

Knowing Jesus Better

Due to a variety of features within Paul's letter to the Ephesians, that epistle is regarded as his most universal letter. There are no personal greetings. The Apostle does not address any specific church conflict or doctrinal controversies in that local community of believers. In fact, many experts believe that Ephesians was a general letter intended to be circulated to several churches in the vicinity of Ephesus. The point being; there is very little historical context through which to muddle when one reads Ephesians. Any church and any believer can receive every word of Ephesians as though they were intended for them. Paul would surely have been willing to pray the following for any of us:

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. – Ephesians 1:15-17

It is the will of God that believers grow in their knowledge of Jesus, or, that they "know him better." This growth comes through "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation." "Wisdom" here refers to the knowledge of facts. It is paired with "revelation" which means "an unveiling or uncovering." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* calls it "the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul."

A genuine growing knowledge of Jesus not only satisfies our minds (our objective natures), but it must also satisfy our emotional and spiritual needs. Our faith must be intellectually centered, but it must likewise be meaningful and fulfilling. To emphasize one over the other falls short of the knowledge of Jesus that we need to make wise choices and to walk obediently through this worldly pilgrimage.

Why do people often tell us that they can read the same passage of Scripture fifty times, but on the fifty-first reading, it still speaks peace to the heart at some point of specific need? The objective meaning did not change. But, the Bible is a living and active conduit of the living and vibrant Holy Spirit of God, Who ministers to the hearts of believers in harmony with the revealed Word of God. It is the Holy Spirit that makes the difference.

So much of modern Christianity seems to pursue one extreme or the other; a wholly objective dogma or a "feel good" faith that is rootless and wholly subjective. Jesus is, in fact, Lord and Savior for the whole man, the mind as well as the emotions.

This knowledge of Jesus is to increase over time. Paul's prayer for our growth in the knowledge of Christ is that we "may know him better." This idea comes from a compound word meaning "upon knowledge." A Christian can never stand still, content with some achieved level of knowledge. He must desire to grow into a full knowledge, to heap knowledge upon knowledge, or as Paul words it, "know him better."

Refuse to stand still in your relationship with Christ. When He teaches you through some trial, or gives you some great victory, it is easy to rest on your laurels. But, unless you continue in the disciplines through which growth come, you are apt to fall flat on your face in the next trial. These disciplines, in addition to worshipping and learning of Jesus with the Body of Christ,

involve personal worship, personal prayer and a hunger for the very words of God as revealed in the Holy Bible.

To know any person better over the course of each passing day is the nature of a normal relationship of love. Paul had traveled the globe and led untold numbers of people to Christ. Yet, even sitting in a Roman jail because of His loyalty to Jesus, his desire was still expressed in a single aspiration:

"I want to know Christ ..." - Philippians 3:10