

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Knowing God

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Ephesians 1:17; Jeremiah 9:23-24

SYNOPSIS Everything in the Christian walk hinges upon knowing the Lord.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Knowing God

We've been talking about the name of the Lord the last couple of weeks. God calls himself Yahweh. His name indicates that he is the source of all existence and reality. He always was, He is, and He always will be. We also talked about how the four letters of God's name, YHWH represent breathing sounds. When pronounced without the vowels, it actually sounds like breathing. YH (inhale): WH (exhale). God chose to give himself a name that we can't help but speak every moment we're alive.

The name of Jesus means Yahweh saves. The name of Jesus reminds us that God is always with us. There is power in the name of Jesus as well – power to save, deliver and heal. Jesus has the name that is above all other names. The name of God and the name of Jesus tell us something about who God is. I just want you to know the Lord more and more.

☞ 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.

Know = precise and correct knowledge. There are a lot of misconceptions about God. Some say that God doesn't even exist, that we are just cosmic accidents without any purpose. I think that my audience knows better – God does exist and we see evidence of his presence all the time. Some say that God is a Cosmic Killjoy who just wants to ruin all our fun. Others say he is just a mean judge who is anxiously waiting for people to mess up so that he can punish them. On the other end of the spectrum, some think God is only love and grace, so nothing really matters and everything is ok.

The misconceptions go on and on... "God doesn't really care about me. He's too busy with more important matters." "I've had a rough life, so God must hate me." "God is punishing me with this illness because of something I did wrong." Conversely, "God doesn't care about what I do, he loves me and would never punish me." Here's more: "If you're healthy and wealthy, God must love you." Or, "If you're healthy and wealthy, you're not really living for God, because he keeps people humble." Even strong believers get mixed up about who God really is.

☞ Listen to what God himself says in **Jeremiah 9:23-24**: This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, 24 but **let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,**" declares the LORD.

Understanding = prudence; insight; attentiveness. We can know God, but it takes prudence and attentiveness. Too many people make assumptions about God and that leads to all kinds of misconceptions. Assumptions only get us into trouble. To know God, we need understanding. This kind of understanding comes through good perception and careful attention. **If you really**



want to know God, you can't just assume what you think is true, you must learn what God says about himself.

In Ephesians 1:17 it says we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we may know him better.

Paul desires God to give us more understanding and greater insight. The "wisdom" is a better understanding of God's truth, and the "revelation" is a clearer picture of his divine character and will. The AMP translation has Paul asking that God "may grant you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation [that gives you a deep and personal and intimate insight] into the true knowledge of Him." The spirit of wisdom and revelation is not some mysterious blessing given to a special few, and it is not the ability to speak as a prophet. Rather, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to help the people of God understand the things of God more fully and completely.

God wants us to truly know him. *Knowing God is not the same as: Knowing the Bible very well; Knowing God's Law; Knowing God's works; Knowing our church; Knowing our pastors and church leaders. We can know all the above and yet not know God Himself.*

☞ **Know** = be acquainted with; to know by experience. **God wants us to know him personally, by experience.** You may have some understanding of who God is, but do you know him personally? Can you honestly say that you are God's friend? God referred to Abraham as his dear friend in Isaiah 41:8. In Exodus 33:11, God said he spoke to Moses as one friend speaks to another friend. Even Jesus indicated the possibility of being personal friends in John 15:15. This is the kind of knowing that God is talking about.

☞ To know God as your personal friend, **it starts with acknowledging who he really is.** He is not the man upstairs or the spirit in the sky. He is not just some higher power or all-encompassing force.

He is the **LORD** = Yahweh. He is the Creator of all things and sustainer of all things. He is the ☞ source of all existence and reality. He always was, He is, and He always will be. **He is over and above all things. He alone is God.** Buddha is not God; Krishna is not God; Allah is not God; the universe is not God. Yahweh, the LORD is God. This is where true knowledge of God begins. Once we establish that He alone is God, then we can get to know his true character.

☞ **He exercises kindness** = goodness; faithfulness; mercy.

God is good. We say this often, but do we really grasp the truth of it? He always, always, always has our best in mind. (Romans 8:28)

God is faithful. He never breaks a promise; he does what he says he will do. And, even when we are faithless, he remains faithful (2 Timothy 2:13).

He shows mercy when we sin and fail. He forgives us of our sins. His mercy makes salvation and eternal life possible for those who believe. (Ephesians 2:4-5)



A mother once approached an emperor seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. "But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy." "But your son does not deserve mercy," the emperor replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.

All of us have committed sins which deserve punishment, but God, in his lovingkindness and mercy has chosen to forgive us through his son, Jesus Christ.

☞ **God is good, faithful and merciful.** He shows kindness to people.

Table Talk: Talk about a time you experienced God's kindness.

☞ **Start Timer**

This is how God describes himself in Exodus 34:6-7: And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."

This shows his kindness toward people. But verse 7 doesn't end there; it goes on: "Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished"

☞ **He exercises justice** = judgment; fair and right decisions

☞ **He judges fairly.** He knows what is right and what is wrong. He knows when you have been wronged and he will make it right. No one can argue successfully against God. Since he sees all and knows all, his judgments are always fair. (Proverbs 15:3)

☞ **He exercises righteousness** = the right thing; truth; vindication

God only speaks the truth; with him there is no shadow of deceit at all. He does what is right ☞ and upholds those who do right. **He ultimately makes all things right.** (Genesis 18:25)

There are many scriptures which encourage us to know God better. Colossians 1:10 speaks of growing in the knowledge of God so that we may be strengthened with endurance and patience. Colossians 2:2 wants us to know the mystery of God to keep us from being deceived by false doctrine. 2 Peter 3:18 reminds us to grow in our knowledge of God so that we don't fall away. Romans 1:28 describes people who decided they didn't want to know God – they became depraved and filled with every kind of wickedness.



I think that most true Christians desire to live a godly life; to do the right thing; to be more Christlike. Those things come through our knowledge of God. 2 Peter 1:3 says that he has given ☞ us everything we need for a godly life – *through our knowledge of him*. **Everything in this Christian walk hinges upon knowing the Lord.**

- J.I. Packer... *“Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord.”*

I don't just want you to know a little bit about God. I want you to really know him. I want you to grow in your relationship with him so that he refers to you as his friend.

Martin Lloyd Jones said our supreme need is to know God.

☞ **Proverbs 2:1-9**

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, **turning your ear to wisdom** and **applying your heart to understanding**— indeed, if you **call out for insight** and **cry aloud for understanding**, and if you look for it as for silver and **search** for it as for hidden treasure,

☞ then you will understand the fear of the LORD and **find the knowledge of God**. For **the LORD gives wisdom**; from his mouth come **knowledge** and **understanding**. He holds **success** in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and **protects** the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path.

Most everybody wants success, wisdom and understanding. Those come through knowing God. And we can really know God by diligently seeking him. Apply your heart and mind to getting to know God better. You won't regret it.