

# Seek For Life Not Knowledge

by Zac Poonen

---

*This sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing life in Christ over mere knowledge of the Bible. It highlights the need to seek to know Jesus personally, to see His glory in Scripture, and to be transformed into His likeness by the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages a focus on developing a deep, intimate relationship with God rather than pursuing academic knowledge or doctrinal correctness.*

**Duration:** 48:06

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:47, Matthew 11:28, Psalm 139:23, Mark 9:24, John 14:6, Hebrews 4:9, 2 Corinthians 3:6, John 17:3, Philippians 3:10

**Topics:** "Intimacy with God", "Transformation in Christ"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing life in Christ over mere knowledge of the Bible. It highlights the need to seek to know Jesus personally, to see His glory in Scripture, and to be transformed into His likeness by the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages a focus on developing a deep, intimate relationship with God rather than pursuing academic knowledge or doctrinal correctness.

---

## Transcript

You remember the verse we started with our last session was 1 Corinthians 15. Very important verse to remember, verse 47 to 49, 1 Corinthians 15, 47 to 49. The first man is from the earth, earthly, that is Adam.

The second man, Christ Jesus, is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also those who are earthy. There is a particular race of people who are called earthy.

They are following the footsteps of Adam. And then there is a group called as is the heavenly, so is the heavenly, those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Then it says, just as for so many years we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

But it's not automatic. Like you know, nothing is automatic. The Bible says Christ died for the sins of the whole world.

But the whole world's sins are not forgiven. In fact, more than 90% of people in the world, their sins are not forgiven. Even though Christ died to save them from hell, 90% of people go to hell.

Why is that? Even though it's God's will that every Christian should bear the image of the heavenly, it does not happen. Why is that? Because, as I keep on saying, God did not make us as robots. Nothing is automatic.

You have to make a choice. And the choices you make every day determine the type of person you become. For example, whatever your spiritual life is today, you know what it is? From the time you were born again, however many years ago that was, in some cases 10 years, 15 years, in some cases 2 or 3 years, but from the time you were born again, the choices you have made in your life from that day to date, you are today the sum total of those choices.

And if somebody else is way ahead of you spiritually, and he was born again the same day as you, you wonder why? I'll tell you. Because he made certain choices which were different from yours. That's why he is where he is and that's why you are where you are.

And what's going to happen in the next 5 years? In the next 5 years, you will be the sum total of all the choices you make in the next 5 years, and that other brother will be, or sister will be, the sum total of the choices she or she makes in the next 5 years. Nobody is a robot. Nothing happens automatically.

Because without choice, we cannot be what God wants us to be. It's very important to understand that. No matter how much you pray, Oh God make me spiritual, you can pray that every single day.

But the choice you make every day determines whether you become spiritual or not. And that God does not force you, because if he forces you into something, you become a robot. God doesn't want any robots in heaven.

So, let me turn you back to the first man was earthy and the second man was heavenly. So let's look at the first man, Adam. See when God created him, if you read in Genesis, there are some things we have to learn from Genesis chapters 1, 2 and 3. You know why God made everything, and then made Adam last of all? It's like a father who provides a wonderful place for his son to live, builds a grand residence, and every provision is made there, and then his son is married, and says, okay son, you and your wife can have this house.

That's what God built the universe for Adam and Eve. Such a fantastic universe, and such a beautiful garden in Eden. Everything was ready.

All those lovely animals who were not violent in those days, they were all nice and tame and loving. And then he made Adam and Eve, and said, all this I've made. I didn't ask you for it.

You didn't ask me for it. I made it before I created you. Everything was made.

Now it's yours, and you know, he created Adam and Eve at the end of the sixth day, and we read the seventh day, Genesis 2 verse 2, he rested, and Adam did not do any work that day. And he spent that one day with God, and God said, I want to teach you something through this, that in my desire for you as a man, I don't want you to work first. No.

The work in the garden can wait. I want you to fellowship with me first. That's why Adam's first day was not a day of work.

It was a day of fellowship with God. It was the seventh day, the Sabbath, and he was created at the end of the sixth day. So Adam's first day, he didn't have to work.

So the law, which came much later, more than 2,000 years later, God gave the law to Moses, and then he said, six days you work, and the seventh day you will rest. But with Adam, in Genesis 2, it was one day you rest, and then six days you work. Very different.

And in the New Covenant, it is like that. We come back to that original purpose of God for man, which is come to a rest in God first, and then serve Him. That's what it says in Hebrews 4. There is a rest for God's people, just like that first Sabbath.

You read Hebrews chapter 4. The meaning is God doesn't want you to work for Him first. He wants you to have fellowship with Him first. He's more interested in your fellowship with Him than your work for Him.

A lot of people think, I'm converted and I must do something for the Lord. No. You're converted, you need to have fellowship with God.

And from that fellowship will come more effective service than if you go out on your own without fellowship with God and do whatever you think you should do. A lot of Christians, they say, I must do something for God. You know, that's not how the angels serve God.

The angels in heaven don't sit around and say, oh, I must do something for God and run around. No. Jesus taught us to pray, our Father in heaven, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

So we need to think, how is God's will done in heaven? The angels don't run around trying to do something for God like a lot of Christians do nowadays. You know what they do? They do what Adam did on the Sabbath day. They wait before God and say, God, what do you want us to do? And God did a lot of job to each angel.

And they're going to do that. Okay, Gabriel, go down to Israel on earth and tell Mary that she's going to have a child and give this message to her. Okay, Lord.

He goes down, tells Mary that, comes back. So he first went and told Zechariah, John the Baptist's father. Came back, and then the Lord said, he asked the Lord, what next? Now go to Mary.

So that's how, they wait on God. God tells them what to do and they go and do it. And that's a much more efficient way of serving God than running around trying to do something for the other, for God, ourselves.

But that requires listening. You know, Jesus said, Man shall not live by bread alone, not by the work he does, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. So, we have to first listen to the word that proceeds from God's mouth and then go and serve Him.

Let me use an illustration. This is how the Lord taught me in serving the Lord. You know, as a young Christian, I found a lot of Christians who spent so many years, missionaries and many others in India, I observed them.

They were doing this, doing that, doing that, and such a lot of work. At the end of their life, 20-30 years of service, their work is in a shambles. It's a mess.

There are no disciples. The people are running out. Their converts are not even properly converted.

They just want honor and position and all that. Many of those missionaries go home disappointed. A lot of the mission stations, I traveled around all the mission stations in India.

Most of them were in an absolute mess. And I said, Lord, I don't want to end my life like that. I don't want to serve you for so many years and find at the end of it everything is a mess.

No, sir. Show me how to do it. I don't want to run around doing something for you.

I want to listen to you and do what you want me to do. And the picture the Lord gave me, I found one or two people in my, you know, I observed in different parts of the world who had the habit of listening and they accomplished a lasting work unlike these others. So the picture the Lord gave me was, the Lord is the owner of a huge fruit garden.

That's the earth. And here I am coming to serve and collect fruit for my master. And I go to some tree, whichever I feel like, and wait for the fruit to ripen.

And that may take a few years. And after a few years, I come with one basket to the master. And I give it to him, and I say, okay, see you later.

And I give it to the Lord and go back to some other tree I choose and wait a few more years and collect some fruit and come back to the master. And in a whole lifetime, I may get two baskets or three. And what the Lord showed me, a better way is, you go to the master first and ask him, where do you want me to go today? And the master says, go to this tree.

It's a huge fruit garden. Miles and miles, square miles. And he particularly tells me the particular tree I should go to.

Go there. So I go there. And lo and behold, the fruit is ripe already.

Ready to pluck. And in half an hour, I've got a basket full compared to the two years I waited earlier to get a basket full. And go back to the Lord and I say, Lord, where shall I go next? Now go to this tree over here.

And I go there and the fruit is all ripe. And I collect it and come back to the master and I discover, hey, this is a much better way of making full use of my life. By listening to God, who is the master of this fruit garden, who tells me exactly where to go and when to come back, man shall not live by bread alone or by his own bright ideas, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Most Christians do not have the patience to wait on God to listen to what he has to say. Because they're always busy trying to do something or the other for God and they waste their lives. When I started serving the Lord like that, in this different way, in the last nearly 45 years, I found amazing results wherever I went, all over the world.

Almost without any effort on my part. Because it was not my work. The Lord is telling me, go here and I found the fruit is right there.

I come back and the Lord says, now go here and I found the fruit is right there. I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters. It's not just for those who are preachers like me.

For every believer, if you want to make the most of your life, first learn to listen to God. Man shall not live by food or by a job, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Do you know those are the

first words that Jesus spoke in his ministry? We read that as soon as he was baptized, the Holy Spirit took him into the wilderness to be tempted.

And the devil said, turn these stones into bread. You're hungry for 40 days. Those are the first words that came out of Jesus mouth in his ministry.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. It was a quotation from Deuteronomy 8. And he lived like that all his life. And he wouldn't even turn the stones into bread, even though he had the power to do it.

But he said, the Father hasn't told me to do it. What obedience. He didn't go by his need.

His need was terrific hunger, 40 days without food. He said, no. I had to wait for my father to tell me.

It's that type of obedience that made the Father say, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. You know, I have seen that in words of the Father to Jesus at his baptism. And I said, Father, you're my father too.

Can you look at my life and say, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased? I want that more than money or honor or position or even ministry. I want to hear you say that to me. I am well pleased with you.

And what had Jesus accomplished when Jesus the Father said that? Some of us may say, oh, I can't preach like you, brother. I can't travel here and there. Forget it.

Do you know that for 30 years, Jesus did not travel anywhere. He was in Nazareth. He didn't preach a single sermon.

He didn't cast out any demon. He didn't heal any sick person. He did not have anything which we call ministry.

He was just like you brothers, working in some job. He was a carpenter. 30 years obeying his mother and living without sin in his home and in Nazareth.

And at the end of it, the Father says, I am delighted with my son. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased at his baptism. That spoke to my heart.

That is not my ministry God is looking for first. It's not what I preach. It's my life.

And I want to say to all of you, forget about ministry. Start with your life. Live in fellowship with God.

The Lord told Adam, your first day is not labor in the garden. The garden can wait. You fellowship with me.

And I believe that's what the Lord is saying to all of you. Don't think you're going to do this, that, and the other for me. Work, work, work, work.

You'll accomplish nothing. Learn to fellowship with me. Adam's first day was a Sabbath day.

That's a very important lesson. In Hebrews chapter 4, if you read Hebrews chapter 4 sometime, he's talking about the importance of the Sabbath day. That means a spiritual Sabbath where I come to rest.

Now, I want to go to the next point here. When God said on the eighth day, he had fellowship with God on the seventh day. That was his first day.

His second day was he had to go to work. And as soon as he goes to the garden, remember, this is paradise. This is a sinless paradise.

And in sinless paradise, the Lord told Adam, there's one tree you must not take part of. Why did God forbid? I mean, there were 10,000 trees in the garden. Now, if the Lord had said to Adam, there are 10,000 trees you must not touch, you must eat only from one, that would have been very difficult.

But 10,000 trees, you can have anything, but don't go to this tree. And the contrast in Genesis chapter 2 is between the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Those are the two trees which were there in the garden.

And many other trees, it says in Genesis 2 verse 9, which is pleasing to the sight and good for food, the tree of life, Genesis 2 verse 9, the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Why did God tell Adam, don't eat from that tree? So you need to understand the principle here. I don't know exactly what the trees were like, but there's a spiritual lesson here which I'm trying to understand.

What God was saying was, you can eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and then the knowledge of good and evil will be within you. You can choose yourself. You don't have to consult me, God says.

Or, you can go to the tree of life and then you'll have to consult me for every little thing, like the branch in a tree cannot produce a single fruit except being in that tree all the time. Even if it's borne fruit for 50 years, it has to still stay in the tree. That is a picture of the tree of life.

A life of dependence upon God all the time. When God tells me what to do, He supplies me with strength. I don't make my own choice.

I always say like Jesus, not my will, but thine be done. I don't have a will of my own. I have a will, but I yield it.

And I say, Father, I don't want my will. I want your will. The tree of knowledge, let me repeat, is one where I don't have to consult God because I've got the knowledge of good and evil now inside me.

I've eaten of that tree. Okay, Lord, I don't have to consult you here. I've got the knowledge of good and evil.

I think this is good, I'll do this. And I think this is evil, I'll avoid that. Isn't that how everybody in the world lives? 99.9% of people in the world never consult God about what is good and what is evil.

They know themselves. I know, I avoid this, I avoid that. And even a lot of Christians, after they say they've accepted the Lord, they've filled in the Holy Spirit and all these wonderful words they use, but they choose for themselves everything.

I'll marry whom I like. Yeah, I like this girl, it's pretty. I'll marry her.

Lord, please come and bless her. I think I'll take this job, Lord. Please come and bless me.

I think I'll go here. I think I'll go to this city and live here. Please bless me.

Are you asking God to tell you what you should do? Or you're deciding to do something and ask God to come and bless you. He's your servant, as it were. He's not your master.

Lord, I'm doing this, please come and help me. It's like you have a servant at home. Come on, carry my bags and do something for me.

This is exactly how many Christians treat God. And they wonder why their Christian life is so shallow. They are living by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which the Lord said to Adam, will bring death.

So, God made Adam make a choice. The choice was, do you want to live with the knowledge of good and evil within yourself? It's a free, independent type of life. You don't have to pray to me or ask me for anything.

You do what you like every day. You won't do evil. You will avoid evil.

But your understanding of evil will be your understanding of evil, not God's understanding of evil. See, true Christians, they don't do evil things. They avoid certain evil things.

But their understanding of evil is a very low level. For example, most of them don't think anger is evil. Or pornography is evil.

Or sexual lust is evil. It's okay. We can call it forgiveness.

They don't understand what it means to live like the branch in the tree. Jesus said, without me you can do nothing. Helplessly dependent.

That is a life of faith. The Bible in the New Testament speaks about the obedience of faith. I trust God that His way is best.

And I say, Lord, I cannot produce one fruit if I don't depend on you. Jesus said in John 15, 5, without me you can do zero. Nothing.

Do you believe that? Turn with me to John 15, verse 5. I'm absolutely convinced that most Christians do not believe this verse. John 15, verse 5. I'm the vine, you're the branches. The vine was the most common tree over there.

That's why I used that example. You use whatever example there is in your country. Apples, mangoes, coconuts, whatever it is.

I'm the mango tree, I'm the apple tree. And you cannot bear any fruit unless you're in me. Whichever fruit tree it is, the principle is the same.

Without me, you can do nothing. It's an amazing word in the end of verse 5. Apart from me, you can do zero. That means you try to do something without consulting me, you'll find at the end of your life you've accomplished zero in your life.

You may impress a lot of other Christians that you're doing this, that, and the other for God. But you know the Bible says in the final day, all our works will be tested by fire. Everything we have done in our life will be tested by fire.

And some people's life will come forth like gold, silver, precious stones through the fire. And other people, their entire life will be burnt up like wood, hay, and straw. So, I don't want my entire life to be burnt up like wood, hay, and straw.

No. I don't want to just go to heaven. I'll tell you honestly, I'm not interested primarily in going to heaven.

Not at all, actually. I'm interested in hearing the Lord say to me, You are my beloved Son in whom I dwell. That means a million times more to me than going to heaven.

I once told the Lord Jesus, I said, Lord, I'd be ready to go to hell if you're there. It's quite okay for me. Because if you're there, it will be heaven for me.

What are you interested in? Jesus himself? Or heaven? I'll tell you, I'm not interested in heaven. I'm interested in Jesus. I want to be with Jesus.

When I die, I don't want to go to heaven. I want to go to be with Jesus. It's a question of how you think.

I die, where are you going? I'm going to be with Jesus. It's like a wife who is so tremendously, a bride who is tremendously in love with her bridegroom. What is she thinking of? If she really loves her bridegroom, they're going to get married.

Is she thinking of what type of house will my bridegroom make for me? Is it four bedrooms or five bedrooms? Not at all. Her attitude would be, I don't care if it's a hut. I want to be with my bridegroom.

That is a true bride of Christ. Those are the happiest Christians on earth. When a person chooses the tree of life, he's choosing Jesus, not knowledge.

Even reading the Bible sometimes can become knowledge more than knowing Jesus. In the Old Testament, they could not know Jesus because they didn't have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. When they read the Bible, they only got a bunch of laws.

Somebody has calculated that including the Ten Commandments, there were 613 commandments that God gave to Moses. You read that in Exodus and Leviticus. So many laws.

613 laws of which we know Ten Commandments. People had to study this. The ordinary people could not study it.

There were no printed books those days. No printed Bibles. They had to go to the scribes.

You read about the scribes in Jesus' time. The scribes were the people who spent years studying these laws. So if somebody came to them and said, what should I do in this situation? They'd say, according to this book, here it says we must do this.

Now Jesus said something very interesting in Matthew 13. Turn with me to Matthew 13, verse 52. Every scribe, 1352, who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven, and goes on, says, will bring out of his treasure things new and old.

The Old Testament scribe must become a disciple in the new covenant. The kingdom of heaven is an expression of the new covenant church. Today the kingdom of heaven is in the church.

Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And the scribe who studies the scriptures, must become a disciple. So the purpose of reading the Bible today is not to just get knowledge like a scribe.

But to be a disciple. The scribe must become a disciple. Yet, I tell you, many Christians today are scribes.

They glory in the fact that they know the Bible here, this, that and the other. They know this doctrine, that doctrine, and they keep checking whether people's doctrines are right. Once he is checking if a person's doctrine is right, whether he agrees with all the doctrines I believe, because life is not right.

For example, if you were to go to the devil, and ask him, Satan, do you believe God is a trinity? He says, yeah. Do you believe Jesus died for the sins of the world? Yes. This is Satan answering.

Satan, do you believe Jesus rose from the dead? Sure. Satan, do you believe that Jesus is the only way of salvation? Yes. Do you believe Jesus is building his church on the earth? Yes.

Do you believe that every Christian should repent and be born again and be baptized? Yes. Do you believe that Christ is coming back and is going to judge the world? Satan says, yes. Which doctrine doesn't he believe? Can you tell me some doctrine that Satan does not believe? You can get the most fundamental statement of faith written by any church in the world, and Satan would sign it, saying, agreed.

You need to understand the difference between knowledge of good and evil and life. Don't glory in the fact that my doctrines are all right. Satan can say his doctrines are right.

In fact, James chapter 2 says about that type of faith. James chapter 2 and verse 19. He says, do you believe that God is one? Hey, that's great.

The devil also believes that. And you could add a whole lot of other things there. Do you believe Jesus is the son of God? Yes, he believes that.

Do you believe Jesus died for the sins of the world? He believes that. And they shudder. He says, the devil not only believes, he shudders.

He says, you guys don't shudder when you come to Satan's words. The devil is better than you. That type of faith is useless.

And he goes on to say, verse 20, faith without works is useless. Do you know there is a faith which is useless? A faith which does not produce a life of dependence upon God. A faith which comes from the knowledge of good and evil.

You go to this information source, which is symbolized by the tree of knowledge of good and evil. I get knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. This is good, this is evil.

And I become a very good scribe. And I'm lost eternally. When I go to the tree of life, it's not knowledge I get.

It's a knowledge of Jesus himself, which is different from the Old Testament scribe. And Jesus defined, you know, we talk about eternal life. Eternal life is not living for eternity.

Because people who go to hell also live for eternity. Have they got eternal life? No. Whoever believes in Christ, commits to him his eternal life.

Eternal life is not talking about the length of life. No. It's talking about not quantity, but quality.

You know, human beings always think of quantity. How long did he live? How many people are there in the church? How much knowledge do we have? Whereas God is always thinking of quality. So eternal life is referring to the life of God.

Because eternal, listen carefully, eternal does not mean never ending. No. Eternal means that which had no beginning and no ending.

That's eternal. No human being will have eternal life in that way. Because we all had a beginning.

So it cannot be eternal physical life. So eternal life, through John 17 and verse 3, Jesus defined it. Very important.

John 17 and verse 3. Eternal life is to know the only true God and to know Jesus Christ. That's eternal life. It's knowing.

It's knowing the Lord intimately. Never forget this definition of eternal life. It's not how long you live.

It is knowing Jesus and the Father personally. Many Christians don't know the Father personally. That's why they get worried, anxious, and so many things.

They don't know Jesus personally. They've got a lot of knowledge of good and evil of the Bible. They're scribes.

But they're not disciples. Many New Testament Christians are like the Old Testament scribes. They can quote this verse, that verse, the other verse.

They don't know Jesus. Eternal life is to know Jesus. Turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 6. 1 Timothy in chapter 6 and verse 12.

1 Timothy 6 and verse 12. Now remember, Timothy was probably around 45 years old. He'd been a believer for 25 years.

He was a close co-worker of the Apostle Paul. And having been with Paul for 25 years, Paul tells him, Timothy, verse 12. Fight the good fight of faith and take hold of eternal life.

How do you take hold of eternal life? Was he telling Timothy to be born again? Timothy says, I was born again 25 years ago. What do you mean, Paul telling me to take hold of eternal life? Get to know Jesus and the Father better and better and better and better. That's taking hold of eternal life.

Because eternal life, we saw in John 17, is to know the Father and to know Jesus Christ. Just like, you know, when you get married to your husband, you don't know anything about him. Marriage is like being born again.

Okay, you got married, and you're beginning to know your husband. And if you live happily with your husband and fellowship with him, in one year, you'll know such a lot about him. In 10 years, you'll know a tremendous lot about him.

If you're in fellowship with each other, not fighting with each other. For example, supposing on the day after you got married, your husband is at work, and you're the wife at home, and somebody comes to your

house and says, Hey, there's something your husband asked me to do, but I want some clarification. So, could you tell me this particular thing, what should I do? You say, I don't know.

I've got no idea. I must ask my husband. I don't know what I should do.

But 10 years later, if somebody comes and says, Hey, what do you think your husband will say about this? He says, Sure, I can tell you. I know him very well. I know his mind pretty well.

See, what's happened in 10 years, the wife has got to know the husband better. She knows what he will decide in certain circumstances, how he will spend his money, how he will spend his time. She's watched him for 10 years.

That's what happens to us when we live with Jesus in close fellowship. Of course, if a wife is not living in close fellowship with her husband, even after 25 years, she will not know him. Even though legally, she's married.

Many Christians are like that. They're legally, they're married to Christ, but even after 25 years, they don't know anything about what Jesus thinks about or what Jesus feels about a particular situation. They can watch a horrid movie on television and not even realize that Jesus would never watch that.

Yeah. But they don't realize that. Sometimes I wonder whether such Christians are even born again.

They don't know the Lord. When you know the Lord, it affects many things in your life. It affects the TV programs you watch.

It affects what you watch on the computer. It affects what books you read. It affects how you handle your money.

It affects many things in your life. It affects your married life. Everything.

Knowing the Lord. Eternal life is not length of life. Eternal life is to know the Lord Jesus.

So, this is very important. And the tree of life, see, the first man, earthy man, remained earthy because he chose the tree of knowledge. And as long as you choose Bible knowledge, you will remain earthy.

If you want to be heavenly, choose life. That when you go to the Scriptures, you say, I want life. I don't want a knowledge of this verse or that verse.

I don't want an explanation. I want life. If you're more interested in an academic Bible study, more than a message that challenges you to draw closer to the Lord, you're probably going to Bible knowledge, which is also from the tree of life.

Tree of knowledge, rather. See, it says about Old Testament law, 2nd Corinthians, chapter 3. These things are written for our instruction. We must understand it.

2nd Corinthians 3, it says, in verse 6, 2nd Corinthians 3, verse 6, it says in the last part, the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. This again, tree of knowledge, which is the letter, and tree of life, which is the Holy Spirit. In other words, if you read the Bible like a book that you have to study, it'll kill you.

You'll get death. Just like the Lord told Adam, if you go to this tree of knowledge of good and evil, it'll kill you. If you go to the tree of life, you'll get life.

You need to understand, what is the choice Adam made? The first man is of the earth, earthy. Why did he remain earthy? Because his choice was for knowledge and not for life. And my brothers, sisters, if you choose knowledge of the Bible more than life in Christ, you will remain earthy till the end of your days, no matter how many conferences you attend, no matter how many messages you listen to.

So, it's all a question of what you are going to look for. What are you going to look for? Is it knowledge? Or is it life? So, let me show you this passage in 2 Corinthians 3, same chapter, further down at the end of the verse. How can we prevent the pursuit of knowledge? The letter kills.

If I just read the Bible and get a lot of knowledge to preach, some people will study the Bible in order to preach. They kill. They kill themselves and kill others also.

But if I seek for life, I may not be able to preach for 25 minutes, maybe 5 minutes. In that 5 minutes, there will be life. 2 Corinthians 3, in verse 18.

He says, Without a veil in our face, the veil is the law. If there is a veil over your face, you are reading the Bible academically like a law, you won't see anything. But if the veil is removed and you look into the mirror, it's a picture of the word of God.

James 1 says, The perfect law of God is like a mirror. So, you look into God's word. Let me read it like this.

You look into God's word and what do you see there? You don't find knowledge there. You see the glory of the Lord Jesus there. Because, verse 16 and 17, You have turned to the Lord, which is the Holy Spirit.

16 and 17. And the Holy Spirit has taken away the veil, taken away this legalistic way, academic way of studying the Scriptures. The Spirit has taken it away.

And taken away this academic way of studying the Scripture. What do you see in the Bible? You don't see a doctrine. You see Jesus.

Imagine reading the Bible and seeing Jesus there. And, what does he do next? There are two things the Holy Spirit does in verse 18. One, when you read the Bible in dependence on the Holy Spirit, you will not just get knowledge.

You will get a knowledge of Jesus. You will see the glory of Jesus Christ in the Bible. And, he will then change you, verse 18, into that same likeness from one degree of glory to another, to another, to another, to another.

Making you more and more like Christ. Leading you towards the finishing line where you become like him completely. So that is what the Holy Spirit is doing.

Conforming us more and more into the likeness of Christ. So when we read Scripture, and say, Lord, I want to see your glory there. You have sometimes heard me.

use certain illustrations from the Gospels to show you how when you read Scripture, you must see, look for the glory of Jesus there. Let me show you one or two examples. You probably heard me say that before if you have heard my messages, but I will repeat it.

In Matthew chapter 12, this is an example of reading the Bible and looking for Jesus and not for a doctor. Matthew 12. Jesus cast out a demon in verse 22.

There was a demon-possessed man brought to him. And he delivered him from the demon. Matthew 12, 22.

And the Pharisees, everybody said, oh, the crowds are amazed. They said, this is the son of David. But the Pharisees were jealous and said, no! He is Beelzebul.

He is the devil, the ruler of demons. And we read, Jesus said, Have you spoken a word against me? Verse 32. No, forgive him.

What does it strike you when you read that? Do you just read it as information? Or do you see the glory of Jesus there? To call a man a devil is almost the worst insult you can give him. You call him a fool or a pig or whatever you want, it's not as bad as calling him the devil himself. Have you had people call you by bad names? Who get angry with you and call you by a bad name? How do you react to them? Do you get upset and avoid them? Yeah, maybe you need to avoid people like that because they're not good people to hang around with.

But what is your attitude towards them after he's called you by that bad name? Jesus said, verse 32. No, forgive him. Immediately.

Do you immediately forgive that person who called you by a bad name, which is much less than being called a devil? That's what I mean by seeing the glory of Jesus. I say, Lord, I see your tremendous glory, which is so different from human reaction. If somebody were to call another human being the devil, that fellow would get so upset.

But you just forgive. I see the glory of Jesus there. And I say, Holy Spirit of God, make me like that.

Change me into that likeness. That is the purpose of Scripture. Let me give you one more example, which also I've used before.

Turn with me to John chapter 7. You won't remember this if you don't see the verse in the Bible. It's very important to see these verses in your Bible if you want to remember them. John 7, verse 53.

It says here, Everybody went to their own home. That is after Jesus had preached in the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus' home was in Galilee.

A hundred miles away. Here he was in Jerusalem, preaching in a temple. And after he finished preaching, John 7, verse 53, everybody went to their own home.

And the interesting thing is, nobody invited Jesus to their home. He had no place to go to. Isn't that sad? A preacher comes to preach to you, and you don't even bother to find out where he's going to stay for the night.

Never happened to me. But it happened to Jesus. And so it says, Jesus, chapter 8, verse 1, went to the Mount of Olives.

Nobody invited him, so what did he do? He walked to the Mount of Olives and slept under the trees. And the next morning, verse 2, he came in the morning and again began to teach. And, the thing that I saw there is, he was not offended that nobody called him.

to his home the previous night. He did not begin his sermon by saying, you know, last night as I was sleeping under the trees in the Mount of Olives to sort of hint that nobody invited me. He wasn't doing such cheap things.

He was perfectly happy to sleep under the trees, and not even mention to anybody. Everybody must have thought, oh well, somebody else must have invited him and taken him home. Nobody invited him.

But all that crowd must have thought, yeah, surely somebody would have invited him and taken him. And he didn't want anybody to know the inconvenience he suffered that night. Because nobody took him home.

His home is a hundred miles away. You see the glory of Jesus there. The next thing is the Holy Spirit says, I want to make you like that.

I want to make you like that where people ignore you, even though you have served them selflessly. They ignore you completely. And it doesn't disturb you.

And you don't want them to feel bad about it. You don't remind them about it. You don't say anything.

I tell you there are many things we can learn in the scriptures if your goal is to know Jesus better and to see his glory. Think of how much you have missed in the Bible by studying it like a chemistry book or science book where you get information. I don't want information.

In the early days, I studied the Bible like that. Because I didn't have a spiritual father to tell me like I'm telling you. I wish I had.

But I never had. So I drifted many years. But finally God showed me.

Read the scriptures to see the glory of Jesus. And ask the Holy Spirit to make you like that. And that's changed my life.

It changed my relationships with people. It brought so much rest and peace into my heart and freedom from anxiety and tension and so many things. So that's just an example.

Eternal life is to know God better. So why do the earthly people, why don't they become heavenly? Here's the answer. They go to the scriptures for knowledge and not for life.

They don't seek to become like Jesus. They want to know more, to preach or to share or something like that. Make the passion of your life to know Jesus.

One last verse. Philippians chapter 3. Now Paul is writing this after having been a believer for 30 years. He was converted on the Damascus road.

30 years later he writes this. What does he say? He says, Philippians 3. My passion, verse 10, is that I may know him better. That I may know him.

Say, Paul, haven't you known him already in these 30 years? Yes, but I want to know him more. I want to know him more and more. And so, let's make that our passion too.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/seek-for-life-not-knowledge/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**