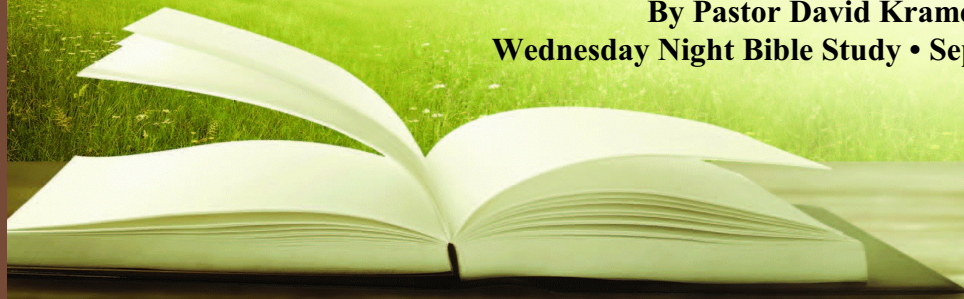


A Guide on Getting to Know God

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Have you noticed that it is starting to get cool in the mornings and the evenings? Why? Because Fall/Autumn is right around the corner (September 22). It also means something else: The Feast of Tabernacles (October 7-14) will be here before you know it.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the time of year when The Church of God celebrates the Birth of Jesus Christ—the Savior of the world. It's a very special time of the year. It's a time when we recognize the life-changing event that took place some 2,000 years ago which altered everything in our lives.

What better way to prepare for the Feast of Tabernacles than to get to know more about God? Our life is a journey to find God. So, who is God? What does God think about me? Will I ever get to meet Him? These are some of the questions we will focus on in this series.

1. WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

A. In **MATTHEW 16:13-19 (AMPLIFIED VERSION), Jesus asked His disciples a very important question.**

13 "Now when Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

14 And they answered, "Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah, or [just] one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed), the Son of the living God."

17 Then Jesus answered him, "Blessed [happy, spiritually secure, favored by God] are you,

Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood (mortal man) did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades (death) will not overpower it [by preventing the resurrection of the Christ].

19 I will give you the keys (authority) of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind [forbid, declare to be improper and unlawful] on earth will have [already] been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose [permit, declare lawful] on earth will have [already] been loosed in heaven."

B. The only visual representation of Yahweh God that you and I will ever see is Jesus Christ—the Son of God (Yahshua).

- » The Bible tells us emphatically that no one has ever seen God.
- » **JOHN 1:18**, *"No one has seen God [His essence, His divine nature] at any time; the [One and] only begotten God [that is, the unique Son] who is in the intimate presence of the Father, He has explained Him [and interpreted and revealed the awesome wonder of the Father]."*
- » Why? Because God is Spirit.
- » **JOHN 4:24 (NIV)**, *"God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."*

C. Yahweh God consists of THE FATHER (Yahweh), THE SON (Jesus—Yahshua) and THE HOLY SPIRIT (Ruach HaKodesh).

- » **JOHN 14:9 (AMP)**, *"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you for so long a time, and you do not know Me yet, Philip, nor recognize clearly who I am? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"*
- » **YOU AND I ARE MADE UP OF 3 PARTS AS WELL: OUR BODY** (which reverts back to dirt), **OUR SOUL** (the eternal part of us that lives forever), and **OUR SPIRIT** (the breathe of life which returns to God).
- » **I THESSALONIANS 5:23 (AMP)**, *"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through [that is, separate you from profane and vulgar things, make you pure and whole and undamaged—consecrated to Him—set apart for His purpose]; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete and [be found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*
- » **ECCLESIASTES 12:7**, *"and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it."*

2. WHAT DOES THE BIRTH OF JESUS HAVE TO DO WITH GETTING TO KNOW GOD BETTER?

A. How do people get to really know you and I?

- » They do it by being around us and interacting with us.
- » The fact is this: People get to know us by **WHAT WE SAY** and **WHAT WE DO**.
- » How many know we can SEE PEOPLE and think we *know* them? But, that's not true.
- » We watch celebrities, sports figures, news personalities and we think we know them, then something happens which proves—WE REALLY DIDN'T KNOW THEM AT ALL!

B. The same is true with God/Jesus. Just because we KNOW ABOUT JESUS, does not mean that we KNOW JESUS like we should.

- » It's not enough to JUST KNOW. The Bible says that Satan and demons *know about God*—but they don't have a relationship with Him. They are all doomed for Hell and the Lake of Fire.

» **You have to accept Jesus as your Savior and invite Him into your heart to know Him.**

C. Let's read JOHN 1:1-18 (AMP) to find out what Jesus SAID and DID.

- 1 *"In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Jesus Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself."*
 - » We are getting ready to celebrate the Birth of Jesus which happened some 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem.
 - » That doesn't mean that Jesus is 2,000 years old. Jesus HAS ALWAYS BEEN. He is a part of the Godhead—He has existed forever.
- 2 *"He was [continually existing] in the beginning [co-eternally] with God."*
- 3 *All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him not even one thing was made that has come into being."*
 - » John is telling us **WHAT JESUS HAS DONE**.
 - » Remember, one of the ways we can KNOW JESUS is by seeing/watching what He does.
 - » That's why I LOVE NATURE. When I see and watch what is happening all around me in nature, I see the faithfulness of God.
 - » **PSALM 19:1**, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands."*
 - » Did you know that God's Word tells us to TALK TO THE ANIMALS? I confess that I don't remember reading this scripture before—LOL!
 - » **JOB 12:7-9 (NIV)**, *"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; 8 or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. 9 Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?"*
- 4 *"In Him was life [and the power to bestow life], and the life was the Light of men."*
- 5 *The Light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness did not understand it or overpower it or appropriate it or absorb it [and is unreceptive to it].*
- 6 *There came a man commissioned and sent from God, whose name was John [the Baptist].*
- 7 *This man came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe [in Christ, the Light] through him."*
 - » John the Baptist was a ray of sunshine (light) in a very dark time for the nation of Israel.
 - » The Israelites had not heard from God in over 400 years. That's longer than the USA has been a nation!
 - » John the Baptist was fulfilling the prophecy of **MALACHI 4:5,6**, *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet...and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers,"*
- 8 *"John was not the Light, but came to testify about the Light."*
- 9 *There it was—the true Light [the genuine, perfect, steadfast Light] which, coming into the world, enlightens everyone.*
- 10 *He (Christ) was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.*
- 11 *He came to that which was His own [that which belonged to Him—His world, His creation, His possession], and those who were His own [people—the Jewish nation] did not receive and welcome Him.*
- 12 *But to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the right [the authority, the privilege] to become children of God, that is, to those who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) His name—*
- 13 *who were born, not of blood [natural conception], nor of the will of the flesh [physical impulse], nor of the will of man [that of a natural father], but of God [that is, a divine and supernatural birth—they are born of God—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified].*

14 *And the Word (Christ) became flesh, and lived among us [; and we [actually] saw His glory, glory as belongs to the [One and] only begotten Son of the Father, [the Son who is truly unique, the only One of His kind, who is] full of grace and truth (absolutely free of deception)."*

- » This is where the FEAST OF TABERNACLES and the Birth of Jesus comes into play.
- » The YOUNG'S LITERAL TRANSLATION of this scripture says, "*And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*"
- » The Feast of Tabernacles is when we celebrate what Jesus DID FOR US. Remember, we said that we get to REALLY KNOW someone by listening to **WHAT THEY SAY** and by watching **WHAT THEY DO**.
- » If Jesus hadn't been born...He could not have died for our sins.
- » That means that without the Feast of Tabernacles (the season when Jesus was born) we would all be going straight to hell.

15 *"John testified [repeatedly] about Him and has cried out [testifying officially for the record, with validity and relevance], "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I and has priority over me, for He existed before me.'"*

16 *For out of His fullness [the superabundance of His grace and truth] we have all received grace upon grace [spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, favor upon favor, and gift heaped upon gift].*

17 *For the Law was given through Moses, but grace [the unearned, undeserved favor of God] and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

18 *No one has seen God [His essence, His divine nature] at any time; the [One and] only begotten God [that is, the unique Son] who is in the intimate presence of the Father, He has explained Him [and interpreted and revealed the awesome wonder of the Father]."*

3. WHY DID JESUS AGREE TO COME AS AN INFANT AND SUFFER A CRUEL DEATH FOR YOU AND I?

A. **Because He loves us ♥. That's the most important thing you and I need to understand about God—HE LOVES US UNCONDITIONALLY ♥!**

- » Does that mean that everybody automatically goes to Heaven? The answer is NO!
- » **You and I get to decide** whether we go to Heaven or Hell by our actions and whether or not we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.

B. **Whether we end up in Heaven or Hell, one thing is clear: ♥ GOD LOVES US.**

- » **II PETER 3:9**, *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*

C. **This series is entitled, "A Guide on Getting to Know God." It's essential for us to understand that even though God knows everything about us, He still loves us unconditionally.**

- » When Satan tells you that you have been TOO BAD for God to love you, tell him that he is a liar and the father of all lies.
- » The Bible tells us plainly that *"neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (ROMANS 3:9).*
- » You can't make God stop from loving you! He made you—He will always love you ♥.