

A Personal Introduction
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How I wish I could take you on a tour of my library! It tells a very visual story of my Christian search for that which satisfies. Each section of my library tells of a journey looking for the essence of what the Christian life might be. As each section was purchased, I tried to find meaning and fulfillment in yet another chapter of my personal walk with God.

Knowing Bible Facts

In this section of my library you'd see my Bible encyclopedia, atlas, and dictionaries along with my survey books of both the Old and New Testaments. I loved studying each book and learning all I could about as many people as possible. I loved accumulating the knowledge and I even must admit felt quite proud of all that I knew. Yet . . . something was missing, and I wasn't sure what that something might be.

Knowing Bible Doctrine

I decided that I must not be studying the Bible deeply enough. In this section of my library are my sets of systematic theology, Greek and Hebrew word studies and my books on the Holy Spirit, Angels, and Prophecy.

This satisfied for a short time. However, I couldn't help but notice that entire areas of my life appeared unaffected by what I knew. My marriage, my anger, my depression, and most aspects of my job remained untouched.

Knowing How To Live The Christian Life

I became excited to find the Bible did speak to those areas of my life that seemed neglected. It truly is a very practical book. I bought books on marriage, children, emotions, and other counseling topics. I grew. . . I changed. . . I became more passionate about what I was finding. Principles were found in God's Word to speak to me right where I was! I was finally satisfied for awhile. . . and then I found myself feeling empty again.

Knowing Christ

I remember the day that I first read Philippians 3:5-10 and saw the parallel between what the apostle Paul was saying and what I was feeling. He too knew Bible facts, deep Bible doctrine and how to live the law. However, he says in those verses that he found all of those areas to be like trash compared to what he found in knowing Christ Jesus His Lord.

"What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. . . I consider them rubbish. . ." (Philippians 3:8)

But then again I thought that I already knew Christ!

Didn't I?

I knew where Jesus was born, to whom He was born, why He had to die, and even a little about how He could be both God and man at the same time. I had initially trusted Christ for my forgiveness when I was very young. I knew Christ.

But then I realized that there was a very large difference between knowing Christ and merely knowing ABOUT Christ. I had to admit that I didn't know God like I knew my wife and children.

No wonder my spiritual life felt dead. . . there was NO LIFE! Mine was a textbook existence using the Bible as a wise and inspired collection of facts, doctrine and principles to be learned.

Whereas I now began to see Christ is a Person to be known!

My whole definition of the Christian life began to undergo transformation. No longer was the Christian life merely the studying of the Bible for its facts, doctrines, and principles. No longer was the Christian life a certain lifestyle of do's and don'ts to be adopted and rigorously applied.

The Christian life became a relationship to be developed.

But I was lost! How do you go beyond knowing ABOUT a Person to KNOWING a Person???

I knew that I would need to spend time with that Person in a wide variety of situations. My imagination helped me as I began to take Him with me to basketball games and concerts. I visualized Him walking beside me mowing the yard. He came along with me as I played with my children, drove my car and worked in the office. Oh, yes. He continued to go to church with me too.

At first I felt silly as I remembered an imaginary friend I had as a child. However, this was different. I was visualizing Someone who was already there.

"God has said 'Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you'"
(Hebrews 13:5)

An unexpected surprise caught me off guard. When I remembered He was with me, I talked to Him much more. I guess that's prayer. . . but not like any prayer I had ever known. I just began talking to Him about everything I would see and experience. Sometimes I would just be complimenting Him on a piece of His creation. I think they call that "worship." Other times I would be visiting with Him about a concern on my mind. But it was so natural and fun!

Eventually, I had a desire. You can only carry on a monologue so long. I wanted Him to talk back to me! What was He thinking? What was He feeling? Did He like it when I complimented Him? What solutions could He give me to some of the situations that faced me?

Then it hit me!

God's Word. I get it. . . GOD'S WORD! The Bible is HIS WORDS. They are the words He would say to me if He were to audibly talk to me. Instead He wrote them down.

The contents of The Bible became personal words to me -- one half of a delightful conversation between two friends.

Suddenly, I found myself gradually getting to know Him better and better. It became an adventure to learn to know Him more intimately. I wanted to share more of my life with Him too! Take Him more places.

I found myself changing. Not by keeping a list of rules. . . but just by being around Him. He began to rub off on me! How naturally it all happened.

The other books in my library? The ones about facts, doctrines, and principles? I read them often. However, I find that now they have become wonderful doorways into getting to know God better and better.

I realize that taking you on that trip into my personal library did take some time. However, I wanted you to know how I came to write these articles in the Ask A Pastor Internet Library.

In those articles you will discover how to read the Bible with only one view in mind -- getting to know God better. You will learn to take all of the major literary forms in the Scriptures and mine out exciting truths about who God is. Commandments, proverbs, narratives, and Christ's own life will give to you new insights into how God thinks, what He values, and how He acts.

May you never look at the Bible quite the same again. Get ready to be spiritually surprised! I find that God likes to surprise us.