

FOLLOWING HARD AFTER GOD

Would you characterize yourself as one who follows hard after God? Do you feel like you do your best to learn of Him, study His Word, and know Him more than the average believer? The question I would like to answer here is what does it actually mean to "*know Him*"? And is following hard after Him one and the same as knowing Him? What does the Creator desire? And is there any credit due to us for any part of our journey with Him?



One of the very first things we must realize is that there is no credit owed to us for our salvation experience. Even when we believe we have chosen Him, He has already chosen us. Scripture makes this clear when it says, "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent me draws him...*" (John 6:44). It's the powerful draw of the Holy Spirit that causes a man to even feel the urge to follow after God, to begin with. We cannot take any credit for choosing God if He, in fact, chose us first.

The act of trying to know God isn't really something we can do. It is the Creator who chooses to know us. When we realize that out of the billions of people on this planet that He chooses to **"know"** and have a relationship with us, our lives are changed forever. It's when He chooses to know us by intersecting with our soul that we have the ability to **"know"** Him. His choice to interact with us is what causes in us a personal, conscious awareness. When our mind, will, and emotions are met with the power of His Spirit, His presence is made aware in our lives. This awareness is as real as any other physical experience or awareness that we humans have in other areas of our lives. And it's this awareness that causes us to choose to yield our mind, will, and emotions (our souls) to His, causing His image to further be burned into ours.

In an age of information overload and the graphic stimulation of our senses through media, videos, lights, cameras, and action, the intimate, quaint power of being aware of the Creator has been lost, replaced by the fulfillment of what **"we"** want, what **"we"** feel, and how **"we"** want to worship Him. Our desire to know Him has been replaced by weekend church performances and Internet videos of the latest, greatest Bible teacher. But does that bring real spiritual growth? What about the intimate personal relationship that can only come through being aware of His presence? Are we really sure we're following hard after God in a way that leads to a deeper image of Him in our lives? Or are we (at best) filling our thirst for knowledge "about" God rather than knowledge **"of"** Him or (at worst) just punching a time clock at church each week?

What do you really want out of your walk with the Creator, the one who called you by name? What's your desire...*really*? If it's anything less than to be made into His image, you've left your first love and have been caught up in a religious net that promises freedom from the sea but ends in a skillet of despair. When was the last time you sat in silence and your entire soul's only desire was to just be in His presence, allowing your spirit man to soak up things in the spiritual dimension that your mind could not possibly comprehend? Do you want to be around God so desperately that you are willing to put aside the things of this world and make time to seek His face? Because in the words of A.W. Tozer, ***"He waits to be wanted."***

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