A silhouette of a human head in profile, facing right. The interior of the head is filled with a dark blue, textured background. Overlaid on this background is white text from the Bible, specifically Ephesians 2:1-10. The text is arranged in a way that it appears to be flowing through the head. The words 'THE CHRISTIAN MIND' are prominently displayed in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the head silhouette.

THE CHRISTIAN MIND

LESSON 8:

Knowledge Puffs Up

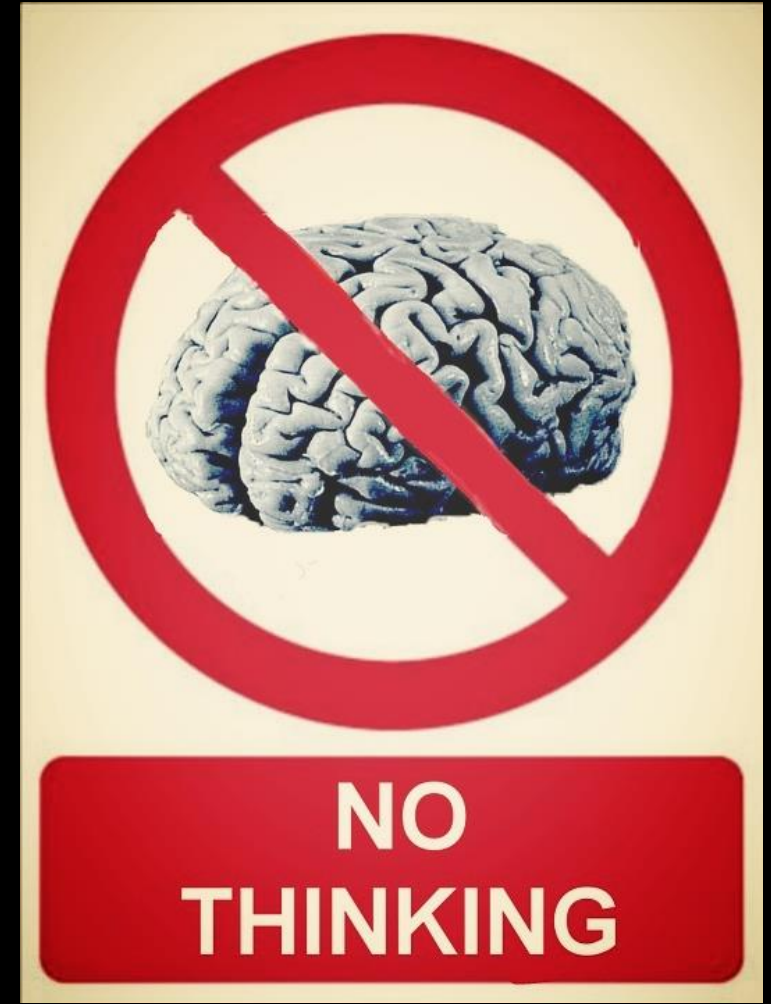
MEN OF THE WORD

November 17, 2021

an·ti·in·tel·lec·tu·al·ism

“opposing or hostile to intellectuals or to an intellectual view or approach”

—Merriam-Webster



“We live in what may be the most anti-intellectual period in the history of Western civilization. We are not necessarily anti-academic, anti-technological, or anti-scientific. The accent is against the intellect itself. Secular culture has embraced a kind of impressionism that threatens to turn our brains into mush, and the evangelical world has followed suit, developing an allergy to all things intellectual.”

—R. C. Sproul, “Burning Hearts Are Not Nourished by Empty Heads,”
CT (Sept 3, 1982), 100

[PARENTHOOD](#)[Stages](#) ▾[Infertility](#)[Hea](#)[PARENTHOOD](#) > [PREGNANCY](#)

Can Men Get Pregnant?

Is it possible?

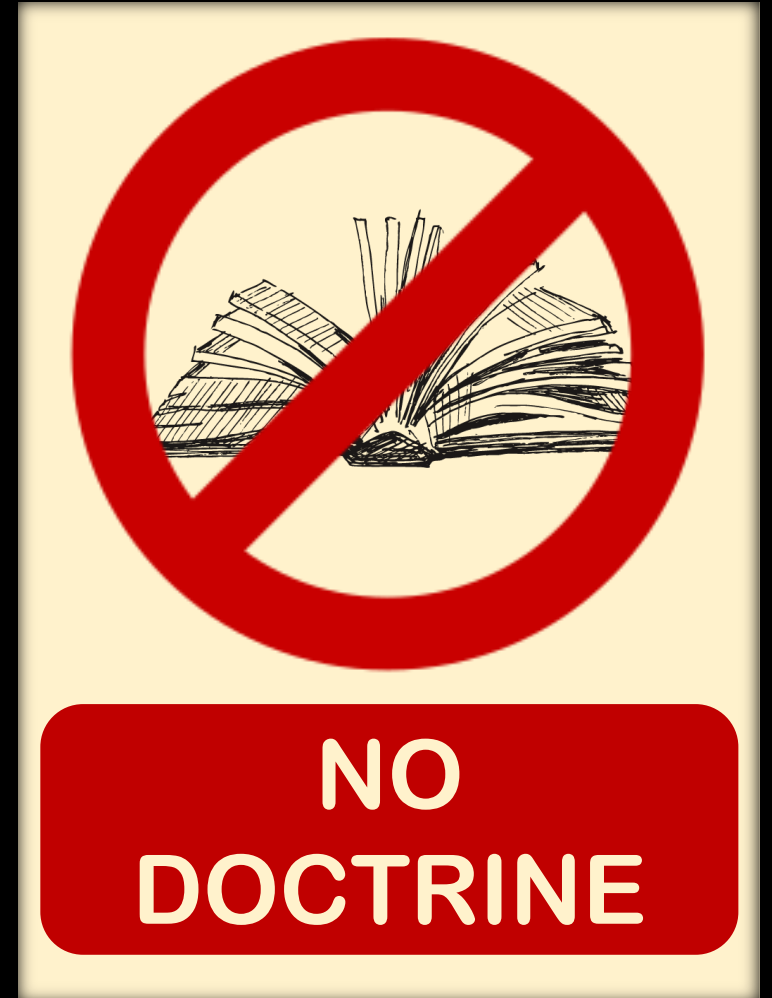
Yes, it's possible for men to become pregnant and give birth to children of their own. In fact, it's probably a lot more common than you might think. In order to explain, we'll need to break down some common misconceptions about how we understand the term "man." Not all people who were

“In Evangelicalism there is a growing trend toward frivolity and superficiality, affecting Christian life, prayer, witness, evangelism and worship. ‘Easy-believism,’ ‘user friendly-ism’ and ‘feel-goodism’ are taking over the church’s life and witness.”

—Don Haddleton, “Evangelical Superficiality,”
Evangelical Times, April 2006

Christian Anti-Intellectualism

- Os Guinness: “a disposition to discount the importance of truth and the life of the mind” (*Fit Bodies, Fat Minds*, 9).
- Christian anti-intellectualism is particularly dismissive of the importance of doctrine.
- It is precipitated by carelessness, conviction, or disillusionment.



- **Ecclesiastes 1:17–18** – “And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind. Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge *results in* increasing pain.”
- **Luke 10:21** – “I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.”
- **1 Corinthians 1:20** – “Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.”

—1 Corinthians 8:1–3



1. The Corinthian Confidence

“Now concerning **things sacrificed to idols** . . .” (1 Cor 8:1a).

- This begins Paul’s response to a question posed to Paul by the Corinthians.
- Idol sacrifices were a regular part of civic life in ancient Corinth.
- Q: Could not Christians liberally partake of food sacrificed to the gods, without hindrance?



“We know that we all have **knowledge**” (1 Cor 8:1b).

- Paul does not directly respond, but instead refocuses the discussion on an issue dear to the Corinthians—*knowledge*.
- The term (γνῶσις , *gnōsis*) is used by Paul 10x in the letter; 5x in this chapter alone.
- Looking back on their former pagan way of life, the Corinthians knew they now possessed real *knowledge* (compare 1 Cor 8:4–6 and Deut 6:4).
- But they prided themselves in that *they* had come to acquire such knowledge, that *they* were now “in the know.”

2. The Corinthian Conceit

“Knowledge **makes arrogant**, but love edifies” (1 Cor 8:1c).

- To settle the question about eating food sacrificed to idols, the Corinthians believed that the appeal to knowledge *alone* was enough.
- But knowledge by itself “makes arrogant” —*literally* “inflates”; *figuratively*, “to cause to have an exaggerated self-conception.”



“Knowledge makes arrogant, but **love edifies**” (1 Cor 8:1a).

- Paul draws attention to the difference in outcomes.
- In contrast to *knowledge* he posits *love*, and in contrast to *conceit* he describes *edification*.
- “Love” (ἀγάπη, *agapē*) – “the quality of warm regard for and interest in another”; “other-oriented behavior”; “giving of self to another.”
- “Edifies” – *literally*, the construction of buildings; *figuratively*, the improvement of another’s ability to live and function responsibly and successfully.



“When [knowledge] is without love it lifts men up to absolute arrogance.”

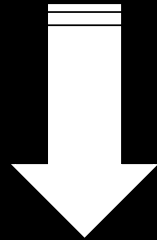
—John Chrysostom, *Homily on 1 Corinthians*

“For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.”

—**1 Corinthians 8:11–12**

The Corinthian Mindset:

Knowledge

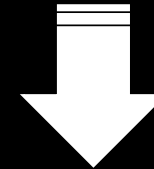


Ethics

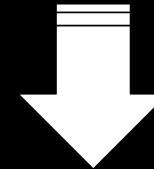
Self-
centered

The Apostle Paul's Mandate:

Knowledge



Love



Ethics

Others-
concerned

3. The Corinthian Confusion

“If anyone **supposes that he knows anything**, he has not yet known as he ought to know” (1 Cor 8:2).

- The focus here is not on *quantity* of knowledge, but on *quality* of knowledge.
- The Corinthians *presumed* they had achieved knowledge. But their “knowledge” produced pride, not others-oriented edification.
- This result proved their “knowledge” was really ignorance and self-deceit. They failed to know as required by God—*lovingly*.

“Knowledge that permits one to steamroll over the scruples of others or to harm them or the church in any way is not Christian knowledge. . . . Paul is an enemy not of knowledge per se but of knowledge that is not informed by faith or directed by love, that inflates egos and wants to put itself on display and receive acclaim.”

—David Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 368–69

“but if anyone **loves God**, he **is known by Him**” (1 Cor 8:3).

- Paul again elevates love over mere knowledge: he does not say “if anyone *knows* God” but “if anyone *loves* God.”
- When such “love” truly exists and is not merely supposed, it is evidence of a more profound reality: such a person is *known by God*.
- To claim to have knowledge from God, one must be first known by Him. And if one is known by God, he will love Him.
- This puts an end to any human boasting: “The knowledge that really counts is not one we possess” (Ciampa & Rosner, 377).

“Therefore, what counts is not so much our knowledge of God as God’s knowledge of us. That is the syntax of salvation.”

—Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, 138

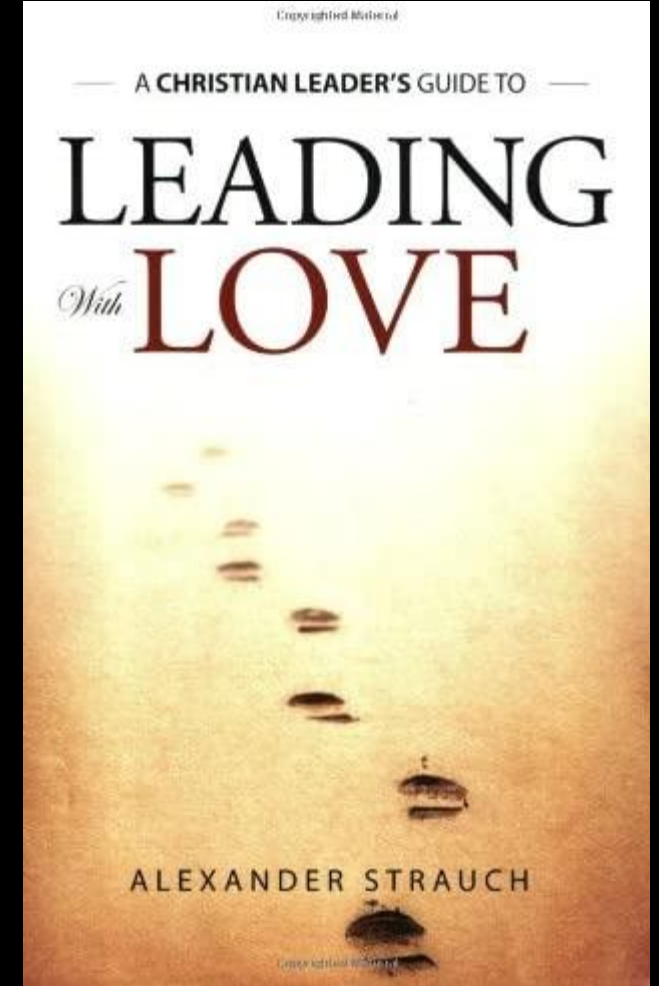
How then shall we respond?

1. Knowledge without love is tyranny.

- The loveless knowledge of the Corinthians was destroying the weaker members of the church.
- **1 Corinthians 8:11–12** – “For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.”
- The Christian use of the mind must always operate upon the two great commandments: love for God (Matt 22:37–38) *and* love for neighbor (Matt 22:39). Otherwise, it is not Christian.

“Knowledge without love inflates the ego and deceives the mind. It can lead to intellectual snobbery, an attitude of mockery and making fun of other’s views, a spirit of contempt for those with lesser knowledge, and a demeaning way of dealing with people who disagree.”

—Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love*, 11

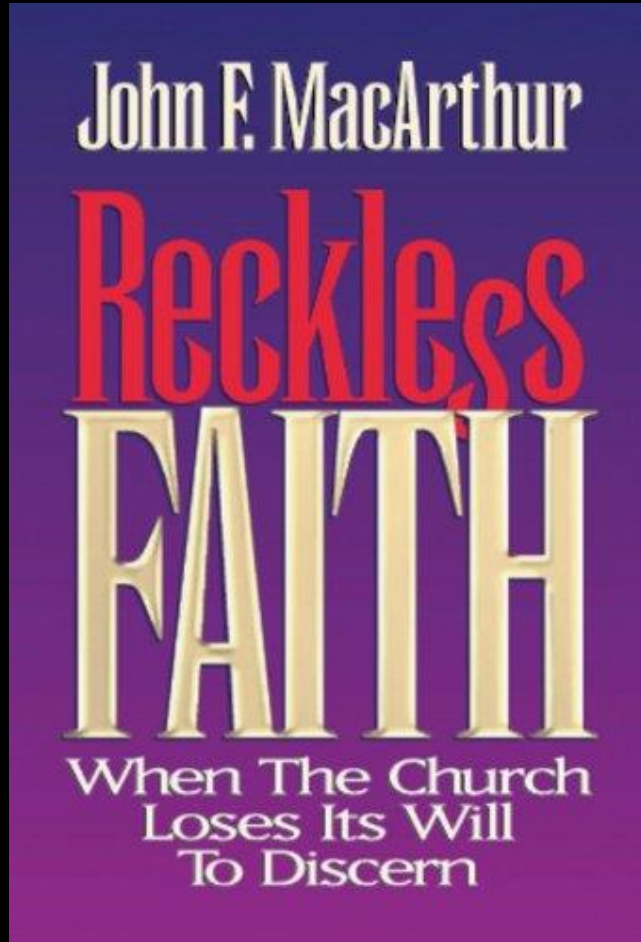


“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart
and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

—1 Timothy 1:5

2. Abuse does not cancel use.

- The misuse of knowledge—when it is employed apart from love—is not an argument for the rejection of knowledge.
- In confronting the error of the Corinthians, Paul never calls upon them to abandon doctrine. He calls upon them to add love—and he does so by *instructing* them.
- Knowledge remains indispensable for the Christian life. The obedient expression of love will not be possible without knowledge of the truth.



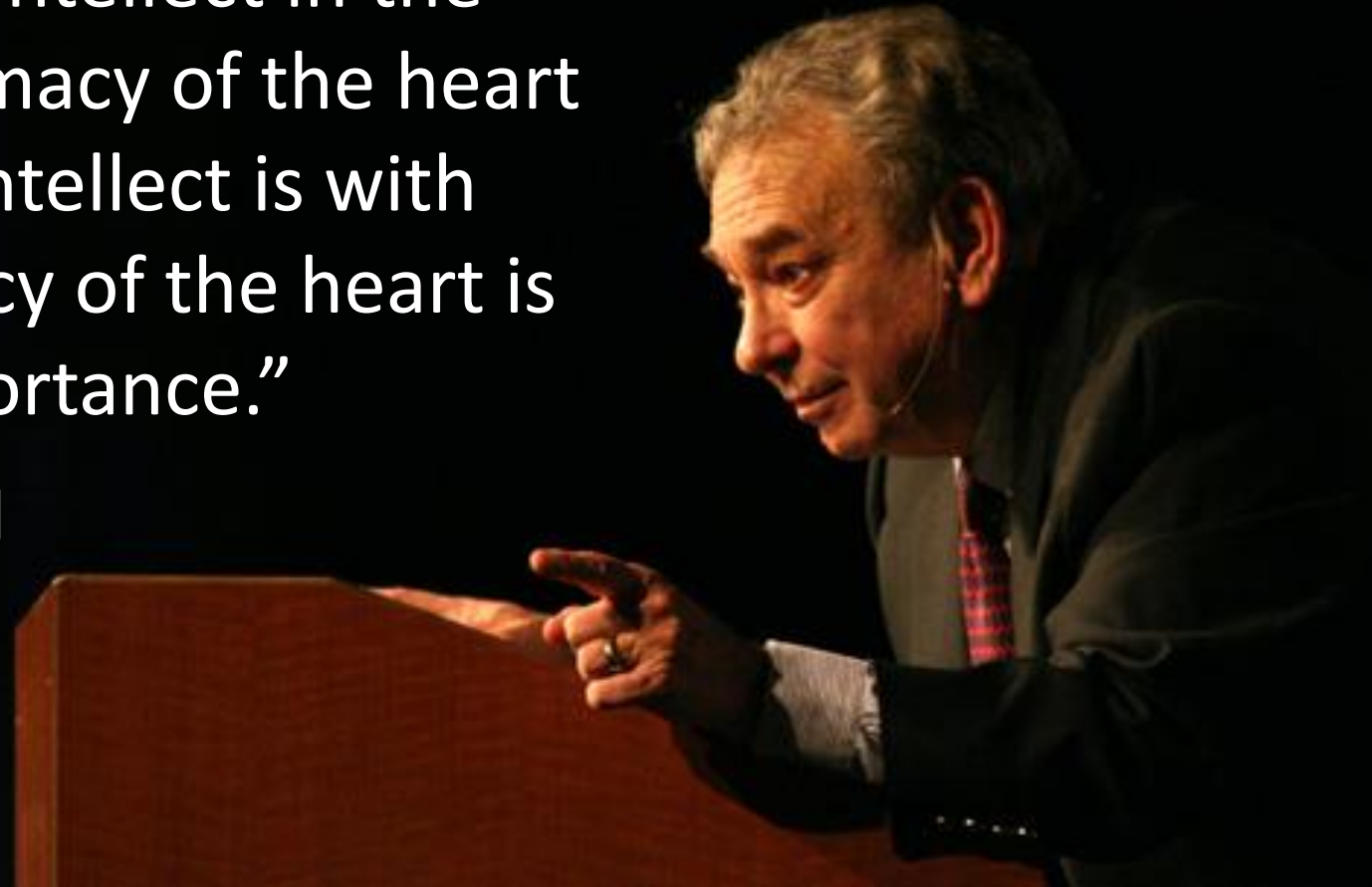
“Authentic faith can never bypass the mind. It cannot be irrational. Faith, after all, deals with truth. Truth is objective data to be known, studied, contemplated, and understood. All those are activities that engage the intellect. That means genuine Christianity *cannot* be anti-intellectual. The body of truth on which our faith is based has depths that are mysterious—unfathomable to the merely human mind, or inscrutable—but truth is *never* irrational.”

—John MacArthur, *Reckless Faith*, xiii.

“Christianity is an intellectual faith. This does not mean that it flirts with intellectualism or restricts sainthood to an elite group of gnostic eggheads. But though the Word of God is not limited to intellectuals, its content is addressed to the mind.

There is a primacy of the intellect in the Christian life as well as a primacy of the heart The primacy of the intellect is with respect to order. The primacy of the heart is with respect to importance.”

—R. C. Sproul



3. Ignorance never saved anyone.

- Old proverb: “Nothing is as arrogant as ignorance.”
- Cotton Mather: “Ignorance is the mother not of devotion but of heresy.”
- We cannot be saved apart from *knowledge*—the gospel.
- **Hosea 4:6** – “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”

“The Christian religion flourishes not in the darkness but in the light. Intellectual slothfulness is but a quack remedy for unbelief; the true remedy is consecration of intellectual power to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

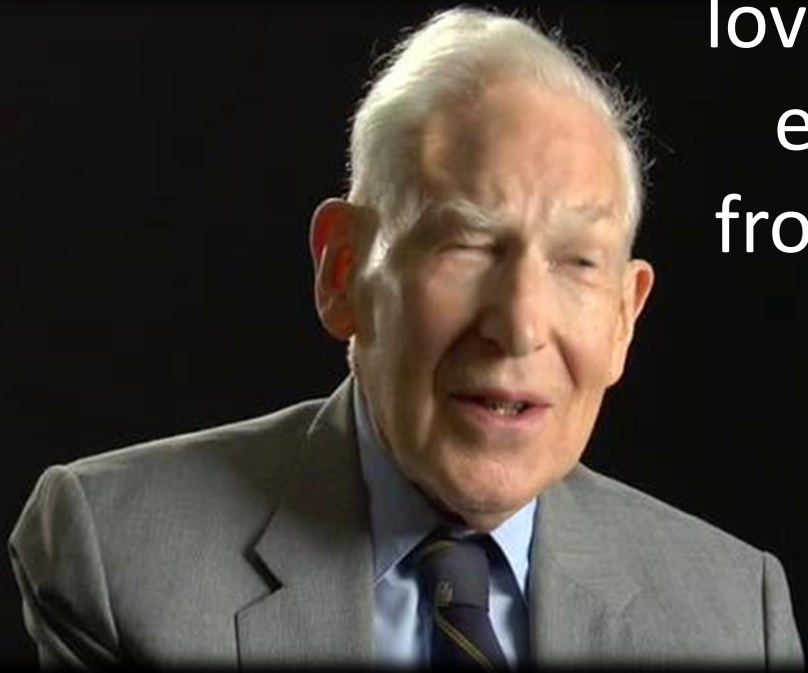
—J. Gresham Machen, *Education, Christianity, and the State*, 34



4. It's ultimately not about what you know.

- A. W. Tozer: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us” (*Knowledge of the Holy*, 1).
- **1 Corinthians 8:3** – “but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.”
- Findlay: “Paul would ascribe nothing to human acquisition; religion is a bestowment, not an achievement; our love or knowledge is a reflex of the divine love and knowledge directed toward us” (“1 Corinthians,” *EGT*, 840).

“What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that *he knows me*. . . . All my knowledge of him depends on his sustained initiative in knowing me. I know him because he first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, one who loves me; and there is no moment when his eye is off me, or his attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when his care falters. . . .”



“This is momentous knowledge. There is unspeakable comfort—the sort of comfort that energizes, be it said, not enervates—in knowing that God is constantly taking knowledge of me in love and watching over me for my good. There is tremendous relief in knowing that his love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench his determination to bless me.”

—J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 41–42

MEN OF THE WORD

Wednesdays 7:00-9:00 PM

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Use the QR code below to submit a question pertaining to this MotW session. We will use these questions to produce additional resources to help provide you with the answers you need.



SCAN ME