

A Vision to Know God (Basics Overview):

The world is constantly changing, but God remains the same and so do the practical methods for drawing close to Him.

Current environment

- Fast-paced, more is better, high-tech world
- 84% of Americans use the internet with some regularity
- 64% of Americans own a smartphone
- “Social” relationships are becoming increasingly more commonplace while “face-to-face” relationships are becoming less important



With all these changes, don't we need to change the way we come know God? And how we engage with Him and draw closer to Him?

God Remains the Same

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Malachi 3:6

“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.”

Numbers 23:19

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Psalms 102:25-27

Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.

2 Timothy 2:13

If we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

So where do we begin? What are the Basics?

Definition of Basic

Basic – *an essential foundation or starting point; fundamental*

- Essential food & water – we all need to eat, no matter how “advanced” we become
- Basic training – every soldier goes through basic training & uses those basic skills in everything they do
- Foundation of a building – without a foundation, a building will not last long

The Greatest Commandment

Mark 12:29-33

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating? Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important? The most important one, answered Jesus, is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one. And you are to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'"

Luke 10:26-27

And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

What is God telling us here? What is the most basic of all as a believer in Christ?

1. Love God
2. Love Others

Getting to "Know" Him

There is a distinct difference between *knowing about* someone and *knowing* someone...

- Kevin Durant example

So what elements are required to know someone? How do you *know* your spouse, best friend, family, etc.?

- Must have a personal relationship to begin with – John 3:16, 1 John 5:11-13, John 1:12
- Time spent together communicating, creating emotional intimacy
- Giving priority – am I prioritizing the relationship in my schedule, where I spend my money, etc.

The Wheel Illustration & Practical Methods

The Hub – Christ the Center

As mentioned above, the Lord doesn't change – stability. It all begins with Him & the power He has given us through the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

John 15:1-5

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

The Rim – The Obedient Christian in Action

Looking at the Scriptures to understand what the life of a believer looks like...

Romans 12:1

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

John 14:21

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

John 14:15

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

1 John 3:22

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

Joshua 22:5

Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Samuel 15:22

Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

Luke 6:46

Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?

Matthew 7:15-21

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

1 John 2:3-5

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him

The 4 Spokes

So now that we know the power comes from Christ (the Hub), what basic & practical actions can we do as believers to connect our lives (the Rim) to tap into His power and “know” the Lord better (the Hub)?

Vertical Spoke – The Word

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Luke 9:23

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Isaiah 37:31

And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward."

1 Peter 2:2

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

1 Samuel 3:21

And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

John 5:39

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me

Getting the Word into Our Lives:

The Hand Illustration – Hearing, Reading, Studying, Memorizing & Meditating

- Listen to the Bible – Romans 10:17, James 1:22
 - Audiobooks, sermons, podcasts. DiscipleshipLibrary.org, etc.
- Daily Quiet Time – Rev. 1:3, Deut. 17:19, Joshua 8:34
 - A time, a place, some materials & a pure heart
 - Journaling; Bible Highlights Reading Record (reference, thought & how it impressed you)
 - Great starting resource – 7 Minutes w/ God
- Bible Study – Acts 17:11, 2 Timothy 2:15, Ezra 7:10, Jeremiah 15:16
 - Great Navigator resources/studies – Lessons on Assurance, Lessons on Christian Living, the Design for Discipleship (DFD) series, the 2:7 Series
 - Studying, Interpreting & Applying the Bible by Walt Henrichsen & Gayle Jackson
- Scripture Memory & Meditation – Psalms 119:9-11, Proverbs 27:17,18, Joshua 1:8, Psalms 1:2,3
 - Topical Memory System (TMS); verse packs; accountability with others

When in God's word, **personal discovery is key.**

Meditation and worrying are essentially the same process; however, one is positive and the other is a negative.

Vertical Spoke – Prayer

John 15:7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 7:7-11

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

James 4:2-3

You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Jer. 33:3

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know

Matthew 21:22

And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.

Psalms 116:1, 2

I love the Lord because he hears my prayers and answers them. Because he bends down and listens, I will pray as long as I breathe!

Creating a Lifestyle of Prayer:

- Always involves 3 elements: my request, His reply & my obedience (action)
 - Sometimes a “no” or silence from the Lord is an answer and we must act in faith
- Top 10 Most Wanted Prayer List
- Prayer Journal
 - Have a daily personal & thanksgiving prayer list
 - Pray for specific groups on certain days of the week (e.g. family & friends on Monday, spiritual & country leaders on Tuesday, other believers, the church & missionaries on Wednesday, lost/non-Christian on Thursday, special heart burdens on Friday, etc.)
- ACTS Acronym
 - Adoration – Psalm 103:1-5
Bless the Lord, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; Who satisfies your years with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.
 - Confession – 1 John 1:9
If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - Thanksgiving – Colossians 4:2
Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving
 - Supplication – Philippians 4:19
And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
- Always be praying – while driving in your car, walking around campus, breaks at work, etc.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Horizontal Spoke – Fellowship

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Matthew 18:20

For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.

1 John 1:3

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

True, Christian Fellowship:

- What things did the early Christians do?
 - Acts 2:42
They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
 - The Word
 - Fellowship
 - Breaking of bread
 - Prayer
- Spending time with like-minded individuals who share similar passions
 - Share joys, sorrows, laughter, family/career milestones
 - Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.
 - Ephesians 4:2
Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
- Do ministry together – LifeGroups, Nav20s, volunteer together

Horizontal Spoke – Witnessing

Matthew 4:19

And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

II Corinthians 5:20

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Sharing the Truth:

- Develop new friendships – get to know new people, people outside your normal “Christian” circle
 - Find common ground (hobbies, interests, career, family, etc.)
 - Ask about their life & learn what they are longing for
- Pray with those people – most individuals will let you pray for them no matter where they are at in their spiritual journey and you'd be surprised the impact that can have on someone
- Share from personal experience
 - Acts 22:15
You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.
 - Acts 26 – Paul's personal testimony to King Agrippa
- Use other great illustrations or tools (e.g. the Bridge Illustration, the Morality Ladder, Steps to Peace with God, the Four Spiritual Laws, etc.)

Conclusion

Seems easy, right? But it's not. Scripture tells us that it requires work. In today's high-tech, busier-than-ever world, there are a lot of things we can focus our time and attention on, but only one thing holds promise for now & forever – our ongoing relationship with the Lord.

I Tim 4:7-9

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, *but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

“Knowing” God doesn't require anything fancy. The basics – absorbing/adoring/studying God's character through His Word, talking (praying) to Him, fellowshiping with other believers and sharing truth with others – are not complex, but they do require time & effort. A result of spending more time with Him results in a greater love for others.

- 1. Love God**
- 2. Love Others**