

INTIMACY WITH THE LORD

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” **(Philippians 3:7-8)**

And to the Christians in Ephesus he 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)**

THE APOSTLE PAUL BOTH KNEW THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN A VERY INTIMATE WAY AND SHARED WITH OTHERS THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD

HAVING AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS A KEY

- i) TO BEING EFFECTIVE IN MINISTRY**
- ii) IN KNOWING THE HEART OF GOD FOR PEOPLE**
- iii) TO STAYING IN THE CENTRE OF GOD’S WILL FOR OUR LIFE**
- iv) TO MAINTAINING OUR JOY DURING THE TOUGH TIMES THAT WE WILL ALL GO THROUGH IN MINISTRY AND IN LIFE IN GENERAL,**
- v) TO GROWING AND REMAINING STRONG IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD, AND**
- vi) IN RENEWING OUR STRENGTH WHEN WE ARE BECOMING WEARY**

The Bible makes it clear that in His presence is fullness of joy and that those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

I WILL NOW SHARE ON A NUMBER OF AREAS IN RELATION TO HAVING INTIMACY WITH THE LORD

i) **Having a lifestyle of prayer**

- Involving the Lord in every area of our life

The Apostle Paul wrote, “pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” **(1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)**

- We must learn to commit all of our cares and needs to the Lord

“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)**

- We can be assured that God answers our prayers (we must not continually speak about the mountains in our life)

“Jesus said, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” **(Mark 9:23)**

JESUS MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE CAN PUT OUR TRUST IN HIM WHO ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS

Jesus 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)**

THE APOSTLE JOHN ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT GOD ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS WHICH ARE IN LINE WITH HIS WILL FOR OUR LIFE

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. **(1 John 5:14-15)**

JESUS HIMSELF SAID

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” **(John 15:16)**

WE MUST NOT ALLOW OUR CIRCUMSTANCES TO PREVENT US FROM STEPPING INTO ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE. AS WE PRAY AND SEEK HIS FACE WE WILL SEE THE MIRACLES IN OUR LIFE

Jesus 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)

ii) **Continually keeping our first love for Jesus alive**

- **Jesus rebuked the loveless Church in Ephesus which was full of good works**

“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: “I know your works, your labour, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for My name’s sake and have not become weary.

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand for its place—unless you repent.” **(Revelation 2:1-5)**

- **Jesus said that because of lawlessness abounding in the last days, the love of many would grow cold**

“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:12-13)**

- **As Christians we need to have Christ’s compassion**

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” **(Matthew 9:35-36)**

“Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.” **(Matthew 9:37-38)**

- **With His compassion we preach with passion and have a great desire to see the lost come to Christ**

Jesus came "... to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)

- **Whatever we do for the LORD must always be motivated by love.**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

- **It is only as we learn to continually abide in Him that our lives begin to bear much fruit**

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)

King David wrote, "Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4)

TRUE WORSHIP HELPS US TO GAIN THE HEART OF THE FATHER AND HIS LOVE FOR THE LOST

Jesus said, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24)

iii) **Knowing and hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit**

- **It helps us to follow God's unique plan for our life**

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

- **Trusting the Lord and obeying the still small voice of the Holy Spirit is the key to fulfilling God's plan for our life**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

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**) “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**)

- **Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it**

“Unless the LORD builds the house, They labour in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.” (**Psalms 127:1**)

- **God’s ways are often so different to our ways but they are far higher than our ways**

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” (**Isaiah 55:8-9**)

- **His plan for our life is far greater than we could imagine**

The Apostle Paul wrote, Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” (**Ephesians 3:20**)

- **We must continually stay close to the Lord so that His plan for our life progressively unfolds as we allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our steps. 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**)

iv) **Building our lives on the Word of God**

- **A key to having stability in our lives**

“Therefore, **whoever** hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the **rock**; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

But **everyone** who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” (**Matthew 7:24-27**)

IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS WE READ

“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.”
(Psalm 119:97-98)

- **God speaks to us through His word to give us direction in our life**

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

“Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.”
(Psalm 119:133)

- **Meditating on the Word of God builds up our faith**

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” (2 Corinthians 1:20)

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

BEFORE JOSHUA LED THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL INTO THE PROMISED LAND THE LORD SAID TO HIM

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. (Joshua 1:7)

“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)

- **We need to have our minds continually renewed by meditating on the Word of God so that we build our lives on Godly principles and His promises for our life.**

- **We must not allow the ungodly things in this world and the negativity in the world to undermine our faith in the LORD**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

Jesus Himself said, “If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

- **Meditating on the Word of God is a key to seeing revival in our lives**

The Book of Proverbs says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (**Proverbs 4:23**)

The Psalmist wrote, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.

Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way. Establish your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You...Revive me in Your righteousness.” (**Psalm 119:33-38, 40**)

THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT WHAT IS IN OUR HEART WILL COME OUT OF OUR MOUTH

Jesus Himself said, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (**Luke 6:45**)

For this reason it is imperative that we also guard our eyes and ears in terms of what we look at and listen to. The Apostle Paul said,

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy- meditate on these things.” (**Philippians 4:8**)

The book of James also gives clear warning of guarding our hearts from ungodly influences: “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” (**James 1:12-16**)

v) **Having a repentant heart helps us to maintain intimate fellowship with the LORD**

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (**1 John 1:9**)

vi) **The importance of setting aside time to spend alone with the LORD. While here on earth Jesus frequently withdrew to spend time in prayer with His Father in Heaven**

“So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.” (Luke 5:16) After spending all night ministering to the sick and demon possessed, (Mark 1:32-34) “... in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” (Mark 1:35)

vii) **When we spend time with the LORD we grow in boldness**

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

viii) **The importance of keeping ourselves continually in the presence of God and building ourselves up by praying in the Spirit. This is a key to helping us to walk in the Spirit**

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” (Jude 20 and 21)

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Galatians 5:16-18)

ix) **The importance of making Jesus Christ Lord of all of our life. That to know Him intimately is our greatest priority and need in life**

Jesus 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)

Jesus also said, “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

I will finish with the words of Jesus to the Lukewarm church in Laodicea, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20)