

## Know God

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Did you know that you were created to have a loving relationship with God? He is patiently and lovingly waiting for you to respond to His invitation to salvation. Yes, you can receive forgiveness for your sins and assurance of eternal life through faith in His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16-17). "Now this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

You may be asking yourself: "How can I know God?" Man is able to know the true and living God through His Word (that is, the Bible). The Bible reveals God's character and His plan for mankind. It is through reading His Word that we come to a knowledge of the righteousness of God and that which He requires of us. What is it that prevents us from personally knowing God? Our sin has separated us from God - our corruption is to such a degree that we cannot know Him personally and cannot experience His love. God's Word says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Man was created to have fellowship with God, but because of his sin (i.e., anything that is against the righteousness revealed in God's Law) he is prevented from that fellowship. This includes anything less than perfect obedience to God's commands. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). The ultimate result of this death is an eternity in Hell. This spiritual death forces a separation from God. Man is sinful and God is holy. This creates a gulf unbridgeable by man making that intended fellowship impossible. The only solution is a divine bridge - that bridge is Christ.

God created a way by sending His Son to pay the price for our sin. "God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). He died in our place; He who knew no sin became sin for us. This removed our burden of sin and allows us to enter into that desired fellowship if we follow His way.

He is the only way. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

It is not just enough that you know these truths. We must individually place our trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. It is by repenting of our sins and believing on Christ that we can know God personally and experience His love.

"But as many as receive Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

You can receive Jesus Christ right now by faith. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

If you now believe on God and place your faith in His Son, congratulations - and welcome to His family. We, all being His children, share in a heavenly inheritance! We are heirs to heaven and are promised the eternal pleasure of glorifying God. As our life here on earth progresses, God will continue to work in our hearts. We are daily being conformed to the image of Christ, Himself. We will begin to live lives of righteousness. Obedience to God will not be a burden to us, but rather a joy.

You may wonder, now that you are a Christian, "What now?" Our greatest recommendation for believers, new and old, is fourfold: 1) find a church so you might hear the preaching of the Word and rejoice in the fellowship of other Christians, 2) study the Bible for that is where we learn of God and His plans, 3) pray to Him to strengthen your faith and increase your love toward Him, and 4) enjoy the blessings given by God in the heavenly ordained sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper. All of these will work to encourage and build upon your faith. If you have any questions, search the Scriptures, ask your Pastor, or please feel free to ask us.

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