

Introduction

Quite often when Karen and I are having a conversation, the other person will begin to share what the other person is about to say. We are not being rude when we do this; it is just that we know each other so well, we know what each of us are thinking and would say in that situation. She knows the way that I think. She knows my habits. She knows my mannerisms. She knows the way that I tease. She knows the way that I will say things, and the words that I would use. Karen really knows me. Karen and I have been in a relationship for fifty years. We dated for four years, and in August we will have been married for forty-six years. Over these fifty years we have walked through many different chapters and experiences. We have had fun and exciting times, and we have had challenging times. Through all of this we have learned a lot about each other, and so it is not a surprise that we would know what the other person is going to say in certain situations.

When Paul wrote Timothy about the qualifications of overseers, which are pastors in a church. Elders, pastors, and overseers are all one and the same office. The term elder implies a spiritual maturity, while overseer speaks of the ability to manage God's household. The term pastor, or shepherd, describes the care and feeding of God's flock. They all refer to the same office. In 1 Timothy 3:6, Paul said that one of the requirements for a pastor is that they cannot be a new convert. We need spiritually mature men leading the churches. We need men that know God, His ways, His heart, His will, and His word. We need leaders who know the Lord so well that they know what the Lord would say in any given situation. We need men of proven character and ability. New believers have come into a relationship with God, but they are not grounded in God's word and in His ways. We need mature believers leading congregations so that they can operate according to God's principles, and can counsel people according to God's will. When storms come and the waters rough, we want experienced leaders to help us navigate through those rough waters. We need leaders who have walked with God a long time and know Him.

(1 Ti 3:6) “*and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.”

In our text today, we are going to find that a mature believer really knows God. A mature believer has spent a lot of time with God, and knows God. A mature believer knows God's thoughts and His ways, and subsequently is able to discern what is of God and what is not of God. A mature believer knows and does God's will for his life. Our primary text today is in 1 John 2:12-14.

Mature Believers Know God (1 Jn 2:12-14)

1. Know God
2. Know God's ways
3. Know God's heart (Is 55:)
4. Know God's will

(1 Jn 2:12–14) “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. {13} I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. {14} I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

1. Know God

A mature believer knows God. When talking about the maturity of a believer, we are not talking about the physical age of a person. A few weeks ago, my oldest son's father-in-law was baptized. He is close to my age, so he is in his late sixties. He is not a child, and he is not a young man; he is a mature man in physical years. However, he just received Christ and was baptized. He is a baby Christian. So, physical age and spiritual maturity are not one and the same.

In our text, John addresses little children, children, young men and fathers. There are obvious stages of a believer's life. Little children know that their sins have been forgiven. It is a good starting place. They know the Father, but they don't have a deep relationship with the Father. Young men are strong, and have overcome the evil one, and the word of God abides in them. They have progressed in their faith and their journey with God. When addressing fathers, John wrote that they know Him who has been from the beginning. In verse fourteen, John again writes that fathers know Him who has been from the beginning.

(1 Jn 2:12–14) “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. {13} I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. {14} I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

The one trait that fathers have is that they know Him who has been from the beginning; they really know God. Because of the stages, it is implied that fathers know that their sins have been forgiven. They have also overcome the evil one. They are also strong, and the word of God abides in them. But the one characteristic that stands out is that they know Him who has been from the beginning; they know God.

One day I was looking at the Logos Bible software that I use. I used Quick Verse for about thirty-seven years, and it was bought out by Logos. They supported the Quick Verse platform for a year or two, and then migrated all of us on to their own platform. Unfortunately, I lost many of the commentaries and resources that I had bought and used in Quick Verse. So, I was looking at the eight different packages that Logos has to offer. They have a Starter package for \$294.99, and it has sixty-eight resources. The next package is the Logos 10 Bronze, which sells for \$629.99. It has one hundred and forty-one resources, including the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT), which I like to use. It has everything in the Starter package, and then other additional resources. The next package is the Logos 10 Silver, which sells for \$999.99, and has two hundred and seventy resources. It has all the Bronze resources and an additional two hundred and twenty-nine. As you progress from the lower end packages to the higher end, the higher ones contain everything that the lower ones have, but then have additional resources. The top package is the Collector's Edition, which has 8,125 resources, and it sells for \$10,799.99.

When John gave the various stages of maturity, it follows the same logic. The young men would have everything that little children or children would have, but they have also grown in some other areas. The fathers would have everything that the children and the young men have, and then some additional things. A mature believer knows that their sins are forgiven. They are strong and have overcome the evil one, and the word of God abides in them, but the most outstanding characteristic is that they know Him who has been from the beginning.

When someone receives Christ, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit. They now have the Holy Spirit to lead them and teach them, and to give them God's thoughts. Before a person has come into a relationship with God, they are spiritually appraised. New believers have a relationship with God, but they are just getting out of the starter's box. They are just starting their journey and walk with Christ.

(Eph 1:13) "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

(1 Co 2:12–14) "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, {13} which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. {14} But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

In 2 Corinthians 5:17, we learn that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, and the old things have passed away and new things have come. New believers are learning lots of new things, and they are just getting started knowing God. Earlier I mentioned that Karen and I really know each other. However, fifty years ago, I had just met her, and I did not know much about her at all. I did not know what she liked and disliked. I did not know her background. I did not know what motivates her. I did not know how she would respond in various situations. I did not know much about her. We got to know each other by spending time together. We got to know each other by talking and asking questions. We got to know each other by going through good times and also rough times. New believers have not had many experiences with Christ, and they have not spent a lot of time with the Father. Mature believers have known Him who was from the beginning.

(2 Co 5:17) "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

2. Know God's Ways (1 Jn 2:12-14)

A spiritually mature person knows God, and he knows God's ways. In Isaiah 55:8-9, God tells us that His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. His ways and thoughts are much higher. We are not born knowing God's thoughts and God's ways. Our parents, friends, and the culture we live in all have an impact on our thoughts and ways, but we do not automatically know God and His ways. We have to learn His ways. We learn His ways by reading the Word of God, meditating on it, and studying it. We learn His ways by being in a church under a godly leader that preaches God's word.

(Is 55:8–9) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. {9} "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Sometimes, we learn God's ways by going through trials. In Psalm 119:71, the psalmist said, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes." When we are afflicted or going through a trial, we look for answers and understanding. When we turn to God for those answers, we learn His statutes and ways.

(Ps 119:71) "It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes."

In 2 Samuel 6, David was bringing the ark of the covenant back. It had been taken by the Philistines in the battle that Eli's sons were killed. They put the ark in the temple of Dagon, a false god that they worshiped. The next morning, Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark. They took the statue of Dagon and set him in his place again, but the same thing happened again. The Lord also struck the people of Ashdod with tumors. They sent the ark to Gath, another place in their territory, and the hand of the Lord was against them. They were struck with tumors and confusion. Eventually, they sent the ark back on a cart with two milch cows, and the cows went straight way to Beth-shemesh. In Beth-shemesh, the Lord struck 50,070 men because they had looked into the ark, and not treated God as holy. They asked the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to come take the ark, and they did. It remained there for twenty years, and now David was bringing it back. (See 1 Samuel 4-7.)

Unfortunately, when David brought the ark back, they put it on a cart, just the way that the Philistines had delivered it back to Israel. Unfortunately, when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen nearly upset the cart, and Uzzah reached out toward it to keep it from falling over. The anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah and He struck him down for his irreverence. David was afraid of the Lord that day, and asked, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" When a trial or tragedy comes in our lives, it prompts us to ask good questions.

(2 Sa 6:6–9) "But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. {7} And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God. {8} David became angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. {9} So David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?"

When David searched out the Scriptures, he found that only the Levites were to carry the ark, and they were to carry it on their shoulders. In 1 Chronicles 15:2, David said, "No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to Him forever." So, the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulder with the poles, just as Moses had commanded them. David learned God's ways because of the death of Uzzah. It caused him to search out the Scriptures and learn God's ways. This is why the psalmist said that it was good for him to be afflicted, so that he could learn God's statutes.

(1 Ch 15:2) "Then David said, "No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to Him forever."

(1 Ch 15:15) "The sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles thereon, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord."

When we know God's ways and His principles, we will not be deceived. In Ephesians 4:11-16, we find that the five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are equipping the saints for the work of service. Every member is to be a functioning member. Paul mentions that we are to grow up in all aspects into Him. When we do this, we will no longer be tossed around by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming. Knowing God and His ways helps us to become mature, and a great side benefit from this is that we will be protected from deception. Currently, the church is very vulnerable to deception. Because less than ten percent of the church has a Biblical worldview, the church is very vulnerable. The church is even more susceptible because only 37% of pastors have a Biblical worldview. That statistic comes from Dr. George Barna in August 2022.

(Eph 4:11–15) “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; {13} until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. {14} As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; {15} but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,”

The primary way of learning God’s ways is through parents. God instructs fathers to train up their children in the way that he should go. Parents are to teach their children to walk in God’s ways. In Deuteronomy, God commanded fathers to diligently teach their sons. Fathers were to talk of God’s commands when they sit down, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down and rise up. Unfortunately, not everyone has a home where the parents teach their children God’s ways. Many parents do not know the ways of the Lord, and have not been taught that they are responsible for teaching their children. Many parents have turned over the spiritual training of their children to the church. Unfortunately, an hour of Sunday school a week is not going to train their children. When parents teach their children, and share with them God’s commands while they are eating a meal, and while they are going somewhere, and when they rise up and lie down, the children will be constantly taught and will learn God’s ways. They will not only hear what is taught but they will see their parents modeling what they are teaching.

(Pr 22:6) “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

(Dt 6:6–7) “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. {7} “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

Another way that we learn God’s ways is to walk with wise men. When we hang around those who are spiritually mature, we learn God’s ways. Solomon wrote that “he who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” If we want to learn God’s ways, we need to walk with those who know and follow God’s ways.

(Pr 13:20) “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

3. Know God’s Heart

Spiritually mature men know God’s heart. This is beyond commands and principles; this is what pleases the Lord. God tells us many times in His word what He likes and what He does not like. For example, in Proverbs 6, God tells us six things that He hates, and seven which are utterly an abomination to Him. God hates haughty eyes, which speak of arrogance. I don’t know too many people who like to hang around arrogant people. God hates a lying tongue. I don’t like to be lied to, and God does not like that either. God likes it when we are honest and truthful to Him. God hates hands that shed innocent blood. I cannot think of anything more innocent than babies in the womb. God hates the one that spreads strife among brothers. God loves and blesses the peacemakers.

(Pr 6:16–19) “There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: {17} haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, {18} a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, {19} a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”

When I married Karen, her father told me that I married the peacemaker of the family. I am blessed to be married to a peacemaker. When we know and understand these things, we begin to see God’s heart. We need to love what God loves and hate what He hates.

David knew God’s heart. In Psalm 51, David said, “For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.” David knew that the sacrifices that please God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.

(Ps 51:16–17) “For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. {17} The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

Asaph knew God’s heart. In Psalm 50, God said that “he who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.” Earlier in the Psalm God said that if He was hungry He would not tell us, for all the world is His, and all it contains. Our sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise bless the Lord.

(Ps 50:12–14) “If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains. {13} “Shall I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of male goats? {14} “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High;”

(Ps 50:23) “He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.”

God loves to see us walk in truth. In 3 John 4, He tells us that there is no greater joy than to see your children walking in truth. We are God’s children, and it blesses His heart and brings Him great joy to see us walking in truth.

(3 Jn 4) “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

We get to know God’s heart when we spend time in His word, and in particular, meditate on the word. The Holy Spirit gives us insights and understanding as we meditate.

4. Know God’s Will

Knowing God’s will is critical in living the Christian life. Over the years, one of the most common things that I hear people say is that they don’t know God’s will for them. In Mark 3, Jesus’ mother and brothers came looking for Jesus. When the crowd told Jesus that they were outside looking for Him, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.” Jesus was clearly stating that those in the family of God do the will of God. It is a distinguishing mark of a believer, so it is important for us to know and do God’s will. I am going to brush over this topic very broadly because we don’t have time to cover it in detail.

(Mk 3:35) “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Knowing God's will is also critical to having an effective prayer life. In 1 John 5:14-15, God tells us that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. I want to pray according to God's will. I want my prayers to be effective and avail much.

(1 Jn 5:14–15) “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

Many people think that God's will is about the details of their lives. They want to know if they should take the job, or move to a different city, or go to another church, or marry this person. They want to know God's plan for their lives. These are great things to know, and they are certainly part of knowing God's will. These all pertain to what I call God's specific will for our lives. When Paul, wrote that he was an apostle by the will of God, he knew that this was God's specific will for his life. We are not all apostles, so this is not God's will for everyone.

(Eph 1:1) “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus:”

(2 Ti 1:1) “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,”

When Paul told the Thessalonians, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality,” this is God's universal or general will. It applies to everyone. It applied to Paul. It applied to the Thessalonians. It applies to you and I today. God's will for you and I is to live holy lives. We find God's will throughout the Bible, and we need to know His general will. We need to know God's universal will so we can live our lives according to His will, and so that we can counsel and help others live according to God's will.

(1 Th 4:3) “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;”

When Paul wrote the Thessalonians, they were only a few months old in the Lord. They were not a spiritually mature church and they did not have a good understanding of God's will. Therefore, Paul wrote to them about God's will, and all of us are grateful that he wrote about it, because we have all benefited from it. In chapter five, Paul gives three more things that are part of God's general will for everyone. We are to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in everything. Why? We are to do these three things because this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. This applies to everyone; it is God's universal will.

(1 Th 5:16–18) “Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

God wants us to know His general will, and He also wants us to know His specific will for our lives. Both of these are important. In Ephesians 5:17, Paul said, “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” God wants you and I to know and understand what the will of the Lord is. In the context of the verse, Paul wanted the Ephesians to know that it was God's will for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit.

(Eph 5:17) “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Second, we should pray about knowing God's will. The Holy Spirit prays for us according to the will of God. Paul and his team prayed for the churches to know God's will. Paul wrote about the will of God to the churches, but he also prayed for them to know the will of God. When Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer, one of the points in the outline is "Thy will be done." We should be praying about God's will.

(Ro 8:27) "and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

(Col 4:12) "Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God."

(Mt 6:10) "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Third, for us to follow God's will for our lives, we need our minds renewed and our lives transformed. In Romans 12, Paul exhorted us to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice. Then, he said, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." In order for us to prove God's will in our lives, we need our minds renewed.

(Ro 12:1–2) "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

A baby Christian does not have his mind renewed. Young men are strong and have overcome the evil one, and they are strong because they are getting to know God's word, ways, heart, principles, and will. They are becoming mature in Christ. A mature believer knows God's general will and also His specific will and calling on their lives.

A great passage that deals with knowing God's specific will for your life and to be actively serving in that capacity is found in Ephesians 4. God gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of service. It was not just so they could know more; it was so that they could serve in the body. They needed equipping so that they could become mature. They needed equipping so that they could grow up in all aspects into Christ, who is the head. The body of Christ is going to be fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part.

(Eph 4:11–16) "And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; {13} until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. {14} As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; {15} but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, {16} from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

Many people use the term, “stadium Christianity,” in reference to how the body of Christ works. There are 100,000 believers in the bleachers watching twenty-two believers play ball. Ephesians tells us that stadium Christianity is not Biblical. Every joint is to be supplying, according to the proper working of that individual part. The body of Christ needs to grow and mature, and one sign of maturity is that they will begin serving according to God’s specific will for their lives.

Conclusion and Applications

God wants the church to be complete or mature. There are many different characteristics of a mature believer. Today, we have focused on how a mature believer knows God. A mature believer has an intimate relationship with God, and has walked with God for a long time. A mature believer knows God’s thoughts. He knows God’s ways. He knows God’s heart and desires. A mature believer knows and follows God’s general and specific will for their life.

How do we get to know the Father? First, it must be a priority. Paul, who was a spiritual father, counted all things as loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ. His relationship with God was his highest priority. He valued his relationship with God above every thing else in his life. Paul’s whole life was centered around God. In Philippians 1:21, he said, “To live is Christ.” Paul’s life was about deepening his relationship with God and living for God.

(Php 3:8) “More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,”

(Php 1:21) “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

Second, since it requires time. If we spend our first five minutes of the day, we may be putting God before everything else, but five minutes a day is not going to build a deep relationship. God wants to fellowship with us throughout the day. We need to spend both quality time and a quantity of time. We must spend time with Him. We must spend time in His word. We must spend time reading, meditating, memorizing, and studying His word. We must spend time talking and listening to God, which is prayer. We must spend time worshiping the Lord.

Third, we must walk with God. In Micah 6:8, God tells us what is good and what He requires of us. We are to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with Him. We become spiritually mature by walking with God. As we walk with God through different situations, we get to know Him, and His ways.

(Mic 6:8) “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Fourth, we need to be around others in the body of Christ. Individually, we are just one part of the body. For us to get to know Christ, we must be connected to the body, and in relationship with other members. We will learn from other members. In the local church, the elders, who should be spiritually mature men, will help us to learn more about God, His principles, His ways, and His heart. We do not become spiritually mature overnight; it takes time.

(Heb 10:24–25) “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, {25} not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

Closing Prayer

Father God, we want to be complete in Christ. We want to be mature men and women. Help us to know You who has been from the beginning. Lord, help us to know Your ways and principles. Help us to know Your heart and Your desires. Help us to know Your will for our lives, both the general will and Your specific will. Give us a heart like Paul, who considered knowing you more important than anything else in life. May we count all things as loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ. Help us to grow to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction (1 Ti 3:6, 1 Jn 2:12–14)

1. **Know God** (1 Jn 2:12–14, Eph 1:13, 1 Co 2:12-14, 2 Co 5:17)
2. **Know God's Ways** (Is 55:8–9, Ps 119:71, 1 Sam 4-7, 2 Sam 6:6-9, 1 Chr 15:2, 1 Ch 15:15, Eph 4:11–15, Pr 22:6, Dt 6:6-7, Pr 13:20)
3. **Know God's Heart** (Pr 6:16–19, Ps 51:16-17, Ps 50:12–14, 50:23, 3 Jn 4)
4. **Know God's Will** (Mk 3:35, 1 Jn 5:14-15, Eph 1:1, 2 Ti 1:1, 1 Th 4:3, 5:16-18, Eph 5:17, Ro 8:27, Col 4:12, Mt 6:10, Ro 12:1-2, Eph 4:11–16)

Conclusion and Applications (Php 3:8, 1:21, Mic 6:8, Heb 10:24-25)

1. Knowing God must be a _____.
2. Knowing God requires _____ with God.
3. Knowing God requires us to _____ with God.
4. Knowing God requires us to be _____ of the body of Christ.