

WHAT IS IT TO KNOW CHRIST?

1 JOHN 4:6-8 • TV063A

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1 John 4:6-8

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

I would like for you to open your Bible to the book of **1 John, chapter 4**. I’m going to be reading **verses 6-8**. Now this is the epistle of John, **1 John chapter 4**.

And my message will be on this subject: **“WHAT IS IT TO KNOW CHRIST?”**

Now, I’m not going to try to preach to you today; I want to talk to you. I want you to sit there and listen very carefully to what I believe the Lord would have me deliver in this hour in answering this question: **“What is it to know Christ?”**

And when we get through with this message, at least in our heads; I trust and pray, in our hearts. We’ll be able to answer the question: **“What is it to know Christ?”**

Now, in **1 John chapter 4**, beginning with **verse 6 through verse 8**, the apostle writes; *“We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we, the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God.”*

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Now, there are three outstanding characteristics of the epistle of **John**, this book from which I'm reading right now.

First of all: It is written in the simplest language! That's right! You'd never know, never imagine that this man John, also wrote the mysteries of the **Book of Revelation**; is the same author who wrote the **1 epistle of John**.

And he writes in this epistle, short words, usually, only one-syllable words, and it's easy to understand. It's easy to read. It can be understood if a person really wants to understand it. It's simple language.

Secondly: The characteristic of the book of the **1 epistle John**, is love, it is all about love!

Every line he writes is seasoned with love. It's all the way through this epistle. He tries all professions by the rule of love. Do we love our Saviour? Do we love one another? Christ said, "*By this shall all men know you are my disciples, if you love one another.*"

This is what John is writing about. He's writing about true, Christian love, "*That love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*" So, that's the second characteristic of this Book. It's simple language and the theme all the way through is love. Every line is seasoned with love.

Thirdly: All through this epistle John unravels the web of hypocrisy and the web of deceit! He will not suffer us to be deceived. He will not suffer us to be deceived about our relationship with God. He continually shows the difference in reality and imitation.

He continually shows the difference in a profession of faith and a true possession of saving faith. He continually shows the difference in those who have and those who say they have.

Now this is a theme running through the Book, not only the theme of love, love for Christ, and love for one another. "*He that loveth not knoweth not God.*"

But here's a theme all the way through this Book. John is pointing out the difference in those who say they have and those who really have faith in Christ. Now listen to some illustrations of this:

First of all: In **1 John 1:6** he says; "*If we say that we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.*"

If we say that God is our Father and Christ is our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit indwells us and we have fellowship with the triune God and we walk in darkness; the tenor of our lives, the bent of our will is darkness and evil and dishonesty. We're not telling the truth. We're saying something that is not true.

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Secondly: Then in **1 John 2:4** He says this; *“If we say that we know Him and keep not His commandments we lie and the truth is not in us.”* If we say that we know Him and we do not walk in His Word, according to His will; we are liars and the truths not in us.

Thirdly: And then in **1 John 2:9** He says this: *“He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother; he is in darkness, even until now.”* He never has been in the light. He’s in darkness even until now. He always has been in darkness and he’s in darkness right now. If he says that he walks in the light and he hates his brother; he’s not in the light.

He’s not in the light of God’s love. He’s not in the light of God’s mercy. He’s not in the light of God’s grace; he is walking in darkness.

Listen to this in **1 John 4:20**; *“If a man say I love God, (a lot of people say that don’t they?). Everybody says he loves God, just about everybody I know. “I love God.” “If any man say I love God and hateth his brother; he’s a liar.”*

Well now there are a lot of liars around today because a whole lot of hate is going on. There’s hatred everywhere. There’s hatred among religious organizations, there’s hatred among business men. There’s hatred between races. There’s hatred in neighborhoods. There’s hatred in schools but everybody says he loves God.

But John says: *“If a man say I love God and hates his brother; he’s a liar.”* Now John’s very plain. That’s what I said at the beginning; there are three characteristics of this book, the Book of **1 John**. It’s written in plain language that anybody can understand.

You can understand that can’t you? John says; *“If any man says he loves God and hates his brother; he’s a liar.”* That’s plain one and two-syllable words that anybody can understand. It is the truth.

And the theme of this Book is love. And John all the way through continually points out the difference between saying, “I know God” and really knowing God. He continually points out the difference in saying, “I believe on Christ” and really believing on Christ.

The Bible doesn’t promise eternal life to those who say they love God. The Bible promises eternal life to those who do love God. The Bible doesn’t promise eternal life to those who say they believe on Christ. It promises eternal life to those who do believe on Christ.

The Bible doesn’t promise eternal life to those who say they know God; it promises eternal life to those who know God. That’s what our Lord said in **John 17:3**; He said, *“This is eternal life that they might know God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”*

I pray that every one of us, this preacher, and you included, may be delivered from a profession of faith and brought into a living possession of Christ. I pray that every one of us might be delivered from word-service. That’s damnable service. Our Lord said: *“You call me Lord with your lips but your hearts are far from me.”*

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I pray that God will bring us from an empty profession of religion to a living knowledge of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul wanted. He talked about his religious experience, his religious heritage and his religious works.

He says, *"I do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but that righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ my Lord; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection."* Not know the Catechism but know the Christ. Not know all of the doctrine but know the deliverer. Not know all of the reasons for morality but to know the redeemer.

That's what Paul wanted, to know Christ, *"That I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."* What is it to know Christ? Let's just get right down to answering this question today, **"What is it to know Christ?"**

Job knew Him; he said, *"I know my redeemer liveth."* Paul knew Him; he said, *"I know whom I have believed."* John knew Him; he said, *"I know we've passed from death unto life."* Peter knew Him; he said, *"I know that I'm not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ."* David knew Him; he said, *"The Lord is my shepherd."*

Do you know Him? Well what is it? All right preacher; what is it to know Christ? It's more than making a profession of religion. It's more than joining a church. It's more than walking an aisle. It's more than changing a doctrine. It's more than changing your lifestyle.

To know Christ; what is it? Let me give you four things:

First of all: To know Christ is to acknowledge Him! That's right; that's where we begin. To know Christ is to acknowledge Him. Now, in the book of **Exodus chapter 1:8** the Scripture says, *"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph."*

What does that mean? Well it means that Israel was down in the land of Egypt and they fared well under Joseph and he died and under the Pharaoh that was after him and he died. And other Pharaoh's arose and they had heard about Joseph and knew Joseph and acknowledged Joseph, the promises made to Joseph, the work done by Joseph, the obligations they had to Joseph.

But one day there arose a king, a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Does that mean he didn't know Joseph existed? No sir; he knew Joseph existed. Did that mean he did not know about the work that Joseph had done? He knew about the work that Joseph had done but he did not acknowledge it. He did not acknowledge Joseph.

He did not acknowledge what had been done by Joseph as being the salvation of Egypt. He did not acknowledge any obligation to Joseph nor to Joseph's people. He did not acknowledge any promises made to Joseph. He did not acknowledge Joseph. So, the Scripture says: *"He knew not Joseph."*

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Now our Lord said, "My sheep know me. They know that I am the good shepherd. They know that I am the great shepherd. They know I am the chief shepherd. They know my voice. They acknowledge my voice. They acknowledge my office. They acknowledge my substitutionary work. They acknowledge my Lordship. My sheep know me. They acknowledge me."

A lot of people know about Christ but His sheep know Him in the same way this Pharaoh knew about Joseph but he didn't acknowledge Him. He didn't acknowledge any obligation to him, any promises made to his people or any dependence upon what he had done. He did not acknowledge Joseph at all.

He said, "We don't need Joseph; who cares about Joseph?" The believer acknowledges Christ.

First of all: He acknowledges Christ to be God!

One day Thomas came and fell at His feet and said, "*My Lord and my God.*" I acknowledge that Jesus of Nazareth who died on the cross, was buried and rose again, is my God. I acknowledge that Jesus of Nazareth who died on the cross and rose again is my Lord. He's King of kings and Lord of lords. I acknowledge that. That's right; the believer acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the deity of the Son of God.

Secondly: He acknowledges Christ to be his Saviour and his only Saviour!

It is Christ who restoreth our souls. It is Christ who leads us in paths of righteousness. It is Christ who leads us beside the still waters. Peter said, "*Neither is there salvation in any other for there's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*"

Paul wrote, "*Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ the Lord.*" Peter said, "*We're redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without spot or blemish.*"

He is our Saviour. We acknowledge that. He is our only Saviour. He is the only life-giver. He is the only Redeemer. There can be no other. He shares His glory with no other redeemer and no other mediator. We acknowledge that.

Thirdly: The believer acknowledges Christ as his Prophet, Priest, and King!

Now, in the Old Testament there were prophets who came to preach and to reveal God, the will of God and the way of God. These Old Testament prophets were types of Christ. They were pictures of Christ. "*To Him gave all the prophets witness.*"

In the Old Testament there were kings who ruled over the people, who reigned over them, kings like David and Solomon. In the Old Testament there were priests who went about the temple and the tabernacle offering the sacrifices, the high priest offering the atonement. These men were pictures of Christ.

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Now Christ is come, that prophet to reveal God. *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* Phillip said, *“Show us the Father.”* And Christ said, *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? I and my Father are one.”*

Christ is that prophet. Christ is that priest, the only substitute, the only sacrifice, the only sin-offering, the only atonement. *“By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”*

And Christ is our King. He reigns over us. We submit to Him. We bow to His scepter. We bow to His rule. He’s the sovereign Lord of our lives:

**“My times are in thy hands, (said the song writer)
My God I want them there.”**

So the believer acknowledges Christ. That’s what it is to know Christ. It’s to acknowledge who He is. It’s to acknowledge that He’s from all eternity. It’s to acknowledge that He is our representative; *“As in Adam we die, so in Christ we are made alive.”*

In Adam death and condemnation and judgment passed upon all men. In Christ peace, righteousness, justification, passed upon all who believe. *“By one man’s disobedience we were made sinners,”* (that is representation). *“By one man’s obedience we were made righteous,”* (that is representation also).

We acknowledge that Jesus Christ came to save and He’s the only Saviour. He’s the God anointed and God ordained and God appointed Saviour. He’s our substitute, *“He bare our sins in His body on the tree.”*

He was buried as our scapegoat. He arose again as our justifier. He ascended as our Mediator. He’s coming again, our great King. We acknowledge that.

**“And when His beauty I see the great King
And join with the ransomed His praises to sing,
All through the ages, my tribute,
With all who believe I’ll bring
And that will be sunrise for me.”**

What is it to know Christ?

First of all: It’s to acknowledge Him!

Secondly: What is it to know Christ; it’s to believe on Him, it’s to trust Him!

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Now in **Isaiah chapter 53:11** the Scripture declares: *“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”*

By knowing Him, we know the righteous servant shall justify many. In other words, he that does not believe Christ does not know Christ. To know Christ is to believe Him.

He who does not trust Christ does not know Him. For to know Christ is to trust Him. He who does not rest his soul in Christ does not know Christ because to know Him is to rest our souls in Him.

One day Mr. Spurgeon was talking to a man about salvation. He talked to him about sin and salvation and the work of Christ on the cross. Finally, the man said; “Well, I’d like to be a Christian but I just can’t, I just can’t believe on Christ. I just can’t trust Christ.”

And Spurgeon looked at him and said; “Sir, what do you mean you can’t trust Christ? Do you find a flaw in His character? Do you find something missing in His work? Do you find a flaw in His substitutionary work? What do you mean you can’t trust Him? If you can’t trust Him; tell me why because I have trusted Him? I’ve trusted and committed my soul to Him. I’ve trusted my salvation to Him. I’ve trusted my life to Him. I’ve trusted all things to Him. And if you find something in His character that cannot be trusted; you tell me for I’ve got a right to know.”

The man said; “Oh no sir, I don’t mean that at all. I don’t mean that. I don’t mean Christ can’t be trusted.”

Spurgeon said, “That’s what you said; you said I can’t trust Christ, I can’t believe on Christ.” Why don’t you say what you really mean? ‘I won’t trust Him, I won’t believe on Him.’ Because I’ll tell you my friend; He can be trusted.”

And to know Him is to trust Him. And a man does not know Christ who has not committed his soul to Christ. *“He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him (and to see Him is to believe on Him) hath everlasting life.”* To see Him is to trust Him.

One day our Lord was preaching to thousands of people. I don’t know how many were there but there were thousands of them. And they were offended by what he’d preached. He preached His glory, His grace, His sovereignty, and His sacrificial work.

And they began, they began to leave; they began to walk off. And all of them were gone but just the twelve. And our Lord turned to His disciples and He said to them: *“Will you also go away?”* And Peter replied; *“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

They knew Him and they trusted Him. They saw in Him the only hope that a sinner has. They saw in Him the only righteousness a sinner can plea. They saw in Him the only foundation on which a sinner could be.

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If there was no hope in Christ then there's no hope. If there's no mercy in Christ then there's no mercy. To see Him is to know Him and to know Him is to believe on Him and to trust Him. And like Paul said, "To commit my soul to Him."

He said, *"I know, whom I have believed and I'm persuaded He's able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."*

What is it to know Christ? It's to acknowledge Him; it's to believe on Him.

Thirdly: Now this is important and this is where I believe most religionists today are missing the boat; it is to experience Him!

Now the Word of God says concerning Christ, *"He knew no sin."* Does that mean He didn't know about sin? He knew about sin. Does that mean He didn't know what sin was? He knew what sin was but He didn't know sin.

What does that mean? It means He didn't experience it. He didn't feel it. It was never felt by Him at all. It was never experienced in His life. He was never influenced by it. His life was never changed by it. He was never under its power. He never knew sin.

And when we know Christ we experience Christ. Christ is felt in our hearts if we know Him. Christ is experienced in our lives. Christ influences us. We are influenced by His presence.

Salvation's not a doctrine; it's a person. Salvation's not a ceremony; it's a person. Salvation's not just feeling good; it's feeling Christ. John said, *"We know Him. Our hands have handled Him and we've touched Him and we've fellowshiped with Him and we have been under His power."*

To know Christ is to feel His presence in the heart. That's what the apostle said, *"Christ liveth in me."* It is to know Christ's experience in our souls. It's to be influenced by His person. *"If any man be in Christ he's a new creature."*

He's a person who loves the Word of God. He's a person who loves God. He's a person who loves his neighbor. He's a person who loves the Gospel. He's a person who is panting after holiness. He's a person who hates sin. He feels Christ in his heart.

He's a new creature. *"Old things pass away and behold all things become new. If any man be in Christ, in Christ, he's a new creature."* And the Scripture says, *"If any man hath not the spirit of Christ He's none of his."*

So, to know Christ is not only to acknowledge Him, it's not only to believe Him, and I didn't say believe about Him; I said believe Him. *"Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness."* Paul said; *"Sirs, I believe God,"* (not just believe in God or about God or there is a God; I believe Him).

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And salvation or to know Christ is to experience Christ. It's for Christ actually to come in and dwell. He said, "*My Father and I will take up our abode in you, (to walk with Him).*"

Fourthly: To know Christ; what is it to know Christ? It is to fellowship with Him!

Now suppose I am in a strange city and I'm walking down the street. It's a busy street. There are hundreds of people on the street. And I walk by hundreds of people; I walk by them, hundreds of them.

And I don't stop and talk to any of them. Why? I don't know them. I've never been introduced to them. They're not my friends. I don't stop and talk with them.

But I see coming down the street a man whom I know. He's a friend of mine. I know him and he knows me. And I smile and he gets closer and sees me and he smiles. And then we stop and begin to talk, we begin to communicate.

We begin to fellowship because we know each other. We have something in common. We have an intimate, personal, relationship, and we talk together and we enjoy one another's presence.

There's a difference in knowing about a famous person and knowing a famous person. And there's a difference in knowing about Christ and knowing Christ.

Yes sir! When the weight of sin, to those who know Christ, when the weight of sin, when the guilt of sin, just overflows, and that's the word the Scripture uses, "*Where sin did abound, grace did much more abound, (that is where sin did overflow; grace did much more overflow).*"

And when the weight of sin just overflows our broken spirits and we're pressed down by the sense of our guilt; Christ is there, our Friend and our Brother to speak peace to our hearts: "*My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled.*"

And then when the clouds of failure and personal thought are made so real that they seem to hide the Son of His love; He's there to speak merciful to us, "*Father forgive them.*"

"*If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us.*" It's all right, it's all right. It's all paid for and it's all forgiven.

And when the waters of sorrow press on our hearts till they can weep no more; He is there with His promise and His purpose. "All things, my child, work together for thy good, for thy eternal good, to those who love me, who are called according to my purpose."

When men forsake us as David said, "*If my mother and father forsake me, my Lord will take me up. He's mine and I'm His.*" We know each other. And there's an intimate, personal, fellowship."

"And when I come to the river at ending of day

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**And the last winds of sorrow have blown
There'll be somebody waiting to show me the way
I won't have to cross Jordan alone.**

**I won't have to cross Jordan alone
Jesus died all my sins to atone
When the darkness I see
He'll be waiting for me
And I won't have to cross Jordan alone.”**

He's my friend and I fellowship with Him. That's what it is to know Christ; it's to acknowledge Him, it's to believe on Him, it's to experience Him. And it's to have such a personal, vital, union, and living fellowship that we commune with Him and He never leaves us nor forsakes us!