

1 Corinthians 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

Analysis

But if any man love God, the same is known of him (ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, egnostai hyp' autou, "has been known by Him")—Paul reverses the equation: what matters isn't our knowledge of God, but God's knowledge of us. The perfect tense egnostai indicates completed action with ongoing results—God's electing knowledge establishes and sustains the believer.

This echoes Galatians 4:9 ("to be known by God") and anticipates 1 Corinthians 13:12 ("then shall I know even as also I am known"). Biblical "knowing" (ginosko in Greek, yada in Hebrew) signifies intimate, covenant relationship—God's choosing love precedes and enables our response. The one who loves God proves thereby that God first loved and chose him (1 John 4:19). Love, not intellectual achievement, marks true knowledge of God.

Historical Context

Jewish theology emphasized God's election and covenant knowledge—God "knew" Abraham (Genesis 18:19), Israel (Amos 3:2), and Jeremiah before birth (Jeremiah 1:5). This covenantal knowing meant choosing, protecting, and claiming as His own. Paul corrects Greek philosophical notions of knowledge as intellectual attainment by anchoring it in divine initiative and relationship.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does shifting focus from "I know God" to "God knows me" change your spiritual security and humility?
2. What evidence in your life demonstrates that you love God—not just know about Him?
3. How does God's electing knowledge (choosing you first) fuel love for Him and others?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δέ	τις	ἀγαπᾷ	τὸν	θεόν	οὗτος	ἔγνωσται	ὑπ'
G1487	But	G5100	love	G3588	God	the same	is known	of
	G1161		G25		G2316	G3778	G1097	G5259

αὐτοῦ
him
G846

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 33:17 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

Nahum 1:7 (Parallel theme): The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

2 Timothy 2:19 (References God): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (Love): But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Galatians 4:9 (References God): But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Revelation 2:19 (Love): I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

James 1:12 (Love): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Jeremiah 1:5 (Parallel theme): Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

John 10:14 (Parallel theme): I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Psalms 1:6 (References God): For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

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