

# SESSION 2 – Pursuing a Deeper Relationship with God

## Sharing About Exercises (25/20 MIN)

Keep in mind that in order to have time for everyone to share, each person should plan on around two minutes. The goal here is for you to share with the group how your exercise from last week went and possibly something you learned about God or yourself (it is not a teaching time).

## Opening Prayer (1/1 MIN)

## Premise of this Session (2/2 MIN)

Although we might think that “eternal life” is only something to enjoy after we die, Jesus says that eternal life is to know God.

## Key Scripture Passage (2/2 MIN)

John 17:3 (NIV) Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

## Commentary (to be read aloud in the meeting) (10/10 MIN)

What is your first thought when you hear that those who believe in Jesus are guaranteed eternal life? Do you immediately imagine heaven, new bodies, and age after age of perfect peace? What if you were told that the eternal life Jesus is speaking of is about a life in the here and now, in our current bodies, amid all our familiar surrounding circumstances?

What if eternal life isn't just about the position of our existence in time without end? What if Jesus is asking the Father to give His disciples a quality of life, to live now, resembling His own—one rising out of the quality of relationship He has with His Father?

During His earthly ministry, Jesus exhibited an awareness of the fullness of who God is, an intimate knowledge of His character, and an absolute love for His ways. Nothing could move Jesus from His devotion to the Father and His desires. We see this in Matthew 4:1-11, when Jesus was tempted by Satan. He steadfastly refused to be enticed. And, again in Matthew 26:39 in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

In return, nothing can move the Father's devotion away from His people. Romans 8:35 says: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?”

Jesus prays that His disciples will have the same relationship with the Father that He does. Do we want that relationship? Or have we convinced ourselves that it was meant only for Jesus, and we must muddle through our lives until He returns in glory? Can we believe that God wants to give us this quality of life now? If we answer yes, how do we get it?

**How do we develop an intimate relationship with another person?** First, we must listen to them and understand the various ways they want to be known (throughout scripture, God gives us many ways to know Him). Then we must invest time and effort to pursue the other person. In similar fashion, we develop an intimate relationship with God by seeking Him. Jeremiah 29:13 says: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Perhaps the first step in experiencing an intimate relationship with God is deciding what kind of relationship with God we expect. Is He an object we aim our desires at, expecting gratification, a sort of cosmic Santa Claus? Do we want Him because He can give us good things if we behave ourselves? Is He someone we fear, who demands we perform perfectly or be condemned? Or do we want to know Him because He created us in His image and desires to be our Father and adopt us into His family as sons and daughters?

Listening for God's invitation to more life with Him, answering the above questions, and committing to pursuing Him all require vulnerability, a willingness to become helpless and (spiritually) naked before Him. It also requires turning away from the gods and idols of this age.

Thankfully, we have been given a series of practices called “spiritual disciplines,” which we will learn more about as we continue this course. These practices have developed over generations by faithful followers of Jesus to help us receive the gift of the eternal life Jesus prayed for us, “disciplines” that lead us into a mature understanding of God and His ways and prepare us to walk with others in their life with God too.

As we close this part of Session 2, consider the story of Jacob’s pursuit of Rachel from the book of Genesis. Rachel’s father Laban agreed to give Rachel to Jacob in marriage after seven years of faithful work for Laban. Think about that; seven years of work sounds like a long time. So, we are surprised to read that these seven years to Jacob only seemed like “a few days to him because of his love for her” (Genesis 29:20). That’s what a loving relationship looks like. Time and hardship and toil seem insignificant because our desires are set on one thing that matters most.

That’s what it will be like – what it is like – to pursue God. Whatever time it takes will seem like nothing because of the love that we have for Him which will transform our temporal existence into the “eternal life.” Starting now.

Who are you becoming?

### **Discussion Questions (25/10 MIN)**

1. **Read** John 17:3. Do you believe Jesus is talking about a life after death in His prayer? Why? Why not?
2. **Name** some of the “eternal” characteristics of God.
3. **Read** John 10:10 in the HCSB version. What does an abundant life look like to you?
4. **Consider** Matthew 4:1-11, the story of Jesus being tempted by Satan in the wilderness. What are some of the characteristics of an abundant life from Satan’s point of view and from Jesus’s point of view?
5. **How do you think** our perception of current affairs in the world would change if we pursued the abundant, eternal life of Jesus?

### **Spiritual Formation Exercises (15/14 MIN)**

Please pick one exercise (or make up an exercise) that you want to do for the coming week.

1. **Journal the Word.** Spend some time in the Bible this week searching for passages where God communicates His desire for you. Write them out in your journal along with your responses to them.
2. **Meditation.** Schedule a time once a day to pray Psalm 139:1-4, 23-24. After you pray, sit quietly and listen for God to reveal to you what He sees in you.
3. **Worship.** Go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) > Session 2 > Worship Exercise. Listen to the video.
4. **Breath Prayer.** Practice breath prayer using Jeremiah 31:3 as follows. Breathe in – “I have loved you with everlasting love.” Breathe out: “I have continued My faithfulness to you.” Do it several times throughout the day. Meditate on how the reminder of God’s love for you makes you feel or if/ how it changes your responses to life around you.
5. **Service.** Ask God to give you an opportunity to sit with someone this week who is struggling in some way. If/when it comes, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you towards a more Jesus-like response as you make yourself available to that person’s needs. If the opportunity doesn’t come, meditate on if/how intentionally making yourself available changed something for you.

### **Prayer Time (10/1 MIN)**

### **Online Resources for this Session**

Visit [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) and click on **Session 2** tab for: **Session 2 Intro** video, the **Going Deeper** commentary, **Sermon Video** and **Transformation Story** about being transformed in the aftermath of severe anxiety attacks.