

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE To Really Know God

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Job 42:1-6; Ephesians 1:17

SYNOPSIS Knowing God is much more than knowledge of bible trivia.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ To Really Know God

Last week we talked about being COMPELLED BY CONVICTION. It was about giving God priority in all things. We don't want to just be part-time believers, but rather, people who are consistently walking with the Lord. Today, I want to talk about Really Knowing God.

☞ Guess the Sound (video)

☞ Job 42:1-6 NLT

Job replied to the Lord: 2 "I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. 3 You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?' It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me. 4 You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.' 5 **I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.** 6 I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance."

The story of Job deals with the grand question of pain and suffering in light of a loving God. He was a good man and a servant of God, yet he lost everything except his own life. He and his friends debated why this happened to him. They dealt with the age-old question: "If God is good and all-powerful, why do bad things happen to good people?" Ultimately, they didn't answer the question, but in the end, Job concluded that God is still good and still worthy of trust.

Today, I'm not really focusing on the question of evil in the world, but rather our understanding and knowledge of God. Job was a godly man who served the Lord, but he and his friends did not really know God. They discussed a lot of ideas about God and had reasonable defenses of their positions. Each one thought he was right on. But then, Job actually had a personal encounter with the Lord which changed everything.

That's when he said, "**I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.**" Have you ever heard a sound in the dark and formed an idea about what you heard, but when the lights came on, it was entirely different than what you thought? Kind of like the Guess the Sound game we just did.

Job had the lights come on, so to speak. He didn't just get a better doctrinal understanding about God. He actually had a personal experience with God that led him to actually know him.

I think that many believers have ideas about God, but don't really know God. We can discuss doctrinal ideas and even debate our concepts of God, but do we really know him? This is the key question today. **Do you really know God?** There are a lot of people who know of Jesus, but they do not know Him.

☞ I want you to **know** God. Listen to what the bible says in **Ephesians 1:17: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better."**



The word “**know**” means to perceive, to understand completely. It is far more than just recognizing the facts about Jesus or having a mere acquaintance with him. The religious leaders of Jesus day knew a lot of things about God, but for some it never affected their life; it was knowledge for pride’s sake. Fact-finding is only part of the process of knowing God.

☞ **Knowing him is more than an intellectual pursuit.** Intellectual pursuits are not a bad thing; we should learn as much as we can about the Lord. But there is more to knowing Jesus than being able to win a bible trivia game about Him.

I could tell you facts about some famous people like Leonard Nimoy, Chris Pratt or Michael Jordan. Because of those facts, I could say that I know them, but the truth is I don’t really know them.

Thirty-nine years ago, as I spent time with Naomi, I started getting to know her. My goal in spending time with her was not to learn all the facts I could about her, it was to know her, the person. And the more I got to know her, the more it affected my life. I married her! And, I’m still ☞ getting to know her more and more. **It’s a life-long relationship.**

I want to personally know God, and I want the same for you. To personally know God will affect your life in many ways, and it can be a life-long relationship. It’s more than information.

☞ **Knowing him is more than what you say.** I could tell people I am a major league pitcher all I want to, but what I say does not change reality, which is I am not and never will be. How many times have you heard someone profess Jesus, and then you see no effort, no faith, or no love in what they do? Knowing the Lord is more than what you say. If your knowledge of God doesn’t affect the way you live, then you don’t really know him. You only think you do, you only say you do.

☞ **1 John 2:3-4**

3 We know that **we have come to know him if we obey his commands.** 4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him

☞ **Knowing him is more than a one-time experience.** I could share a seat with a stranger on a roller coaster and have a fantastic experience, but it wouldn’t mean we know each other at all. I might be able to fondly recall that moment, but in truth, I may not even recognize that person in the future if we happened to bump into each other. To really know someone requires repetition of activity and an ongoing relationship, not just a one-time experience.

☞ **John 15:5-6**

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 **If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers;** such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.



To genuinely know God will require time and effort, along with repetitive activity to build that life-long relationship. Just like Job, we can experience God personally and in an ongoing relationship as well. This personal connection with God is the most profound of all experiences. There is nothing else quite like it. You need to experience the presence of God in your own personal encounter.

☞ **Relationship with the Lord** and staying close to him **is what our souls need**. You have to go beyond just hearing about God in sermons, online blogs and individual studies. You need to have your own personal experience with God. Then you can really begin to understand him and he will become real to you.

It's been said that the longest distance in the world is from the head to the heart. Mark Batterson expanded on that when he said, *"The distance between your head and your heart is only twelve inches, but it's the difference between information and transformation. It's not enough to invite Jesus into your mind. You have to open the door to your heart of hearts. No door can remain locked."*

I mentioned earlier about getting to know Naomi thirty-nine years ago. My knowledge of her has gone way beyond information. It literally transformed my life. I went from single to married; then a family and a home; and a long list of memories to share; and we're still growing together.

I want you to have a heart open to God, not just your mind with ideas and concepts. But, your heart with love and a life-long relationship which transforms, rather simply informs your life.

1 John 2:6

This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

A true relationship will yield similarities between the two. It's been said that long-time married couples often begin to look alike. It's because they spend so much time together and mirror each other. They also sound alike, having the same ideas and using the same phrases – all because of the quantity of time spent together.

☞ In church we talk a lot about being obedient to God and becoming **Christlike**. This is something that **happens naturally when you develop your relationship with the Lord**. It takes effort to build the relationship, but then the similarities develop naturally over time. And, John says God's love is made complete in us. That doesn't mean it is without flaw, but that it is mature and consistent in practice.

In the natural, and with the Lord, the more you work on your relationship, the more you come to love; and the more you come to love, the more you really know each other and become more like each other.

I want you to personally know the Lord. Not to just know about him; not to just work hard to be like him; but, to genuinely, personally, know him. Like Job, the lights can come on and you can



really see the Lord and know him in a personal way. And, for Job that happened when he stopped talking and debating ideas *about* God and instead actually had a conversation *with* God. It was the personal encounter with the Lord that opened his eyes.

☞ **(music will begin)** That personal encounter for you will happen when you **open your heart to the Lord in worship and prayer**. Don't just stand there; don't just read the words on the screen; worship! And, don't just bow your head; don't just ask for stuff; talk with God!

☞ It also happens when you **read the bible**, not just to complete a checklist of daily reading, and not just to do a verse study, but **to hear what God is saying now** as you read. Take time to listen!

I want you To Really Know God.

Prayer time.