

# FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

*“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...” —PHILIPPIANS 3:10*

Paul says, “I want to know Christ” and what he means by that is he wants to know Christ personally, not just intellectually, but through experiential interaction and involvement with Him. He means through the good and bad times, the joys, the sufferings; anything that is true of Christ, he wants to share in.

In Ephesians 1:17, Paul writes, “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.” This is written to the church in Ephesus, people who are already Christians, and Paul is telling them they need to know Christ better. That can only be done through an ongoing development of their knowledge and experience of God.

The Christian life, however, is not defined by our experiences. They become history a day later. It isn't defined by feelings, which are up one day and down the next, nor is it defined by our activities. The Christian life is defined by a developing relationship with God. We can have a relationship with Christianity and with our church, and be very concerned about Christian doctrine. We can even be born again of the Holy Spirit, but fail to have a relationship with Christ, Himself.

There are many people, particularly in ministry, who have a ‘side-by-side’ relationship with Christ. They work with Him, seek to obey Him, trust Him, and want to know His mind and His will. They're on Christ's agenda and want to experience His power to see His work

accomplished. What they have in effect is a ‘business partnership’. It’s all about their work with God and an eager desire to fulfill His purpose. It’s wonderful, but lacks a certain intimacy in that God wants to share in the deepest recesses of our hearts. What are our vulnerabilities, our disappointments and work aside, how do we want to spend our time alone with God?

The same scenario often takes place in marriages. Husbands and wives are working hard to pay the bills and raise their children. They have the same agenda, the same goals in place, but neglect to spend time alone together. As a result, there is very little, if any, ‘face-to-face’ relationship, which makes extremely vulnerable the ‘side-by-side’ relationship. Essential to the Christian life is spending time alone with God, where nothing is hidden, and we’re open and vulnerable. It is through this ‘face-to-face’ relationship we receive the best God has to give us, not only in revelations about ourselves, but in coming to truly know and experience Him.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for the opportunity of enjoying a deeply enriching face-to-face relationship with You. I pray everyone comes to know and experience You.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: How would I describe my relationship with Christ?***