

"Do You Know God?"

How well do you know the Jesus Christ revealed in the New Testament? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Some think they know Jesus, but do they really? Stay with us and find out.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. We're here to search the Scriptures. Now, one way to know someone is to pay attention to what he says and does. The Bible reveals the words and the actions of the Lord Jesus. Scripture reveals what we most need to know, to believe, and to practice. Because of the Scriptures, we can know His will and how to please Him. Pleasing God is our passion. We're delighted you spend this time with us. Let us know that you're watching. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Do you mind if I ask you some important questions? Today is a good day to evaluate your relationship with Jesus Christ. How well do you really know the Lord? Many know some facts about Jesus. They know He was born in Bethlehem, taught great moral lessons, died on the cross, and was resurrected on the third day. Many realize that He's coming again to judge the world. But how well do you know the heart of the Lord Jesus? Do you know His teaching, what He stood for, and what He called sin? Do you know what He valued, and what He loved, and what He despised? Do you call Him your friend? Does He think of you as His friend?

Some people imagine the Christ they want to exist rather than accept the Jesus Christ of the Bible. They want a Christ who is all grace and no repentance. They want a Christ who is like a genie in a bottle who expects nothing of them and then makes no restrictions on them. The Christ they want, however, is not the Christ revealed in the New Testament. We want to know Christ for who He really is. Do you know the Lord Jesus as well as you'd like? How committed are you to a better knowledge of Christ?

Now, we offer an opportunity for you to know more about Christ, and it's free. If you'd like a printed copy of our program, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org and on YouTube.

Larry Owsley will now lead us in song, we'll read from Hebrews 2:1 to 4, and explore what it means to know Christ.

Our reading today comes from Hebrews chapter 2 verses 1 to 4. In the first chapter Jesus is described as the son of God. And so verse one of chapter 2 says.

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

That's a great, great statement of the word of God and it's power in our lives. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father help us never to drift away from the things that we have heard in word. Help us to be faithful and to serve You and to listen and never drift. Help us Heavenly Father to love You and to love others. In Jesus name, Amen.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says that, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” God’s Word is a marvelous gift to help us understand. It provides God’s wisdom, His efforts to save us, and His inexhaustible love for us. The Bible provides an unsurpassed moral law, helping to bring out the very best in us. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” Jesus came to give us life, and the way we come to know about and enjoy that life is through His words.

The prophet Jeremiah reveals how important knowing God truly is. He said in Jeremiah 9:23 to 24, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the LORD.”

The more you study the Bible, the more you see the greatness and the wisdom of God! Paul proclaimed in Romans 11:33 to 36, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

People who neglect to study God’s Word cheat themselves out of a great storehouse of wisdom and knowledge. People study what they love or what seems significant to them. And one day the most significant matter will be where our souls spend eternity. It won’t matter what’s in the bank, where we live, or what position we have. The only thing that will matter is our relationship with the Lord and whether we belong to Him. This book, the Bible, opens up the way to eternal life. For this reason, we must treasure it in our hearts.

Some Christians study a little but never get as deep into the Word as they ought. The writer of the book of Hebrews saw some Christians were drifting in their faith and lacking commitment—much like many today. He said in Hebrews 5:12 to 14, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” Studying the Word helps us mature and gives us the wisdom to discern right from wrong.

Knowing Christ was more important to the apostle Paul than anything. And Paul defended himself against some Jewish Christians who criticized him by revealing his Jewish background. He said in Philippians 3 verses 3 to 6, “for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more (he says): circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.”

Now these were not small matters to a Jew. Being a Hebrew of Hebrews meant he retained his dedication to the Law, even though he grew up in a Greek city. He spoke Hebrew and was a student of the great Jewish teacher, Gamaliel. Paul was a Jew to his very core. Paul could boast a deep and spotless Jewish record; but this meant nothing to him. He wanted Christ!

Paul said in Philippians 3:7 to 11, “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” What are you willing to give up to know Jesus Christ? At the resurrection, you’ll wish you had done like the apostle Paul and had given up everything to know Christ.

How can we know Jesus Christ? Well, you won’t know Him by simply reasoning on your own. Some think they can know God by observing nature. Now I love the great outdoors, the woods, the lakes. One can learn a few things about God from nature. Romans 1:18 to 20 says: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

Nature teaches us the existence of an all-knowing, all powerful, all-wise God, who created the universe to bless us, but nature cannot teach us all we need to know about Him as a person or how to have eternal life. 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” God chose the gospel message to save us. We must know the Lord’s message to know the Lord.

The Bible says in Romans 10:14 to 17, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (or the word of God).” The more you study, the deeper your faith will be and the better you’ll know Christ.

John wrote in John 20:30 to 31, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” While the Bible does not reveal everything that Jesus did or said, it is sufficient to lead us to faith and to eternal life.

Scripture praises the Bereans in Acts 17 verse 11. It says, “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.” They wanted to know the truth about Jesus, so they examined the Scriptures to find the truth. They weren’t content merely to hear Paul; they checked Paul out. And we too must examine what we hear to determine if it’s true to God’s Word. Many just accept what some preacher or their church says. They don’t realize that this could lead to error or give them false hope. Scripture helps us see the difference between what God says and what people are saying. Even many who are religious and at church say things never found in Scripture.

You see, the devil loves to pretend he is religious, but he counterfeits Christianity. Paul dealt with people who were frauds. He explains in 2 Corinthians 11:13 to 15, “For such men are false apostles,

deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds." Now these false apostles exploited the people, trying to get them to follow their deceitful ways and false teaching. My friend the devil is not your friend; he'll do anything to keep you from knowing the truth of the gospel. Can you distinguish the real Jesus Christ from the fraudulent Satan? What some criticize in religion didn't come from Jesus but from Satan.

The Lord Jesus exposed the devil in John 8:44. The Lord said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The devil tells people to buy into his lies. And many of these are lies about Jesus Christ. People who don't study can easily fall for a half-truth. People fall for the lie, for instance, that "Faith alone saves." John 3:36 says that, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." It takes more than faith to please God. The grace of our Lord Jesus never works without love, repentance, or obedience. Never.

I hear people say, "once-saved always saved"; but the Scriptures deny this. Hebrews 3:12 to 13 says to Christians, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Christians who live in sin and disobedience certainly can be hardened and fall away from God.

I hear people say, "well it doesn't matter what you believe" but where do you read this in Scripture? Where? Some think you can believe anything and still be saved. Jesus, however, told the Jews in John 8:24, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, (that is the Messiah the son of God) you will die in your sins." Believing what Jesus says is just as important as believing in who Jesus is. Matthew 7:24 says the wise man hears the Lord's words and does them.

Paul urged Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 to "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." We must know the Word well enough to separate the truth from error. We must handle the truth accurately and not be persuaded by people who don't know the Bible or by what applied to Jews in the Old Testament but not applying to us as Christians in the New Testament. You know if we don't study for ourselves, we may be deceived. The Lord expects us to search the Scriptures so that we might know the truth. Are you studying God's Word daily? Oh my, it's important that you do.

Let's pray. Father we're so grateful that You gave us Your word. That we may know Your will and what pleases You. Help us Heavenly Father to devote ourselves to following Your son Jesus. To listening to His words and to loving Him, loving You and loving others. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Some claim to know Christ but don't really know Him. Scripture is actually what determines who knows Christ and who doesn't. 1 John 2:3 to 6 says, "And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 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; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."

Knowing Christ means keeping His commandments. Obeying the Lord shows our love is full-grown for Christ. People who disobey but claim to know the Lord shame the name of the Lord. Loving the Lord means living as a Christian every day. It means turning away from sin and following the Lord with a whole heart. People who claim they know Christ but live lawless lives, sinful lives, will one day hear the Lord say, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." Knowing Christ will matter at Judgment Day.

To become a Christian, trust in the Lord, repent of your sins, turn from what's evil, and turn to what's right, confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and then to be baptized into Christ. That is in the name of Christ and to do in a way that the bible teaches. Romans 6 teaches us that baptism is a burial, an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ. And Acts 2:38 says it's for the forgiveness of your sins. Now in baptism the Lord will wash away your sins. He will add you to the church. Oh nothing is more important than having a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

We hope today's challenge to know Christ has made you think. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now for all our viewers and listeners outside the United States, we have free programs and biblical materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. SEARCH is also on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and then when you watch be sure to like the programs. We offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And if you get a hold of us don't worry, we're not asking for money. Now we're here to help you draw close to God. And that's our goal.

Show God your love by worshiping at church. Oh, you need a church family. Everyone needs to be a part of a congregation of people who love God to stay strong. Now if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Check out our church map on searchtv.org. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. As always from the bottom of our hearts, we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.