

Knowing God *and* Knowing God's Word

Is my relationship with God like that of a husband and wife, or is it something greater?

Traits of a marital relationship:

- Trust,
- Teamwork
- Affection
- Personal intimacy
- Common life objectives
- Reproduction

Compare these traits to your relationship with Jesus Christ. How are these traits similar to a person who has a deep and abiding personal relationship with God? Are those traits part of your life?

Trying to know God by keeping his commandments (in other words, just being a good person) fall short of God's intention. We must first be introduced to Jesus, who will in turn put a passion for God's law into our hearts.

If we live a life of sin against God does that demonstrate that we do not know Him? Why or why not?

When we keep God's law from the heart we are demonstrating that we have come to know Jesus Christ.

Write your thoughts about the differences and similarities of knowing God and knowing his law (word).

List ways that keeping God's word demonstrates you know Him personally.

Jeremiah & Jesus: Knowing God and God's Law

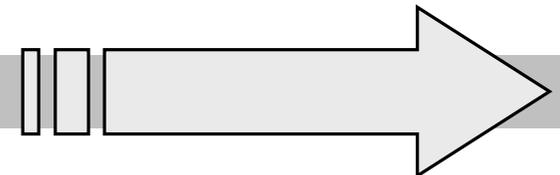
The Prophet Jeremiah was known to Israel as the weeping prophet. Jeremiah's ministry marks an end to the Kingdom of Judah, and the beginning of Israel's long exile from their land in punishment for their sins.

As Jeremiah called his nation to repent and be faithful to the Lord, he also knew that the people would not listen to him and God's judgment on their nation would soon come. Later, after Israel and Judah had been destroyed, the king taken away in chains to Babylon, and the people scattered, Jeremiah penned the Old Testament book of Lamentations.

Lamentations tells of the great tragedy that befell Israel because of their sin – but also presents a hope for the future that if there is repentance God will forgive. Throughout his ministry, the Prophet Jeremiah preached a message of repentance and forgiveness, warning his nation what would happen if they rejected God's love.

In this study we will see how the prophet Jeremiah, in his writings, demonstrated that the person who sins does not know God, and that truly knowing God is dependent upon living a life of righteousness.

We will also see how the person who embraces Jesus Christ has their sin forgiven and even if they lapse into sin again from time-to-time, the full forgiveness of God is readily available.



Jeremiah: Know the Law, then Know God

Jesus: Know God, then Know His Law

Read: Jeremiah 31:31-34

God says the Mosaic Covenant with Israel was like a covenant between a husband and a wife.

(Jeremiah 31:32)

Under the Old Testament law great honor was given to marital relationships. God considers the bonds between a husband and wife to be sacred. Often, throughout the Old Testament God compared his relationship to Israel as that of a loving husband to a wife. But as Israel become faithless, abandoning God, God revealed that a greater kind of relationship was still to come.

List some of the traits of a man who is a good husband, and a woman who is a good wife. Think of your relationship to God in those terms. How would you describe your relationship to God?

While the Mosaic Covenant gave Israel God's law to perform, the New Covenant would give God's law to keep within the heart.

(Jeremiah 31:32, Isaiah 29:13)

God considers keeping the law by rote, instead of obedience from deep within our hearts as worthless. Imagine a spouse who performs all the necessary duties at home but offers no loving attention or expressions of love. Such a home would be an unhappy one!

What kind of fulfillment do you think Christianity would offer if it was only a religion of outward functions, instead of a religion of transformed hearts and minds? What does this mean to you in your relationship to God?

Under the Mosaic Covenant, those who kept God's law could know God.

(Exodus 19:5)

Knowing God under the Mosaic Covenant began with keeping his law. Those who rejected God's law were rejected by God. But the New Covenant God promised in Jeremiah 31:32-34 would let people first come to know God then be empowered to keep His commandments.

Knowing God and knowing his law are intimately connected. If a person claims to know God, but doesn't obey his word, what does that say about that person's relationship to God? Elaborate.

Read: Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:15-18

The New Covenant referred to in Jeremiah is the covenant we know have under Jesus Christ (Luke 22:20). Because the New Covenant is greater than the Old Covenant, the relationship between a believer and God is of a higher order than the relationship between a husband and wife.

In what ways do you think your relationship with God is of a higher order than a relationship between a husband and wife? Explain.

God holds the husband/wife relationship in the highest esteem. If this is true of marriage, then what do you believe God thinks of your relationship and responsibilities to Him under the New Covenant in Jesus Christ?

Israel was commanded to keep God's law so they could know God, but under Jesus, we first come to know God, then we begin to understand the nature of His law.

(II Corinthians 3:13-16)

Why do you think it is important to first know God personally in order to fully understand his law? Can you think of an example in daily life where not knowing someone can lead to misunderstanding their words or intentions?

Under the New Covenant we have in Christ, we first get to know God then the result is that we begin to keep his law.

(John 14:23-24)

In this passage the Greek word for "keep" means more than "doing" something, it literally means to "guard," or "protect" something that is a valuable treasure. We keep God's word because it has the greatest value to us. God's word is our treasure. It has the greatest value to us because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, and His resurrection.

Would you describe your relationship to God's word as "guarding" it like a treasured possession? Describe your relationship to God's word and explain what that says about your personal relationship to Jesus.

