

KNOWING GOD PERSONALLY

The following four principles will help you discover how to know God personally and experience the abundant life he promised.

1 — GOD’S LOVE

God loves you and created you to know him personally. He has a wonderful plan for your life.

- **God’s Love**

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16 ESV)

- **God’s Plan**

“And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3 ESV)

What prevents us from knowing God personally?

2 — OUR CONDITION

People are sinful and separated from God, so we cannot know him personally or experience his love and plan.

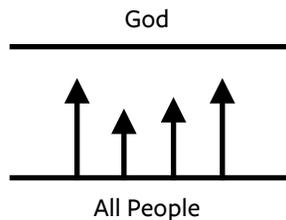
- **People are Sinful**

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23 ESV).

People were created to have fellowship with God; but, because of our stubborn self-will, we chose to go our own independent way and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

- **People are Separated**

“For the wages of sin is death [spiritual separation from God], but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23 ESV).



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and people are sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that people are continually trying to reach God and establish a personal relationship with him through our own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion, but we inevitably fail.

The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf...

3—GOD’S RESPONSE

Jesus Christ is God’s only provision for our sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience God’s love and plan.

- **He Died in Our Place**

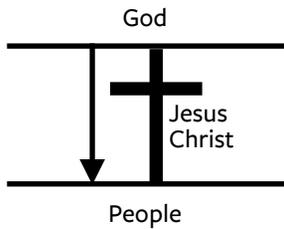
“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8 ESV)

- **He Rose From the Dead**

“...Christ died for our sins...he was buried, ...he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ...he appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6 ESV)

- **He is the Only Way to God**

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” (John 14:6)



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf that separates us from him by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

It is not enough just to know these truths...

4—OUR RESPONSE

We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know God personally and experience his love and plan.

- **We Must Receive Christ**

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12 ESV)

- **We Receive Christ Through Faith**

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV)

- **When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth** (Read John 3:1-8)

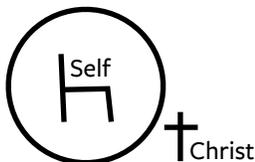
- **We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation**

[Christ speaking] *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”* (Revelation 3:20 ESV)

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive us of our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

These two circles represent two kinds of lives.

A life without Jesus Christ



Self is in the center and on the throne;
Christ is outside.

A life entrusted to Jesus Christ



Christ is in the center and on the throne,
and Self yields to Christ.

- Which circle best describes your life?
- Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

The following explains how you can receive Christ . . .

You Can Receive Christ Right Now by Faith Through Prayer

Prayer is talking with God. God knows your heart and is not as concerned with your words as he is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as he promised.

How to Know That Christ is in Your Life

Did you receive Christ into your life? According to his promise as recorded in Revelation 3:20, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said that he would come into your life and be your Savior and friend so you can know him personally. Would he mislead you? On what authority do you know that God has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God himself and his Word.)

The Bible Promises Eternal Life to All Who Receive Christ

“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:11–13 ESV)

Thank God often that Christ is in your life and that he will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of his promise that Christ lives in you and that you have eternal life from the very moment you invite him in.

An Important Reminder...

Do not depend on feelings. The promise of God’s Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God himself and his Word. Flying in a jet can illustrate the relationship among fact (God and his Word), faith (our trust in God and his Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).

To be transported by a jet, we must place our faith in the trustworthiness of the aircraft and the pilot who flies it. Our feelings of confidence or fear do not affect the ability of the jet to transport us, though they do affect how much we enjoy the trip. In the same way, we as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of his Word.

Now That You Have Entered Into a Personal Relationship With Christ

The moment you received Christ by faith, as an act of your will, many things happened, including the following:

- Christ came into your life (Revelation 3:20 and Colossians 1:27).
- Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14).
- You became a child of God (John 1:12).
- You received eternal life (John 5:24).
- You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Can you think of anything more wonderful that could happen to you than entering into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Thank God in prayer often for what he has done for you? By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.

To enjoy your new relationship with God...

Suggestions For Christian Growth. Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. “...The righteous shall live by faith.” (Galatians 3:11 ESV). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life, and to practice the following:

- G—Go to God in prayer daily (John 15:7).
- R—Read God’s Word daily (Acts 17:11)—begin with the Gospel of John.
- O—Obey God moment by moment (John 14:21).
- W—Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).
- T—Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).
- H—Holy Spirit—Allow him to control and empower your daily life and witness (Galatians 5:16,17; Acts 1:8).

Remember

Your walk with Christ depends on what you allow him to do in and through you empowered by the Holy Spirit, not what you do for him through self effort.

Fellowship in a Good Church

God’s Word admonishes us, “...not neglecting to meet together” (Hebrews 10:25 ESV). Several logs burn brightly together; but put one aside on the cold hearth and the fire goes out. So it is with your relationship with other Christians. If you do not belong to a church, do not wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and his Word is preached. Start this week, and make plans to attend regularly.