

Why we'll never find God on our own – he must reveal himself to us

Those who aren't curious may have a high opinion of themselves and their ability to figure life out. But what if they can't? What if life is inscrutable, what if God is inaccessible unless he chooses to reveal himself? It's a shock to know we're not able to find God on our own. God must reveal himself to us.

We haven't this ability because biblically we're **dead**. *Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. (Eph 2.1)* The probable response would be, *I'm not dead! I'm very much alive!* But we are, as you can show* using a rock, a cabbage, a ball and a cat.

A **rock** has no life – a given. It's wet by the rain, warmed by the sun, but stays inert. It's dead to the ground it's on, dead to the air surrounding it. It interacts with nothing. Can't move, can't feel emotion, doesn't work or play. It's dead.

A **cabbage** is different. It's beside the rock but alive in ways the rock isn't. It's alive to the sun and the soil. The same rain that wets the rock makes the cabbage grow. The cabbage is alive. However, the cabbage is dead in other ways. Like the rock, it can't travel on its own. It has no emotion. A cabbage can't hear a song, can't appreciate the lyrics. If a tennis ball falls beside it what happens? Nothing. Both the cabbage and the rock are dead to the ball.

A **cat** sauntering by is alive in ways the rock and cabbage aren't. The cat can smell the ball, swat it with her paw, play with it. It's alive to the ball like the cabbage isn't. The cat's alive in other ways. It can run and jump and climb trees. Chase mice. Express emotion (not as much as a dog does perhaps...) It's much more alive than the cabbage. Still, a cat is dead in other ways. It can't appreciate poetry. If you read a poem to a cat, what happens? Nothing! The cat is as dead to it as the

rock and cabbage would be. Even if the cat concentrated and listened carefully, it's no use. It's still dead to poetry.

But **we're** not! Imagine someone reading the same poem to us. We're so affected we leap up and dance. We weep, we're touched so deeply. The rock and cabbage and cat can't experience this at all. They're dead to poetry but we're not. We're alive to poetry in other ways. We can compose a tune and sing the poem as lyrics. Our creativity may impact others around us. They weep or dance as they get affected by the song. We're alive to poetry in ways the cat, cabbage and rock will never be.

Could there be something we humans might be dead to? The rock is dead to everything. The cabbage is dead to ball-playing, the cat to poetry. **Could we be dead to something too?**

God's word says *Yes*. We're dead to a higher level of being called *eternal life*. We can't access this different kind of living, can't connect to God on our own. We're dead to his voice, just like the rock is dead to a song. We can't hear his call to us. We're dead to his Dream, unless he chooses to reveal himself to us.

Use this illustration to help those who aren't curious realize the dilemma they're in. They don't know God and can't know him unless he helps them. They're cut off from the new life Jesus gives.

**derived from Dallas Willard's Knowing Christ Today.*