

Seven Truths About Knowing God

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Much is often taught about the importance of having a “personal relationship” with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Believers frequently contrast the terms “religion” and “relationship” when explaining the difference between that which is merely outward and formal, and that which is spiritual and true. The idea of having a “personal relationship” with God is never explained in those exact terms in the Bible. What the Bible does speak of, repeatedly and plainly, is the importance of *knowing* God through Jesus Christ.

The following truths from Scripture should help you begin to understand why knowing God is so vitally important, and what it actually entails.

Knowing God *IS* eternal life. Those who know Him have eternal life, and those who don’t, don’t. As Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3). Life is a relationship.



Knowing God is more valuable than anything on earth. You may be happy with your job, your financial status, your influence, your possessions, your education, and many other things, but these things will be worthless once your life on earth is over. Knowing God, on the other hand, carries eternal value. As the Lord said to Jeremiah, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty boast of His might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me” (Jer. 9:23-24).

Knowing God means hearing and following Jesus. Those who come to know God through Jesus Christ also agree with what He said concerning truth and righteousness. Furthermore, they love to obey His commands. Jesus said this Himself in John 10: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27). “A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers” (John 10:5). John later addressed those who claim to have a personal relationship with Jesus yet live in ungodliness: “The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in Him” (1 John 2:4).

Knowing God begins with God. Just as a hoisted sail cannot make the wind blow, religious effort alone cannot make you know God. God must disclose Himself to you if you are to come to know Him. Jesus made this clear when He said, “No one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him (Matt. 11:27). Jesus said the same about Himself: “No one can come to Me unless the

Father who sent Me draws him (John 6:44). God is the one who determines who will know Him and have a “personal relationship” with His Son.

Knowing God never happens accidentally. God is sovereign, disclosing Himself to whomever He will, but He also has ordained to reveal Himself through certain means. The person who diligently pursues God via those means (namely, the study of God’s Word and humble prayer) is the one who will be rewarded with the knowledge of God. “He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

Knowing God is the source of everlasting pleasure. The initial “discovery” of God may seem like a man finding a narrow vein of gold as he chips away in a rocky mine, but only a fool would stop digging at this first discovery. The “vein of gold” that is the knowledge of God gets broader, richer, and more pleasurable the deeper you dig, and it continues to get better for eternity. As the psalmist wrote to God, “In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures *forever*” (Psalm 16:11. emphasis added).

Knowing God won’t seem as great as it really is until it is experienced. People who have never seen the Grand Canyon in person often have difficulty understanding the passion of those who have been there. The canyon is not truly “known” when it is merely described or viewed in photographs. It must be seen and experienced *in person* to have its full effect. “What’s the big deal about knowing God?” you might be asking. “I know and believe the facts about Him in the Bible, but I can’t see why you find Him so thrilling.” It is only because you have not seen Him or known Him that you say this. Those who have truly seen Him and know Him cannot stop thinking and learning about Him. Only they can honestly say with Paul, “God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6).

You *must* come to know this glorious God. No other pursuit on earth even comes close to comparing in terms of importance and reward. Here are three ways for you to move toward the best possible future:

Read the Bible searchingly and expectantly, like a man digging for gold in a place where he knows it can be found, and where others have already discovered it.

Pray desperately, like a person drifting in total darkness toward Niagara Falls, not knowing when the terrifying drop (that is, your death) will occur.

Guard your heart carefully. The enemy of souls would love for you to be distracted away from your pursuit of God by lesser things—things you may enjoy now, but will despise in hell.