

Intimacy With Christ (Part Four)

Knowing God's Will

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We are going to begin this sermon by turning to John 17:2-3. When I began this series, it was built around a few things that I had read in a very small booklet called *Intimacy With The Almighty* by Charles Swindoll. During this series of sermons I have mentioned several times that the purpose of simplifying our lives, clearing out time so that we can be alone with God, and having truly quiet time for meditation, is to help us come know God.

Shortly after giving that last sermon in this series, I realized I had not defined in any thorough manner what it means to know God, what it means to be intimate with the Almighty. What good is it for me to exhort you to seriously clear out time for God if we do not clearly see where we are to head?

John 17:2-3 As you have given him [Jesus] power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

These two verses accentuate how important it is to know God. We look for Bible definitions of things all through the book, but here is the Bible definition of *eternal life*. It is to *know God*. Knowing God is so important, that if one does not know God, that person does not have eternal life.

Jesus' statement is somewhat elusive, because we may not correctly understand what eternal life means, and so, in one sense, all these two verses do is show us that these two terms relate to one another. They show that eternal life and knowing God are inextricably related, but that does not define what *knowing God* is. The two terms only broadly define each other by showing that they are synonymous, but if you know one, you are going to know the other.

The Bible does clearly define what it means to know God. I think one of the more interesting things about this is that Jesus did not say that eternal life is to live forever. Now certainly eternal life involves living forever. It is life without end, because that is what the word eternal means. But He is also clearly implying that eternal life involves more than endless life. What good would it be for one to live endlessly, like a demon?

Maybe we can relate to this even easier. What good would it be to live life endlessly like we are now? You may have only one leg, or one eye, or no legs, or you might be a quadriplegic. You might be blind, you might be deaf, or maybe your tongue was cut out, or maybe you are psychotic or neurotic. Maybe there is some kind of debilitating disease of the mind. There are all kinds of things that we could come up with where, if we were to live forever with these, it would not be fun. It would not be a boon to do this.

Jesus wants everybody to have eternal life, so He is implying, without directly saying it, that eternal life means more than living forever. There is a quality to the kind of life that He is talking about which will make living endlessly wonderfully enjoyable, delightful, so that we never want it to end, and indeed it will not.

This message then is going to be devoted to a fairly thorough searching out of this subject. At the beginning of the sermon it may sound a little bit complicated. It may get rather boring because I am going to be looking at some things in a little bit of detail. I will be mixing verses that contain the word knowledge, as in, let us say, *knowledge of God*, and verses containing *know*. The only difference is almost always *knowledge* represents the noun form and indicates the accumulation of something, and *know* is the verb form and indicates that either one is involved in the process or is being urged to get involved. In both cases they apply to this subject, and I will keep them separate for you.

I also want you to understand that this is not going to be a study of a singular word, because there are a variety of words that are translated into the English *know*, or the English *knowledge*. It is going to be more a study of context that is important because it shows the use the author made of those words when they were written.

First I am going to give you a simple definition of "to know," and I have taken it under the heading of *knowledge* as it appears in *Unger's Dictionary of the Bible*. Even though it is simple, it is not without value in understanding the term. Also I want us to understand that this is not the Bible's definition, but men's interpretation of the way the term is used. It is accurate. It is right, but understand that it is just one aspect of the word.

Now quoting from *Unger's Dictionary*: "The expression *to know* sometimes means to approve of, and take delight in." This will have impact on our understanding as we go along. The expression *to know* sometimes means *to approve of and take delight in*.

Psalm 1:6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The Hebrew word here is the one that is most frequently translated *know*. It is *yada*. The thought is that because God knows the way the righteous live, He takes delight in them and blesses them. I think you can begin to get the implication right out of this that God is not standoffish, but is intimately acquainted with the lives of His people. We are the focus of His attention. We are the apple of His eye. We are the pupil of His eye, and so if we are righteous—that is, we are keeping His commandments—He takes delight in us and He blesses us. If He was not aware, the implication is He would not bless.

We are going to go now to Romans 8:29. Here in the Greek New Testament there are several Greek words that are translated *know*, and the sense has to be understood within its context. Usually it is very clearly seen. Here the verb is *proginosko*. It is the word from which we get our English word *prognosis*. It means *to know beforehand*, indicating ahead in terms of time.

Romans 8:29 For whom He [God] did know beforehand, [He was more than just acquainted. He intimately knew them.], He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Is that not a blessing? It is saying here that those He foreknew He took *delight* in them—not the way they were, but rather the way they were going to be when He was done with them. So God looks forward to changing us with delightful anticipation. He loves His work of creating sons in His image. He takes delight in that.

These terms can also carry the concept of *delight* one step further into the realm of *cherishing*. You notice how intimate things are beginning to become. With delight you can observe something and find it humorous, enjoyable, and yet not really be a part of it. You can be a little bit standoffish. But when you begin to cherish something, this adds an element of feeling that mere delight does not have.

This next one is kind of interesting because it is not easily seen. Perhaps if we read Greek we would see it a little bit easier. In John 7 the word "know" appears a half dozen times in a very short number of verses. It involves knowing God.

John 7:26 But, lo, He [Christ] speaks boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

The people who are speaking are those who are listening to Christ. The "they" are the scribes and Pharisees, the rulers among the Jews. Now obviously they did not know.

John 7:27 Howbeit [they say] we know this man whence he is: but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is.

This was a lie. We might call it a false doctrine that they believed, that nobody would know where the Messiah was from. You might say they were mentally shoving Jesus aside, shoving His teaching aside, and rejecting Him on the basis of their false doctrine. Jesus then responds:

John 7:28-29 Then cried Jesus in the temple as He taught, saying, "You both know Me, and you know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom you know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He has sent Me.

Most of the time here the verb that is being used is *eido*. In verse 28 it is used in the sense of *knowing about, of being somewhat aware, or having some familiarity with*. See, "You both *know* me." "You are somewhat familiar with me." "You know where I am from." "You know about me." But it is obvious they did not know Him in the biblical sense. This will become clearer and clearer as we go along.

They were somewhat aware. They could have said that He was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, and that they knew His father was a carpenter and that He did some of that work too. They knew He was going around the country preaching. They knew that, and so Jesus threw that right back in their face.

But then Jesus comes to them and says that they are not even familiar with the Father. Now wait a minute here! This is the chosen people—the ones who had made the Old Covenant with God, and the ones to whom God revealed Himself. They had the heritage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses and David, and here is Jesus telling them they were not even familiar with God. They were not acquainted with Him. We are going to see this clearly when we get about three-quarters of the way through the sermon.

In verse 29 Jesus uses this statement: "For I am from Him" or "He has sent me." That sets the context for verse 29—Jesus' relationship with the Father in contrast to the relationship that those listening to Him had. In other words, the scribes, the Pharisees—those listening to Him—had a very distant relationship with the Father. They knew somewhat about Him, but on the other hand, Jesus' relationship with God was very close. What He is saying without saying it—it very strongly implied—is, "If you knew the Father the way I do, you would be talking about Him and behaving as I do."

Now the Jews took great exception to what Jesus said to them, that they did not know God. They thought, I am sure in all sincerity, that they knew God. I need to ask a question I want you to think about. Do you really know God, or are you merely familiar with things *about* Him? I think that by the time we get through this sermon you are going to be able to answer that somewhat, and I think that you are going to see that you do not know the Father as well as you think you do—that is, when we define this by the Bible's definition of it. You can see that this offended the Jews greatly, because if you follow the context right through chapter 8, they were ready to kill Jesus by the time this was over.

We are going to go to Ephesians 3. Paul is telling them of something that was his prayer.

Ephesians 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Here again is another use of the word *ginosko*, only it does not have the prefix in front of it, and that means *to know*. But here in this context it very strongly implies "experiencing." You can read that as "You may *experience* the love of Christ," because that is the way it is intended to be understood. In this kind of context, the word gives the sense closeness, of intimacy.

We are going to go to the verse in Genesis 4 that we are probably most familiar with of all in which the verb *to know* appears. This is perhaps the application that is best known to us.

Genesis 4:1 And Adam *knew* Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

Here the word is *yada* again. Perhaps because of the picture that this verse communicates to us, it helps us most to understand the feeling, the closeness, the devotion, the cherishing, the interaction that the words themselves simply cannot imply.

The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* has a very complete, detailed explanation of this word in fine print. It takes them about two or three pages

to explain this word. We are not going to go into all the details of that, but I am going to extract a few things from there:

The verb to know is used two ways in the Bible: in a realistic sense, and in a scientific sense.

We are not even going to consider the scientific sense because it merely means to have knowledge about something or someone. It means only to be aware of the general features of some object, and that is obviously the way the Jews knew God. They were aware of a few things, but they did not know God at all in a realistic way.

They also call the *realistic* sense an *objective* sense.

It implies a personal relationship between the knower and the thing known. It implies an eagerness to understand the whatness.

That word is not even in the dictionary. It is not in my spell check, either, but I will tell you what it means. It means *specific things*.

It implies an eagerness to understand specific things of the object one has a relationship with, and thus is frequently rendered as to know, or to understand, to have knowledge of by experience, in most lexicons.

Just think about that. To understand the *whatness* is to understand *specific things* about the object that one has a relationship with. Put that back into Genesis 4:1 where it says "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she bore a son." Now who knows more specific things about the one with whom one has a relationship than a man of his wife, or a wife of her husband? Are you beginning to get the idea of the intimacy, of the closeness, of the cherishing, of the desire, of the feeling that is in this word? I hope you are.

We are now going to notice how this experience is illustrated in a series of verses beginning with I Kings 8:38. This is in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple.

I Kings 8:38 What prayer and supplication so ever be made by any man, or by all your people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house.

It is obvious that Solomon is referring to a person praying as a result of his own intimate experience with an affliction. It is not merely something that he is observing in other people, but rather it is he himself feeling the pain. He is undergoing the suffering, so thus the affliction is something personally experienced, personally suffered, as contrasted to something known from a book, or as we would say today, reading about it in a newspaper.

We can see murder wholesale portrayed in a movie, with blood, guts, and gore flying all over the place, and it does not affect us. That is how hardened we have become. We can say to somebody, "I know that because I saw it," but we saw it detached from it. We did not really experience it ourselves.

Let us go to Isaiah 47:8. He is talking about Babylon here.

Isaiah 47:8 Therefore hear now this, you that are given to pleasures that dwell carelessly, that says in your heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.

Read that "I shall not *personally experience* the loss of children."

Turn to Isaiah 53:3. This is the section on Christ and His crucifixion.

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

Here the verb is translated "acquainted."

We know what Christ went through. He was not detached. He has suffered. It is not something that He merely read about, or even watched as a witness. This is to point out the fact that He was going to experience these things Himself and suffer as men suffer, and then He would *know* it. He would know what it is like to be a man.

Are you beginning to see it? Even God had to go through this stuff by experiencing suffering, pain, torment, rejection, disappointment, discouragement, and loss of hope so that the proper relationship could be made to these things. We do not really know something until we have done it, or that we have attempted to do it. As long as we are not going through it, we can maintain a sense of detachment from it, and it does not have the same impact as it does when we experience it. *Then* we know.

Eternal life is *to know God*. We begin to see very clearly that it implies the awareness of a specific relationship in which the individual stands with the object or event, or the significance the object has for him personally. It is not an awareness that we might describe as idealistic, or theoretical, or academic, but rather one that is involved emotionally and practically, as we will see in a little bit.

Understand that the object we are speaking of here is God. We have to add one more thing to get an even fuller picture, and that is the way the Bible perceives a person to be. I do not mean here that the Bible perceives us to be evil, holy, good, or bad, but rather it perceives us as a *differentiated whole* rather than body, soul, and spirit, or body and mind operating independently.

Differentiated whole means that the Bible acknowledges we have parts, but in terms of relationship, it does not separate those parts. Even more specifically, in terms of knowing, it means it is something the whole person is involved in, not his mind only. "If your eye offend you, pluck it out." The whole body is involved in this relationship with God. There is no part of our body that we can separate from this relationship and say, "God does not mind," or "He will overlook it." What this allows for is that in this kind of knowledge, the *knowing God* is always accompanied by an emotional reaction. This is why the word "heart"—meaning the muscle that is pumping—is perceived by the Bible as being *a seat of knowledge*.

Psalm 49:3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

In this presentation or discourse that David gives in this Psalm, it is both factual (the mouth speaking wisdom) and heartfelt (emotional, empathetic, understanding.) The Bible shows the whole of man involved. He is a *differentiated whole*.

Proverbs 2:2 So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding.

Here the ear is used as the passage to the mind for wisdom, and the heart is poetically seen as contributing understanding through an emotional reaction to what the mind hears.

If you know what Isaiah 6 is about, you are going to know that there were strong emotions in this chapter. Isaiah fell on his face at the sight of God.

Isaiah 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Here we see many of the parts normally associated with the accumulation of knowledge grouped together. The reason is because the Bible has this tendency, that from its perspective it sees the person as a *whole*. You know this is the way it is. Knowledge comes to you through all of your senses, from every part of your body, whether it is your big toe or little toe. If it is touched or hurt, it communicates knowledge to you, does it not? The whole body, though it has parts, is contributing to the accumulation of knowledge, and we see that the whole body is involved in the practical use of that knowledge as well, for right or wrong.

I am going to give a series of verses which shows that there is a positive, and indeed a delightful emotional reaction in those who really do know *God*.

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night.

In this Psalm two ways of life are contrasted, and *delight* is the emotional response, an eager pursuit through meditation—the practical response to the accumulation of knowledge.

Psalm 19:7-10 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him.

All the parts of the body get involved in this accumulation of knowledge, and if it is a true seeking of God there is a delightful reaction to it.

Psalm 40:16 Let all those that seek you rejoice and be glad in you: let such as love your salvation say continually, the LORD be magnified.

What we have seen so far is that *to know God* requires facts. It requires practical experience. It requires a positive emotional response and the involvement of the whole person. Though this may be defined as objective by men, it is certainly not coldly detached. It is not merely academic or theoretical book knowledge about the object that one is seeking, but it is realistic. It is practical. It is emotionally rejoicing and an intimate association with the object of the knowledge.

All of this is leading to something. **The comprehension of the object—God—will manifest itself in an action with the object—God—that will**

correspond to our understanding of the relationship. This is very important! It has to be that way because this word *to know* is describing and used within a relationship.

Let me make this real simple. **The more and better we know, the stronger the reaction.** This may sound complicated, but it is not.

Isaiah 1:2-4 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel does not know, my people do not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Notice this complaint from God. He is saying that the ox and the ass understood their relationship with their master, and the result was they carried out their responsibility to him, pulling the plow or pulling the cart, or bearing a load, whatever it was. Because Israel did not know God, they did not carry out their responsibility in their relationship with Him as children in His family.

Do you mean that His own children did not know Him? That is true. That is right. Now how could He tell? It did not matter how much book knowledge they had of Him. It did not matter how many technicalities they knew about the Bible, they did not know Him. God was disgusted with them because they did not react in the way children should. It is that simple. If somebody knows God, he will react in a certain way to that relationship. If the person does not react in a certain way that God expects, that person does not know Him. Let me modify it. The person does not know Him very much, or the person is not really intimate with Him. A person may have a mere familiarity about Him, but he does not know Him. God can tell a person does not know Him because the person does not react the way a child of God would react, like a child who really knows his Father.

Now what was the result? Israel and God could not walk together in fellowship. It was not that they did not have book knowledge of Him. Rather their failure to follow through with their responsibility showed that they failed to understand the relationship.

Now let me make this really clear.

Romans 10:1-3 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

There it is. We know God in proportion to our submission to the righteousness of God. If we can understand Romans 10:2-3, that Israel did not know God even though they knew about Him—and this was at the very foundation of their relationship—they really did not believe God in the first place. They had head knowledge about God, and they were puffed up over that, but the way they lived proved they did not know God. The result was, in the time of Jesus and the apostles, the Sadducees and the Pharisees and their false religion.

It is this principle that makes it possible for a person to have tremendous amounts of knowledge about God, be very religious, and write books, commentaries, and whatever, explaining ingenious technicalities, and yet never know God in the biblical sense. Brethren, this is also why it does not take any more than just normal average intelligence to be converted. The action that manifests that one really knows God is *faithful and true obedience*.

This is what is expected of children, and children will give that to parents they believe and love. If they do not believe and love them, they are skeptical, fearful, and overly self-concerned, and they won't give obedience.

This is what God is saying about knowing Him, that comprehension—the knowing of the object (God) will reveal itself in the way one lives. This

explains why Jesus said what He did in John 7, that "If you knew God the way I do, you would speak of Him the way I do, and you would behave the way I do." That is a paraphrase, but nonetheless it catches the essence of what He was saying there.

In the biblical sense then, to know God is to live like God. That is what eternal life is, because anybody who lives like God lives is going to be given endless life by God at the resurrection because they can walk together. They know each other.

I have gone through this rather lengthy foundation because I want it to be abundantly clear in our minds why some of the Bible writers said what they did.

Jeremiah 22:11-16 For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum [also known as Jehoahaz] the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; he shall not return thither anymore. But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more. Woe unto him that builds his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that uses his neighbor's service without wages, and gives him not for his work; that says, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cuts him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shall you reign, because you closet yourself in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to *know Me*? says the LORD.

Now who knew God? Josiah knew God. As to Shallum (Jehoahaz), and then actually Jehoiakim, who was Jehoahaz's brother and also a son of Josiah, God is contrasting their works with their father's, and in doing this God makes this very significant statement regarding *knowing Him*. Josiah *knew Him*, and God knew that Josiah knew God by the way that Josiah conducted his life.

You can look at this story in the Bible. Josiah was the last good great king of Judah, but he did something very foolish, or he might have gone down as

being the greatest, maybe just under David a shade. He was that great, but his sons did not learn what made Josiah great. What made Josiah great was that he did things the way God would do things were God a man. What he did showed God, "That man knows Me. He understands Me. If I were there I would act just like Josiah is doing. I would do it the way Josiah did."

You can read about Josiah. He threw the idols out and killed the priests of Baal. He did a major housecleaning in Judah. He turned things around, using his position of power to do that. Now Shallum and Jehoiakim were just the opposite of their godly father in temperament, in action, and in attitude toward God. As a result, they acted toward men in a covetous, oppressive, and violent manner. That is why God gives this description of what they did with their lives. They built and beautified sumptuous homes with forced, unpaid labor.

Undoubtedly Josiah enjoyed the good things of life as well, but he did it without injustice or extortion toward his fellow man. Josiah served the people by doing as God would have done were He a man in a similar situation.

Josiah's knowledge of God was translated into action comparable to God's; thus he knew God. So a person *knowing God* is commensurate with his conduct when his conduct is like God's. Jesus' knowing of God was perfect. What was the result? A sinless life. Thus He could say, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

Let us go to I John 2:3. This ought to become very clear.

I John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Is that not clear? Josiah kept God's commandments to the extent that he understood them.

I John 2:4-6 He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. [That person does not know God.] But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He

that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

That becomes so clear. If we really know God, it is not just talk. It is not merely something academic. It will manifest itself in a true obedience to Him to the extent of the knowledge, or as John says here, "to His commandments." Otherwise, the person is a liar, or virtually in ignorance of major parts of elements of the relationship.

I John 3:6 Whosoever abides in him sins not: whosoever sins has not seen him, neither known him. [That is pretty clear.]

I John 3:15 Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

A murderer is a sinner. If a person really knows God, that person will not take the life of another person because he will see that person as God sees him were God a man. Did Jesus ever take another person's life even though He undoubtedly had powers that enabled Him to do things like that? He said, "Don't you think that I can call twelve legions of angels?" But He knew that God in a similar situation would not do such a thing, that He would want Jesus to submit to His will, and Jesus did, therefore showing He knew God, and He did not take somebody else's life.

A person will not take his own life in suicide either, because taking another person's life reveals the person does not know God. He does not love God or fellow man; therefore he cannot walk with God until he repents and gets to know God.

This is becoming very clear that *knowing God* is **moral** in its expression, but there is more than that.

I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

II John 6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments: This is the commandment, that, as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

The bottom line of defining love is terse and clear. It is keeping the commandments. But that is not all there is to love, because we know that love has an emotional element to it. Love could be coldly detached, analytical, and controlling if all it consisted of was keeping certain laws, but love also consists of concern for another's well-being, sympathy, empathy, desire, cherishing, devotion, loyalty, and trust. It is a veritable storehouse of feelings for the security and well-being of others.

I John 4:4-6 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

We are adding something else to this picture, and this has very interesting ramifications for those who know God. We all know that *sin is the transgression of the law*, and that *love is the keeping of the commandments*. We have to be careful, for it is very easy for us to allow ourselves to become trapped into a too rigid definition of sin and love, because it limits growth and overcoming and knowing God even better.

I John 2:28-29 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that does righteousness is born of him.

I John 3:1-3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but

we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he [God] is pure.

Now back to the definition of love—keeping the commandments—and the definition of sin—the transgression of those commandments.

Many times the word *Torah* is translated *law* or *commandment*, and I have no problem with that because that is what the context calls for, and that is a way the word can be used. But the word *Torah* more correctly is the synonym of the English word *instruction*, and that is much broader than *law*. Sin could be precisely defined as *transgressing God's instruction*, and *love* as *keeping God's instruction*.

God's instruction is much broader and has much greater depth than ten laws. God instructs us in kindness, mercy, hospitality, beauty, dress, even barbering, generosity, justice, benevolence, gossiping, judging, health, handling money, childrearing, husband or wife relationships, leadership, government, tact, discretion, courage, sacrifice, pride, foolishness, humility, and on and on and on it goes. There must be a thousand different subjects that He instructs us on in the expression of our personality.

God sets standards all the way through the Book that we need to be striving to do as He would do. Now He has shown these things in His Word either by direct command, a proverb, the example of Jesus Christ, or the examples of others that He was working through. When we transgress those instructions we fall short of the glory of God, and that is what sin is. It also reveals to those of discernment how little we really know of God.

Knowing God then does not involve just keeping the commandments. It does not involve just what would you call love. It involves thousands, perhaps, of other expressions that we need time and experience to purify ourselves so they become like God's.

Hebrews 1:1-3 God, who at sundry times and in different manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds: Who being the

brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Jesus had perfect knowledge of God the Father; thus He perfectly exemplified Him all of His sinless life. Never even once did He come short of the glory of God in any aspect of life. It is right here that repentance, overcoming, and growing come into the picture. It is right here that the previous sermons that I gave come back into the picture. We need time and a simpler lifestyle, solitude, and quiet to understand and approach the problem of becoming into the image of God even as Jesus was. That is the goal in our life now that God has called us.

John 7:15-19 And the Jews marveled, saying, How knows this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory: but he that seeks his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keep the law? Why go you about to kill me?

Jesus did not need any more evidence to know that they did not know God. He did not need any more evidence to know that they were not keeping the commandments of God, because if they were keeping the commandments of God, and if they knew God, they would have never done what they were doing.

The important thing for you and me to understand is—if any man will do His will, he will know. It does not matter whether it's *know doctrine* or *know God*; the *experiencing* of doing the commands of God, doing the instructions of God, is absolutely required to know God and to have eternal life. They are synonymous terms. It must be done.

I am going to add Matthew 7 to this. There are people who want to throw out the law of God. Once you begin to see this kind of stuff you can understand how devilish those things are, like them saying the New Covenant does not

have any law connected to it. So many of God's people are getting destroyed by accepting that trash. They will never know God unless they keep His law.

Matthew 7:21-23 Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] in your name? And in your name have cast out devils? And in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.

You see, it works both ways. God knows us by our actions, and we come to know God by our commandment keeping. What Jesus began His prayer with is so important to understand. Book knowledge will not do it. It is book knowledge *and* experience *and* emotional reaction. It is cherishing. It is delighting. It is running after God, seeking Him with all of our heart for the purpose of keeping His law and glorifying Him with what we *do* that matters to Him. That is what makes us into what He is. It has to be practiced.

So to *know* God is always experiential. Our own experience teaches us we learn better doing than thinking. It is not that thought is not required, but action, more than thought, and especially when it is combined with emotion, gives vital understanding and really consolidates meaning to what we are involved in. This is the practical and positive way God's values are written in our hearts, and they become ours. Then we *know* Him.

I am going to read a translation from *Wuest's Word Studies*, page 113, on I John 2:4-5. *Wuest* has written these things in exactly the tense in which they appear in the Greek. It does not make easy reading because the translators have smoothed all of this out for us to read in English, but this gives the sense that it appears in the Greek.

I John 2:4-5 [Translation from *Wuest's Word Studies*, page 113]
"And this we know experientially, that we have come to know Him experientially, and are in that state at present if we continually have a solicitous watchful care in keeping His precepts. He who keeps on saying 'I have come to know Him experientially,' and as a present result and in that state, and His precept is not habitually

guarding with solicitous care, is a liar; and in this one the truth does not exist."

That is very plain. They can see what John said, that a person does not know God unless he is living like God would live were God a man.

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding [same word] have all they that do his commandments.

Hebrews 2:9-10 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

The word *perfect* does not mean perfect in the way an English-speaking person thinks of perfection, meaning *without flaw*. It rather has the sense of *being completed*. Jesus, as God, was perfect, but as a man He needed to be completed for some reason. We will see why. If you are getting my drift here, this is why we have to keep the commands of God. This is why we do not know Him unless we keep them. We will never be in God's image unless we experience the keeping of His instruction, because it is the keeping of them that completes us. Now what does the word *complete* mean? It means *to make fit for some use*.

Hebrews 2:11 For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

The sanctifier is Christ. We are the sanctified. The One is the Father; or one family we might even say, and so we are brothers.

Hebrews 2:12-17 Saying, I will declare your name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the

children which God has given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.

There is why Jesus had to be a man, why He had to be human. He had to experience life as a suffering human being to be the means of our salvation, that He might also be a faithful and merciful High Priest. And so what did He do? He came *to know* us by experiencing life like us. Now you see, that is the opposite side of the coin. We come *to know God* by experiencing life like God.

Hebrews 2:18 For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

No amount of book knowledge will ever bring this process to completion. It must be experience through practical application of keeping God's instruction with our whole being, and that *is* eternal life. Those who are doing this will be made immortal, because God will know that they will walk with Him, and He can walk with them. Brethren, this is also the key to faith. It is faith that trusts. We cannot have that kind of faith in somebody we do not know, somebody we just heard about. If it is somebody we have just heard about, that kind of faith will be no better than what the Jews had in Jesus' day. Eternal life is a relationship with God that exists because God and man know each other from experiences shared and are walking together in agreement, and trust each other. So *knowing God* is a relationship with God that we have experienced.