

# Discipleship

## Part 6: Being Known by God (part 2)

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### Full Text (for reading on your own)

#### *Knowing Him*

Many Christians are going to be very surprised that the focus of Heaven is knowing and worshiping God! We ought to start practicing for that now! There's a place for teaching, but there is a place for knowing Him! You may think, "when you teach about Him, don't you know Him?" Yes, that opens a door! The teaching about Him opens a door, but until you walk through it, you don't know Him. The teaching about Him is like a map which indicates "there's such and such territory over there." Until you venture into it, you haven't been there - you've just heard about it.

#### *The Counsel of the Word*

When you want to understand a topic from the Word, one way you can do that is to find a list of scriptures about that topic in the Word. One way you can do that is with a concordance (by looking up a specific word that you're looking for). Also, with Google you can simply type in "being known by God scriptures" and many lists of scriptures should come up. Note, some lists that come up on Google will seem to not make sense (having many unrelated scriptures) . . . a robot probably made those lists. Look for a better one. Oftentimes, though, I find lists that are REALLY GOOD and bring to my attention scriptures I was not even thinking of about a topic - so HELPFUL!

When you look at God's counsel across His Word, it helps you round out your understanding of His Word on a certain topic. This is important! Here's why . . . meditating on scripture is how you get revelation. That's where scripture changes your life - in the meditation. But when you are meditating on a scripture, you are only meditating on ONE scripture! (There is no other way to meditate by the way b/c our brain can only really think about one thing at any moment). As powerful as meditation is, the trouble is, when you meditate on one scripture at once, if you don't know a lot of other scriptures, do you know what sort of revelation you are going to get about that scripture? You may get some good revelation and some revelation that might be "off the reservation!"

You need to be careful about this. Some people do a great job of getting revelation from the Lord, but 1/3 of the stuff that they get is off-base. That doesn't mean that they are trying to be counter-scriptural or God doesn't love them. The same thing will happen to any of us if we don't have a well-rounded understanding of what God says about a topic. When that is the case, we are in grave waters as it relates to coming up with some crazy ideas!

For instance, you hear about the Jehovah's Witnesses. That's a heresy. They say Jesus was the son of God but that he was not really God. That's what they say. Well, I don't know if they've ever read Hebrews chapter 1! Or if they've rewritten that part of their Bible too! Hebrews 1 is SO CLEAR that Jesus is NOT an angel - He is SO MUCH HIGHER than the angels! Why did God put Hebrews 1 in there? He knew there were going to be heresies that came along and He put that whole chapter in there to make that point ABUNDANTLY CLEAR! But, if they ignore Hebrews 1, they can twist some other scriptures.

### *Being Known by God*

Last time I preached, I talked about being known by God. I gave a number of scriptures about being known by God, but let me highlight one of them to you again. Look at Jn. 10:27. "Jesus says *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."* This is talking about being known by God! Many Christians prefer to be called "followers of Christ" because calling themselves a "Christian" may or may not mean much to the person they are talking to, so they may introduce themselves as a follower of Christ. This scripture (Jn. 10:27) gives a 2-part definition of what a follower of Christ is. Who, according to Jesus follows Him? People that hear His voice and people that He knows!

We often just do not catch that in scripture! We know that there's something about knowing God, but rarely have I heard a teaching on being known BY GOD. Yet, it is a clear, consistent, and important concept in the scriptures!

God knew Abraham SO THAT He could establish His covenant with Abraham. God knew Moses and that's why there was a favor on Moses. Remember, God's grace is His willingness to use His power and His ability on our behalf. For example, what country would ever give powerful weapons to someone they knew nothing about? That would not be wise! So, who does God empower? Those whom He knows! Why? Because when He knows you, He knows what you will do with the power! Moses was known by God. We see in Ex. 33 that God had told Moses "I know you by name, and you have found grace in my sight." God empowered Moses because Moses was known by God! He was not an unknown commodity - He was known by God!

David was the same way with God. God told David "I am going to establish this covenant with you." Jesus came out of that Davidic covenant - out of that lineage. The Davidic covenant was established with David, whom we see in 2 Sam. 7 effectively tell God "God, what more can I say, you know me perfectly." In the very honest and Holy presence of God, David says "I don't know what else I can say because You know it all!" There was nothing left unsaid in David's relationship with God. What's the result? God was showing Himself strong in and through David's life!

We saw that knowing God and being known by God is a 2-way street, a 2-way relationship. All good relationships have that 2-way exchange. A real relationship is not just me "knowing about you" its me "knowing you." When we know the Lord's words, we know Him. When He knows our words, He knows us!

## *The Long-Term Effect of the Word*

Hopefully your heart has been stirred at this point about the scriptural reality of being known by God! So let's look at "how" to be known by God.

Probably the best place to start looking at "how" to be known by God is the strongest place in all of scripture that talks about God's knowing of us. Can you think of where that is? Ps. 139 is it! This Psalm is so powerful about being known by God. The verse 18 verses are incredible in the detail they give about how God knows us! I'm also going to give you a personal story about this Psalm:

When I was a young believer, I was also a new teacher at the same time. Someone who was discipling me who had a lot of wisdom knew that I was stressed out about teaching because I was spending so much time prepping. They told me "Peter, I want you to pray for supernatural shortcuts for teaching." I prayed for it and the funniest thing started to happen.

I would sit down to prep a lesson and for whatever reason, I would start reading the word instead of prepping a lesson. The person who was discipling me hadn't told me to do that, I had just prayed for supernatural shortcuts. I would notice as I sat down to prep that my heart would not be at rest (new believer, new teacher, stressed out by school - the whole thing) and my heart was not at rest. So instead of starting to prep from a place of strife, instead of working from a place of strife, I worked in the Word so the the Lord could work on my heart!

During that season, what I read seemingly every time I sat down to prep was Ps. 139. For about 2 years I read Ps. 139 at least once a day on average, if not twice a day! So, I conservatively probably read Ps. 139 500 times during that season! I think back sometimes and consider "how awesome that is that as a young believer that got deposited in my heart! That reality of God knowing me!" I don't even know how much that still is paying dividends in my life! When you meditate on a scripture, it is actually a long-term investment. You'll notice a difference then, but you don't even know what its going to do down the road!

So, I would sit down to prep something that probably should have taken me 45 minutes or so, and for about 30 minutes I would read Ps. 139. And all of a sudden I would have this thought "well you should probably prep now." I would get out a piece of paper to prep and I would write down a lesson plan in about 5 minutes and within 15 minutes I would have finalized lesson plan far better than anything else I had ever come up with! And this kept happening! I would have, I believe, divinely creative lesson plans that were really good! And I can tell you that they were really good because one year my students showed the top 1% of growth of all students in the state of Ohio that were taking a certain type of course exam. And I was a young teacher! SO it was working! And why was it working? Because instead of prepping out of strife, I came to a place of God knowing me and God worked in my heart. And when God worked in my heart, now I prepped with His presence.

Ps. 139 blessed me then, but who knows how much it has blessed me since then too! I don't even know because it is literally a fortress in my walk with God! He knows me! He wants to know me!

## Ps. 139: Ask God to Know you!

The first 18 verses of Ps. 139 are so good that we don't want to miss any of it!

*“O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.”* If you thought there was a part of your life that God did not know about it and you went up to God and said “God, I would like you to meet this part of my life” He would reply “I am already acquainted with it!”

He knows what we speak before we say it! *“For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.”*

*You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,” Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You. For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.*

*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. “Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.”* God knew you before you were you!

*“And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.”* God knows your past and He knows your future! *How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.*

God has so many thoughts about you that if you were to count them, they would outnumber the sand. He is with you when you sleep, and with you when you rise. God is with us! The New King James Version in trying to put a summative title to this this Psalm came up with “God's Perfect Knowledge of Man.” NASB titles the Psalm “God's Omnipresence and Omniscience.” Omniscience is to “know all things.” Omnipresence is to “be everywhere.” Later in this section I will talk about omnipotence “all powerful.”

The translator's titles are on the right track. We see in verses 1-18 an absolutely incredible omniscience from God spelled out for us. SO much so that David says “such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain it.” I had a friend a number of years ago that told me “there are some things with God that you can wrap your head around, but there are other things that you just need to wrap around your head.” God's omniscience is something more like the later.

In the context of those first 18 verses of Psalm 139, let's look at the last two verses of the Psalm, verses 23 and 24. These verses come from the same author (David) to the same God. And the first verb in verse 23 is the same first verb that we saw in verse 1, meaning "to search." Remember in verse 1, we saw "*O Lord, You have searched me and known me.*" What was the tense of that verb "search" in verse 1? That's right, past tense! **Have** searched, **have** known. And we know that's what David walked in with God because in 2 Sam. 7 David told God "you know everything there is to know about me - what else can I say?" But look at the same verb in verse 23 . . . what's the tense here? This time, in verse 23, the same verb is used in the present tense! "**Search** me, O God, and **know** my heart; **Try** me, and **know** my anxious thoughts; and **see** if there is any wicked way (or way of pain) in me, and **lead** me in the way everlasting."

Do you see all those wonderful verbs there? They are all present tense. They are all for the now. This is David who had a history of being perfectly known by God. This is David who was able to say at the start of this Psalm "you HAVE searched me, you HAVE known me." David knew all about God's omniscience. He knew God knew everything and he had experienced being known by God. But what at the end of this Psalm does he still tell the Lord? Present tense! Search me, know me, try me, see me, lead me. All present tense! What's the take away?

### ***DAVID WAS KNOWN BY GOD BECAUSE HE ASKED GOD TO KNOW HIM!***

He asked! Isn't that beautiful! Verses 1-18 are all saying "this is how you HAVE known me. This is your capacity to know me." In verses 23-24 David says "before we end this time together Lord, search me. Know me. Try me. See me. Lead me." What a powerful set of verbs for your heart to give the Lord in your next time with Him! Search me, know my heart God. Try me, know my anxious thoughts Father. See my ways God. Do you see that? You have a heart, you have thoughts, and you have ways that you are. Know my ways, know my ways with my kids. Know my anxious thoughts - remember how I was stressed as a new teacher? Know my anxious thoughts Lord! He would set my heart right and the creativity of Heaven would flow once my heart was set right. He knew me and as He knew me, His grace was released to me.

David was known by God because he asked God to know Him! That's my first point, ask God to know you.

### *Genesis 3: Don't Hide from God*

Now let's look at another classic story of relationship with God and being known by Him: Genesis 3:6-10. This is about Adam and Eve, who of course walked with God in uninterrupted relationship initially. They were effectively experiencing Heaven on earth. This section of scripture in Genesis 3 is about what happened with them once that relationship got interrupted. We'll pick up the story in verse 6: "*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*"

That's the backdrop. Now let's look at verse 8: "*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*" Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. NOW REMEMBER, this message is about being known by God. Even when you know that when He knows you He'll know that not everything is quite right. That's what we see on display in this story. Adam and Eve knew not to do it, they did it, and now they're hiding.

So, God went to find them and they are hiding. So, let's look at God's response in verse 9 because there is a profound understanding here as it relates to being known by God! "*Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'*" Notice that God asked Adam where he was! Did God know where Adam was? Of course He knew where Adam was! The Bible says "God fills the Heavens and the earth." Where Adam and Eve were, God was there. He was not at a loss for knowing where they were. BUT, He did ask "where are you?"

You have to get this! ***As it relates to our relationship with Him, we have to understand that our omniscient Father generally chooses to make Himself dependent upon our invitation to be Known by Him.*** God knew where they were. But He asked them where they were!

### *The Sovereignty Doctrine*

This might be a little bit hard for some of us to grapple with, but let me ask you this question based on all the great teaching Pastor Brad has given and what we know of the Word now: "is God omnipotent?" Is He all powerful? Absolutely! He spoke and the worlds were made! Simply consider how vast the our solar system is and then how vast the universe is beyond even our solar system is. As David said in Ps. 8:3-4 "*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?*" Look at the stars and ask yourself if God is all powerful. The answer is a staggering, stammering "yes!" But listen! How does His power relate to us? We ask Him for it!

This is a major, major issue in the church today. There is a whole doctrine called the sovereignty doctrine. Can I tell you that in the King James Bible, the word sovereignty does not exist in the Bible. Try that on for size. Now know this: The NIV version of the Bible put it into the Old Testament roughly 300 times. And if that's not enough, consider also that the definition for "soverign" in the English dictionary is not "in control." Yet, what we tend to think of with the sovereignty doctrine is that "God is control." As a younger believer I even received a teaching DVD titled "God is in control!" Can God do anything He wants? YES! Is He all powerful? YES! But what did He do? Put man in charge!

We just looked at what David said in verses 3-4 of Ps. 8. Have you seen the next few verses before? Here they are! And remember, this is about "man" as shown in verse 4. Here are verses 5-8: "*For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen - even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through*

*the paths of the seas.*” This is powerful! God put man in charge of the earth! He told man “be fruitful and multiply. Have dominion.” What’s that equal? “I put you in charge!”

And when God put man in charge, satan said “dang! that’s what I’ve wanted this whole time.” Although you know his mouth was much more foul than that! “I wanted to be in charge. I wanted everyone to worship me.” Satan had thought to draw worship to himself in Heaven, God cast him down to the earth like a bolt of lightning. So satan was wanting to receive worship in Heaven as though he were God and after he is cast down to earth what does God do? God makes man in the image of GOD! How do you think satan likes that? Satan wanted to be like God. Now God makes man in His Own Image, and puts us on the earth where satan is, and tells man “be in dominion!” This is like a torture test to satan! He gave man everything satan wanted and put man in charge!

So what does satan do? He slithers on up and says this “did God really say . . .” And he’s been trying to steal the Word of God ever since - but not with us praise God! What was satan’s deception all about? We know that we are slaves to him whom we obey. So satan wanted man to obey him so that man would hand the devil the keys to the earth. And when man did that, satan became the “prince of the power of the air.” Satan got put in charge by sin and that’s why death started happening. That’s why things that are not good things started happening in the earth.

Satan tried the same thing with Jesus - the focus of the temptation of Christ was satan trying to get Jesus, whom the Bible calls the second Adam, to obey him too! Jesus did not fall for the thing that the first Adam fell for and instead tells satan “be gone” and “you shall worship the Lord your God alone” - referring to Himself as the Lord God! Because Jesus did not obey satan, He did not relinquish any authority to Him and Jesus now has the keys to the earth back. As believers, Jesus gives us all that authority that regained back in our hands. So, we are not under the dominion of satan anymore because we are believers! Before we were born again we were under the prince of the power of the air, but after we were born again we have freedom and we have dominion over that and our prayers are effectual against the works of darkness!

God, in His power gave us power! He gave us dominion! Now, I don’t mean to attack the sovereignty doctrine, I only mean to set people free. But, if you really believe the sovereignty doctrine which says “God’s in control so if it’s His will, they will be healed” then DON’T GO TO THE DOCTOR! You might be violating the will of God!

We see God’s perfect will expressed through Jesus! “If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.” Everyone who came to Him was healed! We know what His will is! Consider Mt. 10:7-8 when Jesus sent out His twelve: *“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”* LOOK at those verbs! Did Jesus tell His disciples when they went out “go out and see if God might heal.” Did He say “go be an observationist and see if God heals? If He does, you’ll know it was His will, but if He doesn’t you know it must not have been?” NO! Our Lord sent them with action verbs: heal, give, raise, cast out, preach!

Jesus told His disciples to go do something and that's just like how God told Adam and Eve! "Have dominion of the earth, subdue it, do something!" He told them what to do, go do it! Can God do anything He wants? Yes! Can He be in control if He wants? Absolutely! What he chose to do is He put man in charge! And what is man supposed to do then? Man is supposed to adjust himself into the image of God! We're supposed to change ourselves and change our thinking to line up with God! We are not supposed to change Him to line up with us. So what do we do? He gives us the authority, but we submit to Him! But He's given us the authority . . . but we submit to Him! But He has given us the authority. And we choose to submit to Him!

The sovereignty doctrine as it relates to prayer for healing, or prosperity, or any other thing has a terrible effect. The sovereignty doctrine as it relates to prayer causes passivity in prayer; it castrates the Christian.

All of that was to be able to say this as it relates to being known by God . . . The sovereignty doctrine, as it relates to being known by God, causes us to say "well He knows everything anyway, so why would I have to share myself with Him" and IT SABOTAGES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM!

Is God all powerful? Yes. How does that relate to us as Christians? We pray and we ask for His power to be expressed in situations - as a choice! Is God omniscient? Yes. How does that relate to us as believers in terms of our relationship with Him? We let ourselves be known by Him so that He can know us!

### *Genesis 3 (continued)*

Adam was able to hide from God. Did God know where he was? Yes. But when did Adam get to relate to God again? When He allowed himself to be found - when he came out of hiding! Our hearts can do the same with God - we can hide ourselves from God. Does God know what's going on in our hearts? Yes - and He knows all the words you are going to speak next! But as soon as we turn our hearts to Him, that's when all of His power and capacity to know us is brought to bear in our relationship with Him. As it relates to our relationship with God, we have to realize that our omniscient Father generally chooses to make Himself dependent upon our invitation to be known by Him.

So, point one in how to be known by God was to "ask God to know you." Do you see how meaningful that phrasing is?!? I know He knows all about you, but He wants to know you!

One more note about Adam and Eve. They hid because of shame for sin. And there are many people who don't know the Lord yet that hide because they are ashamed of their sin. Sometimes people even like the darkness so they don't want to be exposed by the light. For a lot of believers, when you are first born again, you don't realize the grace of God so actually hide from Him because of condemnation for past sin, not realizing that your old man is dead - and that you have a born-again spirit on the inside of you and God relates to you according to His Spirit that is within you.



For many of us, we do truly know that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and that we can come boldly before the throne of grace. Don't hide because of shame. Yes. Don't hide because of condemnation. Yes.

Also, though, don't hide because of the truths that you know! Sometimes when you know how to walk in the power of God, but you are not walking in it right now . . . it's not that you're sinning, it's just that your not walking in all you know is possible for you as a son or daughter of God. That can actually cause you (or at least at times has caused me) to shy away or put on a bit of a facade with God. It is as if God is saying to you "I know you know what to say, but say what you need to say." We have to be careful not to confuse how to walk in faith with how to be in relational process with the Lord. The secret place, like Psalms 91 talks about, is our refuge! The secret place is a holy place AND it is also a great practice place! The secret place, in the shadow of the Lord's wing is the practice field for your heart. If you can't be honest and open in the secret place as a believer, where else in the world can you be? The secret place IS a HOLY PLACE (recall Eccl. 5:1 and Jn. 4:24 and what they taught us), but it is also an HONEST place. It is a safe place where you can practice with God and allow the coach of the universe to coach you through the issues of your heart!

So, point 2 in how to be known by God is "don't hide because of shame - or because of truths that you know."

### *Ps. 138:6: Be Humble*

Look at Ps. 138:6 "*Though the Lord is on high, Yet He sees (regards) the humble (lowly); But the proud He knows remotely (from afar).*" Our young boys are 5, 3, 1. When our 5 and 3 year olds are playing with each other in the family room, next to the kitchen, you can pretty much by earshot know exactly what's going on in there. As parents, we know the facts of what's going on in there as they wrestle or as they talk or play a game of some sort. We know what's happening in there just by earshot, but we know THEM when they come and tell us about it!

Ps. 138:6 shows that exact dynamic. You can know everything by earshot, but it will not develop relationship until you have conversation about it. Does God know everything? Yes! It even says right here that He knows the proud - but how does He know the proud? From afar, remotely, with little or no contact or connection there. He knows about them, He knows them from afar. He knows everything. But with whom does He develop a relationship? The humble one, the honest one, the one that has a humble heart before Him. Facts alone do not develop relationship, but humble, honest words do. Remember, vulnerability is a key to a love relationship.

Point 3 in how to be known by God is "be humble."

## James 4:8: Draw Near

James 4:8 says “*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*” Now, we’ve just looked at the sovereignty doctrine and how it affects not only our prayer life, but also our relationship with God. In light of that, look at this verse. Does it confirm that or not? “*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*” Do you notice who has the first step in this verse? It’s us!

Now, actually, to be plain, Jesus took the first step! When His body hung on the cross, that veil was torn between us and the Holy of Holies! We were given access into the Holy of Holies because of what Jesus did! In fact, Romans 5:1-2 says “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*” (Rom 5:1-2) We have access and it was bought at a price! But He has ALREADY TAKEN THAT STEP!

Isaiah 53 says “by His stripes we are healed.” He didn’t just pay for your sin, He paid for your sickness. Jesus lost His last earthly possession; His nice garment was ripped off of Him. What is it symbolic of? Jesus got “ripped off” so that we could be well provided for! He lost everything! He became sick so we could become well. His body was broken so that ours could be healed. He became sin so that we could become His righteousness. He got thorns pushed into His head - He lost the “mind of Christ” so-to-speak so that we could gain it! He got everything He didn’t deserve so that we could get everything we didn’t deserve! Praise God! He’s the opposite of the older son in Luke 15 (the prodigal son). In that parable, the older son is upset that the younger son has come, whereas Jesus, the Eldest Son, has given His life so that the younger sons can come! He has paid for it! He has given us the access! He took the ultimate and forever first step! He has already paid for it! It’s established! He’s paid for our healing, He’s paid for our access, He’s paid for it all! So from there, who has the first step now? Us!

And that is exactly what you see right here! David, in Ps. 139, says “God you know everything AND Search me and Know me!” And you see it right here again in the New Testament. James is being so clear “draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” It’s our choice! Our inviting Him into our lives - to know us - not to just know about us, but to KNOW US - is our choice! If we think because of that sovereignty type doctrine “maybe it’s God’s will to heal, maybe it’s not” we will NOT pray for the sick. And if we think “well God knows everything, so He’ll know what He knows” we will NOT share ourselves with Him. Yes He knows everything - He knew where Adam and Eve were, but He asked them where they were. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.

I actually believe that there is a good reason God wants us to initiate in relationship with Him: think about this . . . How often do you think God is loving you? He’s loving you all the time! How often do you think God wants to love on you? All the time. Exactly. So, if God didn’t have us initiate in terms of drawing near to Him do you realize that He would overwhelm us with His love and affection for us! Because our mind is not fully renewed like it will be in Heaven, His love would

actually be far too much for us! So God's saying "you need to initiate. I'm ready to dance whenever you are; take the first step and we'll go!" The more we draw near to God, the more our mind is renewed to His love and affection for us and the more we are able to exist in that love as a continual (or at least closer to continual) experience while here on earth. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. He wants to know you. But it's our choice.

Consider this also. When you go to Heaven, how long are you going to be there? Forever! That's a long time - more than we know! Have you ever thought about how God died to spend forever with you? We may have a best friend we are "dying to spend time with." God's Son wasn't just "dying to spend time with you" in the proverbial sense, He *actually* died to spend time with you! Do you think He wants you to draw near to Him? Yes! He died for the possibility of it! It's our choice!

God died to restore our relationship with Him. It's not a theological relationship. It's a real relationship. Under an inferior covenant, God talked with Moses as a man with a friend. Any time there is talk of discipleship, there must be talk of relationship. That is why this teaching is so essential as part of a sermon series on discipleship. The goal of discipleship is right relationship! God wants to know you. He has already made the ultimate, once-and-for-all, first move. But He is saying as it relates to now "let me know when. I want to know you."

Hebrews 10:22 says *"let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."*

So far, we've learned that we can be known by God by:

1. Asking God to know us
2. Not hiding from God because of shame - or because of truths that we know
3. Have a humble heart before God
4. Draw Near to God

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## Text Summary (for reading as a group)

Many Christians are going to be very surprised that the focus of Heaven is knowing and worshipping God! Teaching about Him opens a door, but until you walk through it, you don't know Him. The teaching about Him is like a map which indicates "there's such and such territory over there." Until you venture into it, you haven't been there - you've just heard about it. When you look at God's counsel across His Word, it helps you round out your understanding of His Word on a certain topic. This is important! Here's why . . . as powerful as meditation is, the trouble is, when you meditate on one scripture at once, if you don't know a lot of other scriptures, you may get some good revelation and some revelation that might be "off the reservation!"

Last time, we looked at a number of scriptures about being known by God, but let's highlight one of them again. Look at Jn. 10:27. "Jesus says *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."* Who, according to Jesus follows Him? People that hear His voice and people that He knows! We often just do not catch that in scripture! We know that there's something about knowing God, but rarely have I heard a teaching on being known BY GOD. Yet, it is a clear, consistent, and important concept in the scriptures! We saw that knowing God and being known by God is a 2-way street, a 2-way relationship. All good relationships have that 2-way exchange. A real relationship is not just me "knowing about you" its me "knowing you." When we know the Lord's words, we know Him. When He knows our words, He knows us! As we see with Moses, God chooses to empower those whom He knows! Why? Because when He knows you, He knows what you will do with the power!

Probably the best place to start looking at "how" to be known by God is the strongest place in all of scripture that talks about God's knowing of us. We see in the first 18 verses of Ps. 139 the incredible with which God knows us! He knows what we speak before we say it! God knew you before you were you! God has so many thoughts about you that if you were to count them, they would outnumber the sand. He is with you when you sleep, and with you when you rise. God is with us! We see in verses 1-18 an absolutely incredible omniscience from God spelled out for us.

In the context of those first 18 verses of Psalm 139, let's look at the last two verses of the Psalm, verses 23 and 24. "**Search** me, O God, and **know** my heart; **Try** me, and **know** my anxious thoughts; and **see** if there is any wicked way (or way of pain) in me, and **lead** me in the way everlasting." All those verbs are now present tense. They are all for the now. David knew all about God's omniscience. He knew God knew everything and David had surely experienced being known by God. But yet at the end of this Psalm David still tells the Lord "search me, know me, try me, see me, lead me." All present tense! What's the take away? David was known by God because he asked God to know Him! That's the first point in "how to be known by God" . . . ask God to know you.

Genesis 3 is another classic story of relationship with God and being known by Him Adam and Eve, had been walking with God in uninterrupted relationship, but they sinned and then hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. So, God went to find them and they are hiding. So, let's

look at God's response in verse 9 because there is a profound understanding here as it relates to being known by God! *"Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'"* Notice that God asked Adam where he was! Did God know where Adam was? Of course He knew where Adam was! The Bible says "God fills the Heavens and the earth." Where Adam and Eve were, God was there. He was not at a loss for knowing where they were. BUT, He did ask "where are you?"

You have to get this! ***As it relates to our relationship with Him, we have to understand that our omniscient Father generally chooses to make Himself dependent upon our invitation to be Known by Him.*** God knew where they were. But He asked them where they were!

This might be a little bit hard for some of us to grapple with, but consider this question based on we know of the Word now: "is God omnipotent?" Is He all powerful? Absolutely! Can God do anything He wants? YES! But what did He do? Put man in charge!

Look at Ps. 8:6-8: *"You have made him (man) to have dominion over the works of Your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen - even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas."* God put man in charge of the earth! He told man "be fruitful and multiply. Have dominion." What's that equal? "I put you in charge!" God, in His power gave us power! He gave us dominion! Consider Mt. 10:7-8 when Jesus sent out His twelve: *"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."* LOOK at those verbs! Did Jesus tell His disciples when they went out "go out and see if God might heal." NO! Our Lord sent them with action verbs: heal, give, raise, cast out, preach! The sovereignty doctrine as it relates to prayer causes passivity in prayer; it castrates the Christian. Likewise, the sovereignty doctrine, as it relates to being known by God, causes us to say "well He knows everything anyway, so why would I have to share myself with Him" and IT SABOTAGES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM!

Look at Ps. 138:6 *"Though the Lord is on high, Yet He sees (regards) the humble (lowly); But the proud He knows remotely (from afar).* God knows everything, but with whom does He develop a relationship? The humble one, the honest one, the one that has a humble heart before Him. Facts alone do not develop relationship, but humble, honest words do. Be humble!

James 4:8 says *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."* Do you notice who has the first step in this verse? It's us! Romans 5:1-2 says *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also **we have access** by faith into this grace in which we stand..."* (Rom 5:1-2) We have access and it was bought at a price! He's paid for our healing, He's paid for our access, He's paid for it all! So from there, who has the first step now? Us! God died to restore our relationship with Him. God wants to to know you. He has already made the ultimate, once-and-for-all, first move. Now He is saying "let me know when. I want to know you." So far, we've learned that we can be known by God by (1) asking God to know us, (2) not hiding from God because of shame - or because of truths that we know, (3) having a humble heart before God, and (4) drawing near to God. Amen!

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## Points to Ponder . . .

- What does Ps. 139 show us about being known by God?
- What does the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:6-10 show us about how God knows His children?
- Describe the dichotomy of two ways we can be known by God as shown in Ps. 138:6.
- In what ways does James 4:8 give us the ability / responsibility in our relationship with God?
- How do we relate to an omniscient Father in a relational way?
- Which scripture from this message most spoke to you or most touched your life?