
Knowing God

By David Wilkerson

January 25, 1993 I am going to make a very shocking statement, and I mean every word of it: I really do not know God! That is I don't know Him in the way He wants me to know Him.

How do I know this? The Holy Spirit told me. He whispered to me, lovingly; "David, you really don't know God in the way He wants you to. You really don't allow Him to be God to you."

In the Old Testament, God took a people unto Himself - a people no richer or smarter than the rest - only so that He could be God to them: "And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God" (Exodus 6:7). God was saying, in other words, "I'm going to teach you to be My people - so that I can be God to you!"

Indeed, God revealed and manifested Himself to His people over and over again. He sent angels. He spoke to them audibly. He fulfilled every promise with great deliverances, Yet after forty years of miracles, signs and wonders, God's estimation of His people was: "You don't know Me - you don't know My ways!"

This has to be one of the most shocking things in all the Bible! God had sought a people who would let Him be God to them and truly get to know Him in all His power and glory.

So God delivered Israel with mind-boggling miracles: He opened the Red Sea and drowned all their Egyptian enemies. He brought water out of a Rock and food out of heaven. He covered the people with a cloud by day and fire by night. He sent hornets into enemy camps to drive them out. He brought down great kings and kingdoms for His people's sake.

Then He led them into Canaan to possess homes they didn't build, vineyards they didn't plant, industries they didn't develop. He gave them beehives full of honey, flocks giving milk, and all kinds of wealth.

The people took it all and possessed it. All things were theirs by the mighty hand of God. Yet the testimony of Scripture was that, even after all the incredible miracles and blessings God had given them, they still didn't know God!

"Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways" (Psalm 95:10) God said "In all of this you never really let Me be God! In My forty years of wanting to teach you, you still never knew Me - you still didn't know how I work!"

Stephen testified to the Sanhedrin: "He had shewed [them] wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years" (Acts 7:36). Stephen was saying of their fathers, "They weren't just wandering around for those forty years. God was showing them signs and wonders! In spite of their rebellion God was still trying to express Himself to them - trying to teach them who He was!"

"...your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways." (Hebrews 3:9-10). God was saying, "The very people I took to Myself - those who have witnessed My power, and to whom I have spoken the clearest - after all these years under My wings, their eyes and

ears are not open. They did not even know Me!"

Beloved, God is still looking for a people who will let Him be God to them - to the point that they truly know Him and learn His ways! Yet few in the church today know Him in this way.

We are like Israel: We all have witnessed miracles. We have experienced manifestations of His presence. We have had prayers answered, sins forgiven. We have taught about God and loved Him to the best of our knowledge. But, in the end, God can say of only a few; "They know Me as God, They truly know and walk in the revelation of My ways!"

Dear reader, I cannot say whether you really know God as He desires you to. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal that. But let me share with you what God has revealed to me about how I have hindered Him from truly being God in my life:

1. I Have Been Guilty of Putting Limits on God's Power and Promises. Scripture says of Israel "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." (Psalm 78:41). Israel turned away from God in unbelief. And likewise, I believe we limit God today with our doubt and unbelief!

We trust God in most areas of our lives - but our faith always has boundaries and limits. We have at least one small area that we block off, where we don't really believe God is going to undertake for us.

For example, many readers have prayed for the healing of my wife, Gwen. But often, when it comes to healing for their own husband, wife, son or daughter, they limit God!

I limit God most in the area of healing. I have prayed for physical healing for many, and I have seen God perform miracle after miracle. But when it comes to my own body, I limit God! I am afraid to let Him be God to me. I douse myself with medicine or run to a doctor before I ever pray for myself! I'm not saying it's wrong to go to the doctor. But sometimes I fit the description of those who "sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians" (2 Chronicles 16:12).

I ask you: Do you pray for God to bring down walls in China or Cuba - but when it comes to the salvation of your own family, you don't have an ounce of faith? You think, "God must not want to do this, My loved one is such a tough case. God doesn't seem to be hearing me in this matter."

If this be true, You are not seeing Him as God! You are ignorant of His ways! God's desire is to "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

God told me, "David, you've tied My hands, you've shackled Me! How can I heal you when you don't really believe I will? Your doubt hinders Me from being God to you. I tell you, you don't know Me unless you know that I am more willing to give than you are to receive!"

Israel murmured continually, "Can God?...Sure, He made a way for us through the Red Sea. But - can He give bread?" God gave them bread - in fact, He spread a table for them in the wilderness. "But can He give water?" they asked. He gave them water from a Rock. "But can He give meat?" He gave them meat from the sky. "But can He deliver us from our enemies?" Time after time, God provided and delivered in every area. Yet the people spent forty years saying, "Can God? Can God?..."

Beloved, we ought to be saying, "God can! God can!" He did - and He will! God can and will do all that

we ask and believe Him to do.

2. I Have Limited God to Intimacy Alone! I thought knowing God meant learning how to draw near to Him. Yet as important as intimacy is, there is more to knowing Him — much more! Many Christians spend hours alone with God, yet they come out of their prayer closet never knowing His ways.

They have not yet allowed God to be God to them!

There is something more to knowing God than being in His presence:

The seventy elders of Israel ate and drank in God's very presence on the mount. Yet the Lord said of them, "You never got to know Me or My ways!"

The disciples spent three years in God's presence — with Christ, who was God in the flesh. They sat under His teaching and were with Him night and day. Yet, in the end, they forsook Him and fled — because they did not know His ways!

Jesus says that God does not hear our prayers and praises simply because we utter them over and over, for hours at a time. It is possible to pray, fast and do righteous things, and still not reach the place where we hunger to know Him and begin to understand His ways. We do not learn His ways in the prayer closet alone, although everyone who truly knows the Lord is very intimate with Him.

3. I Have Limited God by Being Satisfied With Too Little — Whereas, If I Knew Him in All His Power and Glory, I Would Ask and Believe Him for So Much More! God has so much He wants to give you. His desire is "to open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). He stands in a full storehouse, saying, "I am a giving, loving God — but so few will receive from Me. They won't let me be God to them!"

Of course, we are to thank God for all He has done and given already. Yet we are not to be satisfied with what we think is a lot! Many Christians are satisfied to sit in church and be blessed by God's presence. Such people are no more than "satisfied sponges"! They soak everything up — but they limit God in their lives, when He so wants to anoint them for service.

Pastors and congregations are satisfied to build so-called "megachurches" and to be known as the fastest-growing. Yet that is limiting God to four walls — no matter how big and wide the walls are!

It doesn't matter what you have seen so far, or what glorious image your mind can conjure — it is far short of what God wants yet to do in His people. When the disciples marveled at Christ's miracles, Jesus replied, "God has an even greater work ahead for you!"

Most of us are like the disciples. We see one miracle, and we're satisfied to talk about it for the rest of our lives. Yet if we really knew God and let Him be God to us, we would ask Him for so much more:

We would reach into the heavenlies by faith, believing God to bring down the godless leaders in local, state and federal agencies. We would bring down principalities and powers, as God said!

We would believe God to help us saturate our city with the gospel of Jesus. We would stand up in faith against every weapon aimed against us, and we would be pulling down Satanic strongholds in our families and churches.

Our vision would be limitless. We would believe God for even greater things for His kingdom!

Do you not yet know God as He desires for you to know Him? Have you not yet allowed Him to be God to you? You may wonder, then, how you can come to know Him and His ways. My only answer to you is what God has required of me, to let Him be God to me:

1. He Wants to Teach Me To Know His Voice! Those who truly know God have learned how to recognize His voice above all others. He wants you to be absolutely convinced that He desires to talk to you — to tell you things you've never seen or heard before!

The Lord recently showed me that I was still wavering about hearing His voice speak to my soul. Oh, [I] know that He speaks, and that the sheep need to know the Master's voice. But I doubted my ability to hear Him! I spent all my time "checking" the voice I heard — and when it was too big or too mysterious for me, I thought, "This can't be God. Besides, the devil can speak too! The flesh speaks, lying spirits speak. A multitude of voices come at us all the time, How can I know God's voice?"

I believe that three things are required of those who would hear God's voice:

1. An unshakable confidence that God is wanting to speak to you. You have to be fully persuaded and convinced that God wants to speak to you. Indeed, He is a speaking God — and He wants you to know His voice so you can do His will. What God tells you will never go beyond the boundaries of Scripture. And you don't have to be ordained or have a Ph.D. to understand His voice to you. All you need is a heart that says, "I believe God desires to talk to me!"

2. Quality time and quietness. You need to be willing to shut yourself in with God and let all other voices hush away. True, God speaks to us all day long. But whenever He has wanted to build something into my life, His voice has come only after I had shut out every other voice but His.

3. Asking in faith. We do not obtain anything from God (including hearing His voice) unless we truly believe that He is able to convey His mind to us — to enable us to understand His perfect will!

Jesus says: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" (Luke 11:11–12). In other words: if you ask your heavenly Father for a word — a clear direction, a godly correction, a particular need do you think for a moment He would instead let the devil come and deceive you?"

Suppose a son calls his father every night for direction and advice. Then one day the father decides to play a joke on him. He hires an impersonator to answer the phone — someone to mimic his voice. When the boy calls, the impostor gives him all kinds of off-the-wall advice and phony counsel. Suddenly the son is absolutely confused and heartbroken — because everything he hears goes against what he has learned from his father!

What kind of father would you say this man was? Yes — a cruel one! Yet that is what we accuse God of being, when we do not trust Him to give us His voice and not one from the impostor of hell.

God is not a tease! He will not allow the devil to deceive you. When God speaks, peace follows — and Satan cannot counterfeit that peace! If you're in a place of quiet and rest, convinced that God can speak to you, then you have an assurance that never changes. You can go back to God a thousand

times and you will receive the same word — because it is truth!

2. You Cannot Know God In Fullness Until You See Christ as God Wants You To See Him! Knowing God Begins With Knowing His Son.

Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). We must see Jesus not as man teaches, but as the Spirit reveals Him to us — as God wants us to know and see Him! There are many volumes in my library about Jesus, written by good men — yet I believe many of these men have never seen Him as God would have us see Him. We are to get God's vision and testimony of Christ — and then we will know God as He desires to be known!

Here is how I believe God wants us to see His Son:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

Jesus was a gift! God wrapped all His resources up in Jesus — "and He gave His only begotten Son..." Christ is God's good and perfect gift to us, come down from the Father! Do you see Jesus as God's perfect gift to you? Do you see Him as all you need to live joyfully, victoriously, righteously, full of peace and rest?

In the Old Testament, God gave Israel many wonderful gifts in the wilderness: A cloud to shelter them from the desert sun. Fire at night to assure and lead them. Water out of a Rock. A branch to heal bitter waters. A brass serpent to heal the snake-bitten. Yet all of these good things were only shadows!

Who was the Rock from which water came? Who was the fire? the manna? the brass serpent? Everything God did for Israel was through Jesus! That's right — Jesus was every one of those gifts!

"Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea...and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

Today we have much more than the shadow. We have the actual substance — Christ Himself! And He lives in us!

Yet, most of us are still dumb creatures looking to the future for fulfillment. We think some future event, some change in our circumstance, will bring us peace and joy. We say, "Just wait — my day is coming! Somehow, someday, somewhere...I don't know what it is that's out there for me, but it's coming!" We are like children waiting for Christmas, counting the days!

David once wrote during a mournful, introspective season in his life that he felt time was going too fast. He had accomplished so little, he thought. Everything at the time seemed to be in vain: "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them...and now Lord, what wait I for..." (Psalm 39:6,7).

David was depressed, down — his present situation appeared so useless. And out of a perplexed heart he cried out, "Lord, what am I waiting for?"

Recently I was walking alone in the hills of Pennsylvania, and God spoke to my heart on this same question: "David, what is it you're waiting for? Why isn't this the best day of your life? Why can't your 'now' be full and joyous? There is nothing 'out there' that you don't already have in Jesus!"

I ask you: What are you waiting for? "Oh, for Mr. Right," you may answer — that godly person you think is going to rescue you from all loneliness and fill your soul with unspeakable joy.

No! There is nothing "out there" that will change or save you from who and what you are already! If you think someone else is going to solve your loneliness problem, you're badly mistaken. You must find deliverance, peace, hope and joy now — and Jesus is the only One who can fill the void! Some are bored with their mates and waiting for them to go to glory, because they're looking for romance to come into their lives and drive away their emptiness. They never wake up and live!

Ages ago, before you were created, God saw what your hurts and needs would be. He knew ahead of time what you would need to solve all your problems. He did not wrap up His answers and send them to you as a rule book or as an army of "answer men." No — He gave us all one solution to all our crises and needs — one Man, one Way, one Answer to everything we need: Jesus Christ!

When you become satisfied in Jesus, you won't expect miracles out of your mate anymore. You'll no longer try to make God out of your husband or wife, to satisfy something that only God was meant to satisfy. God says to you, "I don't want you to live for tomorrow! You'll only look back and see that today could have been your very best time. Jesus can't be any better or stronger to you than He is right now. Why won't you let me be God to you today?"

3. You Can Know God and His Ways by Complete Rest In the Love That the Father Has for You!

Have you ever had a friend or loved one say to you, out of the blue: "Are you mad at me? Did I do something wrong?"

You may simply be quiet, deep in thought. So you answer, "No, I'm not mad. You didn't do anything to hurt me. I'm just quiet right now."

But they press you: "Was it something I said?"

"No, you didn't say anything wrong. Everything is okay."

"I know what it is — I forgot to do something. What is it?"

"No, you didn't forget anything. All is right."

"Come on now, I can tell something is wrong. I can see it in your face, I'm not leaving here till you tell me what I did to upset you!"

Finally, to convince that person, you have to hug him: "Look, I love you — I'm not upset. But if you keep this up, you're going to get me upset!"

Beloved, this is how we treat our heavenly Father! At the end of the day, we go to our secret closet and say: "Let's see, now, how did I grieve Jesus today? What did I do wrong — what did I forget to do? I'm such a mess, I don't know how He can love me. Lord, forgive me one more time. Someday I'll be

so obedient, you'll find it easy to love me."

But God is there all along, waiting to embrace you! He wants to show you how much He loves you and He wants you to lie back and rest in His love!

Jesus said that when the Prodigal Son came home, he was welcomed back into his father's house. He received a new robe, ate at his father's table and had full forgiveness. But that didn't make him an angel! On the contrary, I believe his father experienced a lot of problems with him before it was all over.

But the one thing this son had to know was that he was secure in his father's love! He had to know his father would bear with him, work with him, love him. That's how our heavenly Father is with us. And yet we keep saying, "One of these days, I'm going to be so perfect and right before God, it will be easy for Him to love me!"

No! He loved you when you were a sinner, a reprobate, an enemy to Him. How much more does He love you now that you're reconciled to Him? God has already said to you, "I loved you when you were an alien to Me, when you were in rebellion and sin. Will I not love you even more now, since you have committed to sonship?"

We don't rest confidently in His love as we should. And yet the Lord says of Himself that He is love. John wrote: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16)

Do you know, believe and rest in His love for you? Or are you constantly examining yourself and saying, "Oh God, You know what's in me — how could You love me?" If you will not accept His love freely — if you are always questioning it, thinking He will take it away then you don't know Him or His ways!

Dear saint. it is time for you to rest securely in the love of God! You must stand up and say, "I won't accept the devil's accusations — because I'll never be worthy anyhow. All my worth comes through Jesus! He has cleansed me by His blood."

When you accept all the lies that are injected into your mind — that you're worthless, a failure, hopeless — this grieves God more than alcoholism, drug abuse, promiscuous sex and everything else combined! He says of Himself, "I am love — and I want you to know, believe, rest and trust in My great love for you!"

I tell you, knowing this has done more for me in recent weeks than anything God has ever opened my eyes to — although I am still far from knowing His love as I ought to. Yes, He wants me — and He is going to love me and be God to me!

You see, you can't let Him be God to you unless you let Him love you!

When the enemy comes in like a roaring lion, don't panic — just rest. Say, "God loves me — Jesus loves me. I know and believe in His love!" Let Him be God to you by showing Him you will rest in His love. Accept it — and enjoy it. God is best at being God to you when you allow Him to shower you with His love.

Hallelujah!