

When God Tells Us Why

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. **—1 Corinthians 13:12**

Not only will we be changed and able to look on the glorified Lord face-to-face, but something wonderful will also happen—God will tell us why. God wants to tell us why, far more than we even want to know. But the patience of God is extraordinary. He can wait. He wants us to know the answers to our questions, but He can wait.

Perhaps this appeals only to the person who is agonized with questions, who really longs for God to explain something. Perhaps the question is: Why is there a devil? Why didn't God just destroy the devil a long time ago? Why is there injustice? Why is there evil? But Paul says, "One day I shall know." F. F. Bruce has commented that the Greek word here, *epignosis*, should be translated as "understand." Some day God will make things plain.

Sometimes our questions are not on such a grand scale but are more personal: Did I make the right decision? Lord, have I been living out of Your will? Did I fail You? Paul is saying we see the Lord's glory only in a reflection, so we can't see things perfectly. The mirror that enables us to see ourselves has its limits: when we look at ourselves in a mirror, we do so with a little bit of bias.

God's Word is the spiritual mirror by which we see our hearts, but even here our self-understanding is limited; we will always be prone to self-righteousness and, therefore, be unable to see ourselves as we really are. Sometimes I will say, "Lord, show me." But if I saw my wickedness directly, I wouldn't be able to take it. If I saw the Lord's glory directly I would die. No one can see God and live.

And so God graciously reveals things to us a bit at a time, like peeling the layers off an onion. With each new bit of understanding we might ask why we had to wait so long to get it right.

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