

# QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry  
for the Christian community*

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## **I WANT TO KNOW CHRIST – Philippians 3 v 7 – 11**

When Paul wrote this letter from Rome to his dear friends in Philippi he was looking back over his apostolic journey of many years, yet he still longed for a deeper knowledge of the person and glory of his Lord and Saviour. He joins the sentiment of Peter who, towards the end of his apostolic ministry, was able to touch the wellspring of our new birth when he wrote in 1 Peter 1 v 8: “Though you have not seen Him, you love Him”. Both these great men had come to a point in their hugely important ministries when their greatest longing was simply to have a deeper relationship with Jesus. As we journey towards the end of our earthly pilgrimage, feeling the challenges of our daily lives and of a world and its circumstances changing beyond all recognition, we too can take refuge in a more intimate walk with the Lord. This simple study is designed to help us lay aside the many complexities of our Christian life and ministries, as blest as they may have been, and focus on our personal knowledge of the Master in preparation for meeting Him face-to-face.

### 1. Knowing Him as our Messiah (the Christ)

The great witness of the early believers was that Jesus was the long-foretold and eagerly-awaited Christ. If He was indeed the expected Messiah then He would be both God and Man (Isaiah 9 v 6 – 7). Their messianic hope was absolutely central to their faith; they were a messianic people. This is why they became known as “Christians” (Acts 11 v 25 – 26). The growing understanding of God’s incredible purpose for the profound restoration of the whole creation – set out so well in Colossians 1 v 15 – 20, and of which our redemption is the first-fruits (Romans 8 v 18 – 23) – filled them with joy and glorious anticipation. This was a prime motivation of the Gospel message; the renewal of our lives, the nations, the environment, the planet, the whole cosmos, back to the state of God’s original intention when He first created everything. Hence the amazing plan of redemption and the destruction of all of Satan’s diabolical interference (Genesis 3 v 15). The Bible closes with the wonderful declaration of a renewed heaven and earth; indeed, the renewal of everything (Revelation 21 v 1 and 5). NB, the word ‘new’ is kanos (renewed), and not neos (brand new).

### 2. Knowing Him as our friend

Our faith is not a religion; it is a relationship. The problem with religion is that so many artifacts, icons, traditions, rules, structures, etc., get in the way and become objects of our faith instead of just Jesus Himself, as Paul points out in our passage. Micah 6 v 8 states it so well - “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”. Jesus gets to the heart of His purpose for His followers in John 15 v 15 - “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his Master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you”. This means not just “what a friend we have in Jesus”, but “what a friend Jesus has in me”! The joy of a deep friendship is the unconditional help, support and advice the friend shows us, especially when we realise the limitations of our own decisions and understandings. As we come to appreciate the closeness and reality of the Lord’s personal love for us and His constant presence with us, there’s a comfort and feeling of security we may have lacked earlier in our life and circumstances. We relish a passage such as Romans 8 v 28 – 39; it repays frequent reading. To have a personal friend of such power, authority and understanding is overwhelming and deserves our deepest appreciation.

### 3. Knowing Him as our bridegroom

When we think of our eternal destiny with the Lord there is only one comparable human experience that comes close to giving us an insight into what this will be like. Paul draws the parallel with human marriage in Ephesians 5 v 25 – 27, and explains in Romans 8 v 17 that this will be a legal position for each of us – “co-heirs with Christ”. It should motivate our desire to see Jesus (Revelation 22 v 17). In John 14 v 1 – 4 Jesus draws very heavily on the Jewish marriage arrangement of that time, and the disciples would have understood completely what He was saying. An intending bridegroom would prepare and attach an annexed room onto his parent’s house (and there may have been several such annexes if there were several sons) and when his father decided the new room was complete, he would tell his son to go and fetch his betrothed bride so that the marriage can take place. The “betrothal” was pre-arranged by the respective parents, often years before. That explains the Lord’s words in His subsequent prayer to His Father (John 17, especially verse 6). Of course, while it is right we ponder and enjoy thinking more and more of the Lord in this way, there are possibly limits to what we will fully know in this life – “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him” – 1 Corinthians 2 v 9. Still, verse 10 assures us that the Holy Spirit will give us a deeper revelation of these things the more we seek to know Jesus as our bridegroom.

### 4. Knowing Him as our judge

There is a better word we can use which comes from the same root as judge – adjudicator – and here we turn particularly to 2 Corinthians 5 v 10. We can be very sure this is not a judgement on our sins, for which the Lord took our judgement on His cross, in our place. Romans 8 v 1 is quite clear: “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”. No, this is after we have been raptured away from this world as the bride of Christ. As the bride’s preparation, it is the removal of any remaining impurity within us. It is also the giving of rewards due to us for faith, obedient service and blessing of others; “well done good and faithful servant”. Whenever the Lord takes any of us home, through death or the rapture, we still have areas to be cleansed, for none of us is yet perfect, even though we are covered in God’s sight by the Lord’s righteousness. Both the removal of remaining impurity and the rewarding of faithful living and service are clearly set out in 1 Corinthians 3 v 10 – 15. The ‘Day’ is then, before the Lord’s judgement seat, and the fire comes from the eyes of Jesus, looking right through our deepest intentions, as described in Psalm 11 v 4 – 5a, Revelation 1 v 14b, and Revelation 19 v 12a. The rewards are given as described in Revelation 19 v 6 – 8. In past years, sometimes younger Christians were told, as part of their training in discipleship, “would you like Jesus to return and find you doing/saying/in the company of those people/etc”. That was a useful discipline in sanctification! Following this final cleansing at His judgement seat the Lord will have the greatest joy in presenting His prepared bride, faultless, before His Father (Jude v 24).

### 5. Knowing Him as our builder

In our Christian walk there are two areas of essential activity that, brought together, can cause us conflict and uncertainty. One is our personal relationship with Jesus, as we have been considering in this study, and the other is our duty to assemble together with others and be “church” (Hebrews 10 v 25). Indeed, trying to balance these two areas of spiritual life can be a major source of difficulty for Christians. Many believers have found church life to be so unsettling in their walk with God that they have abandoned regular times of fellowship and continue to practice their faith virtually alone. So often for them the traditions, rules, doctrinal positions and personalities that dominate their church life cause pain and challenge in their Christian experience. At such times we need to turn to the Lord’s clear instruction in Matthew 16 v 18: “I will build my church”. We must hand over to Him our church life and loyalties, for guidance for the future and healing from the pain of past experience. In doing so we must let Him release us from any feelings of guilt and shame, restore our love for those we once fellowshiped with, even if we know we are to move on, and quietly wait on Him for His will for our future church connections. In our day we can be so grateful for the technology that enables us to do this so easily, thanking the Lord we can do so, but always seeking more real fellowship with others who love and serve Him in ways we can identify with, and be at peace.