

The importance of developing a strong personal devotional life



In the book of Jeremiah we read,

“For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, And has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it?” (Jeremiah 23:18)

- God's desire is to have an intimate relationship with every person



- Because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross at Calvary every person can have an intimate relationship with God if they are prepared to repent of their sins and receive Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives to be their Lord and Saviour
- Once a person has received Christ they can then have ongoing fellowship with God

**In the book of Acts we read the words of the Apostle Peter,
“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be
blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the
presence of the Lord.” (Acts 3:19)**



- **As believers we can enjoy ongoing communication with the God of all creation. This is why the Apostle Paul wrote, “pray without ceasing,” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)**

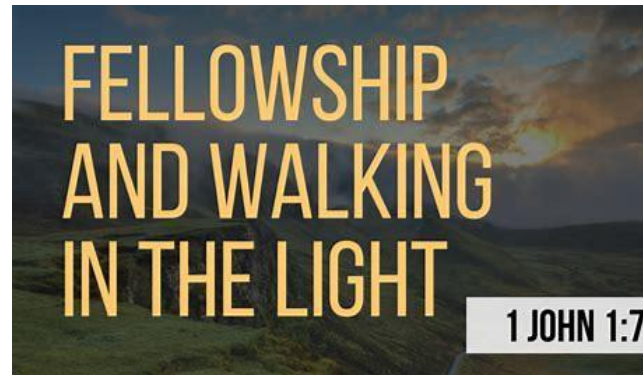
- Especially given the days that we are now living in having fellowship with other believers is crucial



This is why in the book of Hebrews we read, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23-25)

The Apostle John wrote,

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” **(1 John 1:7)**



The Psalmist wrote,

“Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing. To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” (Psalm 92:13-15)



- **Being planted in a local church fellowship is therefore crucial if our lives are to bear much fruit**

- However it is also vitally important that in addition to being part of a loving church fellowship that we ALSO cultivate a vibrant personal devotional life with the Lord so that we can continually grow in our Christian walk



- Life is full of many important choices where we need to get wisdom from God to make right choices
- Much as God will speak to us during our church meetings through the preached messages and counsel of others to help us to do life well, during the week we need to also continually get counsel ourselves from God to do life well

- Having fellowship with other believers on Sunday and during the week helps us to be encouraged and refreshed in our walk with the Lord



- However, throughout the week we will all encounter trials and challenges that will need to be overcome
- Daily we need wisdom to make right choices in life

- It is our ongoing personal devotional life that will help us to consistently make right choices in life and to remain strong in our Christian walk right throughout the entire week and during those times when we cannot have fellowship with other believers because of circumstances arising



- There are many reasons why we need to continually maintain an intimate personal devotional life with the Lord. These include,



- i. **Because we have a very real adversary who is out to destroy our lives. We continually need God's help and guidance to avoid the pitfalls of life**

The Apostle Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

ii. It helps us to continually maintain our peace in life, especially during the trials of life. Jesus is the Prince of Peace



In the book of Isaiah we read, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.” (Isaiah 26:3-4)

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)



iii. It helps us to consistently make right choices in life. Life is full of important choices that will greatly determine the outcome of our life



- We often have to make important decisions on the spur of the moment. On these occasions we do not have the opportunity of gaining counsel from other believers
- The more intimate we are in our walk with the Lord the more easier it is to instinctively make right choices in life

Jesus Himself said,

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” **(John 16:13)**



In the book of James we read,

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” **(James 1:5)**

**In the book of Psalms we read,
“Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD,
And teach out our Your law.” (Psalm 94:12)**



iv. It is a great key to continually remaining in the will of God for our lives so that we see His favour and blessing upon our lives



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:15-17)

v. Because it helps us to get to know God in a real and personal way. In His presence is fullness of joy



King David wrote,

“I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.” (Psalm 9:1-2)

“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11)

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” **(Ephesians 3:17-19)**



vi. Because it helps us to examine our hearts and to deal with any wrong attitudes quickly



King David wrote, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

In the book of Proverbs we read, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

- It is so important that we deal with any known sin in our life quickly. Having regular quiet times helps us to do so
- This is a great key to keeping the pipeline of communication open with God and to seeing our prayers being answered



The Psalmist wrote,

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, Nor His mercy from me!” **(Psalm 66:18-20)**

vii. Because it helps us to remain strong in our faith and to have boldness in the way that we live our Christian life

In the book of Daniel we read,

“...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” (Daniel 11:32)



In the book of Acts we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13)

- The more time that we spend in God's presence and in His word the more fear is broken off our lives and our faith built up



The Apostle Paul wrote, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” **(2 Timothy 1:7)**

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” **(Romans 10:17)**

viii. Because it is generally in isolation that we get revelation from God. God's ways are higher than our ways

The word of the LORD came to the Prophet Jeremiah in prison, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)



ix. Because it helps us to continually maintain our love for God and for others when we have intimate fellowship with the Lord



King David wrote,

“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)

- The more time that we spend with the LORD the more love we will have both for Him and for others**

The Apostle John wrote,

“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16)

AND



x. It is the key to growing strong in our Christian walk
(Having a lifestyle of prayer and meditating in God's word helps us to grow strong in our Christian walk)



The Psalmist wrote,

“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” **(Psalm 46:1-2)**

Jesus Himself said,

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” **(John 14:26)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” **(2 Timothy 3:16-17)**



The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10)



- I will now finish by quickly sharing some keys that can help us to develop a vibrant personal devotional life**

1) Have a place where you meet with God (away from other distractions)



Jesus Himself said,

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matthew 6:6)

2) Make time to spend alone with God, preferably at the beginning of the day (Life can get busy at times)



King David, who was the only man referred to in the bible as being a man after God's own heart, also wrote,

**“O GOD, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.”
(Psalm 63:1-3)**

3) Cultivate a lifestyle of prayer where you learn to involve God in all that you do. This is a great key to learning to hear the voice of God clearly



In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

4) Have an open bible when you spend time alone with the Lord. (God speaks clearly to us through His word as the Holy Spirit highlights passages of Scripture that are relevant to our lives and circumstances)



The Psalmist wrote, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” **(Psalm 119:105)** “Your testimonies are wonderful; Therefore my soul keeps them. The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” **(Psalm 119:129-130)** “Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.” **(Psalm 119:133)**

5) The importance of meditating on the word of God so that it brings positive change to our life (We need to allow the word of God to take root in our heart)



The Psalmist wrote,

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:9-11)

The LORD said to Joshua,

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” **(Joshua 1:8)**



The Apostle Paul wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” **(Romans 10:17)**

6) Have an expectation that God will speak to you through His word during your devotional times. He will

The Psalmist wrote,

“Oh, how I love Your law!

It *is* my meditation all the day.

You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies;

For they *are* ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers,

For Your testimonies *are* my meditation.” (Psalm 119:97-99)



7) We need to learn to be still so that we can hear from God

- Prayer needs to be a two way dialogue with God and not just a list of prayer requests. God wishes to speak to us
- We need to learn to still our hearts and minds to hear from heaven; To be silent to hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit



The Psalmist wrote, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”
(Psalm 46:10)

8) The importance of journalling the things that God communicates to us when we are reading the word of God or praying to Him

- It is good to have a diary or exercise book where you write down all the things that God speaks to us about
- Journalling what God communicates to us helps to ensure that we do not forget what He has shared with us in our intimate devotional times
- When we journal things we can continually reflect upon what God has spoken to us and the guidance that He has given us. This helps to give us stability in our Christian walk.



9) Being obedient to what God tells us to do. This is a great key to maintaining an open pipeline of communication with God



- Continually heeding the guidance of the Holy Spirit helps us to maintain a sensitivity to hearing His voice
- On the other hand if we continually ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we become less sensitive to hearing the still small voice of the Holy Spirit
- God cannot also reveal to us the next step for our life if we have not done what He has previously told us to do

King David wrote, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.” **(Psalm 37:23-24)**



- **Jesus Himself lived a life of simple obedience to His Father's will for His life during His time here on earth**

Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” **(John 4:34)**

10) Be quick to forgive those who hurt you. We cannot have our heart open to God and shut to others at the same time. Unforgiveness towards others will negatively affect our relationship with God

This is why Jesus said, “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” **(Mark 11:25-26)**

AND



11) Make your time with God your greatest priority in life

- It is the key to growing in Christlike character, remaining strong during the trials of life and to fulfilling our God given destiny here on earth

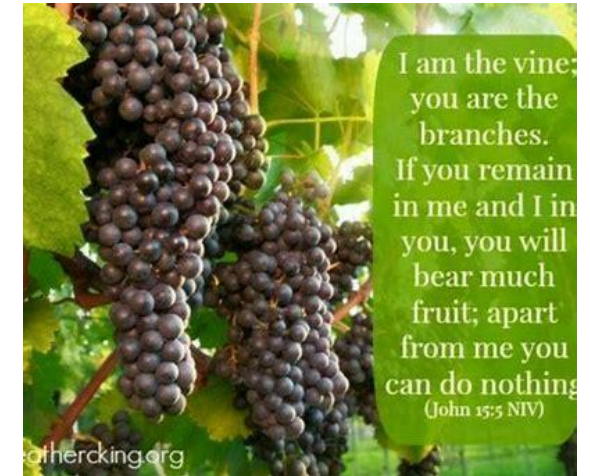


Jesus Himself said,

“And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.” **(Mark 12:30)**

Jesus Himself said,

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” **(John 15:4-5)**



- So in conclusion may I encourage you to make your relationship with God your *greatest priority in the coming days*



- In doing this you will remain strong during the trials and disappointments of life, your life will bear much fruit and you will always be ready for the rapture of all true believers
- So given the ungodly times that we are now living in, may I encourage you to be both planted in the house of God and to have a vibrant personal devotional life so that you will lead a victorious and overcoming Christian life in the days to come

- I will finish with three Scriptures that show the power and authority that we all have as believers when we pray in faith for miracles



Firstly Jesus Himself said, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” **(Mark 11:22-24)**

Secondly Jesus also said,

**“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I WILL DO IT.”
(John 14:12-14)**

AND



Finally Jesus said,

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My Name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” **(Mark 16:17-18)**

