



# KNOWING CHRIST

Disciples & Early Church • U7#4 1st-3rd Gr. • Jan.26, 2025

## Concept

Jesus is personal and can be known.

## Goal

Students will learn that the greatest treasure we have is knowing Jesus, and He wants us to know him deeply.

## Passage

Philippians 3:4-10a

Key Verse: "... I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..." Philippians 3:8 (NCV)

## Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<b>Learning Activity #2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>"Jesus' Characteristics" handout, 1/student</li></ul>	<b>Activity Stations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Copy paper, 1/2 sheet/student</li><li>Pencils, 1/student</li><li><i>Basket</i></li><li>Strong Flashlight</li><li>White construction paper</li><li><i>Black felt marker with pointed tip</i></li><li>Chair from classroom</li><li><i>Tape</i></li></ul>

### \*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

# Background Information (for the teacher)

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"... Far from feeling dissatisfied with the law, Paul viewed himself as 'blameless' (3:6). Far from feeling guilty over his persecution of the Christians, Paul gloried in such a credential (3:6). It was all of this gain, then, that was surrendered for Christ (3:7). Paul gave up ritual, religion, morality, position, and his identity in Judaism, for 'the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord' (3:8).

"The result was that the Apostle moved from religion to a relationship, from performance to a person. Now it became the passion of his heart to simply 'know Christ' (3:8). All of his past glory in Judaism was revalued as 'rubbish' or 'dung' (3:8, KJV)." [1] "What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God. What is the 'eternal life' that Jesus gives? Knowledge of God. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight, and contentment, than anything else? Knowledge of God.

"... What are we talking about when we use the phrase 'knowing God'? A special sort of emotion? ... Or is knowing God a special sort of intellectual experience? Does one hear a voice? see a vision? find strange trains of thought coursing through one's mind? or what? These matters need discussing, especially since, according to Scripture, this is a region in which it is easy to be fooled, and to think you know God when you do not...

"First, knowing God is a matter of personal dealing, as in all direct acquaintance with personal beings. Knowing God is more than knowing about Him; it is a matter of dealing with Him as He opens up to you, and being dealt with by Him as He takes knowledge of you. Knowing about Him is a necessary precondition of trusting in Him... But the width of our knowledge about Him is no gauge of the depth of the knowledge of him. ... you can have all the right notions in your head without ever tasting in your heart the realities to which they refer...

"Second, knowing God is a matter of personal involvement, in mind, will, and feeling. It would not, indeed, be a fully personal relationship otherwise. To get to know another person, you have to commit yourself to his company and interests, and be ready to identify yourself with his concerns...'O taste and see that the Lord is good,' says the psalmist (Psalm 34:8)...we do not know another person's real quality till we have 'tasted' the experience of friendship with him." [2]

[1] Don Williams, *Philippians*, ©1979 by G/L Publications of Regel Books, pp. 135-136.

[2] J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, © 1973 by J.I. Packer, InterVarsity Press, pp. 29-36.

**Activity Stations:**

- **Guess Who**
  - **Instructions:** Give each student a piece of paper and a pencil and ask them to write down something about themselves that probably no one else knows. Their names should NOT be on the paper. When they are finished, they will fold the paper and put it in the basket. If they have trouble coming up with a unique contribution, suggest unusual pets they might have, weird snacks or sandwiches that they like, their most embarrassing moment, the craziest thing they ever did, etc. After a few of the papers have been completed, have students each pick one and try to guess who it is about.
- **Profiles – Do You Know Who?**
  - **Instructions:** Set up a chair parallel to and about 5 feet from the white board. Prop up or hold a flashlight about one foot from the chair with the bright light shining directly toward the white board. Have a student sit in the chair. Tape a piece of construction paper in the space where the student's profile is reflected. Trace the profile. Write the student's name in small letters on the back of the paper. After you have a number of profiles, have the students guess which profiles belong to whom.

Today is our last lesson from Paul's letter to the Philippian church!

Let's read **Philippians 3:4-9**.

Paul was proud to be a man from God's chosen nation of Israel. His family carefully followed the God's rules given to the Israelites. Paul carefully followed those rules, as a boy and as a man. In addition, Paul was a respected Pharisee. The Pharisees were powerful Jewish leaders who thought it was more important to follow the rules than to show people love. They were very religious and made laws they knew they could, but others couldn't, keep. This made them appear to be better than others. Many people thought they were better than others. The other Pharisees respected Paul because he was the top dog in the Jewish community. He had it all. Yes, you could certainly say Paul was an important man.

So, Paul came from the right nation, from the right family, and he was the most important person in the "in" crowd. Now look back at verses 7 & 8. We see a change in Paul's thinking. What was that change? (He once thought it was important to be top dog; now he sees it's worth nothing.) Why did his thinking change? (Because of Christ, nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ.) Our key verse for today is "... I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..." (Philippians 3:8).

## Lesson Continued

Before Paul became a Christian, he believed that if he was important and kept all the rules better than anyone else, he was okay with God. He actually believed he was doing God's work when he arrested and killed Christians. But when Jesus appeared to him, Paul realized he was thinking very wrong. Can you imagine how shocked and afraid Paul must have been? What did Jesus do to Paul? He didn't do anything but tell him He loved him and was willing to forgive him. That was the love that convinced Paul that "... I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..." (Philippians 3:8).

What did Jesus do so Paul and all of us can be forgiven? So since Jesus died to take the punishment we all deserve for our sin against God, does that mean everyone is forgiven? How can we be sure we are forgiven? John 1:12 says, "but as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." What does it mean to "receive Him?" That's right, it means to tell Jesus that we know we sin and need His forgiveness. We thank Him for paying for our sin and tell Him we want to receive His forgiveness.

### Transition

The drama team is here to perform a skit that shows us what it looks like to be like Paul when he thought he was so important and then why Jesus is the most important.

### Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

#### Drama - "Who's the Greatest?" skit performed by Drama Team

### Transition

Let's look at why all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ. Let's quickly move into small groups.

### Learning Activity#2 Sm. Groups

- **What's important?** We all make choices and live each day based on what we believe is important. Therefore, it's necessary that we spend some time to think about what we believe is important. So, let's talk about what things are important to you. Maybe it's important to be well liked at school, to be good at sports, to get good grades, to be good looking, etc. Maybe it's important to you to know famous or powerful people. Can you think of a person that you'd really like to know? Who would you want to get to know if you had a chance?
- **Paul's change of mind.** At one time, Paul thought that he was the most important person. But after he met Jesus, he realized that Jesus was more important than anyone or anything else. From that point on, Paul longed to know him. His goal to know and live for Christ was more important to him than anything on earth. *(continued on the next page)*

## Learning Activity# 2 Continued

- Let's read **Philippians 3:9** again to see if you can get some clues about why he changed his mind. (He belonged to Christ—he was now in God's family. God had forgiven him not because he was able to follow the law, but because Jesus died for his sins, it was nothing he did, but his faith in Jesus' work that made him right with God.)
- **Who is Jesus?** (Hand out "Jesus' Characteristics.") Look at this paper that lists Jesus' characteristics. There are some very big words. Take some time to read each one and consider what they mean. As you read, consider whether the characteristic makes you afraid, glad, angry, grateful, anxious, comforted, etc. Do you care that Jesus has this characteristic? If you believe this to be true, would your thinking about the future be changed in any way? We don't have time to talk about all of them so choose 3 or 4 you'd like to discuss. (Take 10 minutes to discuss this.)
- **Therefore...** Knowing that Jesus loves you perfectly, knows what is going to happen to you, always tells the truth and keeps His promises, doesn't it make sense that you would want to know Him? There is no one who will ever love you in the same way Jesus does. He is the only one who can promise to take care of you now and promise that you will spend forever in heaven with Him after you die.
- So what do you think? Is Paul right in saying, key verse?

**Missions Prayer:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray. You can thank Him that He loves you so much. Those of us who are Christians can ask Him to give us the desire to know Jesus more deeply.