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Chapter 1 : How to Preach Practical Holiness by SermonCentral - blog.quintoapp.com

God is a God of the bedroom or no God at all. Verse 6 makes this issue of holiness clearly an issue of love: "That no man transgress, and wrong his brother in this matter." In other words not only is immorality an offense against the knowledge of God; it's also an offense against the love for our brothers.

Print "I know that I shall not be put to shame" Isaiah The preacher receives a place of honor during worship. Some of us sit on a special chair, on a raised platform, and when we stand to proclaim the word we step up higher still. We wear special garments that mark and separate us, some richly decorated with quilting, lace, or embroidery. And when we preach, despite our fears to the contrary, people listen, and their eyes look up at us in wonder and admiration. The more confidently we declaim, the more they praise our skill. Preachers are wealthy stakeholders in the economy of honor and shame. Shame is not simply a personal response to feelings of guilt or impropriety. It is a cultural phenomenon. It is a mechanism of social control that shapes behaviors and inculcates values. The audience sees the face of the one beating and the face of the one beaten. They see one person standing, head up, legs wide and steady, arm raised in power, beating. They see another person bent, restrained, body contracting and shivering, beaten. An act of public beating claims power, high status, and honor for the one who can inflict such pain, who can force another person to feel what they never want to feel, and to feel it publicly, irrefutably. It assigns low status to the one being beaten, aiming through public shame to deter this person and anyone who views the humiliation and pain from defying the will of those in power. Sometimes acts of shaming are not so physically brutal. Physical pain is not the only form of power. Every community knows ways to attack a person without leaving visible scars on their bodies. This can be accomplished by removing or marring visible signs that distinguish a man from a woman. One such sign is a beard. Second Samuel relates a story in which David sent messengers to offer condolences to Hanun, a neighboring king, at the death of his father. They were disgraced *niklamim*. When David learned of it, he told his messengers to get off the road and stay in Jericho until their beards had grown back 2 Samuel Most in the community will not have license to beat the back or pull the beard of one who has violated their norms or challenged their values. But they can open their mouths and let fly words and spit. These forms of shaming are easy to perform and easy to get away with. They direct verbal and physical expressions of rejection and disgust to the person who has violated social norms and values. Being assaulted by these expressions of disgust and rejection can trigger the desire to hide, to become invisible. But they are not the only values, and not the only norms. The prophet insists, "I have not been disgraced *niklamti* " Isaiah Many of us will never be beaten or spit at for preaching the gospel. But all of us inhabit a social economy of honor and shame. And not only shame but also honor can be a mechanism of social control. In the court of honor and shame, those who are shamed are silenced or silence themselves. The prophet does not accept the values of the community or conform to social norms, not for the sake of status and not even for the sake of safety and health. There is neither honor nor shame in possessing the faculties of a student. Instead, students know that they are still learning. They know that the mysteries of heaven and earth, our life with one another, and our life with God are still unfolding before them. What would it mean for us to perceive, examine, and refuse the economy of honor and shame that operates even in our churches? Let us stand up together The Exposed Self New York: Theory, Therapy, Theology Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ,

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Chapter 2 : If God is all powerful and loving, why is there suffering in the world? | blog.quintoapp.com

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me. How do we become servants worth honoring? In this text, Paul bestows a special honor on two men for their faithful service to God. Paul says this about Timothy and then Epaphroditus: Concerning Epaphroditus, he said that the Philippians should honor men like him because he almost died for the work of Christ. There were many Christians around Paul who professed to follow and serve Christ, but Paul knew that Christians with the makeup of Timothy and Epaphroditus were uncommon. They deserved special honor and so he honors them in this letter to the Philippians. He also implicitly gives them as a model of the mind of Christ and godly servants cf. Essentially, Paul was calling this congregation to be servants. This was especially important because of the division in the church, as two women were fighting in Philippians 4: Christ gave up his rights as God to become a man and not just a man but a servant v. He humbled himself and became obedient even unto death. He now mentions two other model servants who the Philippians would be very well acquainted with. He mentions Timothy and Epaphroditus. His mother was a Jewish Christian woman; his father was Greek and probably a pagan cf. He learned the Scriptures from his mother and grandmother as a child 2 Tim 1: Some believe that Timothy was led to Christ by Paul on his first missionary journey Acts Timothy would have been with Paul at the founding of the church in Philippi cf. We also know that Timothy was later sent to Ephesus to care for the church there. It was for this reason that Paul wrote the letters of 1 and 2 Timothy. He struggled with fear, maybe fear of incompetence in the ministry 2 Tim 1: This man needed to be brave because if Paul was found guilty of being an enemy of Rome, that would have implicated him and potentially led to his death. The Philippians had already been given Christ as a model and also Paul, as he talked about being poured out as a drink offering 2: Here in the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus, they could see pictures of ordinary people who served Christ and others as servants. Timothy struggled with fear and anxiety; he was constantly sick. What are characteristics of honorable servants? How can we become servants worth honoring as seen in Timothy and Epaphroditus? Here, Paul honors them for their service. As we look at this text, we see characteristics of honorable servants who are worth imitating. What characteristics of honorable servants are seen in the example of Timothy and Epaphroditus? I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. We see his concern throughout the letter. Paul mentions how they were suffering for the faith 1: Paul was so worried about the Philippians even though he was the one in prison that he planned to send Timothy to check on them. Used of a person, it described proven character or tested value. He had faithfully served Paul and now was just like Paul. In Acts 16, he left his family, his career aspirations, and everything else to follow and serve Paul. He was willing to serve Paul and be second. He was willing to submit to Paul and his leadership, as Paul followed Christ. Joshua followed Moses; Elisha followed Elijah.

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The disciples followed Christ. Mark followed Barnabas and Peter. For each of these people who were willing to be second and to serve, they each were one day fully equipped just as their teacher. Joshua eventually replaced Moses. Mark eventually wrote the Gospel of Mark. These people sat under their teachers till one day they became one-souled. They had become just like them. This is what made Timothy a servant worth honoring and imitating. A lot of zealous disciples want to skip the season of training in order to do great things. However, training is an essential requirement of being used by God. It develops skill and humility in the servant. And it also can lead to an impartation of special gifts. Paul said this about Timothy: Commentators are not sure exactly what this means. It seems that while Timothy followed Paul, there was some type of impartation. This is the very reason that many Christians are not effective servants. They are not willing to humble themselves to learn from others. They are not willing to follow anyone. They want to keep their independence. Warren Wiersbe shares the story of a young Christian who was not willing to wait and grow under the leadership of another: A popular local nightclub performer visited a pastor and announced that he had been saved and wanted to serve the Lord. But, do I have to wait? I want to start my own organization, make records, and appear before big crowds! And the place to start winning people is right at home. God will open up places of service for you as He sees you are ready. Meanwhile, study the Bible and give yourself a chance to grow. Instead, he set up a big organization and started out on his own. Not only did he lose his testimony because he was not strong enough to carry the heavy burdens, but his constant traveling alienated him from his wife and family. He thought like him, had developed many of the same gifts as him, and now was competent to serve on his own when sent to Philippi. Timothy was willing to be trained and equipped through discipleship in order to more successfully serve God. It should be added that many honorable servants may never be discipled in the same way as Joshua, Elisha, the apostles, or Timothy. The primary element of discipleship is training. Sometimes God chooses different ways to train and equip his servants. This may happen through many teachers instead of one prominent one. It may happen in part through lots of reading and studying the writings of godly people. Paul discipled many through his writings cf. Training may happen formally through Bible school or seminary. It may happen through patiently enduring various trials James 1: Either way, the principle is still the same; honorable servants are willing and humble enough to be discipled and trained. Have you ever experienced a relationship like this? In what ways is God calling you to be further trained? Honorable Servants Are Consumed with the Interests of Christ and Others I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. He demonstrated the mind of Christ as he put the interest of others before his own cf. This is what made Paul constantly pray for the churches and write letter after letter to them. This is what made him travel mile upon mile visiting them. In fact, in many of his letters Timothy was with him in the writing of the letters Phil 1: He carried an anxietyâ€”a deep concern for all the churches. Paul said this about them: This is a sad admission, but the truth is Christians today often are not very different from those in Rome.

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Chapter 3 : Sermons and Outlines

But suppose your first words are, "All of us have them. Some of us have more than others, and some of us feel like every time they come, they come in a giant-sized package. But all of us have them."

There is a legitimate sense in which every believer has come to know God. Jesus prayed John And yet there is another sense in which we need to know God far more deeply than we do. After 25 years as a believer, the apostle Paul said that he had not yet attained to knowing Christ as he ought, but he pressed on toward that goal Phil. As the prophet Hosea wrote 6: He has just unfolded in one long sentence 1: These blessings include being chosen by the Father 1: Then Paul writes 1: Give me this job. Help me to do well in school. Grant the same for my mate and my children, and for all of the saints in our church. It has often rightly been said that Christianity is not a religion. It is a personal relationship with the living God. Personal relationships do not run on autopilot. The same is true in your relationship with the Lord. It becomes a routine or ritual. Since all spiritual blessings come from God alone, we should continually pray with gratitude for all the saints. All spiritual blessings come from God, so we must ask Him for them. We have already seen that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, but that does not mean that we automatically experience these blessings. When a man is hungry or thirsty, he has only one thing on his mind, to find food and drink. He knows that he will die unless those needs are met soon. He is driven to satisfy those needs. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son will to reveal Him. We must ask Him to reveal Himself to us. But there is more, if we want the Lord to disclose Himself to us. Then why does Jesus say that He will love the one who obeys Him? That sounds like conditional love. But, there is also a special, intimate love that is reserved for those who obey Him. It is only to those in this close, love-trust relationship, that He reveals more of Himself. We understand this principle from our relationships. You only disclose your heart to those whom you trust. If you walk up to a stranger and start revealing personal matters, he will rightly think that you are weird. Intimate, personal disclosure is reserved for those we know well, who are trustworthy of that information. The same is true spiritually. As David wrote Ps. Knowing that God has given us all that we are and have, we should continually thank Him. Some argue that this letter could not have been intended for the church in Ephesus, because it sounds as if Paul heard these things second hand. But, it had been at least four years since he had been there, and he was now in prison in Rome. So he was continually thanking God for the good reports that he heard. In a sermon on this text Sermons on Ephesians [Banner of Truth], p. So, if faith and love come from God, we should thank Him in our prayers for these things. We can commend those who are walking in faith and love, but we must be quick to divert all the praise and glory to God alone, because if we were left to ourselves, we would never be inclined to faith and love. Since all spiritual blessings come from God, we must continually pray with gratitude for all of the saints when we see them walking with God. Those marked by faith and love have begun well, but we should pray that God would grant that they come to know Him more deeply. Most of us would be quite content to hear of other believers who are living by faith in the Lord Jesus and with love for all the saints. After all, that is virtually a summary of the two great commandments. What more could you ask for? As Paul wrote Col. And we should love one another, as He commanded us John But, even though these believers in Ephesus were walking by faith in the Lord Jesus and with love for one another, Paul prays for more. My point here is that it is not enough to pray for your loved ones that they come to faith in Christ. Pray that they would come to know God more deeply! Pray this prayer of Paul for other believers and for yourself. There is always more of God to know and experience. Faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints is basic; so yes, pray for those qualities. But, also, pray for deeper knowledge of God. Pray that God would give others and you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The mystery of the Trinity and the inherent glory of God preclude us from knowing Him through our own understanding. No one can figure out

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who the glorious, triune God is from philosophy or reason or intuition. While creation reveals His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and His divine nature, unbelievers cannot know God through creation because they suppress the truth in unrighteousness Rom. The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned 1 Cor. The Bible is clear that we should not put our faith in any mere man, but in God alone. Why does Paul use this designation of God here? I believe it is because Jesus showed us while He was on this earth how to live in complete dependence on the Father and obedience to His will. He showed us how to commune with the Father in prayer. He is our great example. Father implies intimacy, love, and acceptance, but glory implies that He is transcendent and unapproachable. All things have been created to glorify Him. The only way that we can come to know Him more deeply is if He will graciously open our eyes and reveal to us a glimpse of His glory. One of the most instructive biblical illustrations of this knowledge of the Holy One is when Moses asked God to show him His glory. Moses had already seen the burning bush and heard God speak through it. He had already seen God inflict the ten plagues on Egypt. He had seen God part the Red Sea and provide a dry path for Israel, and then destroy the Egyptian army. He had seen God provide water from the rock. He had spoken to God face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. He had just been on the mountain in the presence of God for 40 days and nights, where he received the Ten Commandments, written by the very finger of God. For most of us, that would be more than enough, but not for Moses! After all of this, he dares to ask God Exod. Did you notice that when God revealed His glory to Moses, He emphasized sovereign election? I base that statement on Ephesians 1, Romans 9, and also on Exodus 33, which show that when God reveals His glory, He speaks about His sovereign right to be gracious to whom He wills. Human reason would accuse such a God of being unjust Rom. You can only submit to that truth and rejoice in it, as Jesus did Luke Because God dwells in unapproachable light, we must ask Him for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Thus they take it as a prayer that the indwelling Holy Spirit 1: There is no new revelation about God today apart from the revelation of Scripture. If someone claims to have some new revelation that cannot be found in the written Word, run for cover! The spirit of wisdom enables us to live wisely by applying the knowledge of God through His Word to our daily lives. Any dreams or visions about God must line up with Scripture, or they are false. Knowing him personally involves knowing many facts about him, but it involves more. Personal knowledge involves a relationship. It requires time spent together. Paul is not praying for an academic knowledge of theology about God, although that is necessary in the process of knowing God. Rather, he is praying for a personal, experiential knowledge of God Himself through Jesus Christ, who is the only way to know the Father John Is spending time with God in His Word a priority to you? Knowing God is your supreme need, as Dr. The quest of your life should be to know Him more and more. With Paul, you should be able to say Phil. How can a Christian who is prone to grumbling develop a thankful heart in all things?

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Chapter 4 : Bring Us the Book! | Keep Believing Ministries

In a sermon on this text (Sermons on Ephesians [Banner of Truth], p. 83), John Calvin argues that Paul would have no reason to thank God for the Ephesians' faith and love, unless these quali-

How is God Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient? Many have heard about God, but wonder about His existence, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. Because God is spirit, this helps explain why God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. Notice a couple of comments from two books: Both God and the Word who became Christ have existed eternally and before all else. From them emanates the Spirit of God, by which God is omnipresent and omniscient. God the Father is the divine Father of the God family, into which truly converted Christians shall be born. Mystery of the Ages. Probably one of the first things you wonder about God is where He came from. He has always existed. God always was and He always will be. Is God omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient? In answering such questions, we should always begin with another question: This is, perhaps, the easiest of the three to answer: Yes, God is omnipotent! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! It is God who ultimately reigns in the universe, and all legitimate authority must derive from Him. However, if we were to insist that omnipotent meant God could do anything and everything at all, we would need to reject that description, because His word says He cannot! The Bible clearly shows that God cannot act contrary to His nature. Not if we let Scripture define its own terms! There is no limit to the power of God. This is a point that God wants humankind to clearly understand. The Bible is clear that God is omnipotent. Or what likeness will you compare to Him? The term omnipresent, however, has caused more trouble. Basically, being omnipresent means being present everywhere at the same time. Can this term be applied to God? What does Scripture tell us? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, You are there. David answers the question beautifully: Still, we must be careful with our terms! We do not use human philosophies to avoid the clear statements of Scripture! Consider, as well, the passage in which God says unambiguously that He has a face, a hand and a back Exodus It is by their Spirit that the Father and the glorified Christ have complete access to their creation! Yet He still retains a shapeâ€”a bodyâ€”ruling in glory from His throne in heaven. We must also note that although God is omnipresent through His Spirit, we can become separated from Him. Jesus Christ experienced this horrible separation during His crucifixion, when on our behalf He took upon Himself the full penalty of our sins cf. God is everywhere, in the known, and unknown universe. And the Spirit of God is infinite. The article continued with: Philosophers and theologians have debated this question over the millennia. So, before we determine whether or not God is omniscient, we need to recognize that the world has some weird and conflicting ideas about what this word means. Why is there so much confusion? The Random House Unabridged Dictionary offers this definition of omniscient: The Bible tells us that God does perceive all things, which means that no fact can be hidden from His knowledge. As King David recognized: God sees all things, and nothing can be hidden from His knowledgeâ€”not even the secret intentions of the heart Psalm In fact, He understands our own intentions better than we do cf. Human beings perceive through the senses, but there are limits to what the senses let us perceive and understand. His Spirit searches all things 1 Corinthians 2: In this sense, He is omniscient. Nothing can escape His gaze and His knowledge. If it can be known, He knows it! But if we are to use the word omniscient to describe our Father and His glorified Son, it cannot mean that God knows our every choice before we make it in every circumstance, because Scripture tells us otherwise! For example, the Bible shows that when God gave Abraham the supreme test of sacrificing his son Isaac, He did not know until that moment whether Abraham would choose to obey. Upon seeing his choice, He told Abraham: This was one of the most crucial points in the history of faith and in the plan of God! It was a challenge so intense, and involving such faith, that God did not know what choice Abraham would make. Most of the choices we make each day may be rather predictable. Parents with young children can see this for themselves. Yet the Bible reveals that God does arrange circumstances to challenge our

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character” to help us to grow”where the outcome is not so predictable. When we choose, we participate with God in the creation of our character. We should not allow vain philosophy to rob us of this truth. It is not that God cannot determine the future. He can, and He does! Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. We can say with confidence that God is omniscient. But we must allow the Bible to define what omniscient means. Notice what God is called: God also does not change and will be around always: Thus, even the name that God identified Himself as "I am who I am" signifies eternity. The Bible reveals that the eternal power of the Godhead should be obvious: Notice that God does understand this: Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end Ecclesiastes 3: So we see that God put eternity in human hearts and God is infinite, but that we cannot fully understand even the work that God does from the beginning to the end. It is beyond our ability to grasp at this time. Yet the Bible reveals: Thus it is clear that God knows all His works from eternity, but that there are some things that humans simply cannot fully understand see also Where Did God Come From? It also seems to be able to be beyond our ability to grasp the entire universe cf. Like God, the dimensions of the universe have no beginning and have no end. And if one concludes that empty space is the end, where does the empty space end? Of course, it does not. Thus, just like no one can go to one end or the other of the universe, no one can get to the beginning or the end of the Godhead. So even though the idea of an endless universe can be within our hearts and minds, it is a concept, like the eternity of God, that is difficult for humans to fully understand. God is Love Even though God is immortal, how was it possible for God to inhabit eternity? The answer also seems to be found in the Bible. First read the following: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord Romans 6: Because the Godhead does not ever sin, the Godhead never has to die and is thus capable of living eternally Jesus only died because He allowed Himself to do so, see Matthew Only a sinless being could exist without a beginning. Do you know that Jesus taught the following? How the Continuing Church of God differ from most Protestants. What does the Bible say is the love of God requires of us? And His commandments are not burdensome 1 John 5: Notice that God is love: Also notice that there is no fear of judgment in love: God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. The reason that the Godhead was able to exist from eternity is because that the Godhead is love--anything other than love would eventually destruct.

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Chapter 5 : Growing Up Like Jesus | Christian Reformed Church

There are many ways to communicate acceptance to people. One of them is to listen to them with patience and compassion and receive them with love in the name of Jesus. Another is to refrain from mental condemnation and judgments, from constantly evaluating and analyzing (those things keep us from loving).

Who was thrown into a den of lions? What is the beginning of wisdom? Which angel appeared to Mary? Which two people walked on water? Who had a coat of many colors? How many books are there in the entire Bible? Whose tomb was Christ buried in? What is the Golden Rule? The survey reveals that while most Americans still respect the Bible, few of us read it on a regular basis. Geof Morin, executive vice president of the society, put it this way: I have had one for a long time. Daniel Daniel 6 2. The fear of the Lord Proverbs 1: Jesus and Peter Matthew Turning water into wine John 2: Joseph of Arimathea Matthew Doing well on a Bible quiz does not guarantee that you have a healthy Christian life. That said, most people agree that we live in an age of declining Bible literacy, even inside the church. On this front we face two dangers: First, we may begin to take the Bible for granted, as if owning a Bible is the same as knowing the Bible. Yet we all own books we rarely read. The second danger comes from a different direction. Because we live in a high-stress world, we are easily distracted. Does the Bible bore you? So our Bibles gather dust. We never mean it to be that way, but it happens. By way of background, you need to know that Nehemiah was the man God raised up to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. You can read the amazing story of how he accomplished that feat in Nehemiah Nehemiah 8 tells of a great convocation that took place one week after the walls were finished. We can think of the book of Nehemiah this way: The first half chapters tells about the rebuilding of the walls. The second half chapters tells about the rebuilding of the people. Taken together, the two halves teach us that the inside matters as much as the outside. We certainly need this message today. A New Inclination Verses introduce us to the story: And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. What book is this? This is no new book. This is the old book that Moses wrote. Derek Kidner explains it this way: Given the sad state of the world and the spiritual confusion of the church, I am inclined to agree with that assessment. We need a great revival from the Holy Spirit. Verse 3 says they listened to the reading for at least six hours. The text even says they listened attentively. I wonder how well any of us would do in a six-hour service? Or maybe a lot less than that. They listened for six hours! Recently we received a note from a prisoner in Texas who had read my book An Anchor for the Soul and wrote to tell us his story. He had decided to kill himself when the Holy Spirit convicted him on the spot and caused him to cry out to Jesus for mercy. The next morning, a fellow inmate, whom I had never spoken with, came to me and asked me if I wanted a Bibleâ€”go figure, huh? I am so addicted to the Word. Every day I read about hours a day. I have no interest in TV at all. Genuine Appreciation We see this clearly in verses Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. See how simple and unadorned this is. No pomp, no ceremony, no choir, no gold, no silver, no sacrifice, no offering. Just a platform with Ezra reading from the scrolls while the people listened intently. They stand out of respect for the Word of God, they lift up their hands, and then they bow down with their faces to the ground. Something always seems out of kilter in a service like that. It matters to us. That ought to say something to us. May God grant us a genuine appreciation for his Word! They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. Do you see those 13 unpronounceable names in verse 7? Those were the Levites who assisted Ezra. Perhaps the 13 stood on the

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platform with Ezra or perhaps they circulated throughout the crowd. In part this was necessary because the Torah was written in Hebrew but some of the people spoke Aramaic. So someone had to make the sense of the words clear to them. Verse 8 offers us perhaps the clearest definition of preaching in the Bible: Reading Explaining Understanding This is what preachers do. They read the Bible and they explain it clearly so that people understand what it says. You take a text from the Bible and you explain it so that the hearers understand what it means. This method has produced the greatest preachers in Christian history: Campbell Morgan, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and a host of great preachers in our own generation. This is the best kind of preaching This is the noblest and finest method of preaching. This is the preaching that builds strong churches. Why is this method the best? Because it simply explains the Bible to people, Because it reveals eternal truth, Because it starts with what God has said, and Because it meets the deepest needs of the human heart. Ezra wanted to make sure that all the Jews understood what God was saying. We should preach so that even the children can understand what God is saying. The fifty-second Sunday, preach so that the Ph. Personal Application We see this in verse 9: Why did they weep? Because when they finally heard and understood the Word of God, the Holy Spirit brought its truth home to their hearts. As the Word hit home, they saw their true condition. Weeping is a positive sign, like getting sore after you get a flu shot. It means the medicine is taking effect. The possibilities are endless Perhaps you will volunteer at a crisis pregnancy center. Perhaps you will take in foster children. Perhaps you will tutor at your local elementary school. Perhaps you will adopt a child. Perhaps you will volunteer for prison ministry. Perhaps you will build a house for a poor family in Haiti.

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Chapter 6 : What is the key to truly knowing God?

So let's look at seven ways the Bible tells us we can please God. Have Faith in God. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews).

What is the key to truly knowing God? Within all of us there exists a strong desire to be known and to know others. More importantly, all people desire to know their Creator, even if they are not professed believers in God. Today we are bombarded with advertising that promises many ways to satisfy our cravings to know more, have more, be more. However, the empty promises that come from the world will never satisfy in the way that knowing God will satisfy. Jesus said, "Now this is eternal life: So, "what is the key to truly knowing God? The Scriptures reveal to us that we are all sinful Romans 3 and that we fall well short of the standard of holiness required to commune with God. We are also told that the consequence of our sin is death Romans 6: So, in order to truly know God, we must first receive Him into our lives. Nothing is of greater importance than understanding this truth when it comes to knowing God. Jesus makes it clear that He alone is the way to heaven and to a personal knowledge of God: There is no requirement to begin this journey besides accepting and receiving the promises mentioned above. Jesus came to breathe life into us by offering Himself as a sacrifice so our sins will not prevent us from knowing God. Once we have received this truth, we can begin the journey of knowing God in a personal way. The Bible is essentially a love letter written to us from a loving God who created us to know Him intimately. What better way to learn about our Creator than to immerse ourselves in His Word, revealed to us for this very reason? And it is important to continue this process throughout the entire journey. Paul writes to Timothy, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" 2 Timothy 3: Finally, truly knowing God involves our commitment to obey what we read in the Scriptures. After all, we were created to do good works Ephesians 2: We carry the responsibility to live out the very faith that is required to know God. We are salt and light on this earth Matthew 5: Jesus Himself placed the greatest importance on loving God with all we are and loving our neighbor as ourselves Matthew This command is impossible to keep without the commitment to reading and applying His truth revealed in His Word. These are the keys to truly knowing God. Of course, our lives will involve much more, such as commitment to prayer, devotion, fellowship, and worship. But those can only follow making a decision to receive Jesus and His promises into our lives and accepting that we, on our own, cannot truly know God. Then our lives can be filled with God, and we can experience knowing Him intimately and personally.

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Chapter 7 : Becoming Servants Worthy of Honor | blog.quintoapp.com

18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. 19 And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. 20 We take this course so.

His deliverances are forgotten. Why, look at some of you! You never missed a meal in your lives. When you went to the table, there was always something on it. Some of you, from your childhood, have had all that heart could wish. If God has treated you so, while many are crushed with poverty, should he not have some gratitude from you? You had a good mother; you had a tender father; you have gone from one form of relationship to another with increasing comfort. You are spared, and your mother is spared; your wife and children are spared. Indeed, God has made your path very smooth. Some of you are getting on in business, while other men are failing; some of you have every comfort at home, while others have been widowed, and their children have fallen, one after the other. Will you never be grateful? Hard, hard heart, wilt thou never break? Will any mercy bend thee? I do appeal to some here, whose path has been so full of mercies, that they ought to think of God, and turn to him with sincere repentance and faith. Then he says even more than this: We owe everything to God; shall we not give God nothing? Shall we have no gratitude to him from whom all our blessings have come? If it is manna, we wish we had quail. If it is cereal, we complain because we want eggs. If our black suit is not ready, we complain because we have to wear brown. If we do not have cancer, we complain about our arthritis. If we have a car, we wish we had another one. We dream of a better job because we could be doing so much better than we are now. Complaining, one supposes, goes back to Adam who told Eve that the fig leaves made him itch. I meant to say how God revealed the ingratitude of my own heart, and that I will now proceed to do. God did it in a way most unexpected and one that, frankly, embarrasses me to speak of it, but I am determined to rid my soul of this vice and so I say plainly what God has done for me. In the last two years the Lord has in his mercy led us in paths that are quite different from anything we have traveled in the past. For 27 years I served as pastor of three different churches—one in Los Angeles, one in Dallas, and one in Chicago. Of those congregations I wish only to remark that they were filled with good and kind people who graciously listened to me speak week after week. All three churches were very generous toward us. For more than sixteen years I served a congregation in a Chicago suburb. And so we set off to follow the Lord as best we could. Like Abraham of old, we went out, not knowing where we were going. Here is one fact that I have never mentioned until now. For a full year we went without a salary of any kind. This came at a certain point after the kind provision of the church in Oak Park came to an end. When I say that we had no salary, I mean quite literally that for a year we had no regular or stated income of any kind. We lived off the land, so to speak. Of that year I wish to say two things very plainly. First, that was not part of my plan at all. I never envisioned a moment when we would be without a salary. I had no such desire and no such plan. So it came to pass that for twelve months we lived from day to day and week to week, waiting upon the Lord. Second, God never failed us, not even one time. We saw things happen that seemed to us to be miraculous answers to prayer. Never too much but always just enough, and always in the nick of time. And this we did not see clearly until the year was finished, and we tabulated our income and saw that God had provided all our needs, some of them in ways that simply astounded us. My Ungrateful Heart At length the year came to an end, and God provided a partial support through our ministry that has now become full support. And for that we are very grateful. But God spoke very clearly to me and showed me something about my heart that I had never seen before. During all those years when I received a regular paycheck as a pastor, I never once stopped to give thanks to God for his provision. Never one time can I remember being grateful to God for his provision for our needs. I am certain that I would never have seen it but for that year with no salary at all. I worked hard for it. It is what is owed me for my labor. And is that not how we are all taught to think? A paycheck is money earned. It is not a gift. We work hard for what we get paid. You do not say thank you for what is yours by

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virtue of many hours of hard work. It shames me to think of it now. But God has his ways of humbling his servants. And so during that year without a salary, if I went to preach somewhere and they gave me a small gift for preaching a sermon, I was profoundly grateful to God. Thus does God even the scales. I learned to say thank you to the Lord for his provision for what I had once taken for granted. And from the standpoint of our text, that would be a true statement. We are all unthankful by nature because we all take for granted the goodness of the Lord. We think God owes us something when in fact he owes us nothing at all. Every good gift comes down from the Father of lights above. What do you have that you did not receive? God showed me that in my own heart, I was guilty of the sin that lies at the heart of all other sins—ingratitude. When we are not thankful for what we have received, we open the door to every other sin imaginable. The final point I wish to make is that gratitude is first and foremost a matter of the heart. It is the heart that must be changed. I have learned and am learning that gratitude is a gift first and foremost, a matter of the heart, and it flows down to us, dropping like the gentle rain from heaven. In fact, mercy and gratitude always go together. What starts as mercy in heaven ends as gratitude on earth. And so on Thanksgiving Day, I wish to give thanks to God for showing me the true state of my own heart. I pray to become more grateful for all his gifts. And I humbly ask the Lord to give me a grateful heart for all his blessings—seen and unseen, that I might take nothing for granted, and to open the eyes of my heart to appreciate All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small, All things wise and wonderful, The Lord God made them all. When Spurgeon came to the end of his sermon, he finished with these quaint words. I find them comforting to my own soul, and they make me happy early on this Thanksgiving morning. And then, next, let us begin to be very thankful, if we have not been so before. Let us praise God for common mercies, for they prove to be uncommonly precious when they are once taken away. Bless God that you were able to walk here, and are able to walk home again. Bless God for your reason: Bless God for the means of grace, for an open Bible, for the throne of grace, for the preaching of the Word. You that are saved must lead the song. Bless him for his Spirit. Bless him for his Fatherhood. Bless him that you are his child. Bless him for what you have received. Bless him for what he has promised to give. Bless him for the past, the present, and the future. Bless him in every way, for everything, at all times, and in all places. Let all that is within you bless his holy name. Go your way rejoicing. May his Spirit help you so to do! On that note, I wish you a very Happy Thanksgiving Day.

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Chapter 8 : Isaiah a Commentary by Anatheia Portier-Young - Working Preacher - Preaching This Week (R

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When he prays he closes his eyes and when he preaches I close mine. So much so, that as you approach the pulpit, they slouch down in their seats. You only have 30 seconds to get their attention. And furthermore, no matter how important what you desire to say is, it will not be heard. How do you get their attention in 30 seconds? Four ideas are invaluable. Do a passion check. Are you stepping into the pulpit because you have to say something or because you have something to say? To be an effective communicator, that burden must be expressed with a passion. That passion can be seen in the way you step into the pulpit, your excitement and even your opening words. Your first words are critical. Why tell them what they already know? Even if you need to say something prior to your message to relate to your audience, say it quickly and make it a touchstone with their lives. You might ask, "How can you make those first few words attention-getting? In fact, we have so many of them we are at a loss at what to do. Some of us have more than others, and some of us feel like every time they come, they come in a giant-sized package. But all of us have them. What is he getting at? In fact, some of us have so many problems that pulling into the driveway at night is no easier than backing out in the morning; crawling underneath the covers is no easier than crawling out. Choose wisely what you say. Those first words are more than important; they are critical. What need are you speaking to? Or it may be caused by asking one of several questions that relate to the subject I am about to address. Make me feel like you are sitting alongside me at home. The language you use will help you do that. Call a pew a seat, a hymn a song, and an epistle a letter. Refer to a paragraph in the Bible instead of a passage. That way you are speaking my language, not asking me to speak yours. I feel like we are on the same page. The answer is simpler than you might suppose. Some of the same things used to get their attention are the same things used to keep it. Three more ideas will be helpful. The authentic emotion of enthusiasm breeds authentic enthusiasm. The opposite is also true. The closer you are to the Savior, the more excited you become about Him. But may I also mention how much you need to watch your physical fitness? Studies have shown that when you preach a minute message, it is the equivalent of four to six hours of physical labor. Physical fitness affects your energy level, which in turn impacts your enthusiasm. Jesus Christ was a master communicator. A few of those need to be humorous. While they were smiling, He made a point that impacted their lives for change. He was speaking truth and used humor to help make His point. When people are laughing, they are listening. Laughter is the universal language that not only does everyone enjoy, it also communicates. Relevancy, communicated through language, stories, humor and numerous other ways, has to be a thread that runs through the entire message, not just the first 30 seconds. The Scriptures are written in the context of the people of that day. You, through a proper application and use of the Scriptures, have to know how that truth is relevant to the people of our day. Entice me to hear more, not less. If you are committed to being an expositor, you will have more to say than can be said in 30 minutes. The Word of God is a buffet. There is always more food for the audience to digest from a particular paragraph of Scripture than you have time to serve. But the art of communicating is knowing what to take out of a message, not just what you leave in. Leaving an audience where they desire to know more is preferable to their wishing you had stopped sooner. Conclusion Truth, by itself, does not change lives when it is spoken. It only changes lives when it is heard and understood. If the introduction to the message does not make the audience sit up and listen, the message is not likely to impact their lives. Which would you rather hear as a speaker: View all articles by R. Larry Moyer is a veteran evangelist and a frequent speaker in evangelistic outreaches, training seminars, churches and universities around the world. Born with an inherited speech defect, Larry vowed to God as a teenager that if He would allow him to gain control of his speech he would always use his voice to declare the gospel. He has written several books on evangelism and frequently contributes articles to ministry publications.

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Chapter 9 : W. A. Criswell Sermon Library | Christ Perfected Through Suffering

The Scriptures reveal to us that we are all sinful (Romans 3) and that we fall well short of the standard of holiness required to commune with God. We are also told that the consequence of our sin is death (Romans) and that we will perish eternally without God unless we accept and receive the promise of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

You are sharing with us the services of the First Baptist Church in Dallas. This is the pastor, bringing the morning message from the second chapter of the Book of Hebrews. The last time that I spoke here, Sunday before last, we left off at the eighth verse. And today we begin at Hebrews 2: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given Me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And, the text is all of it, but especially this: There is no book that can stand the test of sorrow and suffering like the Bible. Other books intrigue us for an hour and our hearts are gay and light. We read them for pleasure. They are pleasantly perused. But when the days are dark and the heart is heavy, we turn to the Bible. It was born in the fires. Its every word is bathed in tears. And it was written in blood. This is the purpose of the author in writing this epistle to the little congregation of Hebrew Christians. He was writing to solace them in the grief and pain and sorrow and anguish of a terrible persecution. To be a disciple of Christ anywhere in those first Christian centuries carried with it a burden, sometimes the confiscation of property, sometimes the forfeiture of life itself. And this little congregation of Hebrew Christians had not only borne the abuse and offense heaped upon them by their enemies, they had not only borne the confiscation of their property, they had not only borne the interdiction that proscribed their worship in the Temple and their sharing in the feasts of their fathers and in the worship of all of the beauty of that glorious place, but finally, they had come to be beset by terrible intellectual doubts concerning Christ Himself. It was hard for them, a Jewish people, who was looking for a Messiah to deliver them from national shame and ignominy, from the deliverance of servitude and slavery; it was hard for them to believe that this thorn-crowned, dying and crucified Christ was the Messiah of national desire. So, the author of this epistle writes to that little congregation concerning the exaltation of this dying and crucified Lord Jesus. In the first chapter, he has written to them of the exaltation of Christ above all of the angelic hosts of heaven [Hebrews 1: In the second chapter, he writes of the exaltation of Christ in His incarnation [Hebrews 2: And now, the author turns, in the passage of my text, to speaking of the shame and reproach and suffering of Christ because, to the Jew, that was so opposite to the ideas of glory and favor and honor and dominion and power that their Messiah was to possess. And instead of sovereignty, instead of glory, instead of dominion, they found in Christ agony and tears and sobs and crying and death. For, to the Jew, the sufferings of Christ obscured His glory and His power. Now, the author does not in anywise minimize the sufferings of our Lord. In the fifth chapter, he even describes them: In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that that He feared; Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; [Hebrews 5: The very opposite from denying the sufferings of our Lord, this author dwells upon them. And he presents them in a most unique and unusual way. And what the author says of the sufferings of our Lord is the burden of the message this morning. The first thing he avows is this: It was the plan and the purpose of God that the Messiah, the Christ, the Son should suffer. Now you can have no idea of the meaning of the author unless you understand what he means by that word teleios, which is translated here "perfect. It had no connotation of anything like that in the

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original Scriptures. In order to save time, I have copied out of the New Testament instances of the use of that word teleios, which is translated "perfect" [Hebrews 2: Here is one instance. But strong meat belongeth to them that are teleios" – that are perfect. They have arrived, you would say. The Authorized Version translates it "they are of full age" [Hebrews 5: Now, the verbal form of that word carries the same idea: Again, he says, in John There are many forms of the word, but they all mean the same thing. Teleios, translated "perfect" in the Bible, means "complete. An acorn would be teleios if it finally became a great oak. A cog in a wheel would be teleios if it fit beautifully and accomplished the purpose for which it was cast. So, when it says here "It became God, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation teleios through suffering" [Hebrews 2: But, in order to arrive there, in order to gain that ultimate goal, it was also the purpose of God that the path lead through the glades of Gethsemane, through the awful hours of Calvary, and even to the silence and darkness of the grave. So, the author says the sufferings of our Lord were a part of the great plan and purpose of God in bringing many sons unto glory [Hebrews 2: What happened to Christ was something that God mandated and ordained. Now, he says that our Lord identified Himself with His brethren: And, again, then he quotes from the eighteenth Psalm: Then he spells it out for himself: This was the purpose of God: A group of pilgrims need a great heart. An army needs a captain. Wayfaring pilgrims need a guide. And we poor creatures of the dust need a Savior and a helper [Hebrews 2: And we have one in Him – made like unto us and not ashamed to call us His brethren. We can speak to Him, the author says, of our sorrows; He understands. We can carry to Him our griefs; He was grieved. We can carry to Him all of the tears and sobs and sorrows and weepings of life, for He has known them. And ultimately and finally, we can carry to Him the hour of our death, for He suffered death [Hebrews 2: God mandated it [Hebrews 2: And, He was obedient even unto that death [Philippians 2: Every syllable of this is a sermon. One of the results of the suffering of Christ was our redemption, our pardon [1 Peter 1: He died that we should not have to die [2 Corinthians 5: He died in our stead and in our place. All of the fury and judgment and wrath of heaven against sin that should have fallen upon me has fallen upon Him, "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" [Hebrews 2: Then, another concomitant, another corollary: The author is speaking of the pagan, Mediterranean, Roman world. And when he speaks of that world, he speaks of the world since and the world before: Now, there are two ways that we fear death. We fear death physically. There is no need to hide the shrinking and the horror of the dissolution of this organization, this physical life. We share it in keeping with all of the other animal world. There is not any animal that, in the face of death, does not shrink, does not run away, does not fear. But a man has another fear of death. There is a double fear to a man. For to an animal to die, there is nothing but the dissolution of the physical life. But for a man to die, there is an unknown, uncounted, unmet, unnamed mystery: And a man feels: How does a man face God beyond the weariness and the shortcoming and the sin and the iniquity of his life? Now, the author says that our Lord, the incarnate Son, took upon Him our flesh and was made like unto us; that through death He might enter the very lair of Satan himself [Hebrews 2: And there where Satan reigns – and could I parenthesis to say here, had Jesus not entered that realm, there would always have been one place, one dominion, one sovereignty, where Satan would forever reign. And, our Lord, this author says, came from the ramparts of glory to take upon Him our flesh that He might enter the lair of Satan. And, there, face to face, destroy him who reigns over corruption and the tomb and the grave and the sepulcher and the night of this death [Hebrews 2: And, the author says that He has returned from that terrible conflict, face to face with death and the grave – He has returned glorious and triumphant and has delivered us from the fear of death [Hebrews 2: No longer be afraid, no longer. And, death now, through Christ, is just the entrance into the glorious life that is yet to come [2 Corinthians 5: Now, he turns to the exaltation of our Lord because of His humiliation and His shame and His death: It became God [Hebrews 2: It became God greatly to reward our Savior, to crown Him with glory and honor because He was obedient to the mandates of heaven, and He suffered, according to the plan of God [Hebrews 2: