**Intimacy with God**

## Do you feel close to the Lord? In today’s world life's distractions and duties compete with our desire to spend time with God—then before we know it, we've drifted away from Him. But the Father desires to communicate with us on a daily basis.

**Every individual is important to the Lord.**

You might feel unworthy of the Father's attention, but the truth is, you are a unique creation and beloved in His sight. If we look in [Gen. 1:26](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study)  **“God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground’;”**

He designed us with the emotional and spiritual capacity to have an intimate relationship with Him. Because God loves, **we** are able to love God with our praise, our prayers, and because He spiritually feeds us.

What special place does man hold in creation? Well let’s look at what [Psalm 8:4-5](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study), says  **"What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor."**

God made sure that, we His children, hold a **very** special place in creation. Think about it - we are made in His image! He could have done away with humans for all the sins like during Noah’s time – but instead, God sent Jesus to die for our sins so we might be close again to our creator Father God. I say that in itself shows we hold a very special place.

Let me ask you this, *Do you ever feel undeserving of God's notice*? You don’t need to answer it out loud as I want you to talk to God about in your prayers, if you do seek His help and never forget that God gave us a Councilor who is always here and help us, to speak for us even when we can’t find the words – the Holy Spirit.

Let us look at John 15:15-16 **"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."**

Jesus called His disciples "friends" – that indicates a **close** personal relationship with Him. Through Him we have a personal relationship with God the Father. Real friends are people you can count on to help you out with anything, to be there as a shoulder to cry on to help ease your load if you need it – just to be there through all things, for all things.

That right there describes God, Who has said He will be by our side and if asked will carry us, when we can go no further, Jesus will take our yoke and offer us His as His is lighter. We can cry out to God, to Jesus when something happens and we need help. I ask this for you to think on: How is your relationship holding up with God the Father and God the Son? How is it holding up with God the Spirit?

*No one is too sinful to have a close relationship with God.*

According to [Romans 3:23](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study), "***All* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**". In other words, *no one* is righteous enough on his own to have fellowship with God, who is perfectly holy. Instead of friendship with our Creator, we are enemies and deserve only death and hell—everlasting separation from Him. However, Jesus took the guilt of our sin on Himself and gave us the gift of eternal life We see in [Rom. 6:22-23](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study) this about sin,**"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

God wants us to have eternal life with Him. God cares about and loves sinners. In Luke 15:7, Jesus said this about sinners, **“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.** “

We typically think of eternal life as the promise of heaven after death. But how does [John 17:3](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study) define it? Well is says this, “N**ow this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”**

Turn to [Romans 4:7-8](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study).  “**Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.” God will not use our past sins against us in fact He forgets them after He forgives us of them.**

To have an intimate relationship requires a commitment from us 24/7 –not just sometimes, but **all** the time, God needs to be the first priority for us – as anything else above God is considered idolatry and more important than our Father – which should **not** be the case. **Nothing** is more important than our Father – for cares for and loves us.

So, how do we do this? How do we become more intimate with God?

1. By daily spending time alone with God

– AND –

1. By the daily reading and studying of His Word.

 Let us read [Luke 5:16](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study). “**But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed**.”

Jesus did this when He needed some alone time with God and it’s the example we need to follow. If you read the four Gospels closely, you will see again and again that Jesus withdrew from everyone, often from His own disciples, to spend time alone with His Father. Now, if **JESUS** needed to do this – how much more so do we?

Now, I know sometimes we think there is too much going on, or maybe you will do it later, or you might even feel guilty of wanting some alone time to speak to God because your family needs you or friends need you and you want to make them all feel they are a priority in your life. Well that is understandable – we all feel this way; but we need to remember that *the alone time we spend with God is also a way for us to get refreshed physically and spiritually* so we can go on in our daily lives.

The first step is to simply talk with Him! Just as with our human loved ones – if we don’t spend time with them, our relationship fades, sours and, eventually, drifts into nothingness. The same is true of our relationship with God. If we choose to not spend time with Him, sharing our hearts and listening for Him – then the intimate nature of our relationship will cease and we may find ourselves wondering why God seems so far away – when, in reality, it is we who have drifted away from Him.

But, it’s true, in our hectic lives; we often find it hard to do this. But, here are some ways to help you to do this:

1. Set aside a period of time each day, that, unless a serious emergency occurs, is not to be violated by anyone in your family or by your friends – it may be 10, 15 or 30 minutes, at least to begin with. Many of those great Christians so many of us admire often spent hours each day in intimate communion with God. That may not be practical for you, but to set aside time also shows God that He is a priority in your life.

***Funny point****: That’s one of the things about being a pastor – people don’t get so jealous of the time you spend with God – because they expect it!!* **But – that should be an expectation for every Christian, not just pastors.**

1. Make a habit of talking to God first when issues come your way. Don’t go and seek your friend’s advice, or your family – talk to God first. Only He knows His plans for you, and if you get into the habit of seeking Him **first** in all things, it will soon become apparent that He is always ready and able to provide to you that which you need. God likes to be asked and desires that He has first priority in our lives – even when we are worried or unsure; He is the best and first remedy to any situation.
2. As important as it is to talk with God throughout the day, it’s equally as important to set aside a place –and- time that is just for that purpose.

To have a special place set aside where you can go and spend some time quiet time with God, is to have a place you will **not** be bothered in and a place where others know that when you are there that you need to be left alone while you are spending time with God. You will need to make it clear to your family and friends that this time and place are not to be disturbed.

(*Depending if you choose to sit or kneel, you might choose a chair or a small rug in a small room in your home; some people will even use a large closet; some people prefer to be outdoors and like to talk walks while talking to God. Everyone’s choice is different – the important thing is to have a special place where you can be alone with God, away from the distractions of everyday life. Try to not make it too comfortable – this isn’t about being comfy, it’s about spending time with your Creator! Eventually, that place will take on sort of a sacred quality, because there you will find it easier to focus on the Lord and His still, small voice.*)

 **We need to spend the time alone with God in order to get to know Him, to know just how much love and care He has for us. We need to spend time in daily study of His Word to know what He is saying to us.**

Just like a close friendship or good marriage, an intimate relationship with the Lord requires time. Biblical writers often referred to this as "waiting on God." By this, they meant trusting in the Lord and giving Him time to speak to their hearts, encourage them, or answer their prayers. The Lord will always answer our prayers one way or another when He is ready to do so. And He may wait to answer if He thinks we are not ready yet.

* What benefits are associated with "waiting on the Lord" you ask. Well take a look at [Psalm 25:3](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study), **"No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause." Go to** [Psalm 27:14](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study), **“Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”** And finally let’s see what [Psalm 62:5](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study) says **“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him."**

The other half of this is that reading and meditating on Scripture should also be a regular part of your time with God. It will teach you how the Lord thinks, remind you of His promises, and reveal areas of your life that need His correction. You can make it part of your daily alone time with God, or a separate time each day.

Before you read from the Bible, always ask God to speak to you. He will be faithful to reveal His truth and show you how to apply it to your life through the Holy Spirit. There are many methods to study the Bible – but to simply read it as sort of a letter from a loving Father to His beloved child is a good way to begin. We can address questions regarding Bible study methods at our nest Bible study meeting.

But, remember, in all things, when we come to God, we must have an attitude of ***humility and trust.***

Turn to [James 4:6-7](http://www.intouch.org/resources/bible-studies/content/topic/intimacy_with_god_study). **"But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."**

We must approach God with an attitude of humility. Proud people don't see their need for the Lord and, consequently, resist His guidance and correction. If you find this happening to you – you might want to ask yourself if you are approaching God in humbleness and with trust. When your relationship with God becomes more distant – remember, it isn’t God Who moved.

 Some will say submission to God is a bad thing because of how today’s times uses the word submission. Yes, it is often used negatively but this is **not** the case here: when submitting to God – it is not negative, it is positive! It means that you trust in God totally and have faith in Him; that you are willing to do His will to bring Him glory for all of eternity with Him.

To help us understand just what we need to be like when we talk to God **listen** to what David said in Psalm 131:1-2 **“My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content."**

If you are willing to invest in your relationship with God, you will reap a great reward.

Close with Colossians 3:17 –

"***And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."***

***Let us pray...***