

# Building *Intimacy* with God

Devotional

W E E K 4



*Week 4*

## MAKING INTIMACY WITH GOD A LIFETIME PRIORITY

As I've shared with you over the past few weeks, about ten years ago I experienced a dramatic new depth of intimacy in my relationship with God. Many times, these "mountaintop" experiences fade and become anomalies of the Christian life rather than an expected norm. I was determined not to let that happen.

When the Lord drew me closer, I realized I had been functioning with so little of Him. I want to always know God as my Beloved, my intimate friend, my caring Father, my Savior, and my Lord. True, the "feelings" of God's closeness come and go. Even David, Job, Paul, and Jesus experienced times through which God felt distant. Yet, we can trust and continually pursue the reality of God's intimate presence.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that he exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." By faith, I believe that the pursuit of God's presence is never a wasted effort, even if I can't "feel" Him on a given day.

Over the past ten years, the following practices have been my focus to bring me back to the singular pursuit of walking intimately with my God.

# TAKING *notes*

## 1. Intimacy begins with priority.

Think of something you do every day. Start with basics like eating, going to the bathroom, and taking a shower. And then perhaps less obvious things you regularly do like talking to your spouse or roommate, feeding your dog or cat, and checking your news feed. How did these activities become part of your regular routine? Because you believe they are necessary for daily functioning.

Intimacy with God will become a regular priority when you believe it is absolutely critical for you to function. Earlier we looked at Jesus' words in John 15:5. Write the verse here:

Do you believe what Jesus said? Apart from abiding in Him, you can do nothing. Of course you can do many things apart from abiding in Christ. You can brush your teeth, drive your car, say hi to your neighbor, and post on social media. What Jesus was saying is that we can do nothing of eternal significance apart from Him. Disconnected from intimacy with God, we may be very busy, but we will ultimately have spent our time running on a treadmill, going nowhere. I have become absolutely convinced of this truth. Even my best ideas for my marriage, my children, and my work are empty. But when I am fully surrendered to the work of God in me, He works through me in every aspect of my life. I need Him! I need God's comfort. I need His direction. I need His perspective. I need His love. I am lost without Him. What in your life is impossible to do without being connected to Jesus?

# TAKING *notes*

## 2. Set a time and place.

"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16). The Gospels often refer to times (late night or early morning) and places (the wilderness, mountains, gardens) where Jesus got away to be with the Father. We see similar patterns in Daniel's, David's, and the apostles' lives.

Time alone with God won't just happen. We need to set apart a time and place that will nurture the practice. If your life is loud and busy, perhaps you can only find 15-20 minutes of quiet. Start with that! And the "place" doesn't have to be a whole room; it can be a special chair or place in your backyard.

In this season of life, my time with the Lord is best in the morning before everyone gets up. When the kids were younger, evenings were better for me. I've had to learn what it looks like to prioritize this time with God but not be rigid and legalistic about it. There are some mornings when I know I need to sleep and other mornings where it's important to spend time with my husband. Notice that the Bible didn't say that every night, Jesus religiously got away for three hours to pray. It was His regular practice but not His rigid routine. There are days when my time seeking the Lord looks more like an ongoing conversation rather than a "quiet time."

What does your regular time and place with the Lord look like?.

# TAKING *notes*

## **3. Be inspired by others.**

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up” (1 Thessalonians 5:11), and “let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24). Intimacy with God is contagious. When I’m around other Christians who are passionate for God and fully surrendered to His Spirit, I want to become like them. They remind me to be hungry and thirsty for the Lord; their lives convict me and warn me against complacency and spiritual pride. Whether in the flesh or through their teaching, I want to be in their company.

Be on the lookout for Christians around you who want to know God and walk intimately with Him. Pray for mentors who can encourage you as Paul encouraged Timothy: “I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands... join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.” I have been blessed to know men and women who encourage my walk with the Lord and who show me what it looks like to live a surrendered life. But I am also deeply encouraged by men and women who died many years ago and who I have never met. Among my greatest mentors are people like A.W. Tozer, Andrew Murray, and C.S. Lewis.

Even if we never personally meet, I hope and pray that we can continue to journey together to know God and to walk intimately with Him! Remember the quote I shared in week 1 from Dr. Larry Crabb, “I know that God is all I need, but I don’t yet know Him well enough for Him to be all that I have.” As COVID-19 threatens to take all that we have, may we become ever desperate to know God and be sustained by His presence.