

Can I Have A Personal Relationship With The Risen Jesus Christ?

Most professing Christians believe Jesus was a real person.

They believe in His teaching and supernatural acts. They believe that Jesus rose from the dead, but if you ask them, “do you have an intimate personal relationship with Jesus Christ?” they would be very surprised, even annoyed.

“Yes, I believe in God and I go to church” but what you are asking isn’t that just the belief of the born again brigade and other religious nutcases!!

This is a fundamental misunderstanding of what Christianity really is.

Most people think that Christianity is a religion among others that lead us to God, when actually Christianity is a relationship with Jesus Christ, its founder.

Well, how can I have this relationship with a man who left the earth some 2,000 years ago and ascended into heaven?

How do we get to know any other person?

We spend time listening to what they say and watch what they do.

How can we do this today, 2,000 years too late to meet with Jesus as He walked the roads of Palestine and spoke to all who came to listen to Him.

John 16:12-14 [NIV] “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. **But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.**”

After Jesus Christ died on the cross, was resurrected and ascended into heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to “guide us into all truth”.

The Holy Spirit did this in that generation and continues to fulfil this promise that Jesus made.

The Holy Spirit reminded Jesus’ disciples of the very words and actions of Jesus Christ and they faithfully recorded them in four accounts of His life.

The Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth, then guides us in the application of the commands and words of Jesus to the culture and society in which we live.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the **Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. **But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**”

Note Jesus likens the work of the Holy Spirit to His actually visiting us.

John 14:21 [NIV] “**Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.**”

Jesus will show Himself to us.

How can we ensure that this new relationship with Jesus Christ will begin and continue?

From the scriptures we have read we can see the Holy Spirit is a key to this intimate relationship.

We need to know how the Holy Spirit operates so we do **not** hinder this work of Jesus Christ bringing us into the intimate relationship He desires to have with us.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire;”*

It is the Holy Spirit in us that will make us *“on fire”* for the way of life that Jesus taught and lived.

Ephesians 4:30-32 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**”*

Bitterness or resentment is the major way we grieve the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 [NIV] *“Don’t you know that **you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?** If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”*

God desires to actually live in us, but remember God is holy and He will only dwell in a temple that is also holy.

If we are honest we know we are far from holy.

So how are we made holy and acceptable to a holy God?

To be holy we must be without sin.

How does this happen?

Romans 5:1, 8-9 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” ... “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!**”*

We are justified by faith in the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

To be justified means to be just as if we had never sinned.

When is this blood of Jesus Christ applied to our sinful life and make us sin free?

1 John 1:8-10 [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.**”*

We confess the sins that God’s Word, the Christian Bible, tells us is sin.

1 John 1:5-7 [NIV] *“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. **But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**”*

Jesus Christ's words illuminate our sinful life, as we walk with Him in the light, His blood will cleanse us from all sin.

That is the first step we need to take at the beginning of every day.

What is the next step towards this desired relationship with Jesus through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life?

Luke 11:11-13 [NIV] *“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**”*

We have to humbly ask God, through Jesus Christ our High Priest, for the active presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Acts 5:32 [NIV] *“We are witnesses of these things, and so is **the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.**”*

Obedience to God is also a condition of receiving the Holy Spirit.

John 7:38-39 [NIV] *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, **streams of living water will flow from within him.**” **By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**”*

The Holy Spirit is never stagnant.

He will come into our lives but what He produces in us must flow out from us to others as life-giving waters.

Meeting and walking with Jesus Christ will be costly.

Luke 14:26-27, 33 [NIV] *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate [love less by comparison] his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” ... “In the same way, **any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.**”*

Jesus Christ will **not** take second place in our lives.

When we invite the Holy Spirit into our lives He will only come and act on His conditions, in His way, because He is God.

Isaiah 64:8 [NIV] *“Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. **We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.**”*

We must never forget our position in our relationship with the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Romans 9:14-16, 20-21 [NIV] *“What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, **“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”** It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.” ... **“But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?”***

A loving but humble relationship on our part.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

The word translated “bodies” is the Greek word “soma” – meaning the whole body, mind and human spirit [Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11].

Total surrender of our life.

This is the least we can do in response to what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

John 5:24 [NIV] *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

Before Jesus Christ was in our life we were spiritually dead.

Now we have eternal life.

Becoming a Christian is **not** something we can do “part time”, it involves total commitment to one person, Jesus Christ.

Where is this relationship leading each of us as disciples of Jesus Christ, individually and as a Church which He is building?

Ephesians 5:22-32 [NIV] *“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church, for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church.”***

The marriage between a man and a woman is likened to the intimate relationship Jesus Christ is desiring with the Church.

Jesus calls the Church His bride.

Revelation 19:6-9 [NIV] *“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! **For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.**” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of **the saints**.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”*

This spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ will be consummated at His second coming.

Matthew 25:1-12 [NIV] *“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead,*

*go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. **The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. “Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’”***

The two Greek words translated “know” in most of these scriptures relate to a relationship.

“*ginōskō*” – indicates the beginning or conception of a relationship and “*oida*” suggests a perfect knowledge in a relationship.

The foolish virgins had **not** perfected this relationship at the time of the bridegroom returning.

We at first know Jesus to the extent of who He is and what He is.

But this has to progress to become an intimate working relationship like that of a husband and wife who do extend the Kingdom [family] of God by having children born into that family.

Any relationship as intimate as this takes time to develop and mature, through conversation and working together in a common mission.

John 17:3 [NIV] *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

The Greek word used here is “*ginōskō*” indicating that we will be forever maturing in our relationship with Jesus Christ, our Creator and then husband.

If this is what eternal life will be, wouldn’t it be wise to seek to begin that relationship now?