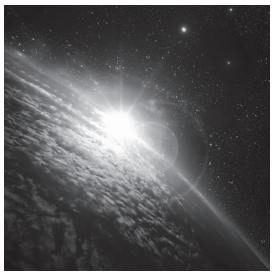
SESSION 7
LEAD IT: COFFEE HOUSE



STUDY NOTE

While your Prep It was divided into four segments, in a nod to the atmosphere of the coffee house, the coffee house guide addresses only the first segment "*Knowing Christ.*"

GOALS

As students experience Philippians 3, they will:

- gain insight into what it means to know Christ, not simply know about Him.

MATERIALS: Group

- Optional: A prize for the student who correctly answers the "Bonus" review question.

MATERIALS: Each Student

- A Bible
- A pen
- Student pages for Session 7 "Knowing Christ"
- "Appointment with Christ" student page
- Scripture sheet for Philippians 3

SESSION INTRO

Prayer

After the group has gathered and you have your coffee, help students focus their hearts and minds on God in prayer. Welcome the Lord's presence and ask Him to give your students the grace to respond to His conviction.

Review

Help your students stay connected to the big themes of Philippians by asking them:

What did Paul consider his past accomplishments to be in comparison to gaining Christ?

What were some words Paul used to describe how he was pursuing a relationship with Christ?

Bonus question: What tribe of Israel was Paul from?

Open

Ask your group to brainstorm on this question:

What are some things people hope to get out of a relationship with Christ?

Let the discussion be open-ended here. Possible answers include love, forgiveness, acceptance, peace, eternal life—and, if they're honest, perhaps things like "a husband or wife," "money," "success" and "a good life."

Tell the group that in Philippians 3, Paul shared what he desired out of a relationship with Christ. Ask them to find this by reading Philippians 3:10–11 using their Scripture sheets. As they read, they should mark the four desires Paul mentioned. Then ask students to tell you what they found. Direct them to record the four desires as they write them in the spaces provided on their journal pages. Be sure that you end up with this list:

1. To know Christ
2. To know the power of His resurrection
3. To know the fellowship of sharing in His suffering
4. To become like Christ in His death

Study Note: Other guides for this session (high school, college age) address all four desires that you just noted. As noted above, we have selected one, "Knowing Christ" to explore for the coffee house guide. You may want to check out the options in the other guides.

DIGGING IN—KNOWING CHRIST

Share with your group that, for the sake of time, you'll be exploring only the first of those four desires.

Set the stage by asking the group:

Is there a difference between knowing Jesus and knowing *about* Jesus?

What would you say that difference is?

Now ask your group to read the passages on the following page using their Bibles. The verse references are also printed on their journal pages. As they read, they should pay attention to the difference between *knowing* Christ and simply *knowing about* Christ by looking for words like "know," "remain," and "abide." There is space on their journal pages for them to take notes on what they learn.

Students can dig into these verses individually or as a group. As they do, the charts on their journal pages will begin to look something like this:

	What do you learn about knowing (or NOT knowing) Christ?
Matthew 7:15–23	***If we don't know Christ:*** *-Jesus will say He didn't know us.* *-we can still do great things, but they don't count eternally.* *-we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.* ***If we do know Christ:*** *-we'll do the will of the Father.* *-we can enter the kingdom.*
John 15:1–11	***If we don't know (remain in or abide in) Christ:*** *-we can't bear fruit.* *-we wither up (spiritually).* *-we're thrown away as branches.* ***If we do know (remain in or abide in) Christ:*** *-we will bear much fruit.* *-we can ask and will receive.* *-we will show ourselves to be His disciples.* *-this will bring glory to God.* *-this will give us complete joy.*
1 John 5:20	***If we don't know Christ:*** *-we will not know truth.* ***If we do know Christ:*** *-we may know Him who is true.* *-He gives us understanding.*

TAKING IT INWARD

Now reassemble the group. Then briefly discuss the passages, prompting the discussion with these questions:

Based on what you just read, what will happen to us if we cruise through life without truly knowing Christ? Did that alarm anyone? Why?

On the flip side, what do we gain if we know Him?

If you're wanting to have a fruitful life, what should be your first priority according to John 15?

The NIV uses the words "remain in me," but a more accurate word here is "abide" (NASB, ESV). The word "abide" connotes that we're to dwell in Him, make ourselves at home with Him, and spend quality time with Him.

Which word better describes your relationship with Christ lately: "Activities" or "Intimacy"? Why?

When you have your quiet time, what do you typically spend time doing—hearing straight from Jesus (i.e., the Bible) or reading what someone else heard from Jesus? Which do you think is better? Why?

Hand out the page entitled "Appointment with Christ." Ask students to fill in the calendar for the next week as best they can, filling in the time designated for school, work, practices, and so on.
Then ask them to carve out at least one block of time—an hour or more—when they can spend time simply getting to know Christ. Suggest that they use the time to "read the red" (Jesus' words) from Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John (John 14–17 is a great passage) and listen to what He's saying to them. Encourage them to journal their thoughts as they spend time with Jesus. The group may even want to set up a phone network to help keep one another accountable to their appointments with Jesus.

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Before you close, ask the group to think of the most meaningful thing they learned about Jesus in this session. Have them write this on their journal page in the space under "What I Learned about Following Christ."