

KNOWING
encountering Christ in every sense
GOD



a guide to your spiritual senses
BY TODD RODARMEL

seeing

hearing

tasting

touching

smelling

IT'S ABOUT KNOWING JESUS!

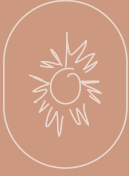
Now this is eternal life: that they know the only true God & Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

John 17:3

Knowing Jesus is more than just knowing about him. It is living in intimate connection with him. That takes knowing the historical Jesus as revealed in the Bible, learning to hear and follow the Spirit of Jesus as he lives within, learning to worship the risen and exalted Jesus, and learning to pray and act in his authority and power.

Knowing a person takes more than one sense. This guide will help you learn to use all of your spiritual senses to know Jesus better. I also pulled a series of five short videos out of the archives if you want to dig a little deeper. Be warned: I am much younger and beardless, but it's still me. Links to the videos can be found on the last page.

– Todd



SEEING JESUS IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE

Jesus himself said that all the scriptures pointed to him. He is the key to understanding the Bible. In the first session, I will show you how to read the Bible for yourself with a better understanding of how it all fits together.



HEARING THE VOICE OF JESUS

Jesus said his sheep hear his voice. How do you learn to hear his voice? In the second session, I will teach you to listen to Jesus with your heart.



TASTING JESUS IN WORSHIP

Jesus was aware of our need to experience with multiple senses when he gave us bread and wine and said it was him. Understanding what we do when we worship, and how our postures and actions make a difference is the key to a more fulfilling worship experience. This session will equip you to bring your best to the God who deserves it.



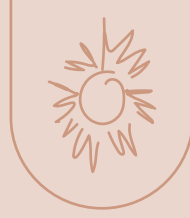
TOUCHING JESUS IN PRAYER

Just as the woman in the crowd reached out and touched Jesus cloak in faith and was healed, we need to learn to pray in faith. We also need to learn the access we have before God and the authority we have in the spiritual world. This session will teach you to make the most of that authority to see God do amazing things.



SMELLING WHAT JESUS IS UP TO

How do you get guidance from God? How do you pray for others according to what they really need. Jesus said, "I only do what I see the Father doing." How did he know? In this session we will talk about how to sniff out what God is up to in your life and with others.



SEEING JESUS IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE

*Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them
what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

Luke 24:27

As Christians, we believe Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God. But long before Jesus came God had been revealing himself to humanity and especially to the descendants of Abraham. Thousands of years of history, religion and revelation led up to the coming of Jesus the Messiah. We must learn to read these ancient texts in the light of Jesus.

When Jesus was traveling incognito with two of his disciples after the resurrection, he asked them about what had happened to their master. Then he said, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (Luke 24:26-27) Jesus is the key to understanding the whole story.

INTERPRETATION 101

How do we interpret the text of Scripture? The Bible comes to us in the form of ancient literature written in a foreign language over the course of over 1000 years by many different authors. It includes all sorts of genres: poetry, sayings, history, fiction, songs, jokes, dreams, letters and more. To say we interpret the Bible literally is too simplistic. We must interpret according to the historical and literary context in light of the larger message of God’s unfolding promise fulfilled in Christ.

To start, ask these questions of any text:

1. What did this mean to the original author?
2. How does it relate to what Jesus said & did?
3. What difference does it make for my life now?

TRY THIS

Read 1 Peter 1:1-12 and ask yourself questions about when this was written, by whom and to whom. Try your best to understand the context - Historical (written by Peter some time after Jesus) or Literary (it’s a letter written to be read in churches)

Now ask these questions:

1. What did it mean for Peter and to those he wrote it to? What is he talking about?
2. What is this telling us about Jesus and what he said and did? In other words, what is it saying God accomplished through Jesus?
3. What does this mean to us now? How do you benefit from it? How can you apply these truths? How can you turn it back into a prayer?



HEARING THE VOICE OF JESUS

*My sheep listen to my voice;
I know them and they follow me.*
John 10:27

Following Jesus means learning to hear his voice and obey what he tells you. We can hear his voice in scripture, we can hear it sometimes through someone else, and for those of us who have his Spirit living in us, we should increasingly be able to hear it from deep within our souls.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SILENCE

Sometimes we don't hear because we don't expect to. Or we don't believe we can. Sometimes it's because of all the other noise we fill our lives with. Does your life look like that of someone who has a priority of hearing God's voice? Make some time to get alone in silence & practice.

DISCERNING WHICH VOICE IS HIS

You may not trust your internal voices. And you may be right. The enemy can lie to us. We can fool ourselves. The best way to learn to recognize God's voice is to get to know his character. Jesus within you will never say something to you that contradicts the scripture. Get to know the Jesus

of the gospels by soaking in them. Check your interpretations of scripture and God's voice with trusted friends who know God. One way to test a voice is to ask Jesus if he loves you. (You know the answer.)

TO HEAR IS TO OBEY

The word hear actually implies obey in the Bible. If you don't obey him, there is no point in hearing his voice. Make sure you are quick to do what he says. In fact, if you are not obeying what you already know, why would you expect him to speak anything new to you?

THE TEN SECOND RULE

I recently read a great book called the Ten Second Rule by Clare De Graaf. The premise is simple. Just do the next thing you're reasonably certain Jesus wants you to do (and do it in the next 10 seconds before you change your mind!) If you practice acting on the impressions you get, you will get more. I promise.

TRY THIS

Read Acts 9:1-20 for a great story about two men who hear and obey God's voice. Read it three times, slowly asking God to speak to you. The first time you read through it, look for one word or phrase that jumps out to you. Write it down. The second time, write a one sentence prayer that expresses what you are feeling or needing right now. The third time, write down what you believe God is saying to you in response to your prayer or just from the scripture. You can use this alone or in groups with any scripture to practice hearing from God.



TASTING JESUS IN WORSHIP

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Psalm 34:8

It is in worship that we taste the goodness of the Lord. We sing of his power, love, might, holiness, goodness, faithfulness, etc. We tell the story of his deeds in scripture. We give testimony to his work in our lives. We meditate on his beauty and wonders through art, silence, media, and sensory objects like water and bread and wine.

WHY WE WORSHIP

We worship because God is worth it. God is worthy of praise and honor and glory. He deserves our thanks. Mostly we worship because we were made for it. If we don't worship the true God, we will worship something, whether an idol, possessions, another person, or even ourselves. Everyone worships something.

WHO WORSHIP IS FOR

While worship is what we were made for and we find great fulfillment in it, it's really not about you. What I mean is, worship is for God. When you come to "get something out of worship" you

are usually disappointed. At least eventually. If you come instead with the idea of giving yourself to God (Romans 12:1) and you recognize that you are performing for an audience of ONE (not the people on stage), then your worship will be more fulfilling for you and God and better for the whole congregation.

WHERE DO I PUT MY HANDS?

God wants our whole body as a living sacrifice in worship. That means we can move our feet, raise our voice, lift our hands, bow our knees, close our eyes, etc. We worship in spirit and truth. That means it is spiritual, but it also has to be a reality in our lives.

WORSHIP IS A LIFESTYLE

Worship is not just about Sunday or about singing. It is our whole life. Presenting your whole self in obedience is more important than words we sing or hearing a message once a week. God wants all of you. Every day.

TRY THIS

Read Revelation chapters 4-5 to see what worship looks like from a heavenly perspective. Read it three times, slowly asking God to speak to you. Don't get tripped up by the crazy imagery. Just know it represents all creation in heaven and on earth and all God's people worshipping together. The first time you read through it, ask yourself why God is so worthy. Pick out a word or two. The second time, write a prayer or song of worship that expresses why you worship God. Why is he worthy? The third time, write down what you believe God is saying to you in response to your prayer or just from the scripture. You can use this alone or in groups with any scripture to practice hearing from God.



TOUCHING JESUS IN PRAYER

*She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak,
and immediately her bleeding stopped.*

Luke 8:44

All of us have pain, needs or prayers that we want answered. Often our prayers are no more than vague wishes. Sometimes they are specific cries. Too many times, they are not answered. But Jesus said ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. (Matt. 7:7) He said God loves to give good gifts to his children. He said to pray and not give up. He said if we ask anything in his name he will do it. So why doesn't it always seem to work? I don't know. But here are a few things I do know from the Bible and some things I've found to work from my experience.

KNOWING GOD'S WILL IS IMPORTANT

Jesus shared the reason he was able to heal and do miraculous things on behalf of God. It wasn't because he was God. He actually says, "the Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees his Father doing." Jn 5:19. Jesus spent time in prayer and listening to the Father and he knew that when he was acting, or commanding, or praying that he was doing what the Father wanted. If you know something is God's will, you can pray with boldness.

KNOWING YOUR AUTHORITY IS CRITICAL

Sometimes God doesn't answer our prayers because he wants us to learn to use our authority ourselves. When Jesus sent out his disciples, he gave them authority to heal the sick and cast out demons. He gives us the same authority to act on his behalf: "in his name". It's like a credit card we are authorized to use to get stuff done. If you are truly authorized by Jesus (and you are if you are a disciple who is walking with him - see below) you can simply command things that you know are God's will. Practice on little stuff. But understand your authority.

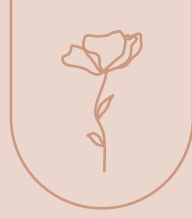
STAYING CLOSE TO JESUS IS CRUCIAL

Jesus said if we remain in him and he in us we can bear fruit and he will answer our prayers, but not apart from him. If you are in sin or you are disconnected from Jesus, don't expect answers. Stay connected.

TRY THIS

Read what Jesus said about prayer in Matthew 6:5-15. What principles can you learn about prayer? What kind of things does Jesus tell his disciples to pray for? What kind of things does it appear might hinder your prayers? Now using the Lord's prayer as a template, pray through it, filling it out as things come to your mind. Think about each word and phrase and fill it with the content of your heart and your life.

*Our Father in Heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come, Your will be done
On earth as it is in Heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For yours is the kingdom, power and glory forever.*



SMELLING WHAT JESUS IS UP TO

*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit
and to us not to burden you...*

Acts 15:28

We want to know God's will from the Scripture. We want to hear God's voice and pray with confidence. But sometimes the best we get is "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us". Not, "Thus Saith the Lord". Just "It seemed good". The reality of the Christian life is that though we expect to hear God's voice, we don't always have absolute certainty. So we need wisdom and spiritual discernment to be able to sniff out what God is up to in our lives.

START WITH WHAT YOU KNOW

If you want to know God's will in your life it's pretty easy. He wants you to love your neighbor as yourself. He wants you to abstain from sexual immorality. He wants you to be kind to the poor. He wants you to tithe. He wants you to pray and not give up. He wants you to forgive. You don't have to wonder. There are enough standing orders in scripture, that if you follow those, you are in good shape.

ASK EASIER QUESTIONS

Sometimes asking God "What should I do?" is too broad - not so much for him, but for your

ability to process. Ask yes or no questions. "Is it this?" or "Is it this?" Wait . . . Wait . . . Try again. Practice when the stakes aren't so high and with little things and it will be easier when it comes time for the big decisions.

GET WISDOM FROM A FRIEND

We never make our best decisions alone. Get wisdom from trusted others. Part of the reason we all need to be in a group of some sort is that we need other Christians we can trust who can seek God with us and give us wise advice. That doesn't mean they are always right. But often there is safety in a number of advisors, especially ones who are walking with God.

START WITH GOOD ASSUMPTIONS

He is always with you and he is always for you. Don't let lack of clarity or answers to your prayers lead you to agree with any lies of the enemy about God. Assume the truth of Romans 8. In fact, read it now from beginning to end to remind you of who you are and what is true about you and about God and his plans for you.

TRY THIS

Browse through the book of Acts and look at how the disciples made decisions and sought guidance. Notice how they cast lots (basically flip a coin) in the first chapter, but in chapter two the Spirit comes and from then on they are led by the Spirit.

Now read Romans 8 and reflect on how God leads us and works things together for our good.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

*You can try this
“five sense” approach to
spend time with God.*

SEE JESUS IN SCRIPTURE

After an opening prayer inviting God to meet with you, simply read a portion of scripture and journal a short reflection on what this picture of Jesus shows you about the nature of God and humanity. It’s easiest to use one of the gospels, but you can see Jesus everywhere in Scripture once you know where to look.

HEAR GOD’S VOICE IN YOUR HEART

Then take some time for silence and ask God to speak to you. He may speak in impressions, words, ideas or pictures. He may bring a scripture verse to mind. Listen with your heart and write what you hear God saying.

SMELL WHAT GOD IS UP TO

Ask God for direction for a specific situation you are facing or just for what he wants to do with you today. If you are praying for another person, ask how Jesus is praying for that person. Then you can pray for them with more authority.

TOUCH JESUS IN PRAYER

Pray for your needs and the needs of others. You can pray for the church, the nation and the world as well. Use the Lord’s prayer as a template to guide you.

TASTE HIS GOODNESS IN WORSHIP

End with a song, giving thanks, or breath prayer to worship God. Tell God what you are grateful for. Use a psalm or write one of your own. Go for a walk outside.

A PRAYER FOR KNOWING

*Jesus, I want to see you in your incarnation.
Reveal yourself to me in all the Scripture
and in the face of every person I meet.*

*Jesus, I want to hear your voice in quiet.
Speak to me by your Spirit in my heart
and through others sent from you.*

*Jesus, I want to taste your goodness in worship.
Encounter me as I worship you
with words and silence and sacraments.*

*Jesus, I want to touch you in prayer.
Answer me as I cry out to you
for my own needs and the needs of others.*

*Jesus, I want to smell what you are up to in my life.
Lead me into what you have for me this day.*

*For you have known me and you have made yourself known.
Help me know you in every sense possible
and make you known to others.*

CLICK FOR THE VIDEOS

Seeing

<https://youtu.be/9iQWoTaEPWo>

Hearing

<https://youtu.be/sOuGoPF9S0k>

Tasting

<https://youtu.be/iqH0Eoy-BzQ>

Touching

<https://youtu.be/czL9Hp7EKy4>

Smelling

https://youtu.be/3f03V0h_oSY