

# Knowing Jesus

## *A One Week Bible Study Guide*

Primary Passage(s):

- Matthew 16:13-18
- Matthew 16:21-23
- Phillipians 3:10

### Introduction

Who is Jesus? For many of us, answering that question may seem easy. We know the titles. Savior. Lord. Son of God. But Peter's experience in Matthew 16 shows us that it is possible to have the right answer and still have more to learn about the Jesus behind that answer.

Knowing Jesus is more than knowing information about Him. It is a lifelong pursuit of seeing Him as He really is, allowing Him to correct our assumptions, and learning to follow where He leads. Over the next five days, we will explore Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" and consider what it means to keep knowing, watching, and following Him.

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### Day One: Who Do You Say?

**Theme:** Making It Personal

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:13-17

#### **Key Thought:**

Jesus first asked His disciples what other people were saying about Him. The crowd had plenty of answers. Some thought He was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or another prophet. They recognized that Jesus was significant, but they had not correctly identified Him.

Then Jesus made the question personal: "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." He was no longer repeating the opinions of the crowd. He was making a personal confession about the identity of Jesus.

The same question matters for us. Our understanding of Jesus cannot rest only on what our family taught us, what a preacher told us, what our culture says, or what other people believe. At some point, the question becomes personal.

**Questions:**

1. If Jesus asked you today, "Who do you say that I am?" how would you answer?
2. What experiences, people, or teachings have shaped the way you think about Jesus?
3. Are there things you believe about Jesus mainly because someone else told you, rather than because you have examined them for yourself?
4. What is the difference between respecting Jesus and personally recognizing who He is?

**Reflection:**

The crowd had opinions about Jesus. Peter made a confession. Following Jesus cannot be built only on public opinion or secondhand faith. Take some time today to think about what you personally believe about Jesus and where those beliefs came from.

**Daily Prayer:**

Ask God to help you see Jesus clearly, not simply through the opinions of others or your own assumptions. Pray for a deeper understanding of who Jesus truly is.

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**Day Two: The Right Answer**

**Theme:** More Than Titles

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:16-21; Matthew 4:17

**Key Thought:**

Peter gave the right answer. Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

But having the correct title did not mean Peter fully understood everything that title meant.

After Peter's confession, Matthew says, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples" what was going to happen. Jesus explained that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and be raised on the third day.

Peter knew *who* Jesus was, but he was still learning what kind of Messiah Jesus had come to be.

We can face the same struggle. We may call Jesus Savior, Lord, faithful, good, or merciful and be completely correct. But we can still attach our own expectations to those words. Knowing the right title is important, but knowing Jesus means allowing Him to define what those titles mean.

**Questions:**

1. What did Peter understand correctly about Jesus?
2. What was Peter still beginning to learn?
3. When you use words such as "Lord," "good," or "faithful" to describe Jesus, what expectations do you attach to those words?
4. Have you ever discovered that something you assumed about Jesus was different from what Scripture actually showed you?

**Reflection:**

It is possible to say something true about Jesus while still having more to learn. Peter's confession was correct, but Jesus continued teaching him. A disciple should never assume, "I already know everything I need to know about Jesus."

There is always more to discover about who He is.

**Daily Prayer:**

Ask Jesus to show you where you may have attached your own expectations to Him. Pray for the humility to let Him correct anything you have misunderstood.

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**Day Three: Get Behind Me**

**Theme:** Let Jesus Lead

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:21-23

**Key Thought:**

When Jesus explained that He would suffer and die, Peter resisted Him. Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him.

Only moments earlier, Peter had confessed Jesus as the Christ. Now he was trying to tell the Christ what He should and should not do.

Jesus responded, “Get behind Me.”

Peter had gotten out of position. A disciple belongs behind the teacher. A follower belongs behind the one being followed. Peter was trying to step in front of Jesus and redirect Him.

We can do something similar. We can say, “Jesus is Lord,” while becoming frustrated when He leads somewhere we would not have chosen. We can call Him faithful and still struggle when the outcome is different from what we expected.

Following Jesus means remembering who leads and who follows.

**Questions:**

1. Why did Peter resist what Jesus was telling him?
2. What do Jesus’ words “Get behind Me” reveal about the proper position of a disciple?
3. Where are you most tempted to tell Jesus what the outcome should look like?
4. Is there an area of your life where you need to stop trying to lead Jesus and instead get behind Him?

**Reflection:**

Peter wanted Jesus to be the Messiah, but he wanted Jesus to be the kind of Messiah Peter had imagined. When Jesus did not fit that picture, Peter tried to correct Him.

Knowing Jesus requires being willing to let the real Jesus correct the version of Him we have created in our minds. Disciples do not walk in front and tell Jesus where to go. We get behind Him and follow.

**Daily Prayer:**

Ask Jesus to reveal any area where you are trying to set the direction instead of following Him. Pray for the willingness to get behind Him and let Him lead.

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**Day Four: I Want to Know Him**  
**Theme: A Lifelong Pursuit**

**Scripture:** Philippians 3:10

**Key Thought:**

Years after Peter's experience, Paul wrote, "That I may know Him."

Paul was already a follower of Jesus. He had encountered the risen Christ. He had preached about Christ, served Christ, and suffered because of Christ. Yet his desire was still to know Jesus more.

That tells us something important.

Knowing Jesus is not something we accomplish once and then move beyond. The Christian life is not simply, "I believe in Jesus. I understand the basics. Now what is next?"

Knowing Jesus is the lifelong pursuit of a disciple.

Paul wanted to know both the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. He did not want only the parts of Jesus that were comfortable or appealing.

**Questions:**

1. What stands out to you about Paul still saying, "That I may know Him" after years of following Jesus?
2. How is knowing Jesus different from simply knowing information about Jesus?
3. Are there parts of Jesus that you find easier to embrace than others?
4. What would it look like for "I want to know Jesus" to become an ongoing posture in your life?

**Reflection:**

There is a difference between knowing *about* Jesus and knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. Knowing Him begins with faith, trusting what He has done through His death and resurrection, and surrendering our lives to Him. But the relationship does not stop there.

Once we know Him, we keep getting to know Him.

The posture of a disciple is not simply, "I already know Jesus." It is, "Jesus, I want to know You more clearly. I want to know You as You really are."

**Daily Prayer:**

Tell Jesus that you want to know Him more clearly and deeply. Ask Him to keep shaping your understanding of who He is.

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## **Day Five: Watching Jesus**

**Theme:** See Him Clearly

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:13-23

### **Key Thought:**

The first disciples had the privilege of physically walking with Jesus. They heard His voice. They watched how He responded to people. They saw what moved Him, what angered Him, and what brought Him compassion. They saw how He treated sinners, confronted hypocrisy, prayed, and trusted the Father.

We cannot physically walk the roads of Galilee beside Jesus, but we have the testimony of those who did.

That is why the Gospels matter so much. They do not simply give us information about Jesus. They show us Jesus.

When we read Scripture, we often immediately ask, “What should I do?” or “What do I need to change?” Those can be good questions. But we should also learn to ask, “What does this show me about Jesus?”

The more we watch Jesus, the more the real Jesus can correct the version of Him we may have created in our minds.

### **Questions:**

1. When you normally read Scripture, what questions do you tend to ask first?
2. How could asking “What does this show me about Jesus?” change the way you read the Gospels?
3. What have you seen about Jesus in Matthew 16 that challenges or deepens your understanding of Him?
4. What would it look like for you to intentionally spend time “watching Jesus” in Scripture?

### **Reflection:**

Peter had the right answer, but he still had more to learn. Paul had followed Jesus for years and still said, “I want to know Him.”

That should be the posture of every disciple.

Keep learning. Keep watching. Keep following.

When Scripture shows you something about Jesus that challenges the version you had in your mind, do what Peter eventually had to learn to do. Get behind Him. Let Him lead.

And keep saying, “Jesus, I want to know You.”

**Daily Prayer:**

Ask Jesus to help you see Him as He really is. As you read Scripture, pray that your assumptions would give way to what is actually revealed about His character, priorities, holiness, compassion, and relationship with the Father.