

Not a Fan: Knowledge or Intimacy?
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Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! (Psalm 139:1-6 NLT)

"To know them is to love them." You may have heard that phrase used to describe someone with a reputation for being kind and loving. It is certainly an applicable description of God. If you really know Him, then you know what true love is all about. Last week we looked at what is involved in being a follower of Christ. This week we will begin to investigate what separates fans from followers.

Digging Deeper

A fan knows ABOUT God, but a follower ACTUALLY knows God.

- Being aware of someone's existence and reciting facts about them does not imply intimacy. For example, we may know who the President is, but most of us have no personal relationship with him. Being a fan is easy. Being a follower requires an investment. What kind of investments are you making daily to enhance the intimacy of your relationship with God? What are some things you know you could be doing but for whatever reason have not yet taken seriously?
- What characteristics are evident in someone who has a deep relationship with God?
- Have you ever felt envious or inspired by observations of someone else's connection with Him? Have you noticed that spending more time with such a person makes their desire and effort to achieve that connection feel contagious?

God knows US and wants us to know HIM.

- Making personal worship a daily priority is the best way to begin to feel closer to God. Do you find that people or material possessions distract you from taking the time to really know Him? What are some ways to create balance in this?
- Scripture assures us of God's omniscience. He records our tears, knows every hair on our head, and is aware of each thought before we think it. Does this bring comfort or concern to your heart? What advantages do we have in the assurance that God knows us in every way? While we can never know the mind of God, talk about some of the many benefits of becoming more in tune with Him?

Intimacy is developed over TIME, with HONESTY, in FELLOWSHIP with other followers.

- Fans of Jesus never move past their knowledge of Him to true intimacy. As we previously discussed, He doesn't want a gaggle of fans. He requires an "all in, cards on the table" kind of devotion that is displayed by picking up our crosses daily to follow Him. Otherwise, we are just talking mouths with no legs to stand on. Are you willing to be 100% honest and available to ensure that this relationship goes the distance? Well, it's gonna cost ya! What would you say are the biggest roadblocks you face in transitioning from fandom to being a true follower?

- Have you ever felt a nudge in your spirit to stop whatever it is you are doing and fully engage with a piece of scripture or another person? Are you obedient to listen in those times or do you typically just move on with your business? How could disobedience in those circumstances contribute to the struggle of becoming a true follower of Christ?

Conclusion

Last week we talked about the value of a D.T.R. talk (Define The Relationship moment). It's time to define our relationship with Christ – is it characterized by knowledge or intimacy? It's time to step into the light. Time to cross out the moniker of "Fan" on our "Hello, my name is ___" sticker and replace it with "Follower". God offers the deepest intimacy for all of his children. The question is, will we seek it?