

## **I. What does it mean to know the Father?**

- A. The theme of knowing the Father for many in Christianity is summed up in the workings of the legality of Salvation through the cross of Christ. In other words, if you consider yourself a Christian you know the Father. (Jhn 1:12)
- B. However, the scriptures make it clear that knowing the Father is defined by the sum of your personal history of relational, revelatory knowledge and understanding concerning His thoughts, actions, and emotions. The Father is not a subject to be studied but a person to be relationally known.
  - 1. It is paramount that we understand the relationship between relational knowledge and love. Without this understanding the multiple exhortations to love God end up just becoming hollow emotions and unobtainable desire. To gain relational knowledge is to grow in love and to not gain relational knowledge is to be stalled or even regress in love.
- C. God reveals to us over and over in His word that the subject of knowing Him is the height and purpose of our existence and the catalyst of the fullness of our experience of existence. If He remains unknown or only a little bit known then the reason why we exist will always remain mysterious and sought after.
  - 1. His desire to be known by us far outweighs our desire to know Him. This becomes clear when we understand the truth that He is self revealed and we would know nothing of Him unless He wanted us to. God refers to the knowledge of Himself (His thoughts, emotions, and actions) as His Glory and/or His Name.

## **II. The Height and Fount of Revelation**

- A. There has been much debate over the years concerning the primary purpose of the incarnation. He told us He came to “seek and save the lost”, and to “set captives free”. By His own admission, His mission had multiple facets but I believe He made His primary mission unmistakably clear. He came to glorify the Father, or in other words to make the Father known. (Jhn 17:1-5)
- B. The essential Christian doctrines of incarnation (God in Human Form) and the Trinity (God in Three Distinct Yet CO-Equal Persons) are held by every Christian and Christian church in the world. However, if most believers were honest concerning their knowledge of Jesus and the Father you will find that the majority of believers have a form Arianism or Nontrinitarian (Gods with Separate Natures) belief.

1. This is most clearly seen in the common confession that the God of the Old Testament is different than the God of the New Testament. Or that Jesus' heart of mercy and love stepped in to save us from the Father's heart of wrath and anger. Jesus was not protecting us from a Father who didn't want us but rather reconciling us to our Father who was longing for us to know His love. (Jhn 14:7-11)

### III. Pursuing the Father's Heart

- A. Assurance of our Pursuit – There is commonly held a primary argument in our minds that we are pursuing or seeking a God who does not care or want to be found. Or that our pursuit is in vain because of His divine loftiness. The truth is that we are the ones being pursued by the Father. He refuses to stop loving us and chasing down our hearts and minds with the truth of His heart to the extent that He would take on human flesh forever and die for us. There is no clearer statement that declares His radical desire to be known.
- B. He wants us to Understand and Know His Father's Heart – God is not obligated to us in anyway and He does only what He wants to do. The fact that He made Himself known and so exhaustively through general and special revelation declares the truth of His burning desire to be known by you. (Mat. 11:27)
- C. His Love is For us, and He Gives it Freely – Some people struggle with feeling like God does not love them or is hindered from loving them because of the darkness and sin in their life. The cross of Christ is a blaring statement of His unyielding love for us while we were still His enemies. (Rom. 5:6-8)
- D. He wants us to Receive His Love Freely – So much of the love that we offer to one another comes with strings attached and is withdrawn when we are let down or not honored as we wish to be. His love is not conditional but rather is offered freely and limitlessly regardless of our response.
- E. Strongholds and Arguments Concerning Him - In our desire to uphold a culture of freedom the issue of knowing the truth concerning the Father's heart towards you is absolutely essential. The strongholds of fleshly attitudes, addictions, mindsets, and actions all find their foundations rooted in a lie or lies concerning the truth of the Father's heart and intentions towards you and your life. (Mat. 15:19; 2 Cor. 10:3-6)
  1. Receiving prayer and ministry concerning an area of stronghold in your heart and life will only result in temporary freedom if the lie that allowed it to be there in the first place is not replaced with truth. Then

that truth must be defended and reinforced until it is truly established in you.

#### IV. Ask, Seek, and Knock

*“Reflect for a moment upon the fact that God is infinitely strong and can do anything He pleases. He is infinitely righteous and only does what is right. He is infinitely good and only does what is good. He is infinitely wise so that He knows what is perfect and right in every situation. When you reflect that He infinitely loves you, and that all of His strength, all of His righteousness, all of His goodness, and all of His wisdom functions to raise the joy of His loved ones as high as it can be raised forever. The fact that this God lavishly invites you to come and ask Him for things with the promise that He will give good things to those who ask, is simply breathtaking..... This also means that one of the most unspeakable tragedies in the church is that there is so little inclination to pray” – John Piper*

- A. One of the outworkings of an individual who knows the Father's heart is an individual who constantly and confidently asks the Father for things. It is an absolute must in people who desire to have a culture of freedom to have a life of asking their Father for greater depths of wholeheartedness and freedom.
- B. In the Sermon of the Mount Jesus gives us 7 encouragements/promises to intercede or ask our Father for Him to give us the good things that He desires to give us. It is imperative that we understand the context of these exhortations are given in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5:1-7:29). (Mat. 7:7-11)
  - 1. Ask and It will be Given
  - 2. Seek and you will Find
  - 3. Knock and it will be Opened
  - 4. Everyone who asks Revives
  - 5. Everyone who Seeks Finds
  - 6. To Him to Knocks it will be Opened
  - 7. He will never Give us what is Bad for Us
  - 8. Your Father will Give Good Gifts to those who Ask
- C. Jesus goes way beyond the encouragement that we have a Father in Heaven. The entire premise of these exhortations is that our Father in Heaven is infinitely “Better” than our earthly fathers and that there is no darkness or evil in Him but only goodness, righteousness, and love. He does this in order that we would be those who know and ask our Father for the freedom and wholeheartedness He wants us to have.