

The logo for "Explore God" with "explore" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font and "God" in a blue, uppercase, sans-serif font. A small "TM" trademark symbol is located at the top right of the word "God".**THE 7 BIG QUESTIONS**

"Can I Know God Personally?"

Idea: You were made by God and for God...for relationship.

Intro: Everyone wants to know and be known. It is human nature. This desire is woven into the psyche of every person because, as we have discovered during this Exploring God series, man was created by a communal God to be in community. We all desire to know that there is a purpose for our lives. We all desire to know that there is something more than the temporary things of this world. We all desire to have deep meaningful relationships, and the relationship that we long for more than any other is with God. We have learned much about God throughout the past six weeks. We have come to know that there is in fact a God, that life finds its purpose in God, and that God has spoken to us through the Bible. There remains one question that that we haven't answered. Can I know God personally?

Take a look at this video. [Play The Curiosity Collective form sermon bumper videos.](#)

Inquiry: Since the Bible refers to God over and over again as "Father," it seems sensible that we would take the time necessary to investigate whether or not He can be known. In

fact I believe the Word of God leaves no doubt as to the fact that God can and even desires to be known personally by you and me. The evidence is on every page. Colossians 1:16 tells us that we were made by God and for God. And this is exactly what we read in the creation account as God walks and talks with Adam and Eve in the garden. God goes on to make Himself known to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, and all the prophets. We read in the NT of God the Son calling twelve men to be His disciples. Jesus spent three years investing in those men and several other men and women like Mary, Martha, Mary Magdalene, and then later Saul of Tarsus.

The testimony of Scripture is that God has never called man to mere religious activity. Instead, God has always called man to Himself in relationship. I believe the best way to illustrate this is by sharing a story. It is one that revolves around a blind man and Jesus. [Read John 9.](#)

3 Realities:

1. The blind man was not called to a religion to practice.

The disciples' question to Jesus in verse two concerned religion. They thought that surely the blindness was the result of the man's or his parents' failure to keep the Law. Jesus' response to them involved His presence (vs. 4-5). Jesus then healed the man, which quickly got the attention of everyone. Later, after the religious leaders had interrogated the man twice, Jesus found him and asked a question. He asked the man if he believed in the Son of Man (vs. 35). This was a title that referred to the awaited Messiah of Israel. The man responded by indicating that he didn't know who the Son of Man was. Jesus replied by pointing out that the Son of Man stood before him.

Jesus never called this blind man to practice a religion in order to be healed of His blindness. Jesus didn't ask him to rededicate his life to Judaism or to spend more

time in the Temple. He didn't lead him to commit to be a better Jew. No, Jesus called this man to believe and to know the Son of Man.

2. The blind man was not called to a list of rules to follow.

The disciples misunderstood the reason for the man's blindness. Like most Palestinians of their day, the disciples assumed that sin was the primary, if not exclusive, cause of all suffering. They thought that someone had failed to follow the Law, and God had judged them for their sin.

Much to their surprise, Jesus didn't call the man to follow a list of rules. Even though demanding a strict adherence to rules would have made the most sense to the disciples and the Pharisees, Jesus never put the emphasis there. Jesus didn't demand behavioral modification. No, He called the man to Himself.

3. The blind man was called to a Person to know.

37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. – John 9:37-38

Can you know God personally? Can I know God personally? Based upon Jesus' words to the blind man, knowing God personally is the only thing that concerns Jesus. Jesus wasn't concerned with religious activity. Jesus wasn't concerned with people keeping a list of rules. He knew that no man or woman could ever keep those things perfectly. He knew the depravity in each human heart. He understood that the Law and the religious system of Judaism was simply a tool to point out the reality of sin and the desperate need for a Savior. Jesus knew that He was that Savior, so He called the blind man to Himself.

3 Implications:

1. God does not call you to a religion to practice.

Religion will never be enough to save you. Primarily it is not enough because you were not created for religion; you were created for God. Religion is impersonal and directed toward an object that is impersonal. The God who created you is personal.

Religion always defaults to rest on man's works...what he does to earn the favor of God. The Bible tells us that all our righteousness is like filthy rags in the sight of God. In other words, we bring nothing to the table in salvation but our sin and guilt. Any good that we may think we bring is tarnished by sin; thus, God rejects it.

2. God does not call you to a list of rules.

Has God said that there are things that should not be a part of the believer's life? Yes, He has. But He didn't call you to follow a list of rules; He called you to follow Him. In following Him, we love and do the things that He loves, and we stay away from the things that He hates. Christianity is not about a list of do's and don'ts. It is all about a God who loves you so much that He bore your sin debt while you were still in rebellion against Him.

God does not call us to legalism. In you are in relationship with Jesus, He has freed you from that. We don't follow His Word in an attempt to earn His favor. We follow His Word out of love. He has changed our lives; He has changed our "want-to's." Now, as we continue to surrender and submit ourselves to Jesus we are conformed and transformed more and more into the image of Christ.

3. God does call you to a Person to know.

Here's the greatest part of salvation. God calls you to Himself to the Person of Jesus Christ...to a great King. Listen to the words of Kari Jobe as she speaks of this great King:

If there are words for Him, then I don't have them. You see my brain has not yet reached the point where it could form a thought that could adequately describe the greatness of my God. And my lungs have not yet developed the ability to release a breathe with enough agility to breathe out the greatness of His love. And my voice, you see my voice is so inhibited, restrained by human limits, that it's hard to even send the praise up. You see if there are words for Him, I don't have them. My God, His grace is remarkable, mercies are innumerable, strength is impenetrable. He is honorable, accountable, favorable. He's unsearchable, yet knowable. Indefinable yet approachable. Indescribable yet personal. He is beyond comprehension, further than imagination, constant through generations...King of every generation.

But if there are words for Him, then I don't have them. You see my words are few. In trying to capture the one true God, using my vocabulary would never do. But I use words as an expression, an expression of worship to a Savior...a Savior who is both worthy and deserving of my praise. So I use words. My heart extols the Lord, blesses His name forever. He has won my heart, captured my mind, and has bonded them both together. He has defeated me in my rebellion, conquered me in my sin. He has welcomed me into His presence, completely invited me in. He has made Himself the object of my sight, flooding me with mercies in the morning, drowning me with grace in the night. But if there are words for him, then I don't have them. But what I do have is, good news. For my God knew that manmade words would never do. The words are just tools that we use to point to the truth. So He sent His

son Jesus Christ as the Word, living proof. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, giving nothingness formation, and by His words He sustains in the power of His name. For He is before all things and over all things. Holy is His name, so praise Him for His life. The way He preserved in strife, the humble son of God becoming the perfect sacrifice, praise Him for His death. That He willingly stood in our place, that He lovingly endured the grave, that He battled our enemy and on the third day rose in victory. He is everything that was promised, praised as the risen King. Lift your voice and sing, for one day He will return for us. And we will finally be united with our Savior for eternity, eternity. So it's not just words that I proclaim, for my words point to The Word. And The Word has a name...Hope has a name...Joy has a name...Peace has a name...Love has a name, and that name is Jesus Christ. Praise His name forever.

Conclusion: Can I know God personally? Can you know God personally? The answer is yes! You were made by God and for God...for relationship. You were created for so much more than religion. If you think that attending church services and maybe a small group is what it means to be a Christian, then you are living for so much less than what God desires for you. If you think that trying to be good and doing the right thing is what matters, then you are missing the point. If you think that God is distant and aloof, then you haven't understood the Bible. God is near. God is here. God created you to be in relationship with Himself. He desires to know you, and He has done everything necessary for that to be a reality.

Jesus, God the Son, was born into this world in order to become our Redeemer. He lived a perfect life so that He could be our perfect Sacrifice. There on the cross as His blood was shed, the Father exhausted His wrath on our sin that Jesus bore in our place.

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

– 2 Corinthians 5:21

Can you know God personally? You absolutely can know God. Jesus has made that possible through His sacrificial death and resurrection. In fact today He is calling you to Himself. Will you answer His call? Will you turn from your sin and turn to Jesus? Will you turn from your religion and turn to Jesus? Will you turn from your pride and turn to Jesus? Will you turn from your fear of what others will think and turn to Jesus?