

Getting to Know Jesus

Christians enjoy an intensely exuberant relationship with our God. Our relationship with Deity is the most personal known to mankind. There are no other religions where the people enjoy their God as Father. The following are characteristics that were incomprehensible before the ministry of Jesus Christ:

1. Jesus gave us the right to be born again sons of God. John 1:12, 13; I John 3:2.
2. Christians are the glorious family of God, even now in time. Heb. 2:11-13.
3. We are the temple of God on earth. I Cor. 3:16, 17.
4. God lives in His temple which is continually being constructed with Christians who have been redeemed from the world realm. Titus 2:11-14.
5. God and Christ live in faithful members of the church by His Holy Spirit. Eph. 2:19-22; I Pet. 2:4, 5; I John 3:24.
6. The ministry of Jesus, our Prince and Savior, made it possible for God to “seat us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:4-7.
7. We are members of the “the church of the firstborn.” Heb. 12:22-24.
8. Peter said, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.” I Peter 2:9.
9. The Three Persons of Deity serve Christians until “Christ is formed” in us. Gal. 4:19.
10. The Holy Spirit leads Christians and bears witness with us so that we internalize the identity of sons of God. Rom. 8:9, 16.
11. Christians are the “Israel of God.” Gal. 6:16. We are the seed of Abraham. Gal. 3:26-29.
12. We are heirs of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Matt. 19:29; 25:34; Rev. 21:7.

There are other intimate peaceful relations Christians enjoy because of the doctrine of justification; “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.” Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:1. For instance, when we desire to speak to our Father in prayer, Jesus will be present as our advocate, as well as our atoning sacrifice (I John 2:1; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:18). The Holy Spirit will also make Himself available in case we have a communication problem in our prayers to our Father (Rom. 8:26, 27). This lesson is about “getting to know Jesus” by a study of some of His encounters with people and situations in the Gospels.

Lesson

All of the foregoing has been said to remind us how wonderfully intimate Christians live daily with the three Persons of Deity (II Cor. 13:14; I Pet. 1:2). An intimate relationship is a **key issue** for our lives now and it will be on Judgment Day. Jesus said “eternal life” is equal to knowing God and Jesus Christ. John 17:3. In Jesus’ Judgment Day pronouncement, He said: “Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!’” Matt. 7:23. Consequently, every sincere Christian’s aim is to know both the Father and the Son. This is life in the kingdom of God. If we don’t know how our Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit thinks, feels and behaves, we may not inherit eternal life. Jesus desires to know us and for Christians to know Him so He can welcome us into heaven. He loves us and He has proved it over and over (John 10:14). We can learn about Jesus by watching Him interact with people while He lived on earth. When we learn to interact with people in the manner He did, He will know us.

We determine the character and personality of people by observing their behavior – as they speak and act (Jas. 2:12). Jesus let mankind see God, the Father, in a way no one had seen before (Ex. 33:18-23). He showed Christians our Heavenly Father by practicing righteousness (John 14:8, 9; Heb. 1:3). We know our Father and Jesus are Holy Persons because Jesus practiced righteousness (Rom. 1:17). Jesus will know we have His mind because we practice righteousness (I Cor. 2:16; I John 2:29; 3:7-10). We do not behave on the level Jesus did; however, it is our practice – our intent. God’s righteousness is the practice of all Christians who are known by Jesus.

The structure of this lesson for “getting to know Jesus” will be organized by considering how He behaved as He encountered different kinds of people and issues. We will attempt to draw some conclusions about His character and personality by observing how He behaved (spoke and act) in different scenarios. The writer of the Gospel will reveal His act and speech. We will try to determine His nature by His behavior. This is the way we determine the character and personality of the people “we say we know.”

Our first encounter will reveal how Jesus responded to His parents when He was twelve years of age. He had accompanied His parents to Jerusalem to keep the Passover because they lived during the Law period. Please read Luke 2:41-52. Of course, we would expect the Son of God to be respectful to His earthly parents and He was. In this encounter we can understand Jesus knew He was the Son of God. Just think, the Son of God went back to Nazareth where He was obedient to His earthly family for eighteen years. This was a part of His

priesthood training (Heb. 4:15). He lived the adolescence stage of His life in subjection to His parents. Many parents would marvel!

Jesus' young adult unmarried life was without sin (II Cor. 5:21). He did not live in seclusion; however, He was not a local hero (Luke 2:52; 4:22). He was very serious about doing the will of God and serving the people (Luke 4:18, 19; John 6:38). Jesus obviously maintained good physical health habits. He was able to fast for forty days, withstand Satan and start a rigorous evangelism campaign all over Israel on foot (Luke 4:2). These facts give us data about the character of Jesus. Now let's try to grasp a description of His personality.

We understand Jesus knew the nature of people (John 2:25). He appeared to enjoy moving the minds of people up to the spiritual level of conversation He wanted to have with them. He did it with Nicodemus. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to say he accepted Him as a teacher from God. Jesus moved the conversation to the concept of an old man being born again (John 3:1-12). Jesus moved a discussion with the woman at the well from the fellowship of sharing a drink of water to His identity as the Messiah (John 4:7-26).

Jesus understood and was sympathetic with the fears people harbor (Luke 5:10). He had compassion for people with chronic illnesses (Luke 5:12, 13). Here then is the main point of this lesson; Is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the same person He was while on earth? **Does our king and High Priest still have the same personality He demonstrated while on earth?** If this is our faith, we can change the "was" and "had" in the foregoing sentences to "is" and "has." Consequently, when we learn how Jesus was ecstatic about the "great faith" He witnessed in the centurion, we believe He rejoices with the angels every time they witness a person's faith moving him or her to repent of a sin (Luke 7:9; 15:7, 10).

Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with Him. As He approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, His heart went out to her and He said, 'Don't cry.'
Luke 7:11-13

"Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever." Heb. 13:8. People are comforted when others share the loss of our loved ones. Christians can have faith that Jesus is aware and shares our deep sorrows when they enter our lives. We may want to re-read the scriptures in the twelve points in the Introduction. Let it be said again; "Christians enjoy an intensely exuberant relationship with our God. Our relationship with Deity is the most personal known to

mankind." Intimacy with the same Jesus who evangelized Israel demands faith. Our faith is that Jesus will rejoice every time we show this strength of faith. We do not want to "grieve the Holy Spirit" by ignoring His presence. He desires to constantly fellowship faithful Christians (Eph. 4:30).

Jesus' personality included anger (Mark 3:5). Anger has been translated from the Greek word "*orge*" in this scripture. It is a strong passion with an abiding tendency, rather than a hot anger from which the Greek word "*thumos*" has been translated in Romans 2:8 where both words describe God's anger on Judgment Day. Jesus became exasperated with His mission team when they failed to show faith in the miraculous power He bestowed on them (Luke 9:41). He gave very blunt replies to those who proclaimed their great courage to "accept His baptism." Luke 9:57-62; 22:33, 34; Mark 10:35-38.

His personality was composed of a very loving tenderness toward those whose lives had been corrupted with sin (7:48-50). Of course, His mission statement demanded a personality that was deeply concerned with the "down-trodden." Luke 4:18, 19. This did not mean He went "soft" on sin and the doctrine of eternal hell (Luke 18:24; Mark 9:42-49). Still Jesus felt a deep sorrow for those who go to hell because they would not repent (Luke 13:34, 35; 23:28-31). Somebody might ask, "Was Jesus happy?" Yes, He was happy because He had the emotional attitudes He taught us (Matt. 5:3-12). He was happy even in His suffering. Christians must experience this exercise of rejoicing in suffering (Heb. 12:5-13). Jesus was joyous about His successful campaigns against Satan (Luke 10:18-21).

Many other characteristics can be pointed out about the character and personality of Jesus Christ. We all marvel at His great love He showed for us at the cross while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:6). However, the main point of this lesson is do we know Jesus. Is He a real person to us as our Lord? Does He really care when I am hurting? Does He still cry with Christians when we suffer the loss of somebody who is precious to us as He did with Mary and Martha? John 11:35. He does and this is the uniqueness of the Christian religion. We do, indeed, have a primary relationship with our Father and Jesus Christ because we have the Holy Spirit with us every hour of the day (Luke 11:13).

Questions for Discussion

1. After a study of the twelve items listed in the Introduction about Christians' relationship with Deity, please answer the following questions and do the exercises:

- a. What is the purpose of this relationship from a Christian's point of view?
 - b. List the numbers from the twelve items that establishes the full identity of a Christian.
 - c. How does God dwell in Christians?
 - d. What do faithful Christians expect to inherit?
2. How does the doctrine of justification by faith serve the relationship between Deity and Christians?
 3. How does a Christian's Day of Judgment relate to our relationship with Deity now?
 4. How do people determine the personality of people they encounter?
 5. How did Jesus attempt to show God to the world?
 6. How can a Bible student know some characteristics of Jesus' personality and character?
 7. What was the first recorded encounter that will help us know Jesus?
 8. List two things we know about the character of Jesus during His adolescent years in Nazareth.
 9. What advantage did Jesus have over the people He encountered?
 10. Did Jesus' character and personality change from the person He was on earth when He became king and high priest? If a Christian's answer is "yes," what does that mean to us in our daily lives?
 11. If our answer to the foregoing is "No," what is our assumption about our present relationship with Him?
 12. What did we learn about Jesus' personality when He encountered a situation where someone's loved one died? Would this suggest He thought death was a tragedy for the one who died? What did it suggest about our loss of a loved one?
 13. List some of the different conditions of mankind to which Jesus responded with compassion.
 14. What is unique about the Christian religion?