



## **Get to Know Jesus** **Discipleship Studies – Session One - Introduction**

So, you want to get to know Jesus! That's a very good thing to desire. And you know what? I have the sense that the feeling is mutual because Jesus wants to get to know you too! The prophet Jeremiah wrote the words of God himself when God said, "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." Jesus isn't a "hide and seek" God...at least not in the way you remember the game! In the case of Jesus, he doesn't hide. In fact, Jesus is doing everything he can to get your attention.

"Well," you say, "doesn't Jesus already know me?" Yes, Jesus does but he wants you to open yourself to him so that you can grow in a mutual relationship. Jesus won't force himself on anybody. Yes, the bible says that God knows your "innermost thoughts" (Psalm 139). But yet, he won't come in for a "chat" unless you invite him to do so. Somebody once told me that Jesus was a "gentleman" that would never push or force anybody to do anything. That's why when you read the gospels in the bible, you don't see Jesus taking people by the neck and saying, "you better..." It doesn't happen. There are INVITATIONS but never anything that is based on coercion. The bible is full of examples of that truth:

"Pick up your cross and follow me" – Jesus could have said, "here, have this and take a step now, or else" – but he didn't.

"Zacchaeus, come on down because I'd like to dine with you?" - Jesus could have simply reached up and pulled him down and forced his way in to his home – didn't happen.

The Rich young ruler was a bit discouraged with Jesus when Jesus didn't answer his question in the way he wanted. The gospels say that he, the young ruler, walked away – Jesus could have forced the issue, demanding instead of inviting – but Jesus didn't do that.

We see Jesus on his hands and knees a lot in the gospels. He says he is the "servant of all." In fact, there is this one scene where Jesus actually washes his disciples dirty, smelly and broken down ole feet. Have you ever washed someone's feet? Not something that any of us would do even to people we know well...Jesus just did it. His friends were embarrassed by it because they tried to stop him...to no avail.

Jesus wants to get to know you. He's more than willing to hold your hand, feet, your heart...Jesus is more than willing to listen, wait and love. Jesus desires to spend the time with you in whatever way, shape or form you decide is best for you right now! No, there isn't a mandatory "program" on getting to know Jesus. Just like with any relationship, if you put any friendship into a "program" it ceases to be a friendship but some sort of obligation. Obligation destroys relationships...trust me! There's no program for getting to know Jesus...but there are things that you can do.

That's what this series is about – how do you get to know Jesus better? What do you need to learn about Jesus that would directly influence your love of Jesus, and your desire to serve Jesus, your propensity to obey Jesus? That's what we are about in these studies.

SO – let's go!



Here are some preliminary questions for you to answer in your own quiet time – look at each, answer them in your mind or, if you prefer, write down your answers in an "I'm Getting to Know Jesus" journal that you begin.

How do you get to know somebody?

How do you build relationships?

What do you feel are the keys to a growing relationship?

Who is your closest friend or closest relationship and HOW did it get that way?

Most people when they get to know someone go through an unwritten agenda...we do these things naturally because, over our lifetimes, we've learned how relationships develop as well as how they work. When you are getting to know someone, you ask yourself (usually subconsciously):

- Who are they (without looking at a resume)?
- What do I feel when I'm with them? At ease? Nervous? Self-conscious? Relaxed and confident?
- How can I get to know what "makes them tick?" Their character...the depth of who they are?
- How can I get to know some of this person's "life facts" (birth stories, where they grew up, interests, hobbies, accomplishments, spiritual journey, etc.)?
- How do we get in conversation with things that really matter?
- Can we have fun together? Is this relationship one where I can share my feelings?

There is a marvelous department at the University of Texas that has been set up as a relationship encourager. Here are some of their criteria for building healthy relationships:

- a) It is important to Build. Build a foundation of appreciation and respect. Focus on all the considerate things your partner says and does.
- b) It is important to Explore. Explore each other's interests so that you have a long list of things to enjoy together. Try new things together to expand mutual interests.
- c) It is important to Establish. Establish a pattern of trust and truth. Make Time.
- d) Be aware of what you want from the relationship...do an occasional heart check to make sure you want to build a love for Jesus.
- e) Be clear of the fact that you have needs and that Jesus wants to know your needs.
- f) Realize that Jesus will often meet your needs as Jesus ministers to you through others who follow him. That's the way Jesus works...through others! The touch of love of another Jesus follower is the touch of love that Jesus wants to give to you.
- g) Try to see things from Jesus' point of view.
- h) Understand your expectations...what do you want in your relationship with Jesus?
- i) One thing that works – repetition of words. Say to Jesus today (often) "I love you and trust you, and I want to be closer to you Jesus."

So here's where we are – as you begin to dive deeper into your relationship with Jesus, ask yourself how well you know Jesus NOW?

- What is the character of Jesus?
- What was he like?
- What do we know about him from his birth? Parents? Where he lived? What he said?
- What would Jesus say to you now if you would stop and listen?
- What do you think Jesus feels about you?
- What do you know about the personality of Jesus?
- How would you introduce Jesus to a friend?

## Final Thoughts

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Here's your final assignment - the BEST WAY you can get to know Jesus by talking to Jesus.

So, ask Jesus to help you get to know him – NOW!

Say, "I want to get to know you Jesus." Say it at least five times in a row. Say it repeatedly throughout the day today.

And know that in order to get to know Jesus:

- You're going to have to talk to Jesus
- You're going to have to spend time with Jesus
- You're going to have to listen to Jesus
- You're going to have to be vulnerable with Jesus
- You're going to have to ask Jesus questions and then listen

Next Study will focus on the Jesus of History – what does History tell us about the Jesus we love and serve? That is Session Two!