

A close-up photograph of an olive branch with several green olives. The leaves are elongated and have a silvery-green hue. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light green. A dark green horizontal bar is overlaid on the lower part of the image, containing the text "Hearing God" in white serif font.

Hearing God

"Hearing God is less about straining to hear a distant voice and more about tuning our hearts to the gentle whispers of His presence in our lives."

King David heard from God:

1. Through prayer and worship: David was a man of prayer and worship, and he often poured out his heart to God through songs and psalms. Many of these psalms express his love for God, his trust in Him, and his desire to hear from Him.
2. Through prophetic revelation: God spoke to David through prophets such as Nathan, Gad, and Samuel. These prophets gave David messages from God, including promises of kingship and warnings of consequences for his actions.
3. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit: David relied on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to make important decisions. In Psalm 51, he prays for God to renew a right spirit within him, and in Psalm 139, he acknowledges that God has searched and known him intimately.
4. Through personal experience: David also had personal experiences of God's presence and guidance, such as when he was anointed as king by Samuel, or when he defeated Goliath with God's help.

Overall, David's relationship with God was characterized by faith, trust, and obedience. He sought God's guidance and direction in all areas of his life, and he was willing to repent and seek forgiveness when he fell short.

Hearing God: J.I. Packer

In *Hearing God*, Packer explores the topic of hearing God's voice and how we can cultivate a conversational relationship with Him. He begins by discussing the nature of God's communication and how He speaks to us through various means, including Scripture, prayer, circumstances, and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Packer then goes on to offer practical guidance for developing a deeper relationship with God, emphasizing the importance of prayer, meditation on Scripture, and cultivating a heart that is open and responsive to God's leading. He encourages readers to seek out mentors and spiritual advisors who can offer guidance and accountability in their spiritual journey.

Throughout the book, Packer stresses the importance of discernment and testing what we hear against biblical truth. He cautions against relying solely on our own subjective experiences or feelings, and instead encourages us to anchor our hearing of God's voice in the objective truth of Scripture.

Overall, *Hearing God* is a practical and insightful guide for those seeking to grow in their relationship with God and deepen their ability to hear His voice. Packer's approach is grounded in biblical truth and emphasizes the importance of both personal experience and objective truth in our spiritual journey.

Scripture references that support some of the key points in J.I. Packer's book *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*:

1. The nature of God's communication:
 - John 10:27: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."
 - Hebrews 1:1-2: "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."
 - Romans 10:17: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."
2. The importance of prayer and meditation on Scripture:
 - Psalm 119:105: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
 - Joshua 1:8: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."
 - Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
3. The importance of discernment:
 - 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."
 - Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

- James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

Some key phrases and quotes from J.I. Packer's book *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*:

1. "God has not gone silent. He still speaks through many means today, if we have ears to hear."
2. "Our listening and discerning faculties must be trained and cultivated, so that we are able to recognize God's voice and distinguish it from other voices that clamor for our attention."
3. "We must learn to distinguish between God's general will, as revealed in Scripture, and his particular will for our individual lives, as revealed through prayer, meditation, and the promptings of the Holy Spirit."
4. "Prayer is not just a one-way communication from us to God; it is also an opportunity for God to speak to us and for us to listen to him."
5. "To hear God's voice, we must be willing to surrender our own agendas and desires, and be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit."
6. "Discernment involves testing what we hear against biblical truth, and being willing to submit to correction and guidance from others in the body of Christ."
7. "Developing a conversational relationship with God requires persistence, patience, and a willingness to learn from both successes and failures."
8. "God's voice is not always loud or dramatic; often it comes in a still, small voice that we must be attentive to hear."

J.I. Packer (1926-2020) was a well-known and highly respected theologian and author, particularly in the area of Christian spirituality. He was born in England and studied at Oxford University, where he later served as a theology professor. He also taught at other institutions, including Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Packer was known for his clarity of thought and his ability to communicate complex theological concepts in a way that was accessible to a wide audience. He was a prolific author, writing over 50 books on a variety of theological topics. One of his most famous works is "Knowing God," which has been translated into numerous languages and has sold millions of copies worldwide.

In addition to his writing and teaching, Packer was also involved in various Christian organizations and served as an influential leader in the evangelical movement. He was a member of the Anglican Church and was involved in efforts to promote unity and cooperation among Christians from different denominations.

Throughout his life, Packer emphasized the importance of a deep and personal relationship with God, and he encouraged Christians to pursue this relationship through prayer, meditation on Scripture, and other spiritual disciplines. He passed away in July 2020 at the age of 93, leaving behind a legacy of faithful scholarship and a commitment to helping Christians grow in their understanding and experience of God.

Summary of *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer.

Knowing God is a book that explores the nature of God and the ways in which we can come to know him more deeply. The book is divided into three parts, each of which focuses on a different aspect of knowing God.

Part one emphasizes the importance of knowing God as he has revealed himself in Scripture. Packer argues that the Bible is the primary means by which we come to know God, and he encourages readers to immerse themselves in the study and meditation of God's Word.

Part two focuses on the character of God as revealed in Scripture. Packer explores various attributes of God, such as his sovereignty, love, justice, and mercy, and he emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating these attributes in order to have a fuller and more accurate picture of who God is.

Part three explores the practical implications of knowing God in our daily lives. Packer emphasizes the importance of living in light of the truth that God is for us, and he encourages readers to trust in God's goodness and faithfulness even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Throughout the book, Packer emphasizes the importance of a deep and personal relationship with God, and he encourages readers to pursue this relationship through prayer, meditation on Scripture, and other spiritual disciplines. By doing so, he believes that we can come to know God more fully and experience the joy and peace that come from a life lived in relationship with him.

Overall, *Knowing God* is a classic work of Christian spirituality that has been widely read and appreciated by Christians of various denominations.

Psychological Benefits to Knowing God

There are many potential psychological benefits to knowing God, and these benefits can vary depending on the individual and their particular experiences and circumstances. However, some possible benefits include:

1. **Sense of purpose and meaning:** Knowing God can provide a sense of purpose and meaning in life, as it can help individuals understand their place in the world and their relationship to something greater than themselves.
2. **Increased resilience and coping skills:** Faith in God can provide a source of comfort and strength during difficult times, helping individuals cope with stress and adversity.
3. **Reduced anxiety and depression:** Research suggests that faith can be a protective factor against anxiety and depression, possibly by providing a sense of hope and meaning.
4. **Increased sense of social support:** Religious communities can provide a sense of belonging and social support, which can be beneficial for mental health.
5. **Greater sense of forgiveness and compassion:** Knowing God can foster a sense of forgiveness and compassion towards oneself and others, which can promote healthier relationships and a more positive outlook on life.

Ignatian Way of Spirituality

There are some similarities between the potential psychological benefits of knowing God that I outlined and the Ignatian way of spirituality. The Ignatian way of spirituality is named after St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, and it emphasizes the importance of developing a personal relationship with God through prayer, meditation, and reflection on Scripture and one's own experiences.

One key aspect of Ignatian spirituality is the practice of discernment, which involves seeking to understand God's will for one's life through careful reflection and discernment of one's thoughts, feelings, and desires. This process can help individuals find a sense of purpose and direction in life, which can be a source of psychological benefit.

Similarly, the practice of prayer and reflection in Ignatian spirituality can provide a sense of comfort, strength, and resilience in the face of adversity, which is also a potential psychological benefit of knowing God. And, as with other forms of spirituality or religion, the sense of belonging and social support that can be found within a religious community can also be a benefit of the Ignatian way of spirituality.

However, it's important to note that while there may be some similarities between the psychological benefits of knowing God and the Ignatian way of spirituality, there are also many differences. For example, the Ignatian way of spirituality places a strong emphasis on the use of imagination and visualization in prayer and meditation, which may not be as prominent in other forms of spirituality. Additionally, individuals may have different experiences with and interpretations of the benefits of knowing God or practicing the Ignatian way of spirituality, depending on their own beliefs, experiences, and contexts.

C.S. Lewis on reading old books:

Yes, C.S. Lewis did mention the importance of reading old books in his writings. In his essay "On the Reading of Old Books," he argues that modern readers should not limit themselves to only reading contemporary books, but should also make an effort to read books from the past. He believed that old books have a timeless quality that can offer unique insights and perspectives that may not be found in more recent works.

Lewis believed that by reading books from different eras, readers can gain a better understanding of history, culture, and human nature. He also argued that reading old books can help to guard against the biases and blind spots that can result from only reading books from one's own time period.

One famous quote from Lewis about reading old books comes from his book "Athanasius: On the Incarnation of the Word," where he writes: "It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to every three new ones."

Overall, Lewis believed that reading old books is an important part of cultivating a well-rounded and informed perspective on the world.

Here are 5 or 6 old books that would be good for Christians to read today:

There are many old books that could be beneficial for Christians to read today, and the choice of which books to read may depend on one's particular interests and needs. However, here are six suggestions:

1. *The Confessions* by Augustine of Hippo (4th/5th century): This autobiographical work by one of the most influential Christian theologians in history is a deep exploration of faith, morality, and the human condition. Augustine's reflections on his own life and spiritual journey offer insights that are still relevant today.
2. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis (15th century): This devotional work is one of the most widely read Christian books of all time. It offers practical advice for living a Christian life, focusing on topics such as humility, self-discipline, and prayer.
3. *The Interior Castle* by Teresa of Avila (16th century): This mystical work by the Spanish Carmelite nun explores the stages of spiritual development and the process of union with God. It offers a unique perspective on prayer and contemplation that can be beneficial for Christians seeking to deepen their spiritual lives.
4. *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan (17th century): This allegorical novel tells the story of Christian's journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, and has been a beloved classic for centuries. It offers insights into the challenges and joys of the Christian life.
5. *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence (17th century): This short work by a French Carmelite monk offers practical advice for living a life

of constant awareness of God's presence. It emphasizes the importance of simple, everyday tasks as opportunities for spiritual growth.

6. *Orthodoxy* by G.K. Chesterton (20th century): While not as old as some of the other works on this list, this book by the famous English writer and thinker offers a unique defense of Christian belief and a critique of modern skepticism. Chesterton's wit and insight make this book a pleasure to read, and his arguments are still relevant today.

The page length of each of these books can vary depending on the edition and publisher, but here is an approximate page count for each:

1. *The Confessions* by Augustine of Hippo: This book is approximately 300 pages long, but can vary based on the edition and translation.
2. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis: This book is relatively short, with most editions around 150-200 pages.
3. *The Interior Castle* by Teresa of Avila: This book is approximately 250 pages long.
4. *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan: The length of this book can vary depending on the edition and whether it includes illustrations, but most editions are around 300-350 pages.
5. *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence: This book is quite short, with most editions around 50-75 pages.
6. *Orthodoxy* by G.K. Chesterton: This book is approximately 200-250 pages long.

Book Summaries:

1. *The Confessions* by Augustine of Hippo: This book is an autobiographical account of Augustine's life, including his early years, his conversion to Christianity, and his eventual rise to become Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. Throughout the book, Augustine reflects on his spiritual journey and offers insights into the nature of God, the human condition, and the relationship between faith and reason.
2. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis: This devotional work offers practical advice for living a Christian life. It is divided into four sections: "Admonitions Useful for a Spiritual Life," "Admonitions Leading to Inner Life," "Internal Consolation," and "An Invitation to Holy Communion." The book emphasizes the importance of humility, self-discipline, and prayer, and offers guidance on topics such as dealing with temptation, practicing gratitude, and seeking God's will.
3. *The Interior Castle* by Teresa of Avila: This book is a mystical exploration of the stages of spiritual development and the process of union with God. Teresa compares the soul to a castle with many rooms, and describes the various obstacles and challenges that must be overcome in order to progress through the castle and achieve union with God. The book emphasizes the importance of prayer, self-examination, and surrender to God's will.
4. *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan: This allegorical novel tells the story of Christian, a pilgrim who journeys from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Along the way, Christian encounters a variety of characters and obstacles that symbolize the

challenges and joys of the Christian life. The book emphasizes the importance of faith, perseverance, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

5. *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence: This short work offers practical advice for living a life of constant awareness of God's presence. Brother Lawrence, a French Carmelite monk, emphasizes the importance of finding joy in simple, everyday tasks and seeing them as opportunities for spiritual growth. The book emphasizes the importance of humility, obedience, and constant prayer.
6. *Orthodoxy* by G.K. Chesterton: This book is a defense of Christian belief and a critique of modern skepticism. Chesterton argues that the Christian worldview offers a more coherent and satisfying explanation of reality than any other worldview, and that modern skepticism has left many people without a firm foundation for their beliefs. The book is written with Chesterton's characteristic wit and humor, and is as entertaining as it is thought-provoking.

Film or YouTube videos:

While there are no full-length films or YouTube videos of these books, there are adaptations, summaries, and videos discussing the ideas presented in them. Here are a few examples:

1. *Confessions of St. Augustine* (2011): This film adaptation of Augustine's *Confessions* is a modern interpretation of the text. It is not a direct adaptation of the book, but rather uses the book as inspiration for a modern-day story.
2. *The Imitation of Christ* (2020): This is a film adaptation of Thomas a Kempis' book that offers a dramatization of the book's themes and ideas. It features actors reading from the book, interspersed with scenes that illustrate the ideas presented.
3. *The Interior Castle* (2018): This is a short film adaptation of Teresa of Avila's book that offers a visual interpretation of the book's themes and ideas. It features a voiceover reading from the book, accompanied by imagery that represents the interior journey of the soul.
4. *The Pilgrim's Progress* (2019): This is a modern-day animated adaptation of Bunyan's book. It follows the story of Christian as he journeys from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, and is aimed at younger audiences.
5. *The Practice of the Presence of God* (2021): This is a short video that summarizes Brother Lawrence's book and offers practical advice on how to apply its ideas to

daily life. It is produced by the BibleProject, a non-profit organization that produces videos and other resources to help people engage with the Bible.

6. *Orthodoxy by G.K. Chesterton* (2016): This is a video series that offers a chapter-by-chapter summary and analysis of Chesterton's book. The series is produced by the YouTube channel "The Better Samaritan," which features videos on a variety of topics related to Christian thought and practice.

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