

N U R T U R E
F A I T H
with
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January 28, 2018

How to Know God Better

READ: Colossians 1:10 (Common English Bible)

“...growing in the knowledge of God.”

REFLECT:

John Leith, theologian and teacher of the faith, once told me in a personal conversation, that the single greatest threat to the vitality of the Christian church is amnesia – the failure of the typical church member to remember the most rudimentary content of the Bible. Increasingly, those who self-identify as followers of Jesus Christ have no intentional and regular plan for reading the Old and New Testament. Yet, there remains no substitute for strengthening our grip of spiritual matters and personally contributing to a fresh and robust witness of the Christian faith. The Bible must be read regularly by God’s people for spiritual transformation.

Growth in the knowledge of God always begins with stillness. That is one of the non-negotiable conditions of knowledge of any subject. Stillness, as modeled by Jesus, is not necessarily the opposite of noise and tumult, though neither contributes to thoughtful reflection. Rather, stillness is slowing down, withdrawing from the routine of life, and turning one’s focus to one thing. The four gospels record Jesus regularly “withdrawing” from his disciples and other people to turn his attention to God alone. If we want to know more of God – indeed, to know God better – we must relax the strain of constant daily demands that are placed upon us and read God’s word.

Experiencing God deeply, as a reality in our lives, increases as we read the biblical witness of God’s mighty acts upon God’s people. Through the pages of scripture we hear God whispering, “I am with you!” But there is more. As we penetrate the stories of the Bible and listen to their claim upon us, we also hear an invitation: “Are you willing to be with me; to live into a relationship with me?” The biblical witness is always calling to us, imploring us to turn away from choices that ultimately result in our disappointment, injury or death. Attention to God in the pages of the Bible impacts the decisions we make each day. Measure upon measure we discover that we not only know God better. Our lives are changed.

As we enter the unsearchable riches of God, in the pages of the Bible, our growth in the knowledge of God becomes as organic and natural as the growth of a seed planted in rich, fertile soil. Growth is a mysterious process that belongs to God. Our responsibility, as with the planting of seed in the ground, is to provide the necessary nurture – the daily watering of the seed until we see the growth and eventual maturity of what was planted. Daily placing ourselves before God’s word in a time of stillness is God’s method for experiencing larger and larger growth in the knowledge of God. The witness and vitality of the church once known by a previous generation can happen again. It begins when the people of God recover the urgency to immerse themselves in the knowledge of God from reading the Bible.

