



Season 1, Episode 3: “Do You Know Jesus?”

OK, guys, if you're a *multitasker*, like me, then you're probably listening to this podcast while you're doing one or a million other things. So I'm wondering what you're up to right now... where you are and what you're doing right this very minute. Maybe driving, or in the middle of a walk, or on a treadmill at the gym, or waiting in the carpool line, folding laundry or getting supper ready... or sitting in a hospital. I keep thinking of y'all and what you're doing and what's on your heart.

So- I'm going to ask you a question—and I want you to *capture* the very first thing that comes to your mind-- and say it out loud, then write it down when you have the chance:

- ***What's your biggest struggle right now?***
- Is it your marriage?
- Worries about your kids?
- A health scare?
- A financial crisis?
- An addiction you can't shake?
- A relationship struggle?
- A struggle with you identity or sense of worth and purpose?
- Loneliness?
- Waiting?
- Your job or career?
- A fear of something?
- Or a recurring something that keeps you stuck where you are and unable to move on?

What's your biggest struggle right now? Don't over think it—just say or write down the first thing that comes to your mind.

OK, so whatever you just said... whatever that struggle is, I'm here to tell you that Jesus has the answer—because JESUS is the answer. And whatever you're struggling with can all be traced back to your relationship with him. It can be traced back to loving, trusting, believing him. So...

- Do you love him?
- Do you trust him?

- Do you believe him?
- Are you listening to him?
- Are you doing what he tells you to do?
- ***But—more importantly, do you know him?***

Because here's the thing: We will never love or trust or believe whom we do not know.

John and I have the opportunity to do a lot of pre-marriage counseling and we absolutely love it! It's an absolute ball to walk with these couples as they make their way to the altar.

But we also do a good deal of marriage counseling with couples that are struggling in their marriage for any manner of reason.

And in both scenarios the thing we start with—or I should say the One we start with is JESUS.

Right off the bat- we ask them: ***“Tell me about your relationship with Jesus.”***

For the engaged couples—we help them to focus on Jesus and to understand that each of them having their own personal thing going on with Jesus is *vital* to their life and their marriage. So we help them to understand in practical ways how keeping Jesus at the center of their own life gives their marriage the best fighting chance of making it.

For the married couples who keep trying to make it work, but just keep landing in the same struggles over and over again—it's always a matter of helping them get their eyes refocused on Jesus, and their hearts recalibrated under the Truth of *His* intended plan for marriage. As my man always says—***God is the one that dreamed marriage up, so He knows best how marriage is supposed to work.***

That's just one example of what I'm talking about today and why I know and believe, by experience and by biblical fact, that **every answer to our every struggle can only completely be found in Jesus.**

Our struggles typically stem from our distance from and our lack of trust in him. As well- all our struggles... well, God allows them and He uses them to draw us back to Him, to trust him, to rely on him and to listen to him— because he really is ***the only one who can do anything about everything that concerns us. And who loves us like crazy.***

God wrote a book—one book and it's called The Bible.

In it God tells us all about who He is, He tells us who we are, and He tells us in loving detail all about the great rescue mission of our hearts that came through His Son, Jesus Christ. Look with me at what the Apostle Paul writes in Colossians 1:9-17.

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.¹¹

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

So- who is this Jesus? And how do we get to know him?

As we just read—the bible tells us that Jesus Christ is the **exact, visible image of God**, and that he made everything; he created everything that is created including, and especially *you and me*. And everything God made, he made **for himself** and in him all things that he made are **held together**.

So, since Jesus made everything- doesn't it make sense that Jesus also knows everything *about everything he made*? And wouldn't it then make sense that he would know everything about you and your circumstances? Your thoughts and your feelings? Your longings and desires? Your hurts and hopes? Your appetites? Your motives? And every one of your dreams?

The fact is—he does. **And nobody knows the heart of a woman like Jesus does.** Jesus is actually referred to as “the heart knower” (*kardiognostes* found only twice in the Scriptures in Acts 1 and 15). I love that word! Jesus knows you and me inside and out...and he gets us! He totally understands us. And he knew all about your circumstances, all about your struggles and your stuff an eternity before you were even here and long before you ever had a clue.

So, obviously it makes sense that the One who made you knows you and knows exactly what you need.

But here's the question: DO YOU KNOW HIM?

- I'm not asking you if you go to church or if you've been baptized or if you attend a bible study.
- I'm not talking about a religious intellectual knowledge, or a religious routine...
- I'm not even asking you if you have a proverbial (quote), “personal relationship with Jesus Christ” ...

- I'm asking you about the kind of knowing that comes from intimacy with him... an experiential knowledge... your intimate knowledge of Jesus acquired through a deep, abiding relationship with him as you encounter him through his Word and by walking with him in your everyday life.

Do you know Jesus that way?

A. W. Tozer, in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, write this:

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

Read that again.

OK y'all—it just begs the question: ***What do you think about God? Who is he? What's he like?***

God knows all about you, for sure, and He wants *you* to know *Him*— as much of Him as can be known this side of heaven. He says this in Isaiah 43:10—

*“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, **that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.** Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.*

Isaiah 43:10 (ESV)

We just read in Colossians 1 that Jesus is the exact image of God. So, for starters, ***if you want to know who God is, look at Jesus.*** In fact, the gospel of John was inspired, and specific encounters were written down precisely for that purpose: that we would *“believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and by believing that you would have life in his name,”* (John 20:30-31)

Every situation, every story, every encounter and relationship Jesus had he had with *real people*, and every miracle he performed *actually happened*, and all of it shows us some facet of who Jesus is. Therefore we see and know what God is like—

- His character
- His personality
- His heart
- His likes and dislikes
- His ways
- His love
- What burdens his heart
- What breaks his heart
- What thrills his heart
- What he thinks about you and me

So, in seeing Jesus—the perfect expression of God, we might know God... so that we might believe Him... **and keep on believing him.**

OK—so let's get down to it and ask the big question again another way. One more time, let's head back to the Book—and read Matthew 16:13-17.

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Jesus asks his disciples first, "Who do others say that I am?" And then he turns the question on them, asking, "**Who do you say that I am?**"

OK, so how would you answer the question Jesus asks his disciples—**because it's the same question he asks each of us, his disciples:**

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT JESUS IS?

Friend, your answer to that question shapes your entire life—

- It determines your identity – because there is no way that you can know yourself apart from knowing, intimately, the One who created you.
- It determines your destiny – because there is no way that you can know where you're going and how to get there apart from the One who has scripted your life with plans and dreams that he has thought through thoroughly and purposefully.
- It determines your eternity – because there is no way that you can have an assurance of where you'll spend your eternity apart from the One who is The Way, and who created eternity to spend with you.
- And it determines how you live your life while you're on this planet; because, again, there is no way to live life the right way apart from the One who gives life and more of it.

So, who do YOU say that Jesus is?

I'm not asking about your church life. I'm asking about your *love-life*.

How do you get to know someone? You can read about them, study and observe them, or experience them through a relationship and time spent together.

But the best way to get to know anyone is to **ask them about themselves.**

So ask him—“Who are you, Lord?”

Then open your Bible—it's God's Word, his voice to you. And it is always the primary way God speaks to his children.

OK, guys... are you reading your bible? Girl... you gotta read your bible! Read your bible. Read your bible. Read. Your. Bible!

Here's the thing... we can be saved by hearing and knowing just a little bit of Scripture, but there is no way we will ever grow and flourish in our faith and know God apart from reading and believing His Word. **A steady, nutritious intake of the Word of God is a vital necessity for our spiritual life and health.**



SIDE BAR:

Let's talk for a minute about reading your bible. I promise that this will be a future Life-on-Life episode that I'll unpack in more detail because it's critically important.

But for now, can I just encourage you...Get a bible you can read and understand... and then read it. Don't try to be all scholarly and go all King James on me. Nothing wrong with King James at all. But for crying out loud, if you've never read the Bible before—start with something you can understand. Get a children's story bible. I'm not even kidding, y'all. One of the first things I tell my young'ins, the girls I disciple—is that if you're not familiar with the Bible then start by doing a quick read of a children's bible to get a an overview of the story of God and get you going deeper from there.

Catherine Vos' [The Child's Story Bible](#) is a good one, or [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) by Sally Lloyd Jones is great; it tells the gospel in the sweetest way with great pictures. Don't kid yourself—I re-read it every year during the Easter Season just because it's the sweetest telling of the love of God.

After that, take a look at the New Living Translation and cut your teeth on that. It's an easy to read version that is true and reputable. I mean, if Dr. Bill Bright and Dr. Church Swindoll have both written study bibles using that translation...well then...?

I think it's better that we start with a bible that we can read and understand than to own a bible that you never read because you don't have the foggiest idea of what's being said.

Well, enough said.

Let's move on...

So when you read your bible (not if, but when), as you read *ASK* good questions— just like you would in any relationship where you want to get to know the person better. ASK him...

- ***Who are you, Lord?***
- ***Who am I, Lord?***
- ***What do you want me to do, Lord, with what you've just told me in your Word?***

If his Holy Spirit is in you, then he will open your mind and heart to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45) and he will open your eyes to see God and know God better through his Word (Ephesians 1:17), and to discover wonderful things in his word (Psalm 119:105), and to continually hunger and thirst for him and his word more and more and more.

Pray for that... for all of it and keep on praying it.

Then dive in and get to know this Jesus, who greatly and dearly loves you... this Jesus who is every bit of God in a body— He is...

- The Love of God
- The Word of God
- The Hope of God
- The Peace of God
- The Help of God
- The Light of God
- The Goodness of God
- The Mercy of God
- The Strength of God
- The Power of God
- The Beauty of God
- The Salvation of God

...and his name is JESUS!!

Y'all... to *know* God is to know Jesus, to believe him and to *love* him

- Not just learn about him
- Not just study him
- But to experience him... with eyes wide open to his activity in your life. Seeing him show up in your everyday life through even the smallest steps of obedient faith.

But the only way you can begin to know God is to begin a ***relationship*** with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, by placing your faith in him and receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life, and then his Holy Spirit is given to you as a gift to fill you, and empower you, and enable you to know God... better and better.

Have you done that? Have taken God at His Word and received His gift of grace... the forgiveness of your sin that separates you from Him?

Would you like to do that now? God tells us in His Word that Jesus is the only way to establish a relationship with Him and to enjoy the peace of forgiveness and eternal life... Jesus paid the price for you and for me... once and for always.

It would be my great honor and joy to pray with you this very minute to begin your new life in Christ and begin the greatest adventure of following Jesus forever.

Dear Lord,

I need You and I am in desperate need of Your saving Grace. I admit that I'm helpless to overcome my sin by my own efforts and to become the woman You desire for me to be. I confess that the things I've done wrong and the disease of sin within me have disconnected me from You, and that I deserve eternal death as a penalty for my sin. Thank you, Father, for sending Your Son Jesus, to die in my place so that I can have a relationship with You. I place my trust in Christ alone to pay the penalty for my sins—past present and future, and to grant me forgiveness by his blood and his finished work on the cross. I receive his gift of eternal life, and I ask Jesus to be the Lord and Love of my life. Holy Spirit, come fill me now; empower me to become the woman You created me to be, help me live the life you've planned and dreamed for me and to fulfill my calling for God's glory. Thank you so very much, Lord. I love you, and I look forward to knowing you better, and to spending now, always and forever with You.

In the strong and saving name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer receiving his gift of grace and asking him to come in and give you a brand-new life, then I want to be the first to welcome you into the family of God! Remember that according to his Word, you are now *marked* as Christ's own forever—and nothing can ever separate you from his love. And if you made that decision today to follow Jesus— please let me know. Email me at heypunky@punkytolson.com and I'll send you some things to get you started on your great new adventure with Jesus!

Now, start reading your Bible and talking to him. Get into a good bible teaching church and get disciplined! Girl, there is no better place to make your home than in Jesus... forever and ever.

Alright—let's go back to the beginning and look at that thing you're struggling with. **NOW, you have the answer.** So when you feel like your life is falling apart, when you feel like you're falling apart-- remember that when you come to him, all the fullness of God— everything that God is in Jesus Christ comes to together and is held together for you, too. His power extends over every part of your life. And there's no better place to fall apart than in the arms of the One who holds everything together by his love.

Go grab your bible... and look that struggle square in the eye and in the mighty name of Jesus you declare: ***The Lord is my shepherd... I have everything I need; I can do all things, even the things that are beyond my power and ability, through Jesus Christ who gives me strength!***

Ask Jesus to show you who he is; ask him for what you need, then open your bible, read and listen to him, wait for his response, and then obey. He will respond to you!

I'll close with this—my signature verse and it's from Hosea 6:3

"Oh, that we might know the LORD!

Let us press on to know Him

He will respond to us as surely

as the arrival of dawn or the

coming of rains in early spring."

OK, that's that for that. And don't forget that you are greatly and dearly loved by The King!

xo -P