

## **“A Question for God”**

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(Pastor Nancy’s notes from her sermon - preached on April 11, 2012 at Trinity Church International, Lake Worth, Florida, USA)

How many of you here tonight have a question you would like God to answer? Every one of us probably has questions about our own life. What is going on with my job? When am I going to be healed? Lord, Why did this happen? How can I get out of this situation? Perhaps just a simple cry of “God where are you?” What, When, Where, Why and How? So many questions, yet it seems sometimes there are so few immediate responses from the Lord. Life is full of uncertainty and unresolved issues about the past, the present and the future - questions without answers. Let me propose to you that there is an answer to all the questions we ask God. Interestingly enough, the answer comes when you ask one specific question. The title of the message tonight is “A Question for God.” Turn to Acts 9. Acts Chapter 9 is about the conversion experience of Saul of Tarsus, who is later known to us as the Apostle Paul.

*(Acts 9:1-5 NKJV) "Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest {2} and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. {3} As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. {4} Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" {5} And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."*

Saul was going about his life, doing his job (which happened to be at this point, persecuting Christians). Suddenly, something unexpected happened. How many of you are in the middle of something that happened “unexpectedly”? Life “happens” and on this day life “happened” for Saul. What was Saul’s first reaction? The same reaction most of us have when we don’t understand something. He asked a question. Notice first, what he did not ask. He did not ask, “Where did that bright light come from?” He did not ask, “What am I doing on the ground?” He did not ask, “Why am I hearing a strange voice?” He simply asked one question, “Who are you, Lord?” Saul did not question or address the situation; he addressed the

only One who could explain the situation to him. He said, "Who are you, Lord?" - And Jesus answered him immediately.

Most of the time when we question God it is about a specific situation or problem we are facing, and it is good to ask God about what is going on. He wants us to talk to Him about everything - but He does not answer all of our what, when, where, why and how questions. The one question that God **will** always answer is a "who" question. It is the same question that Saul asked - "Who are you, Lord?" When we know in our hearts the answer to that one question, and we can properly understand and comprehend who God is, it helps us to wait with patience for the answers to any of our other questions. The What, When, Where, Why, and How questions of life can all be put to rest by asking God, "**Who are you, Lord?**" Why is that? Because the "who" question is about the character of God. When you do not have any other answers, you have to hang on to what you know about the unchanging character of God. Knowing "who" He is builds your faith, gives you assurance, guides your decisions, and brings great peace and joy in any circumstance - even the impossible ones.

The Senior Pastor at Trinity Church International, Pastor Tom Peters, preached a message last year called "Is anything too hard for God?" He said, "*We really don't believe in God unless we believe He is God of the impossible.*"

Who is the only one who can deliver you from whatever situation you are in, Who has all wisdom, knowledge and power? Who loves you unconditionally? Who is God in your life? The answer to these questions very much depends on how well you know Him.

Jeremiah 9:24 God Himself, tells us the importance of "truly knowing and understanding" Him.

***(Jeremiah 9:24 NKJV) "But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD."***

***Jeremiah 9:24 Amplified Bible (AMP) "But let him who glories glory in this: that he understands and knows (with certainty) Me [personally and practically, directly discerning and recognizing My character], that I am the Lord, Who practices***

***loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth,  
for in these things I delight, says the Lord."***

Is there a hunger in your heart, as this Scripture says, to be able to ***understand and know God (1) with certainty, (2) personally and practically, and (3) directly discerning and recognizing His character?***

Let us all go a little deeper in the subject of knowing God. What does that mean to you - to "know" God? We will start with a short Bible study on the use of the word "know" in the New Testament. It will help us understand our own process of getting to know God better and better, which will give us some of the answers we are seeking. I trust this will also give you some insight and Scriptures to use when someone comes to you with a difficult question about God and their particular circumstances.

So let us look at this word "know." Just as there are two different Greek words translated "love" in the New Testament, agape - used to describe God's unconditional love and phileo - which is brotherly love, there are also two different Greek words translated into the English word "know." They also have different meanings. Let's look at a Scripture that contains these two different Greek words for "know."

***(1 John 5:20a NKJV) "And we know (eido) that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know (ginosko) Him who is true..."***

It is impossible to tell there is a difference between these two words. Each is translated "know." They appear to be the same. We can only see the difference when we look at the Greek, so let us look at each of these words.

1 John 5:20 begins: ***"And we know that the Son of God has come.*** The first "know" is the Greek word "eido." e-i-d-o.

This is defined as, *to have seen or perceived as absolute (as in Divine knowledge, or to know from observation in human knowledge).*

For example, (Pastor Nancy asks the congregation to look at the pews upon which they are sitting.) What color is it? (Red). Now, close your eyes. No peeking. With your eyes closed, tell me what color is the pew. Are you sure? Are you positive the pew is red? You can open your eyes. Would you

testify in court that the pew is red? Of course. Is there anything that could convince you that the pew is green or white? No. You look at the pew and (*click fingers*) you “know” that it is red. You do not have to study it, research it, spend time with it; you just look at it and know it is red. That is what this first Greek word for know “eido” means. In the Scriptures, this word is used to describe revelation knowledge straight from God.

To **really know God** you must begin with a divine “knowing” Him - that revelation you first received from the Holy Spirit that you are a sinner and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You know in your heart that He is your Savior who left heaven and came to earth as a baby, who 33 years later was nailed to a cross and crucified for my sin and yours, and the sin of the world. In addition, you know that three days after His crucifixion He was raised from the dead. You know He ascended to heaven where He is alive to this day.

That kind of “knowing” brings you into an eternal relationship with the God. It happens in a split second. For me (Pastor Nancy), one minute I was an atheist - then Jesus came into my heart and immediately, I was saved. I knew “that the Son of God has come.”

Look back a few verses to verse 13 of 1 John 5. This is a good Scripture to illustrate this kind of “knowing.”

***(1 John 5:13 NKJV) "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life..."***

Many of us have the “eido” kind of knowing. You know, that you know, that you know, you are saved because of Jesus. If you are not sure of your salvation If you have never believed in Christ, you can do that tonight. Just as you know the pew is red, you can know with assurance Who God is.

Now let’s look at the second Greek word for “knowing.” Let’s go back to verse 20 again:

***(1 John 5:20 NKJV) "And we know (eido) that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know (ginosko) Him who is true..."***

The second Greek word used in this Scripture **“and has given us an understanding that we may know Him who is true”** is **Ginosko**. This is defined as to come to know, learn, taking in knowledge. Unlike “eido” which is an instant knowing, “ginosko” is a constant and progressive experience of knowing; like going to school, or on-the-job training. It implies **an active, on-going, personal experience** between the one who knows and the person or thing known. It is a learning process of taking in of knowledge to understand.

**Our knowledge of God must be active, progressive and constantly growing.**

No matter how well we know God, each of us has plenty of room left to deepen our knowledge of Christ and bring an even more profound intimacy with Him. Just as we can grow in our relationships with people, we can grow in our relationship with Christ. You may know Him as Lord and Savior, but do you know Him as a Friend? Do you know Him as a bride knows her soon to be Bridegroom? How close are you to Jesus? How much closer can you get?

*(Col 1:9-10 NLT) "So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom. {10} Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better."*

**The New King James says, *“increasing in the knowledge of God.”***

In **2 Peter 3:18**, Peter prays that we **“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

So, Who is God to you? How can you learn to know Him better and better? Your Bible is overflowing with answers to “Who are you, Lord?” He wants to reveal more and more about Himself so you can know all about Him and know all of the blessings and benefits you have because you know Him.

Many of God’s Old Testament names describe perfectly who He is. He is Jehovah Jireh, God who provides for you. He is Jehovah-Rapha, the God

who heals. He is Jehovah Shalom - the God who gives you peace. We can turn to any book in the Bible and discover something about Who God is. Let us look at the book of Ephesians for an example. As I read, let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart and give you some immediate answers to the question: Who are you, Lord?

***(Ephesians 1:1-7 NKJV) "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: {2} Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Paul starts with a greeting, and then he begins his letter by reminding the people of Ephesus and us of Who God is.

***{3} Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,***

***Who are you, Lord?*** He is the one who has given us ***"Every spiritual blessing that heaven has to offer" (GWT)***, because of Christ. Think about that. Think about all the spiritual blessings God has given you. No one can rob you of them. No one can take away the revelation that God has given you. Although we all suffer loss of relationships and things in life, your spiritual blessings are yours for eternity. There is no end to how much more you can receive from the Lord. When you suffer loss in this world, do not dwell on the "whys," ask the question, Who are you Lord? He will answer, I am the one who blessed you with things of the Spirit that can never be taken away from you and I have more for you as I walk with you through this loss.

***{4} just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, {5} having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, {6} to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.***

Notice three words in these verses - ***Chose, adoption,*** and ***accepted.*** Are you questioning God about being rejected or lonely? Who are you, Lord? He says, ***"I am the one who chose you, adopted you and accepted you, just the way you are. His promises in the Word to you include***

***that He is the One who will never reject you, hurt you, leave you or forget you.”***

***(Romans 8:38-39 ICB) "Yes, I am sure that nothing can separate us from the love God has for us. Not death, not life, not angels, not ruling spirits, nothing now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us, nothing below us, or anything else in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. {39}***

Let us return to Ephesians, Chapter 1. Here is verse 7.

***{7} In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"***

Paul reminds us that He is the God who loves you so much that He redeemed you through the shed blood of His son, Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross. He is the one who brought you from darkness to light, from being slaves of this world to being sons and daughters of Almighty God. Who are you, Lord? He is the one who chose you, adopted you and accepted you.

Paul also reminds us in Ephesians 1:7 that He is the God who forgives. When you have made a mistake and you are asking God, *"Why did I let this happen?" "How could I have done this?"* Change your question to *"Who are you, Lord?"* He will answer immediately *"I am the one who forgave you according to my grace."* Confess your sin and I will forgive you, then press ahead, do not look back.

These Scriptures in Ephesians are just one brief example. As you read the Word of God - **make a conscious effort to be aware of all that God reveals about Himself -Who He is.** What is His **unchanging character** that you can always trust in and depend on? On the best of days and on the worst of days, continue to seek the mysteries of God - the glorious truth of Christ in you - your only hope. Your answer to every question.

Make it a priority to "know" Who He is. When we were first married, Bob started saying to me every day *"I love you more today than yesterday."* Twenty-five years later, he still writes that on cards that he gives to me. *"I love you more today than yesterday."* We need to have that same kind of attitude about God. A constant and progressive growing love and desire to know more about Him today than yesterday.

Asking *“Who are you, Lord,”* was the first question that Paul asked Jesus and learning the answer to that question remained a priority throughout Paul’s life.

In *(Philippians 3:8 NLT)*, Paul writes, *“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing (root is ginosko) Christ Jesus my Lord.”* The Amplified Bible expresses this verse so powerfully.

*(Philippians 3:8, 10 Amplified Bible AMP) “I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One)... {10} [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him...”*

*1 Corinthians 2:2 Amplified Bible (AMP) For I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and Him crucified.*

We can have the same determined purpose as Paul because we have the same Holy Spirit living in us. God has given us the Holy Spirit to illuminate His Word and teach us all we need to know about God. He lives in every person who has confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord. The Holy Spirit will **always** answer your question, “Who are you, Lord.” That is what He does.

*(John 15:26 NLT) Jesus tells us this about the Holy Spirit. “But I will send you the Counselor--the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will tell you all about me.”*

Remind yourself of who the Holy Spirit is. He is your Comforter, your Guide and your Teacher. Rehearse what you already know about God and then ask the Holy Spirit to tell you more about Him. Make a determination that you want to know Him more than you have ever known Him. You can be as

sure and unwavering about who God is in the midst of every situation, just as you are sure that the pews are red. When you walk out of this sanctuary tonight, you will have a choice. You can question God about the things you do not understand and dwell on those what, when, where, why and how questions, or you can ask Him one simple question, **“Who are you, Lord?”** Take control of what you are thinking about and make a decision that you are going to look “up” to God more than you look “at” the problem. It will not be easy. It is a battle of faith. Do you truly believe God is Who He says He is? As Pastor said, “Do you believe He is God of the impossible?” Just ask him, **“Who are you, Lord?”** Open the Word and He will answer you.

Maybe you do not know Him, or you have known Him in the past and turned away. This is the time to ask one question to God - **Who are you?** He will answer you that He is the one who loves you so much that He sacrificed His only Son so that your sin could be washed away and you could have a personal relationship with Him. **Now, ask God, in your own way, from your heart - Who are you, Lord?** Allow the Spirit of God to speak to your heart in a personal way so that you can understand the truth. He is God, Jesus is His son. He loves you and wants you to turn your life over to Him.

**I will close with this. When we search the Scriptures for the answers to “Who are you Lord?” We learn some powerful, life-changing truths that can bring peace to our hearts and lay to rest any other question we might have**

**Who are you Lord?** The Psalms tells us he is gracious, righteous, merciful, hold, a sun and shield, our defense, our refuge and strength.

*(Psalms 116:5 NKJV) "Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful."*

*(Psalms 99:9 NKJV) "...God is holy."*

*(Psalms 84:11 NKJV) "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly."*

*(Psalms 59:17 NKJV) "To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; For God is my defense, My God of mercy."*

*(Psalms 46:1 NKJV) "God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble."*

*(1 John 4:16 NKJV) "... God is love"*

*(1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV) "God is faithful."*

*(2 Corinthians 7:6 NKJV) "...God, who comforts the downcast,"*

*(1 Timothy 1:17 NKJV) "God who alone is wise...."*

*(1 Timothy 6:17 NKJV) "God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."*

*(Titus 1:2 NKJV) "God, who cannot lie,"*

*(James 1:5 NKJV) "God, who gives (wisdom) to all."*

*(Ephesians 3:20 NKJV) "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,"*

*(Jude 1:24 NKJV) "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,"*

*(Revelation 1:4-5 NKJV) "John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, {5} and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,"*

*(Revelation 2:18 NKJV) "'And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:'"*

*(Revelation 7:10 NKJV) "God who sits on the throne...!"*

***(Closing prayer) "Dear Lord, we thank you for your Word that reveals to us Who you are. May it be planted deep in our hearts. Lord, every time we walk into this sanctuary and see these red pews remind us to continue to build our relationship with You, to know You more. Let there be no more room for doubt, fear, or worries because in every situation you will give us the answer to the most important question "Who are you Lord?"***

**Let us worship Him.**