

1-8-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: Something More in my Relationship with God

Purpose: Provoke people to desire something more in their personal relationship with Christ; to pursue a deeper and closer relationship with God.

Truth for Today: We can experience a deeper and closer relationship with God in 2023.

Text: James 4:8, Philippians 3:10

Topic: Relationship with God, New Year, Spiritual Growth, Maturity

Series Title: Something More

Series purpose: Provoke people to a deeper and more productive spiritual life in 2023.

Something More in my Relationship with God

- I. Introduction: *sign up leadership app./ due 15th*
 - A. Review series: Something More. My purpose is to provoke us to a deeper and more productive spiritual life in 2023.
 - B. Last week Jesus showed us that Christianity is more than a belief system or religious rituals, but a faith that's lived out every day as we follow Jesus. We follow Jesus on the narrow path of life and build our life on the rock of His will and His Word.
 - C. Today I want to show you how to pursue a deeper and closer relationship with God. We'll look at the basics of Christianity 101 and then go deeper with Christianity 102.
 - D. Title: Something More in my Relationship with God
 - E. Truth for Today: We can experience a deeper and closer relationship with God in 2023.
- II. Christianity is more than a religion, it's a personal relationship with God.
 - A. Being a Christian begins with a spiritual rebirth, [John 3:3 (NLT) Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are **born again**, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."] We then grow in maturity and depth. // meet, date, engaged, marry, spend the rest of our life growing closer to the one we love.
 - B. [James 4:8 (NLT) **Come close to God, and God will come close to you.**] Paul, 3rd heaven, [Phil. 3:10 (NLT) **I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with**

him, sharing in his death, 11 so...I will experience the resurrection from the dead!]

C. I want something more in my personal relationship with God in 2023. I want to sense His Presence and know He's near every day. I want to hear His voice like people in the Bible did. I want to see the supernatural work of the HS in my life.

III. Christianity 101, the basics of a growing relationship with the Lord.

A. Spend private time every day with Jesus, in worship, prayer and reading the Bible.

1. Jesus gave us an example, [Mark 1:35 (NLT) Before daybreak...**Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.**] Expressing thankfulness and talking to the Lord in prayer are at the core of our time together,
2. Reading God's Word is the #1 way the Lord speaks to us. [1 Peter 2:2 (ESV) Like newborn infants, long for the **pure spiritual milk** (*NCV teaching*), that by it you may **grow up into salvation**]. The Bible reveals how God thinks and our goal is to think like Him, to value what He values. [Romans 12:2 (NLT) Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...**] I recommend the *Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*.
Connect room at cost
3. If we spend private time every day with Jesus, our lives will be transformed.

B. Be a part of regular Christian fellowship with committed Christians. Follow the example of the NT church, a spiritual family. [Acts 2:46 (NLT) They **worshipped together** at the Temple each day, **met in homes** for the Lord's Supper, and **shared their meals** with great joy and generosity—] Our friends determine our future. Not everyone was committed to their spiritual family, [Heb. 10:25 (NCV) **You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing**, but you should **meet together** and encourage each other. Do this **even more** as you see the day coming.] Christians need each other for encouragement, correction of error, help with our struggles and serve the Lord together. We are the Body of Christ and God's will is for us is to be connected to one another. When we isolate, we get in trouble. We need you

C. Practice Christian Stewardship. I can't separate what I do with my money/ material world from my relationship with God. Great commandment, [Mt.

22:36–37 (NLT) “Teacher, which is the most important commandment...37 Jesus replied, “ ‘You must **love the Lord your God with all your heart...**] Our material world competes with our spiritual world, [Mt. 6:19–24 (NCV) “Don’t store treasures for yourselves here on earth... 20 But **store your treasures in heaven...**21 **Your heart will be where your treasure is...**24.. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches.] Giving our tithe, 10%, and offerings to God’s work will cause our heart to be closer to the Lord

D. Share our faith. [2 Cor. 5:18–20 (NCV)...**God gave us the work of telling everyone about the peace we can have with him...**20 So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is as if God is calling to you through us...] Telling people about Jesus is our purpose we’re on the planet. Witnessing for Jesus makes us closer to God. // cookies

IV. Christianity 201/ Going Deeper

A. Trade my agenda for His, my will for His. Context, [Acts 1:6–8 (NLT) So when the apostles were with Jesus, **they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”** 7 He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And **you will be my witnesses**, telling people about me everywhere...] The disciples had one agenda and Jesus had another.

1. There’s a difference between knowing Jesus as Savior and following Him as Lord. Lord means master; it means Jesus is on the throne of my heart and not me; it means I put His will before my own. This is a huge turning point in our relationship with God when Christ becomes Savior and Lord. The big question for 2023 is who’s 1st, me or Jesus? The biggest competitor to my relationship with God is me.
2. Jesus modeled the pursuit of God’s will and encouraged us to do the same. Gethsemane, [Luke 22:42 (NLT) “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. **Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.**”] [Matthew 6:9–11 (NIV) “**This, then, is how you should pray:** “ ‘Our Father in heaven...10 your kingdom come, **your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 **Give us today our daily bread.**] This is the path for true followers of Jesus, take up our cross and follow Him.

B. Don't waste your sorrows. Trouble can be a path to get us closer to God. [James 1:2–4 (NLT)...when **troubles** of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for **great joy**. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be **perfect and complete**, (*NIV mature*) needing nothing.] How does this happen? [2 Cor. 1:8–9 (NLT) We think you ought to know...about the trouble we went through in...Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure...9 In fact, we expected to die. But **as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God...**]

1. If we have money and health, we can live like we don't need God but when trouble shakes our life, we realize our need and cry out to God. Trouble may not be fun, but the end result can deepen our relationship with God.

C. Embrace God's discipline for our sin and get back on the right path.

1. Why is sin such a big deal? Sin separates us from God. [James 1:14–15 (NLT) Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And **when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.**] Def. death, the end of physical and/or spiritual life.¹ Habitual sin will affect our spiritual life. The more I say no to God and yes to sin the further I get from God.

2. God cares enough to discipline us, [Heb. 12:5–10 (NLT)...don't make light of the Lord's **discipline**, (Def.: *To correct; to chastise; to punish.*²) and **don't give up when he corrects you**. 6 For the Lord disciplines those he loves...]

3. How does God discipline us? Financial pressure, allowing sickness, job loss, legal/ court system, etc.

v. Conclusion: We can experience a deeper and closer relationship with God in 2023.

A. Christianity 101: (1) Spend private time every day with Jesus, in worship, prayer and reading the Bible. (2) Be a part of regular Christian fellowship with committed Christians. (3) Practice Christian Stewardship (4) Share our faith

B. Christianity 201: (1) Trade my agenda for His, my will for His. (2) Don't waste your sorrows. Trouble can be a path to get us closer to God. (3) Embrace God's discipline for our sin and get back on the right path.

C. Practical way to awaken a spiritually dull life: Touch broken, hurting and needy people; get out of your comfort zone. Go on a ST mission trip, jail, SSS, jail ministry, GH girls.

VI. Response

A. Prayer

B. Souls

VII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [*Harper's Bible dictionary*](#) (1st ed., p. 213). Harper & Row.
2. Webster, N. (2006). In [*Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language*](#). Foundation for American Christian Education.