



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

As ordinary human beings, we have free access to God at any time, through prayer. We can approach Him boldly without reserve, without fear, and with complete freedom. How awesome is that! Personal faith in God opens the door to unlimited help from Him.

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Psalm 33:15 says: “He fashions their hearts individually.” Because God has fashioned our hearts individually, our prayers need to flow naturally out of our hearts and be consistent with the way He has designed us. Do not try to keep up with man made rules for prayer or copy other’s prayer styles; and do not feel compelled to work every prayer principle you have ever learned every time you pray.

But step out in faith and follow God’s Spirit, because that is what pleases Him. We do not need to feel pressured to pray a certain way or for a certain length of time, or at a specific time of day or night, because other people are doing so. Instead, we need to be free to express our uniqueness as we pray the way God desires for us to pray as individuals, with sincerity of heart.

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If I had to identify the most important key to effective prayer, I would say that it is approaching God as our Heavenly Father. When we go to God believing that He sees us as His beloved children, new wonders are opened to us. We experience freedom and boldness, which are both necessary to effective prayer. If we do not know God as our loving Father, and if we are not confident that He thinks of us as His dear children and friends, we will be reluctant to tell Him what we need or to ask Him for anything. If we have stiff, distant relationships with God, our prayers can be legalistic and formal. But if we go to Him as our Father, without losing our awe of Him, our prayers will stay fresh, exciting and intimate.

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Always be respectful toward God as you approach Him, but do not be afraid. The Bible instructs us to have reverential fear and awe, but it never tells us to draw back in fear.

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One of the best ways to ensure a deepening relationship with God is to have a heart that wants to obey Him.

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A natural friendship involves loving and being loved. It means knowing that someone is on your side, wanting to help you, cheering you on, and always keeping your best interest in mind. A friend is someone you value, a partner, someone who is dear to you, someone you want to spend time with, and someone you enjoy. You become someone’s friend by investing time in them and with them, and by sharing your life and heart with that person.

Developing your friendship with God is similar to developing a friendship with someone on earth. *It takes time. The truth is that you can be as close to God as you want to be. It all depends on the time you are willing to invest in the relationship.* The difference between developing a relationship with God as a friend and building relationships with people is that with God, you end up with a friend who is perfect! One who will never leave you nor forsake you, one who is faithful, dependable, loving and forgiving.

Make a priority of developing a great friendship with God and inviting Him to be a vital part of everything you do, every day. That starts with simple prayer, just talking to Him and sharing your life with Him as you go about the things you have to do. Include Him in your thoughts, in your conversation, and in all your everyday activities. Don't just run to Him when you are desperate; talk to Him in the grocery store, while you are driving your car, combing your hair, walking the dog or cooking dinner; Approach Him as your partner and your friend and simply refuse to do anything without Him. He really wants to be involved in your life! Let God out of the religious box that many people keep Him in and let Him invade your Monday, Tuesdays, Wednesdaysand all Sundays as well. *Don't try to keep Him in a religious compartment, because He is not religious and He wants to have free access to every area of your life. He wants to be your friend.*

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You must know that one of the hindrances to a vibrant maturing relationship with God is allowing ourselves to focus on the benefits of friendship with God instead of focusing on Him as our loving Father.

How would an earthly father feel if his children would come to him only when they need his help or need something from him, but would never thank him or spend time with him or give him any show of affection. Surely, this father would be very sad and he probably would not feel like being as generous as he would love to be towards his children. Well, it is the same with God. He loves us dearly, He loves to make us happy and to supply our needs, but it makes Him sad if He sees that some of His children only want things from Him, but are too busy with the things of this world, their earthly priorities, to spend time with Him and show Him sincere love.

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Never forget that your relationship with God is based on Who He is and not on what He can do for you. Keep seeking His presence, not His presents; keep seeking His face, not His hand.