

“In the Head ... or In the Heart?”
by Rom A. Pegram (10/15/17)

For years now, I have been a huge FAN of Eric Clapton. Being a ‘guitar-player-wanna-be’ for most of my life, I’ve always loved the bands Clapton played in. And, his solo career; don’t even get me started! I can tell you many things about Eric Clapton—some things even the average fan wouldn’t know, such as:

- He was born March 30, 1945—an English guitarist and singer/songwriter...
- He started out in the 60s playing with the Yardbirds, the Bluesbreakers, Cream, Blind Faith (w/Steve Winwood) and Delaney & Bonnie & Friends...
- He continued his musical career in the 70s with Derek & the Dominos, and then his SOLO CAREER through the last part of the 70s until today...
- After having played a variety of guitars in the past, in late 1969 Clapton made the switch to the Fender Stratocaster, his most famous Strat named "Blackie" becoming his go-to guitar from 1970-1985—a ‘parts guitar’ for those who are into guitars. (On 24 June 2004, Clapton sold "Blackie" at Christie's Auction House, New York, for US\$959,500 to raise funds for his Crossroads Centre, for drug and alcohol addictions.)
- Clapton is the only three-time inductee to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: once as a solo artist, and separately as a member of The Yardbirds and Cream.
- And, last but not least, Mr. Clapton is an avid fly fisherman ... and, from what I hear, very good at that sport, too. And I know a bit more trivia, if you’re interested...

So, how well do you think I know Mr. Clapton? Folks, am I a FAN ... or a FOLLOWER (or a ‘stalker’)? I AM A FAN, nothing more. With all of the trivia floating around in my head about this ‘guitar hero,’ you’d think I’d met him personally, hang out with his family, and so forth. But, NO, *I am just a fan. I know a lot ABOUT Eric Clapton ... but I DO NOT KNOW HIM.* Thus, I AM A FAN! And that’s what we find in our Bible story for today ... as Jesus goes to the home of a Pharisee for dinner—a man by the name of Simon... Just listen (Luke 7:36-50, NLT):

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. ³⁷ When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. ³⁸ Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!” ⁴⁰ Then Jesus answered his thoughts. “Simon,” he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.” “Go ahead, Teacher,” Simon replied. ⁴¹ Then Jesus told him this story:

“A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. ⁴² But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?”

⁴³ Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt.” “That’s

right,” Jesus said. ⁴⁴ Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn’t offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn’t greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. ⁴⁷ “I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.” ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”

⁴⁹ The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?” ⁵⁰ And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

In Matthew 15:8 (NLT), Jesus describes the Pharisees in this way: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me....” That description seems to fit most FANS I know. Like the Pharisees, many FANS of Jesus have given their lives to the study of God’s word, but *they have never surrendered their hearts!* These were men who had plenty of knowledge *about* God, but they didn’t really *know* God! This is often what separates FANS from FOLLOWERS; that’s the difference between *knowledge* and *intimacy*. So, in light of all this, let’s take a closer look at our lesson for today and let me begin with this statement:

SOMETIMES WE THINK WE KNOW MUCH ABOUT JESUS... Verse 36 explains: “One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat.” Folks, since they didn’t have potlucks in those days, after the preacher had preached, this dinner invitation would just have to do. But, don’t kid yourselves; it was really all about what Simon could get out of this deal—brownie points with his religious friends for having the visiting Rabbi over to eat...

Remember Matthew 15:8 (NLT): “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me....” Simon was no different; he certainly wasn’t a FOLLOWER of Jesus, though *religious* as all get out...

Let me share with you, just a bit, about what was really happening at Simon’s table on this day: *Jesus should have been considered the honored guest at this meal, but it soon becomes apparent that Simon was simply spending time with Jesus due to what he could get out of it, instead of a deep desire to honor him. Take note of these things:*

- **THE MISSING KISS (like a handshake today)...**
- **THE OVERLOOKED FOOT-WASHING (road dirt from wearing sandals)...**
- **THE NEGLECTED ANOINTING (olive oil on head)...**

*These things are all supposed to happen for honored guests at this time in history. But when Jesus comes over to Simon’s house for dinner, there is not a kiss of greeting; there’s no washing of feet; there’s no anointing of his head. And ... THESE WERE NOT ACCIDENTAL OVERSIGHTS! These actions were quite deliberate. *Jesus was ignored and insulted...**

Whatever happens today, *I don't want you to miss the irony of this moment!* Simon, this Pharisee, had spent the better part of his life studying the scriptures. By the time he was 12, he'd had the first books of the Bible memorized (bar-mitzvah). By the time he was 15, supposedly he'd memorized the majority of what is our Old Testament. And here's the real kicker: He had probably committed to memory the more than 300 prophecies about the coming Messiah! Yet ... *he doesn't even realize that it's this very Messiah that he's been waiting for ... who's now sitting at his table ...* with a hand that hasn't been kissed, feet that haven't been washed, and a head that hasn't been anointed...

Do you see what's going on here? Simon, the Pharisee, thought he knew everything. *He thought he knew Jesus—the Messiah!* *FANS have a tendency to confuse their knowledge for intimacy!* There's nothing wrong with knowledge, but without intimacy ... it's not much of a relationship, is it? **SOMETIMES WE THINK WE KNOW MUCH ABOUT JESUS, BUT...**

...WHAT WE REALLY NEED (TO BE A FOLLOWER) IS "A 'YADA' MOMENT!"

Verses 44-47 explain further: "Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. ⁴⁷ I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.'" So, if knowledge and intimacy must go together, in order to be FOLLOWERS of Jesus, we need to talk about that; and the Hebrew word we need to get to know is ... '**yada**'!

Probably the best biblical word for intimacy is the word translated in the Old Testament as 'know.' But this 'knowing' goes much deeper than knowledge. The Bible first uses this word to describe a relationship in Genesis 4:1 (KJV):

"And Adam *knew* [italics mine] Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD."

The Hebrew word for 'know' here is the word 'yada'. Here's the best definition of 'yada' that I could come up with: *To know completely and to be completely known.* But the NLT translates the word a bit differently, because it puts it into the context of what's really happening here. So, modern day versions probably translate it more this way:

Now Adam had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, "With the LORD's help, I have produced a man!"

You get the picture? That's our context for 'yada'. So, this is not just a 'yada, yada, yada moment.' This is a 'yada' moment between husband and wife. It's *an intimate connection on every level.* And it's also a beautiful picture that helps us see what it

means to really *know* Christ! As one scholar puts it, “It’s a mingling of souls”—that intimate...

I don’t have time to go into all of it today, but would you trust me when I say ... over and over again in scripture, *this is the same word used to describe God’s relationship with us*. And over and over again, this is the word used to describe how God wants to be known by YOU! Psalm 139 (vv. 1-4) is a great example:

O LORD, you have examined my heart and *know* everything about me. ²You *know* when I sit down or stand up. You *know* my thoughts even when I’m far away. ³You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You *know* everything I do. ⁴You *know* what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.

Think about that! The same word, the same connection used to describe a man and a wife is used to describe how God knows you ... and how God wants to be known by you! *This completely changes the way we should describe our relationship with Jesus!* Instead of calling myself a FOLLOWER of Jesus because of what I know *about* Jesus, I understand now that I’m a FOLLOWER only because I’ve come to *know* Jesus (in a biblical sense of the word—an deep, intimate sense)...

In Luke 7, the Pharisee knew all *about* Jesus (or so he thought), but he didn’t really *know* Jesus...

- His heart was far from him...
- He didn’t even pick up on the fact that the visiting Rabbi was actually the long-awaited Messiah that he’d spent a good deal of his life studying about...

Yet, *the woman—this known sinner—who invited herself to dinner ... was the only one honoring Jesus on this day*. She forgot she was looked down upon by Pharisees—basically forgot her place in society ... because something Jesus had said *absolutely touched her heart* (i.e. forgiveness, redemption, hope, etc.)! She is desperate to express the love and gratitude she feels for him. And, as pastor/author Kyle Idleman puts it: **“What she does is reckless; it’s impulsive; it’s inappropriate, and it’s exactly the kind of follower Jesus wants.”** Picture the scene:

- She was the one who honored Jesus with a kiss—albeit his feet...
- She was the one who honored Jesus, when tears of love started streaming down her face, washing his feet, drying them with her hair (since she dare not touch a towel that belonged to the Pharisee)...
- She was the one who anointed Jesus on that day—the Messiah, by pouring on his feet the expensive perfume that hung in a flask around her neck—a tool of her trade...

At the end of the story, the conversation between Jesus and Simon goes like this:

Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn’t offer me water to wash the dust from

**my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵
You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not
stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my
head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. – Luke 7:44-46 (NLT)**

In the end, the religious leader *with all the knowledge* is but a FAN; the prostitute who intimately expressed her love for Jesus is shown to be the FOLLOWER. Here, then, is the question for all of us today: *Who am I most like in this story?* When was the last time you had a 'yada' moment with Jesus, like the woman in Luke 7? When's the last time you poured yourself out before him, shed some tears of love over him, or demonstrated your love for him with reckless abandonment? Fan or Follower? Is your relationship with Jesus strictly in your head ... or have you allowed it to reach your heart?