



## **NOT A FAN**

### **“Choosing Intimacy”**

*Luke 7:36-50*

November 20, 2011 A.M. Service

**What is a Fan?** An Enthusiastic Admirer

**What is A Follower?** One Who Is Completely Committed

**God Knows Us Intimately**

**God Wants Us To Know Him**

**God Pursues Us**

**God Call Us To Pursue Him**

**Fans Choose Knowledge...**

**Followers Embrace Intimacy**

**How Do I Become A Follower & Not a Fan?**

It's Understanding Believing With Your Head and Heart the ABC's of becoming a Christian

Then Following Him in a Relationship With Him for the Rest of our Lives!

- ✓ There is No Forgiveness Without Repentance
- ✓ There is No Salvation Without Surrender
- ✓ There is No Life Without Death
- ✓ There is No Believing Without Committing

### **Our Response:**

1. Have you given your heart and life to Jesus Christ – Are You a Fan or are you a Follower? You can become a follower by accepting this free gift of God if you will by faith believe and surrender your heart and life to Him! It's as simple as ABC. **Admit** to God you are a sinner, **Ask** for His forgiveness, **Believe** Jesus is God's Son, **Confess** Him as Savior & **Commit** Your Life to Him as Lord for the rest of your life & being His fully devoted follower!
2. Have you asked Christ into you heart, but never made it public? Have you been baptized – identified with Christ & His church through Baptism? If not, you can make that decision today & be obedient & follow through & become a part of the Bethsalem Family. Step out and tell everyone, I am signing up for Duty!
3. Do you need a church home? – a proper foundation – without one a Christian is a soldier with no army to fight with him or to help him fight. Don't just attend – step over the line today and join this church family!
4. Encourage you to get into a Small Group either Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m. or Wednesday Nights @ 6:30 p.m. and pursue deeper and further this series of Not a Fan
5. How would you rate your relationship with the Lord today? Would it be more on the knowledge side or the relationship side. Rate 1-10 (1 being low and 10 being high) your knowledge of Jesus. Do the same for your relationship (1-10). Do you find yourself more like Simon the Pharisee or like the woman in the story? Why?
6. Where do you need to improve? How can you improve that this week? Make specific ways that you can improve your relationship with Him. By the way, two of the most important ways to pursue that intimacy is in your own daily Time alone with the Lord and involvement here at Bethsalem in Small Groups & Worship every Sunday
7. Are you pursuing Christ in the same that He is pursuing you. Are you going after that relationship? What will you do this week to pursue Jesus more?

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In Luke Chapter 7, we read about two people who encounter Jesus on very different paths. Jesus is invited to eat at Simon the Pharisee’s house.

Simon doesn’t give Jesus a kiss when He walks in, though that was the custom—at least on the hand. Typically the custom would’ve been to wash the feet of your guest or to have a servant do it. Jesus’ feet go unwashed. Oftentimes when you had a guest, especially a distinguished guest, you would give them some inexpensive olive oil to anoint their head. That was their custom. None of this happened for Jesus. He was ignored!

So Jesus is eating at this house of this pretender, and in the middle of their meal there is an uninvited guest, and the Bible tells us in Luke 7 that she’s a known sinner. A woman of ill repute. She walks into this house and she is weeping and she is crying, and she falls at the feet of Jesus and the tears now are dripping off her cheeks and onto the dirty, muddy feet of Jesus that should’ve been washed by the Pharisee. And she sees that they’re not washed; she sees how her tears are making the dirt run off of His feet and she undoes her hair. I don’t think she planned this. She would’ve assumed His feet would be cleaned, but they’re dirty.

So with her tears she washes His feet and with her hair she dries His feet. She begins to kiss them, crying, broken. She pulls out a jar of very expensive perfume and she pours it on His feet.

Let’s freeze that moment, we’ll come back to it. Keep this story in mind as we talk a little bit about intimacy.

**ILLUS: Baby and Mother from Kyle Idleman** – I’m not sure if you know this or not, but when a baby is born, it cries a lot. Because it has no other way to communicate, no other way to say what they want or need, they cry. When my children were babies and they were crying, I never knew what was wrong. I could never figure it out. I mean I was trying. I tried to understand what they needed, but I just didn’t know. And when I didn’t know, I would try everything. Process of elimination, right? I’d pick them up and hug them, give them the bottle, change the diaper. In the end, though, I didn’t know what to do. But my wife just knew. She would

listen to the cry and say, “Oh, she’s tired.” Sure, enough, the baby needed a nap. Or she’d say, “Oh, she’s hungry,” and so you’d give the baby a bottle and all was right with the world. My wife would hear another cry and she’d say, “Oh, she needs her diaper changed. She wants her daddy to change it.” At that point, I figured that my daughter wasn’t really asking for me to change the diaper, but you don’t argue with the baby whisperer. Still, despite using her ability to get me to change diapers, my wife had an intimate, intuitive connection with all of our babies. In fact, there’s almost no relationship more intimate than a mother and her baby. Because a mother is able to know and understand her child’s wants and needs in a way that no one else can. Surely you’ve been in a room before with friends or family and a baby starts to get fussy? All of the sudden, everyone’s passing around that shrieking baby like a hot potato, hoping to see who has the magic touch? Nobody can get the baby quiet, but then mom walks in the room, and the baby just hears the voice of the mother and is somehow calmed. That’s an intimate relationship, knowing and being known completely.

In a picture, that’s intimacy. And until you’ve witnessed or been in that kind of relationship, you won’t know what intimacy is. I could read you the definition, explain where the word comes from or how the word is used, but you wouldn’t really know what intimacy is. You would just know about intimacy.

### **God Knows You Intimately**

Probably the best Biblical word for intimacy is the word “know.” It is first used in the context of relationships in Genesis 4:1. Genesis 4:1 simply says this: that Adam knew his wife Eve. That’s from the King James—we’re going old school, here. And the Hebrew word for “know” here is the word “yada’.” The definition for yada’ is “to know and to be known completely.” But the NIV translates the word a little differently, because it puts it in context of what’s happening. So your Bible probably says, [Genesis 4:1: “Adam lay with his wife Eve…”](#) You get the picture. That is our context for yada’. But don’t giggle and brush past this. This is not just a yada, yada, yada moment, ok? This is a yada’ moment between a husband and a wife. It’s this intimate connecting on every level.

To know, to be known. I think it's a beautiful picture. There's something to be said for the sacredness of sexual intimacy that when we first read about sex, it's about intimacy, not about physical pleasure.

There are other Hebrew words that could have been used, words used later in Scripture referring to the physical act, or even procreation, but here it is this intimate connecting. 1 Hebrew scholar calls it, a mingling of the souls

**ILLUS: Story from Kyle Idleman – It's hard to understand this until you see the difference between a brand new couple and a couple who've been together for a long time.**

Two different couples sit at each table. One table had a young couple. They might have been newlyweds, but I bet they were still dating. This couple was all over each other. Snuggled up close, talking to each other rapidly. They were making jokes, interrupting one another, their food was getting cold. But they didn't care. They just kept talk, talk, talk, talking. Next to them was this elderly couple, and I'm guessing they had been married for decades. It's possible they've spent over half their lives together. They didn't say a word. Nothing. I watched as they just sat there in silence, not saying anything. I finally pointed this out to my wife, and I said, "Look at that. Isn't that kind of sad? It starts off this way, with this couple just talking, talking, talking, so much to say, so much to share, and then decades later you have this elderly couple just sitting there in silence, and it's sad." And my wife said, "I think it's kind of sweet." I kind of nod in silence, trying to be agreeable, but I had no idea why that's sweet. Why is it sweet for me to sit here quietly? I don't understand. And then it hit me. It's sweet because they are communicating in silence.

They're connecting in silence. For them, just being together is ample space for connection. They're able to communicate without saying anything. I don't know what they were saying to each other—maybe, "Why is that guy staring at us over there?" But they sat at their table, and they were able to connect because they share an intimate bond.

Now, you may not think that couple was actually able to talk to each other without speaking, but you understand their connection. You understand what it means for a woman and man to have intimacy, to yada' each other. If you trace the usage of yada' through the Old Testament, you'll find that over and over again, this is the same word that's used to describe God's relationship with us. Over and over, yada' is the word that's used to describe how God knows you and how He wants to be known by you.

Weird, right? The same word, the same connection used to describe a man and a wife is used to describe how God wants to know you. This completely changed the way I saw my relationship with God. Thinking of the day-in day-out connection that my wife and I have, I'm embarrassed to look at how my connection with God compares. I wasn't connecting with God the way I connect with my wife. But learning this taught me something: my relationship to Jesus is not a weekend fling. It's not a casual encounter. It is yada', a deep knowing. It's intimacy. David uses the word yada' about six times to describe how God knows us in Psalm 139. 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 know, You know, You know. David speaks to God in this intimate way. It says, "God, You know how I feel, You know how I hurt, You know what I'm thinking."

### **God Wants You to Know Him**

While it's crazy that God knows us that deeply and intimately, it's even more crazy to me that God invites us to know Him. God wants His soul to mingle with ours. For some wild reason, the Creator of Heaven and Earth has offered an invitation to you and me. He's opened his heart and said, "I want you to know me more closely and minutely than you know anyone else. I want you to know my heart, to connect with me on a level that can only be reached through the most vulnerable intimacy. I want our souls to come together, for both of us to know the other deeply and wholly."

When we read that in Scripture, it sounds kind of poetic and beautiful like classical literature. I think people are comfortable reading that like they would a piece of poetry. But if someone actually sent you a letter with that in it, you'd probably freak out a little bit.

Reading that from a real person, wouldn't it kind of make you blush? It's almost too much, right? You feel almost claustrophobic when you get done reading it. That's ok. Many of us have a hard time knowing how to deal with intimacy. We can do pretty well at avoiding it, but when it's right in our faces, some of us kind of lose it. Then it's not surprising one of the

most common responses to unavoidable intimacy: fear. You could understand that, right?

Honestly, intimacy can be pretty scary, because it involves allowing yourself to be vulnerable. And many people fear intimacy with others and with God because they know that vulnerability and pain go hand in hand. So many people have experienced a betrayal, or a crushing blow from someone close to them. They opened up, they made themselves vulnerable, and then someone let them down.

And when we make ourselves vulnerable to God, we know He's going to find some things that we're not proud of. Think of the sinful woman in [Luke 7](#). A woman of ill repute, she knew she had sin in her life that made her unworthy to touch the Messiah. And because we've all fallen short, we know that God's going to look into our lives and find things that He doesn't condone. So it kind of makes sense that many people would be afraid of that vulnerability.

But followers know that there's so much more gained from intimacy with God, because then we know that He's there with us through any pain we endure. That comfort, knowing that God's with you, can only come through intimacy.

**ILLUS: Story – when guys and girls relationships change** – from cooties to coo coo for each other – 1<sup>st</sup> guy goes for it, and rest make fun, until it happens to you – then we go, oh, that's what's that's about! It then becomes a pursuit – we become willing to do whatever it takes to get that person and we even do crazy things to let them know how crazy we are about them! Think about those love songs: **ILLUS: Love Songs**

### **God Pursues Us**

[I John](#) reminds us that it was Christ who first loved us and died for us before we were ever even born! Because He has pursued us and offered us the most important relationship we can have – a personal intimate relationship with the God of the Universe, the Creator of everything and everyone – and yet choose to pursue a relationship with you! Astounding when we truly stop and think about it! Is it because He needs something from us? He needs our money, our worship, our relationship, NO – He doesn't need those things but He wants those things because He wants our love and affection – He desires that from us! A relationship!

## **God Call Us To Pursue Him**

He calls us – He offers the invitation this morning to come after Him – to pursue Him – why? Grace, mercy, unbelievable love it's like Mark 13:44 when a the man went and sold everything he had to buy the field because of the treasure that was hidden there – that treasure could represent salvation. The call this morning is to pursue Him and nothing else. When you were pursuing your wife, you didn't pursue her and a few other women along the way, or a few other important things, no, she was your sole focus – so the question is – why not now?

Here is the amazing thing – you and I have a choice today – do we choose to pursue Him and if we do then we have the last step to think about. What kind of relationship will it be? Will it be one of convenience or one of commitment. He is not calling you to co-habitat with Him but a committed relationship with Him. He is not calling you to just move in with Him and hang out, but instead to ask Him to live inside of you to have your whole heart and life! **ILLUS: Vows from The Door.**

## **Fans Choose Knowledge, Followers Embrace Intimacy**

But in church, we've often failed to embrace that kind of intimacy with Jesus. Instead, we've created a system focused around learning, not unlike Simon and the other Pharisees. Admittedly, our default setting is knowledge, not intimacy.

**Think about it:** We love having Bible Studies, many of which include some kind of workbook that includes a curriculum for working through a particular book of the Bible. Sermons are accompanied often with an outline members can fill out or follow. A great number of preachers read their sermons, which makes their presentations, by definition, a lecture. Private Christian academies have been established all over the world, ranging from grade school to graduate studies, all of which offer different courses that study God: theology, exegesis, Greek, Hebrew, etc. We even do it to our kids! They go to Sunday School, where they are taught lessons and are assigned different Bible verses to memorize. Some of them even compete in Bible Bowl competitions, all of which are won or lost depending on how much Biblical knowledge you've accumulated and how fast you can raise your hand or hit a button. (And yes, I am a little bitter about never winning).

Don't get me wrong: studying and learning from God's Word is invaluable. Jesus referenced, read, and quoted all kinds of passages from the Old Testament, ample proof that he had studied God's Word with great care and diligence.

**However, we can't expect knowledge to replace intimacy, even though we often try to. And I think we try to substitute knowledge for intimacy because knowledge is so much easier.**

It's easy for us to say, "Well, I know about Jesus," but He wants to know us. That's where we find Simon the Pharisee. He knew a lot about Jesus and his teachings, and he wanted to learn more. He calls him Teacher, emphasizing that he's most interested in learning from Jesus, not opening up to Jesus. Simon sees all this woman does for Jesus, her embarrassing actions, and the Bible tells us in Luke chapter 7, verse 39...it says, "When the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.'" And he says it to himself.

But Jesus, who knew Simon's thoughts, answered him, "Look, I came in the house. You did not give me a kiss, not even on my hand. She hasn't stopped kissing my feet. You gave me nothing to wash my feet with, and she is washing my feet with her tears. You gave me no olive oil for my head; she has poured perfume on my feet." And people can just see the brokenness of this woman, and then Jesus turns to this woman and He says, "Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace." Simon brought Jesus to the meal, but all he wanted was knowledge. He wanted to keep things shallow, and he defined his relationship by not washing Christ's feet, not caring to kiss him, not being willing to anoint his head, but this woman was willing to open up to Jesus. She made herself vulnerable, being totally willing to open up and let Jesus know her.

So will you let Jesus know you? Will you embrace the close and intimate relationship He wants to have with you? Because with that intimate relationship comes forgiveness and yada', something only followers truly experience.

Last question – have you lost that loving' feeling? That passionate pursuit and relationship with Christ – has it become simply knowing about Jesus and not knowing Him intimately? Are you apathetic? Do you yawn at

Jesus? Bored and unmotivated, content to just do the church thing 1 hour a week? Never growing deeper, never being challenged? Revelation 2:4-5 The Lord is inviting you to go further today – to not be a fan, but to be a follower and a follower is one who has that intimate relationship with Christ. Do you have it? If you don't, you can today

**ILLUS: Older Lady – standing by grave of her husband**

She didn't say, "I am ready to go home and be with your grandpa." What she said was, "I'm so ready to go home and be with Jesus!" That's the heart of a follower!

This morning we are going to do something a little different – and have a unique opportunity to respond in invitation and the first is that we are going to take part in the Lord's Supper this morning. It is a part of our relationship with Him. For some of us, you have done this since you were a older child or teenager, and it can lose it specialness. I am praying that it will be different today, because of our intimate walk with Him – that we will be reminded of what it means. The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing after we conclude with the Lord's Supper will have a time of worship to sing and also during that time will be a time of response and invitation and I urge you and invite you to sing and to respond as well.

Ask you to take a moment to ask the Lord to examine your heart, your relationship with Him and to get that right – right now and to take this Lord's Supper differently than you have in a long time – as one participating in a relationship experience, and not one of something I am just supposed to do – to worship Him as you partake of His body and His precious blood shed on the cross for you and for me! We are reminded of His pursuit, may we know pursue Him!

[I Corinthians 11](#)