

## Pursuing Intimacy in Prayer

Isaiah 6.1-5; Matthew 6.5-8

Every Christian knows about prayer. We say grace before meals, pray with our kids at bedtime, and recite the 'Lord's Prayer.' But prayer is also a doorway to intimacy with God. We just need to change our goal from getting God to do something for me, to knowing Him better.

What happens when we 'Get to Know' God (Isaiah 6.1-5)

- Getting beyond our 'manageable deity'
- Can we "see" God? (Mt. 5.8; Heb. 12.14)
- Stopped in our tracks...and in awe.

What happens when we 'Get Alone' with God (Matthew 6.5-8)

- No ulterior motives, no 'abundance of words.'
- The 'secret' things come to the surface.
- We trust our all-knowing heavenly Father.



1. We all know Bible verses that call us to pray, even to 'pray without ceasing!' (1 Thess. 5.17) Yet we seem to often come to the end of a day without once consciously even thinking about prayer. Why is prayer difficult for us? Does our enemy have anything to do with this? How does our culture and social environment contribute to our approach to prayer?
2. C. S. Lewis's classic *The Screwtape Letters* is a clever uncovering of Satan's schemes in this world, and Letter #4 in particular reveals some of Satan's ways to undermine our prayer lives. Get ahold of a copy and read it. What ploys of Satan to keep us from prayer, or to confuse us about prayer, do you recognize from your experience?
3. Christians often say that they 'want to be more like Christ.' What example of prayer do we see in Jesus? Read Mark 1.35; Luke 5.16; 6.12; 9.28. What observations can we make about Jesus' prayer life? Now consider this: As the second person of the Trinity, Jesus had *unbroken fellowship* with His heavenly Father throughout eternity, yet in his incarnation (as a human), he "often" got alone to pray, starting before sunrise, and keeping at it all night! What does this show about His *intimacy* with the Father?
4. In Isaiah 6.1-5, Isaiah 'sees' the Lord in a vision. Can you imagine what a scene like that depicted in verses 2-4 would be like? What was Isaiah's response? Since we know that Isaiah was a righteous man, what did his statement in v5 show?
5. In Luke 11.1, after Jesus' disciples found Him *yet again* praying, one of them asked Him to teach them to pray. They never asked Him to teach them anything else: Why prayer? In Jesus teaching about prayer in Matthew 6.5-8, what impediments to intimacy in prayer does He expose? What is the "reward" He refers to in v5? What do you think the "reward" is in v6? What are vain repetitions (v7)? Do we sometimes lapse into these? How does knowing that God knows you better than you know yourself affect prayer (v8)?