

# Growing in the Knowledge of Jesus

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### Defining the goal

At its foundation, Christianity is not a lifestyle, a moral code, a system of religious rituals, or a collection of shared beliefs. Christianity is a *dynamic relationship with a Person*: the Lord Jesus Christ. The outcome of our relationship to that Person, our *hope*, is based on our *faith*, or our trust and confidence in who that Person is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do. In order to understand how we mature in our faith, how we walk like Him, and how we attain our hope, we must put the bounds of our *relationship* in perspective.

### Defining relationship

1. In our day, we have trivialized what it means to have a “personal relationship with Jesus”. In order to understand how to relate with Jesus, we must first understand what defines a *relationship*. Generally, there are three facets to any relationship:
  1. Invitation: the call to know God deeply
  2. Substance: relational knowledge
  3. Overflow: emotions
2. Friendship is primarily composed of *relational knowledge*. We know this intuitively from our other relationships, but often fail to apply this to our relationship with Jesus.
3. We cannot lay hold of deeper friendship and stronger faith in Jesus that we desire unless we know what we are in search of. Our love for Jesus must be rooted in the truth of who He is as revealed in the Bible by the Holy Spirit. Any “relationship” not completely anchored in His identity will be fleeting zeal and hollow sentiment. Knowledge is the fuel for relationship and faith.

### Application to the Life of Christ

1. These simple, foundational truths necessitate that a large part of our relationship to Jesus and our faith in Him be based on His “life story”. The entire Bible is telling the story of Jesus, but He comes into narrow focus in the inspired account of His life as revealed in the four Gospels. If our faith is in a *Person* and we love a *Person*, the most natural thing would be to devour every detail of His life available to us so that we grow in relationship with Him.

**“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18 ESV)**

2. It is becoming common for people in this generation to know very little about the story and life of Jesus and yet call themselves followers of Him without seeing any contradiction. Christianity is increasingly being defined by belief in very basic truth-formulas, participation in activities, and allegiance to issues rather than a loving preoccupation with Christ Himself.

**“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” (Colossians 2:6–7 ESV)**

3. We must soberly ask hard questions about what our ‘relationship’ with Jesus is based upon and consider the possibility that we are often guilty of being more in love with the *idea* of Jesus than with Jesus Himself. How can we relate to Jesus in authenticity if we have little regard for the story of His life – His past, His family, His friends, where He went and what He did?

### Seeing God in the Flesh

1. The reason why the Gospels are so rarely focused upon is not mysterious – it is because we are simply not that interested in His life. The question, therefore, is: *how do we change our perspective so that His life is a precious treasure to us?* One part of the answer is to come to the story of His life with a dynamic awareness of the divinity of the One on the pages. The Gospels themselves beckon us to see Jesus in this way.

**For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form... (Colossians 2:9)**

2. Ministry of John the Baptist and the Coming of Yahweh (Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:1-8, Luke 3:1-17, John 1:23)
3. What makes Jesus so unique and so important is that in Him alone we find the definitive answers to the questions of “*who is God?*” and “*what is He like?*”. The incarnation is God’s ultimate self-disclosure, accomplished through a perfect, sinless human life that will never end.

Word

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God...<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-2, 14)**

Wisdom

**... attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ**

**Himself, <sup>3</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.  
(Colossians 2:2-3)**

Light

**For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)**

4. If we desire to grow in our faith and our love for Jesus we must do so by fixing our attention and affection upon the face of Christ and not simply mentioning His name in our rhetoric. In many minds, Jesus is often viewed merely as the stepping-stone necessary to ascend into the knowledge of the Father or encounters with the Holy Spirit. Having received forgiveness, we subtly marginalize Him in favor of a host of other topics, causes, and experiences. (John 14:8-10)
5. Many are sincere but misdirected in their pursuit of God. Unless Jesus is the focal point, all of our reachings towards God will at the least end in frustration, if not confusion. We simply do not have the liberty to circumvent God's design and decide to adopt a version of Christianity without Jesus at the focal point.

### Relationship and Application to Worship

1. Just as a relationship is *personally* grounded, Christian worship is *personally* grounded and *personally focused*. We don't worship an idea or concept, we worship a Person. We sing to Him in response to *who He is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do*. True knowledge of Jesus is what fuels worship of Jesus.
2. As musicians and singers who lead others into worship, we must *lead the way* by filling our hearts and minds with the words and story of Jesus. We must do more than just play and sing songs – as a *worship leader* or *worship team*, we are drawing others' eyes towards One who is supremely important and deserving of all praise. We must study Him – not merely in an academic way, but in the way that one studies the beauty of a sunset or a flower.
3. The most important thing for our lives as worshippers and even more generally as Christians is to get to know Jesus and to hear His words. In the Gospels we find a feast of the glory of God laid before us. With every heartbeat of Jesus of Nazareth, God Himself was putting Himself on display.
4. Starting with His precious words, we must make Jesus' entire life the subject of our adoration and the anchor of our faith. By joining Himself to the human story, Jesus has invited us to throw ourselves into His story. To ponder, muse, listen, and gaze is what the Bible calls *meditation*, and by taking time to read and talk with Him, we draw near until by faith, our ears hear His voice, our eyes behold His form, and our hands touch His skin (1 John 1:1-3).