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JOHN 14:7-14

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] Father, we're just reminded of your compassion. We know you're a God of truth and you've marked out truth for us, but you also care for us so deeply. You care about the personal things we're going through. You care about, even as you mention, the clothes that we have, or the hairs on our head are numbered, or you care for the birds. You care for us so much more than that. Your compassion for us is much needed. We praise you for that, we acknowledge your greatness in that. We admire your compassion for us. Lord, we need to bask in that today. Just hearing different stories from people this morning about the challenges that they've faced this week and I ask that you extend that compassionate heart to them in a way that's very personal and meaningful. Lord, thank you for giving us hearts that experience joy, but also experience pain. We ask in this moment that you'd help us to open our hearts. Especially if there's tendencies to become bitter or critical, that you'd help us to release that and experience the healing that comes through your compassion in our lives. Thank you for giving us your word and now we're going to open it up. Lord, these are your people, eager to understand your word, and this is your word that we're going to look at. So we ask that you would connect the two. Connect your people to your word in a way that brings change into our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

Have you heard that statement "it's not what you know, but who you know that counts"? Have you heard that? The idea is that if you know a network and you have certain people that can help you with a promotion or whatever, it's who you know. But I think both sides of this are true. That it's what you know and who you know that are important.

I'm going to give you an example. I don't like waiting in lines. I just don't like it, waiting in lines. So a few years ago I came to this great understanding of realization (someone helped me understand this) that if you want to pay for something at the store and the customer service area is open, but the lines are all long, you can go to the customer service area and pay. It's a common thing. So I get to jump the lines many times and do that. That was a few years ago. I did it in Whole Foods, at ShopRite, in Home Depot. But now you don't even have to... you can go online and shop and you can go to the store and pick it up. You don't have to do anything with the lines. Some of you are so smart and savvy, you go online and order all your stuff and have it delivered to your house. It's what you know sometimes that helps you skip the lines. And sometimes it's who you know that helps you to skip the lines.

I'll just tell you one story about Ed Miller. He's my friend and he has a membership to the 9-11 Memorial Museum in New York City. So we were taking some folks up there and Ed was our guide. So you get there and there's lots of people in line. There's a line for about fifteen minutes to buy your tickets. That gets you the privilege of getting into the hour line or the hour-and-a-half

line to get in because they only let a certain number of people in at a time. But Ed Miller has a membership. So he had tickets for us. We didn't have to wait in the first line and we didn't have to wait in the second line. We just go right up to the front and they let us right in.

But Ed says, "I have one extra ticket, more than we need."

I said, "Well would you like me to give that away?"

He said, "Sure."

So I go over to the line with everybody getting ready to pay their tickets and I said, "I have one ticket for a person that's by themselves." People are looking at me like I'm... Do I have an honest looking face? You would think people would be raising their hands or something. They're just looking at me staring. "It's one ticket. You can get in. You don't have to go through these lines. You can come over here." And finally this one young lady says, "I'll take it!" I said, "Here you go. You don't have to wait in this line. You don't have to wait in that snake of a line over there. Come on in with us." She came into the museum and really appreciated skipping the lines. In that case it was who you know helps. Knowing me, but I know Ed Miller. And so it's who you know that counts.

Now in our story today as we come to this passage of scripture, Jesus is going to communicate this idea of what you know and who you know. When we get this idea, it opens the door for us into a world, a different part of our world than we're used to. Because we're living here in the mundane, the things that are going on, and God wants us to continually live into this bigger world. So open your Bibles with me, if you would, to John 14. In John 14 we're going to look at this passage starting in verse 7 and going to verse 14. Stand with me as I read this passage to you.

John 14:7-14, Jesus is speaking to His disciples in the upper room. We've been tracking Him where He's going. I just want to park here and let this idea soak into us today. He says to His disciples – *"If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

You may be seated.

There are three words that I want you to see that are repeated several times. The first one has to do with *know*. We're going to look at that because if we know certain things, that's going to help us understand this different kind of world, the spiritual side of the world that we live in. If we know. The next part is what we believe. So *believe* is going to be a key word in the passage. Another word has to do with doing or works. And that's the third word.

Now if we know those three and we're going to exercise those, then we come to the secret weapon at the end. That's where we're headed today. We're going to understand the know, the believe, and the do, and then we're going to understand what the secret weapon is to engage these in our lives. That's where we're headed.

Now in order to understand the *know* I want you to read the first verse there. Notice it says – *“If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”*

The word *know* is used three times, but it's two different Greek words. Now the New Testament was written in Greek. As we study the Bible we go verse by verse. We're trying to understand the actual words that are being used and we lose something in the translation, if I could say that. Or maybe I should say when we understand the Greek words behind this, it gives us greater insight into what's happening in the passage.

So let me take this apart, just this first verse for you, and show you what it looks like. He's saying *if you really know me*. Now the first word here is *ginosko*. It's a common word for *know* in the New Testament. It means to know by experience. It might mean to know a person by experience, but it also means to know something in a personal way. So truth. To have some truth that you know. So *ginosko* is to know by experience. This, by the way of illustration, is the same word that's used for a man and a woman who get together in order to have a child. The Bible says he knew her and they had a child. So this word *ginosko* describes this connection. It's used in this way to describe experiential knowledge. This isn't just about information. So Jesus is saying to His disciples as He's getting ready to leave them. They know that. He's already told them I'm going away. And He says to them – I want you to know me.

If you're here today and you're not yet a Christian... I shouldn't use the word Christian because sometimes that's a misnomer. People think that because they've attended some church somewhere or are in America or something, they're Christian. What I mean by that is you've accepted Christ as the Lord of your life. You've made a choice to invite Christ into your heart. When you do that, there's this personal relationship that you enjoy with Jesus and you know Him in that personal way. So if you're not yet a believer today, that's your first step. You want to make that commitment and ask Jesus to come into your life. You're just basically saying, “Lord, I know that I'm a sinner. I need a Savior. I know that you're the Savior of the world and I want to invite you into my life to control me, to run me. I want to seek your will. I want to do what you want me to do and I want you to empower me.” That's what it means to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

I want you to see the passage isn't written to nonbelievers. It's written to disciples. Jesus is talking to people who are already on board and He's describing to them there's something that

you can have that's going to help you get into this world, and this is knowing God the Father better. If you know the Son, this is the first thing He says – *If you really know experientially, then you will know my Father as well.*

Now this is the word *oida*, which means the light bulb comes on. “Oh I get it” is basically what it means. So He's saying if you know me experientially then the lights are going to come on inside and “oh I know the Father.” And then notice the rest of the verse says – *From now on you do know him and have seen him.* In other words if you know Jesus as your personal Savior, if you know Him in that experiential way, then you know the Father.

Now this is big news for these disciples because Jesus has told them about the Father when He said, “I'm going to teach you how to pray.” How does this start? *Our Father.* Right? Explaining that to... He talks to them about how the Father is compassionate and cares for us and takes care of us even better than the flowers of the field or the birds of the air. Your heavenly Father knows the needs that you have. So this is big news for them to get to know the Father and Jesus is sharing with them. Because when you know the Father, good things happen in your life. We're going to see more about that in a minute.

Now Paul uses the same idea of *ginosko, oida* in his writing. So I want you to see how this is amplified in another passage of scripture because Paul is saying something similar. He says – *I keep asking the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father...* So he's back to this idea of fatherhood of God because everyone of us has a hole in our hearts that is only filled by God as Father.

Now we all have earthly parents and sometimes there are frustrations that we have with our earthly parents or hurts or pains that we have with them that cause us struggles. In fact I would say all of us grew up with imperfect parents and all of us have this deeper need for God as Father to fill that in our hearts.

So Paul is praying for the Christians. Again, notice the passage is to Christians he's writing to. He says – *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him experientially, get to know him better.* We all need that. I hope this week in your relationship with the Lord you'll get to know Him better, experientially know Him. Not just in your head know Him better. But when that happens he says – *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that they know* (that is the light bulb will come on, your heart will get enlightened), *you may know the hope to which he has called you.*

You'll get this hope idea. When you know God as Father, this hope kind of comes into you and we need that hope this week. If you're a young person facing challenges at school with social challenges, social relationships, school pressure, expectations of parents about your schooling, you need that hope. That ultimately comes with an experience with God the Father. So Jesus is describing what that looks like.

Now as He does that, notice in the next verse what Philip says in verse 8, he says – *“Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”* We will be satisfied. That's what the word *enough*

means. I've got it. That's all I need. I imagine in some cultures they serve you food around the table and then the host, the mom, comes out. She comes, "Here have some more. Have some more. Would you like some more food?" So they're trying to push the food. And you know, "I've had enough. I'm satisfied." That's the idea here. Philip is saying just show us the Father. And that will be enough for us. You see, when you know the Father there's a satisfaction that you experience that you really need. That you're not going to find in another place.

Let me show you how Paul uses the same word. He's talking about the problem that He has with the thorn in the flesh. You might have one of these thorns in the flesh. Maybe it has a name. You can put a name to it. Or maybe it's a thing or a situation. But it's something that just continues on in your life. Paul is describing God's grace and what God's grace does for him. He says – *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is enough. My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* It's like the "I got what I need on my plate here. I don't need any more food. It's enough. It's all that I need."

In our lives each day when the pressures come, when the challenges face us and God's grace is available to us, it comes from the Father and it is enough for us. So Philip is saying that in the dialogue in the upper room here. He's saying just show us the Father. If you show us the Father that will be enough for us.

And Jesus said – *"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?"*

This is one of the stronger times where Jesus is saying, "I'm God." Don't let someone tell you that Jesus doesn't say that. There are sometimes when a person will say, "Oh you know Jesus never claimed to be God." I would say just take a look at the Bible and read it a little bit and you'll see that Jesus did claim to be God and here's one of the passages that make it pretty clear.

There are some people who look at religion in the world and they imagine that all religions have a place and that they're trying to get to the same place. That's not what Jesus is teaching. There is one way for us to experience God and that's through Jesus. That He is God. When you realize that when Jesus came to earth He didn't just come as a man. He did come as a man, but He was a God. Somehow 100% man, 100% God. He comes into the world and He's different. When you start thinking about that and you start realizing that, it just opens the door for your heart.

I was pondering this whole idea this week and just wow, this is really big to know God as Father. And that Jesus, knowing Him as my personal Savior allows me to get to know Him better.

Jesus continues and says – *"The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."* Now I'm going to show you as I continue to read here, I want you to see here the word *do* and *work* how often it's used here. Because the first thing we're doing is we're seeing the word *know*. We need to know God and experientially expand our understanding. So knowing God is important. Now He's talking about doing. Notice He says – *"Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."* That's an interesting relationship between Jesus and the Father.

You know I have a hard time understanding the God-man, how that all comes together. It's a miracle that's taking place. But even Jesus is saying it's the Father who's working through me. If you understand that idea, it's going to be really important because He's going to pass it onto us. In the same way that the Father worked through Jesus to do these miracles and accomplish His will on earth, we can experience the same thing in our lives.

He says – *who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*” Whoa. He's telling His disciples this. He's sharing this with us and I'm saying that's just amazing.

What does He mean that we're going to do greater things? I mean He did all these amazing things. I think about the story of the woman who had given up on marriage, been married five times the Bible says. At the well, this Samaritan woman says to Jesus, “I want that living water that you offer.” So Jesus helps her to understand what salvation is and opens her eyes and she experiences something in relationships, husband and wife relationship, that she never experienced before.

God says we're going to do *greater things than these*. I think what He means by that is that we're going to see people change, miracles take place in people's lives that are amazing and powerful. People will be changed. To ponder that is.... God wants to do things in our lives and through us. In the same way that Jesus, it was the Father working through Jesus to accomplish these things, we're connected to the Father now. We have an opportunity. We have potential, more potential I think than we realize, and that's Jesus' message to the disciples. You have more potential than you realize. I'm going to help you understand what this is. You need to understand the spiritual blessings here. It's not just knowing; it's also doing.

He also uses the word *believe* over and over again. When we do that, it opens these doors into kind of the spiritual understanding of the world. Because there's this plain of earthly things that are going on, but at the same time, God is working in people's lives in interesting ways. We don't always get to see the spiritual part, but it's evident. Every once in a while they connect and we go, “Whoa. There's God at work! Wow! There it is again!” and you see God working in people's lives.

I'm convinced that when you get to know God in that personal way and you start allowing Him to do works through you and you believe, it's not just opening a closet. It's not just opening a closet of spiritual things. It's not even opening a big room with spiritual things. It's not just opening a house of spiritual... It's opening a whole new world that God has for us. We could see things that we didn't see before. Knowing, doing, and believing – three key words in this passage that God is using, that Jesus is using to describe to His disciples something else that they could have. Something bigger, something better, and that I think He wants for each one of us.

That's what we're going to walk away from today. We're going to walk away from this message, this passage of scripture with the realization that we have more potential than we're using

because it's the spiritual potential provided by the Father when we get to know Him. God has these amazing things planned.

Now there's two more verses at the end, which I think really demonstrate this exercise. Exercising this verse 13 and 14 is what's going to produce in us the ability to experience the knowing and the doing and the believing. Do you want to believe more? Do you want to do more? Do you want to know more? Here's how we do it.

Notice it says in verse 13 – *And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.* That's a pretty big statement, I would say.

Now there are some people who say, “Well, well, well,” and they start watering down the statement. There is a statement in there *in my name*, so we need to pray in God's name, in Jesus' name. Not just tag the words on at the end, but in the sphere of Jesus and who He is, we're praying in line with God and where He is and He's going to allow us to ask anything. I think that protects us from the crass kind of prayers that are selfish kind of prayers. “Lord, give me this great whatever that's for me selfishly.” Because that's not in His name.

But there are some people who look at this passage and they miss the expanse that Jesus is inviting us to by the words in His name and kind of saying, “Well prayer really isn't that important. I mean God's got it all figured out anyway. Why do we need to be praying in the first place?” and we miss the words that are there. I just want to say there are several things that are important about prayer and the power of prayer and exercising this know, do, and believe that help us understand and become part of the bigger thing that God is doing.

One is that prayer aligns us with what God is doing in the world. It opens the doors for us spiritually because we're praying, “God, how can I fit into your plans today? Lord, would you show me what you want me to do? Lord, I want to be part of what you're doing.” So it does something to us. That's not all it does, but it does something to us so it aligns us with God and His plan.

The second thing I would suggest in the power of prayer (and this is really interesting), when you think about God's will and how He's determined things and how He has a plan, how does prayer fit into that? Well God uses prayer as a vehicle for accomplishing His will. He gives us the privilege to enter into His will and His plans and He actually does things because of our prayers. He uses our prayers to get things done. So when we pray, “God, would you do this?” He uses our prayers to actually accomplish what He wants.

So I like the stories in the Bible where God uses people. You know, like in the story after the Sermon on the Mount and He fed all the five thousand people. Okay so He fed them, but when He fed them, He didn't just have manna come down from heaven like He did in the Old Testament. He told the disciples, “Have them separate into fifties and hundred. Organize them all. You guys get the aisles ready so that we can distribute the food.” Then He used the disciples to hand out the bread. Now could He have done it if the disciples were unwilling? Yes, He could

have done it on His own. He could have just had manna come down from heaven, but He chose to use people.

That's pretty big for us to think about how God wants to use our prayers. There are things that God wants to do in and around your world because you're a praying person. Because you're coming to the Lord and you're saying, "God, I want to ask for something big here. I want to ask for you to do something big here." Prayer is powerful because it's something that God uses to help us become part of what He's doing, but also it accomplishes His will.

A third thing that it does is that it moves us out of our comfort zone. I think we get pretty comfortable. Sometimes we go to our comfort zone. Sometimes we live in our comfort zone. Sometimes we visit our comfort zone. But the point is we have one. Prayer moves you outside of it. Are you ready to move out of your comfort zone?

Prayer is this exercise of something God wants to do that's bigger. Go into the story of what He's saying. What is He telling His disciples? There is some power that you have that's bigger than you imagine right now. I want you to take advantage of those.

Let's just go back to the verses again in our passage. I underlined the two words – *whatever, anything*. Those are big words. When I come before God, I want to pray like Joshua that God will cause the sun to stand still while he finishes the battle. That's a big prayer. That's outside of my comfort zone. I want to pray like Elijah that rain will come down from heaven in the midst of a drought. Because I believe in a God who does big things and He changes things in people's lives.

I want to be that kind of person who takes my reality and moves it up to my theology. Okay, I'm just showing you theology today. Where's your reality fit? I think sometimes in our lives (and me too), my reality is down here and my theology is up here. What do I do something I dumb down my theology and bring it down to my experience. And I say, "Well it says in His name there, so I guess well I'll bring it down to my reality." What I need to do is I need to keep the theology where it belongs. I need to move my reality up to this place where God wants to do amazing things.

I'm convinced that God is ready and willing to do more amazing things than we often are allowing Him to do. So the key here that Jesus is trying to communicate to His disciples is prayer. It's a key element for you. Next week we're going to go into a whole other aspect of how you can move to this next level. But this time He's just saying to them, guys, you need to ask. You need to pray.

I hope that as you go away from this passage today you'll take this idea that yes, we can know God personally. And we need to. God wants us to know the Father better because when we know the Father it expands our world. That we do works that are tied into what God wants to because the Father wants to work through us to accomplish things in our world. That we need to believe. That we're coming in and believing things. You know the people around you in class or work, they don't believe the things you believe. We're believing in what God is doing and wants to do. It's a personal experience. Other people are not going to understand it. We're believing.

You want to exercise those things? Then it's your prayer life that's going to do it. We pray and we pray for big things, the whatevers, the anythings. As we do, God starts to open up that world for us more so we can see that spiritual realm and God grows us in our spirituality in ways that we couldn't experience otherwise. That's His message to His disciples and that's His message to us today as well.

Would you stand with me? Let's pray together. If God is speaking to your heart and you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior saying, "Hey, God's speaking to me," then why don't you come up. Let us pray for you and help you to get connected to God as Father to meet that deep need that you have within your heart.