

LESSON 1 - KNOWING JESUS

#KnowingJesus>Everything

OUR NEED FOR JESUS

When God created us, He made us unique in that we have the ability to interact with Him on an intimate and intelligent level. We've been given the ability to choose Him and receive all the blessings He offers, or reject Him and suffer the loss of His friendship and blessing. We have all since chosen to reject Him through selfish actions and decisions and now must choose again to turn to Him in love. But why would He give us the ability to choose if He knew we would make the wrong choice? Well, someone who truly loves you will never force himself upon you. It's God's love that has given you a choice. Before the world was made, God knew what it would cost you and, more importantly, what it would cost Him in order to gain the intimate relationship He desires to have with you. He determined a relationship with you is worth the sacrifice!

Romans 3:23 says *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."* We have all become disqualified for heaven, as God's standard is perfection. Sin separated us from God and ruined our chance to be holy, making us unable to live in the presence of a Holy God. Simply turning back to God doesn't fix this. We are in need of having our sins forgiven and removed from our record in order to restore our relationship with God. Jesus has made this forgiveness possible by taking our place, dying on a cross, and receiving the penalty of our sins.

Throughout history there have been many theories and ideas about how to gain eternal life, but there's only been one Savior. Jesus said "I am the life." He performed many miracles that even His harshest critics could not deny. He suffered for our sins and died as the prophecies foretold, then rose from the dead, and He did it all so we could have a relationship with God.

OUR HOPE IN JESUS

In a world full of failed dreams and painful memories, with so much wrong and injustice, real hope can be a difficult thing to come by. Many will put their hope in uncertain things, but Jesus give us hope that we can be sure of.

Knowing Jesus can assure you that you have **forgiveness**. The Bible tells us in **1 John 1:9** *"if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."* Every Christian deals with there own personal sin and is in need of forgiveness daily. Keep short accounts with The Lord as you find yourself struggling with sin. Confess your sins to Him and trust that He is faithful and just to forgive you. You can move forward in life and into eternity knowing that your sins are remembered no more and that God has forgiven you! Knowing Jesus comes with another amazing privilege. You have **assurance that you will one day go to heaven**. Religions offer rules and guidelines but no real certainty as to where you'll go when you die. Knowing Jesus gives you the certain hope that you will be with Him in heaven. **John 3:16** says *"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."* If you ever feel unsure of your salvation, allow this verse and others like it to reassure your heart. Hold on to His promise and continue in His will for your life.

Along with the hope of heaven, you're also given the **hope of the resurrection**. Jesus has risen from the grave defeating death and has promised that you too will one day rise from the dead. You may have experienced the death of a loved one recently or perhaps suffered through a serious illness. Jesus has given us the hope of being physically raised from our graves to live in a place with no more sickness or death.

Temptations will arise everyday and Satan is hard at work trying to get us to stumble. Don't be surprised or discouraged when this happens. You're not the only one who faces these issues and you're not alone in dealing with them. In Jesus, we've been given the **power to overcome**. As you face a temptation remember **1 Corinthians 10:13** which says:

"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure."

Remember, The Bible offers great hope to those who stay close to Jesus, but it offers no hope to those who don't.

OUR HELP FROM JESUS

Avoiding mistakes and selfish decisions, remembering Jesus' promises, resisting temptation, knowing God's will; these things are difficult for every Christian. The Lord knows you need help and He's offered it to you!

In **John 14** Jesus promises to give us a helper that only His followers receive, His Holy Spirit. It's through the help of the Holy Spirit that you can be sensitive to your own sin in order to avoid it. It's through His help that you can remember

what Jesus has taught you. It's the Holy Spirit who teaches you the will of God for your life and gives you the strength to overcome sin in times of trial and temptation.

Jesus made another special promise to us. He said that anyone who asks for the Holy Spirit would receive Him (**Luke 11:13**). If you haven't yet asked for the gift of the Holy Spirit, ask Him now and believe God will give you the equipping you need. When times of loneliness come, remember what Jesus said in **John 14:16**

"I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever."

L1 RESPONSE

Look up the verses and answer the questions that follow.

1. **John 1:29** – Why did Jesus come into the world?

2. **John 3:16** – How can someone be saved?

3. **John 10:27** – Jesus is now your Good Shepherd. What does this verse say about the way you now live your life?

4. Review the questions above and briefly explain why you are saved.

5. **John 1:12** – What new relationship do you now have with God and what does this say about how He wishes to interact with you?

6. According to the section on **Our Hope In Jesus**, what are the four things mentioned that you can now trust Jesus to provide you?

7. **John 14:26** – What is the job of the Holy Spirit?

CALL TO ACTION:

The Bible says that we love God by loving the people around us. Show Jesus you love Him by doing something kind for someone in your life. You might do a chore for someone who needs help, or pay for someone's lunch, or maybe even apologize for a mistake you made in the past. **Whatever you decide to do, do it for Jesus and know that He's blessed by it.**

LESSON 2 – QUIET TIME

WHAT IS QUIET TIME?

#Time=Attention=Affection

We take time throughout our day to stop and meet some of our basic needs. We work, we play, we rest, we exercise, we eat... As a Christian, your greatest need is to connect with your heavenly Father one on one, and “Quiet Time” is when that happens. God desires to have a deep and meaningful relationship with you. Yet, the only way relationships can grow and thrive is through spending quality time together.

God has something special He would like to tell you, maybe a word of wisdom that will bless you as you apply it, maybe a warning that will protect you from making a bad decision, or perhaps a promise that will fill you with peace and hope. Whatever the Lord may desire to tell you, one thing is certain; you won't hear it if you're not listening. In **Proverbs 8:17** God promises us saying, *“those who seek me diligently will find me.”* The Lord is waiting for you. He's calling you to come away from the noise and commotion of the world, to a place where it's just the two of you.

GROWING IN THE WORD

In order for our cell phones to work, they need two major components. The first is a speaker, something that we can hear with. It would do us no good to have a conversation with someone we can't hear. There are many ways in which the Lord can speak to us; The Holy Spirit, the people at church, circumstances, but the primary way is through His Word. It's the speaker we put our ear to when we want to hear from Him.

The Bible offers wisdom for every believer, new and old. It contains some concepts that are very simple and some that are very complex. Don't be intimidated by things you may not understand. The main things in the Bible are the plain things; so don't feel as though you can't get anything from it on your own. Start in the book of John and read a little until the Lord shows you something. A few weeks later you may read a whole chapter a day, and then multiple chapters from different books. As you remain faithful in your quiet time, your appetite for the word will grow and your ability to hear from God will increase.

Here are a few pointers to get you started on the right foot:

1. Before you begin reading, take a moment to let God know you want to hear from Him and ask Him to help you understand. Then read with an expectation and an anticipation that God will speak to you.
2. As we read, we sometimes attempt to see what we want to see instead of what The Bible is actually saying. Be sure to allow The Bible to change your mind and try not to let your mind change the Bible.
3. Look for ways to respond (e.g. examples to follow, sin to stop, mistakes to avoid, promises to believe, commands to obey, actions to take).

It's exciting to think that as you read the Bible, you're learning about the living God. You see what He likes and dislikes. You learn what He desires for you and what He wants from you. Through regular time spent in its pages, you can begin to know the very heart of God.

GROWING THROUGH PRAYER

The second component that our cell phones need in order to help us communicate is a microphone. We need a way to talk as well as a way to hear. It would be difficult to get anywhere in a conversation if we didn't have a way to respond. Thankfully, we don't need to use some special device in order to pray to God. There's no formula or special language that's required. As a child of God, we can go directly to Him knowing that He hears us.

The Bible tells us that we're to be in constant prayer. You might be thinking, “I can't talk to God non-stop, all day. I don't really have that much to say. I have other people I need to communicate with throughout the day.” Well, it's not so much like a radio talk show where you fill every moment with words. It's more like the time you spend with a spouse or close friend. You may not always be talking, but you're aware of each other and you're comforted knowing the other person is there. This idea of constant prayer has been described as “the awareness of His thereness”. It's keeping the line of communication open to The Lord and using it often.

What can you pray about? Anything and everything. God wants to hear from you. He wants to hear you **praise** Him for who He is. As you read verses about His greatness, pray them back to Him and acknowledge them as true. He wants to hear your honesty about the areas where you struggle. So, as you read about certain sins, **confess** to Him the ones you wrestle with. You can develop a thankful heart by **thanking Him** for all He's given you. You can also go to Him with your needs. He wants you to **ask Him** to be the one to fulfill the needs and desires that you have. So, examine your heart and tell Him what you find, the good, the bad, the big matters, and the small. He cares about it all!

L2 RESPONSE

Look up the verses and answer the questions that follow.

1. **Psalm 63:1** - King David was a man who spent lots of quiet time with The Lord. How did David deal with his physical and spiritual needs?

2. What does David's response to difficult times say of his perception of God?

3. In your opinion, what made David's faith so strong?

4. **John 8:31,32** - According to Jesus, what separates a true follower of Jesus from those who just say they're Christian?

5. According to this verse, what do we learn when we read His Word?

6. What positive affect mentioned in verse 32 will this have on us?

7. **Philippians 4:6,7** - We all have things we can be anxious about. Think about some of the things that most concern you. What advice does God's Word give us in verse 6 regarding these concerns?

8. What happens to us as we develop the ability to follow this advice?

CALL TO ACTION:

A good way to get the most from your quiet time is by combining your growing in the word and your growing through prayer. Read through John chapter one. When something jumps out at you or really speaks to you, echo it back to The Lord through prayer.

Example: Verse 4 says "*In Him was life*". My prayer; "Lord, life really is found in You and only You! I know that you are the one who has given me life and I thank you for it."

LESSON 3 - FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship has been defined in jest as “two fellas on the same ship”. Silly, yes, but the image is powerful. Two or more people on the same ship by default are traveling in the same direction, and consequently, they have the same destination in mind. When we join with other believers in recreation or in worship, the focus, whether explicit or implicit, is being like Jesus.

Biblical fellowship is best defined by **Proverbs 27:17** “*As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.*”

Fellowship is designed by God to create spiritual growth and moral maturity. The Bible tells us in **Hebrews 10:25** “*let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*” By gathering with a loving community of trusted believers we enter into a give and receive relationship. At times we are called to give of our gifts, talents, time and wisdom; and at other times we are on the receiving end of those gifts.

L3 RESPONSE

Discussion and Self-Reflection Questions:

1. In **Acts 2:42** we find the ingredients for biblical fellowship. Briefly define in your own words the four components listed in the passage.

2. According to **2 Corinthians 6:14-17** what kind of fellowship should we avoid?

3. The “Lone Ranger” approach to Christianity is a myth that must be debunked. Considering the life of Jesus and passages we covered, why is fellowship important to your own personal growth?

4. Find your church bulletin or place of general information and list 3 ministries that could help you increase your fellowship opportunities with other believers.

5. List 3 people who challenge you to live more like Christ. If you can't think of anyone in particular, list Bible characters that you admire or aspects of the life of Christ that you desire for yourself.

LESSON 3 CALL TO ACTION:

If you have not identified three people in your life who encourage and challenge you to live for and trust in Jesus, pray that the Lord would provide you with godly relationships. If you have three people in mind, pray about writing them a “Thank You” card and deliver it to them. You may also want to include a request to them that they would continue to hold you accountable in a loving and gentle way.

Suggested Reading:

Read *Calvary Distinctives* by Pastor Chuck Smith for more information on the history of Calvary Chapel as well as our ministry philosophy.

LESSON 4 - SERVING

WHAT ARE THE GIFTS?

Throughout life, we're given opportunities to receive gifts and rewards. However, a gift is very different from a reward. Rewards are awarded for the completion of a task, contest or challenge. A reward is something that you can earn. A gift is something else entirely. According to the Bible, all of us have been given gifts by God. Salvation is a free gift from God, meaning that you could never earn the love and grace of God. Eternal life in heaven is a free gift from God, which we will enjoy along with other believers. But not all gifts are future based. We have been given the Holy Spirit who guides us daily in Spirit and in truth as well as convicts us of sin and comforts us in the midst of calamity. Lastly, we have been given spiritual gifts or **power tools for the construction and encouragement of the people of God**. Here is a list of gifts we find in scripture:

Romans 12 - Prophesying, serving others, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, showing kindness

1 Corinthians 12 - Giving wisdom, special knowledge, faith, healing, power to perform miracles, prophesying, discernment as to whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit, the ability to speak in unknown languages, the ability to interpret unknown languages.

WHAT IS MY GIFT?

First off, know that there is a difference between gifts and talents. Shaquille O'neal is 7'1" tall. When he extends his arm to dunk a basketball his reach is in the 11' range. He did nothing to earn his height nor did he develop his height over years of difficult practice. Shaq's height is the byproduct of genetic benefit. He has no reason to boast in his height; it's simply a **gift** he's been given.

It has been said that 10,000 hours are required for the mastery of a skill. When we spend time to develop a skill, **talent** is what's being cultivated. Spiritual gifts are not equal to hard earned talents. Spiritual gifts are aptitude and proclivities that come easy to you, that bless others, and glorify God. The application of spiritual gifts within the church and around others is something to be developed, but they are not the byproduct of any conjuring or human effort.

These special gifts are given to every believer as the Holy Spirit wishes to give them and in varying degrees. We may have one gift or we may have many. We may have one for a time and then have another for a time. To determine what your gift is, first pray to God to show you where you may be gifted and how He might wish to use you. After that, start looking for evidence of a specific gift and opportunities you might have to use certain gifts. Shaq's gift was apparent by those around him and it wasn't long before he was given opportunity to exercise it. The same is true for our spiritual gifts. Those at church might recognize your gifts before you do and God will definitely give you opportunities to be used. One thing is certain, it's easier to steer a moving car than it is a parked car. Get busy. Get involved and allow God to confirm the areas you're gifted in and the areas you might not be. You have a special gift from God and, though you may not even realize what it is, the church family needs it and would be lacking if you weren't involved.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

"Do what you can, where you are, with what you have, to the glory of God." When God called Moses, He had a shepherd's staff in his hand and God used that staff to work miracles. What's in your hand? Look around you. With whom do you most often identify and surround yourself? Are you a cashier at a convenience store? Can you teach other employees biblical principles that will help them serve the company more effectively. Does your work ethic demonstrate your obedience to a higher authority? Is there opportunity throughout the day for you to show mercy and compassion to people who are in need of those virtues? Is there a need that you have identified as something you can remedy?

Remember there are two kinds of people: servants and critics. Both can spot problems and inefficiencies wherever they are, but only one of them chooses to get involved to help.

L4 RESPONSE

1. In **Romans 12:4-8** we find the context for spiritual gifts. Carefully read this section placing special emphasis on the individual gifts and their use in the church. Which gifts fall most inline with your personality, talents that you have developed over time, occupation, and enjoyment?

2. Imagine a birthday party. At that party someone is bringing out the cake when suddenly they trip and the cake comes crashing to the ground. Briefly describe the first thing you would do.

3. Based on your answer to the previous question, which spiritual gift(s) from **Romans 12** and **1 Corinthians 12** best describe how you chose to act?

4. What needs have been made obvious to you by the Holy Spirit here at Calvary Tucson?

CALL TO ACTION:

In the foyer of the church there's an information kiosk. Pick up a volunteer application and pray about filling it out. The application will cover some basic general information about yourself as well as bible related questions. Will this be the year when you chose to use what God has given you to bless Him and your church family?

Suggested Readings:

Read *Living Waters* by Pastor Chuck Smith for a more indepth study of the role of the Holy Spirit and His equipping ministry in your life.

LESSON 5 - SHARING

WHY DO I SHARE?

For all those who have come to know Jesus, there have been people who were willing to share. For you, it may have been a family member or coworker. Perhaps a friend invited you to church and you heard from a pastor. Maybe you heard a song that told of God's love. Whatever the case may be, this one thing is certain; Jesus wants everyone to know Him and He has chosen His followers to be the ones to introduce Him to the world. God is perfectly capable of getting the job done without our help. However, He has blessed us with the privilege of partnering with Him in the greatest work ever to be accomplished on earth, the salvation of souls!

So we are to go and tell others the gospel or "good news" of Jesus Christ by proclaiming it to them. As we have heard the good news about Jesus and have received God's love and forgiveness, we want others to receive it too. We never want to keep this good news to ourselves. So by faith and prayer, step out and share the love of Jesus that others may receive the hope of eternal life!

HOW DO I SHARE?

There's no need to be anxious or nervous about sharing. God has done all the work to save people by sending His Son. God is the one working in the hearts of people, preparing them to receive Jesus. We merely have two tasks. Though they can be difficult at times, they are quite simple. We **live** our faith and we **speak** our faith. We can't separate the two. If we speak of faith without living it, we are likely to do more harm than good. If we live our faith, we're certain to have opportunities to speak of it. As we love and serve the people around us, those who are searching for truth will be drawn to us. As opportunities arise to share with others, it's important that we're prepared to clearly explain the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thankfully, it's simple enough. One easy way to remember what to share is by knowing the **Three S's**.

STANDARD - What many people don't know and need to realize is that God's standard for heaven is perfection. Good people don't go to heaven, nor religious people, nor sincere people. Only two types of people make it to heaven, perfect people and forgiven people. *"For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws."* - **James 2:10** (NLT)

SIN - The next thing people need to know is that **no one is perfect**. *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."* (**Romans 3:23** NLT).

SALVATION - Now that the bad news is understood, it's time to share the good news! Our only hope is to be forgiven and there's only one way that happens.

God knew we would all sin against Him and that He would have to rescue us. That's why He sent His only Son to die for our sins! *"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."* - **John 3:16** (NLT)

As we share our faith in Jesus, it's important to give people the opportunity to respond. After they've heard the gospel, ask them if they would like to put their trust in Jesus and be forgiven? Invite them to follow Jesus. Most people need time to think about what they've heard but some are ready to believe in Jesus that very moment! If this is the case and they would like to receive Jesus, a prayer similar to the following is a great way to help them express that new faith in Christ.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. Please forgive me. I believe Jesus died for me and rose from the dead. I ask you to be my Lord and Savior. Come into my life and fill me with your Spirit. I receive you now, and I thank you for eternal life!"

WITH WHOM DO I SHARE?

We are to share our faith in Jesus with all people, no one is exempt; the cashier at the store, the man on the corner, the kids at the mall. This is what we do as Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ. **Matthew 28:19** is Jesus' last words to his disciples in which He says, *"go and make disciples of all the nations"*.

As we picture what it might look like to make disciples of the whole world, it's important that we don't forget the most important group we ought to share with; those closest to us. We have the ability to influence the people around us in ways no one else can. As a father or mother, brother or sister, peer, or close friend, God desires to use you to reach your own small corner of the world.

Everyone deserves to hear about God's love and forgiveness and it's available to all who will call upon Jesus and be saved! Many, near and far, don't know of God's love, so we must tell them. We have believed and received the good news of Jesus Christ, so let's go to our family and friends, co-workers and fellow students; to anyone we meet to share our faith!

L5 RESPONSE

Look up the verses and answer the questions that follow.

1. **Romans 10:13-15** This passage lists, in reverse order, 6 steps. Find all six steps and write them in the order that they would be carried out.

2. **Romans 1:16** Paul, the author of Romans, recognized people would be intimidated to share. What did Paul understand about the Gospel that helped him to share?

3. **Acts 17:32-34** We should be prepared for the ways people might respond to us when we share. What were the 3 different responses that Paul received after sharing the gospel?

4. **Matthew 10:16** As we see in the previous question, some people won't like what we have to say. However, we shouldn't allow this to discourage us from sharing. How do you think we apply Jesus' command in this verse as we share?
