

WHAT TIRED CHRISTIANS NEED TO KNOW

- A. Christians seemingly get tired or burned out when they feel like they aren't measuring up. They are doing the best they can and it just isn't good enough.
- B. It takes many of us years or even decades to come to realized that God is not calling us to do but to be.
 1. God is calling us to not be the workers but the conduit through whom God works.
 2. Jesus declared in John 15:5, *I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*
- C. The messages will examine what we need to know so we don't miss the privilege of being used by God. He doesn't need us but we most certainly need Him.
 1. Know God
 2. Know Yourself
 3. Know Others
 4. Know What (or So What)

KNOW GOD

- A. In Holiness
 1. Donald McCullough states that the crying need of evangelicals is a proper view of God, *God is different-fundamentally different-from anything we could have imagined, from any god we might have created for ourselves. The biblical word for this difference is holy.*
 2. We need a fresh dose of the holiness of God. Our study of theology must not be an exercise in defining God in our image, but submission to His authority and majesty.
 3. C. S. Lewis pictures well the otherness of God in his description of Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*:

Is-is he a man? asked Lucy.

Aslan a man! said Mr. Beaver sternly. *Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of the Beasts? Aslan is a lion-the Lion, the great Lion.*

Ooh! said Susan. *I'd thought he was a man. Is he-quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.*

That you will, dearie, and no mistake, said Mrs. Beaver. *If there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly.*

Then he isn't safe? said Lucy.

Safe? said Mr. Beaver. *Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.*
 4. Our study of theology should be tempered by the same regard Mr. Beaver had for Aslan. God is not safe, but God is good, very good.
- B. In Relationship
 1. Notes
 - a. Definition of eternal life
 - 1) Eternal Life
 - 2) To live forever - no theological perspective.
 - 3) To be born again - that is required to live with God.
 - 4) To trust Christ alone - *how* not the *what*.
 - 5) Biblical definition, John 17:3, And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
 - b. Definition of *know*
 - 1) Present tense marks progression, *learn to know*.
 - 2) Subjunctive mood emphasizes potential.
 - 3) To acquire information through personal involvement or experience.
 - 4) Note Deuteronomy 29:6, *that you may know that I am the LORD your God.*

2. Question - Do I know Jesus Christ?

a. Knowing about Him

- 1) I believe Jesus Christ is God the Son who died on the cross, was buried, and was raised from the dead - I know Who Jesus is.
- 2) I believe He died to pay my penalty for sin - I know what He did.
- 3) I placed my trust in Christ alone for eternal life.
- 4) But do I know Him?
- 5) Alister McGrath - *...intellectual assent can easily become a spiritual liability. It led me to think of "knowing Christ" purely in terms of knowing about Christ...Knowing Christ was nothing more and nothing less than gathering information about Christ.*

b. Knowing Him personally

- 1) W. E. Vine, *...such knowledge is obtained, not by mere intellectual activity, but by operation of the Holy Spirit (based) upon acceptance of Christ.*
- 2) I want to know Him not only intellectually but relationally.
 - a) It is a process, learning to know.
 - b) It is possible, I have the potential of knowing Him.
- 3) I have had the privilege of being married to my wife for almost 50 years. I know her. She knows me - probably more than she would like to know. Yet, the deepness of our relationship is not in knowing each other's likes and dislikes but in spending time together. I enjoy being with her. I enjoy pleasing her. I have come to know her not just to know about her.
- 4) Donald Coggan, former archbishop of Canterbury, *The journey from head to heart is one of the longest and most difficult that we know.*
- 5) If you are tired in ministry, probably that's a journey you need to take this year.
- 6) Michael W. Smith sings a song called *Breathe*. He cries out to God, *I'm desperate for You.*
- 7) Are you desperate to know Christ not just know about Him?
- 8) A.W. Tozer, *Every man is as close to God as he wants to be.*
- 9) Paul's goal was to know Christ
 - a) It is relational, Philippians 3:8-9, *More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.*
 - b) It is experiential, Philippians 3:10, *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,*

C. For consideration

1. Does the song *Your Love is Extravagant* by Casting Crowns reflect your relationship to God?

Your love is extravagant
Your friendship, it is intimate
I feel like moving to the rhythm of Your grace
Your fragrance is intoxicating in our secret place
Your love is extravagant

2. Henry Blackaby, *God is more interested in a love relationship with you than in what you can do for Him.*
3. Philip Yancey, *The only thing more difficult than having a relationship with an invisible God is having no such relationship.*
4. Henry Blackaby, *I think God is crying out and shouting to us. "Don't just do something. Stand there! Enter into a love relationship with Me. Adjust your life to Me. Let Me love you and reveal Myself to you as I work through you.*
5. Philip Yancey, *We are profoundly different, God and I, which explains why friendship is not the primary model used in the Bible to describe our relationship. Worship is.*

KNOW YOURSELF

A. In character

1. Christians are chosen, Casting Crowns, *Who Am I?*

Who am I, that the Lord of all the earth
Would care to know my name
Would care to feel my hurt
Who am I, that the Bright and Morning Star
Would choose to light the way
For my ever wandering heart

Not because of who I am
But because of what You've done
Not because of what I've done
But because of who You are

2. Christians are self-absorbed

- a. Augustine, *My soul is constricted. Expand it so that You can enter in.*
- b. Chrysostom, *...runners don't think about how many laps they have finished, but how many are left. We, too, should think not about how we are advanced in holiness, but about how much farther we have to go.*

3. Christians are needy

- a. Augustine, *...I don't know what temptations I can resist and which ones I can't. But there is hope because You are faithful...Therefore, I will confess what I know about myself. I will also confess what I don't know about myself. What I do know about myself, I know by Your enlightenment. And what I don't about myself, I won't know until the time when You will see my "darkness as the noonday.*
- b. Chrysostom, *We shouldn't retreat or lose heart when unexpected things happen to us. Instead, we should submit to the One who knows best and who will test our hearts by fire as long as He likes.*

4. Christians must be an example, Cyprian, *Your character should provoke everyone to imitate your life and conduct.*

B. In ministry

1. Pursue the greatest goal - know Christ

- a. It begins at salvation.
- b. It continues through personal experience.
 - 1) The power of His resurrection - Jesus was raised from the dead and believers are raised from spiritual death to spiritual life.
 - 2) The fellowship of His sufferings - Paul was willing to suffer for the cause of Christ.
 - 3) Conformity to His death - it demands obedience but it will happen, note Romans 8:29, *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.*
- c. It is based on Christ's indwelling presence, Colossians 1:27, *To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

2. Maintain clear vision

- a. Definition of vision - what God wants to do through you.
- b. Measuring vision
 - 1) Is your vision too narrow?
 - a) Do you measure your ministry only on what you are doing?
 - b) The Apostle Paul built his ministry on developing others, Ephesians 4:12, *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*
 - 2) Is your vision too small?
 - a) Do you only want to preach, teach, and evangelize?
 - b) The Lord Jesus Christ commands us to make disciples, Matthew 28:19, *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

- 3) Is it too shallow?
 - a) Do you spend too much time doing good works?
 - b) Jesus reminded Martha to do what is best, Luke 10:41-42, *But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."*

3. Take positive steps as seen in 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

- a. Follow the Leader (14), *But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him.*
 - 1) The scene before us pictures God as the conqueror through Christ...and Paul as the conquered.
 - 2) He is not the object of praise...he is not the leader...he is the follower.
 - 3) Christ won the battle...not us. It's His celebration...not ours. He gets the glory...not us.
- b. Produce the right aroma (15), *For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;*
 - 1) Priests marched in the procession waving censers that produced an unmistakable aroma along the parade route.
 - 2) Paul captures this image and adapts it to the Christian life and service.
 - 3) How we live gives off an aroma to God. The aroma is to reflect the aroma of Christ...that is Christlikeness.
- c. Demonstrate an humble spirit (16), *to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?*
 - 1) It is a huge responsibility to be an aroma of life to some and to death to others.
 - 2) Paul felt incompetent outside of God's enabling power, 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, *Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*
- d. Stand firmly for the truth (17), *Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside,*
 - 1) Sincerity - no distortions in the message - his motive was pure
 - 2) From God - his calling was of God - his mandate was authoritative
 - 3) In the sight of God - every time he spoke, Paul recognized that God was watching...listening - his attitude was submissive
 - 4) In Christ - his ministry reflected a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ and commitment to serve Him - his message was clear

C. For consideration

1. Augustine, *We must be persuaded how much God loved us so that we don't shrink from Him in despair. And we need to be shown also what kind of people we are whom He loved so that we also don't withdraw from Him out of pride.*
2. Are there things I must do to get back in step with God?

KNOW OTHERS

- A. Personal concern over motivation for Christian service.
- B. Freedom in Christ
 - 1. A believer's position in Christ is freedom, Galatians 5:13a, *For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters;*
 - a. Christians are called to freedom not bondage to the law.
 - b. Justification is by faith alone not by attempts to keep the law.
 - c. Freedom for believers is the purpose of God's actions in Christ.
 - d. John Stott, *No man is truly free until Jesus Christ has rid him of the burden of guilt. It is freedom from the awful bondage of having to merit the favor of God; it is not freedom from all controls.*
 - 2. Definition of freedom in Christ, Galatians 5:13b, *only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.*
 - a. It is not license
 - 1) Selfishness is evidence of bondage to the flesh instead of freedom in Christ.
 - 2) Religion Watch, *In a recent survey of 730 students at evangelical seminaries, 40% of the seminarians agreed that "realizing my full potential as a human being is just as important as putting others before myself."*
 - b. It is service
 - 1) Our service is based on our relationship to Christ - through the new birth we were made slaves of righteousness.
 - 2) The means by which we are to serve others is *through love*.
 - 3) Love is the expression of true faith, Galatians 5:6, *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.*
 - 4) Jesus is the example of love, Galatians 2:20, *and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
 - 3. Benefits of service
 - a. It is enrichment, Henry Drummond, *To love abundantly is to live abundantly.*
 - b. It is testimony, Henry Blackaby, *People know us. They know what we can do. When they see things happen that can only be explained by God's involvement, they will come to know Him...The world comes to know God when they see God's nature expressed through His activity.*
 - c. It is maturity, Bernard of Clairveaux's 4 stages of spiritual growth:
 - 1) *Loving others for our own sake.*
 - 2) *Loving God for our own sake, in view of what God does for us.*
 - 3) *Loving God for God's sake, unselfishly.*
 - 4) *Loving ourselves (and others) for God's sake, in awareness of God's great love for us.*
- C. For consideration
 - 1. Does my freedom in Christ draw me closer to Him or to the world?
 - 2. Am I spiritually mature based on my love for others?
 - 3. What keeps me from knowing others?

KNOW WHAT (SO WHAT)

- A. Knowing God is possible!
 - 1. We were made to know Him.
 - a. Augustine, *You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.*
 - b. John Calvin, *God accommodates Himself to our abilities.*
 - 2. He wants us to know Him
 - a. Philip Yancey, *Jesus gives God a face, and that face is streaked with tears.*
 - b. Note Revelation 3:20, *Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.*

3. We can deal with barriers
 - a. Alister McGrath, *...the closer we draw to Christ, the more conscious we become of our sin.*
 - b. Repent and obey, 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
4. We can remind ourselves of His blessings.
 - a. Philipp Melanchthon, *To Know Christ is to know His benefits.*
 - b. Theological
 - 1) Adoption - Sinners become children of the holy God.
 - 2) Justification - Jesus became sin for us...
 - 3) Sanctification - with God's help, we start living what we believe
 - 4) Glorification - We will become just like Jesus
 - c. Personal - signposts
 - 1) In the Old Testament, the people of Israel set up signposts to remind them of God's working in their lives.
 - 2) Mark your life with signposts of God's work in you.
5. Philip Yancey, *Does God really want close contact with us? Jesus gave up Heaven for it. In person He reestablished the original link between God and human beings, between seen and unseen worlds.*
6. Henry Blackaby, *When you face a crisis of belief, what you do next reveals what you really believe about God.*

B. Knowing Yourself Realistically

1. Henry Blackaby, *Frequently, the reason we do not join Him is we are not committed to join Him. We are wanting God to bless us, not to work through us.*
2. Mark Bailey, *Jesus is the Master. He's the one who wrote the music. All He asks is that you let Him play His music in the cathedral of your life.*
3. Don't pursue works sanctification - working for God instead of God working through me.
4. Steps
 - a. Be led by God - submit, Henry Blackaby, *If you really believe that God is love, you will also accept that His will is always best.*
 - b. Be committed to God - obey, Henry Blackaby, *'Obedience is the outward expression of your love for God.*
 - c. Be dependent upon God - trust, Henry Blackaby, *Let God use times of waiting to mold and shape your character. Let God use those times to purify your life and make you into a clean vessel for His service.*
 - d. Be faithful to God - true, C.S. Lewis, *Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in,' aim at earth and you will get neither.*

C. Knowing Others

1. Mark Bailey, *He trains you to be His disciple so you can help disciple others who come to Him too.*
2. Henry Drummond, *To love abundantly is to live abundantly.*
3. I am free to know and serve others because God knows and cares for me.

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