

Growing in Grace #5 - Grace for Knowing God

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon emphasizes the importance of growing in the knowledge of God through the grace of God, and that knowing God is the highest priority in life.

Duration: 59:05

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:2

Topics: "Knowing God", "Intimacy With God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of knowing and building a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. He highlights the various roles and activities that the apostle Paul engaged in, but emphasizes that they were all centered around the central goal of knowing the Lord. The speaker explains that the unseen realities of the kingdom of heaven are more real and lasting than the physical world we currently live in. He emphasizes that through the shed blood of Jesus, we have been brought near to God and can have intimate fellowship with Him. The speaker concludes by stating that knowing and building a friendship with God is the greatest thing to invest our lives in.

Transcript

Lord, again we humbly come, needing you, hungry for you, thirsty, but along with the humility, Lord, that you keep working in our lives, the reasons to humble ourselves before you. We find faith growing, more reason to trust you, count on you, believe in you, hope in you, expect of you to work. So we come to your word that way, Lord, and we humble ourselves under your mighty hand, teach us.

And Lord, we also ask you to build us up in the faith, strengthen us, encourage us, and Lord, for the changes that are needed in our lives, may we humble ourselves, admit it, face it, and let the grace of God do its mighty work. By the work of your Holy Spirit, guide us in your truth, we pray in Jesus' name, amen. Study number five in our series of studies on growing in the grace of God.

Study number five is about grace for knowing God. Grace for knowing God. God's grace is available to us.

In order that, we might get to know God better and better and better. In the outline, by way of introduction, we see Ephesians 2.13. Let's add with that first, again, Ephesians 1.7, which we looked at this morning. Ephesians 1.7 reminds us that we're speaking about the grace of God.

In him, in Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. The shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ to provide forgiveness for sin. That's all a part of the riches of the grace of God.

God is very rich in grace. We have not at all tested his grace yet. We haven't drawn on the bank of heaven, the resources of grace until they are kind of low and depleted.

The riches of his grace, that's what was involved in the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. God's grace for us seen in that death of Jesus Christ. Now Ephesians 2.13, but now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

By this shed blood of Jesus Christ, we are given the opportunity of an intimate relationship with God. We once were far off from God, separated greatly from him by our sins. But now through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we have been brought near, near enough to talk to God and listen to God and fellowship with God and walk with God.

And we'll see in part of our study that the intimacy available between us and the Lord is absolutely astounding. It goes beyond anything that could possibly develop even on the human level, even in the marriage relationship where two become one. And even though husbands and wives in Christ are a picture of Christ and his bride, there's something unique about the relationship we can have with the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's by way of introduction just to remind us that we're still dealing with the grace of God, and the grace of God has brought us close, close to God where we can really get acquainted with him. So let's think together a little bit about our next heading, Getting to Know God. Getting to Know God, 2 Peter 3.18, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

God's grace and knowing God, they go together. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are to grow in grace, in the understanding of it, in the experiencing of it.

And we are to grow in knowing the Lord. The more we know about the grace of God, the more we know about one of the great, great truths of our Lord God. He's a God of grace.

But it's not only learning about grace that lets us know God better, it's the fact that the grace of God at work in our lives lets us get to know him better. Not just understanding grace, but God's grace at work, opening our hearts, opening our eyes, opening our minds. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

God's grace and knowing God go so beautifully together. In fact, we'll see that the highest use of God's grace is that we may grow in knowing him. There's no greater way to appropriate, to use the grace of God than to use it in the growing of knowing the Lord.

John 17.3 sort of gives an indication in that direction. Just by implication, the very wording that's used, John 17.3, there Jesus says, and this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent. What would we say if someone asked us, tell me, what is eternal life? Define it for me, describe it for me.

Well, we might say, forever we miss hell and forever we get heaven. Well, that's good, but that doesn't get at the heart of it. That's not wrong, but that isn't eternal life itself.

It's included, but you couldn't say escaping hell and getting heaven, that is eternal life. No, that's involved in eternal life. You might say eternal life, that's where you're just going to go on and on and on, forever and ever and ever and ever.

No, that doesn't hit the heart of eternal life. In fact, everyone ever created will go on and on forever and ever and ever, but some in a place we don't ever want to be forever. So, just going on and on and on in existence forever, that's not eternal life.

Forgiveness of sins, well, that's involved, but that's not right at the heart of eternal life. Jesus tells us, this is eternal life. This is eternal life.

Not just this is included in eternal life, but this is eternal life. What is it? What's it all about? That they, the people of God, might know God the Father, the only true God, and His Son who was sent. Getting acquainted with God is what eternal life is all about.

Building an ongoing friendship and acquaintanceship. Too many Christians, after meeting God, do not grow in the relationship or in acquaintanceship with God. And for some reason we've kind of just accepted it as, well, I guess kind of the norm.

No, even if it were average, it would not be the norm. The norm, that is the standard, would be how God intended it to be. God did not intend us to meet Him in salvation and saving grace and forgiveness of sins and new life, and then be strangers until we stand before Him in glory.

Like, oh my goodness, I should have been getting to know you. The marriage relationship, which is to be a picture of Christ and His bride. What if husband and wife got married? Oh, I love you, honey.

Oh, the wedding, this is fantastic. I may see you along the way. I could pop in any time.

But if you don't see me for 20 or 25 years, don't forget I love you. That's marriage? No way. Marriage involves really, really getting to know each other as servants.

Oh, that we would be loving servants one to another. We saw it today. We want to be filled with the Spirit.

That's what lets the grace of God abound. Oh, let's be servants to one another. Lord, by your Holy Spirit, make us servants in the home to one another.

Just like the Lord Jesus Christ is not accusing us all the time, putting us down, condemning us, using us, and wringing the life out of us. So we should not be either with each other. He came, the King of Kings, to be servant of all.

My goodness, what should we be? Something more than a servant? Something other than a servant? Great, great quenching of the Spirit of God. This is eternal life, knowing God. Just like a marriage is all about knowing our mate.

Knowing them to bless them, not knowing them to use them. So it is with God. Knowing him to bless him.

Not knowing him to use him, but to be used of him. This is eternal life, that they might know you, God the Father and the Son who was sent. Just as we would say tragic, pathetic, heartbreaking for two people to meet each other in a union of marriage and then never get acquainted after that.

May we not be found in that place with our bridegroom as we are the bride of Christ. We met him when we called on the name of the Lord Jesus. Our sins were forgiven and new life was ours.

We were brought into the family. We were introduced to the Lord God Almighty. Well, this is what eternal life is all about, that they may know you.

Getting acquainted with God. That's what eternal life is about. Now that's something to live forever in.

Can you imagine that? It's going to take us forever to appropriately get acquainted with the Lord God Almighty. I guess some people think that when they get to know some other people that a little bit goes a long way. And a few years of knowing is all there is to know.

You know, that kind of attitude. Well, I think that's underestimating what God can make of people in doing them. But how about the Lord God Almighty? It's going to take forever to get to know Him right.

This is eternal life. Getting to know God. Paul spoke like that in Philippians chapter 3. In Philippians 3.8 Paul said, Yet indeed I also count all things lost for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

The excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Paul was willing to lose everything else that would get in the way. It would obstruct that.

He counted all loss. The excellence of the knowledge of the Lord. That could be translated, the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

The surpassing value. In other words, the word means, knowing Christ my Lord. There is no value, there is no thing worth anything that is worth more than this.

This is the most worthy item. It's the surpassing value. It passes way beyond anything else that life has to offer.

The excellence, the surpassing value of the knowledge of the Lord. That is knowing the Lord. That is building a growing relationship with the Lord.

This is life's highest priority. There is nothing that measures up to this. If we want to know what to use the grace of God for the most and to the highest end, it's growing the grace of the Lord that we might grow in the knowledge of the Lord.

Both of those beautiful realities held out in 2 Peter 3.18. This is the surpassing value in life. This is the greatest thing to invest the grace of God upon. Getting to know the Lord.

Building a friendship with God. No wonder the world wants to lock us up sometimes. You say, you know who? God.

Oh yeah, God. Yeah. Not only that, I know his son.

Oh, wow. You're really something aren't you? No, but he is. We're getting to know God.

No wonder life is so empty out there. The highest priority, the most fulfilling reality in life cannot be known by those who do not know Jesus Christ. It's only by the grace of God that we can know him, meet him, find new life, be saved and end his family.

It's only by his grace at work that we can grow in understanding and knowing and loving and sharing and caring in life with him. Paul said in verse 10, that I may know him. I think if we were to ask Paul, Paul, what is your aim in life? What do you think he'd say? That I may know him, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul, how can we pray for you? That I may know him. Paul, what's your life all about? That I may know him. Kind of one track mind, aren't you? Yes.

In fact, Paul said in his life there was one thing that he did. One thing. Verse 13, remember this? Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do.

For getting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal. What was the goal? Getting to know God. For the prize, what was the prize? Every benefit and blessing that comes from getting to know God.

The prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. What is that upward call of God that's for all of us who are in Christ? It's come get to know my son and come get to know me through my son. Paul said he did one thing in and with his life.

That's an amazing thought. We could probably sit here and make a pretty good list of many things that looked like Paul did. Evangelist, missionary, teacher, short-term pastor and church planter, discipler, leadership, raiser.

He did all kinds of things it seems. Traveler, advisor, teacher, pastor, adventurer, visionary, but he says one thing I do. Why? Because all these things were related to that one central thing.

Getting to know the Lord. The excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. We probably know God wants us to have a heart like this.

When people talk to us about what makes us tick, well I've just got one passion. What's that? That I may know him. Why? Because it's the surpassing value in all of life.

Nothing measures up to it. Nothing exceeds it. To have a heart like that more and more, probably the prayer given in Ephesians 1.17 would be very appropriate.

Ephesians 1.17. We looked in our last prayer study at the great prayer in Ephesians 3. Here's the other great prayer in Ephesians 1.17, the part of the prayer that says, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. This is a prayer for spiritual enlightenment unto a greater knowing of the Lord. How are we going to know God? Imagine him? Visualize him? Or pray that he would reveal himself to us? Definitely the latter.

We can pray this for one another and we should. I pray that the Lord Jesus, the God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory would give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. It takes a holy, heavenly spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God.

We can't figure God out on our own. We're not intended to. But he can reveal himself and give us wisdom in the knowledge of him.

In knowing what he's like and who he is. His character, his works, and his ways. Great prayer.

Lord, give to us, all of us, the spirit, a spiritual wisdom and spiritual revealing in the knowing of yourself. See, if God reveals himself to us, if God gives us spiritual wisdom to understand him, we'll get to know him. We can't get to know God any other way.

Again, this is the grace of God at work. Again, this is the Holy Spirit at work. God, by your Holy Spirit, give us heavenly wisdom and heavenly revealing of who you are.

It's a work of God. This is a great prayer. God has been doing that in our lives or we probably wouldn't be here tonight.

We'd be out doing all kinds of other things. But the Lord has been revealing himself to us, giving us wisdom in understanding him. And what does that do? Makes us hungry for more.

Oh Lord, that's good. That's great. That's why I'm created.

Show me more. Tell me more. Reveal more.

Give me wisdom and more understanding and walk with you. Getting to know God, we're to grow in it. It's what eternal life is all about.

It can become and should be the one passion that drives our entire lives and we can consistently address God in prayer that he would let it be taking place. All of this is the grace of God. How intimate? How close can we come in this knowing of God? This next phrase in our outline, in Christ.

In it is revealed so much. Oh, as the Lord to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him concerning even just this phrase in Christ. Part of the intimacy of relationship that is available to us is seen in this great phrase in Christ.

Also, the resources and realities of the grace of God are unfolded in this phrase in Christ. Has this little phrase captured your attention yet in the scriptures? Again, early as a believer, before I was pastoring, I never even noticed the phrase in Christ, though I was beginning to read the Bible a lot and teaching Sunday school. Then a youth pastor and then I was pastoring and I still didn't pay attention to this phrase.

It was kind of like, how important can it be? A little prepositional phrase, you know what I mean. Go in the house, go outdoors, climb up the stairs, I mean. In Christ? Oh, how blind I was.

This is one of the most glorious truths in all of the New Testament. It has great insight concerning the knowing of God. Galatians 6.15, one of the many places it appears in the New Testament.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything but a new creation. In Christ Jesus, that is where we now live and it also is how we now live. As certainly as a fish lives in the ocean and on the ocean, the resources of the ocean, we live in Christ and on Christ.

As sure as my lungs live in my body and live on the life of my body, so we live in Christ on the resources he provides. Now, seeing a fish in the sea or comprehending someone's lungs in their body, that's not that hard to do. You can see it.

But we're called to walk by faith, not by sight. There are relationships like that that are even more powerful and more real and more significant than a fish in the ocean or lungs in a body or people in a room. Right now we dwell in this room and tonight we're dwelling on the benefits of this room.

The company of one another, place to sit, the opportunity to worship the Lord and feed on his word together. We can comprehend things like that. But you know just as real, no, more real because these rooms will be gone.

These bodies in that illustration will be gone. We'll have glorified bodies. The things that are so real to us by sight, they'll be gone someday.

But this reality, the unseen realities of the kingdom of heaven, they'll last forever. This isn't as obviously real to us, but in the plan of God in eternity, it's far more real than the things we think are so real in Christ Jesus. It's where we now live.

We can't see it, but God has told us that's what's happened to us. That's how we live, in, on, and by the life of Jesus Christ shared with us, just like the vine shares its life with the branches. Not to be confused, though we live in God the Son, we will not become God.

We will not become little gods, as the Word of Faith movement misrepresents the word. We're going to become little gods. We're not all gods in the waiting just for a quantum leap into Godhood, as Shirley McLean and the New Age movement says.

And as Joseph Smith and the Mormons teach, we're not going from manhood to Godhood awaiting our little universe to run. Those are all perversions of the word. But setting aside those misunderstandings, here's still the truth.

We are in Christ Jesus. He's our spiritual dwelling place. And right now, He is sharing His life with us, which is eternal life.

Just like a branch in a vine will always be a branch, it doesn't shift over there and become the vine. So we'll always be created ones, but growing in the image of our Creator. And just like a branch lives by the life of the vine, we live in Christ and sharing His life.

It's so glorious. Now in Christ Jesus, neither, nor, but. Did you see those connecting words in this verse? In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything but a new creation.

I love the watch for connecting and joining and contrasting words like that. It just lets you listen carefully to God, just like you would to someone you really didn't want to miss what they were saying. You're hanging on every word, you know.

Oh, I don't want to miss this. Well, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything. For those of us who are in Christ, human circumstances, being circumcised or uncircumcised, or religious rituals and religious situations, they mean nothing.

You say, I know things are great between me and God. How? Because of religious circumcision. It means nothing in Christ.

Someone else says, well, I don't think I can ever have the right walk with God because, you know, I've not gone through any religious circumcision. I'm uncircumcised. It avails nothing either way.

You're no worse off for having or the better off for having or not having. It doesn't avail anything. It doesn't cause any spiritual reality to become yours.

In Christ, it's not human circumstance. Well, I'm so uneducated. Well, I'm so inept.

Well, I'm such a bumbler. Well, that doesn't put you in bad with God at all. In fact, you might be way ahead of all those so able people.

You know, so able they don't need God. In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision or uncircumcision avails anything. Then what does avail? What does matter? What does cause changes to take place? What does bring blessing? But a new creation.

You can be young, old, educated, uneducated, red, white, black, or black and blue. And it doesn't avail anything. It's neither for you nor against you.

It just means nothing before God. Well, what matters? What causes things to happen? Being a new creation. This is the end of side A. To listen to the rest of the message, please turn the tape over now.

Well, what matters? What causes things to happen? Being a new creation. See, in Christ Jesus, we get a new life. We're born again.

We're not the people we were before we came to Christ and everybody said, praise the Lord. We're a new creation. I'm so thankful to God.

I'm not the person I was before I met Jesus Christ. That man, I tell you, he should have died on a cross. That's what he deserved.

Well, actually he did die there once he believed in Jesus Christ. What matters in Christ? Being a new creation. And everyone in Christ is a new creature.

This is the grace of God. This is the grace of God. This is the grace of God that you can't get merits or demerits from all these human circumstances or religious conditions.

All that matters with God is this. Are you a new creation or not? If not, God is not being allowed to do anything in your life. If you've let Him give you a new life in Jesus Christ, you're a new creature and He can continually make all things new.

He builds the lives of the new creation to make them like Jesus Christ, His Son. I am so thankful to God for the grace that let me become a new person in Christ. Isn't that a blessing? Is there anybody at all that would want to be the person they were before they came to Christ? No.

Thank God for that grace that makes us new creatures. How closely can we relate to the Lord? How about living in someone? Is that pretty close? I've never gone through this experience for obvious reasons, but I've understood that mothers carrying yet-to-be-born babies get very acquainted with those babies. Whether or not they hiccup, how much they move, whether they stretch lightly or whether they thump and kick.

It's quite an intimacy there between the mother with child and the child. I mean after all, the baby is inside of her. That's pretty intimate.

That's a pretty close relationship. She shares her life with that child. Wow, I wonder what that would be like.

Well, we're getting to know it. We don't think of it in these terms, but we are in Christ Jesus. We're sharing His life.

That's how intimately we can get to know Him. In Christ defines our relationship. Ephesians 1.3 speaks more about it.

Ephesians 1.3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us, past tense, already accomplished, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Oh, how God has blessed us already. How fully He's given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Every spiritual blessing that heaven has to offer for life here on earth now is already ours in Christ. Some might say, oh wait a minute, those blessings haven't all been given to me. There's just a ton of them I haven't experienced yet.

The possessing of them and the experiencing of them are two different things. He's already blessed us with them. They're ours in Christ.

Too many of us know too little about what's already ours in Christ. So we have too little experience in these things. That's where we want to grow in knowing the Lord.

Get more acquainted with what God has already given us. Can we even comprehend that? That God has blessed us, past tense, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. A man said one day when I was teaching this, a brother, pastor, but what I need is I need these blessings here on earth, not in heavenly places.

I said, brother, that's why we're connected to Jesus Christ, because that's where the blessings are. And we can draw on those now and walk in them here on earth. Heaven is not four trillion light years away.

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is at hand. You can reach out and touch it. Why? Because the king was there.

Where the king is, the kingdom is there, and the king lives in us. The kingdom isn't way out there. Elsewhere Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is among you, or it could even be translated within you.

The resources heaven offers that we need for living here on earth to the glory of God, they're as close to us as the Lord is. We're in Him. That's pretty close.

They're right there to draw on. Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places verse 3, you know what that is? That's more of what verse 7 is talking about. End of the verse, according to the riches of His grace.

God has forgiven us according to the riches of His grace. He wants to grow us up, transform us, and use us according to the riches of His grace. And all of these, every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, those are the riches of His grace.

We're to draw on these. We have a tremendous bank account in heaven with our name on it. In it are the resources of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

And in prayer and faith and service and communion and fellowship with the Lord, we're to be drawing on that account daily. Don't worry about overdrawing it. Don't worry about taking out more than your share.

There's an infinite supply there. Years ago in the days of the Civil War, that period, there was a slave who, like virtually every slave, had a very, very difficult existence. Somehow, he didn't know how, one day he came in possession of a signature of Abraham Lincoln.

And for obvious reasons, like most of us, he loved and respected that man. He carried that signature of Abraham Lincoln with him everywhere he went. He loved to show it to people.

He loved this man so much. And he had a signature of Abraham Lincoln right in his pocket everywhere he went. This dear man did not know how to read, but many told him that was Abraham's signature.

They could tell. One day, someone who could read, looked closely at that signature and said to the slave, do you know what you have in your pocket? Oh, yes! The signature of the man I love the most on the face of the earth and respect deeply. I've got his signature.

And they said, oh, no, no, no, my friend. You've got far more than his signature. You're carrying around a document for most of your life here that sets you free.

You know, many a Christian is in that dilemma. We have been given already every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, but we don't know what God has already given to us. Many Christians don't know what is theirs in Christ.

They carry the Bible and love it dearly. But it's as though they're illiterate in some places of the Word, like Ephesians 1.3. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Are we drawing on those? If we don't know that verse, if we don't know that truth, if we don't know God that well, if we don't know how much grace is available, we won't be drawing on it.

Or we might hold up our Bible like that man living in slavery, held up that signature. But do we know we no longer have to live as slaves? We've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. The riches of the grace of God are ours.

God wants us to know that. That's part of knowing Him. He wants us to live by these resources of grace, not for the indulgence of the flesh, but for the glory of Christ.

The glory of God. He wants us to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord. Look how this intimacy builds.

It's not only us in Christ, but next, Christ in us. Not only are we in Christ, but Christ is in us. Colossians 1.27. The end of the verse says the great mystery that God wants to reveal among the nations is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Not just Christ creating you, not just Christ coming to earth for you, not just Christ dying for you, not just Christ forgiving you, but Christ in you. See, Christ died for us that He might come to live in us. And living in us, He's our hope of glory.

Oh, we can know the Lord intimately. As intimate as union and communion and us being one with Him. We live in Him, but He also lives in us and He is our hope of glory.

Living without hope spiritually is like trying to exist physically without oxygen. Hopelessness is spiritually smothering. Oh, we need hope.

You know we have a glorious hope and our hope is a person and He lives in us. The more I study this, the more it thrills me. The more I study it, I'm staggered at the majesty of it.

Christ lives in me? It's just, it's hard to believe. But it's true, I must believe it. He tells me time and time again in the Word, Christ lives in you.

Maybe you can believe that easier than He lives in me. Christ in you, the hope of glory. What a tremendous thing.

Hope, hope is not wishing. The American cross your fingers hope is not New Testament hope. Good synonyms for hope in the New Testament, expectation, guarantee, confidence, certainty, that's New Testament hope.

Christ in us is our guarantee of glory. He's in us, we're going to make it to glory. We need to see glorious things take place now? Christ in us is our hope of glory.

You want to give glory to God? Christ in you can bring forth glorious things that glorify God. Any way you look at it, we have a glorious hope. He's not way off there.

It's not some system we buy into. It's a person, our Creator and Redeemer and He lives in us. How is your mind handling that? Well, I hear the circuits popping and sizzling.

Let's really give Him a charge, okay? Galatians 2.20, Galatians 2.20 on knowing God and Christ in us. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live.

Well, there's one to chew on. But, see the story is not over. But Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

You and I who know Jesus Christ, we have been crucified with Him, that person we were with nothing but sin and guilt, nothing but alienation and separation, died on the cross with Jesus Christ when we believed in the Lord Jesus. So here's the truth. It's no longer I who live.

It's no longer just me in this life. The life I had died on the cross. And what you see now, it's no longer me living.

What is this a religious riddle? No, this is absolute reality. Well, what is going on? But Christ lives in me. Oh, I love to meditate on that.

I can't grasp it. I'm more encouraged and with more wisdom and revelation understanding today than 20 years ago when it first grabbed me. But I love to just let it blow my mind.

The Creator of the universe, the Redeemer of men's souls lives in me? Yeah, that's what the Christian life is all about. Anything less than that is just another religion. But they say, wait a minute, this life I see you now living in these flesh and bones bodies.

What's going on there? Well, let me tell you. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God. I get up each morning trusting in Him.

I face the things that are there trusting in Him. I go through the obvious and the perplexing and the unexpected, the routine and the impossible trusting in Him. The Son of God who loved me and gave

Himself for me.

That's pretty intimate, isn't it? A staggering, mind renewing, faith building truth. Christ lives in and through us. What riches of grace that is.

Can you imagine? God would come to live in and through a person like me? Like you? Is that the grace of God or what? It isn't that we just hang out with God. We hang in with God. How do you say it? You can't even find words to get it right.

I'm going to go hang out with God. Well, I thought He's in you. Oh, yeah.

I'm going to go talk to the Lord. Well, where are you going to find Him? I thought you're in Him. Oh, yeah.

Wow. This relationship is close. There's nothing like it in the universe except the Godhead itself.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Well, in conclusion, let's let Jesus remind us of how He lived here on earth. It is so like what He wants us to walk in now with Him.

John 14.10 concerning grace for knowing God. Look how the Father knew the Son on earth and the kind of life He lived. John 14.10, Jesus said, Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

I can still remember when God first caught my attention with that verse and said, Slow down, sit down, listen up, learn something big. I always pictured Jesus, God the Son visiting earth, easy for Him to walk on water and raise the dead. He's God.

Oh, I missed the whole point. Philippians 2 said He laid aside all those prerogatives. Not that He became other than God.

He just didn't exercise His deity. He became a servant. He was showing us how man should live with God.

And as He trusted in God, He could say, If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. So there's Jesus revealing how man should live perfectly while He's perfectly revealing who the Father is. The Father dwelling in Jesus did the works.

Wow. How about that? How about that intimacy between the Father and the Son? The Father's in Me. I'm in the Father.

Things you see Me saying and doing, it's not Me. I'm depending on the Father. And the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

Do you know Jesus then takes that same truth and applies it to you and Me? Yes, He does. Right in the Gospel of John, chapter 6, verse 57. Hold tight to your mind.

Don't let it explode. John 6, 57. As the Living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so He who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

See, the Living Father, the Father of life and light, sent the Son and He lived because of the Father. He didn't live because He was the Son. He laid that independent generation of life eternal that was His very being aside to draw on the Father.

The Living Father sent Me and I live. I live out this life on earth because of the Father, so. Those are good words to watch for in the Scripture.

This is an as-so verse. As with Jesus and the Father, so with us and Jesus. That's the parallel.

As the Living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so He who feeds on Me will live because of Me. See, we don't live the Christian life because of us. Our resource is not Me, Myself and I. It's the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

If we'll feed on the Son like the Son depended on the Father, we'll live like the Son did on earth. Jesus depended on the Father. The Father worked through Him.

We now feed on the Son. That is, find our nurture and nourishment we believe in, count on Jesus Christ to be our all in all and we live because of Him. Just like the Father worked through the Son, so now the Son wants to work through us.

He wants us to get to know Him that way as the very One who lives in us, lives in us at home with the kids, lives in us in the classroom at school, lives in and through us at the job. And yes, at church it's not us, it's Him living through us. That's the glory of it all.

That's the Christ-like life. It's like the veil is pulled back. People say, I want to be like Christ.

Well, here's how He did it. Let's be like Him. Let's live the same way.

Let's depend on Him the way He depended on the Father. We don't have to be God to grow in godliness. Just do it like Jesus did.

He fully depended on the Father. What a glorious life He had unto the Father. We can depend on Him.

Last verses in conclusion, 2 Peter 1, verses 2 and 3. Again, about knowing God. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power is given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. Verse 2 tells us that the grace and peace of God can be multiplied toward our lives.

Do you ever sense that need? That just dropping out, adding, drip, drop, drip, the grace and peace of God won't be enough. You need it multiplied. Sprayed.

We often are in that kind of a place. God doesn't want to just add grace and peace. He wants to multiply it.

How does God multiply grace and peace in our lives? Look carefully at verse 2. In the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. The more we get to know the Lord, the more His grace and peace are multiplied toward us. It makes me think of my wife.

God's worked greatly in her life. Through 29 plus years of marriage I've seen it. My life has been blessed enormously through her life.

The blessings of her life have been multiplied toward me. But how? As I've gotten to know her. What if I'd been one of those guys? Married her.

Oh, I love you. I'll see you at least every ten or twenty years. Remember, I'm yours.

Well, God could keep working in her life greatly but it wouldn't affect my life. Why? Because I wouldn't be knowing her. That's exactly how it is with God.

We know how it is when a life is touched by God and we get to know them. We're touched. Well, how about getting to know God? Will we be touched? Yes.

Grace and peace will be multiplied toward us. And last, God has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness. All we need to live life God's way and grow in godliness, He's given it to us.

But how do we avail ourselves of all of that? How do we tap into that? How do we draw on that? Notice carefully, same way, verse 3, through the knowledge of Him. The more we get to know the Lord, the more we draw on and live by all things that He's given that pertain to life and godliness. Oh, this whole issue of knowing God, it's all about the grace of God.

It's the grace of God that He'd even let us know Him. It's understanding His grace that lets us grow in knowing what kind of God He is. And it's the grace of God at work on us, in us, and through us that lets us abound in the knowing of the Lord.

We are to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord. They go together and they're a mutual growth experience. Oh, may we lay our hearts before the Lord.

This is the highest calling we have on earth. Let's pray together. Father, how we thank You for Your grace that has let us meet You, be introduced to You.

Oh, now by Your grace at work we yearn to know You better and better. Work that in and through our lives. Lord, by Your grace, for Your name's sake and the grace of Your name, let us get to know You more and more.

Thank You for this amazing truth that we are in You, and even more amazing, You are in us. Lord, how intimate can it get? Unfold this for us. Let us live this way more and more.

Remind us of these truths. Give us more and more of that Christ-like life, a life lived in dependence on God above. Use us, Lord.

Work in and through us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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