to even the proof of His recorded word, God's own majesty stands as a barrier impenetrable to many individuals. *How, they say, can the creator of the universe, and the one who devised all the intricacies of the human body lower Himself to have feelings for small me?* For those looking for an excuse, here is the one most convenient.

Yet to those who are interested in discovering the whole truth of the Divine comes the startling fact that not only did God create love, but He was the first to *practice* it.

*We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19*

Before the first millisecond of God's miraculous creative act, before the finger of God initiated the birthing of the universe and thus created the dust that would one day be used to make man, the Godhead determined that because he would rebel, man would require salvation. Salvation would require a Savior external to man, since he would not be able to save himself. So eternity's first known act of love took place when God decided that man's salvation would come from Himself. Mankind would be offered redemption from its sin through the sacrifice by death of God's own Son.

*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10*

God's feelings for His human creation were full-bodied, robust. Man was not an afterthought, nor was the relationship God would have with Him an accident of birth. From the very beginning God would desire only the best for each individual that would inhabit His creation. He would wish for each person to attain his or her full potential: a close, abiding bond with the One who loved them before they even knew He existed.

It is so simple that only some people are able to accept the truth of it. Many who reject the love of God do so by blaming His grandeur. *He's too high, they complain, beyond my reach.* "But I love you," He answers back. *No, You're too demanding,* they insist. "I'm not demanding anything. I just love you." *No, it's too hard.* And so they die, surrounded by an untouched love well within their reach.

**agape** ag-ah'-pay; from Greek (agapao); love, i.e. affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a *love-feast* :- (feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love; as used of God, expresses the deep and constant love and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential love in them towards the Giver, and a practical love towards those who are partakers of the same...

*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.  
God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.  
1 John 4:16*

God is love. Simple. Pure. He does not just practice love, or use love to get what He wants. God is love. Every staggeringly wonderful thing that happens out of love is what God is. He invented it. He embodies it.

Every flavor of human love is grossly imperfect in comparison to God's love. The highest, most exquisite example of unselfish love that one person has for another is little more than a pale ghost of the love God has for His people. And His love is that specific: His love is for those who call upon His name; those who do *not*, He only *wants* to love.

*The Lord is in his holy temple;  
the Lord is on his heavenly throne.  
He observes the sons of men;  
his eyes examine them.  
The Lord examines the righteous,  
but the wicked and those who love violence  
his soul hates. Psalm 11:4-5*

Those who are loved by God are loved unconditionally. It is not a transaction, a *quid pro quo*: If you rise some morning with a mean belly and a bad taste in your mouth, grumbling against God—He still loves you. It is not a bargain, a deal, where He will only love those people who make it worth His while. Ministry is not a price one pays to purchase His affection. There is no price man can offer that would satisfy the cost.

The price set for God's love is beyond measure. There is not enough gold on earth to purchase it. God's love is so priceless that it can only be purchased by His own blood. His is the only life that is worth that much. And He did it. As high as it was, He paid the price. And because the price has been paid, the value set on God's love is now even higher.

Now it can only be had for free.

*And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

*He left His Father's throne above, so free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race;  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free; for O my God, it found out me.*

*Amazing love! how can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!  
Charles Wesley*



# The Key to His Storeroom



God's grace is identical twin to His love. The two are inseparable, sometimes indistinguishable, and always the two together are the closest approximation in human terms of the root of God's personality. God is love, and that love is boundless, but it is His *grace* that affords humanity the opportunity to experience the full measure of His affection. Grace is the key that opens the storeroom of God's love.

By God's grace all men are united to Him, as well as to each other, under the sacrifice of love poured out at the cross.

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.*

*For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Ephesians 2:13-18*

Like His love, God's grace is available to all, but is only acquired by request. Contrary to the fears of the Left, no one is ever forced into a relationship with God's grace. The individual is free to pass it by, heap scorn upon it, even denigrate it in the press. God never forced Himself on anyone. Even after the ultimate sacrifice He paid for it, Jesus Christ never sanctioned any indoctrination centers for brainwashing people into accepting His grace.

God's grace is free—free in both directions: It does not cost anything to obtain, and anyone is free to reject the gift.

God's grace is free—free in both directions: It does not cost anything to obtain, and anyone is free to reject the gift.

Who God is—even to what He looks like—is so supernaturally complex as to bring instant death to any mortal that finds himself in His presence.

*Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."*

*And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy*

*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,  
There where the blood of the lamb was spilt.*

*Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,  
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;  
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,  
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.*

*Dark is the stain that we cannot hide,  
What can avail to wash it away?  
Look! there is flowing a crimson tide;  
Whiter than snow you may be today.*

*Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
Freely bestowed on all who believe;  
You that are longing to see His face,  
Will you this moment His grace receive?*

*Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within,  
Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin.*

*Julia H. Johnston*



*on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” Exodus 33:18-20*

The majesty of God can embody terrible, nightmarish fury—especially in the wrath He exercises against those who reject Him.

*See, the Lord is coming with fire,  
and his chariots are like a whirlwind;  
he will bring down his anger with fury,  
and his rebuke with flames of fire.  
For with fire and with his sword  
the Lord will execute judgment upon all men,  
and many will be those slain by the Lord.  
Isaiah 66:15-16*

Yet in His dealings with those who call upon His name, the Lord God is gentle and direct, compassionate, patient, every thought and action infused with grace. His grace is what first extends His offer of life and redemption to the one that is lost; once that redemption is received, His grace is then woven throughout every moment of every day in the life of the one redeemed.

## One Way Back



Far back in the mists of infinite eternity, far back before the beautiful angel Lucifer fell to become Satan, back even before the Godhead had invented what humans would call Time, God knew that man would need saving.

God would make man perfect, as much a stranger to death as Himself. But, being omniscient, God also knew that there would come a moment when man would give in to the tortured reasoning of the fallen angel, and man would then, for the first time, be faced with the prospect of death.

*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—  
Romans 5:12*

One might suppose that the first man and woman could have understood the error of their ways, come to terms with that seminal act of rebellion, repented, and gone on to live out the remainder of their days in a return to the unsullied bliss they had previously enjoyed with their Maker. But in fact, the entrance of sin opened the floodgates of depravity.

*What wondrous love is this,  
O my soul, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this,  
O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this  
That caused the Lord of bliss  
To bear the dreadful curse  
For my soul, for my soul,  
To bear the dreadful curse  
For my soul.*

*When I was sinking down,  
Sinking down, sinking down,  
When I was sinking down,  
Sinking down,  
When I was sinking down  
Beneath God's righteous frown,  
Christ laid aside His crown  
For my soul, for my soul,  
Christ laid aside His crown  
For my soul.*

And when from death I'm free,  
I'll sing on, I'll sing on,  
And when from death I'm free,  
I'll sing on,  
And when from death I'm free,  
I'll sing and joyful be,  
And thro' eternity  
I'll sing on,  
I'll sing on,  
And thro' eternity I'll sing on,  
American Folk Hymn

Jesus answered,  
"I am the way  
and the truth  
and the life.  
No one comes to  
the Father  
except through  
me."



*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen... They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Romans 1:25,29-31*

This is what man is: there is rebellion in his heart. He is born with it, and on this side of Paradise, it does not ever leave him.

Out of His love, by the administration of His grace, God answers man's rebellion with Christ. Because man cannot save himself, God determined—back before there was even a need for the decision—that man's salvation would be supplied by the sacrifice of Himself. God also determined that because life was in the blood of a living thing, that blood would be the requirement for atonement. Sin would be forgiven and expunged by the spilling of life-giving blood.

Before the Son of God came down in flesh, the sacrifice of blood was a repeated thing. Over and over, year after year, through thousands upon thousands of substitutionary deaths man used the blood of beasts to atone for his sins. But then, in a simple and direct solution for man's rebellion, God the Father sent God the Son down to make of Himself one final sacrifice of blood. Once, for all.

*For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Hebrews 9:24-28*

Over the brief span of time since God made Adam from the dust, man has conjured many gods of his own making. He has rebelled against the true God by manufacturing gods of his own. God's answer to this rebellion was to enact the love for man that already filled His heart, to express it through His grace, and to offer man a way back into His arms. But only one way, for the God who created and animated everything that exists—the God who flung into the black of space every molecule of dust that would become a planet or star or streaking comet—this God would not be mocked. He would offer man a simple, direct way back to Him.

Jesus, the Christ.

# Aspects

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