

Coming to Know God

"If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that his nation is your people." The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

- Exodus 33:13-14

Having just led the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses prays for God to lead the Israelites so that they may continue to know God and live with his blessings. Moses understood that without God, his nation would be lost and indistinguishable from other nations. And how does God respond? God promises that his presence, which represents all his immeasurable glory, would journey alongside Moses, which ends up being 40 years of wandering in the desert!

In my experiences, I have also wandered. I found it hard to find community in my first few years at the fellowship and found it difficult to have a passion to learn about God and his word. And yet in the past year, through serving as an IG leader I began to discover small hints of how God journeys alongside us. Being responsible for leading Bible Study, I dug deeper into the Bible and found meaning in it. In wanting to help support people in the group, I witnessed how they saw moments of God's love and work in their own lives. Through all of this I was humbled – in my journey of wandering God has always gone with me, he has always invited me to know him, and in him I can find rest.

As we accept that invitation to know more about God, we uncover more of God's plan for us. This inspired my vision, which is for the UTCCF community to be a fellowship that **desires to know God**, to strive to patiently uncover his plan for us **and to progress in faith** with that understanding of God in mind.

Knowing God and His Plan for Us

What does it really mean to know God? Part of that is understanding his character and how he acts.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

- John 10:14

Jesus compares us knowing him to how he knows the Father. That is an amazing comparison, because Jesus is God! Jesus and God are inseparable, and for us to know God is to be inseparable from him as well. As a result of coming to know God, we become inseparable from Christ and his purpose, just as Jesus was completely entwined with God's beautiful plan for salvation. In knowing God, we would be motivated to live lives that glorify him and embody his mission – to have the desire to serve and sacrifice for one another, and to reach out to unbelievers to create one flock under one shepherd.

I hope that our fellowship can come to know God as Jesus knows the Father. My prayer is that we would find comfort and joy in God's love that he would lay down his life for us and to be able to hear God's voice and experience him personally. My hope is that as we in UTCCF come to know God daily, God's plan will slowly unfold and become clearer to us as to where we fit into his mission.

Progressing in Faith

As a response to knowing God, part of the faith journey is putting what we know about him into practice. This is done through reflecting on where we begin, understanding what it takes to practice and live out our faith daily, and to always have our eyes fixed on the goal, which is to come to know God and his plan for us and to fulfill it. For us, we can be confident that God will be with us in every step, giving us peace as we face challenges along the way. In the case for Moses, God's presence was with them the entire journey even though it took them many years to finally reach the Promised Land.

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

- Philippians 4:9

We are challenged to practice – which implies discipline and improvement over time. It is my hope that every member of UTCCF will be able to witness growth and progression in their faith. With each meeting as a Christ-centered community, with each Bible Study, and with each intentional moment spent with God, God can slowly take root and be planted in our lives. And as students move on after graduation, the beginnings of the planted roots will lead them to testify and glorify God in the future.

Implementations

- One of the things I want to focus on is building up our faith step by step. Can promote continuity in what we learn:
 - Map out spiritual walk visually or in a journal as a large group activity and review at the end of the year
 - Encourage the use of IG as a space for members to follow up with what they shared about or committed to through prayer or accountability partners
- In the role as a vice president to help build up leaders:
 - Encourage support among all leaders – Committee, IG, and ministry leaders – by grouping them off every month and having them meet and discuss their visions
 - Provide leadership opportunities, where people could more easily take initiative. This could include rotating different IGs not just for carrying worship equipment, but for tasks such as large group prayer or with hospitality and welcoming.

Personal Evaluation

What are one or two strengths (skills/qualities) you possess, and how have you demonstrated these in the past?

One of my strengths is patience – I am willing to persevere with tasks and also am willing to put in the time to invest in people as well. Serving in IG this year, I spent extra time in Bible Study preparation sessions to try to better understand the passages. Also, I am a logical thinker. When I lead Bible Study, I always try to ensure that the studies follow a logical flow so that the conclusions that are drawn are informed by the observations that are gleaned from the passage.

What weakness do you possess that may hinder you in your chosen role, and how will you commit to improving in this area while you are serving on committee?

Sometimes it is easy for me to settle in comfort and become passive in leading. I am aware this is a weakness for me and my discipleship group is aware of this too. They act as a support group that keeps me accountable through devotions, prayer, and rebuke.

What can you personally offer to help the other members of committee in their difficulties next year? What is your personal commitment to ensure that committee works well together as a team?

I understand that in committee there will be moments where opinions may clash and that people may have different expectations. For me, I consider myself to be first a listener before making judgements, and I am committing my time to hearing what people have to say before offering my input. Even if there is extra responsibility in committee, I believe that there should still always be joy in serving. If there is conflict, I will commit my energy towards addressing team issues first before they grow and in being transparent with my thoughts. Even though I will be busy next year at school, I am committing to offering my energy and time for UTCCF as an equal priority.

If you are not elected to your chosen role, how will you still serve and carry out your vision at CCF next year?

I still have a passion for Bible Study as a way of knowing God, and seeing growth over time in a group. I will consider serving as an IG leader again or as a VitaMin leader. I believe that the impact is the same in any role at the fellowship, while committee may be a support role in the background, being a leader upfront is a role where you interact directly with the fellowship.