

Teaching outline for session 1: Knowing God

Primary Texts: John 17:3, Jeremiah 9:23-24

Primary goals of this session: This session is about the central goal and heart of the Christian faith – knowing God. In it we want to introduce the concept and examine Jesus profound statement that to know God and Jesus is eternal life. Because we only spend one week on it, we want to focus on what it means to know God, why it is eternal life, and give people both the desire and resource to move forward in that relationship. We want people to see everything they do in the Christian sphere – from Bible study, to Christian fellowship, to Christian service – as helping them draw nearer to God.

This teaching plan involves some teaching a lot of questions. The thinking is people learn well when they are thinking through it with you and reaching the proper conclusions themselves. You can ask these questions of your entire class or take moments where they connect with a few people around them for discussion. You don't have to use every question if you don't want to.

Feel free to add to or detract from this tool in any way you feel would best suit your class.

Teaching Outline:

Open with an illustration personal or non, of a good friendship. Something that illustrates what it's like to truly know someone well.

I.E. a married couple that knows what each other is thinking, best friends who finish each other's sentences, a relationship in which a couple anticipates each other's needs and looks out for each other.

We were made to know God.

Read John 17:3.

A word study on the word "Know":

γινώσκω (ginōskō) –

- . to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of perceive, feel
- . to know, understand, perceive, have knowledge of

This word involves learning. To know someone is a learning process. In this way it is a journey.

For discussion:

- Why is learning an essential part of any relationship?
- Why would this never stop no matter how well you think you know someone?
- How do we learn more about God?

Read 2 Peter 3:18.

How do we learn about God?

This word involves understanding. To know someone is to strive to understand them.

For discussion:

- What is the difference between understanding and learning?
- Why is trying to understand someone (you may say empathize) essential to any relationship?
- Why would this never stop no matter how much you might understand someone?
- How can we understand God more?

Read Jeremiah 9:23-24

What does this say about understanding God?

Why is knowing God the only thing worth boasting about?

Re-read John 17:3

Defining eternal life: Eternal life is a gift, it is something we receive that goes on beyond this life on earth (John 11:25-26) but it is something that starts here and now. Eternal life is something we live every day.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:18 and Matthew 6:19-21 – What does this tell us about living eternal life?

How is knowing God an eternal journey or a way of life?

What steps can we take to know God more?

Points to share and discuss:

- Prayer
- Bible study
- Christian service
- Christian fellowship – accountability, mentorship, discussion
- Spiritual disciplines: fasting, silence, solitude
- Worship
- Contemplation

Read the following quote from JI Packer: *“What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we have in life? To know God. What is the eternal life that Jesus gives? To know God. What is the best thing in life? to know God.”*

Closing prayer