

RESILIENT FAITH IN A TURBULENT WORLD



Everyone's a Theologian

"Theology is the human enterprise of considering and contemplating the nature of the divine, irrespective of one's specific beliefs or traditions. In this way, everyone is a theologian... Everyone is a theologian because everyone thinks something about God."

(from *Slow Theology*)

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

(A.W. Tozer)

2 John 1:9

Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

“The dangerous tendency of all human thinking, judgment, and theology is that it can often run ahead of Christ. A true and faithful Christian theology follows the real Jesus. Scripture is what holds the feet of theology to the fire of the Spirit.”

(from *Slow Theology*)

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."

“Theology itself is not divine revelation. Rather, theology is *reflection* on divine revelation... Loving God entails recognizing that our thoughts about him need some work. This posture of the heart is the beginning of the best theology—and truest of wisdom.”

(from *Slow Theology*)

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“What is the *goal* of Christian theology? The goal of theology is never merely theological knowledge. The goal of theology is always an encounter with the living God. A Christian’s allegiance is always first and foremost to the person of Jesus Christ—not to their current understanding of him.”

(from *Slow Theology*)

“By virtue of the proliferating technology that we have at our fingertips, we are trained from our earliest age that we can find out anything we want to know, whenever we so desire... This cultivates within us a distaste for anything that we feel is off-limits or unknowable... People who live in the information age can feel entitled to knowing all things.”

(from *Slow Theology*)

John 16:12-13

¹² "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

The final goal of thinking about God is not to hold better thoughts about God... it is to *know God*. To deepen our encounter with the living God through a growing allegiance to Jesus.

Genesis 32:24-26

²⁴ So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶ Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Exodus 3:1-3

Now Moses was tending the flock... and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

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Luke 24:13-17

¹³ Two of them were going to a village called Emmaus... ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

Jeremiah 29:13-14

¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the Lord...

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"God 'hides' because he wants to be pursued and found." (from *Slow Theology*)

"It's not that God doesn't want to be known. He visits people precisely so he can be known. But the key is this: God wants to be pursued so there can be a deeper knowing. He rewards signs of curious and penetrating faith with a deeper knowledge of who he is.

*Will you wrestle all night? Will you take your sandals off and come closer to the fiery bush? Do you feel your heart burning in the company of this stranger? God doesn't just want to be *believed in*, like Santa Claus or the tooth fairy. The living God wants to be *known*."*

(from Slow Theology)

"God wants us to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand; and if only the will to walk is really there He is pleased even with our stumbles."

(C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*)

“While we toddle to God because we want to know and be known (which is very good), as we pursue God with more wisdom and understanding, it becomes clear that God has really been following and chasing after *us*.”

(from *Slow Theology*)

God did this so that they would
seek him and perhaps reach
out for him and find him,
though he is not far from any
one of us.

Acts 17:27

Closing Reflections

What comes into your mind when you think about God? What words come most naturally when you think about needing to describe God to someone else?

Closing Reflections

Invite the Spirit to help you focus more on knowing God instead of just on knowing more facts about God.

Closing Reflections

When you're frustrated at how slow God is to reveal himself, do you take that frustration to him, or does it drive you away?

Closing Reflections

Offer a prayer of gratitude to God for the way that he pursues us, even if we don't realize it's happening.