

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Knowing God II: Syllabus

Notes 

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction to Knowing God II.
- II. The Imitation of God.
- III. The Four Primary Activities in Knowing God: Introduction.

CLASS #2:

- III. The Four Primary Activities in Knowing God. (cont.)
- IV. Discipline in Knowing God:
 - A. Knowing God Requires Consistency.
 - B. Knowing God Requires Commitment.

CLASS #3:

- IV. Discipline in Knowing God:
 - C. The Fruit of Consistency and Commitment.
Historical Example.
- V. Crisis of Dependence upon God:
 - A. What is the Crisis of Dependence?
 - B. Consistency.

CLASS #4:

- V. Crisis of Dependence upon God:
 - C. Reward.
 - D. Intimacy.
 - E. Secrecy.
 - F. Importance.

CLASS #5:

- V. Crisis of Dependence upon God:
 - F. Importance. (cont.)
 - G. Submission.
 - H. Conclusion. Exam.

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Knowing God II: Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Using three Scriptures, explain the essence of the imitation of God by explaining its context (pp. 54, 55).
- 2) Using Jn 15:5 and Prov 3:5, 6 explain the meaning of the “crisis of dependence upon God” (pp. 68-70).
- 3) Discuss intimacy in our relationship with God (pp. 75-77).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) In one or two sentences define a Biblical imitation of God (pp. 54, 55).
- 2) List the four primary activities in knowing God and the Scripture from which the list originates (p. 57).
- 3) Refer to two Scriptures that promote consistency in prayer (p. 62).
- 4) What is the greatest reward of seeking God? Include two Scriptures (pp. 73-74).
- 5) In two or three sentences respond to this question: Why do we need a little more of the attitude of Mary and a little less of the attitude of Martha (p. 79)?
- 6) Use Mk 3:14 to show the importance of knowing God (p. 81).

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I. Introduction to Knowing God II.

Notes 

A. The Desire of Every Man.

1. The pagan world has been always haunted by the understanding that God can not be known. At best, man can search after Him, but He will always be a mystery.
 - a. Plato's words represent the frustration of the common man: "It is hard to investigate and to find the framer and the father of the universe. And if one did find Him, it would be impossible to express Him in terms which all could understand."¹
 - b. Aristotle spoke of God as "The supreme cause, by all men dreamed of and by no man known."²
2. The ancient world did not doubt that there was a God or gods. However, it believed that if gods did exist then they could not be known. They also believed that the gods were only occasionally interested in mankind.
 - a. In a world without Christ, God is a mystery.
 - b. He is a power that is desirable, but never known.

Discussion Point

In your own experiences, have you observed people involved with other religions and philosophies who were continually striving to know God, or many gods, but never able to have that relationship?
At one time, were some of you those people?

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B. The Contents of This Course.

1. This course continues the study that is the desire of every man. That is, the desire to know God. Can God be known? If so, how can he be known?
 - a. These questions were answered in the course, “Knowing God I” from a theological perspective. We studied the doctrine of the knowledge of God, then formed a theology of how to know God.
 - b. This course progresses toward the next step of knowing God, which is the practical realm. This course addresses the question, “What can we do to know God better?”
2. To answer this question, we will study the following topics:
 - a. The imitation of God.
 - b. The four primary activities in knowing God.
 - c. Discipline in knowing God.
 - d. The “crisis of dependence” with God.

II. The Imitation of God.

A. What is the Imitation of God?

1. To know God is to be like God. Therefore, the concept of imitation, is very important in the study of knowing God.
2. However, we must obtain the Biblical understanding of imitation.
 - a. The apostle Paul exhorted Christians to imitate Christ. Paul also encouraged believers to imitate Him and follow His example as he imitated and followed Christ (see I Cor 4:16 and I Cor 11:1).
 - b. Paul often encouraged believers to imitate those believers whose life and faith imitated that of the Lord (1 Thes 1:6, 2:14; Heb 6:12, 13:7).

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- c. However, Paul's understanding of imitating an example does not mean that there is a code or list of rules that must be memorized and followed. Indeed, the knowledge of Christian behavior is not acquired in that type of a process.
- d. Imitation is the result of a new attitude towards God. It expresses itself, not in the following of **a rule**, but in the commitment to an **entire lifestyle**.
- e. The idea of imitation is focused on Christ as the One who enables the follower to imitate Him. Man is not the one who attains or achieves a level of imitated perfection in the likeness of God (see Eph 5:1).
 - 1) Man, in his own ability, power, or works can not be like God.
 - 2) Only as man allows Jesus to work through him can he become an imitator of that example.
 - a) It is not "working" or "striving" that results in being more like Him.
 - b) Rather, it is the process of being formed into His image that results in being more like Him. This is done through walking with Him in relationship and obedience.
 - c) It is not a "striving," but instead, it is surrendering that results in the imitation of God.
 - d) The imitation of God is more of a result of relationship and obedience than it is a result of certain actions that might produce a likeness.
 - 3) To imitate God is to surrender to Him, because the only way to actually imitate God is to have God in you. Your life becomes an imitation in the sense that your life becomes a continuation of the life of Christ. Christ in you is the only real method of imitating God.
 - 4) Thus, relationship with Jesus and obedience to Him become the two main manifestations of the imitation of God.

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Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss what it means to be an imitator of God through Christ.

B. What is the Context for the Imitation of God?

1. References to the imitation of God are always in the following contexts.
 - a. Dying to self/ Suffering/ Laying down of your rights.
 - 1) This makes sense if we remember that in order to imitate God we must allow God to control our life.
 - 2) Thus, we must die to ourselves, be willing to suffer for the Gospel, and lay down our rights to win the lost.
 - b. Being “other” oriented.
 - 1) This makes sense because the imitation of God is actually the continuation of the life of Christ in me (Gal 2:20), and the life of Christ was a life lived for others (Mk 10:45).
 - 2) Thus, we must be others oriented, or live a life of serving others.

Discussion Point

Study the following passages and the context of each passage:
1 Cor 4:16; 1 Cor 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1 Thes 1:6; 1 Thes 2:14; and 2 Thes 3:9.

What are the implications for how we should understand the concept of imitation?

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III. The Four Primary Activities in Knowing God.

Notes 

A. Introduction.

1. Perhaps the best Scripture to use in a study concerning the practice of knowing God is Acts 2:42. In Acts 2:42 we have a list of the four activities that were used by the first members of the Church as they sought God.
 - a. Teaching (we might call this “Bible study”).
 - b. Fellowship.
 - c. Breaking of bread (or “praise and worship” since the Greek word here is “Eucharist” which means “giving of thanks”).
 - d. Prayer.
2. We will briefly study each of these four primary activities in knowing God. A more detailed study of each activity is offered in other courses.

B. Bible Study.

1. The love of the Bible.
 - a. The Bible has been translated into more than 1200 languages. Every year it is the best selling book in the world. People who love God will also love His Word.
 - 1) The purpose of the written Word of God, the Bible, is to reveal the living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2) To love the Bible is to love Christ. To love Christ is to love the Bible.

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- b. The Bible is not just another book. It is God's Word. It is alive (Heb 4:12).
 - 1) God's purpose is to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ, who is the Word (Rom 8:28, 29; Jn 1:1).
 - 2) One of the most potent ways to do this is by reading and studying the Word of God. There is power in the Word of God. It can change us. It can help us to know God.
 - 3) If you believe this and if your greatest desire is to know God and to be transformed into His image, then you will be motivated to read and study the Bible.
- 2. Bible study and knowing God.
 - a. If we put the Word of God in us, then we will not sin against God (see Ps 119:11).
 - 1) It is our sin that separates us from God.
 - 2) The Bible can help us not to sin, and therefore not to be separated from God. That is, the Bible can help us to know God (see Rom 6:23 and Is 59:2).
 - b. The Bible washes us. That is, it cleanses, purifies or sanctifies us (see Eph 5:26).
 - 1) The pure see God.
 - 2) The Bible can make us pure. That is, the Bible can help us to see or know God (see Mt 5:8).
 - c. The Bible helps us to initially know God (see 1 Pt 1:23 and Rom 1:16).
 - d. The Bible helps us to grow in our knowledge of God (see 1 Pt 2:2).

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Insert Your Illustration:

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Discussion Point

In what ways has studying the Bible caused you to better know God and grow in a deeper love relationship with Him?

Note: To better learn how to study the Bible, refer to the Bible Study courses in Volume Three.

C. Fellowship.

1. I can know God better by knowing His children better.
2. This is true because God lives in His children. Thus, to a certain degree, fellowship with other Christians is fellowship with God, because Christ lives in them (Gal 2:20).
3. Fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ and fellowship with God are strongly connected in the Scriptures (see 1 Jn 1:3).

Insert Your Illustration:

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Discussion Point

In what ways has fellowship with other believers been a positive aspect in your Christian growth and caused you to know God better?

Note: To further study the concept of fellowship refer to the course, Church Fellowship, found in Relationships, Volume two.

D. Praise and Worship.

1. The “breaking of bread” in Acts 2:42 refers to the taking of the Lord’s Supper. The essence of the Lord’s Supper is that it is a Sacrament of thanksgiving, or praise and worship. Indeed the Greek word used here, Eucharist, means “to give thanks.” Through praise and worship we can approach God and we can know Him better (see Ps 95:2-6 and Ps 22:3).
2. Praise is a response to the greatness of God. It is an expression of gratefulness (Ps 63:3). Praise boasts of God (Ps 106:47).
3. A life of praise is developed through four aspects.
 - a. We develop a life of praise through thanksgiving or verbal appreciation (see Phil 4:6; 1 Thes 5:18; and Ps 50:14, 23).
 - b. We develop a life of praise through vocalizing adoration and recognition of God (see Ps 63:3; 1 Thes 5:16; and Ps 145:1, 2).
 - c. We develop a life of praise through singing to God (see Ps 105:2; Ps 100:2; and Eph 5:19).
 - d. We develop a life of praise through practicing the presence of God (see Phil 3:10; and Ps 27:4).

Insert Your Illustration:

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Discussion Point

How has a life of praise and worship caused you to grow closer to God?

Note: For a more detailed study of praise and worship you can refer to the course Praise and Worship, found in Relationships, Volume two.

Notes 

E. Prayer.

1. Prayer is broadly defined as the process of talking and listening to God. Through prayer we can be in direct communication with God at any moment.
2. Aspects of prayer (see Eph 6:18).
 - a. We should pray regularly (Rom 12:12).
 - b. We should pray in different ways (Mt 6:9-13).
 - c. We should pray with intensity (Jms 5:16).
 - d. We should pray with sensitivity (Mt 26:41; Col 4:2).
 - e. We should pray with perseverance (Ps 57:7; Lk 11:8, 9; Lk 18:1-8).

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Describe how the increase or decrease in your prayer life has effected your relation with God.

Note: For a more detailed study see the course Prayer and Fasting, found in Relationships, Volume two.

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IV. Discipline in Knowing God.

A. Knowing God requires Consistency.

1. Each one of the four basic activities of knowing God includes within its Biblical instructions a sense of consistency and regularity. In each case, the Bible uses phrases like “always”, “day and night”, and “day by day.”
 - a. Bible study (see 2 Tim 2:15 and Ps 1:2).
 - b. Fellowship (see Acts 2:46 and 1 Jn 1:7).
 - c. Praise and Worship (see Ps 63:5, 6; Ps 35:28; 71:6; 72:15; 119:62, 164; 146:2; and Acts 16:25).
 - d. Prayer (see 1 Thes 5:17; and Eph 6:18; and Daniel’s example in Dan 6:10).
2. The process of knowing God must be a continual process. We must seek God consistently (Prov 8:17).
 - a. We must try to be consistent in a general sense. That is, we must be consistent in keeping our minds set on the things of God throughout the entire day (Col 3:1,2).
 - b. We must be consistent in a specific ways also. That is, we must be consistent in our devotional times with God. We must develop good habits of seeking God at planned times of the day.

Insert Your Illustration:

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Discussion Point

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In what ways can you increase the consistency of your relationship with God? What are things that hinder you? What things have helped you to be more consistent in the past?

B. Knowing God requires Commitment.

1. When we speak of consistency we must also speak of commitment. Consistency is not possible without commitment. Consistency is the manifestation of discipline. Commitment is the foundation and motivation of discipline.
2. We can decide to be committed to practical efforts of seeking God. We can not “decide” to know God. Only God can reveal Himself to us.
 - a. Although the desire burns in us to know God, we can not know Him by our own works or by our own will. God is the source. Our free will is not the source.
 - b. However, we can cooperate, making it possible for us to receive God’s revelation of Himself. We can, indeed, -we must, decide to seek God in a dedicated and disciplined way.
 - 1) Our motivation must be our love and desire for God.
 - 2) By faith, we must act.
 - a) We do not need to understand how we are being transformed into the image of Jesus or how we are growing in our knowledge of God. We simply must act in faith that God is transforming us and that we are growing closer and closer to Jesus.
 - b) It is God who does this. We can not do it ourselves.

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3. We can decide to establish a Bible reading program. We can decide to praise and worship the Lord. We can decide to spend time with other Christians. We can decide to pray. Try to plan a daily program.
 - a. In the morning you could spend an hour with God.
 - 1) You could pray for 30 minutes.
 - 2) You could praise and worship for 15 minutes.
 - a) Sing to the Lord. Use a guitar or other instrument if you are able.
 - b) Listen and sing along with praise tapes.
 - c) Sing a new song to the Lord that comes from your heart (Eph 5:19).
 - 3) You could read your Bible for 15 minutes.
 - a) Read two chapters from the Old Testament.
 - b) Read one chapter from the New Testament.
 - b. In the afternoon, you could plan to have lunch with a Christian. You could enjoy a time of fellowship during lunch.
 - c. In the evening you could spend 30 minutes with God before you go to sleep. Perhaps you could pray, read the Bible, and praise God for the day.
4. The key is to be committed to whatever you establish as a program. If it is to spend 10 minutes or 3 hours with the Lord daily, the most important thing is to be committed. As God sees your commitment with a little bit of time, He will motivate you to spend more time with Him (Lk 16:10).

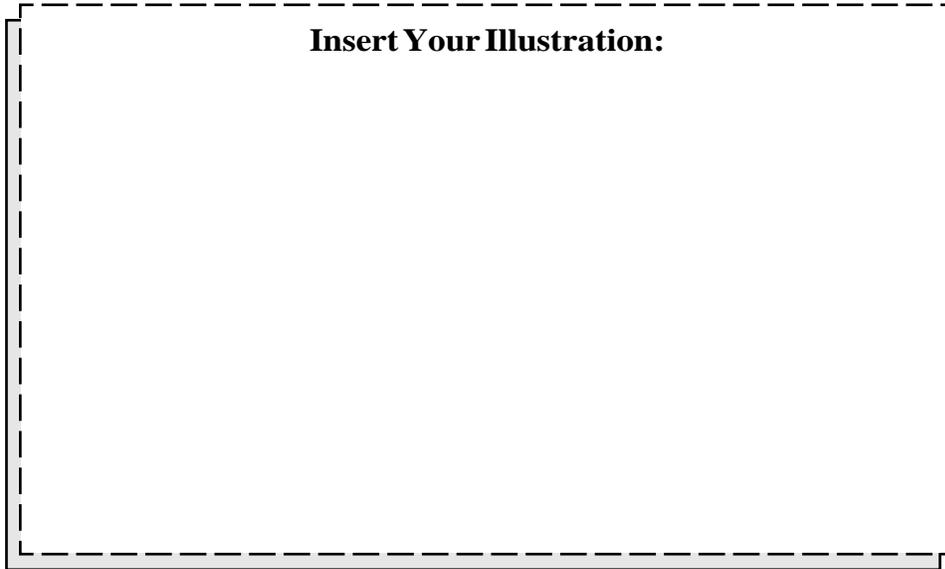
Discussion Point

Are you committed to a consistent plan of spending time practicing the primary activities of knowing God?
What things will help you overcome a lack of commitment?

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Insert Your Illustration:

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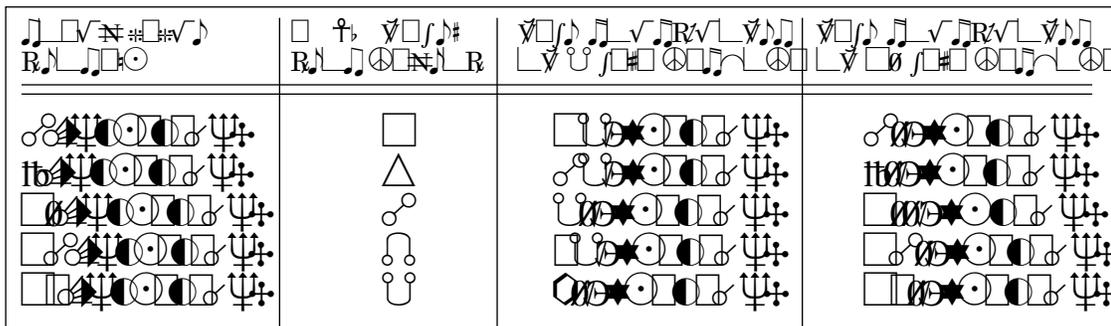


C. The Fruit of Consistency and Commitment.

1. Some people try to read the entire Bible in two weeks. Most times, they start but do not finish. Other people practice discipline. They are consistent and committed. They read three chapters each day and read the entire Bible in one year.
2. It is amazing to calculate what the fruit is of the combination of consistency and commitment.

Discussion Point

Consider the following diagram, which illustrates this point in the case of Bible study.



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Author's Comment:

If you could discipline yourself to read the Bible for one hour each day, then you could read through the whole Bible three times each year. That is, you could read through the whole Bible 30 times in one decade. If you did this you would certainly have the Word of God in you. You would know God very well and would be greatly transformed into His image.

It is not unrealistic to plan on reading the Bible for an hour each day. For many people it would simply mean cutting their television viewing time in half.

If you could discipline yourself to read the New Testament for an hour each day, then you could read through the whole New Testament 14 times each year. That is, you could read the New Testament 140 times in one decade. You would be an expert on the New Testament. Moreover, the fruit of that discipline with respect to knowing God is not able to be calculated.

Insert Your Comment:

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D. The Lessons of Discipline.

Notes 

A Historical Example of Discipline:

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, led a life of discipline with respect to knowing God. (Many examples could have been chosen but Wesley represents a good example of discipline).

Before the Methodist Revivals began, Wesley had formed a group called the Holy Club. This Club was organized under the desire to lead a disciplined life in seeking God.

The following schedule shows a typical day in the life of a member of the Holy Club:

- 1) Wake up at 5:00 a.m.
Sing psalms and read Scriptures until 8:00 a.m.
Pray from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m.
- 2) Five nights each week they met together for fellowship. They encouraged each other and read religious books.
- 3) Each night, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. they would pray for the petition's of the poor. During this time they also planned for ministry for the next day.

1. Discipline is a method, not a goal.
 - a. The Holy Club members were disciplined, but that was not the goal. It was not for the sake of discipline.
 - b. To be disciplined is not our motivation. Our motivation is the love of God and the desire to know Him.
2. To live a life of discipline, we must have our minds renewed.
 - a. There must be a transition from seeking God in a way that fits into our daily activities and conveniences.
 - b. Our daily activities must fit into a life of seeking God.

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3. The reality of a disciplined life of seeking God will lead to a disciplined life of serving and loving others.
 - a. This is consistent with the progression of the two greatest commandments (see Mk 12:30, 31).
 - b. This is consistent with what happened in the Holy Club. They soon began a disciplined schedule of visiting and ministering to those in hospitals and prisons.

V. The Crisis of Dependence upon God.

A. What is the Crisis of Dependence?

1. In Jn 15:5, Jesus said..."I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."
 - a. If this statement is true, then every moment of your life is a crisis of dependence upon Christ.
 - 1) However, many people only come to God in times of an emergency (a perceived crisis) because that is when they **feel** the urgency of their helplessness.
 - 2) The reality of life is that every moment leaves us in reliance upon God and represents our complete helplessness without Him.
 - a) In this sense, every moment is a crisis of dependence.
 - b) Every moment we must come to God.
 - c) When we begin to see every moment of our life as a crisis, we begin to see the crisis of dependence in our relationship with God.

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- b. The more that you see yourself as helpless without God, the more you will seek God.
- c. To say "God, increase my relationship with You," is to say "God, increase my awareness of how helpless I am without You. Increase my awareness of my need for You!"

Notes 

Author's Illustration:

Once there was a king who had a son to whom he gave a yearly allowance. He paid him the entire allowance on the first day of each year. As the years passed, the king began to realize that the only day that he saw his son was on the first day of the year. So the king changed the payment schedule. He began to pay his son day by day. He paid him what was sufficient for the day. The king began to see his son every day!

Insert Your Illustration:

- 2. Unfortunately, some Christians have a "Deistic" view of God. This means they act as if God is far away and unconcerned about our daily lives. They do not want to bother God too often. However, God is like the king in the story. He makes it so that we are in constant need of Him, so that we might be in constant fellowship with Him.

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Class Activity:

Review Jn 15:5 again, then examine Prov 3:5, 6 (focus on the word **all**). “Trust in the Lord with **all** you heart and lean not on your own understanding, but acknowledge Him in **all** your ways and He will make your paths straight.”

How does the principle of Jn 15:5 logically lead to the principle of Prov 3:6? (Reflect upon the story of the king and the application that it taught).

Each and every moment, we are experiencing the crisis of dependence upon God because every moment we are in need of God.

Now, analyze more closely Jn 15:5 and Prov 3:5, 6. Answer the previous question in terms of the relationship between the words **nothing** (Jn 15:5) and **all** (Prov 3:5, 6).

Author’s Comment:

There are six separate aspects within the **crisis** of dependence upon God.

In the English language, we can use each of the six letters of the word **crisis** to develop the following six aspects:

C	onsistency.
R	eward.
I	ntimacy.
S	ecrecy.
I	mportance.
S	ubmission.

This acrostic style teaching method, uses the first letter of each word to teach a different aspect. We realize that this will not apply in most other languages.

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B. Consistency.

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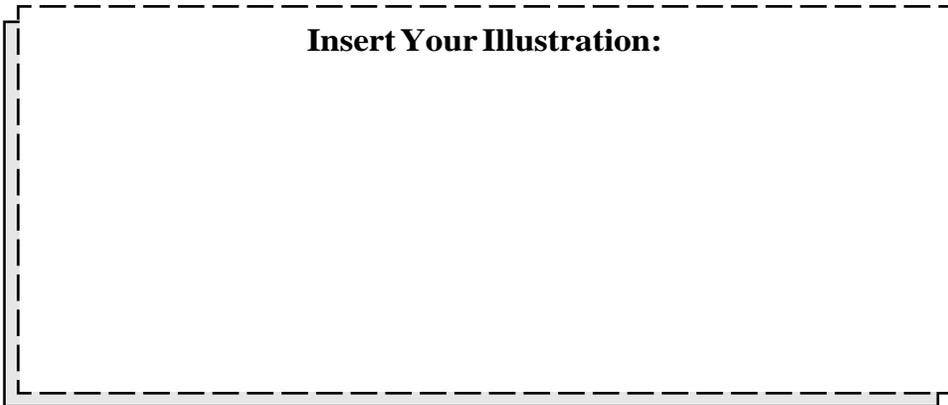
1. Again, read Prov 3:5,6. Meditate on the seriousness of the word **all**.
 - a. **All** means all! Our relationship with God must be consistent and it must cover every area of our lives.
 - b. Some people say that this type of thinking is fanaticism (which means to be unrational and over-zealous in an undesirable way). They say that people who think that they have to do everything with Jesus in mind are simply fanatics (Read Jn 15:5 again). They say that fanatics are crazy.
 - 1) However, according to what we have just learned, the only crazy thing is to try to do something without Jesus (Jn 15:5).
 - 2) It is only logical to follow Prov 3:5, 6.
 - 3) More importantly, it is disobedience toward God to not follow Prov 3:5, 6.
 - c. What we really need in our Christian lives is a little more of this “fanaticism.” We need more fools for Christ (see 1 Cor 4:10).
 - 1) Remember, it was Paul (who also called himself a fool for Christ) who used the words **always, all,** and **without ceasing** when he talked about prayer.
 - 2) There is no Christian who has too much of Jesus in his life!

Author's Illustration:

Jesus is not like milk. Doctors say that milk is very healthy as long as you do not drink too much of it. They say too much of even a good thing is not healthy. Jesus is not like milk! You can't get too much!

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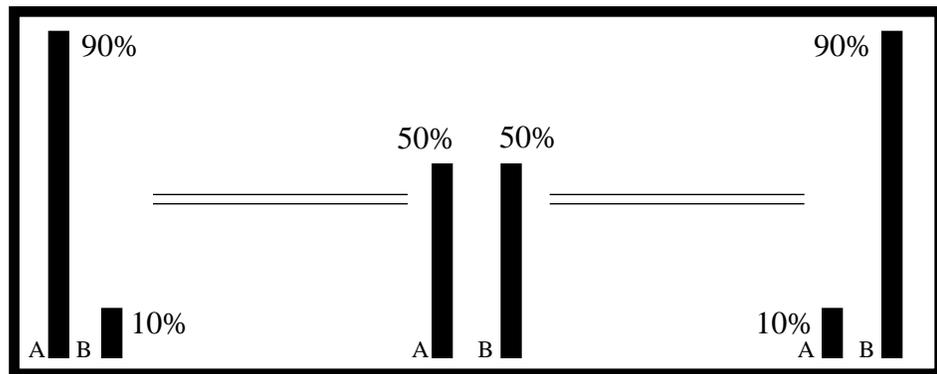
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- Sanctification can be described in many different ways. One of the best ways to describe it is in terms of **consistency** in our relationship with God. Sanctification is the process of spending less time **out of** fellowship with God, and more time **in** fellowship with God.

Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to discuss the relationship between sanctification and consistency in relationship with God.



“A” = percentage of time each day that is not spent with God
“B” = percentage of time each day that is spent with God

To spend time with God is to **acknowledge** Him (Prov 3:6). As Brother Lawrence would say, **it is to practice His presence.**

The process of sanctification is the process of moving more and more consistently into the presence of God. It is moving from left to right on the diagram.

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C. Reward.

Notes 

1. The promise of consistency is reward.
 - a. What is the reward that is promised to those who consistently seek God (study Prov 3:5, 6 again)?
 - b. Study Heb 11:6.
 - 1) Is God a rewarder of those who seek Him?
 - 2) Note how faith is essential.
 - a) Without faith, we can not please God because without faith, we can not even approach God (note that a study of Heb 11:6 shows that it is our coming to God that pleases Him).
 - b) Only faith (which often seems to go against reason) could have climbed the mountain that Moses climbed to fellowship with God.
 - c) God rewarded Moses because God “is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”
2. What is the reward?
 - a. Brother Lawrence, the great monk who learned to live a life continually in God’s presence, said, “There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God.”³
 - b. For Brother Lawrence the reward of seeking God was the opportunity and motivation to seek God more. The reward of having a relationship with God is to have a greater relationship with God.

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Class Activity:

Study Ps 73:28. What is the “good” or reward of the psalmist?

Study Dt 10:9. What is the “inheritance” or reward of Levi? Remember, it was the Levitical priests who were the only ones allowed to enter the tabernacle area (Num 18:1-7).

Study Lk 18:30. What is the reward? What is eternal life (see Jn 17:3)?

- c. The reward of seeking, knowing, or having a relationship with God is more seeking, knowing, or relationship with God (also see 1 Chron 28:9; Mt 7:7; Jms 4:8; Prov 3:32, 33 and Rom 6:23), (remember how eternal life is defined in Jn 17:3). From Gen 15:1, we could say that Abraham’s greatest reward was his “direct communication” with God.

Discussion Point

Describe how you personally have reaped the rewards from spending more time with God.

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D. Intimacy.

Notes 

1. The Biblical concept of “to know.”
 - a. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for “to know intimately” is “Yada.”
 - 1) The greatest thing in life is eternal life.
 - 2) Eternal life is to know God.
 - b. In the New Testament, the Greek word for “to know” (in Jn 17:3) is “ginosko.”
 - 1) It means “to know” through personal experiences or experientially.
 - 2) It can also signify the intimate aspect of knowledge and relationship.
 - c. The aspect of intimacy in relationship with God is more clearly represented in the Old Testament word, “yada.”
 - 1) Review Prov 3:5, 6. The word **acknowledge** is the translation of the Hebrew word “yada.”
 - 2) Study Gen 4:1. Again we find the Hebrew word “yada”. It is used in a very intimate context.
 - 3) When we combine the study of these two passages we see clearly that the Word of God is showing us that our relationship with God is not to be superficial.
 - 4) On the contrary, it is described as being analogous to the most intimate relationship that is possible between human beings (physical sexual intimacy).
 - a) We might say that the Bible encourages us to have “spiritual intercourse” with God.
 - b) We are to be intimately united with Him.

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- c) We are to be one with Him.
- d) Consider the intimacy of the Biblical concepts of “Christ in us” and “Us in Christ.”
- e) Consider Eph 5:31, 32. The marriage **relationship** is a shadow of the type of **relationship** that should exist between Christ and the Church.
- f) We are to have a love affair with Jesus. There is nothing superficial about it. Our relationship with Jesus must be intimate.

2. Maintaining intimacy with God.

- a. In Rev 2:4, the church of Ephesus had left their first love. This implies that at one time, they were intimate with God.
- b. Our relationship with Jesus needs the romance of a first love (Ps 77:6).
- c. This romance leads to intimacy (Ps 63:6).
- d. This intimacy leads to conception (the creation of life) (Jer 24:7).
- e. This conception leads to birth and life (Dan 11:32).
 - 1) The Hebrew words that describe the actions of the people who **know their God** are words of life.
 - 2) These people are strong and durable. They are able to do exploits, bold deeds, or daring acts.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Author's Illustration:

Let us think of the vigor and vitality of a young man who is in love.

A shy, weak, young man may live his life as a coward until he falls in love with a girl. If the girl is threatened, the coward can suddenly turn into a lion.

We are spiritually weak when we do not have an intimate relationship with Jesus. The devil beats us down until we fall in love with Jesus. Suddenly, we become like lions.

Notes 

Insert Your Illustration:

E. Secrecy.

1. Who is your best friend?
 - a. One way to define the idea of a “best friend” is to think in terms of secrecy.
 - 1) A best friend is the person who knows your secrets. That person knows the personal details of your life.
 - 2) He knows more about you than anyone else, because he spends more time with you than anyone else, and because you tell him your secrets.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Discussion Point

Consider the following passages with respect to secrecy:

Mt 6:6 (secrecy in prayer)

Mt 6:17, 18 (secrecy in fasting)

Mt 6:3, 4 (secrecy in giving)

- b. God wants to be your best friend! He wants to create an intimate relationship with you through secrecy. There is a bond between you and God that forms and becomes strong when you share your secrets with Him (when only you and He know).
2. The need for a “lonely place” or “secret place” or “private place.”
 - a. More than once we read in the New Testament that Jesus went to a “lonely place” to pray (for example, see Mk 1:35).
 - b. It is important to have a time (note that in Mk 1:35 Jesus went in the early morning) and a place to seek the Lord privately (or secretly). This type of a setting can help to establish the intimate relationship that is desired by God.

Discussion Point

Discuss the times and events when God has revealed Himself to you, when meeting God at the “lonely or secret place.”

F. Importance.

1. What does Jesus want more than anything else from you? Obedience? Honesty? Faith? Good works?
 - a. No! There is something more important than all of those things. More important than obedience? Yes, because obedience depends on something else. It depends on the strength of your relationship with God.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

- b. More than anything else, God wants your time. He wants to spend time with you. He wants your love (Mt 22:37).
 - 1) Love is expressed by obedience (Jn 14:15).
 - 2) However, love is developed through time spent with God.
- 2. What we need is a little more of the attitude of Mary and a little less of the attitude of Martha!
 - a. Study Lk 10:41, 42.
 - 1) The simplicity of our lives is found in knowing God.
 - 2) How could Jesus say that only **one thing** was necessary (referring to spending time with Him)? Because Jesus understood the reality of Jn 15:5 and the implications of Gal 2:20.
 - a) Relationship with Jesus is the only thing necessary in the sense that everything else is based on it.
 - b) Everything else is based on Christ in us, and Christ in us is based on time spent with Him.

Notes 

Author's Illustration:

A recently married man wanted so much to please his new wife. He worked two jobs so that he could buy her the best home, the nicest clothes, and anything else that she might want. He did not have much time to spend with her, but he thought that there would be more time in the future once they were financially stable. After a few years, his wife left him. She did not leave him for more money or for more material things. She left for a man who would spend time with her.

We, also, are often so busy in the things that we are doing for God that we forget to spend time with Him. The tragedy is that the heart of God beats with the desire to spend time with us. His greatest desire is to have an intimate and constant relationship with us.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Insert Your Illustration:

- b. God is not so interested in us doing something for Him, as He is in Him doing something through us. For Him to do something through us we must be in relationship with Him.
3. Martin Luther, that great German theologian from the 16th century, understood the importance of a relationship with God. The more Martin Luther had to do in a day, the longer he prayed in the morning. He said, “I have so much to do that I must spend the first three hours of each day in prayer.”⁴
4. Physical food is necessary for physical health. Spiritual food is necessary for spiritual health.
 - a. Would you cook a meal for yourself even if you did not feel like cooking? Most people would answer by saying, “no matter if you feel like cooking or not, food is still necessary.”
 - b. Would you spend time with God even if you did not feel like it?
 - 1) Our answer should be the same as the one above.
 - 2) Consider the words of Job 23:12.
 - c. For the Christian, seeking God should be like breathing. Just as breathing is the response of physical life to the presence of air, so prayer should be the response of spiritual life to the presence of God.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

5. In Mk 3:14, Jesus appointed the 12 apostles. Consider the order of priority Jesus gave for the purpose of appointing them:
 - a. First: **To be with Him.**
 - b. Second: To preach.
 - c. Third: To cast out devils.
6. We might be surprised to realize that Christ's disciples never asked their Master how to preach, or what were the five steps to Church growth. They did ask Him how to pray!

Notes 

Discussion Point

Discuss the problem that some ministers face in being too busy serving God to be able to spend time with God. Is this true for you? Are you prepared to make a change?

G. Submission.

1. Relationship begins with submission or surrender. The price or cost is high.
 - a. God does not so much want partnership with us.
 - b. He wants ownership of us.
2. This act of surrender results in selflessness.
 - a. Selflessness has a lot to do with knowing God.
 - b. Review the earlier study of the "imitation of God."

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes

3. To know Jesus is to know the cross, it is to be crucified with Christ.
 - a. Leonard Ravenhill offers these words:

"The man who has died to self has no ambitions and has nothing to be jealous about. Has nothing to fight about. He has nothing he calls his own, and therefore nothing to worry about. He has no rights, so therefore, he cannot suffer any wrongs. He is already dead, so no one can kill him."⁵
 - b. Summary: A man who has died to himself can not be offended because there is no self left to defend. You can not kill a dead man.
4. Relationship necessarily implies positions. The correct position of the believer in his relationship with God is the position of submission or surrender.

Discussion Point

As a leader, do you struggle with feeling like the ministry you conduct belongs to you or is yours to own?
What things must we do to get the right perspective that we belong to God and so does our ministry?

H. Conclusion.

1. Every moment is a **crisis of dependence upon God** because we are in need of God every moment. Thus, our goal must be to spend every moment in relationship with Him.
2. We should make the words of Hosea 6:3 our personal statement of purpose: "So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord."

KNOWING GOD: PART II

3. Challenge each student at the end of this course to do the following four things:
 - a. Make a decision **now** to begin **tomorrow** to spend a certain amount of planned time with the Lord. Be specific.
 - 1) What will you do? When?
 - 2) Review the four primary activities in knowing God and the discipline in knowing God.
 - 3) Pray that God will enable you to be disciplined in your plans.
 - b. Make a decision to try to be in constant fellowship with God tomorrow. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of God's presence and to motivate you to acknowledge Him in all of your ways.
 - c. Consider the barriers in your life that might hinder your relationship with God.
 - 1) Physical barriers.
 - 2) Mental barriers.
 - 3) Emotional barriers.
 - 4) Spiritual barriers.
 - a) Form a strategy to destroy these barriers.
 - b) Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the power to do this and to reveal to you other barriers.
 - d. Pray for revival in your life.
 - 1) Ask God to stir your heart towards Him.
 - 2) Ask Him to give you a hunger and thirst for seeking Him.
 - 3) Remember, God is the source of all good things. Even your own desire to seek Him comes from Him. Ask Him for more!

Notes 

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Knowing God II: Endnotes

¹Plato, Michael P. Green, ed. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989) p. 169.

²Aristotle, Michael P. Green, ed. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989) p. 169.

³Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour and Co., 1993), p. 54.

⁴Martin Luther, Michael P. Green, ed. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989) p. 277.

⁵Leonard Ravenhill, as quoted at Dick Eastman's "Prayer Seminar," 1986.