

CHAPTER 3

Known versus Loved

What do these three women have in common?

Whitney Houston

Marilyn Monroe

Princess Diana

Did you guess tragic deaths? That would certainly be true. Were they public figures with secrets in their private lives? Maybe. Are they among the world's most beautiful women? I'd say so, but that's not the connection that interests me most. These women were loved. Very, very loved. They had huge fan bases and their names up in lights and paparazzi waiting in the bushes to give the world more of them. Yep, these women were *loved*, but would they have traded in all the love in the world for a chance to be *known* instead? If I were a betting gal, I'd go all in on answering "yes."

Let's use Whitney as an example. Her hits like "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" and "I Will Always Love You" would be on the soundtrack for my life, for sure. Her career spanned three decades. She sold over

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200 million records. She holds the Guinness World Record for the most awarded female act of all time.¹ Yes, Whitney Houston was loved. But she died alone in a hotel bathtub.

How about Marilyn? She was one of the biggest stars of all times. Loved and desired by generations and yet she, too, died alone, found dead in her bedroom by her maid.

There is a difference between being known and being loved. All too often we hang our hopes on the wrong hook.
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Princess Diana was The People's Princess. She was killed when the paparazzi's desire to feed the public's craving for more of her resulted in a tragic crash. Was it the people's love that eventually killed her?

These graphic images illustrate an important reality—there is a difference between being known and being loved. All too often we hang our hopes on the wrong hook.

Daisies and T-Top Corvettes

I was just about to start cooking supper when my mom called out of the blue.

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“Can we come pick up the boys and take them to the movies?”

Hot diggity! My night just got a lot more interesting!

Jason and I waved goodbye to our three boys and hopped in the car. Where were we going? We didn't know. What would we do when we got there? Who cares! We were kid-free and ready to party. Don't get me wrong, we love our kids, but life with three small boys isn't exactly conducive to romance. There are always messes to clean up, fights to referee, snacks to dish out. It seems that we go days without ever talking about more than who will handle pick-ups, drop-offs, baths, and bedtime stories. That's why, when we get a little time together, we always default to one of our favorite games. As we cruised the back roads, giddy to be in a vehicle without car seats, Jason and I settled into a familiar rhythm.

Jason: Favorite flower?

Me: Daisy.

Jason: Favorite color?

Me: Yellow.

Jason: Favorite car?

Me: T-top Corvette.

Jason: Musician you most want to see in concert?

Me: Elvis.

He already knows the answers to the questions. He's been asking them for decades. But every question is like

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a love note that says, “I know you.” Few people have known me longer than he has. No one has known me deeper. But I need the reminder that I am known. He needs reminded of the delight found in the knowing.

Hallmark’s got it all wrong. Being known is far more romantic than being loved. Unfortunately, that’s a memo our culture seems to have missed. We’re obsessed with being loved. We think admiration, adulation, and applause is the be-all and end-all. I’m not saying that love doesn’t matter or that we don’t need it, of course we do. But love is cheap. *Knowing* is the good stuff we should all be after.

Souls Knit Together

David was a superstar in his day. He was certainly loved. Throngs of women cheered his name in the street (1 Sam. 18:7). But what did that love gain him? Let’s take a quick look at David, and the people who loved him.

King Saul

In 1 Samuel 17, David impresses Saul by offering to whip up on the oppressive enemy soldier Goliath. I’m sure you’ve heard the story. David hits the giant with a rock, cuts off his head, and brings it to the king.

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Apparently, dismembered body parts was Saul's love language, because he is immediately enamored with David. He does not allow David to return home, but brings him to the palace.

But Saul's love was short lived.

Saul became insanely jealous of David. He plotted to kill him several times. Eventually Saul's rage burned so hot that David was forced to flee.

Cue Poison's "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" . . .

Michal

Michal loved David too.

"Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him" (1 Sam. 18:20).

Michal loved David so much that she wanted to marry him, and so she did. But as we all know, marital love doesn't always result in happily ever after. If we fast-forward in David's story a bit we read, "As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, *and she despised him in her heart*" (2 Sam. 6:16, emphasis mine).

Cue Carly Simon's "You're So Vain" . . .

Saul and Michal loved David. At times they really, really loved David, but the love didn't last. Eventually, it was replaced with jealousy and resentment. If the long

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list of songs written about love gone wrong is any indication, most of us have experienced this kind of love on the rocks.

Jonathan

Jonathan was Saul's son and David's best friend. The Bible tells us that Jonathan gave David his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt. These were friendship offerings given from one warrior to another. When Saul intended to kill David, Jonathan worked as a mediator. When his dad could not be dissuaded, Jonathan helped David escape.

David and Jonathan's friendship provides the definition we need to understand being known.

1 Samuel 18:1 tells us, "As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, *the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David*, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (emphasis mine).

Knit-together souls. This is the image of knowing.

Knowing says, "I see who you are and choose to weave my life into yours." How much better does that sound than simply, "I love you"?

Knitting Lessons

I am constantly in search of the perfect hobby. I've tried violin, drums, embroidery, and decoupage. My knitting phase was particularly ill-fated.

I have a friend who is a master knitter. She makes our whole family wool socks each year for Christmas. Putting them on is like wearing a hug for my feet. I asked her to teach me her craft. Bless her heart. She tried. She really did.

I hated it! I got far more stitches wrong than I got right. My pot holder looked like something a squirrel had spent the winter in. It didn't take long for me to throw down my knitting needles and decide there was far too much counting and concentration involved. I paid my dues in Math for Dummies in college; I certainly was not going to pick it up again as a hobby.

I didn't become a knitter, but I am thankful for my knitting lessons. When I read that Jonathan's soul was knit to David's, I understand the analogy. This was a relationship that took intentionality. It required concentrated effort. That's why knit-together souls are such a beautiful description of knowing. It is the process of mining someone else's heart to discover all the jewels within. It is seeing someone for who they really are and willfully super gluing your own self to them.

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No. That wasn't a typo. I wrote that sentence twice because I want it to permeate your heart. I want you to realize that being loved is not the same as being known. Just ask David, Whitney, Marilyn, and

Diana. Love is based on what you can do for each other and what you look like when your best foot is pointing forward. Knowing and being known only happens when we allow the roots of our relationships to grow deep.

A Knowing God

God is in the business of making Himself known. It's a truth written all over the Bible. Here are the highlights.

- The Lord has made Himself known. (Ps. 9:16)
- God makes the path of life known. (Ps. 16:11)

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- He makes His covenant known. (Ps. 25:14)
- We can know Him as our fortress. (Ps. 48:3)
- God’s ways can be known on earth. (Ps. 67:2)
- The wonders of God can be known. (Ps. 88:12)
- God makes His faithfulness known. (Ps. 89:1)
- God makes His salvation known. (Ps. 98:2)
- He is known as a mighty power. (Ps. 106:8)
- He reveals “hidden things” we cannot know without Him. (Isa. 48:6; Jer. 33:3)
- Jesus came to make God known. (John 1:18)

If you’re like me, you tend to race through bulleted lists like that, but I encourage you to go back and read that list slowly. Let your mind land on this radical truth—the God of the universe lets me know *Him*.

After you’ve picked up all the pieces of your brain from that mind-blowing truth, consider this—the God of the universe knows *you*.

Here’s proof:

- God knows the distress of your soul. (Ps. 31:7)
- Before you ever speak a word, God knows what you will say. (Ps. 139:4)
- He knows the exact number of days you will live. (Ps. 139:16)
- If anyone loves God, he is known by God. (1 Cor. 8:3)

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- He knows the number of hairs on your head.
(Luke 12:7)

Galatians 4:9 says, “But now . . . you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God.”

Psalm 139:1 says, “O LORD, you have searched me and known me!”

In many ways, Christianity is a lifelong study of God, but when it comes to us, He’s already done His homework. He knows you intimately. He knit you together and then studied His handiwork. He invites you to weave your story into His.

When Jason works to know me better, I recognize it as a sweet gift. How lucky am I to have found a man willing to mine my heart for decades? (He’s mine. You cannot have him.) If you find yourself chronically lonely, you might be missing something huge! That same sweetness can be found from God. He knows you. He invites you to know Him in return.

A Hint of What’s to Come

If you’ve been to many Christian weddings, you know the love chapter of the Bible. First Corinthians 13 tells us what love should look like, but the chapter is wrapped in a strange bow: “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then

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face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Cor. 13:12).

After a vivid description of what love is, Paul seems to take a hard left turn here into the subject of being known. For now, our concept of love is a little hazy, our concept of knowing perhaps even hazier. Knowing God has to be squeezed through the filter of sin and sometimes things get lost in translation. But . . .

A day is coming when we will know Him fully. Love is like the appetizer to the best feast we will ever enjoy.

God’s love is a precious gift, but the reason He loves me is even more beautiful. He loves me because He knows me. He knows every hair on my head, every thought in my brain, every worry in my heart. He sees all of me, from beginning to end, and He loves me. He invites me to knit my heart into His in a bond so tight that we can never be pulled apart. Being so intimately known is the vaccination we all need to cure our deep feelings of loneliness.

Don’t Settle

I hope you’re starting to realize that dealing with the pandemic of loneliness isn’t going to be easy. We can’t simply make a new friend or cram more people into church pews and see the tide start to turn. Our

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relationships with God and others are as intertwined as a big ol' plate of spaghetti. We've got to reexamine some of our most basic understandings of who He is and how He made us in order to connect. I'm afraid we've been singing a song all wrong since preschool. Yes, Jesus loves

Yes, Jesus loves me, this I know. But when loneliness comes, I need to be reminded that Jesus *knows* me. This I love. #connected

me, this I know. But when loneliness comes, I need to be reminded that Jesus *knows* me. This I love.

Yes, God loves you and that is a beautiful truth, but maybe we find ourselves unsatisfied because we've missed the wonder of His knowing. Is it possible

that has trickled down into our other relationships—causing us to crave love while missing opportunities to knit our souls with others?

Many of us have experienced deep heartache, starting in childhood. If we started to compare relationship scars, I'd have some big ones to show. I get that being known can be very, very scary. Relationships are complicated. Knowing and being known doesn't always work out like a Lifetime Original movie. Sometimes we step on land mines, and the whole thing gets blown to bits.

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But loneliness doesn't effectively insulate us from pain, does it? It just transfers the hurt to another corner of our hearts.

When it comes to dealing with loneliness, we are just getting warmed up. God's Word is a deep well with the answers to our ache to connect. We'll get there. But for now, I'd like you to consider this:

- Do I seek to know God? Am I comfortable with Him knowing me?
- Do I crave love and admiration instead of knowing and being known?
- Do I knit my life to others? Do I allow them to knit their lives into mine?

