

Do You Know Your God? (Part 1 of 2)

1 John 4:7-8 (New American Standard Bible)

*⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** ⁸ **He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.***

Introduction

We are going to talk about knowing God in two-part series, this morning and next week. Let me begin with a question why we ought to know God.

Why Must We Know of God?

Why must we know of God? Why should we be intentional about knowing God? Some of you may say, “Isn’t it just good enough to know that the LORD is my God? Doesn’t God already know that I believe in Him? Why should I know more of God?”

Well, that’s how the people of Israel thought in the time of Prophet Jeremiah. By then, their ancestors worshiped the LORD for centuries. Their faith became more like a culture they grew in. To them the LORD God said, “For My people are foolish, They do not know Me; They are foolish children And have no understanding. They are skillful at doing evil, But they do not know how to do good” (Jeremiah 4:22). I see a stark resemblance between Jeremiah’s generation and today’s world.

Here’s a reality in the Church today. Most of us, like the people of God in the time of Jeremiah, are convinced that we know God, therefore, we do not make any efforts to know Him more. Instead, we carry the ‘hit or miss’ attitude that someday we will be enlightened if needed. But the Lord commands us to know Him. To know God is not a wishful thinking, suggestion, or an option, but a command from God, like the Ten Commandments. God requires you and me to know Him. If the knowledge of the Lord comes to us so naturally, like breathing, then, God would’ve never commanded us to know Him. In other words, like certain things in life, to know God requires our time and efforts to study, gain, and retain.

Although our God is benevolent about us taking time to know Him throughout our life, He never wants us to be ignorant of Him nor slack about learning of Him. Rather, He expects our knowledge of Him to grow each day. He wants us to be diligent and make every effort to know Him (2 Peter 3:18). Can we honestly say that’s how we pursue the knowledge of God?

By the way, those who are casual about getting to know God will have a rude awakening in the end. That's what happened to the generation of Jeremiah. They simply thought that the Lord would protect them from the enemy from the North, but it didn't happen and resulted in the Babylonian Captivity. Here's another example. Consider the Exodus generation. They started with a bang! For starters, even before they departed for the Promised Land, they witnessed the Ten Plagues in the land of Egypt (e.g. water turned to blood, frogs, dust turned into lice, flies cover the land... Exodus 7 & 8). For the next forty years, they experienced daily miracles of God such as manna from heaven, quails, pillar of fire and clouds, parting of the Red Sea. Yet, in the end, the first generation was denied entering the Promised Land (only their children were allowed to enter). What caused their denial? It was the lack of their knowledge of God. God cannot be blamed for this, not keeping His promise to the Israelites, but that God's people failed to grow in the knowledge of God and His will. They squandered all God's miracles and ended up provoking God to anger repeatedly for forty years through idol worship and unbelief. They feared the Lord alright, but their fear of the Lord and daily experience of God's miracles never translated into the saving knowledge of God. We must be intentional about knowing God and be diligent about it.

Content

One day Jesus was having a discussion with the crowd. The topic was about who's their spiritual father and whether they know their father or not. Please pay attention to the phrase "your father" in Jesus' words. Three different fathers He mentioned here.

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "... therefore you also do the things which you heard from **your father**."...³⁹ They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus *said to them, [No, he is not!—kc] "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. ⁴⁰ But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. ⁴¹ **You are doing the deeds of your father.**"

They said to Him, "... **we have one Father: God.**"⁴² Jesus said to them, [No, He is not!-kc]. "**If God were your Father, you would love Me**, for I came forth from God and am here; [Jesus continues saying 'Let me tell you who your father is---the devil'-kc]...⁴⁴ **You are of your father the devil, ... the father of lies.**" (John 8:34-44). Hearing this, the crowd got really upset and called Jesus a demon (John 8:48). They picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and escaped (John 8:59).

Imagine this! So called religious folks who confessed their faith in Abraham and the LORD God, wanted to kill Jesus! It reminds us of the difference in knowing about God and of God. Remember the crowd knew a lot about the Lord their God, but Jesus said, *you are mistaken!* We must know of God, not about Him.

I am sure you heard about the difference between knowing about God and knowing of God. To know about someone means your head knowledge. To know of someone means your intimate relationship. For instance, nowadays, anyone can know about me instantly by googling my name. Simply typing my name in a search engine, within a matter of seconds, they will find out some facts about me such as how old I am, where I currently live, and the towns and churches I served in the past. The sermons I preached and even the books I have written and so forth. Anyone can know about me without meeting me once.

To know of me, however, it's a different story. It requires much more than a heap of information about me. If you say, I know of Pastor Choi, you must be more than an acquaintance of mine. How long have you known me personally? Do you know me intimately? Have we ever worked together? Have we prayed together? Have we cried together? Have we shared our joy together? In this sense, the person who knows of me most besides God would be my wife who lived with me for almost 40 years. She has been with me through highs and lows in my life. She knows my favorite foods and strange habits. She has an intimate knowledge of me. Yes, she can say that she knows of me. Folks, that's what we are going to talk about this morning. To know God intimately. What's that mean?

Let's dig in. There are three types of people in terms of knowing God.

Three Types of People in Terms of Knowing God.

1. **Those who do not know the Lord at all.** Neither do they want or acknowledge the need of knowing God. Some of them even refuse to know God (Jeremiah 9:6). They are just happy without God. They don't believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. The Bible calls such people 'the world.' Jesus declares that the world doesn't know God or Jesus (John 17:25). The same world also fails to recognize the believers because it did not know God nor Jesus. John the Apostle says this: "... *the world does not **know** us: because it did not **know** Him* (God-kc) (1 John 3:1).

2. **Those who may think that they know the Lord but, in reality, they don't.** You can find such people both inside and outside the Church. They may even consider themselves religious or attend services on Sundays, but it doesn't mean that they know Jesus or the Father in Heaven. One day, Jesus said to Philip, one of His disciples, saying, "*You have been with Me all these years, yet you still don't know Me?*" (John 14:9). Let's go to Jesus in John 8:19. He was debating with the same crowd I mentioned before: ¹⁹ *So they were saying to*

Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “**You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.**” Remember: this crowd was proud that they knew God and very religious, yet they didn’t know the Father. This is one thing we want to avoid by all means. After years of serving the Lord, the Lord could say to us, we have not known the Father or Jesus the Son (John 16:3). May it never happen to us.

Get what Jesus is saying here: *you may have the head knowledge of God and of Me, but you don’t know God or Me.*

3. Those folks who believe in Jesus and keep His commandments. They know the Father in Heaven. They also know Jesus their Lord. They want to please the Lord, so they keep His commandments. If you want to know whether you know of God or not, whether you are close to your Father or not, whether you are loyal to the Lord or not, check out the following things.

First, **do you keep His commandments?** John the Apostle wrote that that’s the surest sign of those who have come to know God and love God (1 John 2:3). Those who know the Father keep His commandments.

Next, **do you love one another, even your enemies** (Matthew 5:44)? If you do, you please God and surely know your heavenly Father. Listen to John the Apostle again. ⁷ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*** ⁸ ***He who does not love does not know God, for God is love*** (1 John 4:7-8).

Thirdly, **do you welcome the Word of God with gusto and with all your heart?** Do you remember what the crowd wanted to do to Jesus when He told them the truth? *But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth,...* (John 8:40). Those who hate truth always fail to know the God of truth. Listen one more time to John the Apostle: *The one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error* (1 John 4:6). Those who know God welcome and embrace the truth, the Bible, the genuine message of God and discern the spirit of truth from the spirit of lies and error.

Of course, there are signs of those who do not know God. What are the signs? The first sign is this: they may appear to be religious but **remain in sin**. Listen to John the Apostle: *No one who remains in Him sins continually; **no one who sins continually has seen Him or knows Him*** (1 John 3:6). Another sign of those who do not know of God: **not keeping God’s commandments**. Listen. *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).

Next week, I will talk about the ways to know our Father in Heaven.

Conclusion

Do you want to know God the Father? Of Him, not just about Him? Then, you need Jesus. With His help, you will know of God. But, without Him, you will not know the Father. To know Jesus is to know the Father. And, to know the Father is to know Jesus. You cannot separate them from each other. ⁷ ***If you had known Me, Jesus said, you would have known My Father also;*** (John 14:7). Without knowing Jesus, no one can know God. Know Jesus. Know God.

Let us pray. “Give us a heart to know You, Lord, for You are our God and we are Your people. Make us return to You with a whole heart” (Jeremiah 24:7). Amen.