

Getting to Know God

There are a lot of ways you can get to know someone: you can hear about them from someone else, you can check out their Snapchat or Instagram, or you can watch how they interact with other people. If they're famous, you might even watch a YouTube interview or read a blog about their life. None of these methods, though, are nearly as effective as actually sitting with the person, one-on-one, and asking them meaningful questions like:

Where did you grow up?

What was your childhood like?

What are you most afraid of?

What brings you the most joy?

Why do you do what you do?

How does it make you feel when...?

Who is your personal hero?

What roles do God and faith play in your life?

Questions like these help you get past shallow topics and allow you to really get to know a person; they reveal a person's true identity. While you can use these questions to get to know other people, they are also a great starting point for getting to know yourself.

Where does your identity come from? Where do your beliefs come from? What (or who) do you base your decisions on? These are all important questions to reflect on and they should all lead you back to one fundamental truth: You are not your own creator. You are the main character in your story, but you are not the author of your life.

God is the author of your life.

That's right, God is the author and you are a character in His story, not the other way around. Reality reveals (and the Bible affirms) that God created you through your parents. He loves you and wants you here. And if you really want to know yourself, the best and fastest way to do that is to get to know the one who created you.

The Bible is a great way to get to know God, the author of your story. By reading about His interactions with

people who came before us, you not only learn about how God thinks and moves, but how others have responded to Him in both right and wrong ways.

When you read Scripture, you will see that while customs and traditions change, people don't really change all that much. You will realize that you have more in common with Biblical characters than you would have originally thought. We aren't just reading about people from thousands of years ago. No, when we read the Bible it's as though we're reading about ourselves. God doesn't change, so knowing what did and did not please Him then is a great way of knowing what does and does not please Him now.

In this Bible companion you are going to be introduced (or reintroduced) to God's Word in a variety of ways. You'll learn how to navigate the Scriptures, locating the chapter, verse, and specific stories. You'll be given an overview of different kinds of writings and styles, what to look for, and honestly, what you probably want to "avoid" as you begin reading. You'll be given practical examples, tools, and important insights so you can start to successfully pray the Bible on your own. Additionally, you'll be directed to dozens of passages and stories, some of which you might know well and others you might not recognize

at all. Some are heroic and some are heartbreaking, but they're all thoroughly human. If you look hard enough, you might find a little bit of yourself in each story. At the very least, you'll be reintroduced to a God who is madly in love with you.

It's important to remember that while God might not love everything you do, He loves you and is cheering you on to your own sainthood. This companion will act as a small step in that direction. Some of the verses you'll find cited will convict you, some will challenge you, and many will affirm you. In the pages that follow, the Holy Spirit will meet you where you're at and inspire you to look deeper, further, and higher. The characters and stories from Sacred Scripture all have something worth imitating and learning. So, stop and learn from them. What you'll soon realize is that living as a Christian is not so much about "finding yourself," as it is about finding and unleashing Christ's presence and power within you. The more you recognize God's presence — in you, your family, your school, the Church, the world — the better you'll be able to share His love with all those you come in contact with.

The secret to a joyful life and a hope-filled future isn't about figuring out tomorrow, it's about listening to

God today. God, the author of life, has something to say to you through the brothers and sisters who came before you. If you want to know God better, take a deep breath and turn the page.

It's story time.