

LEADERTREKS **SERMON SERIES**

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ know God.

SCRIPTURE

ROMANS 11:33–34; 1 JOHN 5:13–20

SERMON OVERVIEW

To be in a relationship with anyone, you must know them. This is especially true of our relationship with God. This lesson will help students understand how we know anything about God at all. Scripture teaches that we are entirely incapable of comprehending God apart from his revelation to us. Even with access to God's Word and God himself through Christ, as finite beings, we will never fully understand the infinite ways of God. Students will learn that one of the mysteries of following God is that while we're unable to know everything about God, he's invited us to know *him* intimately through the work of Christ.

OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- What is one of your most meaningful memories with a close friend or family member?

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

READ ROMANS 11:33–34

POINT 1: We can't fully understand God

In this passage, Paul references two characters from the Old Testament, Isaiah and Job. Their stories remind us that God has decided what is true and good, not us. Scripture says that his ways are not like ours. In fact, they're so far above us that without him, we can't understand God at all. Apart from God, we're hopeless.

ILLUSTRATION: Have you ever seen the starry sky on a clear night, away from a city or any other light source? It's incredible! There's nothing that can remind us of how big God is (and how small we are) like experiencing awe and wonder. Many scientists have studied the world we live in, and while they've made many great discoveries, no one can fully understand our universe. We live on a rock that's flying through space, and that space is so big that our rock, which feels huge to us, is barely a speck compared to the universe. And God created it all!

It can be easy to assume we know everything or think we have God figured out. But spending time in creation can remind us that he's far beyond what we can wrap our minds around and that any understanding we do have is a gift from a good Father who invites us to experience him in his creation.

READ 1 JOHN 5:13-20

POINT 2: God has revealed himself to us

Thankfully, God doesn't leave us in our ignorance but reveals himself through his Word and creation. Even though we'll never fully understand God, he's given us everything we need to know God himself and be in relationship with him.

Paul and John knew a lot about God. Each of them had personal encounters with Jesus that changed their lives. As a result, they wrote books and letters teaching and encouraging Christ-followers from their personal experiences of Jesus. Despite all their knowledge, however, both writers concluded that everything we know about God is given to us so that we might know God, instead of merely knowing facts about him.

POINT 3: God invites us to know him

In this passage, John is assuring Christ-followers that even when life is uncertain, we can be certain that God is present. Our understanding of God is to develop a relationship with him, not just memorize facts about him. God doesn't expect us to understand him, but he does invite us to know him.

ILLUSTRATION: If anyone could fully understand God, you'd think Jesus' disciples would've had a handle on things. The twelve spent three years following Jesus and listening to him teach. They were eventually entrusted with spreading his Good News to the world. Yet, again and again, the Gospels tell of the disciples failing to understand what Jesus was teaching.

But even though the disciples couldn't fully understand Jesus, they knew him. They'd been his closest friends for three years—they'd seen how he loved "unimportant" people and how he brought peace to chaos. They knew he had the words to eternal life, even if they couldn't always understand those words.

Like the disciples, we can know God, too. Maybe not in exactly the same way, since the physical Jesus is no longer on earth, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, God within us. The God of the universe is inviting you to know him in a personal and transformational way. How are you going to respond?

CLOSING REFLECTION

Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.

- How will you respond to Jesus' invitation to know him in a personal and transformative way?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some ways you get to know God more?
- What are some things you don't understand about God?
- How is it possible that even though we can't understand God, we can know him?
- How do you feel knowing the only way we can know God is by his gift of revealing himself to us?
- How can God's creation remind us that he's beyond our comprehension?
- How has God revealed himself to you through his creation?
- In what ways has God revealed himself in your life?
- How is God inviting you to know him more?
- What is one way that God is inviting you to grow closer to him this week?

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.

Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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