



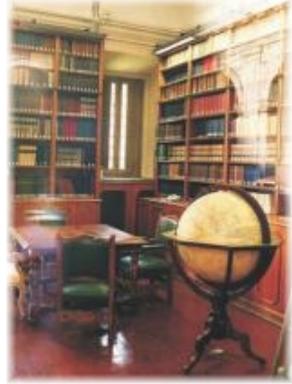
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“THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL”

IN John 17 we have the transcript of a prayer of Christ. He was even then standing in the shadow of the cross, yet His burden was for His disciples. In this touching prayer, rich with meaning, Christ gave a lesson which should be engraved on the mind and the soul. He said,:

“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” — John 17:3



This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent is the power of God to transform man into his own image. It gives to man the mastery of himself, brings every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind, and thus transforms its possessor into a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings his mind into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to his understanding the rich treasures of the universe.

This knowledge is not found without painstaking effort, for it is obtained by searching the word of God; yet it may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it.

If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. — Proverbs 2:3-5

Human beings are infatuated with knowledge. Some spend years getting an “education”; others enjoy learning everything there is to know about sports, so that they can tell you every statistic; others study automobiles, and can tell you the small-

est differences in the different years and models; while still others inquire into the personal lives of all the movie stars. But what is the value of such knowledge? How can it compare with a knowledge that enables us to obtain eternal life?

A CASUAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD IS NOT ENOUGH

One day, as my daughter and I were playfully talking and laughing, she said something jokingly about someone, but I sensed that it was with some sarcasm. When I didn't respond, she exclaimed, "You are talking with your eyes!" So I asked,

"Well, what did I say?"

"You said I am being mean."



She knew me well. I didn't have to say anything. She already knew what I was thinking. Perhaps you too have a grandmother, husband/wife, sister/brother, or good friend, with whom you have or have had such a relationship. You know them so well that you can tell what they are thinking. You have been together so long, and admire one another so much, that you have come to think alike. When your eyes meet, you can read each other's thoughts. A look, a hand on the shoulder, a hug or a touch on the hand, all communicate a thousand things. You love to be together, and you hate being separated.

Have you ever thought of having such a close friendship with God? Have you ever imagined it possible to know and love Him, and know with a certainty that you too are loved by Him even more? Does it seem possible to you to trust Him so much that no circumstance can shake your confidence in His love? Do you expect answers to your prayers, and receive the things needed, because you asked exactly what He wanted to give you anyway? Do you think so much like Him, that before He asks, you have already thought of His desires for you, and are performing them? Does the thirst for His presence drive you like the weary deer to the water? Jesus had just such a relationship with His Father, and it is our privilege to have it as well.

His intimate relationship with His Father and his desire for His followers to have the same relationship with their heavenly Father was the subject of Christ's last public prayer, recorded in John 17:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. — John 17:23

The closeness and intimacy that God desires with us was penned by the psalmist in the following language:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. — Psalm 32:8

I had the opportunity once to ride a friend's horse. My friend was training this horse with a special method. The horse was trained to go in the direction its rider looked or pointed, without the rider having to direct it with the reins.

God longs for us to live so close to Him that when in thought or prayer we look to Him, we will know and understand His thoughts toward us, and be ready to carry out His will for us.

INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS POSSIBLE

In Hebrews we read of those,

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. — Hebrews 11:33-35

What kind of relationship was this, which gave them such experiences!

We read of Daniel that he was greatly beloved; Abraham was called the friend of God, and ate and talked with God; Enoch walked so closely with God, that God took him to be with Him; Moses spoke face to face with God as a man speaks with his friend; Job declared concerning God, "Though he slay me yet

will I trust in him." John leaned on Jesus' breast, and so was referred to as the beloved (loved of Christ). We too can know God as did these godly men of old, and have that knowledge which "is life eternal."

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD WAS BROKEN

Adam enjoyed free and open communion with God. Morning and evening, in the "cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8), God came and talked with Adam and Eve; but sin changed all that. God, who dwells in glory unapproachable, could no longer commune with man.

With no communion possible, how was man to ever know God, much less have a close relationship with Him? We are helpless, powerless, and subject to the assaults of a powerful foe; but not so with God. We are constantly tempted, but He cannot be tempted. How are we ever to discover what He is truly like? How can we know how He would respond in an environment like ours, or how He thinks on any given matter? How can we, sinful, defiled creatures, ever hope to be able to enter into His presence, and communicate with the high and holy Creator; for we live in a world of sin so vastly different to the pure, holy, sinless, and glorious environment of heaven?

THE ANSWER

Jesus Christ is the answer to this all important question, for:

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. — 2 Corinthians 5:19

[God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. — Hebrews 1:2

In Christ, we see and know God, because He whose character and attributes are the same as His Father's came to this sin darkened world and lived out the character of God in humanity.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. — John 1:18

It is one thing to have a knowledge of God through another's life, but it is another thing to experience God's providence for ourselves – to commune with Him personally, to know our prayers are heard, and to recognize His leading and involvement in our lives. To have our faith so rooted and grounded in love that we will have an experience like those of Hebrews 11, "of whom the world was not worthy." God is calling us to this kind of experience!