

INTIMACY with GOD

By Kirk Long, Central Elder

Intimacy with God is the deepest level of connection that we as believers can experience with our Creator. It is more than just knowing about God; it is about knowing Him personally, walking closely with Him, and experiencing His presence in every area of life. True intimacy with God requires effort, time, and a heart that seeks after Him continually.

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DEVELOP INTIMACY WITH GOD?

Intimacy with God refers to a deep, personal relationship with Him, where we experience His presence and grow in our knowledge of Him.

- a) **Knowing God Personally:** Developing intimacy means moving beyond a superficial relationship and truly knowing who God is. John, in 1 John 4: 7-8 said “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love”.
- b) **Loving God Deeply:** Intimacy with God is built on a foundation of love—In Mark 12:29-30, Jesus said “THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.
- c) **Abiding in His Presence:** Intimacy means remaining in constant fellowship with God, abiding in His presence through prayer and worship. In John 15:4 Jesus reminds us to “Abide in Him”.
- d) **Seeking God Earnestly:** Those who are intimate with God make seeking Him their top priority in life. In Psalm 42:1, David says “He thirsts for Him as the deer pants for water”.
- e) **Communion with the Holy Spirit:** Intimacy grows by maintaining a continual connection with the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to lead and guide your life. 2 Corinthians 13:14 says “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

One of our biblical examples of this was David, as David was known as a man after God’s heart as it says in (Acts 13:22). Most of his psalms reflect his deep longing and desire to be close to God.

2. WHY DEVELOPING INTIMACY WITH GOD IS ESSENTIAL

Building an intimate relationship with God is a must for every believer who desires to live a fulfilled and

victorious Christian life.

- a) **It Draws Us Closer to God:** As we seek God with sincerity and humility it draws us closer to God, in James 4:8 He promises us if we “Draw near to Him, He will draw near to us.
- b) **It Leads to Spiritual Growth:** Intimacy with God enables us to grow spiritually, becoming more like Christ in character and conduct. 2 Peter 1:3 says “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence”.
- c) **It Brings Divine Guidance:** When we are close to God, we can clearly hear His voice and receive the needed direction for our lives. In Isaiah 30:21 it says “And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.
- d) **It Strengthens Our Faith:** Intimacy with God strengthens our faith, helping us to trust Him more deeply even in difficult circumstances. Hebrews 11:6 says “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. As I talked about in the beginning the recent tragedies have allowed me to gain a more intimate understanding and relationship with God as well as a deeper faith in Him.
- e) **It Brings Peace and Joy:** Those who dwell in God’s presence experience the fullness of His peace and joy, no matter what they face In Psalm 16:11 David said “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore”.

Another of our biblical examples of this is that Enoch walked with God so closely that he was taken up to heaven without experiencing death (Genesis 5:24). His intimate relationship with God set him apart from others.

3. HOW TO DEVELOP INTIMACY WITH GOD

Developing intimacy with God requires intentional actions and a heart that is fully committed to pursuing Him. Here are some practical steps to cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

- a) **Prioritize Time with God:** Set aside daily time to spend in prayer, Bible study, and worship. Make seeking God a priority in your life. Matthew 6:33 says “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”.
- b) **Seek Him with All Your Heart:** God promises to reveal Himself to those who seek Him wholeheartedly. Approach Him with sincerity and passion. Jeremiah 29:13 says “And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart”.
- c) **Meditate on God’s Word:** Meditating on Scripture allows us to know God’s heart and mind, drawing us closer to Him. In Psalm 119:15. David said “I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.
- d) **Practice Stillness and Silence:** Intimacy grows in the secret place of quietness. Learn to be still be-

fore God, listening to His voice. Psalm 46:10 says "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

- e) Live a Life of Obedience: Intimacy with God grows when we walk in obedience to His commands. A disobedient life hinders our closeness to God. In John 14:21 Jesus said "The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him."
- f) Cultivate a Heart of Worship: Worship is not just about singing songs; it is about surrendering our hearts and lives to God daily. Psalm 95:6 says "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!"

Pastor Matt has been going through Exodus recently and we learned that Moses spent time with God face to face, speaking with Him as a friend as it says in Exodus 33:11. His intimacy with God was so deep that his face shone with the glory of God after their encounters as it says in Exodus 34:29.

4. BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING INTIMACY WITH GOD

When we draw close to God, the blessings and benefits are numerous, both spiritually and practically.

- a) Divine Revelation: Intimacy with God opens the door to receive deeper revelations of His will and purpose for our lives. Jeremiah 33:3 says "Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know."
- *b) Transformation of Character: The more we spend time with God, the more we are transformed into His likeness, reflecting His love and grace. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,[e] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."
- c) Unshakable Peace and Joy: Those who dwell in God's presence experience a peace that surpasses understanding and joy that is unspeakable. Philippians 4:7 says "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

In another biblical example we see that John the Apostle had a special closeness to Jesus, often referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." His deep relationship with Christ gave him unique revelations, including the visions in the book of Revelation (John 13:23; Revelation 1:1). I'm not saying that we will have revelations like John, but having a deeper intimacy with God will allow us, as I said earlier, to understand His will for our lives better as we develop deeper intimacy with Him !!

5. HINDRANCES TO DEVELOPING INTIMACY WITH GOD

There are several factors that can hinder our relationship with God and prevent us from experiencing true intimacy with Him.

- a) Unconfessed Sin: Sin separates us from God and hinders our ability to approach Him with confi-

dence Isaiah 59:1-2 says “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or His ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

- b) Distractions and Busyness: A busy lifestyle filled with distractions can prevent us from spending quality time with God. In Luke 10:38-42 Jesus gave the example of Mary and Martha and showing the difference between following Him or being distracted by our lifestyle !
- c) Lack of Desire or Passion: Intimacy with God requires a passionate pursuit of Him. A lack of spiritual hunger will result in distance from God. Revelation 3:15-16 refers to being “Hot or Cold” in our pursuit of God which shows our lack of passion towards gaining intimacy with Him and He goes on to say “ I will spit you out of My mouth” !
- d) Pride and Self-reliance: Relying on our own abilities instead of depending on God can hinder intimacy, as God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6 says “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”
- e) Unforgiveness and Bitterness: Holding on to unforgiveness can block our relationship with God and prevent us from experiencing His presence. Matthew 6:14-15 says “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Our last biblical example of hindrances with intimacy with God is from Revelation 3:15-17 which reveals the Church in Laodicea had grown lukewarm in their relationship with God. Their complacency and self-reliance distanced them from the intimacy God desired to have with them

CONCLUSION:

Developing intimacy with God is the highest pursuit of the Christian life. It requires intentionality, consistency, and a deep hunger for His presence. As we draw near to God, He draws near to us, filling our lives with His peace, joy, and divine guidance. Let us commit to seeking God with all our hearts and cultivating a relationship with Him that goes beyond the surface. In His presence, we find everything we need to live a victorious and fulfilled life.

PRAYER:

Father, give us a deep hunger and thirst for Your presence, help us to prioritize our time with You above everything else, remove every distraction that hinders our intimacy with You, teach us to abide in Your presence and hear Your voice clearly, help us to walk in obedience to Your Word daily, transform our heart and make us more like You, reveal Yourself to us in greater ways as we seek Your face, and Holy Spirit, guide us into a deeper understanding of God’s heart, in Jesus mighty name I pray, Amen.

Central

