

Knowing God

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—"
John 10:14 NIV

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."
John 10:27 NIV

In writing about the Lord knowing His people and what that means a good friend suggested to me that the other side of the coin is also a precious truth: we know the Shepherd. I pondered that thought for a while and was blessed with the exercise.

When a Jew of Jesus' day spoke about "knowing" something or someone it meant much more than an intellectual exercise. What I mean to say is that "knowing" in our Lord's vocabulary meant intimate acquaintance, significant involvement with the person known.

To say we know the Prime Minister of Canada means we can point him out in a crowd. To know the man means we know about his plans for the government and the legislation he wishes to enact during the

next session of parliament.

But to know the Prime Minister in the Jewish definition means we talk with him, exchange ideas, eat meals together receive help in difficult times and so on. When we speak of knowing God we mean our lives are focused on doing His will for us. It means we are taught by Him and follow His teaching. So knowing the Lord is much more than knowing some facts about Him, or understanding His message to the world.

To know Jesus is to follow Him wherever He leads us. When someone says they know Jesus but they do not follow in obedience to Him they are not telling the truth. Jesus, in John 10:27 makes it clear that there are two very important characteristics of His sheep. First, the sheep listen to His voice and sec-

ond they follow Him.

So, anyone who says they know the Good Shepherd but is not actively listening to Jesus nor are they walking in obedience to Christ they are not telling the truth. Those who are Jesus' sheep delight in the sound of His voice and eagerly walk in obedience to His leading even when that means denying ourselves to do the Shepherd's will for us.

Listen to Matthew 16:24 NIV "Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Ask yourself—if you truly know the Good Shepherd, what is the evidence?

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