

Intimacy 1

Being a son or daughter of God automatically assumes relationship. And relationships are two-way. We may think "What can we possibly add to a relationship with God!" but we need to know that God wants to spend time with us and He longs for us to spend time with Him.

Let's look at what the bible says:

Re-read the creation story and in particular how God created Adam and Eve and saw that it was very good and that he provided everything for them. Read Genesis 3 and how God walked in the garden, that he had an intimate relationship with his creation.

God never stops pursuing his people, but throughout the Old Testament we see a repeating pattern of Israel rejecting God and him restoring them. Look at some examples of this throughout the History books.

Look at Revelation 21:3 and how God promises that his home will again be with his people in the future.

Reflect on the present and how we are in-between these times and yet still have the Holy Spirit so that we can be with Him now.

Let's now look at some example in scripture of some who had intimacy with God:

Moses

Read about the tent of meeting in Exodus 33 and 34 and how Moses was able to meet face to face with God as one talks to a friend, how God knew Moses by name, how Moses was desperate to be in God's presence – how he actively sought out God, even climbing a mountain to be near Him. Moses didn't hold back – he even asked to see God. Read how Moses encountered God through the cloud and by Him passing in front of Him and their conversation. What questions does this bring up for you? Does it teach you anything? How could you seek more intimacy with God?

Elijah

Read 1 Kings 19 (in particular verses 10-12). We find ourselves on another mountain! Is this significant? Elijah was zealous for God. What is significant about the fact that God was not in the wind, earthquake or fire but in the still whisper? It is important for us to keep the communication open between us and God. What questions does this bring up for you? Does it teach you anything? How could you seek more intimacy with God?

David

David sought God in terms of where he was going or what he should say. When we read David's Psalms we see an honest dialogue between him and God. We read about the heights and depths of God's love and David's intimacy with Him. David was not afraid to express his feelings to God of joy, despair, anger, thankfulness, fear and hope – all found in the Psalms. Choose a couple of Psalms and write down all the emotions and feelings you detect from the writer. What questions does this bring up for you? Does it teach you anything? How could you seek more intimacy with God?

Jesus

Jesus often took himself away to pray. Often it was before a significant event or decision (choosing his disciples, the transfiguration, his betrayal in Gethsemane etc..) Is this something we can do more of?

Chapters 14-17 of John's gospel contain key passages where Jesus speaks the words of His Father in heaven and does what the Father does. We too need to learn to speak the words of the Father and do and act how he would choose to in the world.

Read John 14:26 about how the Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us to listen and to pray for revelation. Look out for it and receive it.

Read John 15 about how we are to remain in Him in order to bear fruit. Keep Him close. Jesus had complete access to the kingdom of God and so do we! And when we ask we will receive – not for our own benefit but to share and reveal God's kingdom with the world

Read John 17 and Jesus' prayer for us. What questions does this bring up for you? Does it teach you anything? How could you seek more intimacy with God?

So how can we be more intimate with God?

1. Prayer - make sure it is 2-way! Try to pray away from the hustle and bustle of life and practice hearing His still voice
2. Reading His word in the bible. Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal God's word to you as you read it. Ask Him to do this before you start.
3. Fellowship – worship together with others, make declarations together, share testimonies, teach one another. Make a list of all the ways we can grow in intimacy together and make an effort to do more of them!
4. Make time for God! Read Luke 10:38-42 and the story of Martha and Mary. What does this tell us about spending time with God? It is not saying we should stop doing and serving but don't become anxious or overtaken by busyness. Don't let your *doing* overtake your *being*. After all, Jesus didn't stop working – he was constantly doing the will of the Father healing, preaching, teaching, meeting! But He did it empowered by His intimacy with God the Father. In Him we find freedom and fulfilment.

Activity

Spend time listening to God. Maybe play some background music and give everyone a pen and piece of paper. Write down what God is saying to you now.

In order to help you, look at a Psalm or two – maybe Psalm 23 or Psalm 139. What is God saying to you from the words of the Psalm. Have a tray of random objects on a table. Pick up an object that you are drawn to. What is God saying to you through the object.

Pray for one another: For those who have heard a word from God and want to share it; for those that are not sure they have heard and want confirmation; for those that haven't heard from God to hear Him more clearly.