



*Know
Christ
Deeply*

A 6 Week Devotional Journey

Know Christ Deeply



You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me. John 5:39

A 6 Week Devotional Journey
(based on the *HighQuest* series)

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Knowing Christ Deeply

Most people find their identity in their accomplishments, titles or positions, trying to prove their competence while living in constant fear that someday they will be exposed. But what if our identity - our greatest claim to fame - was not based on what we have done or will do but on who we know?

Reflecting on his own list of accomplishments the apostle Paul said, “What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ...I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” (Philippians 3:8,10).

Knowing God is more than discovering facts about God; it is a relationship, one based on five key assumptions:

1. God is
2. God is knowable
3. God wants to be known
4. We are capable of knowing God
5. We want to know God

If any of these 5 statements be false, then a discussion of knowing God is irrelevant. The Scripture presents #1-4 as being absolutely true....and remarkable. If #1 is not true, then we have the worldview of atheism. If #2 is not true then we have the worldview of deism. The amazing truth of #3-4 is that God actually wants to be known and has designed us to know him.

Since #1-4 are true, then the only question before each of us is, “Do we want to know God, in a personal, and experiential way, discovering more about him as we walk with Christ through all of life’s situations?” Knowing him will demand honest and consistent dialogue through the shared experiences of normal everyday living. Knowing Christ is both our greatest privilege and our greatest challenge; it is at the heart of our journey of faith.

Knowing Christ is the incredible privilege of friendship with the living God. In John 15:15, Jesus told his disciples, “I no longer call you servants ...instead I have called you friends.” However, friendship with Christ is not a relationship of equals, it is the undeserved opportunity for

us to have a deep and personal connection with the Creator of the universe. As we learn, believe, and obey the will of God, he reveals more of his heart to us through his Spirit. The important question remains whether we will make time and space for him.

In this devotional you will take a scriptural look at who he is by reflecting on his works, his ways, and his glory. Remember as you read the various scriptural passages that although the Bible is written in various styles of literature from history to poetry, written in a different time and culture, its purpose is not to simply tell a story but to reveal its Author. Look for and expect God to reveal himself in each day's reading. The Bible is God's story, written so we can discover who he is and then join our story to his. As you read and reflect each day ask the Holy Spirit to expand your heart knowledge of God in Christ, to break through the small, inadequate, erroneous image you have created in your mind and replace it with the grand and awesome one that made Isaiah cry out, "I have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."



How to use this devotional

Set aside a time (5-10 minutes) each day to spend in God's presence. Each week there are 5 daily devotionals, a summary page, and a page for sermon and small group notes. This devotional guide is designed to start on Monday and finish the week with the sermon on Sunday. If you are using this material in your small group, your "week" will simply be the prior 7 day sequence.

The daily devotional has you:

- Read an introduction for the day.
- Read a short Bible passage.
- Highlight key words in the verse that is recorded.
- Reflect on what you have read. Ask what, why, and how questions.
- Spend time in prayer using the prayer outline.

The prayer outline follows the pattern of:

- Praise: Reflect on who God is and what he has done.
- Confession: Assess where you may fall short of God's design.
- Ask: Ask God to help apply what you have just read, working the truths into your life and the lives of others you know in a supernatural way according to his will.

During the first two weeks you are given some suggestions as a model to pray but after that only the outline. This prayer outline is a way to help you dialogue with God. You may add or adapt as needed. It is important to pray back to God what his Spirit has highlighted from the Scripture if we are to have a dialogue with him. Use this pattern for prayer as simply a way to get started in your conversation with him.

Don't be discouraged if at first you find it difficult to acquire the habit of meeting consistently with God. Any new skill or habit takes practice. As your schedule changes, you may need to adjust your devotional practice. Many have found that setting aside time the first thing in the morning is the best way to be consistent; but most importantly, find the time that works for you.

Week One and Two: His Works

Introduction

Knowing him is our profound privilege. To say, “I know him” would be an arrogant claim were it not that:

- God desires to be known by us.
- God has placed the desire to know him in our hearts.
- God has revealed himself in Scripture and ultimately in Christ.

Since God is self-existent and not caused, he stands outside our understanding. He is not like anything we know. Yet he has chosen to enter our world and reveal himself to us. What we can know about God is not comprehensive but sufficient.

Knowing God is like a child reaching out to touch the stars. They are beyond his reach, but in the reaching he begins to learn. On a clear night when you get away from the city lights and gaze into the sky, only a few stars are visible. But as you focus, a greater number of stars will seem to magically appear. They were there all along but your vision was not prepared to see them.

As you gaze at the myriad of solar bodies, you realize that, although what you see is awesome, there is much more you can't see. With the aid of a telescope you could penetrate further into the vast universe always knowing there is more.

Knowing God requires that we leave the lights of the city and all that would blur and cloud our vision, to focus our gaze on the awesome glory of God. As we gaze, that which was dim becomes clearer and that which was hidden becomes visible.

The Scripture becomes our spiritual telescope with which we can look deeper into the nature of God. The Bible is not written as a text on theology but rather an unfolding story of the infinite, creator God helping people on their quest to know him. Since Jesus is the fullest revelation of God, knowing him is how we know God (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Knowing him involves understanding what God has revealed as true about himself as well as what he has revealed is true about who we are in Christ. Over the next two weeks you will be looking at five key truths about God's work on our behalf (God is my....) and five corresponding truths about our identity in Christ (In Christ I am...).

These 10 topics are designed to launch you into a lifelong quest of discovering the awesome reality of God. All of life is a school and every event a course for knowing God. As we know him more deeply, our everyday, routine, ordinary lives take on an eternal dynamic. Life becomes integrated rather than compartmentalized; connected rather than isolated; engaged rather than disengaged.

God is my...

God reveals himself through the work that he has done and continues to do. Through a variety of roles he reveals his character and nature. The Bible reveals these truths so that we can understand and relate to God as he truly is -- not as we would like him to be. It is important that we develop a complete picture of God if we are to understand his purposes and plans. We often come to erroneous conclusions when we fail to see all that God is and does.

In this section we will look at God in five key roles or positions that describe His Works. These five are core to understanding who God is and how we can relate to him. Each one has huge implications for us as believers and followers.

In Christ I am.....

Who we are in Christ is the basis for our new identity. Who we are in Christ is not a matter of how we feel about ourselves but about who God says we are. Satan loves to keep us confused not only about who God is, but who we are. Confusion about our identity in Christ will result in anemic and powerless lives. Understanding (and believing) our identity in Christ is foundational to an effective journey with Christ.

As you understand more about who you are in Christ, your ability to relate to him will be strengthened and enhanced. You will find new boldness and passion. You will find your heart responding to new insights that create an even greater thirst to know him more deeply.

God is My Creator

God is revealed in Scripture as the uncreated Creator. God has no source or origin...he simply is. This is foreign to our natural world as everything we know has an origin. The little child who asks, "If God created everything, then who created God?" is simply thinking naturally.

God as the uncreated, self existing Creator, implies power. God created out of nothing. He spoke and worlds came into being. The creative power of God is one of the basic truths any person can recognize by observing nature. It is a truth that is intended to draw us into a deeper understanding of the nature and character of God.

God as Creator not only implies power but ownership. This implication has caused many to eliminate the divine source of creation from their world view. They prefer to accept human theories to explain world origins without God and, therefore, without obligation to God.

God is not only the Creator but he is my Creator. Considering God's unique act of creating man in his own image leaves the humble heart in awe and amazement. God as my Creator is deeply personal. Rather than my life being a random act of chance, it takes on meaning and significance. Everyone is an individual who has unique importance to God.

Sin has marred the original image of God given to us by our Creator, but it can never separate us from God's love. His incredible love for the people he created, regardless of their condition, is the theme of the entire Bible. People are described as broken, dysfunctional, blind, prisoners, and rebellious; still God desires a personal relationship with each one. As you reflect on this truth, ask yourself the question, "If this is true, then what difference should it make for me?"

READ: Genesis 3:26-31

(26) Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (28) God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (29) Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. (30) And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath

of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. (31) God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

RECORD: (highlight key words)

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

REFLECT

Q1: What does this passage tell me about God: his nature, values, purposes, ways, or desires? What does it say about me?

Q2: Why is this important? Why does God want me to know this?

Q3: If..then: If this is true, then how does it relate to my world today? How can I put into practice what I have observed?

RESPOND

Praise God for his power, creativity and wonder, for the beauty of his creation, for the wonder of the human body, for the dignity given to men and women as the focus of all God’s creation.

Confess the times you fail to acknowledge God as the source of everything, the times you have not treated his creation, your body and others with respect.

Ask to be more tuned into the wonder of God’s creation, to help you honor your body with greater care through diet, rest and exercise.