

What is Intimacy with God?

This summer we're focusing on intimacy with God. Scripture doesn't explicitly address this, but it is displayed in the lives of godly people, and is an implicit goal for every Christian. What *is* intimacy with God?

Some Fundamental Errors to Avoid

- Intimacy is *not* an event or experience.
- Intimacy is *not* the result of a formula or checklist.
- Intimacy is *not* 'one size fits all.'
- Intimacy is *not* a state you achieve or attain.

Some Glimpses of Intimacy with God in Scripture

- Adam and Eve's sinless, open relationship in Eden (Gen. 3)
- Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, etc.
- Jesus calls His disciples "friends" (John 15.5)
- 'Abba, Father' relationship (Mark 14.36; Rom. 8.15; Gal. 4.6)

What Intimacy with God Entails

- Walking hand-in-hand, heart-to-heart, as it were, through life.
- Discovering and internalizing God's truth in life.
- An awareness of and openness to God that guides my life.

What Intimacy with God Requires

- Since the fall, and until we reach glory, it is a daily struggle.
- It's volitional: You must decide to do it, and make it a priority.
- Drawing Near: Humbleness, submission, and cleansing.



1. The word 'intimacy' conjures images of the closest relationships in our human experience. Marriage is an intimate relationship, but not all marriages reach a level of true intimacy. How would you define intimacy? When have you had an intimate relationship in your life? What made it different from other relationships? Is there a time you would describe your relationship with God as intimate? Why?
2. Think of great biblical characters, people we would say were close to God. What are some common factors that may have contributed to them being intimate with God? What factors in their lives upset their open intimacy with God? How was intimacy restored?
3. No two people are the same, so what intimacy with God precisely entails for one Christian may not be the same for another, but God is the 'constant' in this relationship: He does not change, His love is unwavering, and His faithfulness is unending. As someone has put it, "If you're not close to God, who moved?" What factors in your life help you draw near to God? What pushes Him away?
4. While events in life may increase our desire for and experience of intimacy with God, we must not confuse the two. Singing worship songs may increase our emotional passion for God, but how is that different from intimacy with God? Persecuted Christians often say that their experience of closeness to God was greater during times of suffering than ever before. Why might this be? What did Jesus' words "Abba, Father" exhibit – and what do those words mean for the Christian (see Mark 14.36; Rom. 8.15; Gal. 4.6)?
5. Let's use James 4.4-10 to help us think about intimacy with God. In verse 4, what impedes 'friendship' with God? What does verse 5 indicate God desires? Verses 6-10 are a chiasm: The 'centerpiece' is *Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you* (8a). Adjoining this are appeals for humbleness before God (6, 10), submission to God (7a, 9), and cleansing from sin (7b, 8b). What is being humble before God? Submitting to God? How does this promote cleansing from sin? How do all these help us to draw near to God?