

[Teaching today: Pastor John Lawley]

Good morning! You guys are well rested, you all look so awake. It's good to see you guys. Have a good week? Anybody sick in your house? Everyone was sick in my house, all the girls, one by one, it was wonderful, [LAUGHTER] but uh, yeah, so I'm not well rested but I'm glad to be here. I love being here.

My name is Pastor John for those who are new with us. I'm going to teach you the Word this morning. I just want to take a moment thank you for coming. If you're new with us you can scan the seatback cards in front of you or see us at the Blue Wall, we'll take care of you and answering questions you may have. Thank you for joining us online. I know many of you who are traveling or just can't get out of the house because you're sick are joining us online, so thank you for coming.



Quick question: How many of you would say that over the last six weeks with our DOCTRINE series you've grown? You've found it valuable, you've learned, it's wonderful [APPLAUSE] – so glad. So one of the things we're doing for those who are new with us is we're doing a doctrine series this fall, so we're looking at key doctrines in the church. And we actually titled it DOCTRINE –WHAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD BELIEVE, and that wasn't an accident; we actually didn't title it what Christians *hope* to believe, or what some Christians believe. This is what we believe God's Word reveals to us, and so there are a lot of different Christian beliefs but this is what Christians *should* believe because this is what God tells us to believe.

And it's not really about our feelings, it's about His revelation, we'll be talking about that this morning. And so that's why we talked about this DOCTRINE series being so important in the midst of a world that's going to have all these different opinions—what does God have to say about these things? What does He have to say about Himself? What does He have to say about His Word, His nature? And so that's what we've been talking about the last few weeks, which has just been wonderful. I've really enjoyed it.

So if you've missed a couple weeks or you haven't been here, just to give you a little heads up, if you go to cfdowntown.com/doctrine you're going to see all the past weeks there. So we have podcasts on Tuesdays that come out, we have women's Bible study notes, our discussion guides, our transcripts, sermon notes, sermons, all the stuff – the whole series is located there, and it's going to live there really much all pretty much from here on out. So if you want to go back, catch up, maybe you're driving a long commute and you want to play a podcast or a sermon, we would encourage you to do that. If something I say this morning maybe you haven't connected with, go back and listen, learn – does that sound good? All right, awesome. Some of you guys are like, "I need to just wake up." Okay.

So what we're going to do this morning is we're going to actually look at the past six weeks and we're going to ask the question: How do we live it out? So what do we do with the information that we've been given? And J. I. Packer has a book called *Knowing God*¹ and I'm going to talk about it a couple times throughout the message, but here is actually one of the lines that I love which is really the thesis of this message which is this: That knowledge *about* God needs to lead to knowledge *of* God. That if it's just knowledge in our head and it doesn't grow our affections for the Lord, we kind of miss the boat. And so the question is how do we apply these things that we've learned all our lives? Has it changed maybe the way that we think about different things? How does it change the way we think about ourselves? And so that's what we're going to do because the big idea is sound doctrine we believe leads to life. It's not life but it leads to life because sound doctrines will lead you to the cross. Amen? It'll lead

¹ Free PDF download of the book is available at <http://bootsandbible.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Knowing-God-JI-Packer.pdf> and includes the study guide. Note: Text has been Americanized (i.e., words such as favour and splendour have been changed to American spellings favor and splendor) and was completely re-typeset in 1993.

you to Jesus, the blood on the cross that was sacrificed for your sins, the revelation that God has given us, the promise of His Spirit upon belief—that's where truth will lead you—and so sound doctrine is important. Why? Because we have a specific message that we're trying to communicate to the world which is yes, you're broken and fallen and sinful by nature, but Jesus loves you despite every day of your life not giving Him the worship and glory He deserves. He loves you and He pursued love by coming as a man and dying for you. And so for placing your faith and trust in Him you have a new life in Christ. This is the message, we're stewarding that message.

And so we know that there's a sacred trust there, we have to tell the world the right message, and we don't compromise that message because the world maybe doesn't like how it sounds or we don't shift the message to fit culture or pleasing ears. No. That's the hope of the world despite where the world is when they receive it. And so that's why we teach doctrine. And so the end of sound doctrine is life—it encourages believers—so I hope this morning as I go into what we've learned and what I've learned, I hope this encourages you.

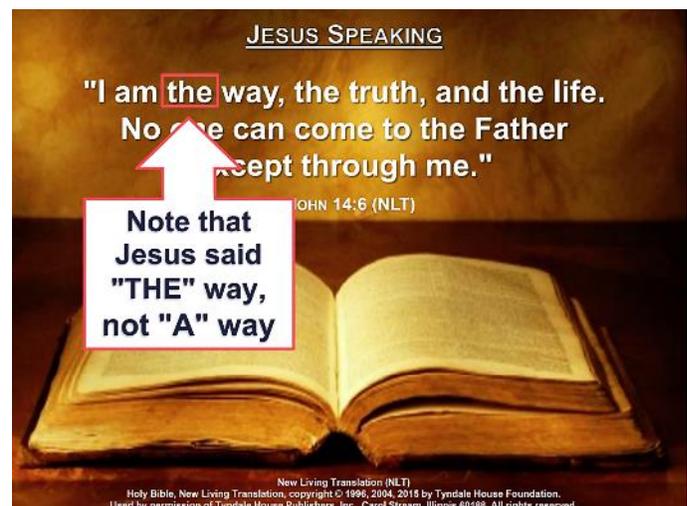
First service there was a lot of quiet kind of listening going on, and hopefully that was a good thing, uh, not a bad thing, but I hope this encourages you, it convicts you. The goal is never guilt, church, the goal is conviction—Amen?—that stirs your affections and grows your love for the Lord. That's the goal in everything we do because we're under grace.

Truth has been revealed to us.

So here's the first thing that I think we've discovered in the first six weeks of really diving into doctrine, if you've joined us in that, and this is what I would believe is key. I believe that we've learned that truth has been revealed to us. If you remember the first two weeks we talked about the Bible and why we believe the Bible is the revelation of God. It is the Word of God that we can find and meet and experience our Savior, and our intimacy with the Lord is through the revelation of His words. And so we said the Bible is God's truth revealed to us, that's why we go to it every day, that's why we hunger to know more about what it says about everything in our lives because it is truth, which means, church, that truth is not something that is discovered – **it is** – meaning that truth in and of itself does not change whether you acknowledge it or not. Truth has been revealed to us and it's up to us to receive it or reject it, but it doesn't change what it is. God is love regardless of what you think about Him. God has rescued you regardless if you reject that. Truth has been revealed to us.

The Bible says that Jesus claimed in the gospels to be not only the way but the truth and the only life, the only path to God.² This is what the Bible teaches us, that the sovereign God who created the world revealed Himself in the person of Jesus in order for us to be saved—that is truth.

In fact, we believe—look at me, guys—we believe hopefully that truth died on the cross 2,000+ years ago. Amen? That He IS truth, not *a* truth, not a religious leader who teaches good moral foundation and structures in order for you to say, "Well, I like that part. I'm going to take that and believe that to be true." No-no-no, we believe that you do not hold the source of truth. In fact, we



² John 14:6 (ESV): Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

believe that you make a horrible god and you need to step off your throne because truth doesn't come from feelings and emotions. It IS in the person of Jesus and we fall on our knees and receive that truth that's been given to us. So even if I don't *feel* like following, I need to follow; even if I don't *feel* like I need the Lord, He is my Lord; even though I *feel* sometimes like I'm good, I need a Savior. So we don't cling to our truths, we don't hold our truth and grab His. No, we take our truths and we die to all of them and say, "Spirit of God teach me your will, your purpose, because You are truth." And I'm here to know that and to worship and to walk and to follow, and we're going to talk about that.

Truth has been revealed to us. Why does this matter? Well, Timothy says that all Scripture is breathed out, 2nd Timothy 3:16. Paul's saying Scripture is the words of God, and so when you look at that, we talked about this, okay, there is a unique message to the Bible. So I'm going to talk to the person who questions the authority of the Bible, it's a unique message. In fact, the Bible teaches a message that no other religious book teaches. In fact, the Bible doesn't make you the hero, it doesn't make men the hero. In fact, it tells the truth about humanity which, I don't know about you but that's check one.

2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Okay, if God really loves me, He's gonna tell the truth. *You know I know your heart and I know what you're like when no one's looking and you're not actually good.* Thank you, Lord, for seeing that because if you thought I was then You wouldn't know me. But it also says that despite the fact that you can't earn God's love, there's no standard in which you can achieve. In fact, you have fallen short, every day you actually fall short. God says, *I know that and while you still are sinner³ look what I did for you. I loved you and I pursued you and I rescued you* — that's the message of the Gospel, which is not a God of wrath, it's a God of love. It's a God who says He is holy and good and you need a Savior, that's the message. But because God loves you He is provided a way because only holiness can atone for holiness. Not only is there a unique message that human depravity exists and that we can't rescue ourselves, which all other religious texts say you have to earn your salvation—good luck living in hypocrisy.

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

— Romans 5:8b (ESV)

Not only is there a unique message which is intellectually, okay, that makes sense, there's remarkable unity in Scripture. Okay. Is Bible true? Well, it says something that sounds true about human nature, but then there's also 1,500 years, 40 different writers, but remarkable unity, remarkable in its thread of the same God pursuing the same broken world, rescuing them from Genesis to Revelation. There's this beautiful thread written by all these different people because the Spirit of God spoke through them. Okay. Intellectually, that makes sense. If it was God's revelation it *would* tell the truth, it *would* have miraculous unity even though He's using people.

But there's also truth claims. Okay. This is also intellectual. Okay, yes, there's truth claims. When you study the Bible and you rid yourself of pride, if you're just trying to go after truth wherever it leads with not a prideful heart—most of us don't even care about truth, we just want to justify things—but if you pursue the Word saying, "Is this truth?" what you'll see is that there's scientific, historical, prophetic 300 Messianic prophecies that Jesus fulfilled alone, which is mathematically impossible if He wasn't the Messiah. Okay, so even prophetically that makes the Bible different, okay, that makes sense, but in all of that why do we know truth has been revealed to us? Because Jesus did not claim to be a prophet or a teacher, He claimed to be God, I AM, and He used Scripture as authoritative. He used it to rebuke the temptation of the enemy, to teach, to correct, to convict. Jesus said this Word is authoritative.

³ Romans 5:8b (ESV): but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



Okay, if Jesus died and stayed dead there would be questions, but He conquered death, He was victorious, and so His claims to be God were justified when He had victory over death. And so why do we believe truth has been revealed? Because God Himself told us it was. Are you following me? That if you don't believe the Word of God to be true, you have to question Jesus because Jesus did, and when He conquered death He not only checked that last box but He said nothing else in this world is going to be more than that; just all you need I've given you, all you need to know Me, to know of, what I've done for you, and to walk in that righteous and forgiveness. He says this is complete. So that's our anchor.

So here's the thing, truth is discovered by the idea of a heart longing to know Jesus. It is transcultural—that, because Jesus is the only way, it actually doesn't matter where you grew up, doesn't matter your religious background, it doesn't even matter what you think of morality—you need Jesus. You need Jesus because morality and good ideas doesn't save a sinful heart. And so in the Gospel what it teaches us is yes, here is how you ought to live, but here is Jesus, your Rescuer. So without Jesus it doesn't matter what you believe, there is no hope. That is why the revealed Word and the message of Jesus is the hope for the world. It doesn't offer good moral behavior, it offers a Savior, church. Amen?

Like—you gotta listen, this is huge—why is this huge? Well, because it's not found in people then. Truth is not found in people. Truth is not found in people. I'm gonna say that again because you have to understand this is the primary lie of the enemy – truth is found in people but this is how it looks: truth is how I feel, truth is a political ideology, truth is this religious community and the systems of rules that we create, that's truth. No, truth is the rules established by men and truth has to fit in. No-no-no, truth in and of itself is not found in people. In fact, one of the biggest things I'm seeing as a threat to the church is people leaving the church because of what people have done and they missed Jesus.

I'll give you an example, this is often what happens is you go to Christianity or the church or you go to wherever it is and you see the behavior of the people around and you say, "Okay, I'm going to start to live like they live." So you start to change your morality to fit their morality because you adapt to the culture and the community that you're in, so you no longer swear as much as you did and you go to Sunday school and you go to church all the time and you think you're living out truth. And then that person or those people end up not showing something that is righteous or good and you say, "I want no part of that community and Christianity because it's destructive to me," and you run towards the world and you say it's found in them—and all the while you missed Jesus. You thought truth was found in the people of God, but the people of God are there not because they hold truth, it's because they need truth. Don't miss this.

I just talked to a girl named Katrina, grew up in the church, understood Christendom, married a man who said he was a Christian, wasn't anything but filled with hypocrisy, they divorced. Now she doesn't want anything to do with Jesus and the church because she thinks that's what it is and all the while she never knew Jesus. She never knew that that pain she feels she needs to run to Him. That's the message is that people will let you down, people will hurt you, people make horrible gods so don't worship them, don't cling to what they say, don't listen to a self-help guru thinking that they hold truth. No, you run to Jesus. And for those who are echoing what Jesus said, you agree; if they don't, you run and you cling to Him and you say, "Okay, I don't worship people. I don't find truth in those things." Does that make sense?

Because we have a world that's going to say to you truth is found in the behavior of people. No, truth is found in Christ Jesus. Our behavior should be response to that truth. Transformation should come because of who Jesus is and what He's given us in His promised Spirit. That's why the mark of a Christian life should be transformation because if not, then you could be "Christians" and not know

Jesus, and you're just distracted. And if you look at what we're dealing with we have to understand, okay, God has revealed His truth to us and so we have to be very slow to run to the world and very quick to run to the Word of God, and to prayer and the community that's seeking after Him and saying, "Teach me, Lord, what You have me to believe, not what the world or my friends or my peers or myself wants to believe." This is why you should always say in conversation for those who are walking with Jesus, "What does Jesus teach about that? What does the Word of God say about that?" That should be your anchor for every thought and every idea that comes through your mind.

What does Jesus teach about that? What does the Word of God say about that?

God is both knowable and vast beyond.

Here's another one that we've learned, that truth has not only just been revealed to us but that God is knowable and vast beyond. How awesome is that, that God is knowable and vast beyond? How many of you joined us when we talked about The Trinity? Okay. We talked about the triune nature of God, that God is a relational being, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. We talked about the character of God and what's amazing is because of the revealed Word we know of God, we know His qualities and His characteristics, but I don't know about you but how many in talking about The Trinity says, "Okay, I'm lost"? That yes, God is knowable but He's also vast beyond, that if you think you can box God in and say, "This is all that He is," then He wouldn't be God. So there's comfort in that. Right? There's comfort in knowing that, yet God has revealed Himself to us and we can know Him and He wants a relationship with us, He is still God, He is still vast and beyond, and His ways are higher than our ways.

**"For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts *higher* than your thoughts."
~ ISAIAH 55:9 (AMP)**

Like, try to grasp for a moment holiness. But some of you, if you think holiness is the best person you've met in your life, not even close. Try to grasp holiness without having a little bit of [REVERENT] fear and know that that God wants a relationship with us. Jesus entered the world to show us who God is. So God is knowable.

For you to say, "Well, I have a relationship with God and you have a relationship with God and they're both the same or different based on how we feel." No-no, if you know Jesus you have a personal, intimate relationship with God that you cannot have without Him. That you can know *about* but you can't know *of* without Jesus, without the Spirit, without the intercessory, it's not possible.

But here's what Jesus says, He says in John 14:7-9:

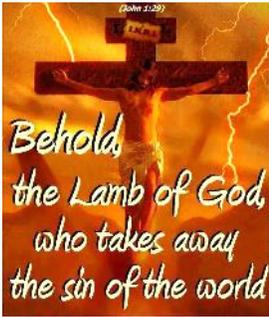
⁷ "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

– JOHN 14:7-9 (ESV)

And so if you want to know is there a God and what He is like, Jesus is revealing to you who God is.

So a couple things there, if you think God is vengeful, bully, kind of this tyrant dictator that has no interest in you, you have a hard time thinking that with the cross. Like, you're gonna have to get over the cross, if you're gonna tell me that God is this moral monster and He's a bully, you gotta explain to me why He would do this. And so Jesus reveals the love of God, the heart of God, that God in fact *is* love, and our desire to be loved is rooted in His very nature. This transforms us because now we know there is a God and we know He's a loving God, and so we have access now through the blood of Jesus to not only know Him but to continue to know Him until we're in glory, which means that now that we know this truth the primary purpose of our lives in Christ Jesus is to know more of Him and to make Him known. Period. And everything else about our lives that isn't about that is a distraction from the enemy—I promise you this, because that is our soul's primary food in order to be satisfied.



So we know, okay, God is knowable and that that's why we are here. Jesus teaches us all throughout the Scriptures that we are here to know God, to pursue God. So I can stand up before you because truth has been revealed and that we study God's Word, I can say this to you right now that if you do not know Jesus, if He's not alive in you, if you don't have a relationship with Him, if you don't have the promised Spirit in your life, then your soul is starving. And then hold your life against this truth, test it, and you may never show that this is real, but I'm going to say something and if this strikes the chord for you maybe God is real, maybe this is true. If you are someone who has always strived after the things of the world—so you've gotten that job, you've graduated from that college, you've gotten that wife, you've gotten that kid, you've gotten that house, you've gotten that car, you've gotten that raise, you look the way you want to look, but there's something inside of you says, *There's something more*—that's because this is true. [APPLAUSE]

And that void in you, that void in you, you can say it doesn't exist but if it does, then listen to what I'm about to say. That void in you is because you are meant to know God and your soul is only satisfied in that. That everything you're trying to worship, the relationships of this world, they are image bearers of Him, they won't satisfy, they'll just show you a glimpse. And we trade the access of knowing Him with the access of trying to worship the things He created that's supposed to point to Him. In fact, Scripture says if you don't worship Him, the rocks will,⁴ the mountains will, the creation will because you're made to know God. That's why you're here, that's why nothing will satisfy a soul, that's why your obsession with entertainment and comfort only leads to despair because your soul is not meant to live in that world.

That void in you is because you are meant to know God and your soul is only satisfied in that . . . that's why nothing will satisfy a soul, that's why your obsession with entertainment and comfort only leads to despair because your soul is not meant to live in that world.

I hope you're hearing this. We're not preaching a message of moral behavior, change; what we're preaching is spiritual transformation through Jesus and a desire to satisfy your soul. Like the message of the Gospel is do you want ultimate joy, ultimate peace, or temporary joy, temporary peace? Temporary peace, temporary joy is found in the things of this world; ultimate joy and ultimate peace is found in your relationship with Jesus – your choice. But you will chase, you will chase, you will chase, you will chase,

⁴ Luke 19:40 (AMP): Jesus replied, "I tell you, if these [people] keep silent, the stones will cry out [in praise]!"

LIVE IT OUT!

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 7 | 10.10.2021

and you will get nowhere here because God loves you too much. We know this. He loves you too much to be satisfied in anything but Him because He is more.

Him coming to the earth revealing that He is knowable and that He wants to rescue you tells us that He's not content with you having crumbs. Like, just imagine if we knew God exists but we did not have Jesus. Take a moment, take Jesus out of the world and what are we left with? We have knowledge of God but no access to Him. Imagine God being real but not the Spirit of God, so we have knowledge of God, we have knowledge of Jesus, but not the power to walk in His righteousness and His goodness and His freedom, not to have something that can help us overcome our flesh. Imagine. That's why when we talk about knowing God and that He is knowable, this is a divine obsession that should mark all of our lives. This should be why we are here.

And when you look at your children and your family and you evaluate whether they're doing well or not, the question should be how much are they in love with the Lord. How much do they love Jesus? You know what a good question to ask that should mark your life: Who do you say Jesus is? Ask your children, "Who do you say Jesus is? Do you know Him? Do you have a relationship with Him or do you just have knowledge about Him? Because if you have knowledge about Him we have a lot of work to do, because knowledge about Him only takes one conversation with some intellectual guy to leave that conversation not a believer. But for you to tell me that the people in my life that I have close, intimate relationships with like my Savior is not real, man, that's a different conversation. That's like trying to prove my mom's not real. Good luck. No. He's walking with me, I know Him, I talk to Him, He's with me, He's transforming. Do you want me to tell you who I used to be? That's a different conversation than, *Oh, yeah, maybe intellectually I like this idea over this idea.* That's why to know Jesus is the point of this, and why we worship is because we all need Him every day and we all need to grow in Him.

How many of you have ever read a book by a believer, godly woman, godly man, that maybe have been walking with the faith for 50-60 years and you read a book and your heart goes, "There's more"? Do you know what I'm saying? Like, I [INAUDIBLE 0:20:30.2] this kind of John Owen, a Puritan preacher, he's just blowing my mind, the intimacy this man has with the Lord. And I'm not jealous, I'm just kind of like I want to have more. Okay? There's more to God that I can know, that this relationship which I can grow in my intimacy with God. Okay, I'm in. If by serving, by stepping out, by being used I'm going to know more of God and He's going to just do more in my heart to satisfy my soul, I'm in.

And that's why I would argue comfort and entertainment is the enemy to our primary purpose in our lives which is to know God and to make Him known, and I believe that with my whole heart. One of the biggest issues in your life is your love of comfort and entertainment—and actually, it's probably an idol. And that leads to people being in a church like now looking at me saying, "This guy's crazy. God's not knowable like that." You know why you don't know God like that? It isn't because you don't want to know God, it's because you're being distracted by stuff that has nothing to do with Him. And in fact, God says no, I want to reveal myself to you but here's where I am – I'm with the poor, I'm with the sick, I'm with the widow, I'm in those areas that are so uncomfortable you would never go.

Do you want to know if God is real? What I'm saying is true? Put yourself in a place of uncomfortability and a dependency on the Spirit of God and watch what happens on the drive home. Put yourself in a situation where you don't have the words to speak but you're in this place where you're dependent on the Lord to lead and then He'll show up. And you'll say God, You're real and You're powerful, and You want to use me. But I can't be used if I'm sitting down watching TV all day, from scrolling my image and coveting other people's lives all day. I can't be used. And so I'm going to grow this distant



relationship with You. Even though I love that You died on the cross for me, I'm not going to be intimate with You, I'm going to be distracted. And you guys, maybe I'm not telling the truth, but this is what I'm seeing. If you want to know God, do the things Jesus did and God says He will show up in a mighty way. If you have the Spirit of God living inside of you, man, why won't you want to unleash it?

Men, I think our issue for a lot of us in this room is that we're distracted and for some of us it's fantasy. Your idol is fantasy so whether it's fantasy football, or becoming somebody that you want to become and so you push everyone around to try to reach this person that you're never going to be outside of Christ because it's just a self-worship model of yourself, or it's pornography, or it's fantasy football for goodness sakes, we are stuck in a fantasy. And because of that we're not faithful and then we wonder why we're depressed and filled with anxiety and feeling like we can't be used, and our wife doesn't love us, and our children don't respect us, because we're trying to find purpose in these things that God has rescued us from.



Our testimony should be this: I used to do those things. I used to do those things but now I'm all in, it's about God, it's about knowing Him, it's about intimacy with Him, because I can't love my wife and my children without it. I can't discover my purpose without pursuing Him. The more I know of Him the more I know of what He wants for my life, and so I'm going to anchor my life on more of Him. And I want to be tired doing what God wants me to do.

Like, godly people should be exhausted at the end of the day. And it's not because you just spent the day entertained, you spent your day on mission. You're telling me that the people who are suffering or sick in a hospital bed who love Jesus are not experiencing an intimacy with the Lord that, in fact, we should be jealous of. Not that we should long for suffering, but man, people can experience more of God when they lean in. So that's our primary purpose from here on out because we are saved, because truth is noble. We are to have a divine obsession.

We all desperately need Him.

Here's the last one, (1) truth has been revealed; (2) God is both knowable and vast beyond. I also feel like one of the things God's taught me over the last couple weeks and just in our conversations and podcasts is that (3) we are all in desperate need of Him. Like, I don't know about you but the more you learn about Jesus and His nature and who He was, the more you learn about the Spirit of God and what He is. The Bible says that God has this plan for us, Romans 8:29:

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

– ROMANS 8:29 (ESV)

That we learn, the more we learn of God the more we learn of this, like, holiness of God, that He is holy, and that we have this access to holiness. And so with that you have to stop and look around and say okay, because of that how has that not changed everything about me? Because if the Spirit of God is necessary, man, I need to ask every day that the Spirit of God will take over my life because it says in Scripture – right? – the Spirit of God reveals truth.⁵ I don't know about you but that makes me want to worship God when I really think about that. So what God's Word tells us about the Holy Spirit is that for those in this room that if I ask you, "Do you have knowledge of God; do you have a relationship with God through Jesus?" Not just the relationship with the church or Christianity, but you have an intimate

⁵ For starters, see Psalm 25:5, Psalm 119:160, John 1:14, John 1:17, John 4:24, John 14:6, John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:13, John 17:17, Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Timothy 2:15

relationship with Jesus. If you do the Bible says that the Spirit of God drew you to that [FIGURE A], that you would have been blind to truth [FIGURE B] if it wasn't for the Spirit of God saying this is true,

[JESUS SPEAKING]
"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."
- JOHN 6:44a (ESV)

FIGURE A

[SNAPS HIS FINGERS] this is true. But the Spirit of God in you says no, you need this, you need this, this is what your soul needs. That the Spirit of God is, in fact, when He draws you to Himself, and so we don't even get credit for coming to

Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.
- JOHN 14:17a (ESV)

FIGURE B

know the Lord. It's *His* love that transforms our heart from something that we think is silly to something that we desperately need.

That's why I tell you all the time my testimony is I used to sit in this Pastor's church and sleep, a few months later when I met Jesus I was writing down everything He had to say. Why? Because the Spirit of God creates a hunger inside of us for truth and righteousness. There's a hunger. So in love—look at me—I love you, but if you're apathetic and bored with what we're talking about right now, I don't know if you know Jesus because this should pump you up. Pumps me up clearly, I'm sweating. [LAUGHTER] This should get you, like, okay, yes, God has revealed the truth, I have this anchor; yes, He's knowable, I can pursue Him and I need Him.

Okay, this should shape how we see everything about Him. We are desperate for Him because He convicts us. Spirit of God help me to be convicted. I have sins in my life that I am not convicted about, which means that You're not in it, help me to be convicted. Lord, I don't love the way You want me to love, help me to be convicted about those things, intercede on my behalf. There are relationships in my life that even though I love You, there's none of You in it. Because I desperately need You, I'm gonna look at everything in my life and I'm gonna say, "Okay, is this about knowing God and making Him known, and am I dependent on Jesus and the Spirit in these things?"

So right now you should look at your husband and wife and say: Am I dependent on the Spirit to love them well, or am I all dependent on the flesh? Am I settling for the flesh even though I inherited the Spirit through my trust in Jesus? You have the greatest Counselor in the world but you never knock. And so this is what we're reminded, the more we understand of God. J. I. Packer, I mentioned him, he says this quote, this is his full quote in a book called *Knowing God*, amazing book, would recommend you reading it. It says this:

How can we turn our knowledge *about* God into knowledge *of* God?" The rule for doing this is simple but demanding. It is that we turn each truth that we learn *about* God into a matter of meditation *before* God, leading to prayer and praise *to* God.

- J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*⁶

So that's really what I'm trying to get after here is did you in the past six weeks really love what you learned about God, or did it grow your love for Him, grow your intimacy? Because here is the sad reality, there are people all throughout this world that are in churches for 60 years and they never knew Jesus. And you think I'm wrong? Go to Matthew and see the part where they say, "Jesus, didn't we do all these things your behalf?⁷ I performed miracles... I was on the school board... I was on the elder board... I taught Sunday school... I had my children come bitterly and complaining every Sunday morning for You. And He says, "I do not know you." And so we all need Him, not just knowledge of Him but when we hear about what He wants for us we say, "Okay, Lord, please." We pray and we long

⁶ Packer, J. I. (1993 paperback, p. 23), *Knowing God*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. (Original work published 1973)

⁷ See Matthew 7:21-23



LIVE IT OUT!

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 7 | 10.10.2021

and we worship for Him to show up in those promises. We don't hold God to His promises and say, "I'll believe if you do." It's no-no-no, I believe so now use me as a vessel for your work and glory. I've died to myself when I said I put my faith in Jesus.

Like, here's something that I have a conversation with a lot of people often who say they left the Lord, like, "I left, I was a Christian, now I'm not a Christian anymore." I always have this conversation because I don't understand that, like, I don't understand how they can say that, I really don't. Unless their version of what the Gospel says is very different than my version, because when I hear they used to be Christian I hear that they surrendered their lives to Jesus. If they were Christians that means they examined their sinful nature, they examined their past and they said, "Lord, I trust that I need You and that I am a sinner and that You died for me and You set me free, so I surrender my life to You. Lead me from this day on." That's what I think about when I think about Christians. So if you're no longer a Christian, did you ever surrender? Because how can you un-surrender something? You hear me? How do you un-surrender your life to Jesus? Because the very posture of surrendering is there's nothing else, all you're doing is leaving morality that you didn't like, or people that you didn't like, but you never knew Jesus. And we can't miss that. We can't learn doctrine and learn of and all about God but not take that and say okay, let's live this truth out in our lives.

And so how do we conclude with what we're talking about here? Well, first, I think that for those who missed these series, go back and check, go back and see if truth has been revealed because it has. That's why we encourage you to be in your Word, not to check off a box of Christian behavior, it's to know and grow in your knowledge and intimacy with the Lord. That's why we encourage you to give and come on Sunday mornings and just learn and to serve. Why? Not just to do it so that you can call yourself an attendee at Calvary Fellowship Church, because if you come and you miss Jesus we failed. That's the thesis, we failed. You're gonna go to Hell with good moral behaviors because the question is: Who do you say Jesus is?" Do you know Him? And if you don't we would love to introduce you because He is knowable.

But in His knowledge there's never-ending knowledge there. Like, you're gonna, if you pursue the Lord, you're never gonna be satisfied, you're never gonna get to a place where you're like, "I know everything," because a humble heart led by the Spirit is always going to unravel wonder. You're always gonna be in the Word and say, "I never knew this, I never knew about You, God," and that's because God is real and He's vast, and He wants to continue to reveal Himself.

By the way, that's what Heaven is. Do you know what the treasure of Heaven is? It's Him, it's experiencing intimacy with the triune nature of God, that's Heaven, which means that that is greater than anything in this world.

**"No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
and no mind has imagined what God
has prepared for those who love him."**

~ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 (NLT)

So we all have a choice to make: Do we pursue something that we ultimately desire, or do we satisfy ourselves with temporary things that don't satisfy our souls? Because, like, here's logically you saying I don't want God, I want this relationship that doesn't have God in it, is saying I love the feeling of that relationship. But really, what the enemy is not telling you, is that feeling was created by God. How much more is found in Him? So church, don't trade intimacy with the world with intimacy in the Lord,

you lose, it's less. And that's why, hopefully, for those who don't know Jesus when I talked about that soul, that void, you can at least connect to that and say maybe I need to step towards what this guy's saying right now. But we know that we all need Him.

And so here's my challenge, church, here's my challenge: What if we are a church anchored on the revealed truth? That everything we do is about that; that all of our conversations that we have is about what does Jesus say about those things? How do we grow in our understanding of the Lord? And we welcome conversations, *Man, this is why I believe what I believe, but I don't know if that's even biblical. Maybe I just believe this because I was taught by my parents to believe it.* What does God say about that? Man, what if we were those types of people in our small groups, in our conversations, that we say, "This is what I *think*, but I don't even know if that's what God wants me to think. Can you help me to see what God has to say about this?" Does that make sense? That's the goal is to take all of our thoughts, all of our feelings, and put them before the Lord and say, "What does your truth have to say?"

What if we're a people who our goal is to know God and to make Him known, like, we're not satisfied with church attendance, we are intimate and asking each other, "Do you know Jesus?" Like, what if this week all you do – I just challenge you – what if you just have one person in your life, maybe it's your kids on the way home, you ask this question, "Who do you say Jesus is?" and just see what their answer is. Some of us, man, that's going to be a really convicting moment because there will be a realization in that moment that our kids know about Jesus but they don't know Him, and that we need to stop spending so much time teaching them how to swing a baseball bat and teach them about this. Because without this none of that matters, but with this it all becomes a tool. That's what Solomon learned. With God this is all purposeful; without God it's all meaningless.



If they don't know who they are in Christ Jesus, they're gonna try to find meaning in those things and you're setting them up for disaster. But if they know Jesus then they're gonna be intentional. So just ask that question – who do you say Jesus is? – and if they don't say, "Jesus is God. He is the only way to God. He is my Savior and my Lord. He is the way, the truth and the life," like, if this is not who they say Jesus is, if they think He's a good moral teacher then we've missed the mark and we've got to keep on teaching them about who Jesus really is and what He's done for them.

If you live your life and you don't know the Spirit of God, if your life is not marked by transformation, maybe this morning is the first morning you say, "God, if You actually *are* knowable, I want to know You." But for marriages in this room we're going to start—we have these beautiful songs that we're going to sing here shortly—for marriages, maybe you just need to grab your spouse's hand, you need to walk up here to the altar. Maybe you're in your own seats there and you need to for the first time say, "God, we need You in our marriage. We claim to love You but You're not in it. You're not in any of this and we need You because we understand that without the Spirit of God this marriage cannot be healed. And so we understand that with the Spirit of God You can change all things, You can transform all things for your glory and honor. We need You.

Maybe for somebody in this room, maybe you're a young adult – right? – and you're looking at your life and you're saying, "What do I want to do with my life?" and now you are reminded that God has revealed the truth of knowing Him as the primary purpose of your life. So my challenge for some young people who are trying to discover what they want to do is don't you dare think about picket fences in retirement. In fact, I would say spend this season of your life growing in your knowledge and intimacy with the Lord because two things will happen. One, you discover your purpose; rather than being distracted by provision and protection conversations, that you will discover your purpose in this time. Why has God gifted you and what is that gift for, and not only that but you will steward a heart and a characteristic that then will be fruitful if God wants to provide you with a godly wife or a godly man, that your intimacy with the Lord will overflow in your future relationships. So spend time growing in your knowledge and intimacy in the Lord and let that be the primary focus of your life.

Remember also your Creator
in the days of your youth,
– ECCLESIASTES 12:1a (ESV)

Families, how many of you [APPLAUSE], thank you, family – and two things, guys, hold on, families – I would argue this and I'm just being completely transparent with you. About a month ago I looked around and I said I'm not leading my family the way I need to lead, I'm not. I need to spend intentional time with my children. I know they know a lot about God but I want to have deep conversations about how they treat each other, and why we are to love the way we love them, why did daddy care and give His whole life to Jesus, and why does he not act like other dads? I want to have these conversations with my daughters and I want them to remember that their daddy loves Jesus and is desperate for them. I want them to see their daddy on his knees praying out to the Lord in desperation. I don't want to just be somebody who says they're a Christian in words, but I want to be one who lives it out in deeds so they see Jesus in me.



TECH-DISTRACTED PARENTS



And so families, maybe some of you, you need to anchor your life around this truth and it hasn't been, it's been knowledge of God, you're a Christian family but you have not been bearing fruit in that family at all. You can't remember the last time you had a family devotional. Come on, you're just distracted by entertainment and comfort all week long. How many of us mothers and fathers need to stop doing this on the couch [GESTURES SCROLLING ON A SMART DEVICE] because that doesn't save souls?

Here's one more thing, singles, you don't often get spoken to but I want to highlight this because I think this is really key, and band you can come on up. Do you know that God says that in the midst of knowing Him as your primary goal, if you're single you are blessed. [APPLAUSE] But you *are* blessed and let me explain that to you. Because God says that without the world you have primary access to knowing God and making Him known.

So singles, pray right now as we worship that the Lord would stir your heart to be adaptable and to meet needs and to change and be flexible because you can be. You could set your eyes on Jesus and say, "Lord, I can make You known. I could be uncomfortable, I could go to the sick, the poor, the widows, and I don't have any obligation to keep me

from doing that. I'm privileged to be all out for You. What a great gift You have for me during this season in my life where I can pursue You and to make You known full-heartedly. Lord, You have my

LIVE IT OUT!

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 7 | 10.10.2021

time, my resources, my energy, where I live, I'm all in." What a gift that is. And so maybe during worship you need to give that to the Lord and say, "Father, take me from a heart of bitterness to a heart of purpose because I shouldn't see this as a bitter thing, I should see this as a blessing in which God calls it to be."

And so I'm going to just take a moment and ask you guys wherever you are, maybe I struck a chord with your family, your friend, just posture yourself before the Lord and worship and ask Him to be intimate and to be real and transform your life. Because if you don't know Jesus then we lose and the message of the Gospel is not heard the way it needs to be heard. It should change lives.



And so Lord, we thank You for the gifts that have been given for the goal of Gospel proclamation, for transformation. Lord, let us be a church that pushes back the lies and the darkness in the world. Lord, I pray right now for the couples who need to respond, for the families that need to respond, for the young adults, for the singles, Lord, for all of us in this room that we are right now asking the question how much do we know of You, how much do we have a personal relationship with You? For some of us here we've been in church for 50 years but we've never known more than just knowledge. Lord, I pray this DOCTRINE series would take root in our heart and produce a great love and intimacy with You, a great dependency on You. Lord, teach us in this moment how to praise You and to worship You the way You deserve to be worshiped. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Scripture quotations marked (ESV) were taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Accessed on esv.org

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) were taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. Accessed on biblegateway.com

Scripture quotations marked (AMP) were taken from The Holy Bible, Amplified Bible (AMP). Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, CA 90631. All rights reserved. Accessed on biblegateway.com

Graphics Sources: Images appearing in this transcript were obtained from DuckDuckGo image searches (attributed sources in parentheses). Pg 4—Jesus is my anchor (etsy.com). Pg 6—Behold the Lamb (pinterest.com). Pg 7—social media distractions (blog.reformedjournal.com). Pg 8—Fantasy football (sport001.org). Pg 10—wedge frame (openclipart.org). Pg 12—tech-distracted parents, dad (movingtolearn.ca), mom (huffingtonpost.com). Pg 13—praying hands (pixabay.com).

Additional sources: Pg 2—"I am THE way" (screenshot from <http://jetwriter.com/jet/2021Disp6-GoodNews.pdf>, page 32). Pg 5—Isaiah 55:9 (screenshot from <http://jetwriter.com/jet/2021InTheBeginning.pdf>, page 41). Pg 10—1 Corinthians 2:9 (screenshot from <http://jetwriter.com/jet/2021Disp1-Innocence.pdf>, page 17). .Pg 12—YouTube "Watch or Listen" button (youtube.com).

CF website screenshots: Pg 1—Live It Out (doctrine page). Pg 12—CF "Watch or Listen" button (main page).

CF sermon video screenshots: CF logo in the footer.

All other graphics were created by the transcriber.

Keywords: Truth, Word, Spirit, love, knowledge, know

COPYRIGHT © 2021 – JOHN LAWLEY – ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.