

# Eternal Life is Knowing Jesus and His Father

Series: Ten Messages from John 17

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John 17:3, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ."

Think of the process of getting to know a person. I have known my wife for 54 years. I wish I could say I know her completely. I don't. But, I bet I know her a lot better than all of you, maybe all of you combined. I have known some of you for close to 30 years. During that time I have learned facts about your life, but I have also had experiences with you that tell me who you are. But, how well do I know you, and how well do you know me? That is impossible to quantify.

If you think knowing another human being is difficult, think of how difficult it is to really know God. I often ask people to describe the God they say they believe in. Most fumble with their answer. Most give me a few words which describe God. Some flat out tell me they don't know him at all.

Our text may seem simple but it is probably the toughest part of this prayer to explain. When we say we want the gift of eternal life we often mean we want to live forever or, more bluntly, we do not want to go to hell. Yet there is none of this in this passage. It is all about knowing the true God and His Son.

Listen to these haunting words: "Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers.'" (Matt.7:23)

Here are some facts about the concept of "eternal"

- In the renowned Theological Dictionary of the New Testament the first words you will see under the word for eternal is "vital force or life." For something to be eternal it must be powerfully alive.
- Plato (and many philosophers) have pondered the concept of eternity, and have concluded there is a distinction between timeless and time. Timeless means there are no months, days or hours. Life is lived outside the boundaries of time. There are no birthdays or anniversaries in eternity. It is all one "eternal day."
- In 200 BC there was a pagan god called Eternity (Aion) celebrated in Alexandria, Egypt.
- Man has perceived the eternal as the eternal in the strict sense vs eternal as an extended period of time. Context determines which it is.

- The word “forever” is often used for eternal:
  - Lk.1:55, “merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever...”
  - Jn.6:51 :Whoever eats this bread will live forever.”
  - 2 Cor.9:9 “...their righteousness endures forever.”
- The word eternal can also be in plural form
  - 1 Cor.2:7 “a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”
  - Col.1:26 “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations.”
  - Eph.3:9, “mystery which for ages past was kept hidden in God...”
- Singular and plural merge in Col.1:26
- We often see “forever and ever”
  - Heb.1:8, “Your throne O God will last forever and ever.”
  - Eph.3:21 “be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”
- God is eternal
  - Rom.16:26, “...the command of the eternal God...”
  - Always Been, Gen.21:33 Abraham called on the name of the Lord, the Eternal God.”
  - Always will be
  - The Living God, Deut.5:26 The voice of the Living God speaking out of the fire.
  - The Great I AM (The Ever Present Existent One)
- Psa.90:2 describes God as from eternity to eternity or from everlasting to everlasting.
- Eternity is extended to Christ
  - Heb.13:8, Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever.

### What is the idea of Life? (Zoe)

- From life to life, 2 Cor.2:16, A fragrance of life to life
- Life hidden with Christ in God, Col.3:3
- Passed from death to life, Jn.5:24
- Coming age, eternal life, Mk.10:30
- True Life, 1 Tim.6:19

### What does it mean to know God so as to know eternal life? Various aspects:

- Perceive, Matt.22:18, Jesus knew their evil intent
- Discern, Matt.25:24 I knew you were a hard man
- Ascertain by examination, Mark 6:38, Found out how many loaves they had
- Understand, Mark 4:13 Don't you understand this parable?
- Acknowledge, Matt.7:23, I never knew you
- Resolve or Conclude, Luke 16:4 I know what I will do if I lose my job

- Assured, Luke 21:20 When you see Jerusalem surrounded you will know the desolation is near
- To Be Skilled, To Master, Matt.16:3, You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky
- Know Intimately, Matt.1:25, Joseph didn't "know" his wife
- To View with Favor, I Cor.8:3, "But whoever loves God is known by God."

What do we conclude from all of this information about eternity, and life, and knowing?

- There is a timeless dimension that we have access to.
- This timeless dimension is qualitatively unlike anything we have yet experienced within a world ruled by time.
- The only link between the two worlds is the one who created and controls both worlds, the world of time and the world of eternity.
- We have a choice as to how we live our lives. We can either focus on the maintenance of a certain quality of life here in the world of time, or we can seek to know the eternal, timeless God who is the only true God, and his Son, and find our purpose in them.
- In this one line within Jesus' prayer he reveals the secret to the meaning and purpose of life. (Our job is much greater than just to get people to come to church. We are to lead them to the source of eternal life and to help them know God and Jesus.)