

Series: destiny

September 23, 2018

## **Title: Reveal!**

### **[Slide 1]**

**Text: Ephesians 1:15-17**

## **“Getting to know you”**

### **Who do you know?**

Who is the person in your life that you would say you know the best? How long have you known them? What makes that relationship different from all the other relationships you have?

The fact is, we *know* a lot of people at some level or another. If we have met a person or could recognize them on the street, we say we know them – we know who they are.

But it’s quite a different thing to truly *know* a person: not knowing their name or recognizing their face, but knowing them on the inside! A life-long friend is not the same thing as an acquaintance.

### **How do you know?**

At least two key things are present in a relationship where you really know another person: trust and love.

In order to truly know and understand someone else, we must feel safe around them. We must feel that the other person is safe and trustworthy. If we tell them a secret, we must know it won’t be on Facebook tomorrow morning. If we ask them for their advice, we can trust that they will tell us the truth, no matter what.

The second thing that must be present is love. In order to really know someone, we have to be willing to empathize with them, get into their world, feel what they feel, even if we might see things a little differently. We must care about them for their own sake and want what’s best for them all the time.

As Paul put it:

### **[Slide 2]**

### *1 Corinthians 13:4-5 The Message*

*Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always, "me first," doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others.*

You can know all about someone. You can know their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes, their history and future plans. But if you want to go beyond knowing *about* someone to actually *knowing* the person, you have to be able to trust them and love them.

### **"Getting to know you"**

Paul's greatest longing was that followers of Jesus come to not just know *about* God, but actually come to *know Him*. Listen to how he put it in his own words:

### **[Slide 3]**

*Ephesians 1:15-17 NIV*

*For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I 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.***

Let me highlight a couple of things that Paul was saying:

- He could see that the people he was writing to had come to **trust** the Lord Jesus. They didn't just know about Jesus and His story. They had come to the place where they had put their full trust in Him.
- He could see that the people he was writing to had come to genuinely **love** each other as members of God's family.
- And that is why he prayed that they would come to **know God better.**

To "know God better" didn't mean to know more *about* God. It meant to *know Him in the deepest possible way*. Nothing less.

Who is the person you know better than anyone else? For Paul the answer would have been: The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father.

## Wisdom from Heaven

### Special tools for knowing God:

So how does this happen in our lives? How do we come to know God in such a personal and life-changing way? Well, again, Paul pointed the way in his letter to the Jesus followers in Ephesus:

#### [Slide 4]

*Ephesians 1:17 NIV*

*I 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.*

In order to get to truly know God, we need a special tools: **wisdom** that comes directly from God Himself through His Spirit living in us, and **revelation** of things we could never discover for ourselves, again, through God's Spirit.

### The wisdom of this world:

In the Bible, the human story begins with people trying to figure out who God is. The first two people in the story have the chance to truly *know* God. They can choose between trusting Him by doing what He tells them to do, or disobeying Him and breaking their relationship.

This test comes in the form of a quest for wisdom. The serpent tempts Eve to disobey God by telling her that if she eats from the forbidden tree, by telling her:

#### [Slide 5]

*Genesis 3:5 NIV*

*"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Eve looks longingly at the forbidden fruit and sees that it is "desirable for gaining wisdom," so she eats it.

The writer James has a term for this kind of wisdom, knowledge obtained without trust or love:

**[Slide 6]**

*James 3:14-15 NIV*

*But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is **earthly, unspiritual, demonic.***

**The wisdom from Heaven:**

Contrast this earthly "wisdom" with what James says next:

**[Slide 7]**

*James 3:17 NIV*

*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

Here we find all the marks of what it's like to eat from the Tree of Life. Here we find a wisdom that opens the door to trusting God and showing love to each other. This is the kind of wisdom that Paul was writing about. It's the only kind of wisdom that opens the door for us to truly know God – and each other.

When we put our trust in Jesus as the one who came to rescue us from sin and death, we choose to eat from the Tree of Life. Now the door is open to begin to truly know God.

**Reveal****Revelation:**

But there's one more thing that Paul asked God to give his friends so that they could truly know God: the Spirit of revelation.

Revelation: it means to uncover something hidden so that you can know it and see it for yourself. For instance, many expectant couples have a "reveal party" before their baby is born. At the party, the biological sex of the baby is *revealed*, thanks to the miracle of ultrasound technology. The ultrasound gives a peek at the baby inside the womb; it reveals what would otherwise be unknowable at that particular time.

When you think of it, coming to truly know someone requires “revelation.” You have to talk and listen, spend time together, get to *know* each other. Over time, you come to, as it were, see inside the person and begin to know them in a whole new way.

### **The Spirit of Revelation:**

The same thing happens when we truly come to know God. He becomes present in our heart and mind through His Spirit. His Spirit uncovers for us the incredible mystery of God’s love for us. We feel that love, know we can trust this unseen Presence with our entire being. We come to know God.

What does that love look like? John put it this way:

### **[Slide 8]**

*1 John 4:10 NIV*

*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

This is love that had to be *revealed* to a broken world. Mere words would never do. We had to see for ourselves that God loves us *no matter what*. This is love. This is who God is.

### **Reveal!**

The other day I was visiting someone in the hospital when my own doctor walked by. He has been treating me and monitoring my condition for the last 9 years. He came by and asked how I was doing and if everything was all right. This wasn’t a professional office visit. It was just an act of caring by a very busy physician in the middle of a very busy day.

Right then I felt like I knew my doctor better. It wasn’t that I had more information about him and his practice. But that little encounter showed me I wasn’t just another number on a medical record or just another patient to be seen once a year. It showed me that I could continue to trust him, and that he took a genuine interest in me as a person.

And that is what God wants you to know about Him. That’s God’s greatest “reveal.”

