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TO FULLY LOVE; BE KNOWN

Jonathan Safran Foer is a noted author and professor of creative writing at New York University. He has authored a number of books, including "Extremely Loud & Clear" and "Everything Is Illuminated". Some take away quotes from his works would be, "It was one of the best days of my life, a day during which I lived my life and didn't think about my life at all." and "Try to live so that you can always tell the truth." But there is another one that recently came to mind in a little article written by Julie Ackerman Link, where she cited one of the characters in a book penned by Foer, speaking of the Empire State Building. "I know this building because I love this building."



The correlation between love and knowing is clearly on display in the quote noted above. Is it possible to love without growing in knowledge? Love of another does not remain static, it longs to grow and deepen. The only way that can come about is with knowledge. Learning as much as we can about the individual. By the same token being of the mind to share with them knowledge about self. But some are unwilling to reveal much about self to others, perhaps feeling that if we were known it might render us unlovable.

Pau in writing to the brethren in Galatia noted, "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God..." (4:9 see also 1Corinthians 8:3) In spite of ourselves, God still loves us. Consider what is seen in Romans the fifth chapter. In verse eight, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Then drop down to verse ten. "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Factor in as well what John set forth in his first epistle, chapter four and verse ten. "In this is love, not

that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Then in verse nineteen, "We love, because He first loved us."

The beautiful hymn, "The Love of God" by Fredrick M. Lehman paints a magnificent verbal picture of the depth of God's love for mankind. "Could we with ink the ocean fill. And were the skies of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade; to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky."

God has so fully revealed Himself to us in word and deed. His character, nature, works and certainly His love are on full display. Think back to the quote in the first paragraph of this article, the one about the Empire State Building. You may well state a love for God, but how well do you really know Him? Do you know Him well enough to know He cares enough for you to open up to Him? "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 40:10) "For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, Fear not, I will help you" (Isaiah 41:13) The more we know, the more our love will grow.

The greater the love, the easier it is to trust and place our total being into the hands of God. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you." (1Peter 5:6-7) Isn't it true that when you love another, you want to know all about that person? So it must be with our relationship with God. Our life long desire should be to know Him more and more. Could there be any thing grander than knowing fully the love of God? (wbe)

THE BULWARK