



E.7. One Thing: To *Know* Him

*“Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but **one thing** I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the **goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3.13-14*

Just what is the grand conclusion to “*pressing on towards the goal?*” To what is the “*prize of the upward call*” *focused* upon? What might we consider an ultimate in which both the heart of God and the heart of the believer become satisfied? We have written pages with new understandings, new perspectives, with fresh revelations and visions; expanding and adding depth to our perception on such matters of salvation, spiritual maturity, end-time purposes, the demise of religion and the hope of the spirit and of divine relationships. A final question remains, “What is the overall quintessential message?” What is the “vanishing point” to which all lines of hope and thought seem to converge in the distance? What is the “**one thing**” remaining to aim for, to press after? The apostle Paul expressed this as the “**goal.**”

The One Thing is Not a Place of Eternal Bliss

I recently noticed a large *billboard* along the highway that read: “Where are you going? To Heaven or to Hell?” Is this the *one thing*, the *goal* for which Paul wrote? Does eternity and eternal life come down to being in the right “place” at the end of time? Is the grand purpose in all creation to save man from the destruction of hell for the bliss of heaven? Absolutely not! This is an extremely narrow and immature view that maligns and demeans the provision of God as revealed in the Gospel of Christ. It is a deception, a distraction propagated by fleshly thoughts and desires and perpetuated by the enemy of our God. It sends man into delusions and fantasies.

Paul wrote of eternal rewards (and/or loss thereof), and both he and Peter wrote of an awaiting crown of glory. (1 Cor. 3.12-15; 2 Tim. 4.8, 1 Pet. 5.4) But to contemplate these as some “physical” eternal benefits is also being near-sighted, short of eternal purposes. “*One thing*” is the antithesis for many things. A Christian will accomplish little without a singleness of vision and purpose, for he will be too busy juggling the *many things* that crowd his life and cloud his view of life’s single most *goal*. He will major in minor things and minor in the most major.

May it simply be stated that any view that does not focus on believers being brought by the Spirit into the ultimate communion with Christ and the Father, both now and forever more, falls short of God’s high purposes and calling. “Persons, even Divine

persons, and relationships” must replace “places and conditions” as the essence of God’s calling in our thinking.

We have firmly established in previous writings that the goal, the great objective of salvation is not a mystical heaven comprised of some pleasant ethereal environment where there is no death, pain or suffering, only peace and tranquility. May it be said again that this is a limited childish view with no scriptural evidence to support it. But there are a few things that we do know and speak of positively. Eternity, in its fullness, is ushered in with a *new heaven* and *new earth* upon which God and the Lamb are found central to it as its temple (2 Pet. 3.13, Rev. 21); believers will have resurrected bodies fashioned in the likeness of our Lord’s resurrected body; and that it will involve an eternal relationship and interaction with God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This life eternal, then, is not mere conscious and unending existence in a place, but a life of acquaintance with God in Christ. It is important at this time to pause and draw upon the nature of that “relationship.”

One Thing: To “Know” Him

[Please note: This now becomes a timely and very personal message.] As I awoke early one morning, thoughts began running through my mind, not random notions but much focused thoughts. It was then that the draw of “*one thing*,” and one thing only, began to crystallize and roll over and over in my mind to where the thought began to apprehend me, it would not let me go. And, the more I fixed my thoughts upon it, the more my heart desired for its reality, and that thought is...**to know Him!** O’ we can believe on Him, testify of Him, study Him, pray to Him, and even worship Him or die for Him. But do we *know Him*? This knowledge of God spoken of here is not the knowledge of Him by intelligent understanding of creation; nor is it knowing Him from the mere reading of scriptures, for many may know God in these senses and not know Him in the light of Him being the “*living Christ*.”

Is not the ultimate of life itself to *know* another in whom there is life? Do not take lightly this particular Biblical word for “*know*”, which is in the Greek, *ginosko*. Its meaning goes beyond perception to a point of intimacy, of knowing by experience, not just to know another in existence, but to *know* another with some matter of depth. Literally, *ginosko* means to know through personal experience (*first-hand acquaintance*.) For example, it is even used for intimacy in Lk. 1.34, “*And Mary (a virgin) said to the angel, ‘how will this be since I do not know (ginosko) a man?’*” I could not begin to measure the void in my life without those I have known so closely. With many family and friends and brothers and sisters in Christ I have been overly abundantly blessed. One word can only describe it: *precious*. My “life” would be an empty hull surrounded by things without them.

This single thought of “*knowing the living Christ*” brought to mind Jesus’ definition of “*eternal life*” (Gk. *Zoe*) and of this need to “*know*.” *Zoe* life is higher than the created life of man; it is the eternal life of God possessed by the Father. Jesus said in Jn. 17.3,

*“This is **eternal life**, that they may **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

“Life” and “knowing” is what defines relationships. *Life* is the ability to have communion with another; and by communion is meant a sharing or exchange of intimate thoughts and feelings. *Knowing* is the actual experience communing or connecting with another mentally, physically, or in thought. The “You” in this verse, “*that they may know You*,” is a personal pronoun relating to God the Father. The emphasis is not knowing about Him, but being in communion and fellowship with Him. Remember the two sisters of Mary and Martha and how Martha was busily serving the needs of Christ and others with perhaps food, drink, and comfort. But it was Mary who sat at Jesus’s feet to intimately commune with Him, to know Him. His presence drew heavily upon Martha but consumed Mary.

Jn. 17.3 continues, “*the only true God!* This is important! All ideas of God that deviate or fall short of “the Father” as revealed to us by Christ, are not the *true* God, and the knowledge of them do not lead to *eternal life*. God “the Father” is the source, the progenitor of (*zoe*) life, and by this life is not meant created life, but eternal life. It is written, Jn. 5.26 “*For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;*” This life eternal, then, is not mere conscious and unending existence, but a life of full acquaintance, a life of relationship with God the Father in and through His Son, Christ. The Fatherhood of God expresses an everlasting relation, one that may begin now as we live and breathe in these mortal bodies, and extend into eternity in fullness. It is life that begins in a new birth with the inception of the seed of Christ, thereby becoming a child of God, and with prospects of maturing into adult sons and daughters of God.

Do you see that life without truly *knowing* (*ginosko*) another, especially God, is not really “life” at all? Though I be a living encyclopedia and “know” (Gk. *eido*) much about many things, places, and people, and have not known (*ginosko*) another, I am to be pitied. True love (Gk *agape*) is impossible with mere understanding alone, but this Godly love is made real and comes alive with the deeper *ginosko* knowledge of relationship. Once Jesus warned that in the day of judgement many will boast of doing this and that in His name, but He will have to tell them plainly, “*I never knew (ginosko) you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!*” Mt. 7.23 O the gap between knowing Jesus outwardly and religiously and knowing Him spiritually and experientially—it is unfathomable. Jesus’ definition of eternal life went beyond knowing the Father but included knowing Himself in like fashion.

“Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.” 2 Cor. 5.16

O’ that I might *know* Him! That I might know Him with a knowledge that transcends the temporal, the historical and the outward but then reveals the inward, the spiritual and eternal. O’ there is such a profound difference between knowing Jesus according to the flesh and knowing Him as the resurrected glorious *living Christ*. (See 2 Cor. 5.16-17)

Recall the account following Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection when He joined Himself with two men walking on the road to Emmaus. Both knew Jesus according to the flesh. They were disciples, having walked with Him, perhaps even being nearby at His crucifixion. However, they did not recognize "the resurrected Christ," not even as He opened their understanding to the scriptures regarding the recent events of the crucifixion. But there came a time when breaking of bread in communion with one another when "*their eyes were opened and they **recognized** Him.*" Lk. 24.31 They *recognized* (*epi-ginosko*) Him—which interpreted means "fully knowing," or knowing through first-hand personal experience in a more complete deeper way. Their eyes were open to behold *the living Christ*, not the historical Jesus who walked the earth and was crucified on the cross. They came to *know* the resurrected Christ, the living manifested Son of God and now resurrected Son of Man. It is written that their hearts burned within. Their passions were ignited. Their lives would never be the same again, for they have not only touched upon the *living Christ*, but in Christ they have now touched upon the Father—the author and giver of life.

NO ONE TOUCHING ANY ELEMENT OF "*THE LIVING CHRIST*" IS EVER THE SAME AGAIN. This is simply the way of the Spirit. The Spirit touches not the outward man with knowledge, senses, and emotions. Rather He touches the inward man, stirring the heart, and giving understanding to the mind. You may ask, how do I know this is true? My answer is simply, "I know that I know." No one in all the earth can call this into question. "I know that I know;" it is written deeply in my heart.

A Balance of Passions

Along with the increased desire for "knowing Him" there is simultaneous a growing distain for the counterfeit, the mundane and this facade called "religion." So, on the one hand I plead in prayer, "O' that I might know You, the only true God;" but on the other hand there comes along-side the desire to forsake all aspects of religion, and to even move beyond all knowledge gained burning the mid-night candle over Bible studies and scholarly writings, and all efforts to right my lopsided life for some sense of righteousness. Even apparently "good" things now *grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.* (Song: Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.) The focus is intense.

Paul said that all these things he counted loss, better yet he counted as *rubbish* for the surpassing value of *knowing* Christ. (Phil. 3.7-8) All these things, in heaping measure, I now count as rubbish for the excellency of *knowing* Him, the *living Christ*. Yes, I am very thankful, eternally grateful for the foundational understanding laid over many years of pursuing Him, and for those the Lord has sent my way, as faithful servants, each to help lay a sure foundation in my life. But now, in the light of *knowing Him*, all that understanding seems distant. At one time, while building my house, I stood in the mud-filled ditches while the foundation was being laid. But then there came a time when the foundation was complete and filled in with dirt, no longer noticeable. Life became altogether different as I began to live in the erected house.

At this moment in time in my life I am not satisfied with knowing about Him, or of His ways, or His teachings, or His promises—but only to know His reality, to have that increasing revelation of the *living Christ*. In Mt. 16.13-17 Jesus asked His disciples, “*Who do men say that I am?*” “*Simon Peter answered, ‘You are **the Christ**, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’*” Imagine that! This revelation of *the Christ* did not come by the reasoning powers of Peter’s mind but by Divine revelation. God the Father, who is in heaven, revealed “*the Christ*” through His Spirit to Peter in an altogether new dimension. Jesus then confirmed to Peter that upon “*this rock*,” this massive solid mountain of His being “*The Christ*,” that He would build His Church.

I am no longer interested in church “services,” in doctrines, and codes of behavior. I do not want to participate in rituals and symbolism or sit through long-winded sermons. Pardon me from the formality and piety of religion, and of pretense of worship or prayer. All these things are consumed in but one brief encounter of life in knowing Him. “*O’ that I might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent*,” is the repeated prayer. When we do gather together as the Church, let us do it soberly and with full intention to “*draw near to God so that He will draw near to us*.” Jam. 4.8 Let us pursue, press into the Father with all there is within us, only in and through the *living Christ*. In doing so, let it be a time of communion, of spirit touching Spirit and soul touching soul. Our lives will never be the same again. This is the time, the moment of the transformation of the soul...for it is now, in time of communion that it is “*God that works in me both to do and to will of His good pleasure*” (Phil. 2.13)....so that even my works now come by grace.

My heart’s desire is to be part of a people zealous **for Him**. O, I have been a part of people wanting to follow after Him; a people wanting to walk in His footsteps; of a people zealous for good deeds in His Name; of a people wanting to serve Him in many different ways, even to go to the ends of the earth in His name; and of a people devoting their lives in defense of the Gospel and Christian principles. All these are good and admirable pursuits. But now, in this hour in my life, I hunger to be part of a people zealous **for Him** alone, the *living Christ*; a people “fully engaged,” apprehended by a kindred spirit, being single-minded, passionate to lay hold of the vital aspects of this eternal life by knowing Him, of laying hold of the “one thing.”

One Thing and David

*“**One thing** I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.” Ps. 27.4*

The Old Covenant was with an earthly people with earthly promises. With obedience came long life, deliverance from their enemies, absence of diseases, and abundance of crop and herd. Disobedience brought the loss of those things. It was in the earthly tent, housing the Ark of the Covenant, containing a lampstand, incense burning, and psalmists worshipping, that David was overwhelmed. He delighted to be in that presence. It is much like today

people find comfort being in a church building with all the religious fixtures, or to be at a special place they can emotionally sense a closeness to God. My sister enjoys working in her garden where she reflects upon God (and sometimes sings, "I come to the garden alone, ...")

Natural settings such as these bring a sense of comfort, peace and rest to the soul. Yet something within our hearts yet beckons us to come higher and to know Him in a deeper more personal way.

One Thing and Mary

Jesus said, *"but only **one thing** is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."* Lk. 10.42

Mary enjoyed and appreciated the presence of the Lord. She enjoyed sharing in His life. She witnessed His miracles and learned of His teaching...the Gospel. Jesus was present with her, subject to all her senses as well. Though touched within, there was no true spiritual communion; for Mary, like David, was not born again...for the promise was yet to be fulfilled, the cross yet laid before Him. Today, many re-visit the historical Jesus as revealed in the Bible. The Gospel is read again and again, His miracles recounted, and His promises of salvation and resurrection are read again and again. At Easter time Catholics re-visit the crucifixion in what is termed, "The Stations of the Cross" in which each one of the 14 stations recounts from the condemnation death sentence to Him being placed in the tomb. This and other denominational religious practices are emotionally touching to the soul.

Yet a dimension remains of **knowing** "The Christ" and "The Father." This initiates a new realm of knowing God in the spirit. And, it is in the spirit that this knowing is not in the tangible and visible, but is by faith—which we know is *"the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* Heb. 11.1

One Thing and Paul

*"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but **one thing** I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the **goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* Phil. 3.13-14

This **one thing** hoped for by Paul is 100% outside of the natural realm, extraneous to anything earthly or fleshly activity. Of no value are "holy" places, buildings (even the finest of the great cathedrals), or of objects deemed to be "sacred," or the practice of religious rituals and of reciting verbatim of passages from the Holy Book. It does not involve logic or reasoning powers or the passion of emotions. For it is by faith and faith alone, and faith does not rely upon the outward, the observable, the touchable. Rather, faith is founded solely in the promises of the Father contained in the Word of God. Faith operates in the realm of the invisible, the spiritual. In Jn. 4.24 Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him **must** worship in spirit and truth."*

*“That I might **know Him**,” Paul cries out, “and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformed to his death;” Phil. 3.10 That I might know Him—experientially, as the *living Christ*. Paul fully understands that to know (*ginosko*) Him is more than merely to know a doctrine about Him. To Know Him experientially is to be brought not just to redemption, but into communion with the Redeemer Himself and to draw from Him eternal life.*

It is to become acquainted with His divine nature and character, as revealed in 2 Pet. 1.3-4, read carefully, *“seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature.”* 2 Pet. 1.3-4 To the unsaved, to the un-regenerated, this is a mystery. This transformation of the soul cannot be correctly understood, for it has little to do with the power, strength, determination and ingenuity of man. It has everything to do with the **one thing, knowing Him**. It is being in spiritual communion and oneness with God our Father in and through Christ. Yes, it may truly be considered a miracle.

And, to become acquainted with His work in the kingdom of God gives further understanding of our worth and usefulness, for we now live and participate in a Church that is alive with His presence, as it is written in Eph. 1.22-23, *“And He (God the Father) put all things in subjection under His (Christ’s) feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* Religion divides the people into the clergy (the useful) and the congregation (the less than useful.) This ought not be, and in knowing the Christ in this dimension, it can never be, for “we” are *“His body, the fullness of Him who fills all and in all.”*

The way into God’s presence is now opened to us enabling us to *draw near*; communion and fellowship take on new meanings. As it is written, Eph. 1.4 *“For He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His presence.”* Eph. 1.4 This promise is not for some future time, or for some special clergy, but to all who call upon the name of the Lord. It is for now and into eternity. Glory!

So, **one thing** remains; *“to know the Father and Jesus Christ who He has sent.”* Let religion be for the religious and let knowing Christ as our life be for the living—for those who have become alive in Christ. The command remains, *“(You) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”* Jam. 4,8 So today, in this hour, let us behold Christ in a new and living way, as our redeemer, our Savior, our Deliverer, and also as the resurrected Son of Man who is the Son of God, who sits at the right hand of Father on the throne, who pleads with the Father on our behalf, and upon whom we have fixed our affection, our gaze and our attention. Invite His Spirit afresh into your heart to transform your life into His likeness and purpose.

Then, and only then, we might humbly cite in pray and in hope, Gal. 2.20,

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

S4.E7. Questions for Discussion

1. Explain the difference between “persons” and “relationships” and that of “places” and “conditions” as the essence of the high call of God.
2. Explain the meaning of the Greek word “*gnosko*”, to know. What is its significance in understanding Jn. 17.3?
3. How does knowing the Jesus of the Gospels, the one who walked this earth to His crucifixion is different than “the Christ” who now sits at the right hand of God in heavenly places. What is different in His nature?
4. In the light of this article, how would you describe “religion?” And, how is that different than “knowing Him?”
5. Drawing close to God is not “logical” yet it can transform your life. Explain.
6. If you were to condense your Christian faith down into a single most desire, what would that be?