

# GETTING TO KNOW GOD

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# WHO IS GOD?

Proverbs 9:10 tells us, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Sadly, many people in today’s world have no real understanding of who God really is. We cannot begin to grow in our Christian life until we at least have the proper view of God. God is not just some great person we can’t know or see. God is the creator of everything. He is Sovereign God, there is no one He has to answer to, No one is more powerful, more knowledgeable, or more wise than He is. When God gave us His Word, the Bible – He gave to us complete instructions on living our lives as Christians, and if we truly want to know Him, we have to read and study what He has given us in the Bible.

The verse above tells us that the “fear” of God is the “Beginning” of wisdom. In other words, we can’t even begin to understand His Word or learn through Him how to walk with Him, until we truly realize how awesome and amazing He is. The word “fear” in this verse doesn’t mean that we are afraid of Him, it means that we understand just Who He is, and why we should seek to know and obey Him. Knowing and obeying God doesn’t come naturally, it takes effort. And most people aren’t willing to put forth the effort it takes, until they realize the real value in knowing Him and walking with Him each day of our lives.

We could take up countless pages talking about Who God is and His character (attributes). However, some of His most important attributes are:

1. **God is Holy** – In other words, He can be blamed for nothing. He is absolutely perfect in all that He does. “Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?” (Exodus 15:11)

2. **God is Righteous** – Doing only what is right. Not only is He perfect in all that He does, He is right in all that He does. “The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds.” (Psalm 145:17)

3. **God is Sovereign** – Highest in power and superior to all others. God is the ruler of ALL. He answers to NO ONE. And He Can do WHATEVER He chooses to do. “...I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isaiah 46:9).

God is awesome and amazing, and when we see that if we obey Him and love Him, He will provide all of our needs, He will protect us from harm, He will guide our lives, and He will bring us peace and joy even in the most difficult circumstances, we then start to realize “**Okay, I see that knowing Him is very valuable!**” And then, we have the proper foundation to begin our walk with Him.

## **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT GOD?**

These are just a few of the many verses in God’s Word that tell us Who He is....

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (Numbers 23:19)

Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love (Psalm 33:18)

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. (Isaiah 40:28)

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)



# FEAR GOD!

The Bible mentions fearing God at least 300 times in different ways, such as “Fear the Lord” and “Fear God”. So, does that mean that we are to be afraid of Him, like we would be afraid of a ferocious tiger running toward us? Or does that mean that we just respect Him for Who He is?

Let’s look a little closer at “Fear” and try to get a better understanding of what it means when God’s Word tells us to Fear Him.

There are two different kinds of fear used in reference to fearing God. First there is the fear of those who do not know God, and they are afraid of Him because He has promised them punishment in eternal hell. And secondly, there is the fear of those who know Him as our Heavenly Father. The fear we should have of Him is not the same, but it should be a fear of doing anything that is disobedient or displeasing to Him, because we love Him and want to please Him.

As Christians, we should have such a high regard and love for God that all we want to do is honor Him and obey Him. Everything that we say and everything that we do should be to please Him. And so, just as we don’t want to do things that would bring punishment from our fathers in this life, we also should not want to do anything that would cause our Heavenly Father to have to punish us.

Proverbs 1:7 tells us, “The **fear of the LORD** is the beginning of

knowledge...” We cannot even begin to truly get to know God until we have the proper fear of Him. Until we realize and acknowledge how awesome and amazing He is, and until we fear bringing shame or dishonor to Him by disobeying or displeasing Him.

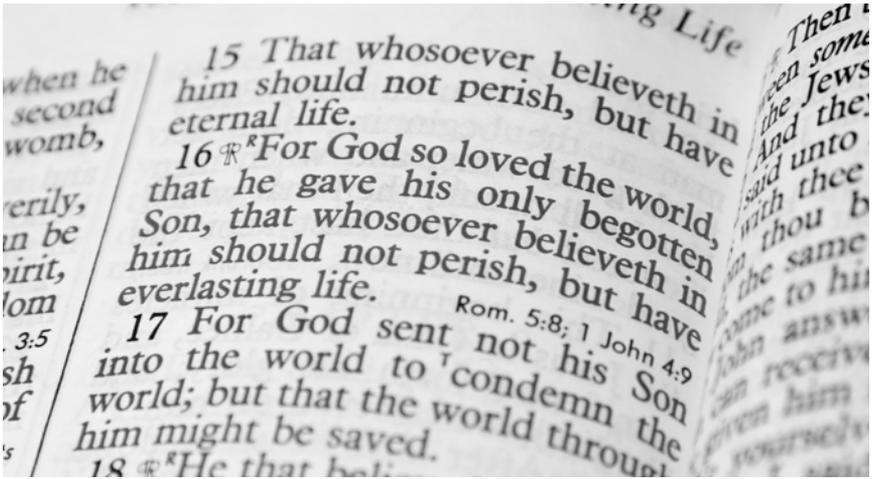
Proverbs 8:13 tells us, “The **fear of the LORD** is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.” When we have the proper fear of Him, we will hate anything that He does not like, and we know from God’s Word that He hates sin and evil! So, having a right fear of Him means that we do not want to be involved at all in anything that goes against His Word!

Proverbs 23:17 tells us, “Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the **fear of the LORD** all the day.” In this world, we are surrounded by those who do not fear God. Those who seem to be able to do whatever wrong they want, and nothing happens to them. And many times, they may seem to be having a great time doing what is wrong. However, if we have the proper fear of God, we will understand that one day they too will stand before Him and be judged for their sin, and if they do not know Him personally, they will be doomed to spend eternity in Hell. So, don’t be envious of those who are obviously walking contrary to God’s Word, but rather focus on Who God Is, with the knowledge that we too will one day give an account of our lives to Him.

The Bible talks a lot about fearing God, because God wants us to realize and understand just Who He is! He is almighty God, and He controls everything. He hates and despises evil and everything contrary to His Word. We should want to please and obey Him in everything that we do!

Proverbs 14:27 tells us, “The **fear of the LORD** is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.” Having the right fear of God, and seeking to have a right daily relationship with Him will bring peace, joy, and contentment to our lives, and will save us from a lot of trouble!

Moses summed it up quite well in Deuteronomy 10:12, when he told the nation of Israel – “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to **fear the LORD your God**, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” That should be our goal in life – **Fear God, Love God, and Serve God in everything we do!**



# GOD'S WORD

The Prophet Isaiah reminds us in Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” I remember from my days in elementary school, many long years ago – we used to sing a little chorus that goes like this:

The B-I-B-L-E,  
Yes that's the book for me,  
I stand alone on the Word of God,  
The B-I-B-L-E.

I cannot stress enough the importance of not only reading, but studying and memorizing God's Word. The Bible is a critical part of our lives as a Christian. In it, we learn about God, we learn how to live, and we find our hope for tomorrow. However, the Bible is not something we are to just quickly read through and then forget...it will change our lives, but we have to learn to read it and obey it.

There are five key steps to our proper understanding of the Bible: 1. Hear it. 2. Read it. 3. Study it. 4. Memorize it. and 5. Meditate on it. Through these important steps, we can grow in our faith, find strength and wisdom to fight against temptation and sin, understand and properly know God, and find light to guide us through our journey in this world of darkness.

## 1. Hear it

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17) We hear the Word of God when we attend church, when we go to Bible studies, and when we listen to others who know God.

## **2. Read it**

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.” (Revelation 1:3) We should all have a time each day that we spend time reading God’s Word. We can use a Bible-reading plan, or we can just read what God lead us to read each day. The important thing is, that we don’t just hurry through our reading time...but that we read slowly and seek to understand what we are reading.

## **3. Study it**

“My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.” (Proverbs 2:1-5) By carefully studying God’s Word, we learn more about Him and how we are supposed to live. We study it, by finding out what certain passages mean, who were they written to, and how do they apply to us today.

## **4. Memorize it**

“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” (Psalm 119:11) We are daily faced with temptation and opportunities to do wrong, and only when we know God’s Word, can we truly learn to fight against those temptations. The more we know God’s Word – the more we know Him!

## **5. Meditate on it**

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.” (Psalm 1:1-2) To meditate on something simply means to think about it over and over. When we read God’s Word every day, study it, and memorize it – we should then think about what we have been reading, studying, and memorizing. God’s Word should become such a delight to us, that

different parts of it occupy our mind many times through out the day. It should become part of our daily life!

As a Christian – there is nothing more important to us than knowing God and His Word. The more we know Him, the more we will find Him guiding and directing our lives each day. Make God’s Word a vital part of each day in your life.



# TALK to GOD

One of the greatest privileges of the Christian life is being able to talk to God, knowing that He hears and answers our prayers. Prayer should be a daily part of life. In fact, we should spend much time in prayer – not just a few minutes in the morning or evening. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “pray without ceasing”. Now, that doesn’t of course mean that we spend all day on our knees and never do anything but pray. No, that simply means that we live our life in deep awareness and surrender to God, so that at any moment, we can simply talk to God like we would talk to any other friend who would happen to be with us.

I know many people, when they talk about prayer, say “I pray, but God never answers?” Well, there are conditions which must be met in our lives before God will answer our prayers. We can not just go around living any way we want to, doing whatever we want, and then expect God to answer

us when we suddenly need Him. Prayer is not just asking God for stuff. Prayer is to be a way of life, where we talk to God all the time. We step outside and see a beautiful sunrise and say “Wow...thank you God for creating such a beautiful morning!” We see God protect us from harm and we thank Him for that. We see someone who has a need, and we don’t have the means to help them at the moment, so we pray that God will provide their need. We come to a point where we need to make a decision or choice and we say, “God, give me wisdom here....” So, you see – all throughout the day, prayer is constant communion with God. That’s how our prayer life should be.

There are also two main conditions we must meet for God to answer our prayers:

1. We must abide in Him and pray according to His will.
2. We must have no un confessed and continuing sins in our lives.

Jesus said in John 15:7, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” To abide in Him means that our lives no longer belong to us, but they belong to God now, and our main purpose and goal in life is to please and honor Him. Jesus Christ now becomes the center of our life. Everything is now about pleasing Him, knowing Him more, and obeying His commandments.

I John 3:22 tells us, “whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him” Again, it is clear that if we obey Him and please Him, we have the confidence that He will answer our prayers. A lot of times, our prayers don’t get answered simply because we are not praying according to God’s will – we are praying according to our own desires and wants. James 4:3 alerts us to this when it says, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” As a Christian, we belong to God now – and since we belong to Him, our desires and wants must be His desires and wants. It’s all about pleasing and honoring Him!

If we are not seeking to always obey His commandments and do what is right, God is not obligated to hear or answer our prayers. Look at what the prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 59:1-2, “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” It is highly

important that we seek to obey Him. And when we do sin, to confess and seek to forsake that sin.

When Jesus was teaching His disciples to pray, He started this way, “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven...’” Notice how everything is about God. “Your name”, “Your Kingdom”, “Your will”. And when we talk to God, it must be with that attitude. Everything is about pleasing and honoring Him. That is to be our life as a Christian. That is how we abide in Him. And remember, John 15:7, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” As long as we keep the right perspective, live a life pleasing to Him, obey His commandments, and seek to bring glory to His name, He will hear and answer our prayers, and our fellowship with Him each day will be a delight and joy.

How is your relationship with Him? Have you made Him number one in your life? Is everything you desire and seek after all about pleasing and obeying Him?



# TRANSFORMED

One of the most amazing transformations in God’s creation is when a caterpillar spins itself into a silky cocoon. Inside of that cocoon, that caterpillar radically transforms. And when it emerges from the cocoon,

what once was an ugly caterpillar is now a beautiful butterfly. Before it spins itself into that cocoon, it is a caterpillar and crawls around on it's many legs. However, once it emerges from that transformation, it now has wings and can fly!

You know we as Christians are supposed to be transformed as well. We are to change the way we live, the way we think, the way we act, and all about us once we become a true follower of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote to the church at Rome, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1,2)

Just as a caterpillar is completely changed by the transformation it undergoes, we also are to change. Notice Paul said "do not be conformed to this world." As a true Christian, we CANNOT go on living like we used to live.

Notice what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:1-5, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

He tells the believers at Ephesus, You WERE DEAD! You FORMERLY walked according to the course of this world. FORMERLY lived in the lusts of our flesh. Just as the caterpillar ONCE crawled around on the ground, AFTER the transformation into a butterfly it DOESN'T do that anymore, if we TRULY follow Jesus Christ, we CANNOT continue to live the way we did BEFORE salvation.

Too many people who claim to be Christians seem to think that becoming a follower of Jesus Christ is like joining a private club or something. They become members of this "club" and when they are at the club, they act a certain way – but the rest of their life goes on just as it did before, continuing to indulge the lusts of their flesh and living the same way the world lives. NOT SO!! The Bible CLEARLY tells us, "Therefore, if

anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Now, the caterpillar spins itself into a cocoon to begin the beautiful transformation that it undergoes. How do WE begin the transformation of our lives? Well, Paul tells us back in Romans 12:2, “be transformed by the renewing of your mind”. The word “renew” means to renovate, change. It’s like when someone buys an old house and renovates it. They tear out all the old stuff that is warped and ruined and put in NEW stuff that is clean and fresh and new! We MUST transform our lives by RENEWING our minds. In other words, we CANNOT go on thinking like the world does and following the “wisdom” of this world. We have to NOW begin to think and follow GOD’S wisdom. We read and study God’s Word, we seek wisdom and guidance FROM HIM! We DO NOT make provision for our flesh and allow it to rule our lives any longer!

Just like the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly takes time, so does the transformation we MUST undergo if we TRULY want to know Jesus Christ and follow Him. For that caterpillar, it all begins when the caterpillar spins itself into it’s cocoon. What about YOU? Have you started the transformation of your life? Have you made an effort to stop thinking like the world, stop following the wisdom and philosophy of this world and learn to trust and follow God and HIS WORD! His Word will TRANSFORM our lives when we submit to It’s authority and realize God is Who He said He is and He WILL do what He promised.

A caterpillar can NEVER fly until it is transformed into a butterfly! And WE can NEVER truly know God and His power in our lives UNTIL we are TRANSFORMED into a NEW LIFE and begin to TRUST and OBEY His Word.

KNOWING GOD  
SHOULD BE THE MOST  
IMPORTANT THING  
IN OUR LIVES!



# AWESOME GOD

What an awesome promise this is. God doesn't force us to draw close to Him, but He does promise that if we take the first step and start seeking Him, He will draw near to us. In the second part of that verse, the Bible tells us what we need to do in order to take that first step, "Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." In other words, stop trying to please both God and the flesh, and – get rid of the darkness that is in your life. God doesn't abide where there is darkness, if we want to know Him personally and have daily fellowship with Him, we've GOT to get rid of what is not pleasing to Him in our lives.

Now, many of us, rather than just saying, "Yes, I want to know God, so I'm going to do whatever it takes...", we make arguments about why it's not necessary to have that close relationship with God, OR we make excuses as to why it's impossible for us to do it.

We may argue, "It's impossible", but God says all things are possible – "And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27)

We may argue, "I'm just too tired", but God tells us He will give us rest – "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

We may argue, “I can’t figure things out”, but God tells us He will direct us – “Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” (Proverbs 3:6)

We may argue, “It’s not worth it”, but God says His plan is perfect – “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,” (Romans 8:28)

We may argue, “It’s just too stressful for me”, but God tells us not to worry about anything – “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

We may argue, “I’m not smart enough”, but God says all we have to do is ask Him for wisdom – “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God” (James 1:5)

We may argue, “I feel like I’m headed down this road alone”, but God says He is always with us – “For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

So, basically, there is NO excuse that is good enough to keep us from drawing near to God. His promises are always true, His love for us is amazingly abundant, and His mercy and grace are beyond our ability to comprehend.

Just think of this – Almighty God, the Creator, the King of Kings, the Author of Eternal Salvation, the Everlasting Father, the Holy One WANTS to have fellowship with us! He wants us to know such great peace and joy in our lives that every day with Him will be more and more amazing. All He asks is that we lay aside the cares of this world, and seek Him. When we do that, He will meet us, guide us, protect us, provide for us, and supply EVERY need we have!

You see, true Christianity isn’t just another “religion”, it is a COMPLETE way of life. God wants our lives to reflect Him towards others and once we have found Him to be ever faithful and true, He wants us to be lights in this world of darkness to shine for Him and point others to the AWESOME relationship they too can know by placing their faith in Jesus Christ, and taking that first step in drawing near to God so that He will draw near to them.

If you haven’t already begun the exciting journey, why not now? Start today in seeking God with all of your heart. Ask Him to point out the things in your life that you need to lay aside in order to meet Him on the path to

true joy, true peace, true happiness, and a life filled with God's love and blessing.

You'll never regret taking that step towards God – He is Awesome and Amazing beyond our ability to comprehend or understand. And the most mind boggling thing – HE LOVES YOU and ME!!! That love will NEVER fade, will never change, and will never go away.

**Find out today just how awesome He is – call out to Him and He will answer!**



# **ABIDE in HIM**

Jesus said in John 15:4-5 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

The word “abide” means to remain, to stay put. In other words, as true believers in Jesus Christ, we are to keep our faith in Him, to follow Him,

and to obey Him. We could also use the terms “hold to”, “conform to”, “act in accordance with” etc., to what it means to abide in Christ. We are to hold to what His Word teaches, conform to the life He demands of us, and act in accordance to His commandments.

When we learn to abide in Him, and we put it in practice in our lives, we bear fruit. Now, what does that mean? Well, it’s just like anything we plant in the ground. If we plant tomato seeds, we’ll get tomatoes, etc.,. If we abide in Christ, and plant Him and His Word in our lives, we’ll live a life that is pleasing to Him. Our lifestyle and behavior will be what pleases and honors Him. We will make the right choices and decisions, and we will know true joy and peace.

It’s not always easy to abide in Christ. In fact, we can’t do it apart from Him. So, we must choose to set our hearts and minds on Him and His Word and allow them to be the focus of our lives.

Here are several things that will aid us in Abiding In Christ:

1. Determine to Abide – “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13)

We can only truly come to know God when that is the most important thing to us, when it is more important than anything else in our lives!

2. Meditate on God’s Word – ” I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you...I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes;

I will not forget your word.” (Psalm 119:11, 15-16)

What we spend time thinking about and meditating on will determine who and what we are. If we want to abide in Him, we must meditate on Him and His Word!

3. Learn to Trust God – “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

When we begin to abide, we must understand that God doesn’t work the way we would. His plans are perfect, and no matter what – we have to trust Him.

4. Know that God Alone is Our Strength – “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)

No matter how difficult it may be to abide, we can do it as long as we lean completely upon Him alone for our strength.

5. Have Courage to Obey God – “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

The more we learn to trust and obey, the more we will make the right choices and decisions in our lives, and we will be successful at whatever God wants us to do.

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# ABOUT JOSHUA

Joshua Goodling is a terminal cancer survivor, speaker, and author. At just the age of four, He was diagnosed with a terminal cancer, and given only one week to live. The doctors said his chances were zero! That was almost 50 years ago, so it's been a LONG week! Joshua's life is a testimony of how truly amazing and powerful God is, and how He has a perfect plan for each of our lives. All we must do is have faith in Him, and learn to love Him, trust Him, and obey Him! If you have any comments or questions about truly knowing and experiencing God, contact Joshua!

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