

LESSON 6

Knowing Christ Personally

Philippians 3:7–10

My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death.

Philippians 3:10

Class Overview: In this lesson, we shift our focus from the church as a collective body to the personal knowledge of Christ that sustains and strengthens that body. Scripture teaches that unity, maturity, and faithful service all flow from a growing relationship with Jesus Himself. Drawing from Paul’s writings—especially Philippians 3 and Ephesians 1—this lesson emphasizes that knowing Christ is not merely intellectual understanding, but relational knowledge that transforms desire, identity, and daily living. A church grows strong when its members are personally rooted in Christ.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ personally.
2. Identify why personal knowledge of Christ is essential for spiritual maturity.
3. Recognize how intimacy with Christ shapes priorities and desires.
4. Understand how personal faith strengthens the unity of the body.
5. Commit to practices that deepen their relationship with Christ.

Introduction

IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE VERY BUSY WITH SPIRITUAL THINGS AND STILL FEEL SPIRITUALLY DISTANT. A person can attend worship faithfully, serve consistently, hold sound convictions, and yet quietly sense that something is missing. The routines are there. The responsibilities are there. But the joy feels thin, the motivation strained, and the heart a little tired.

God's Word never treats that tension lightly. In fact, it speaks directly to it. God's desire has never been that His people merely know *about* Him, but that they know Him personally. Christianity is not built on information alone, but on relationships. Doctrine matters deeply, but doctrine was always meant to lead us to a living, growing knowledge of Jesus Himself.

Paul is a powerful voice here because no one had more religious credentials than he did. He knew the Scriptures. He had discipline, training, and experience. Yet when he reflects on his life, he does not point to his knowledge, his service, or his accomplishments as the center of his faith. He points to one driving passion: knowing Christ.

This lesson encourages us to slow down and reflect on that priority for ourselves. Not to focus on how active we are, but on how connected we are. Not to ask what we have done for Christ but whether we are growing closer to Him. Because unity, maturity, and endurance in the Christian life do not come from activity alone; they come from a deep, personal relationship with Jesus. The question before us is not whether we believe in Christ but whether knowing Him is the main goal of our lives. That question shaped Paul's faith, and it still influences the health of the church today.

If anyone could have rested in religious achievement, it was Paul. He had knowledge, training, heritage, and discipline. Yet when he looks back over his life, he sets all of that aside to focus on one central pursuit. In Philippians 3, Paul opens his heart and shows us what truly defines his faith: not achievement, not status, but a growing, personal knowledge of Christ. As we turn to this passage, listen for what he

values most and what he is willing to surrender to know Jesus more fully.

Knowing Christ is Relational, Not Merely Informational (Philippians 3:7–8)

Over the last few years, these verses have deeply moved and challenged me. When Paul talks about knowing Christ, he carefully distinguishes between religious knowledge and relational knowledge. Verses 3–6 cover everything that once defined his identity: heritage, training, discipline, and religious achievement, and he declares it all loss compared to *the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*, (v. 8). This is a powerful statement from someone with deep scriptural knowledge and impeccable credentials.

It is certain that the beloved apostle is not dismissing truth, learning, or obedience. Instead, he is clarifying what those things were always meant to serve. Knowledge that doesn't lead to relationship becomes empty. Activities that don't flow from intimacy become draining. His language indicates that knowing Christ is not mainly about accumulating facts but about entering a transformed relationship that reshapes values and priorities.

This is as real as it gets. He speaks of *knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*. This is not distant or abstract. It is relational, personal, and costly. See how he describes his former confidence as rubbish, not because it was false, but because it could not give him what only Christ could offer. Knowing Christ required letting go of lesser identities so that Christ could become central. His greatest desire was to understand *the power of His resurrection and to share in His sufferings*. Knowing Christ means sharing in His life, not only His blessings but also His path.

I think this challenges a superficial understanding of faith. It is possible to know facts about Jesus, agree with doctrine, and still keep Him at a distance. Paul went as far as he could go. He longed for a relationship that influenced how he lived, suffered, and hoped. Knowing Christ was a dynamic and ongoing process.

Personal knowledge of Christ reshuffles everything. What once mattered most no longer holds power. New desires begin to emerge. Identity is redefined. This kind of knowledge sustains faith during tough times and keeps service from becoming an empty routine. The Christian life does not begin with knowing enough; it begins with knowing Him. And as that relationship deepens, everything else finds its proper place.

Knowing Christ Shapes Desire and Direction (Philippians 3:12)

Do we realize that knowing Christ is a continuous journey, not a final destination? In Philippians 3:12, Paul openly states that he has not yet reached it. For Paul, spiritual maturity isn't about being perfect, but about the direction he's heading. What characterizes his life isn't how much he has accomplished, but where he is going.

The Christian life is a focused movement. We press on, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. Our hearts are to be driven by desire rather than duty. We follow Christ, not out of guilt or obligation, but out of longing. Knowing Christ creates momentum. It pulls us forward even when progress feels slow or incomplete. This pursuit should shift our priorities. Paul willingly let go of past achievements and failures because they no longer defined him. His identity was now rooted in Christ, not in performance.

I think Colossians 1:9–10 ties into the truth found in Philippians 3. Here, Paul prays that we would be filled with the knowledge of God's will, so we can walk worthy of the Lord—bearing fruit, growing in knowledge, and pleasing Him in every way. Knowledge of Christ provides direction in life. It influences decisions, relationships, endurance, and obedience. As we grow closer to Christ, our desires shift. What once seemed urgent becomes less significant. What once felt burdensome becomes meaningful. Pursuing Christ brings clarity and stability in a world full of distractions.

Personal Knowledge of Christ Strengthens the Body (Ephesians 1:15–18)

In Ephesians 1:15–18, Paul prays that our hearts would be enlightened to understand the hope of God’s calling, the riches of His inheritance, and the greatness of His power. This prayer is addressed to a church as a whole, not just individuals. Personal knowledge of Christ is intended to strengthen the entire body.

We live in a time when more and more people want to pursue Jesus on their own. They look at other Christians and see hypocrisy and want nothing to do with it. And this sounds admirable at first. We need to be authentic in our spiritual pursuits. But Paul never views personal faith as an isolated experience. While knowing Christ is deeply personal, it is never solely private. As we grow in our understanding of Christ, our perspective changes. Pride gives way to humility. Anxiety gives way to hope. Self-focus gives way to love. These changes do not remain internal; they shape how we relate to one another. A church marked by growing knowledge of Christ is more patient, more gracious, and more resilient.

This is directly tied to unity and maturity. Ephesians 4:13 shows us that the body grows until it reaches unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Unity is sustained not by pressure or conformity, but by shared devotion to Christ. This explains why churches struggle when personal faith is overlooked. Programs might continue, and activity stays high, but unity weakens as individuals drift away from Christ. On the other hand, when we are personally connected to Christ, cooperation becomes natural, forgiveness is possible, and love is evident.

When faith is rooted in relationship rather than routine, we are less likely to divide over preferences or personalities. Christ becomes the center that holds the body together. A healthy church, then, is not built merely on structure or strategy, but on those who are personally anchored in Christ. As each of us grows in knowledge of Him, the whole body is built up in faith, love, and maturity.

For Application

We need to examine the center of our faith. It is possible to know Scripture well, serve faithfully, and remain active in church life while allowing our personal relationship with Christ to drift into the background. Everything in the Christian life finds its meaning and strength in knowing Christ personally.

Knowing Christ is not a one-time achievement, but a daily pursuit. It shapes our desires, gives direction to our lives, and sustains us through both joy and suffering. As our relationship with Christ deepens, lesser identities lose their hold, and Christ becomes the defining center of who we are.

This personal knowledge of Christ also strengthens the body. When we are rooted in Him, unity grows naturally. Pride softens, patience increases, and love becomes more visible. A church is healthiest when its members are growing individually in their walk with Christ. So, **the question before us is not how busy we are, but how connected we are.** Knowing Christ personally is not an optional aspect of faith; it is the foundation that supports unity, maturity, and faithful service.

Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

Memory Verse:

“My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death.”

— Philippians 3:10 (CSB)

Challenge:

This week, pursue a deeper personal knowledge of Christ. Set aside focused, undistracted time each day for prayer and Scripture—not simply to gather information, but to listen and respond to Christ. Ask yourself what He is teaching you about His character and His will for your life. Look for one opportunity to encourage another brother or sister by sharing how Christ is working in your heart.

For Reflection

1. What is the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ personally?

2. Why did Paul consider everything else loss compared to knowing Christ?

3. How does personal knowledge of Christ reshape priorities and desires?

4. In what ways does individual spiritual growth strengthen the whole body?

5. What practical steps can help deepen our relationship with Christ this week?
