

1 John – God is Love: Week Four

What it Means to Know God

Day Two: How to Truly Know God

Read 1 John 4:6-8

There are several references to knowing God in Chapter Four. Such as:

- v. 2 By this you KNOW the Spirit of God...
- v. 6 He who KNOWS God listens to us...
- v.7 Everyone who loves is born of God and KNOWS God.
- v.8 The one who does not love does not KNOW God..

We can understand from these verses and others in 1 John, that truly knowing God is something that is possible. But, we also need to realize that we cannot hope to know God, unless He chooses to reveal Himself to us, and although we may know Him, we will only know Him in part. After all, we are talking about the God of the Universe, the Almighty, Eternal Creator of all things, the One who upholds all things by the Word of His power. We aren't really in His league!!!

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways”, declares the Lord, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts”. Isaiah 55:8-9

Jesus said, *“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:24*

So, in our quest to truly know God, let's consider six important points.

I. God Reveals Himself to those He chooses.

Our God has chosen to reveal Himself throughout Scripture. Look up the following verses and fill in the blanks.

1. **Genesis 35:7** So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. He built an altar there, and called the place El-Bethel, because there _____
_____ when he fled from his brother.

2. **Deuteronomy 29:29** The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the _____ belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

3. **Daniel 2:19-23** Then the mystery was _____ to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; Daniel said, “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who _____ the profound and _____ things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.

4. **Matthew 11:25,27b** At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have _____ to infants... No one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and _____ to whom the Son wills to _____ Him.

The Apostle Philip asked Jesus at the Last Supper, to show them the Father.

Read John 14:6-10

God is a spirit, so we won't know Him according to the flesh. So what provision did God the Father make, so that He could reveal Himself to us – based on John 14:6-10?

Read Colossians 1:15-18

According to this passage in Colossians, which things did the Father place under the control of His Son?

We will truly know the Father when we know His Son, Jesus. And we can know Jesus and the Father, as He chooses to be revealed to us.

John gives us more insight into those that God chooses to reveal Himself.

Read 1 John 2:3-4

How does John tell us we can come to know Him? _____

II. The one who keeps His commandments will come to know Him.

We know that our eternal salvation is based on God's gift of grace, not our works. Jesus died in our place – He is the Propitiation for our sins. Yet, John is telling us that it is possible to grow and mature in our knowledge of God, so that we may come to know God, by keeping His commandments. This is a deeper spiritual relationship that God is offering to us. John tells us that those who really want to be in fellowship with God, and to know the fullness of joy, can do so. This is why he is writing this letter! The writer of Hebrews speaks of the need for us to encourage each other so that we are not "*hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*". Unfortunately, there are many who have been deceived.

*"Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God, but **encourage one another day after day**, as long as it is still called "Today," so that **none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin**. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." Hebrews 3:12-14*

We are told by the writer of Hebrews that not all those who confess to be believers in Jesus Christ will be willing and obedient. Sometimes those who truly want to know Christ and follow Him, feel like they are a minority, even among fellow Christians. Have you ever felt like that? _____

The writer of Hebrews also said this, “*Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God...*” Hebrews 6:1

Those of us who have placed our lives in God’s holy hands, and have responded “Yes, Lord”, to our Lord’s loving call, must also be willing to follow Him by keeping His commandments.

III. No one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

Read 1 John 3:6

What does sin prevent from happening? _____

(Remember that John told us how to deal with our sin in Chapter 1:8-9)

Read Romans 6:5-11

When we make Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives, He commands us to also give Him the control. That means that we no longer walk after the pattern of the world as we did formerly, before we knew Jesus. Now, we humbly place Him on the throne of our hearts, and we offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice. To be a disciple of Jesus is to be united with Him in the “*likeness of His death*”, so that we will also be “*in the likeness of His resurrection*”. It’s in the dying to the flesh, and all that is of the flesh, that we begin to know God. “*He who has died is freed from sin.*”

Dying isn’t easy, is it? God wants us to willingly choose His path, the path of the cross, taking up our own cross by choosing to obey God even if it means suffering for righteousness’ sake.

Jesus said, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.*” John 12:24-25

When Jesus talks about loving or hating our lives, He means that we will cling to our own selfish desires if we love our life and be willing to let go of them if we hate our life. It is a matter of choosing Jesus and His will over our own. Someone who “loves his life” will not love others. Someone who “hates his life” will love others and put others needs ahead of their own. It means to deny the flesh at every opportunity for Jesus’ sake. A true disciple of Christ will follow Him even when it’s hard.

Read 1 John 3:2-3

John tells us that when Jesus appears, we will be like Him! We will see Him just as He is. Then He says that everyone who has this hope fixed on Jesus will have the same reaction.

What will the reaction be, for those who have “this hope”? _____

Read Matthew 5:8

Finish writing the verse here: Blessed are the _____ for they shall

Purity is another word for holiness, or righteousness. We need to be cleansed of all impurities. God will forgive us, if we ask Him to. But you must be willing to purify your mind and your heart.

IV. We have an anointing from the Holy One.

Read 1 John 2:20, 27, 3:24, 4:13

Who is the Helper that will help us to keep God’s commandments? _____

Let’s keep in mind that we have been equipped with everything that we need to keep His commandments. First, our sins have been forgiven (assuming we have repented), and we have our Intercessor and Advocate, Jesus Christ. Secondly, we have our Helper, the Holy Spirit.

*Jesus said, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the **Helper** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you...I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, **He will guide you** into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and **He will disclose to you** what is to come.” John 16:7, 12-13*

And the Holy Spirit Himself also intercedes for us. (Romans 8:26-27) With these two (The Son and the Spirit) interceding for us, we are more than able to handle anything! Amen?

V. Do not love the world or the things in the world.

Read 1 John 2:15-17, 3:8, 13, and 4:3

If we continue to love the world – and the things in the world, we will never truly know God. Jesus told us that He has overcome the world. To follow Jesus means to go the opposite direction from the world. The world feeds our flesh. It caters to our selfish pride. Think about the magazines and commercials, etc. that cater to the “*lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.*” Anything that is of the world system (under the control of the devil himself) must not have a place in our hearts. God wants us to be led by the Spirit. We need to feed our spirit with spiritual food - the Word of God, so that we will be strong in the Lord, not strong in the flesh.

What comes to mind when you think about the world and how the devil tries to deceive us by catering to our flesh? Give examples.

Read Romans 12:1-2

If we want to prove what the will of God is, what are we **not** to do? _____

What are we to do, if we want to prove what the will of God is? _____

Jesus came to earth to teach us a better way to live. He laid down His life. By giving up His life, Jesus taught us that our eternal reward for any suffering we go through, will be well worth it! This life is temporary. Life with God is forever. Jesus gave promises “*to Him who overcomes*”. This means overcoming sin and overcoming the flesh and its dominion over us. (See Revelation 2:11, 17, 26-27, 3:5, 12, and 21.)

*“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were **born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**” John 1:12-13*

VI. The one who keeps His commandment to love knows God.

Read 1 John 4:7

The great commandment that sums up all the others is this: Love God and love one another.

Hopefully by now, you have come to understand that if you truly want to know God, you must learn to walk in love. John repeats himself a lot, doesn't he? I think he does that so that we can't miss it!

When you or I think we know someone, we think of what we know about them. We might know their name, what they look like, their address, their hobbies, their work, etc. God – who is a spirit – is known by the Spirit that dwells in Him. His love can be seen through His actions. The Father's thoughts toward you are full of love, because He doesn't allow any thoughts into His mind that are not a reflection of love.

So, if you and I want to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, so that our joy will be complete, then we must love each other and love God. This is going to take some practice isn't it? We can easily love the people that are loveable, but what about those who are difficult? Yes, we must love them too! It means that we are going to respond differently than most other people. We will be more humble – not insisting on our own way. When we love others more than we love ourselves, people take notice. It isn't natural. And God is glorified through us. Don't worry! God will help you, if you turn your heart toward Him with all humility.

Is it possible to know God? Yes, it is. With God all things are possible!

Take some time to pray about the many Scripture verses we studied today. I know this was a lot of work. Just know that you are feeding your spirit with God's Word, and you are learning to walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son. What could be more important?

*“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding
**so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true,
in His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 5:20a***