

# DOES HE KNOW YOU?

By His Close Friend and Confidant, Jeri Mertes



## Part One: That Dog

Have you ever gotten a new puppy and nurtured it and grown up with it? Whether it was a male or female, that dog had a relationship with you like no other. Whether or not you have a dog now, or you have ever had one, and if you yourself were a caring, responsible dog owner, then I really needn't remind you of what that was like, but just in case you forgot, let's take a look.

You became everything to that dog, and that dog was loving, loyal and totally devoted to you and your every move. That dog followed you everywhere, laid as near to you as possible, watched your every move, and waited patiently for you to return every time you went away. And when you returned, that dog was overjoyed and just couldn't tell you in enough ways how happy it was at your return.



That dog listened to every noise you made or word you spoke and responded with cocked head, wagged tail, yelps and jumps and ear twitches that indicated the level of understanding between the two of you.

And when scolded, that dog was miserable with pain and longed for your forgiveness. And you couldn't stay angry for long.



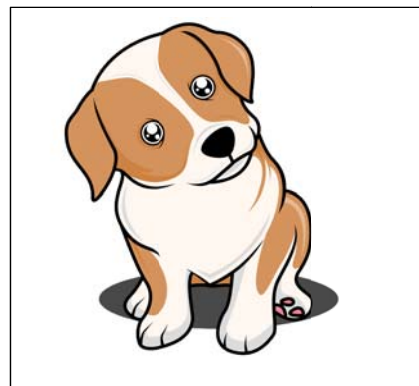
That dog knew more about you than you knew about yourself. That dog knew when you were happy, content, tired, confused, depressed or feeling sick. In fact, that dog could tell when there were things wrong inside of you that you weren't even aware of, like an oncoming heart attack or seizure. That dog empathized with you through every tough day, every crisis, every heartbreak, and was there for you every time you were in need, while at the same time, rejoicing with you through every triumph and joy that you experienced together.

That dog obeyed your every command, demanded practically nothing from you, gave you wholehearted devotion and knew your every habit and mood. That dog knew when you were upset, tense, or scared, and also if you were in danger.



That dog would have protected you with its life, and would have risked any danger to itself to protect you if you were threatened in any way, and I'm pretty sure you would have done the same for that dog. If that dog needed emergency medical attention, and you didn't have the money, somehow you would have done everything possible to make sure he or she was taken care of. And that dog adored you, and again, I'm pretty sure the feeling was mutual.

Let's face it, you had a *relationship* with that dog like no other. And if you've never been fortunate enough to have a relationship like that in your life, well it's never too late to get a new puppy.



But, seriously, there is a relationship JUST LIKE THAT available to every human being if they desire to have it. And if you'll just turn the word 'dog' around, you'll see exactly who you can have that relationship with. There is no other creature to whom God has bestowed the great honor of having that same 3 letter name – dog.

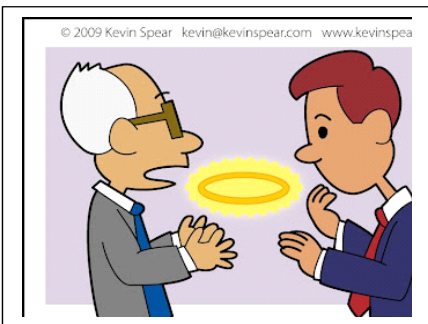
And God not only named the dog after Himself, but he modeled the character of the dog after Himself as well, and through the relationship of a person and a dog, He has shown the

exact kind of relationship He wants to have with every one of us. A relationship characterized by the many terms I used above, like love, devotion, obedience, sharing and caring, protecting, closeness, joy, listening, learning, responding, following, waiting, watching, talking, understanding, and even being willing to die to save someone else (just like Jesus did for us).



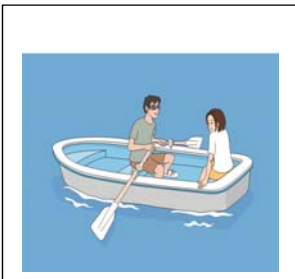
## Part Two: Do You Know Him?

For many years I told people that I was 100% sure I was going to Heaven because I had gone forward in church, said the sinners' prayer, repented of my sins and accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. And those are very good things to do – important steps to beginning a relationship with Jesus. And that is what every pastor we knew at the time had emphasized for us to do to be sure we were saved.



Unfortunately, I, like so many others, thought that if I just tried from that point on to stick to my commitment, modeling my life after the life of Jesus, I would skip right on along to eternal life and Heaven. But as time went on, there was one verse that kept troubling me, and I learned it wasn't the only place in scripture where Jesus alluded to 'knowing' Him, and even more so to Him 'knowing' me.

And, whenever I heard these strange testimonies from some 'Christians', I felt uncomfortable and certain that they were imagining things, or worse, just trying to make themselves more important than other Christians. For example, one of the first of these stories was about a family whose daughter dropped her expensive prescription glasses into the lake



where they were boating and was afraid to tell her parents until they got home. They prayed, got back in the boat and asked the Lord to show them where the glasses were – in that big lake where they had no landmarks of any kind and had traveled way out into the lake. They said that the Lord showed them right where the glasses were, and her dad dove into the lake, went straight down and came up with the glasses.

Now, as a Christian myself, I totally doubted that this story could be true. But I also just didn't really know what to do with that whole concept. And I never forgot that 'true' story.

Another time, I heard about a woman who was driving home late at night and said she heard God tell her to take a left at a dark, unmarked dirt road coming up, and she decided to do so. As she drove down that road she saw a light ahead and pulled up near a small shack that was totally isolated from everything.

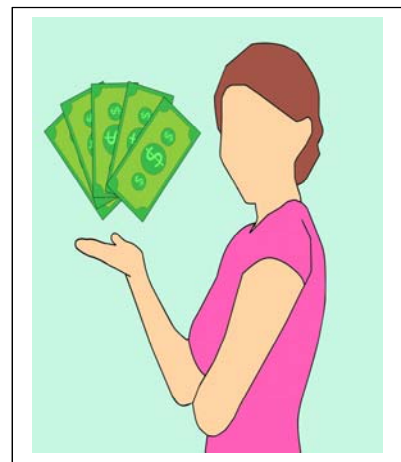


She warily went to the door and knocked, and a woman called to her to come in. As she entered, she found a very sick woman, with a very sick small child, with no telephone, unable to care for herself or the child, and in desperate need of food, water and medical attention. The sick woman told her she had been praying and believed God had just sent her an angel of mercy. Of course, she took them immediately to the hospital where they were helped and restored.

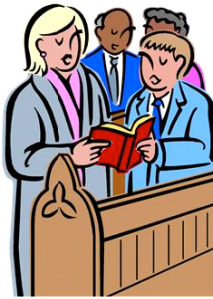
Once again, I dismissed this story as something that just doesn't happen. After all, what makes someone think the God of the Universe would talk personally to THEM? (Now, in 2021, I just wonder what would have happened to that lady and her baby if this woman *hadn't listened* to God. Since that sick woman had been asking God for help, would He have sent someone else? I believe he would have. Today I wonder how many times He might have tried to send *me*, or tried to get *me* to pray for someone He had put on my mind, but I missed it because I wasn't listening . . .)

And then there were a couple of times, separate incidences, many years ago, that different people came to Steve and I out of the blue and told us that God had told them we needed their help. As Christians, we had probably been in prayer asking God for His help.

In both instances, they literally gave us rather large amounts of money at a time when we desperately needed it, and said they didn't need it back. One told us to 'pay it forward.'



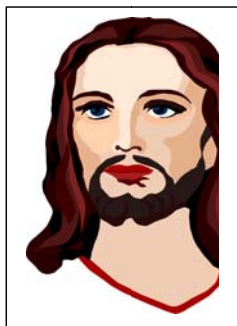
In spite of all this, and other incidents that followed, I still stubbornly refused to believe any of them. After all, I was a 'saved Christian,' and I had never experienced God talking to me... or HAD I ?



One day, thinking about all of this, I asked myself if it was possible that *God had been talking to me*, but I just wasn't *listening*. I had been a 'Christian' for about 20 years, and had read through the Bible 3 or 4 times by then and attended numerous Bible studies. I remembered



reading that all good things come from above, and there had been many good things that had happened to me in my life, and many great ideas that God had apparently given me, that I had not acted upon or thanked Him for, but instead just brushed them off with thoughts like, "Well, that probably wouldn't work", or "Someone else has probably thought of that already," or even "What a dumb idea that is – where did THAT come from?" Maybe God HAD been talking to me, sharing ideas, acting on my behalf, and I just never acknowledged Him for it, or thanked Him, or acted on any of the things He was telling me. In other words, I wasn't listening.



### **PART 3 Does He Know You?**

Then, because I had a desire to grow closer to him, I started to listen to my 'thoughts' and try to determine whether or not they could be from God. A real turning point happened in 2015 when my husband, Steve, and I went through a very traumatic experience and I began thinking about ways to resolve the horrible situation taking place in our lives (which is another whole long story).





One morning I awoke with an idea that I quickly dismissed as 'impossible,' impractical,' 'a useless waste of time,' etc. Then, suddenly, I thought about Ephesians 3:20 and asked myself, "What if this idea is from God and could, in some unbelievable and unimaginable way actually help our situation?"

I presented the idea to Steve, who also thought, at first, that it couldn't possibly have any merit for numerous obvious reasons, but then after discussing it a bit, we decided to act on it since we had no other options at the time anyway.

WELL, that one moment in time, when we decided to take a chance (because God may have put the thought into my mind) and do something we felt was really stupid and pointless, turned out to be the beginning of a faith growing journey that is still ongoing today, and has produced literal miracles, one after another, in our life ever since. We went where He told us to go, and had a divine 'appointment' there that led us to another step (again totally off the wall) which led to another, and another and so on.



Over thirty 'steps' and 'miracles' and divine interventions and divine appointments later, over a five month period of time, and because we kept listening, thanking Him and taking the next step, *no matter how impossible we thought it was*, we ended up in the most amazing place with the most amazing life we *never* could have imagined or even thought to ask for. God opened impossible doors, broke through impossible barriers (we feel like He moved mountains for us),

provided impossible physical resources, led us to wonderful new relationships, and the list goes on. In short, I am now a true believer in knowing that God *does in fact talk* to those who will listen (and listening is the key), *does in fact provide* for those who have 'an attitude of gratitude' for every little thing (and thanking Him all the time is the key), and *does do actual miracles* in the lives of those with whom He has a loving and trusting relationship.



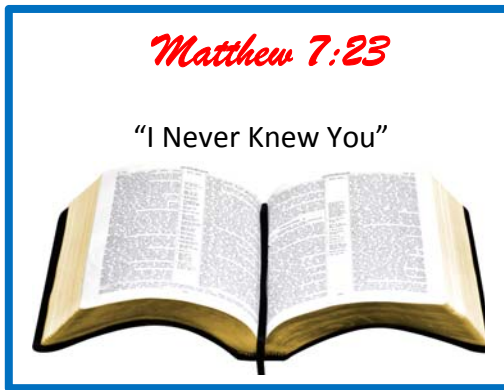


The trouble was that, prior to this experience, neither Steve nor I actually had a *relationship* with Jesus. We had religion, and plenty of it, but religion, with all of its trappings, rituals and regulations, just isn't where it's at or where Jesus wants us to be.



I knew who He was, knew many facts and stories about Him, what He could do, and so much more, but, even after having read the Bible several times through, I didn't really KNOW HIM. And what's even worse, I became aware that I might be one of those Christians to whom He might say on that day, "I never knew you." I realized that those four words would have to be the worst possible words

any Christian would ever want to hear, and I knew I had to do something about it.



Since Steve and I were on the same page 'religiously' all through the then 30+ years of our marriage, we discussed all of this and determined to begin thanking God for every little thing He does for us, and had been doing, every single day. (And since then, I could fill a book with all the stories of 'things' he has done for us that are *way beyond* coincidence – I call them 'God-incidences').

I am reminded of a family, with two daughters - one was ungrateful and never happy about anything that happened to her or for her, while the other was always thankful and appreciative of everything that was done for her. Their parents realized that no matter what they did for the ungrateful one, it was never enough and never appreciated by her. Of course, this made them *want* to do more for the grateful daughter. This story makes me realize that God must feel the same way about His grateful and ungrateful children.



## First Meeting with Jesus

NOW, I am 100% certain that I am going to Heaven to spend eternity with Jesus, and I feel certain my first meeting with Jesus will be something like this:

Rather than allowing me to fall to my knees in His presence, I am sure He will rush toward me, wrap his arms around me, hug me and kiss my cheeks and say, “Welcome Jeri – I have been waiting for you and I am so happy you are here.”

Then, I believe, he will dominate the conversation because I will be speechless (for once) and He will begin to assure me of things that may still be on my mind, such as “Don’t worry about Steve (assuming I go first), I have him covered and he’ll be just fine – and not too far behind you. And your kids and grandkids, ...” (and He will name them all by name and tell me that he hasn’t let go of their hands no matter how stubborn they are being).



And He may even tell me the good news that my mom (to whom I repeatedly witnessed trying to remove the barriers of her ‘religious’ life so that she would come to a saving relationship with Jesus) was there in Heaven with Him. He may say, “I know you didn’t think you reached her, but on her deathbed (*where I was not present*), I sent a mighty angel to break through the barriers created by your unsaved brothers and their families who didn’t want you there, and because of you and your prayers for her, and your determination, she made the right decision with her last breath.” At least, that’s what I’m hoping He will say, because I really won’t know if she’ll be there until I get there myself.





## The SIMPLE GOOD NEWS

So you see, knowing Jesus is really simple. It's not about how often you attend church, or how many hours you volunteer, or how many times you read the Bible, or even about setting aside 15 minutes (or even an hour) every day to 'spend time' with Him.

He wants to be there with you every minute of every day, just like your precious doggie did, sensing your moods, giving you ideas, helping you solve problems, having conversations with you, and then listening for YOU to thank Him. It's as simple as working a jig saw puzzle and asking Him to help you find that difficult piece, or the one you dropped on the floor.

And it's as simple as saying, "Thanks, Lord for that good night's sleep", or for waking you up on time.

And it's as simple as asking for His help when you go to take that test, or better yet, while you are studying.

And for standing between you and that car that was out of control, or for protecting your home during that storm.

And it's as simple as asking His blessing on your meal, and thanking Him for making it nutritious for you (because He can, and He will).

And as simple as thanking Him for giving you eyes that see, and a strong immune system.

He's there just like your heartbeat.

It's that simple . . .

**And on that day, He will know you!**

