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# Introduction

THERE IS A longing in the heart of every follower of Jesus Christ that only He can satisfy. However, there are times when we tend to gravitate toward material and tangible things to deal with life's challenges. But, once the effect of these things wears off, we recognize that something is still missing. It's the hunger and thirst of the soul. It is a desperate cry for something much deeper than what can be purchased or acquired. It is the divine connection between the disciple and his or her Lord that fills all voids. Nothing can make us complete greater than the unconditional, unlimited, uninhibited presence of Christ. He alone is our source and there are no substitutes. He is the ultimate foundation of our peace and focus in life. Apostle Paul made one of the most touching statements, which has continued to ring in the hearts and minds of Christians for 2000 years. He said "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:10).

The context of the statements is not about having a perfect knowledge of Christ, but being acquainted with Him. Being close to Him. Relating to Him. To know Him is to come closer to Him, to receive His words, and have intimate fellowship with Him. To know Him

means to surrender yourself and declare Him to be the foundation of life (John 14:6). It means relinquishing your presuppositions and allowing Him to teach and lead you in His way. To know Him means having a conscious and deliberate trust in Him. It means willfully placing your faith in His person and His work. This means relating to Him on the deepest, most intimate level of your existence. It means giving Christ all that you are — raw and open — just as He gave you His all on Calvary's cross. There, He was open, vulnerable, and stretched wide to show you that nothing could separate you from His love (1 John 4:19). He allowed you to see Him in a most undesirable and unwelcomed condition so that you would have the courage to open yourself to Him the same way. He is saying to you what He said over 2000 years ago which is, "Come to Me" The bible declares that "All have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The effects of sin have left us broken and morally stained; yet, in His eyes we are still desirable. The question I often ponder when I consider how much He loves me is, "Why?" Then, He softly whispers, "Why not?"

We are His beloved—we who have made the decision to follow Him into everlasting life. We are His workmanship, that is created in Him for every good work (Eph. 2:10). Yet, above all, He calls us to come closer to Him. Just as Christ outstretched Himself, we must be willing to do the same on our level. The outstretching of our arms is a symbol that we are inviting Him into our secret places. It is an indication of submission, surrendering, and separation. Submission, because we yield our way to His way; surrendering, because we shed self and humbly come to Him; and separation because we unplug from whatever stands between ourselves and Him. This is a love relationship at