

KNOWING the God We PRAY to

- A. What we *believe* about God affects how we *experience* relationship with him.
- B. There is often a gap between what we believe to be true about God (our God knowledge) and what we experience to be true (our God image).
 - For example, if we feel God is angry, distant, unapproachable, etc.
 - Life circumstances, relationships with people, our sin, etc. affect this.
 - Satan can't change the truth about who God is, so he comes against our perception of this

Key Point: If we want to know who God is, we look to Jesus. Looking to Jesus' life and ministry and meditating on who we see Him to be in his interactions with people in the Bible, tethers and transform our hearts to KNOW and EXPERIENCE the truth of who God is.

Jesus Reveals God's nature and heart

- A. **Jesus is not merely a messenger *from* God—He *is* God made visible.**
Hebrews 1 reveals that Jesus is the exact imprint of the nature of God.

"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." (Hebrews 1:1–3)

In the one place in the Bible where the Son of God pulls back the veil and lets us peer way down into the core of who he is, we are not told that he is austere and demanding in heart. We are told that he is 'gentle and lowly in heart. (Gentle and Lowly, Dane Ortlund, p. 21)

- B. **Jesus directly identifies Himself as the perfect revelation of the Father's nature (character and heart).**

"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 14:9

- C. **Paul emphasizes that Christ is the image of God, revealing God's glory through the gospel.**

“Image” (Greek *eikōn*) means the visible representation or exact likeness. Jesus perfectly images the invisible God to humanity.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."
Colossians 1:15

"The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
2 Corinthians 4:4

D. Jesus tells His disciples that seeing Him is equivalent to seeing the Father.

"Whoever sees me sees him who sent me." John 12:45

Four Portraits of God's nature through Jesus

1. The Kindness of God

- Jesus welcomed the overlooked: children, outcasts, lepers.
- **Luke 7:** The compassion He shows to the widow of Nain.

Truth: God's kindness isn't earned; it flows from His nature. His heart is bent toward mercy.

2. The Love of God

- Jesus didn't just teach about love; He embodied it in sacrifice.
- **Romans 5:8:** "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Truth: God loves us unto death.

3. The Relentless Pursuit of God

- Jesus pursues the broken and goes after His kids.
- **Luke 15:** The shepherd who leaves the 99, the Father who runs to the prodigal.

Truth: God's pursuit doesn't stop when we fail, it intensifies.

4. The Humility of God

- Jesus shows a God who kneels to wash feet and carry burdens.
- **Philippians 2:** He "emptied Himself," taking on human form.

Truth: He is the humble King, approachable.

5. What else do we know about God because of Jesus?

Tending to the Gap (know vs. believe) through Prayer

- What changes when we pray knowing God is kind, loving, relentless, humble, and faithful?
 - How does the Spirit move within prayer to tend to the gap we talked about earlier (our knowledge vs. our experience of God)?
 - How then, does prayer become more about communion with God and less about performance for God?
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Prayer Exercise: Ask the Holy Spirit to bring a REAL story of Jesus to mind from the gospel. What need is He responding to? What Got his attention? What does he do? How does he act? What do you notice about his nature, his posture, his response in his interactions? What does he care about? How is he ministering? What does this tell you about who God is? What does this tell you about who you are to God? Pray into this.