

VIDEO - <https://vimeo.com/71913214>

Text: John 1:9-13

Title: “Explore God: Can I Know God Personally?”

Today we conclude this series called “Explore God.” It’s been a great time for us to deal with some of the big questions people have about God and the Christian faith. We’ve learned that life has a purpose because of the evidence that God created everything. We have a world where there is pain and suffering because our lives are ruined by sin. The message of Christianity (the Good News) is that the only answer to our sin problem is found in the forgiveness that comes through Jesus Christ. So we come to the question, “Can I Know God Personally?”

Open your Bibles to John 1. Perhaps you haven’t struggle with the other questions we’ve addressed, but you have often had doubts whether or not you can actually have a relationship with God and know Him personally. John, one of Jesus’ closest friends and an eye-witness to the life of Jesus, writes about the coming of Christ. **Read John 1:9-13.**

STARTING POINT – God wants us to know He exists, but also to know Him personally through His Son Jesus Christ.

It’s as straightforward as it can be.

1. JESUS CAME SO WE COULD KNOW GOD PERSONALLY (John 1:9-10).

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world with a purpose. He was God coming in human flesh, but v.9 says that He was also light shining in a world of spiritual darkness. It says in v.10 that Jesus came into the world that He Himself had made. That’s right. Remember Jesus is God and so He was a major part in the creation of the universe and all the people of the world. God created us for a relationship with Himself, and Jesus came to make that possible. Here’s the next truth:

2. PEOPLE RESPOND TO JESUS IN ONE OF TWO WAYS (John 1:11-12).

John 1:11 - He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

So we are made for a relationship with God ... we are His own. But God never forces Himself on anyone. And according to these verses we respond to Jesus in one of two ways. One way is to reject Jesus. It says His own rejected Him. But the other option is in v.12: “Yet to all who received Him...” Each of us is faced with the decision of either rejecting Christ or receiving Him. I’ll talk more about that in a minute, but what we do with Jesus, reject Him or receive Him, determines our whole future destiny.

INTERVIEW WITH MATT MCALISTER – Today I want you to hear the amazing story of how Matt McAlister moved from the darkness to the light. Matt, his wife Shannon and their five children are newer members of our church. Matt is a student at SWBTS.

So we will either reject Jesus or receive Him. Matt chose to receive Him and his life was changed forever. Back to our text:

3. THE BIBLE EXPLAINS THE WAY TO KNOW GOD (John 1:12).

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

Now here's a common misconception. Not everyone is a child of God. He created everyone and they are His, but not everyone is a child of God. Ask yourself today, "Am I a child of God?" And what has to happen in order for God to become your Father? I tell you this: It's not automatic for anyone. It comes down to two very important steps of faith for us.

To know God personally... you must receive Jesus

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him ... he gave the right to become children of God—

To receive Jesus means to welcome Him. Welcome his salvation, His leadership, His provision, His wisdom, His protection, His authority and His rule. It means you receive Jesus on His terms. You're not just hanging out in His house on His couch; you are coming under His rule. It means you take Him into your life as the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. As we've seen in this series, the magnitude of Jesus' claims demand an all-or-nothing commitment.

To know God personally ... you must believe in His name

John 1:12b - To those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

To believe in His Name is to trust in Christ. It means to humble yourself to say that you can't save yourself. You turn away from anything or anyone you've been depending on for hope, meaning and satisfaction in your life ... and you turn to God in Christ. To believe means that you switch your allegiance from these things to God alone.

ILLUSTRATION –Suppose you are on a high cliff and you slip and start to fall. To your side there is a branch growing out of the cliff. It appears to be strong enough to hold you. But can it save you? You can be sure in your mind that it can hold you but if you don't actually reach out and grab it, you're finished. However, if you reach out for that branch, even though you're not 100% sure it will hold you, it will save you. It's not the strength of your faith, but the strength of the object of your faith that saves you. So you don't have to wait for your doubts to completely disappear before you put your trust in Jesus.

So what if you don't receive Christ and believe in His Name? Jesus says that there is only judgment awaiting you.

John 3:36 - Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

But when you receive Christ and trust in His name...

4. TWO POWERFUL CHANGES OCCUR (John 1:12-13).

- **We are born again.**

We are dead in our trespasses and sins. We need new birth to be born again. That's what John means when he says we become...

John 1:13 - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Being born physically was an act of your parents. To be born again spiritually is an act of God. It is something God does in response to our believing in and receiving Jesus. We become a totally new person in God's eyes. It's as real as your first birth.

- **We get to join God's family.**

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

The very moment you put your trust in Christ He gives you a new birth, but you are given all the rights of a child in God's family. Our sins are forgiven, our guilt is taken away, and we are totally accepted by God into His family. For the first time in your life you have a personal relationship with God as your Father. You become an heir of everything God owns. And God is a perfect Father who loves you unconditionally. He's gracious and merciful, and He will provide for and protect you in every way.

BOTTOM LINE: Jesus came to earth so that everyone who trusts in Him can know God personally.

GOSPEL INVITATION