

NEED TO
KNOW

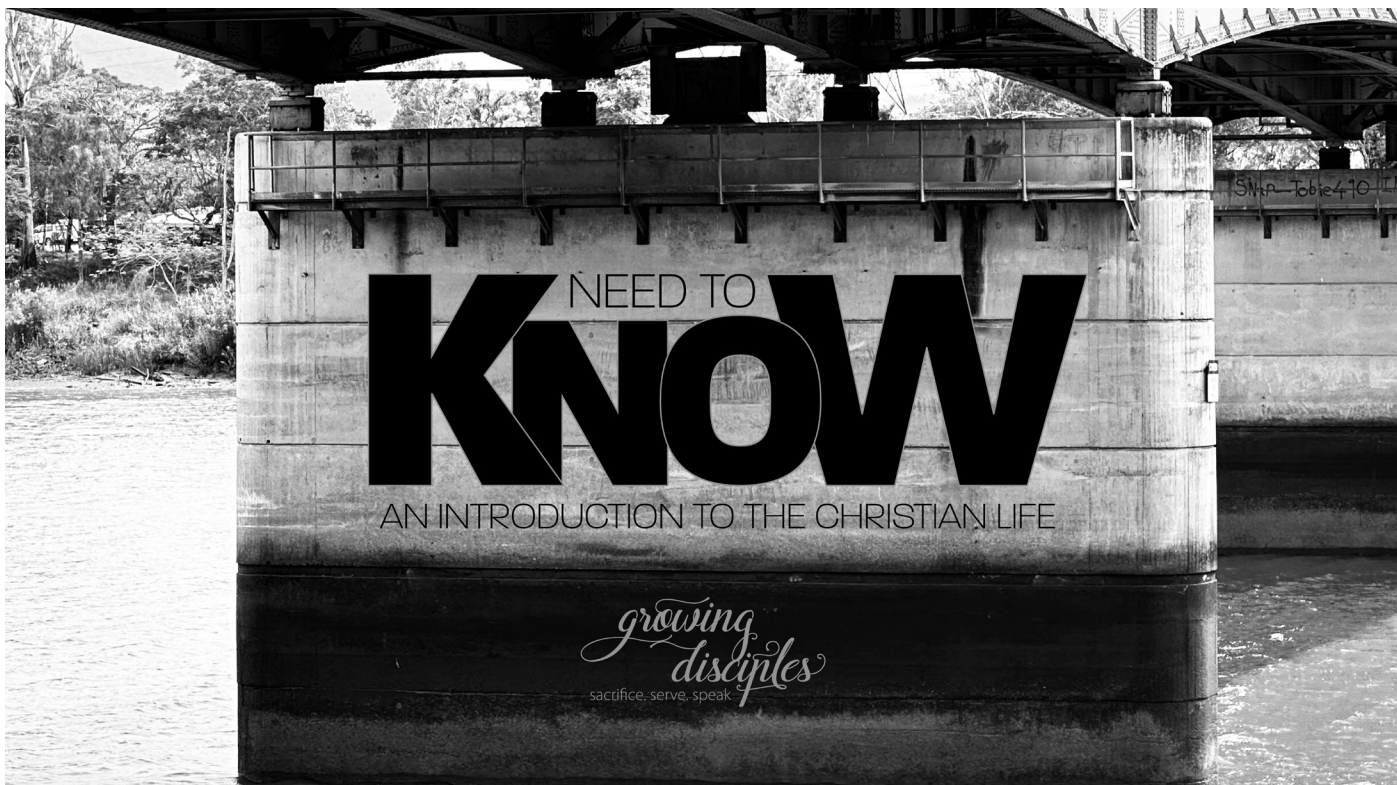
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

rockypc SERIES COMPANION

WEEKS 1-6

TERM 1 2025

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak



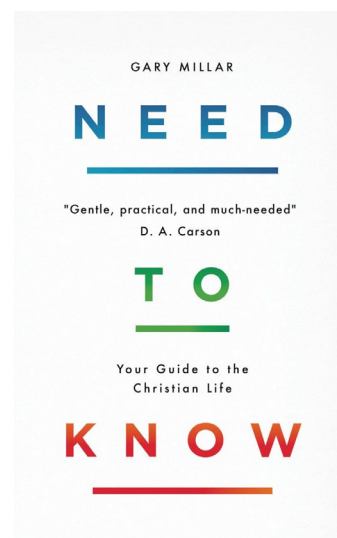
Coming to faith in Jesus can be an overwhelming experience that is joyful, daunting, confusing, peaceful, hopeful, convicting and transforming, all at the same time. In this series, we'll be going back to the basics of what we need to know, in order to live as people who belong to Jesus. That doesn't mean it will be simple, because we'll be covering a lot of topics, such as knowing God as Father, Son and Spirit and what it means to be 'in Christ'. We are going to work hard to see some big ideas, but our prayer is that this series will give you increasing confidence in living for Jesus. We hope to gain clarity on **WHAT WE BELIEVE** and **WHY IT MATTERS**.

There will be something for you, whether you are not yet a Christian, just new to faith, struggling to hang on to Jesus, or have been going strong as a disciple for years.

We will loosely be following a book by Gary Millar, called *Need to Know*. You can grab a copy of his book as a further help.

As we do discuss these things, it may sometimes seem like it's too much to take in, and/or we'll never get our heads around the way God is at work in us and in the world. But we can take heart and approach the task with **CONFIDENCE**, because God has revealed himself in his word, the Bible. So, what he wants us to know and what we need to know can be found there.

However, we also want to approach this task with **HUMILITY**, because we stand in a long line of people who've thought about these things before us — and there are some things that we still can't piece together. This is because we are finite humans who are trying to understand and infinitely wise, eternal and unlimited God. So, we humbly acknowledge that he is beyond us in many ways. But this is good news, because who wants a God they can totally understand. No, our God is bigger and better and greater and more magnificent than we can describe and that should be a source of comfort and assurance. ... but more on this in the weeks ahead.



TERM PLANNER

DATE	BIBLE TALK TOPIC	GROWTH GROUP
Week of Monday 27 January		Starting Well
Sunday 2 February	KNOWING GOD — FATHER & SON	
Week of Monday 3 February		Study #1 — FATHER & SON
Sunday 9 February	KNOWING GOD — SON & SPIRIT	
Week of Monday 10 February		Study #2 — SON, SPIRIT & BEING UNITED WITH CHRIST
Sunday 16 February	KNOWING GOD — UNITED WITH CHRIST	
Week of Monday 17 February		Study #3 — GOD'S WORD & WILL
Sunday 23 February	KNOWING GOD — HEARING HIS VOICE & KNOWING HIS WILL	
Week of Monday 24 February		Study #4 — PRAYER
Sunday 2 March	KNOWING GOD — A LIVING RELATIONSHIP THROUGH PRAYER	
Week of Monday 3 March		Study #5 — SIN, TEMPTATION, REPENTANCE & FAITH
Sunday 9 March	KNOWING OURSELVES — SIN & TEMPTATION, REPENTANCE & FAITH	
Week of Monday 10 March		Study #6 — HOLINESS
Sunday 16 March	KNOWING OURSELVES — TRANSFORMATION & HOLINESS	
Week of Monday 17 March		Study #7 — CHURCH & MISSION
Sunday 23 March	KNOWING COMMUNITY — WHY WE NEED CHURCH	
Week of Monday 24 March		Study #8 — SUFFERING & JOY
Sunday 30 March	KNOWING COMMUNITY — MISSION & EVANGELISM	
Week of Monday 31 March		Study #9 — LIVING FOR JESUS
Sunday 6 April	SUFFERING, JOY & LOVING GOD	(school holidays)
Sunday 13 April	LOVING JESUS & LIVING FOR JESUS	(school holidays)

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SERIES COMPANION

ON YOUR OWN— Work through the questions before your GROWTH GROUP so that you've started thinking about the topic before you arrive. You can take a look at the extra passages at the end of each study, if you have time. And there is another book you could check out for each topic too.

WITH YOUR GROWTH GROUP—Don't be afraid to stop and talk about things that grab your attention or raise questions for you. In the midst of some big ideas, we want to see how they lead us to praise God and follow him with wholehearted devotion.

ON SUNDAY—Make sure you bring your SERIES COMPANION along with you, so that you can keep track of any questions you have and record the way that God's Spirit is helping you to understand His Word and grow in your love for Jesus.

These series companions are designed to be used as either a print version, or interactively on a device. Use whichever method is most helpful for you.

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak

KNOWING GOD — FATHER AND SON

HEBREWS 1v1-6

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

What is hard for us in talking about the one God as Trinity (Father, Son and Spirit)?

The first key thing we need to know as Christians, is to know God as Trinity. Trinity is not a word used in the Bible, but it is a theological term that helps explain who God is, as one God in three persons. From the beginnings of Christianity, people have been trying to understand and explain this big idea (while refuting heresies). The Nicene Creed from the 4th Century AD puts it this way:

'We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty;
 Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
 We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,
 God from God, Light from Light,
 True God from True God,
 Begotten, not made,
 of one Being with the Father.
 Through Him all things were made.
 For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven.
 By the power of the Holy Spirit
 He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
 And was made man.
 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 He suffered death and was buried.
 On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
 He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
 and his kingdom will have no end.
 We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life;
 Who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
 With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified.
 He has spoken through the Prophets.
 We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
 We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
 We look for the resurrection of the dead,
 And the life of the world to come.
 Amen.'

Rather than trying to understand how the one God can be three persons, we're going to focus on the relationship between Father and Son this week, and how the Spirit draws us into that relationship next week. These are weighty topics, but we're going to work hard to understand them because it is something essential to knowing God. There will be some extra material at the end of each study if you want to dive deeper. We are going to avoid analogies, because they inevitably lead us into error.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 8v4-6

Paul is alluding to the *Shema*, a central Jewish creed that was recited every day, from Deuteronomy 6v4

'Hear, O Israel, The LORD our God, the LORD, is one.'

1. What can we know about the one God in v6?

2. What do we learn about ourselves in relationship to Father and Son?

READ HEBREWS 1v1-6

3. What is the Father's purpose in all of creation and salvation?

4. How is the relationship between Father and Son described? (cf Colossians 1v15-17)

We've had hints in the Old Testament of a Son who would have the office and title of reigning heir, for example, Psalm 2.

READ PSALM 2

5. What is the relationship between God and this Son?

Jesus steps into this office as *THE Son*.

READ ROMANS 1v1-4

6. How is Jesus the awaited Son and heir?

READ JOHN 5v16-30 (you can also read vv1-15 for context)

Jesus isn't just a son who is a Messiah-heir, like David. He is the real Son of his Father.

7. How does the Father feel about his Son? What does this lead him to do for his Son?

8. How are Father and Son distinct, yet equal and inseparable?

9. How does the Son respond to his Father? Is he an unwilling participant in his Father's work?

10. How is there both love and order within this relationship?

READ JOHN 17v1-5; 20-26

11. Was God needy or lonely without us? How are we included in the Father's eternal love and glorifying of his Son?

12. In 1-2 sentences, summarise what we've seen about Father and Son today.

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.

What has caused you to marvel about God today?

How has your understanding of God's purposes in salvation grown, as you've seen the Father and Son?



How can you be sure of the Father's love for you? Do you have to twist his arm to listen to you? Do you have to fear approaching him?

Some people caricature the Father as the stern God and the Son as the compassionate human, who has to placate him. How would you respond to this kind of thinking?



What questions do you still have?



PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God who is Father, Son and Spirit. Pray that we would know him. Praise the Father from whom all things came and for whom we live. Praise the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.
- Praise the Father for showing us himself through his Son, the radiance of his glory, his image and representative. Praise him as the risen king, the heir of all creation who rules at the Father's right hand.
- Praise the Father and Son for loving one another throughout eternity, working together for our salvation. Honour the Father as the Son does. Honour the Son as the Father does.
- Praise Father and Son for including us in their love, and drawing us into relationship and unity. Pray we'd have confidence in their love for us.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The passages we've looked at today, saw just a small cross section of what the Bible teaches about Father and Son. So we haven't just plucked a few verses out. If you want to take a deeper dive into God as Father and Son, take a look at the passages below. Or check out this book by Andrew Moody.

FATHER AND SON ARE EQUAL AND ETERNAL

John 1v1-3, 14; 10v58; Ephesians 3v14-21; Titus 2v11-13; 2 Peter 1v1; 1 John 1v1-3; 2v22-24; 4v14-15; 5v20; 2 John 9; Revelation 1v8,17; 21v6; 22v13-16

SEEING THE SON IS SEEING THE FATHER

Matthew 11v27; John 8v56-58 (Exodus 3v14-15); 12v44-45; 14v5-14; 2 Corinthians 4v4; Jude 24-25; Revelation 21v22-23

SON IS AN OFFICE - MESSIAH

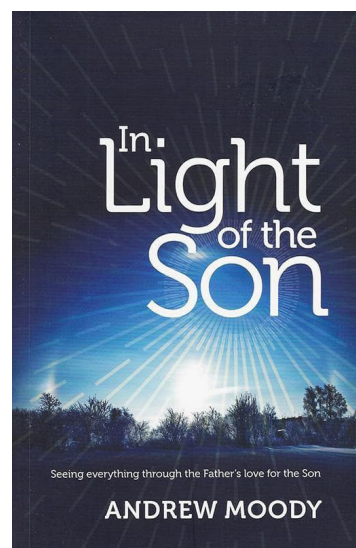
2 Samuel 7; Daniel 7; Jeremiah 23v5-6; John 1v49; Hebrews 3v6; 4v14; 7v28

HEIR WHO RECEIVES CREATION AND KINGDOM

Acts 13v32-34; Colossians 1v15-20; Ephesians 1v3-14; Hebrews 1v10-13 (Psalm 110); 1 Peter 3v21b-22; Revelation 4-5

HE'S A REAL SON, BELOVED

Matthew 3v17; 17v5; John 3v16; 15v9-10; Romans 8v32; Galatians 4v4; Hebrews 5v7-10



HISTORICAL HERESIES & THEIR MODERN EXPRESSIONS

HERESY	MODERN EXPRESSION	ANALOGY	ERROR	PASSAGES MISUSED	CORRECTIVES
Arianism	Jehovah's Witnesses		Jesus is not God; Jesus is not eternally begotten, he was created; 'There was a time when he was not'	Proverbs 8v22 Acts 2v36 Romans 8v29	John 1v1-3; Revelation 1v8,17; 21v6; 22v13-16
Modalism	Oneness Pentecostalism	Water/Ice/Steam Someone who is concurrently a son, father and grandfather in different relationships	God is in 3 alternating forms, but not co-existent and not co-eternal	Deuteronomy 6v4 John 10v30 Acts 2v38 with Matthew 28v19	Matthew 1v13-17 1 Timothy 2v5
Adoptionism	Mormanism		Jesus is not God's Son from eternity, but was adopted by God	Psalm 2v7 Mark 1v9-11 Acts 13v32-33 Romans 1v3-4 Hebrews 5v5-10	John 10v58 17v5, 24
Kenosis	New Apostolic Reformation		Jesus emptied himself of divinity while on earth, performed miracles only as a man, but in Spirit's power, so we can do greater miracles than him Jesus doesn't remain fully God The Spirit makes him (and us) divine	Philippians 2v7 John 14v12	2 Corinthians 8v9 John 1v1-3, 14 Colossians 1v15-20
Subordinationism	Some forms of Complementarianism		The Son is eternally inferior to the Father in his own being, because he is sent from the Father and obeys him	John 5v19; 30; 6v57; 14v28 1 Corinthians 11v3	John 5v21-27; 10v28-30; Colossians 1v19
Non-hierarchical	Some forms of Egalitarianism		There is no order/hierarchy within the eternal relationships of the trinity (only in the incarnation of Jesus)	Mark 13v32; John 10v28-30; 17v1-5	Colossians 1v15-20 1 Corinthians 15v23-28 1 Corinthians 11v3
Partialism		3 leaf clover Egg (with shell, yolk and white)	God is in 3 parts that only form God when they come together	Matthew 3v16-17; 28v19	Deuteronomy 6v4 John 5v19-30
Docetism	Islam Belief that Jesus' resurrection was spiritual, not bodily		Jesus was not truly or fully human His death & resurrection were illusions or made up	1 Corinthians 15 Philippians 2v7	John 1v14 1 John 4v2-3 2 John 7 Colossians 2v9-10 Hebrews 2v14-15
Unitarianism	Unitarian Universalist Association		There is one God but Jesus is not divine because he is a distinct person, as a son. Links with humanism, rationalism and universalism (all people are saved and there is no eternal judgement)	John 8v17-18 Acts 10v38 1 Timothy 2v5 1 Corinthians 3v23 John 20v17	John 1v1-3, 14; 10v58 Ephesians 3v14-21 Titus 2v11-13 2 Peter 1v1 1 John 1v1-3; 2v22-24; 4v14-15; 5v20; 2 John 9
Tritheism	Some Seventh Day Adventists		There are 3 gods	Matthew 28v19	Deuteronomy 6v4 Mark 12:29-32; Ephesians 4:6; James 2:19

KNOWING GOD — SON AND SPIRIT

LUKE 4v1-21

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

Share something about your Dad with the group. A quirky fact? Something about your relationship? Something else?

Last week, we saw Jesus, the eternal Son and heir of the Father. Father and Son glorify one another in an eternal relationship of love. Today, we will see how the Spirit of God empowers the Son, uniting us to him and to the Father, so that we are sons and heirs too.

READ DEUTERONOMY 34v5-12; 2 KINGS 2v1-18

1. How did God's Spirit empower Moses and Elijah?

2. What happened as Moses and Elijah's lives ended?

The Old Testament is brimming with stories of how the Spirit of God fills certain people and empowers them to lead and save his people. Moses wishes that the Lord would put his Spirit on all people (Numbers 11v24-29). But throughout the Old Testament, his wish remains unfulfilled, while Ezekiel looks forward to a day when God will cleanse and hearts through his Spirit (Ezekiel 36v24-27). Into these long years of longing steps Jesus.

READ LUKE 1v26-35; 3v21-22; 4v1, 14-21; JOHN 3v34-35; ACTS 10v37-38; ROMANS 1v1-4

3. In what ways did the Spirit empower Jesus?

'Because of the Spirit, Jesus lives in the world and gives life to others. Because of him, God and Jesus are one. Because of him, the baby born in Bethlehem grows up to become everything God wants him to be: saviour, revealer, ruler.'

Andrew Moody, *In Light of the Son*, 2015

READ JOHN 14v15-21, 26; 15v26

4. What do you notice about the relationships between Father, Son and Spirit?

We will think more about the Spirit being given to us shortly.

Early church theologians expressed the nature of the Spirit in the Nicene Creed:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life;
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

READ ROMANS 8v9-11

5. What is the Spirit's work in believers?

The Spirit joins us to Jesus, so that we are one with him. The Bible talks about this as being 'in Christ' or 'united to Christ'. This concept appears all over the New Testament (for a small sample see: Romans 8v1; 1 Corinthians 1v2; 2 Corinthians 5v21; Galatians 2v20; Ephesians 2v10; Philippians 2v1-2; Colossians 2v6-7; 1 Thessalonians 4v16; 2 Timothy 2v11-13; 1 Peter 5v10; 1 John 2v5-6). When we are united to Jesus, what is true for him becomes true for us.

READ ROMANS 8v14-17

Last week we saw Jesus as the Son and Heir of his Father.

6. How does this become ours through the Spirit?

READ ROMANS 8v26-30

7. What is God's will and purpose for us, through the Spirit? (see also Ephesians 3v16-21)

There is a lot more that could be said about the Spirit working in the lives of believers. If you want to look into it further, check out more passages at the end of the study.

8. In 1-2 sentences, summarise what we've seen today about Father, Son and Spirit.

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD**, **SEEKING GOD**, on **MISSION**, as we **SERVE** in **COMMUNITY** together.

How does it impact you to think about being adopted as a child of God? To be joined to Jesus, caught up in the love of Father and Son, through the Spirit?

What do you want to say to him in response?

SEEKING GOD

This study has focussed on how God's Spirit joins us into the loving relationship between the Father and the Son. This is his main role, that all of his other roles flow from.

What are the dangers in getting the emphasis skewed in another direction?



SEEKING GOD

What has been your experience of receiving God's Spirit?



SEEKING GOD

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that Jesus is filled with the Spirit in power in his life and resurrection.
- Praise him for giving us his Spirit who lives in us, giving us life and joining us to Jesus. Praise him for advocating for us and reminding us of Jesus' words.
- Thank God that he adopts us as sons and heirs, by his Spirit. Call out to him as Abba, Father.
- Pray that God might continue to work for our good in conforming us to Jesus' likeness, by his Spirit.

MORE WAYS THE SPIRIT WORKS IN US:

Genesis 2 & Psalm 104 — Spirit breathes life into all creatures
Matthew 3v11-12 — Spirit baptises us in repentance
John 3v5-8 — Spirit gives us new birth into God's kingdom
John 4v21-26 — Spirit enables us to worship Jesus in truth
John 7v37-39 — Spirit is living water for the thirsty who come to Jesus
John 16v13-14 — Spirit guides us in truth and glorifies the Son
Acts 1&2 — Spirit enables ordinary people to speak the gospel
Acts 6v1-10; Colossians 1v9 — Spirit gives wisdom to serve
Romans 5v5 — Spirit pours God's love into our hearts
Romans 8v26-27; Ephesians 6v18 — Spirit intercedes for us in prayer
Romans 15v13 — Spirit's power fills us with joy, peace and hope
Romans 15v16 — Spirit sanctifies and makes the unclean acceptable to God
1 Corinthians 2v9-16; Ephesians 1v17 — Spirit helps us understand the mind of Christ
1 Corinthians 12v3 — Spirit enables us to call Jesus our Lord
1 Corinthians 12v7-11 — Spirit gives gifts to body of Christ for the common good
1 Corinthians 14 — Spirit gives prophecy and languages for strengthening, comforting and encouraging the body and to praise God
2 Corinthians 1v21-22; 5v5; Ephesians 1v13 — Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance
2 Corinthians 3v3 — Spirit writes God's words on our hearts
Galatians 5v5 — Spirit enables us to wait by faith for God's righteousness
Galatians 5v18-25 — Spirit leads us and grows his fruit in us
Ephesians 2v19-22 — Spirit unites us to Jesus and one another, like a temple.
Ephesians 5v18, Colossians 3v16 — Spirit fills our hearts with songs to the Lord
Ephesians 5v8-6v9 — Spirit fills us to enable us to live thankful, humble lives
Ephesians 6v17; 1 Peter 1v10-12 & 2 Peter 1v20-21 — The Spirit breathes out the Word of God
1 Thessalonians 1v5 — Spirit gives joy in suffering
2 Timothy 1v7 — Spirit gives us power, love and self-discipline
Titus 3v5 — Spirit washes and renews us

KNOWING GOD — UNITED TO CHRIST

ROMANS 8

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

KNOWING GOD BY HEARING HIS VOICE

JOHN 1v1-18

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Do you like to talk?

Over the last couple of weeks, we've thought about knowing God as Father, Son and Spirit as we're bound up into their loving relationship. But how can we get to know him?

From the very first page of the Bible, we learn that God is a speaking God (as he speaks all of creation into being). The whole Bible is a record of how God speaks to individuals (prophets), and through them to whole nations and the world. His words show what he's like, for example, that he is the I AM, the eternal God of all (Exodus 3v14). Even in narrative books of the Bible, God speaks to explain what his actions reveal about him. For example, the plagues on Egypt are a judgment demonstrating God's power and glory (Exodus 9v13-16). The book of Esther is the exception that proves the rule, as he doesn't speak at all! Throughout the first half of the Bible, God speaks over and over again to show himself to his creation and especially Israel.

Peter was a close friend of Jesus. As he writes to Christians, he wants them to know the reliability of the Jewish scriptures (what we call the Old Testament), spoken by prophets and of the gospel message about Jesus (known as the New Testament), spoken by Jesus' apostles.

READ 1 PETER 1v10-12; 2 PETER 1v16-21

1. Who authored the words of the Bible (both Old and New Testaments)? What is significant about this for how we read the Bible?

READ HEBREWS 1v1-2

2. What are various times and ways you can think of that God spoke through Old Testament prophets?

3. How has God spoken in the last days?

READ JOHN 1v1-3, 14-18

4. How is Jesus God's final word to us?

READ LUKE 24v13-27, 44

5. Is the Bible about us? Is it a guidebook? A rule book? Life hack manual? What/who is the Bible really about?

The speaking God spoke by his Spirit, through prophets who wrote down the Scriptures. But God spoke most clearly and beautifully in the person of his Son, Jesus. And the word about Jesus is still the way we hear God speak today.

READ HEBREWS 3v7-15; 4v12

The Holy Spirit speaks to us when we read Psalm 95, Numbers 13-14 and Hebrews.

6. How does God's word work in us, by his Spirit?

READ 2 TIMOTHY 3v14-17

7. How is the Bible both necessary and sufficient for those who have faith in Christ Jesus? How does it grow us?

READ PSALM 19v7-11; COLOSSIANS 3v16-17

8. Is the reading the Bible something to be endured? Knowledge to be gathered? Something optional for Christians? How do David and Paul feel about God's word?

growing disciples

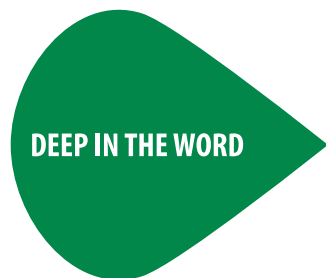
At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD**, **SEEKING GOD**, on **MISSION**, as we **SERVE** in **COMMUNITY** together.



How would you describe your attitude towards God's word?

What has been challenging for you today?

What do you want to ask God to change in you, by his Spirit?



What are the different contexts in which you hear God's voice through his word?

How can you take steps to grow in listening to him?



How can we help one another to keep sharing in Christ by his Word?

How can the message of Christ dwell richly in **rockypc**?

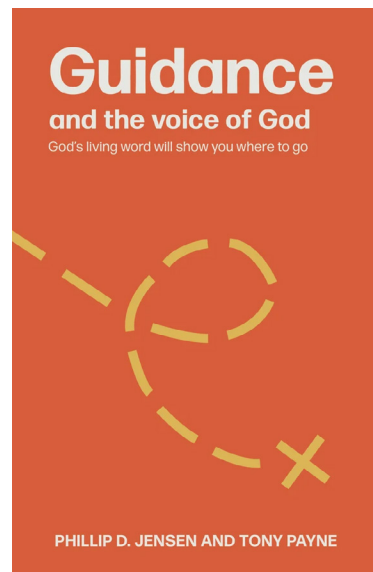
PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God, who shows himself to us as he speaks in the Bible. Praise God for the prophets of the Old Testament who were carried along by the Holy Spirit, for our sake.
- Praise God for speaking to us by his Son Jesus. Thank him that his Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. Praise Jesus who is full of grace and truth from his Father, making him known.
- Praise God that the whole Bible points to Jesus. He is the awaited saviour, who fulfills all God's promises. Pray that we would read the Bible to see how it points to him.
- Thank God that he still speaks to us by his Spirit as we read his Word. Pray that we would listen and keep sharing in Christ.
- Pray that we would encourage one another to keep holding onto Jesus by his word. Pray that we wouldn't have hard hearts towards him.
- Pray that God would use his word to teach, rebuke, correct and train us for righteousness. Ask that we'd know it's all we need to be equipped to serve him.
- Ask forgiveness for when we haven't loved God's word. Pray that we would cherish it and love to listen to him. Pray that it would dwell amongst us richly and fill our hearts with thankfulness.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

God used various ways to speak to his people throughout the Bible. God could speak in any of these ways to us today. **BUT THE ONLY WAY HE PROMISES TO SPEAK IS THROUGH HIS WORD, BY HIS SPIRIT. SO THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE SHOULD EXPECT TO HEAR FROM HIM.**

If you're getting tangled up in how to make decisions because you think you must get a direct word or sign from God, then check out this helpful book.



KNOWING GOD BY PRAYER

LUKE 11v1-13

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

If your prayer life were a colour, what would it be? Tell us your reasons.

Last week, we learned that God speaks to us in a person — his Son. Jesus reveals who God is, his heart for us and his grace and truth in action. The whole of the Bible is about Jesus. We delight in knowing God as we hear his voice in the Bible, through his Spirit. As God speaks to us in his Word, he invites us to respond to him in prayer. Today, we're thinking about speaking to God. We pray because of who God is, so we are going to start by looking at his character.

READ ACTS 17v24-31

1. How do we know God is all-powerful?

God is strong and able. We're not talking to a weak and ineffective God.

2. What is his relationship with all of humanity?

God is a kind Father to everyone he has made. And he wants us to seek him.

READ PSALM 115

3. How is our God better than idols?

READ ISAIAH 59v1-20

4. What prevents us from coming to God? What is it about his character?

God's holiness would keep us at bay. Yet his holiness also draws us near.

READ PSALM 65v2-4; HEBREWS 10v19-22

5. How does God act in holiness to draw us to his throne room?

Having seen God's power, goodness, relational nature, holiness and mercy; we can look at *why* we should pray to him.

READ LUKE 11v1-13

6. How is our relationship with God a reason to pray?

READ 1 JOHN 1v8-2v2

7. Why *must* we pray?

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 5v16-18

8. Why else *must* we pray?

READ 1 JOHN 5v13-15

9. What does God promise when we pray?

There is lots to say about *what* to pray. But we're just going to see Paul's example of what to pray in one passage.

READ COLOSSIANS 1v9-12

10. What are Paul's priorities in praying for the Colossian Christians?

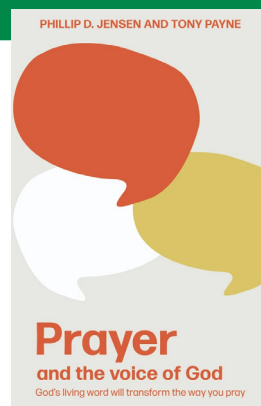
Prayer isn't emptying our minds, as some religions do in meditation. It's full of thoughtfulness and purpose. Rather than being self-focused and small, prayer is asking for God to bear out his will in ours and others' lives. Prayer is joyful and thankful, rather than somber and fearful. And prayer is responding to truth about God, e.g. Christ has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2v3), so Paul prays that God would fill the Colossians with understanding and fruitful knowledge.

Hearing God's voice in his word always leads us to respond in by speaking to him in thankfulness, wonder, repentance, asking for his help and intervention.

Even if we aren't sure how to put words to our prayers, God promises His Spirit will take our mumblings to God (Romans 8v26-27). We also know that God delights in working out his kindness, compassion and love towards us (Romans 8v28-30).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Do you have questions about whether God needs us to pray or if there is any real power in our prayers? If you want to think more about what prayer is, why we don't pray, how to pray and what to pray for, then check out this book.



growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What stirs your heart to want to pray?

What holds you back?

What hope is there for when we fail?



'Prayer is not a matter of technique but of relationship.' Jensen & Payne, 2019

What difference do you think our view of God makes to how we pray? If he is a stern, distant boss? An unknowable mystery? A mate, who's the same as you? A kind and powerful Father?



How can you grow in this area of your relationship with God? How can we help one another in this?



PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he is willing and able to answer our prayers. Thank him for hearing us as we cry out to him.
- Praise God for his holiness and mercy in drawing us near, through Jesus' death for us.
- Thank God that he is our Father, who is good and kind. Thank him that we can come to him, with shameless audacity, in the power of his Spirit.
- Confess our dependence on God's grace in our sin and suffering.
- Ask forgiveness for so often failing to talk to our generous God.
- Praise God that he promises to answer our prayers, in line with his good will. Pray that we would believe this and keep asking him.
- Pray that our prayers would be constant, in faith and humility to the one who can hear us and help us.

KNOWING OURSELVES IN SIN & TEMPTATION

JAMES 4v1-10

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

What makes 'sin' a dirty word in our cultural moment?

Previously, we've seen that God's word exposes our hearts:

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4v12-13

Today we're going to think about whether there's any hope for us when sin rises up in our lives.

READ GENESIS 3v1-10

There are multiple ways to describe the nature of Adam and Eve's sin eg they sin by disobeying; they sin by rebelling against God.

1. What are some other ways can we describe the sin in this story?

The sin of the first two people has far reaching effects on all of creation (Genesis 3v7-24). Shame, hiding, blame and a struggle for power are part of our relationships. Life is full of pain, frustration and struggle. And we find ourselves far away from God, cast away with death hanging over us.

Sin and its effects pass from one generation to another, so that we live it and feel it too.

READ PSALM 51v5-6; HEBREWS 3v12-13; ROMANS 7v14-24

2. How is sin ingrained in us?

READ ROMANS 7v25-8v8

3. What has God done for sinners like us?

Thanks be to God for his deliverance through his Son, Jesus! We are now set free from condemnation, and death. We are freed to live by the Spirit, rather than our fleshly, sinful desires. And yet, we still feel the pull of sin.

James writes to Christians, saved by Jesus, and yet, he describes the way sin is still at work in them.

READ JAMES 1v13-18; 4v1-10

4. What is the cause of these Christians' sin? How does it display itself?

Remember the cause of Eve's sin in Genesis 3v6?

5. How does our sin set us against God?

6. How should we respond to our temptations, desires and sin?

7. What hope is there for if we come to God in humble repentance?

8. James doesn't use the word 'faith' here. But how is the same concept of faith at work, as sinners turn to God? (see also 1 Timothy 1v13-17)

Martin Luther unwittingly began the Reformation movement in 1517, by nailing his 95 theses on the Wittenburg church door. The first thesis was 'When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent', he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance'.

In the face of our temptations and sins, we can run to God over and over again, knowing that he draws near to humble sinners. He never runs out of grace, as his mercy is poured out abundantly. We can have faith that he lifts us up with passionate love, as he longs to see his Spirit purifying us.

growing disciples

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What desires are within you, tempting and leading you to sin? Think for yourself for a few minutes.

To help you think about your desires, Gary Millar shares some of his in *Need to Know*:

- *A very strong desire to prove himself*
- *A very strong desire to be right*
- *A very strong desire to be accepted and liked*
- *A very strong desire to be first*
- *A very strong desire to indulge himself*
- *A very strong desire to be appreciated*



SEEKING GOD



What do you find hard about turning to God in your sin?

What do you struggle to believe about God, as you acknowledge your sin?



Jl Packer, in *A Passion for Holiness* says repentance is:

- Realistic recognition that we have wronged God
- Regretful remorse at having dishonoured God
- Reverent requesting of God's pardon
- Resolute renunciation of sin
- Requisite restitution to those we have hurt

Spend some time repenting to God together.

PRAYER IDEAS

- Confess that we call God a liar and accuse him of holding out on us. We seek to be like God, deciding good for ourselves. In our disobedience, we want autonomy from him. Our sin leaves us alienated from God and one another, hiding in shame.
- Praise God that he has delivered us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Praise him for sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.
- Praise God that he has set us free from sin and death. Thank him for his Spirit who lives in us, changing our desires.
- Confess that our sin is deeply ingrained in us, hardening our hearts and deceiving us. Acknowledge that it's in our very nature to sin.
- Confess the desires that tempt us and lead us to sin against the God who saved us. Repent and seek forgiveness for our unfaithfulness.
- Pray that we'd come to God in humility, submitting ourselves to him. Pray that we'd mourn our sin.
- Ask that we'd have faith in God's abundant mercy and grace that lifts us up.

KNOWING OURSELVES IN HOLINESS

JAMES 4v1-10

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

'How little people know who think that holiness is dull. When one meets the real thing... it's irresistible.' CS Lewis
Is holiness dull or irresistible to you?

Last week, we saw that in our temptation and sin, we can run to God. We humbly cling to him in repentance and faith, and he pours out his abundant mercy.

God himself is holy in purity, justice, kindness, wisdom, love and power (see Revelation 4v8-11; 5v9-14). He is far beyond us, in all of these ways. His holiness is dangerous for sinful humanity (Isaiah 6v1-5). Yet, in his holiness, he draws us near.

READ HEBREWS 10v10-16

1. How can sinful people draw near to a holy God?

Through a sinless saviour, we *are* holy, in our position before God. There is nothing to add to Jesus' once-for-all declaration that we are now holy. And yet, we are also *being made* holy, in a progressive transformation. We often struggle to see how this could happen in our lives. Our sin plagues us and it seems like nothing will ever change. It turns out that we don't need more to do, more rules or life hacks. We have all we need already, as a gift from God himself.

'To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.' 2 Peter 1v1-3

READ HEBREWS 12v4-13

2. How does God the Father grow us in holiness?

READ ROMANS 6v1-14

3. How does God the Son change the way we view ourselves?

READ GALATIANS 5v16-26

4. How does God the Spirit transform our desires?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2v12-13

5. Whose work is it to grow us in holiness?

READ COLOSSIANS 2v16-3v14

God works in us, as we actively participate.

6. So do we need to add more rules make us more holy?

7. What do our hearts need to be love and cherish?

8. What do our minds need to know and remember?

When we want to change, Tim Chester says we're motivated by trying to prove ourselves to God and we think we can add to what Jesus has already done at the cross. Or we want to prove ourselves to others (seeking their praise or fearing their condemnation). Or to prove to ourselves that we have willpower and the ability to justify ourselves. It is all about me and what I can do.

In our battle against sin, we need to acknowledge these lies and keep preaching the truth to our own hearts.

Change comes when we love God more than our sin. Tim Chester says we can cultivate a delight in

God's greatness (so I don't have to be in control)

God's glory (so I don't have to fear others)

God's goodness (so I don't look for satisfaction elsewhere)

God's grace (so I don't have to prove myself)

READ GALATIANS 6v7-9

9. How do you think we tend to sow to please our flesh?

10. What will it mean to sow to please the Spirit instead?

growing disciples

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What has warmed your heart today, as you've seen how God works to make us holy and grow us in holiness? What do you want to cherish about him?



What is one area of your life where you need to grow in holiness? What would you like to change?

What lies are you believing? What truths do you need to turn to?

How are you sowing to please your flesh? How can you sow to please the Spirit instead?



Do you sometimes feel like nothing is changing in you? What do you need to know and believe?



How can our **rockypc** COMMUNITY grow together in holiness? How can we help one another?



PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for making us holy through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Praise him that we can now draw near to the holy God.
- Thank God for making us increasingly more holy, in his image. Thank him that he disciplines us as a Father.
- Praise him that we're united to Jesus in his death and resurrection, so that his grace is now our master.
- Praise him for his Spirit who grows his fruit in us so that our desires are changed.
- Pray that we would work out our salvation with fear and trembling, as God works in us.
- Pray that we wouldn't rely on rules to change us. Pray that our hearts would be set with Christ who reigns in heaven. Pray that God's forgiveness would grow our love and compassion.
- Pray that our minds would be set on the life we have in Christ. Ask that we'd know we've been made new in him.
- Pray that we'd live to please God's Spirit, rather than following our flesh.
- Pray that **rockypc** would be a COMMUNITY that can share our struggles and failures honestly. Pray that we'd meet one another with grace and compassion. Pray that we'd help one another delight in Jesus.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you want more help with growing in holiness, check out this book by Tim Chester

