

WHO TO KNOW

“Oh, that we might know the LORD! Let us press on to know him! Then he will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn...” Hosea 6:3 (NLT)

The psychological area of life deals with the mind, will, and emotions. We call this area the “soul.” The New Testament word for “soul” comes from the Greek word “psuche.” In fact the term “psychology,” the study of the mind, will, and emotions, comes from this word.

We refer to the *mind* as what you think; the *will* as what you choose, and the *emotions* as your feelings. What you think, the way you choose, and how you feel are important because they affect every area of your life.

How would you describe your life? Would you say that you are enjoying life or are you miserable? Is life overwhelming or do you have everything under control?

Most people believe that if they could just eliminate the negative circumstances in their life, they would be happy.

- Q1.** Have you tried to eliminate all of your negative circumstances? Explain.

The fact is you will never be able to eliminate all your problems.

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."
John 16:33 (NLT)

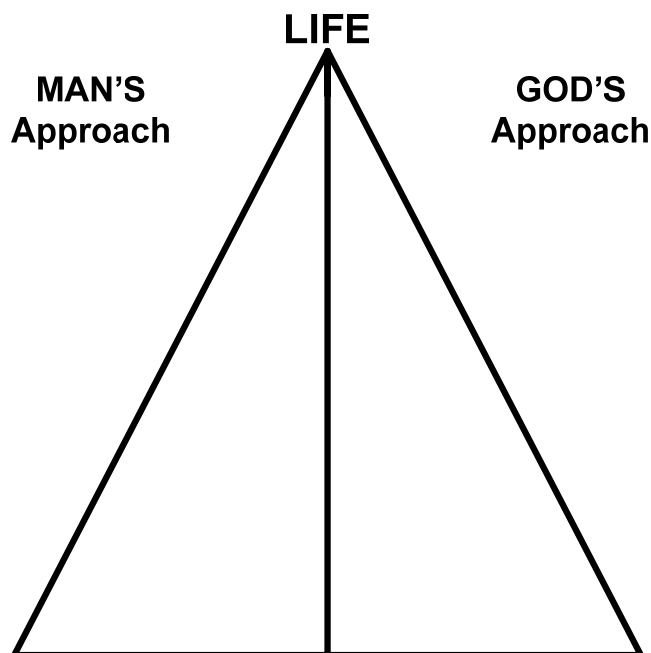
Since you can't eliminate all of your negative circumstances, what does it take to get through them? This chapter covers how you can be mentally and emotionally equipped to deal with life.

Two Approaches

There are two approaches to knowing how to deal with life – man's approach and God's approach.

Both approaches agree that to be mentally and emotionally equipped, requires a proper foundation. However, each approach is totally different in terms of what that foundation should be.

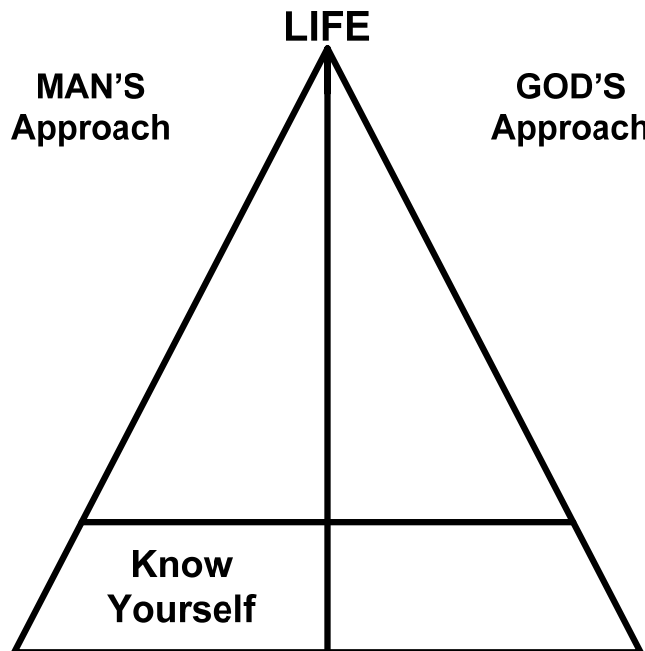
Life is shown at the top of the following diagram. The line down the middle of the triangle shows the division between the two approaches.



There is an old expression that says, "It's not *what* you know that helps you most in life. It's *who* you know." Who do you need to know to succeed in life?

Man's Approach

This diagram illustrates the foundation of man's approach is to **know yourself**.



Q2. Who are you? Write a few words to describe yourself.

Know Yourself

Man's approach presumes that understanding yourself is the first step to understanding how to deal with life. This approach says, "You need to understand why you think the way you think, feel the way you feel, and act the way you act."

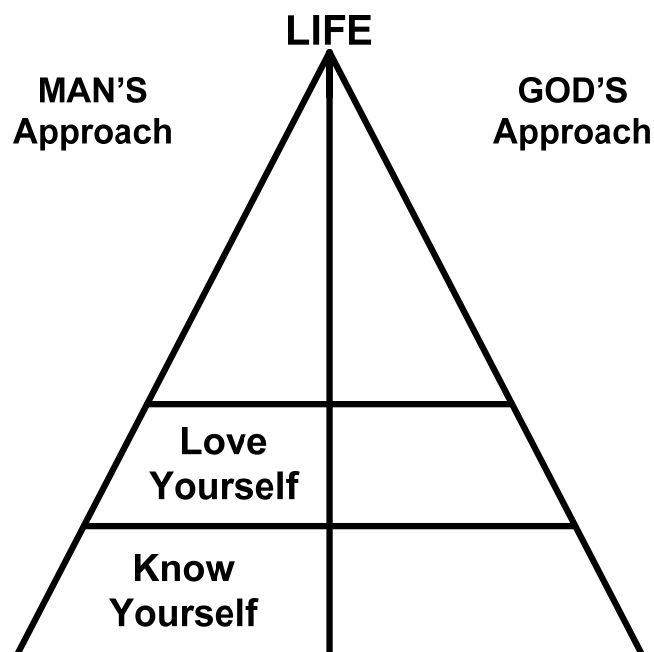
Man's approach attaches labels to you that describe your past, your behavior, and your personality. For example: You are a victim, an addict or a perfectionist. These labels could describe you for the rest of your life.

Q3. How much time do you spend thinking about yourself?

Q4. Has life gotten better as a result of thinking about yourself?

Love Yourself

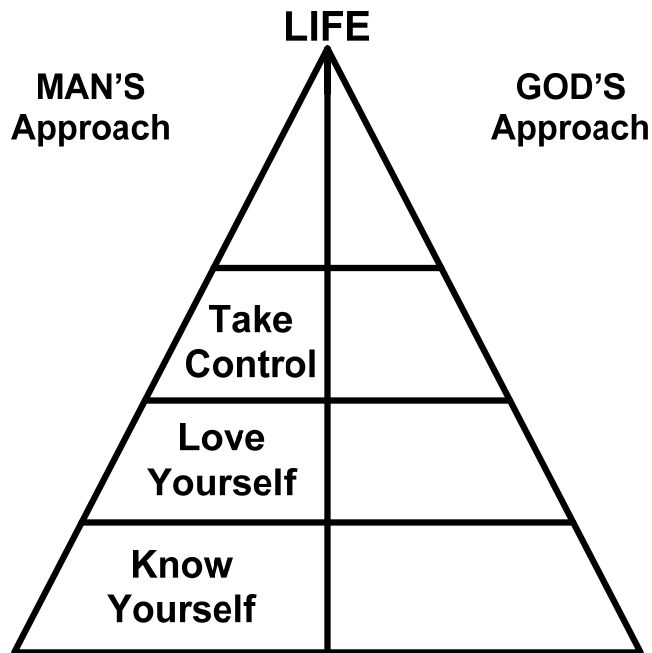
The next step in man's approach to dealing with life is learning to **love yourself**. Once you know who you are, you need to embrace who you are. This approach may include the following thinking: "You need to believe in yourself and accept yourself. Stop punishing yourself. If you don't love yourself, you will allow people to take advantage of you. You should focus on what is good about yourself."



Q5. Have you been trying to love yourself more? Has life gotten better?

Take Control

After you learn to love yourself, man's approach encourages you to **take control** of your life. "You have to start controlling your situations, your future, and getting your needs met. You can do it. You have the power inside you." For example, if you have trouble with anger, you need to stay away from anything that makes you angry.



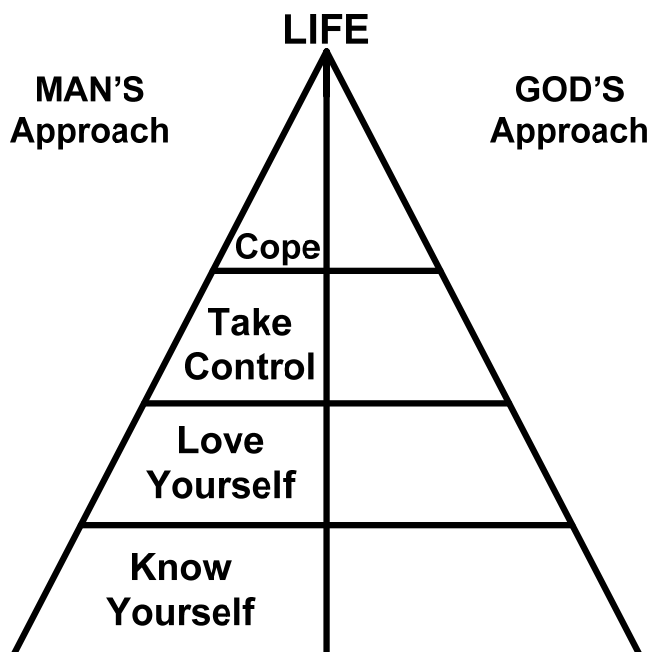
This approach encourages you to figure out what and who should be in your life and keep everything and everyone else out. You need to protect yourself.

- Q6.** What are the *circumstances* you think need to change before you have your life under control?
- Q7.** Who are the *people* you think you need to get out of your life before you can be happy?
- Q8.** Have you tried this strategy? How is it working for you?

Man's approach presumes that if you know yourself well enough, you will understand why you do what you do. After you understand who you are, you must learn to love yourself. Loving yourself gives you the confidence you need to control your life.

Cope

The end result of following man's approach is that you will be able to **cope** with the circumstances in your life.



Q9. Have you been successful at coping with your life circumstances?

Q10. Are you enjoying your life? Explain.

The problem with man's approach is that it is self-focused. This kind of self-focused love leads to unhealthy behavior and the Bible warns against it.

"For people will love only themselves...They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control; they will be cruel and have no interest in what is good...You must stay away from people like that." 2 Timothy 3:2–3, 5 (NLT)

If you've been following man's approach to dealing with life, you are being cheated out of a better way.

"Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world, and not from Christ." **Colossians 2:8** (NLT)

God's Approach

God's approach to dealing with life doesn't begin with thinking more about yourself and getting to know who you are; it begins with knowing who He is. When you learn about yourself, you discover you are not so great; but when you learn about God, you discover He is wonderful.

"Let not the wise man gloat in his wisdom, or the mighty man in his might, or the rich man in his riches. Let them boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who is just and righteous, whose love is unfailing..." **Jeremiah 9:23–24** (NLT)

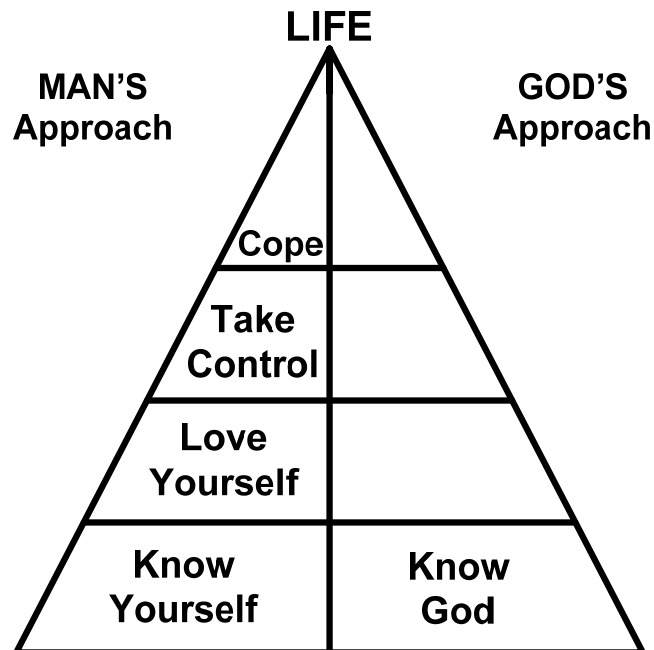
Know God

The Bible says knowing God is the first step to knowing anything else.

"Fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in understanding." **Proverbs 9:10** (NLT)

Since God created life, knowing Him is the best foundation for dealing with life.

"Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak." **Isaiah 40:28–29** (NLT)



When you get to know God, you discover that He has the power to help you in every circumstance of your life.

You can get to know God by talking and listening to Him and by reading or hearing His Word.

Q11. How much time do you spend getting to know God?

Know God's Love

As mentioned earlier in this lesson, man's approach to dealing with life is for you to love yourself. Man has figured out the fact that you *need* to be loved. However, your love is limited and always changing. The good news is there is Someone Who loves you infinitely more than you can love yourself and He never changes.

"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."

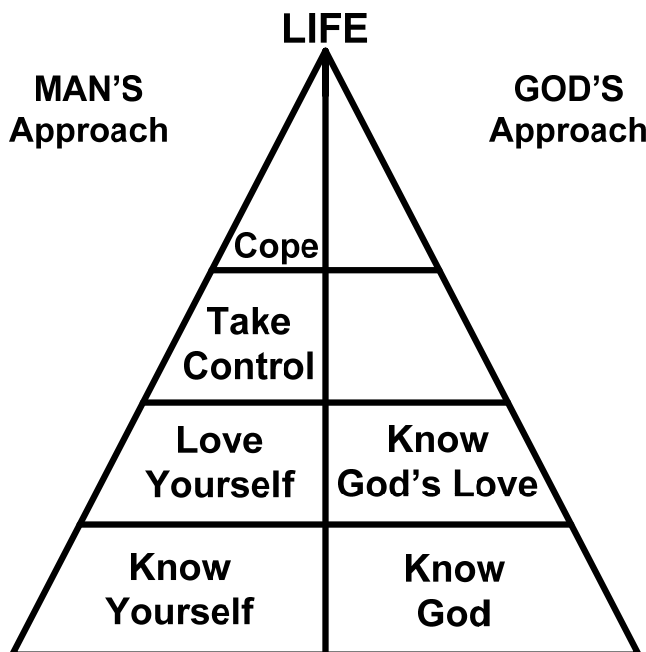
Romans 5:8 (NLT)

Jesus was willing to be humiliated, rejected, and crucified for you. There is only one reason for His sacrificial behavior. He is in love with you. God loves you now and He always will. Even your sin, no matter how big it is, isn't bigger than God's love.

Q12. Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins?

If you believe that Jesus died for your sin and have received Him into your life, then you are God's child.

*"But as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** in His name." **John 1:12** (NKJ)*



Man gives you *labels* based on your past, your behavior or your failures. God sets you free from man's labels. God gives you the *identity* of "His child" when you are born again. Can any identity be more important than that one? That identity has the power to override any label the world has given you.

"Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious, insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ."
Colossians 3:11 (MSG)

God's love for you is so great that *nothing* can keep His love away.

*“And I am convinced that **nothing can ever separate us from his love**. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away.”* **Romans 8:38** (NLT)

Your troubles today or tomorrow can't separate you from God's love. God wants you to know and believe He loves you.

Q13. What does it mean to you that God loves you?

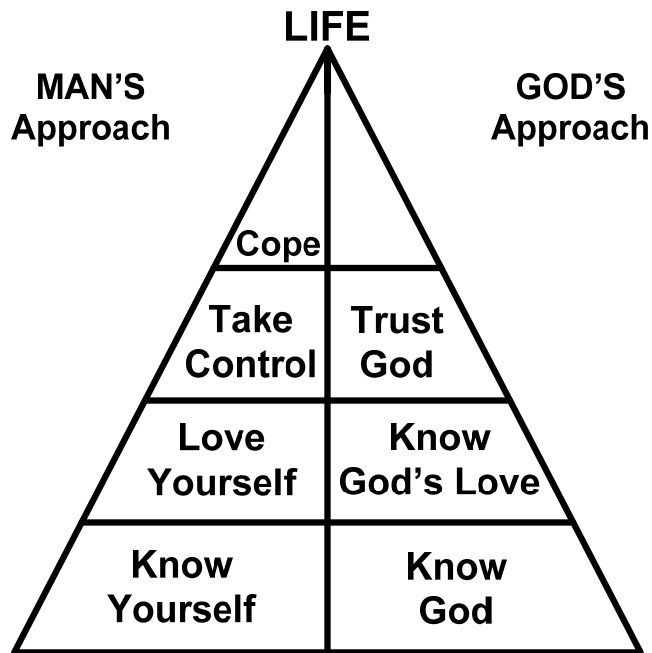
Q14. Have you had an experience that caused you to doubt God's love for you? Explain.

“If you are really wise, you'll think this over – it's time you appreciated God's deep love.” **Psalms 107:43** (MSG)

Trust God

Man's approach says you need to take control of your life; God's approach says you need to trust His control. You trust God because He loves you. He can take care of you much better than you can take care of yourself.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’” **Jeremiah 29:11** (NLT)



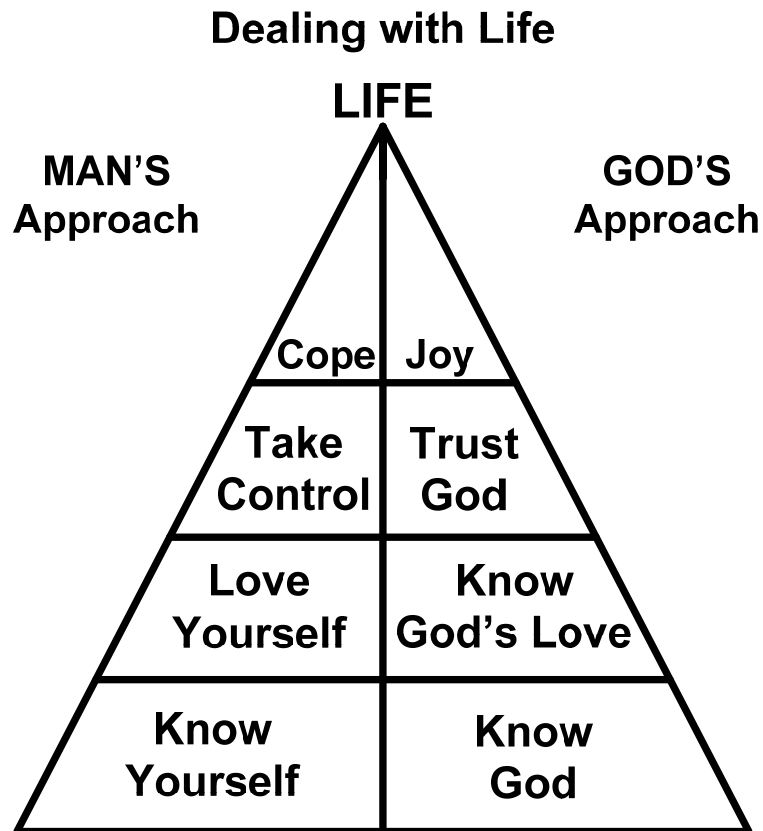
Q15. What would it take for you to trust God in every area of your life?

Joy

The exciting news is that when you trust God because you know Him and know how much He loves you, you can have **joy** in spite of any troubles in your life.

*"I am overcome with **joy** because of your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul."* **Psalms 31:7** (NLT)

Joy, contentment, and peace are outcomes that man's approach never achieves.



The Challenge

God created life. Doesn't it make sense that He knows best how to live it?

God loves you. How can you love yourself as much as He does?

God promises to take care of you. How can you take care of yourself as well as He can?

Many brilliant people have promoted man's approach to dealing with life but God's approach is wiser than any human plan.

"So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made them all look foolish and has shown their wisdom to be useless nonsense. This 'foolish' plan of God is far wiser than the wisest of human plans..." 1 Corinthians 1:20, 25 (NLT)

Talk to God and tell Him you want to know Him and His love for you. Decide to trust God and start enjoying life.

Dealing with Life

Diagram

Notes

