

Episode 003

Intimacy with God

Introduction

Mark 12:30

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

It is wonderful when believers in Christ are fervent about prayer and intercession. One thing we need to be watchful of is to not go through the motions of prayer in intercession. Let's not do so religiously, knowing the rhythm of prayer so well and yet something is missing.

That very ingredient is an ever-growing deepening relationship with God.

Your prayer and intercession life becomes more meaningful and effective to achieve God's purposes for the people you care for, for the nations that God love.

Story of Corrie Ten Boom, author of *The Hiding Place*.

Intimacy with God helps us live victoriously in conjunction with continual prayer even in the most difficult circumstances.

How then do we grow in intimacy with the Lord?

Much of intimacy with God has to do with us being aware of His very presence. In other words, practising the Presence of God in our lives.

The 3C's are 3 simple ways we can practise God's presence and pursue God's heart through prayer.



Firstly: Cultivate and nurture friendship with God

The greatest privilege we have is knowing and loving the God who absolutely loves us and paid the price for us through His Son, Jesus! Our God derives great pleasure in knowing and connecting with us.

As a humble cook in a seventeenth-century French monastery, Brother Lawrence was able to turn even a boring job, such as washing dishes, into an act of worship and an opportunity to build his relationship with God.

Psalm 16:11

You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in your presence. With eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Worship is not an event, rather it is our perpetual attitude of connecting with the Lord in His Presence.

That perpetual interaction with the Lord is what motivates our prayer lives! This is a holy companionship with Jesus.

Practising the presence of God will give us rest and lead us into a more fruitful lifestyle. Answers to prayer come in God's perfect timing and we need to rest in Him and not be anxious nor be fretting when we await His reply.



Some tips to practise God's presence on a daily basis?

1. Consider short breath prayers

Pray a brief phrase to Jesus throughout the day that you can repeat in one breath. You may want to pray phrases such as, "You will help me," "You promise to never leave me," "I can do all things through Christ," "Your joy is my strength," "I love You," and "help me trust You."

Breath prayers will keep you more conscious of your relationship with God on a moment by moment basis.

You become more aware that He is with you through all the joys and sorrows of daily life. You are in a deeper dimension of His companionship. As time goes on, it becomes a natural practice in your everyday life, and you realize afresh that Jesus really is your greatest friend.

The promise of Exodus 33:14 becomes more real: "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." A deeper joy invades your life as you realize that you are learning to abide in Christ.

2. Ponder over God's word

Meditate on God's word throughout the day.

Focus your thoughts on the Bible (Scriptures). Think about who God is and what He has done.

As we do so, we find ourselves being drawn closer to God and continually being refreshed and refocused by the Lord. This will help you in your prayer life because you begin to pray what resonates with God's heart and His Word.

Psalm 1:2-3

His delight is in the law of the Lord, And on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prosper.



Why worry when you can meditate upon God's Word and be built up and prosper despite circumstances surrounding you!

Why don't we move into a new place as a praying intercessor and practise God's presence even more than you ever did before?

These are the days when God's Word is absolutely essential! With Covid and all that is happening around us, we need to keep our mind on the Lord.

Be aware of God's presence throughout the day as we live out our lives. Personally invite Jesus to be the central focus of our everyday living.

No matter what the world's events are like, God can help us ride through the storms of life. This is how we will defeat the Enemy by staying close to Jesus!

Practising God's presence through short breath prayers and pondering God's Word will make all the difference. Together let's stay aware of His presence and step up higher, into a new realm of intimacy.

Joshua 1:8-9

Do not let this book of law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.



Secondly: Cultivate and diligently pursue God's heart

Acts 13:22

And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'

Despite his weaknesses, David was a man after God's own heart. He was moved by what moved the heart of God.

How does pursuing God's heart look like and how does it impact us?

When you and I know the emotions and feelings in God's heart, what matters to God, we can better walk in obedience to His word and live radically for Him because God's love sustains us.

We are able to obey God in the long term because we are empowered by Him instead of relying on our own strength. We can live joyfully because we are living in a whole new realm. Psalm 16:11 says, "You will fill me with joy in your presence."

When we pursue God's heart, everything becomes easier because we are walking in step with the Lord and focusing on God.

We begin to comprehend His overwhelming love for us personally and the deep pleasure He derived from our fellowship with Him.

This motivates us to change as enabled by the work of the Holy Spirit. Our actions and lifestyles become more Christlike because we see ourselves the way God sees us, and this impacts everything we are, say and do.

We see ourselves through His eyes. This enables us to say no to sin and grow in holiness out of that deep abiding love and appreciation for God.



God's truth and love for the entire world moves into our hearts. We then respond to God from our hearts, experiencing God's love in a deeper measure.

Realize that Satan will always attack this dimension of our relationship with Christ. Satan seeks to sneak in and subtly distract our attention from the purity and simplicity of loving God. He knows that simple heartfelt devotion to Jesus is the key to all fruitfulness and spiritual victory. That is why we must keep cultivating and grow in pursuing a heart after God.

Thirdly: Cultivate deep longings of the heart towards Christ

All our inner longings can only be met as we closely relate with God. Remember the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well in John 4.

John 4:13-15

13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,

14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

We can never fully live for God, abandoned to His purposes, until we have the longings of our hearts met by His perfect love. Our true contentment comes from the Lord.

When we have had a personal revelation of God's love for us, knowing that He deeply enjoys us and treasures our relationship with Him. We will discover praying more effectively from this position.

The Holy Spirit will guide us in our praying and our "goings and doings." Our faith in Christ will deepen. Our prayer life will grow from that fellowship with Him, becoming a greater joy and privilege.

Love begins to impact everything we do, including how we pray. We rise up with new confidence in Jesus.



Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt like you hit a brick wall in your prayer life? Let's take time to seek God and ask Him to reveal to us what may be the hurdle you are faced with. If we need to repent, let us do so with humility before God. If not, let us ask God to help us get through that hurdle.
2. Where are you finding yourself in terms of intimacy with God; on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being needing God's major renewal in prayer and 8 being steady and growing closer). The key is to desire for more of God in our lives. Not to remain stagnant in relating with the Lord.
3. Which of the 3C's would you ask the Lord to help you with? What are some steps you are taking to draw you closer to the Lord?





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