

KNOWING GOD

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

Over the past 12 lessons, we have been trying to do one thing: learning to know God and Who He is. In all of these lessons, whether they have been talking about what happens to you when you die or how to live a Christian lifestyle, we've been discovering Who God is and how much He cares about us. All of these topics are descriptions of God's character and love for us. This is the last lesson in this series, but for you, this may be just the beginning of your forever-journey to knowing God deeper and better. This journey is something that never ends as you constantly understand God in a deeper way and grow in your relationship with Him.

It's always a good idea to follow Jesus and use His example as the model for what we should do. Jesus continually spent time with His Father. It was the first priority in His life! In fact, I think you could say that His connection with His Father was what encouraged and sustained Him. Jesus spent time with God the Father to continue building their relationship.

Matthew 14:23, "...He [JESUS] went up on a mountainside by himself to _____."

It was Jesus' priority to spend time with His Father, so He would do whatever it took to get away from everyone else and spend time praying and connecting with His Father. He understood that His ministry on earth, His calling, EVERYTHING was based on the power that God the Father was giving Him. So, He regularly spent time with God the Father to build that connection.

We too, although we are not Jesus, are either growing closer to God or further away from Him. God is always available to us and is eager to spend time with us to build our relationship, but it's up to us if we will make the effort to make Him the priority. And although the effort is up to us, the benefits of spending time with God are enormously beneficial to us!!

Just look at some of the positives from spending time with God.

Isaiah 46:10: "I make known the _____ from the _____."

God knows EVERYTHING! He knows what will happen in the future, and what is going to happen in your life. I don't know about you, but I would love to have someone help me navigate my life as they direct me with their knowledge of the future!

Psalms 139:13: "For you created my inmost being; you _____ me together in my mother's womb."

Luke 12:7: "Indeed, the very _____ of your head are all numbered."

John 10:3: "He calls his own sheep by _____..."

God knew you before you were born. In fact, the Bible gives the idea that He was the one that put you together before you even took your first breath. He knows everything about you, including how many hairs you have. And, what really means a lot to me, He knows your name! You aren't just another human being, but He knows you personally, and He wants you to know Him too!

God is a relational God that constantly desires to grow our relationship with Him. He always wants to spend time with us so that we will know Him better.

So how do you know God better?

There are so many different ways to know God better, but I'm going to list a few of my favorites to help you think of some ways that you may really enjoy.

Prayer: Prayer is probably the easiest way to know God. Sometimes we think that prayer is a one-way conversation where all we ever do is talk TO God and that He never talks back to us. But one of my favorite pieces of prayer is just listening. Have you ever talked to God in prayer, but then you just stopped for a minute and listened? I've never heard Him speak in an audible voice, but I have felt Him impress me with an idea or something that I believe He wants me to do.

Prayer is probably the most basic way to get to know God, but it may be the deepest connection as it gives you an opportunity to pour your heart out to Him.

Bible Study: Another of my favorite ways to know God is to read His special letter to me. The Bible is a collection of stories and letters that have one single point: to let us see inside the heart of God and to know Who He is. When I read the Bible, it is like God is speaking straight to me. Usually, I try to read a couple chapters each day. I don't just read to check it off my to-do list, but I try to ask questions too. Probably the most important question to ask when you read the Bible is: *What is God trying to tell me through what I am reading?* When you ask this question, reading the Bible means so much more for your life, and you begin to know God better as you let Him speak into your life!

BASIC POINT

Knowing God every day is what grows you into a deeper Christian

Music: Have you ever heard a song that brings up emotions and makes you tear up? Music is a powerful tool, for good or evil, but I believe it is a powerful way to connect with God and to know Him better. Something that I enjoy doing as a way to build my relationship with Jesus is to put on some Christian music that praises Him and invites me into worship of Him. Sometimes I just go to a quiet place, alone, and turn this music on and praise God while I listen.

Nature: Another of my frequent ways that I choose to use to help me know God is through Nature. I love hiking and biking and exploring out in the woods. Whenever I am in nature, I am constantly thinking, *"God made all this for ME!"* I think about how powerful God is and how much He loves me to create such a beautiful place that I can enjoy. I think about the effort that He gave to make everything perfect for humans to live as well as the effort He gave to save all the humans that live here too! He's such a good God to bless us with Nature.

Church: While going to church doesn't save you, church is a wonderful way to grow to know God better. Whether it is through a small group Bible study, or worshipping through music or it's applying a sermon to your life, church is one of many ways to know God. God created the Church as a way to grow to know Him better. Paul writes about the value of church in this next verse.

Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. Let us not neglect meeting _____, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

As "the Day" when Jesus comes back gets closer and closer, God wants us to be connected to a church family that will encourage and grow each other to know God better.

There are so many different ways to connect with God and grow to know Him better! But the bottom line is this, if we don't continually grow to know God better every day, then we begin to grow away from Him. Without making Him a priority, our lives drift into a life that doesn't include Him and exists without purpose. Here's a Bible verse to help you prioritize and set knowing God as the first thing in your life!

Matthew 6:33: "But seek _____ his kingdom and his righteousness..."

Knowing God must be your FIRST priority if you want to grow as a Christian. Seeking Him first and making effort to build your relationship with Jesus is the only way to grow deeper and stronger in your faith with Him. And it's by doing this that you become a true disciple and follower of Jesus. That's His desire for each of our lives, and I want to do just that!

As these lessons finish and you now have completed the fundamentals of learning to know God, it's only right that we close with a prayer that I am praying for you...

"Dear God. I am praying for all those that have completed these study guides and have learned the fundamentals about You. I'm praying that they have not only discovered Who You are but have made a commitment in their heart to know You better each day. May You put a hedge of protection around

them, their families, their relationships and everything else they encounter. May You become vividly real in their life and show them how powerful You really are. Thank You for being a God that wants nothing more than to have an authentic relationship with each of us. May we all grow to know You better. We love You and can't wait to see You. In Jesus' name, Amen!"

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. What are some of your favorite ways that help you know God?
 2. What is the best time in your day to spend time with God?
 3. What will you need in order to continuing growing to know God better?
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LESSON 12: KNOWING GOD

