

Discussion Guide

The passage is on knowing the Father personally. Begin by either singing a song about knowing God or about God the Father or play a song you love that celebrates having a personal relationship with God.

⁵“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

⁹Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. ¹¹Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do. ¹²“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!”

¹⁵“If you love me, obey[Ⓜ] my commandments.

1. What difference has knowing God personally made in your life? Of those ways, which one has had the most influence on your life?
2. Was there a time in your life when you knew a lot about God and were heavily involved in working for God, but did not know God? If not, do you know any Philips? (People who are very involved in church, and Christian things but do not have personal knowledge of God)
3. If asked, what do most people believe about Christianity?
4. People yearn for the personal today. Have you seen that and how does it manifest itself? What are the implications for our lives and the ministry of the Church?
5. What have been the ramifications of being in a high tech society where people require high touch and at the same time being unable to touch due to COVID?
6. Christianity is essentially about having a personal relationship with God. So what role does informational knowledge play in the life of a believer? Can we overemphasize one form of knowledge over the other to the detriment of our faith and life – can we be too cerebral or too experiential in our approach to our faith for instance? What are the dangers of being too cerebral or being too experiential in our faith?

7. Interact with Pastor Richard’s statement: *“You can know the Bible and not know God personally but you cannot know God without reading the Bible.”*
8. Look at the two objections people have regarding Christianity: It is too invasive and it is too exclusive. Address each one. What can we say to help people overcome these two barriers to faith or is this the wrong approach? Instead of trying to answer people’s objections, should we stay focused on bearing witness to Jesus and the Gospel message?
9. Pastor Richard mentioned the sign that you are indeed a Christian – someone who has a personal relationship with God is, Jesus has an effect on you intellectually, emotionally and volitionally. What do you think about that?

Of the three, is there an area of your life that God tends to affect more than the others? Why do you think that is?

10. Should Christians/the Church be involved in “culture wars?”

If you are unfamiliar with the term, it emerged in the 1980’s as the result of Christians and Churches feeling that the culture they were in was attacking the faith and they sought to push back on the culture and defends its faith and teachings.

In the 1980’s the Church clashed with culture in these areas: abortion/the sanctity of life, sexual mores, patriotism, communism, purity in the media, gender roles, homosexuality and AIDS, and evolution (faith and science). There were others but these were the big ones.

Go back and respond to the initial question. Then respond to this question: Were you involved in any of these culture wars? Share your involvement.

11. List the current culture wars.

I did an online search and this is what I found:

Working class vs. management, economics: capitalism vs. communism, progressive politics vs. conservative politics, Trumpism, racism (Black Lives Matter/Blue Lives Matter), LBGTQ, cancel culture/wokeness, power of the government, gender identity, legalization of pot/drugs, approach to the addicted, homelessness, climate change, parental rights in the classroom, and immigration/border security.

Are there others you’d add to the list?

What has the cost been to the church for engaging these culture wars? What’s the cost of not being engaging our society on these issues?

12. Final thought or questions?

“Knowing the Father”
John 14: 5-15

2/13/22
