



Knowing Jesus or Just Knowing *About* Jesus

Do you know Jesus, the resurrected Lord, through a personal relationship with Him; *OR* do you merely know facts about Him? The difference is as profound as living with a person you love versus relating to that person only through a photograph.

When people are spiritually born into the family of God (John 3:3), they receive eternal life (John 3:16) but do not realize all there is to learn in a relationship with Christ. One's spiritual birth is the first step of a rewarding journey of a lifetime walk with Jesus (Colossians 2:6-7).

One's spiritual growth is indicated in the meaning of eternal life, which is "knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). This "knowing" is not mere intellectual knowledge or a recitation of "God facts," but emphasizes increased understanding of God the Father that is acquired through a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit (John 14: 9, 16-18).

Full and complete Truth found in Christ will only be realized when we see Him face to face. We can and should, however, grow in our present understanding of who Jesus is and, especially, how His life, crucifixion, and resurrection impact daily life. Like the Apostle Paul, a follower of Christ longs to truly know Jesus (Philippians 3:7-8). A believer will also echo Paul's words, "I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

How can a believer live as Galatians 2:20 indicates? A believer's intellectual and experiential knowledge of Jesus corresponds with the input that comes from a diligent study *and* practice of the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2-3). Input from the Word that is illumined by the Holy Spirit will not only increase one's "book learning" but will also result in a growing dependence on the living Lord. This relationship keeps one's attention fixed on Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith (Hebrews 12:1-2).

By God's grace, followers of Christ are to grow past mere intellectual "Jesus facts" and rote-oriented "doctrinal perspectives" that do not translate into experiential Christianity. Instead, maturing disciples of Christ will become enamored and enraptured with knowing — really knowing — Jesus.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

John 3:3, Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Colossians 2:6-7, Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

John 14:9, 16-18, Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" . . . "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

Philippians 3:7-8, But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord . . .

2 Timothy 2:15, Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Hebrews 5:12-14, For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

1 Peter 2:2-3, Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Hebrews 12:1-2, Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.