



# We Really Knew Jesus?



Paul led a very full and colorful life. He lived through the good, the bad, and everything in between. But as he told his friends in Philippi, absolutely nothing compared to the amazing treasure of knowing Jesus.

## Day #1: Good as Gold

I'm sure you have seen a gold ring before. Gold rings can either be solid gold, which are gold through and through, or they can be gold-plated. When a ring is gold-plated, a jeweler starts with a ring that's made of a much cheaper metal and puts a very thin layer of gold around it. At first, both rings look almost the same. Only a jeweler with a trained eye can tell the difference. But in time, the gold coating wears off, revealing the cheaper metal underneath. However, the gold on the solid ring can never wear off. The more it is rubbed down, the more beautiful it will become.

As a young man, Paul worked very hard at obeying God's law and the laws that the Pharisees made up. In fact, as a young up-and-coming-Pharisee, Paul kept the rules better than anyone else. But Paul did not understand the heart of God. On the inside, Paul wasn't like God at all. He wasn't loving, kind, peaceful, or forgiving.

**+** *No one can say, "I have kept my heart pure. I'm clean. I haven't sinned." - Proverbs 20:9*

Without a clean heart, all of Paul's rule-following made him like a gold-plated ring. He looked good on the outside, but the inside wasn't pure. He wasn't good through and through; the bad stuff was just below the surface. As hard as he tried, Paul wasn't perfect and he was separated from God.

That's why Paul was so thrilled about knowing Jesus! When Paul met Jesus and put his trust in Him, God gave him a new heart and filled him with the Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:10, Ephesians 1:13). Suddenly, he was like a solid gold ring. Because the inside was good, the outside would be even better. From that moment on, the good things Paul did were the natural outpouring of love, grace, and mercy that God had filled him with.

Day #1 continued:



What rules do you try to follow? Do you know that rules can never make you right with God? (Romans 3:20) Only trusting in Jesus makes you right with God! (John 6:29) Then He gives you a pure heart and you are able to follow Him fully.

## Day #2: Step of Obedience

Look across the room and pick out an object. What object are you looking at? Now, if you wanted to get to that object, what would you do? You would have to take a step in that direction, then another, then another.

In order to get closer to God, we have to take the steps He tells us to take—steps of obedience. When we do what He tells us, we get to know Him in the experience.

For example, centuries ago, Abram lived in the city of Ur. God had adventures and blessings in store for Abram that he could never have imagined in his wildest dreams! (Genesis 12:2-3)



*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people. Leave your father's family. Go to the land I will show you." - Genesis 12:1*

And how did Abram respond?

*So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him. - Genesis 12:4a*

From there, God blessed and blessed and blessed Abram. In fact, you could say that the rest of the Bible is all about the amazing things God did to and through Abram. God proved His love for Abram and for all people, God showed Abram He would never leave him, and God taught Abram He always keeps His promises.

But what if Abram had not obeyed? What if he had thought, "I know God promised great things, but I'm not sure I trust God that much. I'm pretty comfy right here in my own neighborhood. I think I'll just stay here"? Then Abram would have missed out on getting to know God!



Get up and take a step toward the object across the room. Let it be a reminder that you should obey what God tells you so you won't miss out on one second of getting to know Him!


## Day #3: Time Table


Jot down a list of the things you do in a regular day, and about how much time you spend doing them.

It takes most people about 11 minutes to take a shower and dentists say we should spend at least 5 minutes a day brushing our teeth. How many hours do you spend at school or at soccer practice? How much time do you spend at the TV, computer or video games?

One thing we need in order to really *know* Jesus is time. You know that with any relationship, the more time you spend with a person, the deeper your relationship will be. It's the same in our relationship with Jesus. Take time each day to read His word. Throughout your day—especially in difficult situations—allow time to tell Him how you feel and ask Him what He wants you to know.

If you think you are too busy to spend time with Jesus, then you are too busy! Period.

 *Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have given up everything else and count it all as garbage. All I want is Christ.* - Philippians 3:8 CEV

 Look back at your list. Is there anything on your list more important than knowing God? If your days are filled with other things, ask Jesus what He wants you to give up in order to spend time with Him (Psalm 1:2).


## Day #4: Fear No More

What situation are you most afraid of? What if something wonderful could come out of a bad situation? You see, often, it's in our most difficult times that we get to know God better. This happened throughout the Bible:


- After spending 100 years unable to have a baby, Abraham and Sarah learned that God keeps His promises (Genesis 21:2).
- After being kicked out of her home, a servant woman named Hagar learned that God goes after those who are treated badly (Genesis 21:17-18).
- After being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph found out God would never leave him (Acts 7:9-10).
- When Lazarus died, his sisters, Mary and Martha, learned Jesus had power over death (John 11:44).

And one of the most trouble-filled lives we find in the Bible is Job. Job had a great life with tons of blessings. But before he knew it, it was all stripped

Day #4 continued:

 away from him. After losing everything he had—riches, health, and family—Job had this to say: *I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.* - Job 42:5

Our #1 goal should be getting to know God. So if the hard times we have help us to know Him, then we can view our trouble differently. We should stop being afraid to face trials, and instead, see every turn in our life as an opportunity to know the Lord more deeply.


 The next time something happens that makes you uneasy, don't panic. Instead, thank God for it (1 Thessalonians 5:18), and ask Him to teach you something you never knew before about His character.

## Day #5: Listen Here

What if your brother or sister told you, "Mom said, 'Your room is too neat - you need to mess it up!'" Would you believe that your mom said that? Why not? Most likely, it's quite opposite of what she normally says. Because you really *know* your mom, you know her character. You can recognize the type of things she would or would not say.


In a similar way, you have to spend time reading God's written word, the Bible, so you will know His character and you can recognize the types of things He would or wouldn't say. Then when His Spirit speaks to your heart, you'll know that it's Him speaking! (John 10:4-5)

God sent His Spirit to live in us for a reason! His Spirit speaks to us and guides us. Right in the middle of a situation He lets us know what to do.

 *The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you.* - John 14:26b

There are certain things God does not say. He would never say to hold a grudge against your sister; He would tell you to forgive her (Matthew 6:15). He wouldn't tell you to be selfish; He would tell you to share (Psalm 37:21). He wouldn't tell you lie; He would lead you to speak truth (Proverbs 6:16-18).

God's Spirit will NEVER say anything that goes against His written word. When you feel like God's Spirit is speaking to your heart, or giving you a gentle nudge, and it lines up with His written word, then you should obey!

 Discuss a time when God's Spirit gave you a nudge. How did you know it was Him? What did you do?