

INTIMACY WITH GOD

Part One

Conversing with God

What's the main difference between you and an unbeliever? A personal relationship with God! All healthy personal intimate relationships will have a mutual giving and receiving of love and truth (Eph4:15, 25; John 17:3).

Prayer is a conversation, an encounter with God—a foretaste of heaven on earth. Prayer is a continuation of a conversation God started. Since prayer is our reply to God, we need to explore how He first speaks and how we can learn to answer Him. (Matt13:9 15xs in N.T.; John 8:47, 10:27)

2Tim3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- 1) **Christian prayer is fellowship with the personal Triune God who befriends us through speech.** Vv16-17; Matt4:4; Rom10:17; Ps86:11-12
- 2) **When the Bible talks of God's Word, it is talking of God's active presence in the World.**
The God of the Bible is a God who by his very nature, acts through speaking. Gen1:3; Psalm 29:4-5, 10-11; Isa 55:10-11; Matt24:35
- 3) **The best way to have God dynamically active in our lives is through the Bible. In the Bible we actually hear God speaking and also meet God Himself when we respond with trust.**
Vv16-17; Heb4:12 "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."
- 4) **Since we learn language only as we are spoken to, we should listen, study, think, reflect, and ponder the Scriptures until there is an answering response in our hearts.** Col3:16; Josh1:8; Ps1:1-3
Meditation is working the text OUT & then you work it IN to your life.
Two basic questions to understanding a text:
One—What did the original author intend to convey to his readers in this passage?
Two—What role does this text play in the whole Bible; how does it contribute to the gospel message and move along the main narrative arc of the Bible, which climaxes in the salvation of Jesus Christ?
Questions: Am I living in light of this? What difference does this make? If I believed and held to this, how would that change things? When I forget this, how does that affect me and all my relationships?
- 5) **In prayer we are to use a rich and varied range of words and attitudes in response to the character of God who is at once our friend, father, lover, shepherd, and king.**

Left to our own personality, cultures, inner needs and psychology, there are many kinds of language that we would never use in prayer. The book of Psalms reveals a great range in the modes of prayer: shouts of wonder, strong complaints, reasoned arguments, pronouncements and verdicts, appeals and requests.

We need both: God is Great (Transcendent, Powerful) & God is Good (Immanent, Personal). It's His Greatness that makes His Goodness so comforting. It's His Goodness that makes His Greatness so captivating.

6) We are not to decide how to pray based on the experiences and feelings we want. Instead, we should do everything possible to behold our God as he is, and prayer will follow.

2Cor3:18 "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

7) Without immersion in God's words, our prayer may not be merely limited and shallow but also untethered from reality. We may be responding not to the real God but to what we wish God and life to be like. 2Tim3:16-17 ...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...

Teaching (Correcting) Beliefs -> Who I am (Character)

Training (Reproof [proved or tested]) Behavior -> What I do (Conduct)

2Tim4:3-4 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

8) A heart for prayer grows out of the realization that the same glory that would have been fatal to Moses on contact now comes into the hearts of those pardoned by Christ.

Ex33:20 God-- "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

John1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2Pet1:3-4 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Reflect on Psalm 36 using the questions from point #4 above.

V1 Fearing God in more than belief in God. It is to be filled with joyful awe and wonder at the privilege of knowing, serving and enjoying God. Sin shrugs at God and treats Him like He doesn't matter.

V2 Indifference toward God is a form of self-conceit and is self-deceiving.

V3 To feel no need for God is to cease to be wise and out of touch with reality.

V4 What starts as overconfidence can grow into dishonesty and cruelty. Sin is spiritual cancer.

In contrast to the claustrophobic, self-absorbed nature of sin is intimacy with God.

V5 God's love is as high as the heavens, v6a majestic as the mountains, and v6b inexhaustible as the ocean, V7b His love is priceless, v7b it is like a mother bird sheltering her young, vv8-9 intimacy with God is like Eden restored. Vv10-12 Is prayer to persevere in intimacy with God and therefore preserved from the influence of the proud and wicked who will ultimately be destroyed.