

Relationship Not Religion

Religion is about knowing and following the rules. Relationship is about knowing and associating with a person.

God calls people into a relationship with Him. He wants to be with His people, not just forgive them and then live separately from them. We are not just to know about God, we are to know God.

In accepting the gift of salvation and becoming a disciple, you are entering into a relationship with Jesus. You don't just know who He is, you know Him and He knows you.

Of those who think salvation is based on works Jesus said this:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” Matthew 7:21-23 ESV

Jesus did not say that those He spoke of did not really do the things they claimed. They knew who Jesus was but Jesus said that He never knew them. They did not have a personal relationship. As a result, they would not be able to enter the kingdom.

You start a personal relationship with Jesus by accepting the gift of salvation and then you build your relationship with Jesus by being His disciple. You learn more than just Who Jesus is, you learn to know Jesus in a personal way.

Consider this analogy.

You decide to make a donation to the Boys and Girls Club in Los Angeles in the name of LeBron James. You even decide to volunteer at one of the clubs telling the manager that you are doing it to honor LeBron.

Sometime later, you show up at the players' entrance to Staples Center in Los Angeles telling the attendant that you've made a donation to the Boys and Girls Club in LeBron's name and that you've been volunteering at one of the clubs. Is that going to be enough to get you in? Probably not.

What if you told the attendant to check the list because you knew that LeBron was aware of your donation and volunteer time? If your name is not on the list, once again you will be denied admittance.

But, if your name is on the list, not because you know who LeBron is but because he knows who you are and had your name put on the list, then access will be granted.

And even better, if LeBron is walking by and says, “He’s with me.” or “She’s with me.” then in you go.

Your relationship with LeBron would matter.

In the same way, our relationship with Jesus matters. Again, we start a relationship with Jesus by accepting the gift of salvation and we build that relationship through discipleship. When we do that, we become His children in a way that goes beyond being merely His creation.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12 ESV

We receive

...the Spirit of adoption as sons [and daughters], by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”
Romans 8:15b ESV

One final thing: living as a disciple of Christ is not something that one does under one’s own power. God has promised that there will be help.

So, how do you get started?

Read on.

© 2020 Steven Hall
All Rights Reserved

Bible quotations are from the
English Standard Version
© 2001 by Crossway