



"What a man is alone on his knees before God, that he is, and no more."

—Robert Murray M'Cheyne

22-Oct-21

## Do We Know God?

Jesus tells us in [John 17:3](#) that eternal life is to know [God](#) and [Jesus Christ](#). "Know" in this verse does not suggest mere intellectual knowledge but goes far beyond it—to having a close, intimate relationship with Him, as would a husband and wife (see how the same Greek word for "know" here is used in [Matthew 1:25](#)). Our future is to be the Bride of Jesus Christ ([II Corinthians 11:2](#); [Romans 7:4](#); [Isaiah 54:5](#); [Revelation 21:9](#)). No person wants a future mate who, before the marriage, shows no enthusiasm to develop the relationship.

Christ is no different. In the [Parable of the Ten Virgins](#), the foolish virgins miscalculate their preparation. They have not done enough. The bridegroom's message to them in [Matthew 25:12](#) is, "I do not know you." The [Laodiceans](#) likewise misjudge their relationship with Christ, believing it is sufficient. In [Revelation 3:16](#), His message to them is, "Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."

Christ is serious about having a Bride who has already built a relationship that, when married, He knows will last for eternity. Not caring enough now to create a close relationship, to open the door to our Betrothed, is a red flag.

He does not take this dangerous warning sign lightly as the foolish virgins and Laodiceans demonstrate.

How can we build a relationship of such intimacy that God and Christ know it is a relationship that will last for an eternity? The good news is that we have an answer—we have had it for decades. Herbert Armstrong answers this very question in his booklet, "What is [Faith](#)?" (emphasis in original): "You get to *know* Him in prayer. We are too close to the *material* things. Through prayer, *much* more prayer, you can come closer to God and the *spiritual* things."

Any good relationship is the result of many conversations. Prayer is talking to God. What should we talk about to God? Benjamin Chapman provides some ideas in a sermon summary that appeared in the August 28, 1978, *Good News*:

That relationship you build with God is based primarily, fundamentally upon your prayer life. That's how you can have, right now, an encounter with God. Do you realize that your salvation depends upon your prayer life? Your most important Christian responsibility is your prayer life, your time of [contact with God](#) Almighty. There are so many facets of our lives that are in some way dependent upon prayer.

Spiritual growth, how you progress in God's Church, how you are able to take the trials of life, your Bible knowledge, your understanding of God's Work, the marital relationship you have with your husband or your wife, how you train and rear your children and your relationship with them, how you treat your workers or your boss, how you live with your neighbors, how you get along with fellow workers are all partially dependent upon your prayer life. Prayer is really the essence of your whole spiritual life.

Prayer is one thing God expects of us—that we set aside time to visit with Him, to talk to Him. Your schedule should really be built around your prayer life if you really want to prepare for God's Kingdom.

How often should that conversation with God take place? In one of Herbert Armstrong's radio broadcasts on the [book of Hebrews](#), he says, paraphrased, "You need to be in contact with God every hour!" The apostle Paul instructs in [I Thessalonians 5:17](#), "Pray without ceasing." Similarly, [Hebrews 13:15](#) urges us to offer prayer to God "continually." God's purpose for us requires a great deal of conversation because it is about the relationship, about knowing God and Christ.

To expand on how often, notice the advice Mr. Armstrong gave to church members in the October 1957 *Good News*:

You must go to a private place, alone with God, and have *long talks with Him*—yes, *every day*! Unburden your heart to Him. Take *all* your problems, your interests, your plans, your troubles to Him. Talk over *everything* with Him, *continually*. Then, even when going about your work—when walking down the street—when driving your car, or *wherever you are* or whatever you do, talk with God as you work or as you drive or walk along. Go to a private place, and kneel in prayer (on both knees) as often as you can, and at least once every day. But *talk with God often* in between. *Pray without ceasing!* (Italics ours.)

In another radio broadcast, the first in a series on Hebrews, he first quotes [Hebrews 4:16](#): "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." He then wonders, Are we taking full advantage of this great privilege God offers?

How often do you go to that throne of grace? How often do you take advantage of this? How often do you claim the promises that God has made on your behalf, to fight your battles for you, bring you out of all your troubles, to solve every problem and trouble that comes along and show you the way out, to guide you, to lead you, to give you [wisdom](#), to heal you when you are sick, to provide every need if you are in real need? Of course, He didn't say every want; and we think a want is a need quite often when it isn't, I know.

Notice David's attitude toward God in [Psalm 63:1](#): "God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water." With this enthusiasm for the relationship, it is no wonder God said of David that He found "a man after My own heart" ([Acts 13:22](#))! God found a person who wanted a relationship with Him with a passion that would last for an eternity.

In Daniel 6, we see the priority that the prophet placed on his relationship with God, built through prayer. For him, to lose contact with God for even part of a day was more of a risk than facing lions! His relationship with the Lion of Judah outweighed any fear of a mere physical lion. For Daniel, prayer was a life-and-death issue. Is it for us? What excuses would we have made to avoid those lions? What excuses do we make today to justify a lack of prayer?

God and Christ want us to know Them intimately and personally, to have a relationship that will last an eternity. They have given us the means: prayer. Are we taking full advantage of it? At the appearance of the Bridegroom, unlike the foolish virgins and the Laodiceans, will we have made ourselves ready ([Revelation 19:7](#))?

- Pat Higgins

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Knowing, Following, and Striving for Christ](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

Christians are set apart from others because they believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead and that He is alive and actively interceding for us right now. Because of this, we must know, follow, and strive to conform to Christ's image. Our goal is to know Christ on a personal and intimate basis, knowing the power of His resurrection. This knowledge should be a practical understanding of His power and of the depths of His suffering, leading to a daily pattern of life that will become eternal. Only by knowing Christ can we

possibly know the Father. Nothing is truly knowledge unless it is practiced in daily life, empowered by God's Holy Spirit. Part of knowing Christ is to share His sufferings, enduring persecution. We should make every effort to diligently live for Christ, living among those who are spiritually dead. God had a purpose for calling us, an event which begins a new process of spiritual life, being conformed to the image of His Son. We have an obligation to follow Christ. Discipleship is personal. We should never base our Christian living on the circumstances of a brother or sister in Christ. Fighting and overcoming our carnal human nature is not easy, but the rewards for doing so are enormous. Nothing we give up in this life will compare with the trade-off in God's Kingdom. It is a total win-win proposition. We need to let go of the past, and press forward to the goal of conforming to the image of Jesus Christ.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[The Elements of Motivation \(Part Six\): Eternal Life](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

If you knew you would live forever, how would you live? John Ritenbaugh explains that, biblically, eternal life is much more than living forever: It is living as God lives!

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