

Ways We Draw Close To God

❖ We Come To Him In Prayer And Lift Up Praises To Him.



"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come into His presence with singing." Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His Name." (Psalm 100:1,4)

"I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." (Ephesians 3:17-18)

"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 Read, Trust And Apply His Word Daily.



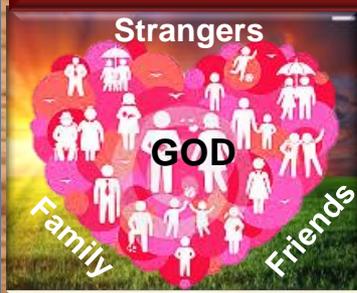
To approach Him. To draw near to Him. You can be close near to Him. You can be close to God only if you trust in Him, if you have faith in Him. But faith is like a living thing that needs feeding. You must constantly feed your faith by reviewing the basis for your beliefs. Matthew 4:4;

But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God.'" We must study His Word; "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) "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22) "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your Word." (Psalms 119:114)

"Jesus Is Our Model For Intimacy With God"

If we hope to attain true intimacy with God, Jesus must be our model. We love God because He first loved us (1 John 4:10), and we prove our love for Him by obeying Him. Jesus told His followers, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). When we obey Him and keep what He has commanded, He promised that we will remain in His love, just as He remains in the love of the Father by doing the Father's will (John 15:10). There can only be intimacy with God when we are in good fellowship with Him through obedience. Then we can know the joy and peace that comes from trusting Him and yielding to His will, just as Jesus did.



It has been said that relationships are the centerpiece of the human experience. Without them, life seems to lose its meaning. Even early in life, we begin to dream of someday finding our soul mate, starting a family, and enjoying the times together. Our life consists of an entire portfolio of various types of relationships. Friends, neighbors,

rivals, and even strangers all contribute to the delicate blend of relationships that make up our experience of life. Needless to say, experiencing a relationship with God is a crucial part of the equation. But there's a drawback to all these relationships, and invariably it leads to conflict and problems as we interact with others. By nature, entering into a relationship means giving up the freedom of going it alone. Instead of calling all the shots in our private life, we are forced to revise our plans to include the desires of others. Frankly, at times it can be an ongoing struggle.

Our Relationship With God Can Be Reduced Down To Contractual Terms



The same is true with God. On one hand, we want a meaningful connection with our Creator. But on the other hand, we'd like to do things our own way. So in an attempt to establish good terms with God, we ask the question, "What do I need to do?" We want to quantify the ways that we can earn God's favor. We'll follow the rules,

attend church, and give some money, whatever it takes to be good enough. Unfortunately, for some our true motive is simply to live our lives our way... as much as possible. If we're not careful, we take what could have been a beautiful relationship with God and reduce it down to contractual terms. In lieu of sincerely putting God first in our lives, we began to "work" the list of dos and don'ts, looking for ways to get by without really knowing Him. Jesus demonstrates with His own life that a relationship with God is not about rules, rituals, man made religions. These things are used to exalt and impress people and they are fruitless when it comes to attaining a real knowledge of God. In Luke 11, we read that even the disciples struggled with really knowing God. One day when they were observing Jesus' deep communion with the Father while He prayed, they noticed how He spoke to God intimately. He wasn't caught up with following certain rules or rituals. The disciples wanted to have that same connection so they asked Jesus to tell them His secret to having close communion with the Father.

God Longs to Reveal Himself to You



Jesus revealed the answer to them in an astounding parable, which is summed up in verses Luke 11:9-10 **"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."** Jesus' message -- for

all of us as God's children -- is that God earnestly desires to talk to us and spend time with us through prayer. And when we come to the Lord prayer we can be certain that He is not reluctant to help us, but instead He is exceedingly ready to come to our aide and to bless us. Jesus goes on to explain further. **"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"** (Luke 11:11-13) Many of us were taught to fear God and to see Him as an angry or hard-to-please taskmaster. But Jesus tells us that God is someone entirely different! He assures us that when we pray we don't have to be afraid of not being able to perfectly follow certain rules or rituals, but we can pray with a confidence that **our Father in heaven loves us just as we are.** We can also believe that God is a good, generous, warm, receptive and an absolutely **"on-our-team"** God. More than anything else, God longs to spend time with us and He wants us to see Him as a God Who desires to bless His children. **"But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul."** (Deuteronomy 4:29) Embrace your true identity through Jesus as God's beloved child. **Know that, from God's perspective, you have incredible value.** Your value has been secured by Jesus and isn't dependent on your abilities or whether or not other people accept you. You are His Beloved and He waits for you!



The Veil Of The Holy Of Holies Has Been Torn

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great Priest over the house of God, let us draw heart in

full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty

"Sometimes We May Feel Distant From God"

We all know that, in Christ, God has given Himself fully to us; He has said He will never leave us nor forsake us. We cannot earn a deeper or closer relationship to Him... He's already given us everything He has to bring to the relationship! And yet, it just doesn't feel like that sometimes. So often we are left feeling distant from Him. We don't feel His presence. We feel like we are drifting apart. Or maybe we feel like we ever connected with Him at all. This is because there is a very real truth, that while God has given us everything, it is by our belief in that fact that we get to start experiencing it. So how do we become more aware of God's presence, His voice and Who He is? How do we **"build"** our faith?

Look Inwards Not Upwards



God does not reside in a distant far off place but rather within you. You have become the holy of holies, the temple of the living God. Next time you start praying, instead of looking upwards or thinking of God far off in Heaven on big golden throne, simply close your eyes, rest

your hands on your chest and acknowledge: **"Father, I thank You that You are not far off, You are within me and You will never leave, nor forsake me."** Focus on Christ in you the hope of glory! That will change your prayer life forever! Drawing near is not moving from one place to another. It is a directing of the heart into the presence of God Who is as distant as the Holy of Holies in heaven, and yet as near as the door of faith.

"Drawing Near To God"



God will never draw near to those who do not draw near to Him, and the way we **"draw near"** is through righteousness. **"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded"** (James 4:8). Certainly, God

will never draw near in intimacy with the unrighteous, but those who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and have received His righteousness at the cross have the hope of intimacy with God. (2 Corinthians 5:21) **"For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."** In fact, it is only those who have been saved by grace through faith who have that hope, because Christ is the hope through which we draw near to God. (Ephesians 2:8-9) **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of Go not the result of works, so that no one may boast."** This is the center of the gospel - this is what the Garden of Gethsemane and Good Friday are all about - that God has done astonishing and costly things to draw us near. He has sent