



Reformation Ministries

Stephen N. Johnson

“I STAND, I STAND IN AWE OF YOU”

Mark Altrogge’s magnificent song of fervent adoration, “I Stand in Awe,” says,

Who can grasp Your infinite wisdom?

Who can fathom the depth of Your love?

Two questions worthy of consideration.

Infinite means without limits. God’s wisdom and love are infinite, without limits, and impossible to fathom. Because God Himself is an infinite being, everything about Him is infinite. There are no limits to His wisdom, knowledge, power, presence, etc.

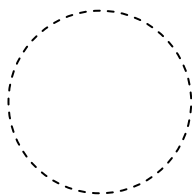
The reason we can know our God at all is that He has chosen to make Himself known. The theologians call this “revelation.” We can know about God only because He has freely chosen to reveal Himself to us in nature, in Scripture, and ultimately and supremely through Jesus of Nazareth. (See John 1:1-18.)

While there is much that we can understand about our infinite, self-revealing God, our knowledge and understanding are enormously limited. Paul acknowledges this in 1 Corinthians 13:9,12 “For we know in part and . . . now we see in a mirror dimly.” And in Romans 11:33-36 “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (“Unfathomable” literally means, “not to be tracked out.” Similar to the trackless immensity of the heavens, God’s ways are beyond human discovery.) For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him, through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Though this infinite God has revealed Himself to us, finite humans (not even to speak of sinful humans and thus twisted, distorted, prejudiced, and blind), can grasp only a minute, infinitesimal part of our infinite God.

Let me depict this graphically. This circle at right represents the totality of God’s being and all that He is. (A solid line indicates limits and the point I am trying to make that God is without limits. The dotted line is my attempt to get beyond the image of limits. Work with me here!) So, this unlimited circle, *larger than the known universe*, represents the totality of all that God is.

Now, how much of the whole circle do we understand, or how much of God do we understand? Is our knowledge of God like a slice of the pie?



No. That is too much—far too much to represent our limited understanding of the infinite God. The circle below is better. (Do you see the little dot in lower left of the circle?)

That is how much we know. That tiny dot in a circle larger than the known universe represents our knowledge of God compared to the totality of our infinite God

Why is this important? Since God is without limits, *all His qualities, and attributes are without limits.*

Who can fathom the depth of His love? No one. His love for us is infinite—greater than we can comprehend. Who can fathom the depth of His mercy or kindness or forgiveness or goodness or any of God’s attributes? None! All are infinite, unfathomable, and we will never be able to *understand* or *experience* all the love, mercy, kindness, etc. that God has for us.

How much of God’s love do we understand or experience compared to how much God loves us? Look at the dot. How much of God’s grace, forgiveness, kindness, goodness, mercy, etc. do we comprehend compared to all that God has for us? It is dot size! His love and grace for us are infinite, greater than the universe, and far *greater than our capacity to ever understand or experience it all*. However much of the love of God you understand or experience, it is infinitesimal compared to all the infinite love God has for you. What you know and experience is dot size compared to the infinite love God has for you.

All language about God is analogy. Our understanding of God’s love is limited by our understanding and experience of human love—always flawed and often conditional. Yet the analogy of flawed human love is the only context we have to understand God’s love.

But God’s love is neither flawed nor conditional. Along with being infinite, God’s love is perfect love. No limits. No conditions. No flaws. And the entire life of Jesus reveals this perfect and limitless love, and He reveals that this love is for you.

No wonder Mark Altrogge wrote,

*Holy God to whom all praise is due,
I stand in awe of You.*

Amen.

Grace to you.

