



Spirit to Spirit

Talk to any couple who are devoted to one another. Ask them when they realized they were in love — call-me-in-a-crisis love, face-the-day-to-day-with-me love — and the answer will probably not be “When I realized he was only dating me to win a bet with his boss.”

If you know what movie that references, you and 12-year-old me would have been great friends.

*Like any other self-respecting American tween of the early 2000s, I used to watch a lot of romantic comedies. I forget how old I was when I realized that romantic comedies are actually ... really boring. Not because they're about love — true love is *fascinating*. I could watch real-life people talk about who they love for *hours*.*

Because when we say we love someone — truly love them — what we mean is we love their spirit. We love what they are. We love the qualities that escape description, the attributes we have to talk around or reduce to cliché in order to define. We cannot love a body alone. We cannot love a name or a reputation. We cannot love a story that we've built around a relationship.

To be in love with someone you need to know their spirit. Intimately. And that knowledge cannot help but change everything about you. It

changes your goals, your understanding of the world. It changes the amount of courage you have to face the life ahead of you. It changes your ability to be who God wants you to be.

The disciples lived and ate and walked with Jesus for three whole years before they really knew his spirit. They didn't know it on Good Friday when they scattered and hid and wept. They didn't know it on Easter Sunday, when they couldn't believe what they saw. They thought they loved him, but when push came to shove their love failed.

But by the end of their lives, the disciples knew the kind of love that sustained them even in the face of martyrdom.

What was it that changed? It was the Spirit. They finally knew the Spirit.

***"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."** — 1*

Corinthians 12:3

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