

ALL-KNOWING DECEMBER 7-12

Theme: Omniscience

PLASTIC CHRISTIANITY

Matthew 6:1–15

Image is everything. Or at least it sometimes seems that way. Facebook, Twitter, blogs—there are so many tools available to help us create just the right public persona. We all want people to think well of us. The temptation is to go out of our way to draw attention to ourselves and impress other people.

Jesus says we should give up our attempts to create an image of who we are or to place ourselves in the best light possible. The reason is God knows us just as we are, and it is His opinion that really counts. Even actions that seem spiritual and godly, such as giving to the poor and praying, can be emptied of all their value when we do them to build up ourselves, rather than honoring God and trusting that He knows and rewards our faith.



NOTES:

Rather than focusing on yourself and building your own image, focus on God and do everything you can to enhance His glory. Find the humility to see yourself as a servant of the living God and trust that He will reward your service far beyond any earthly praise you can ever earn.

GODLY WISDOM IS COUNTERINTUITIVE

1 Corinthians 2:6–16

Perhaps our greatest need today is the ability to discern the pseudo-wisdom of the world from the genuine wisdom of God. Much that passes for spiritual truth today is really just the latest motivational, self-help, or management techniques dressed up with Christian-sounding terminology.

While it may be true in some sense that all truth is God's truth, the apostle Paul said there is a distinct difference between the wisdom we can find in the world and what comes from God. True wisdom begins at the cross, with Christ crucified. It is much more about brokenness, mercy, and grace than it is about success, power, and glory. Spiritual wisdom is counterintuitive; those who are not yet alive in Christ cannot see it as anything but foolishness.

Spiritual understanding is not to be found in the latest scientific discoveries or therapeutic methods.

It is not a Christian version of the same old stuff you can learn anywhere else. It is nothing less than a gift of God. Immerse yourself in God's wisdom through His Word, and you'll begin to see life from a brand new perspective—one that is more authentic than anything you've ever known before.

SELF-CONDEMNATION

1 John 3:16–23

Whether we like it or not, we all have some image in our minds of the ideal Christian life. We think we know how much time we should spend in worship, service, Bible study, prayer, and everything else. Then when we don't live up to our own standards, we start feeling guilty: "I just know I should be doing better than I am. What's wrong with me?"

In his first letter, John said such guilt could rob us of power in our prayers. When we pray with confidence, John said, we receive what we ask. But at other times, our heart condemns us and prevents us from having confidence in prayer. How can we overcome this obstacle in our relationship with God? John wrote we must trust that God is greater than our heart and He knows everything about us. God doesn't judge us according to all those standards we set for ourselves, but His judgment is based on the sacrifice of His Son.



PLAYLIST:

He Knows My Name |
Tommy Walker
Indescribable |
Chris Tomlin
Lay Down My Pride |
Jeremy Camp
Be Thou My Vision |
Selah
Search Me and Know Me |
Michael Card

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

*God, help me
trust that You
know what You're
doing.*

Have confidence, John said. God knows who you are. And how can we reassure our own hearts? By following Jesus' sacrificial example and helping those who are in need.

SIGNIFICANCE IN CHRIST

John 10:1–21

Some people thrive on meeting different people and developing new relationships. But for most of us, there is something comfortable about being with others who know us well, particularly when those people still accept and value us. Being with such people reminds us that we are significant—at least in the circles where we run.

In Jesus, we find all of that and more. If you are His disciple, you are not some number or a nameless face to Him. He doesn't have to check your info page on Facebook or dig in His desk drawer for your file to refresh His memory. He already knows you by name. As a good shepherd, He is absolutely committed to guiding you, mentoring you, and protecting you. He has even gone so far as to lay down His life for you. You can be sure you are a significant person to Him.

Still, this is a two-way relationship. Jesus refuses to be like that guy who befriended you two weeks ago and you only have a vague recollection of who he is. Jesus knows His disciples by name, and they hear and obey His voice.

NOTES:



LOVE AND DEVOTION

Revelation 2:1–7

Have you ever had so much to do and so many decisions to make that you were simply overwhelmed and didn't know where to start? Life comes our way so fast we're barely able to comprehend it, much less bend it or shape it in the direction we want it to go. It's incredibly easy to lose focus.

Not only does Jesus know us by name, He also knows the intimate details regarding the decisions we're making and how they're shaping our lives. In this letter to the church at Ephesus, Jesus pointed out they are doing a lot of good things—working hard, being patient, thinking critically, and rejecting the attempts of others to pull them away from following Je-

sus. At the same time, Jesus also warned something was missing. They did not love Him and others the way they had at first.

Jesus knows our works, and while He is pleased by all of our efforts to make wise decisions and live holy lives, He is not satisfied unless our lives reflect devotion to Him and love for those around us. Remember, they will know we are Christians by our love.



SMALL GROUP PREP

Read Matthew 26:17-30 to prepare for your next small group time.

Make a list of the top 10 significant events that have happened in your life. Would you have done anything differently, keeping in mind that God knew about all of them?