

# CHRISTIAN HEADS, HEARTS, AND HANDS

ARTICLES TO FORM US AS FOLLOWERS OF "THE WAY"

---

## Pursue Others Like Jesus Pursues You

by Ed Welch

### Following Jesus's Lead

All the biblical stories of the Lord moving toward people are stories of grace. Grace is God's moving toward us in Christ. He pursued us not because we called out so well and took the first step of self-reformation. We were simply sick and needed him. Or worse, we were enemies who were not inclined to surrender (Rom. 5:10).

He says "I love you" first, even when we respond with an indifferent shrug or the equivalent of a passing, "Oh, thanks." And in this we discover why it might be hard for us to move toward others: the one taking the initiative in the relationship—the one who loves most—is the one who risks humiliation.

But imagine this. You believe that Jesus pursues you. You are letting go of old lies that suggest he doesn't care and that you are forgotten. Because of Jesus, you no longer look for the easiest person to talk to when people gather. Instead, you move toward the quieter ones, the new person, and the outliers. Imagine a group of people who move toward each other—active more than passive, loving more than fearing rejection. They look glorious; they attract the world. This is an example of what the apostle Paul calls *putting on Christ* and is evidence of the Spirit of Christ at work in us (Rom. 13:12, 14; Gal. 3:27).

As you envision how to grow in moving toward others, think of those who have known hardships in their lives. For example, a man once shared with a small group that his past year had been the most difficult of his life. In response, no one said a word. No one ever approached him. No one asked, "Please, tell me more. How are you now? How can I pray for you?" Not one. It is no surprise that he kept to himself for the next ten years.

Too often we are silent when we know of someone's trouble. Silence is the same as turning away.

### Jesus Listens, We Listen

So we move toward others. The extroverts among us seem to make it look easy. The more shy might be intimidated by the potential awkwardness or silence.

But loving pursuit is neither easy nor natural to anyone. All of us need both humility and help from Scripture in order to navigate the early stages of a helpful conversation.

Those initial steps might look like this:

- The Lord calls us family, so we greet warmly.
- The Lord knows our name, so we learn someone's name.
- The Lord knows seemingly irrelevant details about us, such as the number of hairs on our heads, so we take an interest in details. Is the person new to your gathering? Where does he or she live? Who does she live with? Does she work, go to school, manage a home?

What we hear might surprise us. After all, most people are not often asked about themselves, so we might hear much more than basic information. We might hear about events worth celebrating; we might hear of personal hardships.

The good and pleasant events might be a job completed well or a new relationship. But they also include a deeper good such as when we see something of the character of God in another—in the way he or she loves family and friends, serves, cares, or perseveres in trouble.

And there will be nonstop trouble, such as personal health struggles and those of family and friends, injustices at work, or broken relationships.

In response, we *listen*. This means we are undistracted, engaged, and affected by what they say. We share, in some small way, the delights of the good things and the burdens of the hard things. The script for eliciting these important matters can get fuzzy, but we know this: there is always more to know.

The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. (Prov. 20:5)

We hope to be that person of understanding. This can happen only if we pursue others as we have been pursued by Jesus.