

New Life Vineyard

Pathway into Discipleship



Getting to Know Your Heavenly Father

Key Verse

John 17:3

³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

1. According to John 17:3, what is eternal life?
2. What do you think of the idea that you can actually know God?

Knowing God, as opposed to knowing about God, is a different concept for many people. John 1:12 tells us that when we receive Christ, we become children of God. God is not just GOD to us anymore, He is our Father! *Romans 8:15* says, *“⁴⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”* Believe it or not, the term “Abba” is like our English word “Daddy.”

3. How does this knowledge affect your thinking about God? What is it like to know that the God of the universe is your Heavenly Dad?

The prophet Jeremiah tells us in *Jeremiah 29:12-13*, *“⁴² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”* Are you ready to get to know Him? Your heavenly Father desires a relationship with you. It is up to you to seek Him. He promises that if you do seek Him wholeheartedly you will find Him.

How Do I Start?

Like any relationship, a relationship with God involves spending time with Him. It also involves communication. To develop your relationship with God, it is important to set aside time each day to read your Bible and to talk with Him. *Psalm 16:11 says, “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”* Ask God to reveal Himself to you as you read. Start with the gospel of John and read a chapter a day. John gives us an intimate picture of Jesus. Then just begin to talk with Him. The promise we read in Jeremiah is that He will listen.

Questions for Review

1. How did you view God before you received Jesus as your Savior? Was He approachable or unapproachable? Were you afraid of Him? Did you think He liked you?
2. *John 15:7 says, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”* What do you think it means to “remain” in Jesus?
3. Read Psalm 16:11. This verse promises “fullness of joy” and “eternal pleasures.” What would it look like for you to experience these? What must you do to experience them?
4. The idea of “praying to God” intimidates many people. What do you think of “talking with your Father” instead?

In addition to these individual pursuits, believers in Jesus are told to assemble together. Hebrews 10:25 tells us not to forsake getting together for fellowship and mutual encouragement. As a result, it is important to make church attendance a priority. There you will be able to participate in corporate worship and praise. Good pastoral preaching from the Bible will also help you to get to know your heavenly Father better.

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Leader's Guide and Related Resources

Purpose

The key in this lesson is to help new believers see that they can pursue an incredible relationship with the God of the universe, who happens to also be their heavenly Father! However, some people may not have had the best experience with their earthly fathers—those that may be associated with anything from being uninvolved to brutal. Be prepared to reinforce the idea of the Father's love for us. (1 John 3:1).

Additional Scripture

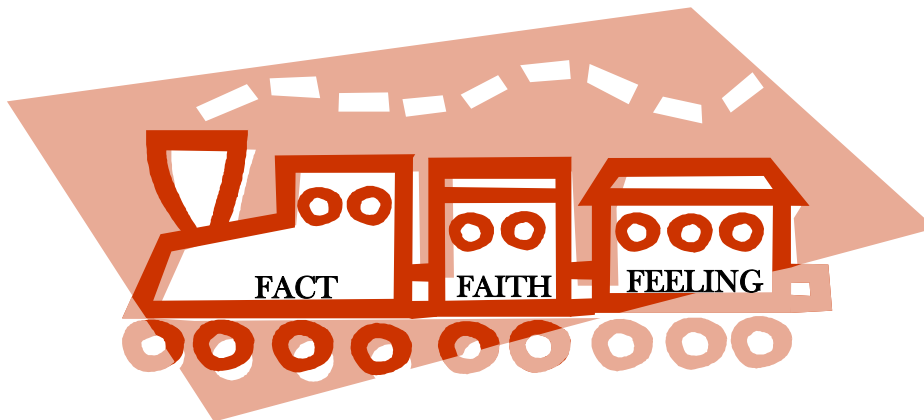
- Galatians 4:4-7
- Jeremiah 9:23-24
- John 7:37-38
- Romans 5:8
- Romans 8:32-39
- 1 John 3:1

Insight

People often have no concept of God as their heavenly Father. The idea can be very alien to them. Be patient with comments that reflect old religious attitudes and values, but show them when their feelings differ from the truth of the Scriptures. Use the diagram on the following page to remind them to place their faith in truth and not in feelings, which can be very fickle.

DO NOT DEPEND ON FEELINGS

The promise of God's Word, the Bible, is our authority, not our feelings. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. The train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).



The train will run without the caboose. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, we, as Christians, do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.*

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*From "The Four Spiritual Laws," by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ

Answers to Questions

1. To know the Father is eternal life. In John 14:9 Jesus says, “...Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” Knowing Jesus means knowing the Father. Try not to get into the doctrine of the Trinity with this. The key is this: Having eternal life means knowing God and that is only through receiving Jesus.
2. Most people have not thought in this way before. We want them to see this as a relationship instead of being religious.
3. Some people may have father issues. We all tend to see God as being like our earthly father. It is important to stress here that God is a good Father.
4. Ask them if they have a Bible. Get them one if they do not and have them start with a chapter per day in the gospel of John.

Answers to Review Questions

1. Answers may vary here. Answers that begin with “I used to think” are fine. Assure them the harsh God they “used to think” about is not the true God. Using the Bible, show them that that God is approachable (Hebrews 4:16), and we do not need to be afraid of Him (1 John 4:18-19).
2. To “remain” in Jesus means to live our life within the context of our relationship with Him.
3. The only way to experience these wonders is to be in His presence. We need to get to know Him. And as we experience Him, it truly elevates us to a joy that is inexpressible as 1 Peter 1:8 says.
4. This again reflects the idea of a relationship, not the religious discipline of prayer.

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