

Who, Indeed, Knows?

I'm old enough to remember the heyday of radio. While television was trying to come of age (an improved form of it didn't become popular until after World War II), we could listen to various week-night radio shows.



Among favorites were *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Jack Armstrong*, *the All-American Boy*, *The Green Hornet*, *The Lone Ranger* and a couple of scary shows – *Inner Sanctum* (with that frightening squeaky door) and *The Shadow*. The announcer always gave a spooky line just before *The Shadow* came on: “Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!” Then there would be a blood-curdling laugh that faded away into the distance.

Many years have passed since those simple and innocent days of my youth, but that single line remains a haunting question to this day: Who, indeed, knows what wickedness lurks in the hearts of men and women?

We think we do. But how wrong we usually are. The heart houses secrets we can never see. People are awfully good at cover-up. Smiling masks often camouflage breaking hearts. Lurking in many a life is pain beyond belief.

Stories of hidden heartbreaks are legion. I was stunned, as was the entire community, years ago when a good friend – a minister and educator – chose to take his own life. He was a man who seemingly had everything – an important job at a college, a reputation of respect and admiration in his church and the community, among his professional peers and within his home.

In our world of superficial and casual relationships, it is easy to forget that a smile doesn't necessarily mean “I'm happy,” and the courteous answer “I'm fine” may not be at all truthful. Just because it's Christmas, we can't assume everybody's merry. Even closest family members can be blindly unaware of each other's pain.

This is not to suggest that everyone is an emotional time bomb or that masks are worn by all who seem to be enjoying life. But I've lived long enough to know that many a heart hides agony while the face reflects ecstasy.

There is Someone, however, who fully knows what lurks in our hearts. And knowing, He never laughs mockingly and fades away. He never shrugs and walks away. Instead, He understands completely and stays near.

(more)

Who, indeed, knows? Our God, alone, knows. He sympathizes with our weaknesses and forgives all our transgressions. To Him, there are no secret struggles or silent cries. He hears. He sees. He stays near. He accepts us and loves us unconditionally. He is “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.”



He who loves us most knows us best. He who knows us best cares the most.

O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with my ways ... I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well (Psalm 139:1-3, 14 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter