

HOW DO WE KNOW GOD?

The Catholic Blog - Helping people find answers to the most common questions about Catholicism with answers from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible.

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“How do we know God?” - Important Passages of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Consider:

- “the Church is expressing her confidence in the possibility of speaking about him to all men and with all men” (CCC, 39)
- “the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time” (CCC, 77)
- **“this living transmission**, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, **is called Tradition**, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, ‘the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes’ (CCC, 78)
- “The Father’s self-communication made through his Word in the Holy Spirit, remains present and active in the Church” (CCC 79)

“How do we know God?” - Important Scriptures to Consider:

- Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (ESV)
- Deuteronomy 6:6-7 “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (ESV)
- **Mark 7:8–9 “You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!”** (ESV)
- Psalm 19:7 “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (ESV)
- Psalm 119:130 “The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” (ESV)
- 2 Timothy 3:14-15 “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the **sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus.” (ESV)
- 2 Peter 3:16 “There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures” (ESV)
- 1 Peter 2:14 “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (ESV)
- **2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”** (ESV)
- John 10:14–16 “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and **my own know me**, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16] And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and **they will listen to my voice**. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” (ESV)
- John 10:27–28 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” (ESV)

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- **Acts 17:11** “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (ESV)

“How do we know God?” - Important Questions to Consider:

- Who is called to speak and teach authoritatively about Jesus?
- What is the role of the family in teaching about God?
- **Does the Bible give more encouragement about tradition or more warnings about traditions?**
- **NEGATIVE - Matthew 15:1–9** “Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, [2] “Why do your disciples **break the tradition of the elders?** For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” [3] He answered them, “**And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?** [4] For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ [5] But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” [6] he need not honor his father.’ So **for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.** [7] You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: [8] “**This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; [9] in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**” (ESV)
- **NEGATIVE - Mark 7:1–13** “Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, [2] they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. [3] (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, **holding to the tradition of the elders,** [4] and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) [5] And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do **your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders,** but eat with defiled hands?” [6] And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; [7] **in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**’ [8] **You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.**” [9] And he said to them, “You have a fine way of **rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!** [10] For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ [11] But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)—[12] then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, [13] **thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.**” (ESV)
- **POSITIVE - 1 Corinthians 11:2** “Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and **maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.** (ESV)
- **NEGATIVE - Galatians 1:13–16** “For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. [14] And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, **so extremely zealous was I for the traditions** of my fathers.” (ESV)
- **NEGATIVE - Colossians 2:8** “**See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition,** according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” (ESV)
- **POSITIVE - 2 Thessalonians 2:9–15** “But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and **belief in the truth.** [14] To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [15] So then, brothers, stand firm and **hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.**” (ESV)
- **POSITIVE - 2 Thessalonians 3:6** “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and **not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.**” (ESV)
- How does Psalm 119 describe the Bible? Skim to pg. 80-81 to some amazing truths about the Bible!
- Are the writings and teachings of man (devotions, traditions, etc.) necessary for understanding how we know God through salvation?
- **What does 2 Timothy 3:14-15 say about salvation?**
- **What is the best way to know and follow Jesus? Can we interact with Him directly?**

- **Read Acts 17:11. Why are the Bereans praised for testing the teaching of Paul? Why didn't they just presume what he said was true?**

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