

A
**JOURNEY
INTO
INTIMACY
WITH GOD**



**This devotional has been made freely
available to you.**

**Our prayer is that it will help you journey
deeper into His wonderful presence.**

**If this devotional is a blessing to you or
you pass it on to others, please consider
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INTRODUCTION

Whenever, though, they turn to face God as Moses did, God removes the veil and there they are—face-to-face! They suddenly recognize that God is a **living, personal presence**, not a piece of chiseled stone. And when God is **personally present, a living Spirit**, that old, constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We're free of it! All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him.

2 Corinthians 3:18-19 (The Message)

I was changed forever the day I read this Scripture. The words “living, personal presence” become a life-giving revelation to my spirit. Day after day these same words kept coming to my mind. Father God was giving me a new paradigm for living a life with him. He desired for me to have a continual experience of his presence - his personal, loving, intimate presence. Now I realise that I can never settle for anything less!

In this devotional I share Scriptures which have become a ‘revelation of intimacy’ to me. They are a part of my personal journey into a greater intimacy with God.

How do you know if this devotional is for you?

- ✧ Are you desiring more of the fullness of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- ✧ Are you hungry and thirsty for more of God?
- ✧ Do you desire a deeper relational intimacy with him?
- ✧ Are you willing to be like a little child as you come to him in faith?
- ✧ Do you believe that you can personally encounter God and experience his presence?

If you answered “yes” to the above questions then read on!

This devotional is designed to be used day-by-day rather than read right through as a book. The short devotions are not intended to “give you bread”, but to simply provide a launching pad for you to receive revelation direct from God. From this place you will be able to go deeper and deeper into true intimacy with him.

My prayer is that the Spirit of God will give you much revelation about the intimate relationship the living and personal God desires to have with you. That day-by-day he will personally lead you into wonderful experiences in his presence.

TEACHING

The following sections on **journaling, soaking and soaking in the word** will help you get more out of this devotional . I recommend that you read through each of these short teachings and seek to put them into practice each day. These teachings are not my own. I acknowledge some wonderful brothers and sisters from Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship - Ps. Steve Long, Ps. John & Carol Arnott, June Bain and Kim Tung. Thank you for your input of such wonderful truths into my life, and for your blessing to share them with others.

Journaling

It is important that we record the things which God shows us as we encounter him. Many of us have discovered journaling as a wonderful tool. The most life-changing journaling is “two-way journaling” – both asking and listening.

Here are some tips on how to journal:

- ✧ As you begin, focus on the Lord and his presence with you.
- ✧ Learn to ask and write down specific questions such as, “Jesus what would you say to me today? Lord, please give me deeper revelation of who you are and who I am”.
- ✧ Write what you see and hear from him.
- ✧ Record the spontaneous thoughts and impressions that come to you. Don’t try to analyze too much with your mind while you are journaling.
- ✧ Learn to stay in the flow of the Spirit until you sense you are finished.

Soaking in the Word

Revelation is defined in the dictionary as: “The act of revealing or disclosing. Something revealed, especially a dramatic disclosure of something not previously known or realized.” The Greek word for revelation has the meaning of “uncovering” or “unveiling”.

In John chapter five verses 39 and 40 Jesus said to the Pharisees:

“You have your heads in your Bibles constantly because you think you’ll find eternal life there. But you miss the forest for the trees. These Scriptures are all about me! And here I am, standing right before you, and you aren’t willing to receive from me the life you say you want.” (**The Message**)

Revelation is a removing of the ‘veil’ from the written word of God allowing us to receive the life he desires to give to us. The written words themselves are a doorway to the Living Word - a doorway to the One who desires us to experience an intimate relationship with him.

A great way to receive life-giving revelation is to “soak in the word”. We have already talked about soaking, so here are a few practical tips to help you soak in the word.

- ❖ Bring your heart & mind into a place of stillness. Focus on the Lord until you sense his presence with you.
- ❖ Read the Scripture slowly. Take it in to your spirit. Taste and digest it.
- ❖ Sense the heart of God in what you are reading. Seek to touch the revelation on the other side of the written word.
- ❖ Take the revelation which you receive and turn it into prayer back to him. Respond to what he says to you.
- ❖ Continue until the sense of the Lord’s presence lifts or you feel you have drawn as much from the scripture as you can at this point.

Soaking

Soaking is a relatively new term, but not a new concept for God’s children. So, what is soaking, or soaking prayer?

- ❖ Soaking is simply **coming to be with Father God** – without agendas or prayer lists – just being ourselves in His arms of love.
- ❖ Soaking is resting or waiting for **more of his presence**.
- ❖ Soaking is spending time to develop a **relational intimacy** with God – **expressing and receiving his love**.
- ❖ Soaking is a **dedication**: “God this time is just for you”
- ❖ Soaking is an **invitation**: “God do what you want to do in me”
- ❖ Soaking is an **expectation**: “Thank you Father for what you are accomplishing as I rest in you”.

How do we soak?

- ❖ Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down.
- ❖ Remove distractions (write down a list of anything you need to do later in the day and put it aside).
- ❖ Put on some intimate worship music to help you enter his presence.
- ❖ You may like to start by meditating on a Scripture (see soaking in the Word) or asking God a question (see Journaling).
- ❖ Focus your whole attention on Jesus.

Thirsty for God

1

On the final and climactic day of the Feast, Jesus took his stand. He cried out, "If anyone **thirsts**, let him **come** to me and **drink**. Rivers of living water will brim and spill out of the depths of anyone who believes in me this way, just as the Scripture says.

John 7:37-38



Amazing! Rivers of living water will flow out from deep within us! Jesus also said that the Kingdom of God is within us. We are indwelled by the Holy Spirit and anyone who believes in Jesus 'this way' will experience these rivers of living water. So, what is 'this way'? Firstly it is **thirsting**. Then it is **coming** to him to **drink**. This is the essence of soaking. Why do we soak? We soak because we are thirsty. How do we soak? We come to him and drink. Picture a man coming to an oasis after several days in the desert without water. The thirst is insatiable. Wild horses could not keep him away from drinking the life-giving water. Let's be like this today! Thirst, come to him and drink.

Reckless lovers

2

In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, **reckless** in your **love**, you'll have it forever, **real** and eternal.

John 12:25



Gf someone had told me that one day I would become a **reckless lover** of God I would have probably said, "that doesn't really sound like me". My upbringing didn't prepare me for the possibility of walking in reckless love with God. So, where does the recklessness begin? Maybe it is in letting go of all the substitutes we have for him. The things that give us comfort in an often uncomfortable world. Jesus said that if we hold onto our life (the substitutes for him) we are in fact destroying real life (ouch!). But, if we let go and love recklessly, we receive life that is forever, **real** and eternal. Now that is something I want! How about you?

My friend

3

"If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you. I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you.

John 14:15-16



Ghave not yet experienced anywhere near the full reality of a **friend** that would always be with me. Let's have a chat with the Holy Spirit today and thank him for his constant presence with us. "Holy Spirit you are my intimate friend. Over the years I have often neglected your friendship, but starting today I want that to change. My Father has provided you to be with me until Jesus returns and he never gives bad gifts to his children. Holy Spirit I invite you into every part of me and every place that I will walk today and every day. Thank you that you are coming to me just as a **faithful friend** would want to do."

Trust him

4

Answer this question: Does the God who lavishly provides you with his own presence, his Holy Spirit, working things in your lives you could never do for yourselves, does he do these things because of your strenuous moral striving or because you **trust him to do them in you**?

Galatians 3:5



God desires us to learn to **trust him** more fully and not rely on our own efforts. As a young believer I had this misconception, that if I only knew and obeyed all the "rules" of being a Christian, I would become mature in Christ. Twenty years on I realise that my times of strenuous moral striving have brought about little permanent change in my life. When I began to understand that he wants me to experience his own presence things really began to change. As I learnt to trust him he began to do the things in me that I could never do for myself. Let's pray together, "Holy Spirit I **trust** you to do in me the things that the Father desires. I receive his presence lavished upon me today."

Rightful heritage

5

Thus we have been set free to experience our **rightful heritage**. You can tell for sure that you are now fully adopted as his own children because God sent the Spirit of his Son into our lives crying out, "**Papa! Father!**" Doesn't that privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that you are not a slave, but a child? And if you are a child, you're also an heir, with complete access to the **inheritance**.

Galatians 4:5-7



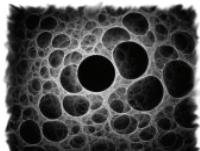
Cour rightful heritage is to live in the experience of being his children. As God's children we have the awesome privilege of intimate conversation with him. The Holy Spirit within us is continually crying out to our **Daddy God**. This Holy-Spirit-cry mingles with our need and desire to be loved as his children. It doesn't make much sense to the natural mind that a child can have complete access to their **inheritance**. The kingdom truth is that we have already been set free to experience our **rightful heritage** - now. Let's take a hold of our inheritance and begin to experience what is rightfully ours.

Reach out

6

... you'll be able to take in with all Christians the **extravagant dimensions** of Christ's love. **Reach out and experience** the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!

Ephesians 3:18



There are no limits to Christ's love for us. The real question is how much *we* want to experience and enter into his love. Jesus is calling us into his love, but we must **reach out and experience him**. A good analogy, which is often used to demonstrate soaking prayer, is the sponge. A sponge can sit next to a bucket of water indefinitely. The water is real, but it has no effect on the sponge. The sponge needs to be immersed in the water before it will 'experience' the water. God's love for us is much the same. We need to be immersed in Christ's love and then we will begin to experience the **extravagant dimensions** of his love. More love!

Totally himself - totally yourself!

7

For Jesus doesn't change--yesterday, today, tomorrow, he's **always totally himself**.

Hebrews 13:8



Wow, this is so cool! Jesus can't help but be who he is. He is **always totally himself**. What a wonderful security this gives to us in a world where the only constant is change. He is always the same. What changes is that moment by moment he is revealing more of himself to us. In discovering who Jesus is we discover who we really are. It is in gazing upon his beauty that we begin to understand how beautiful he is making us. We are then free to be who we really are. Children of God. Lovers of God. Soak in the presence of the One who is totally himself and be **free to be totally yourself**.

Active rest

8

If we **believe**, though, we'll experience that state of **resting**. But not if we don't have **faith**.

Hebrews 4:3a



Someone has called soaking the practice of 'active rest'. This really does sound like an oxymoron. If you are active, then how can you be resting? The author of Hebrews says that if we believe, we will experience God's rest. We enter into God's rest by **faith - actively believing**. Experiencing intimacy with God is not a 'passive waiting', but an 'active engaging' with him. We must believe that he desires to reveal himself to us and then by faith begin to encounter him. As we soak today, let's release our faith to actively engage with him and surely we will find ourselves experiencing his **rest**.

My whole being

9

When my heart whispered, "Seek God," **my whole being** replied, "I'm seeking him!" Don't hide from me now! You've always been right there for me; don't turn your back on me now. Don't throw me out, don't abandon me; you've always kept the door open.

Psalm 27:9



We were created spirit, soul and body and must learn to seek him and respond to him with all we are. One area people can get hung-up on is the manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as laughing, weeping, shaking, and trembling. When we encounter his presence everything within us longs to respond to him. This includes our body and emotions. I often sense the warmth of his presence in my chest. My wife feels the fire of God on her hands and body. We don't seek the manifestations in and of themselves. We do seek to encounter him. As the Holy Spirit touches you today respond with your **whole being**.

Intimacy & victory

10

... And a second reminder, dear children: **You know the Father from personal experience.** You veterans know the One who started it all; and you newcomers--such vitality and strength! God's word is so steady in you. Your fellowship with God enables you to gain a **victory** over the Evil One.

1 John 2:13b-14



There is nothing better that we can have for a testimony than this: "**You know the Father from personal experience**". This is a formidable platform from which we can defeat the powers of darkness whom are committed to our destruction. Here is God's recipe for victory. 'Your fellowship with God enables you to gain a **victory** over the Evil One'. There is no victory without his **intimate** presence. The more intimate the fellowship, the greater his presence will be and the more victory we will experience in our lives. So, your victory today over Satan and his hordes begins in God's presence.

In his house

11

I'm asking God for one thing, only one thing: To live with him **in his house** my whole life long. I'll **contemplate his beauty**; I'll study at his feet.

Psalm 27:4



G've often wondered where God's house is. In Old Testament times God's house was the temple. Under the New Covenant some say God's house is the church while others say heaven is God's house. We also know that each of us is the temple of the Holy Spirit - a '**house**' for his indwelling **presence**. I've come to realise there is another place where God 'makes a house for himself'. Wherever his presence is manifested there is a 'house of God'. This can be anytime and anyplace. I love it when the soaking place becomes a house of his presence and I'm simply overwhelmed by his presence.

Wait passionately

12

Wait passionately for God, don't leave the path. He'll give you your place in the sun while you watch the wicked lose it.

Psalm 37:34



Some of God's children struggle with the concept of waiting on God. I know those who would rather watch grass grow than come to a soaking time. Why is this? Maybe 'waiting' is seen as too passive by those who need to 'get things done'. But hang on a minute, we are missing something. This Scripture says, "**Wait passionately** for God." Now this is a different kettle of fish. This kind of waiting is an **active engagement** of our whole being to love. We need to believe that our highest calling is to be an ardent lover of God. Most of us need to be awakened to this kind of love - it is not an automatic thing. Passionate waiting quickly attracts his presence to us and then all heaven can break loose. Try it today!

Come running

13

Every person the Father gives me eventually **comes running** to me. And once that person is with me, I hold on and **don't let go**.

John 6:37



Go often have a strong desire to run and jump into the arms of my heavenly Daddy. Even though we as his children belong to him (John 1:12), we need to keep on running to him. A parent can never forget the delight in their child's eyes when they see you return from being away. No matter what they are doing when you enter their world they yell, "Daddy" or "Mummy" and are instantly flying into your arms. In the same way we can keep running and jumping into Father's arms. They are always open wide for us even when we have been 'away' from him! The best news of all is that when we are with him he holds on to us and **never lets us go**. **Come running** to him again today.

Captured

14

You've **captured** my heart ... you looked at me, and I fell in love. One look my way and I was **hopelessly in love**!

Song of Songs 4:9



These are the words that Jesus is saying to us right now, "you've **captured my heart** and I'm **hopelessly in love** with you." Isn't this just the best thing we could ever hear? We didn't do anything to earn this kind of love. He designed and created us to love him and he is now fulfilling his intimate love desire. This is a seeming 'paradox' in the nature of God - all powerful, but yet with a single 'vulnerability'. Despite our sin, weakness and rebellion, he can't help but love us! The work of Jesus on the Cross has provided the means for a restored relationship. We now get to enjoy this love relationship. Soak today in the One who has **captured your heart** and is **hopelessly in love** with you.

The "already open" door

15

And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already **thrown open** his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand--out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, **standing tall** and shouting our praise.

Romans 5:2



The most dangerous place we can find ourselves is entertaining the lie that our heavenly Father doesn't really want to be close to us. Here is the truth! Father God is waiting for us to **throw open** a door to him. We have the capacity to open a door to his presence. As we throw open a door in childlike faith we **always** discover that He has already thrown open his door to us. On his side he is always there waiting with a door open wide! He is true to his Word. We will find ourselves standing where '**we always hoped to stand**', in the wide open spaces (freedom) of his grace and glory (presence). In this place, **stand tall** and shout his praise!

Generous pouring

16

In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling **shortchanged**. Quite the contrary--we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God **generously pours** into our lives through the Holy Spirit!

Romans 5:5



Gwant to live in the expectation that there won't be enough containers to hold everything he wants to pour into my life. The problem is that I still often find myself with high expectations that the things of this world will fulfill me. Men, you may relate more the following. 2007 was a dismal year for New Zealand sport (the national idol). There were four major international sporting events that the nation had high hopes of winning. By the end of the year they had all slipped away. I definitely had a feeling of being **short-changed**. Yet another lesson is learned to find **fulfillment** in the One who will never leave us feeling short-changed! "Come Holy Spirit and pour into our lives more than we can contain!"

Spirit life

17

The Spirit can make **life**. Sheer muscle and willpower don't make anything happen. Every word I've spoken to you is a **Spirit-word**, and so it is **life-making**.

John 6:63



We need to be receiving **Spirit-words** on a daily basis. Only the Spirit can make **life**. The words that the Holy Spirit speaks are life-making. The Holy Spirit speaks these life-giving words through Scripture, visions, impressions, dreams and many other ways. Despite our best efforts to 'manufacture' life we constantly fail and fall short of even our own expectations. If only we truly understood that God is speaking all the time to his children. There is a constant flow of revelation being poured forth from heaven for children willing to listen and receive. Let's open our spirit today to the Holy Spirit to receive a Spirit-word and let the life flow.

Walk right up!

18

So let's **walk right up** to him and get what he is so **ready to give**. Take the mercy, accept the help.

Hebrews 4:16



Have you ever wondered why some people seem to receive so easily from the Lord and others struggle? It is easy to come to the conclusion that there are favorites in the Kingdom and that we were not included in this group! But hold on! Our loving Father does not show favoritism. Could it be that some of his children are simply more willing to **walk right up** to him and get what he is **ready to give**? A young child **sees** what they want and they go for it, with or without an invitation. Jesus said that, "the Kingdom of God is given to such as these". Let's be like children today and walk right up to him and get from him what he is so ready to give.

Experience of communion

19

The Word of Life appeared right before our eyes; we saw it happen! And now we're telling you in most sober prose that what we witnessed was, incredibly, this: The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us. We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you so you can experience it along with us, this **experience of communion** with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!

1 John 1:2-4



The Apostles had Jesus - the infinite Life of God – manifest right before their eyes. They saw him, felt him, heard him and experienced him. This same kind of **experience of communion** is ours to enjoy - day by day - moment by moment. His very presence and life taking shape (manifest) right before us through the Holy Spirit. John said, "We want you to **enjoy** this, too". Your intimate communion with God should be 'most enjoyable' and bring much, much joy. Today, ask him for fresh revelation of who he is. Begin to enjoy a closer communion with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

River of delights

20

They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your **river of delights**. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Psalm 36:8-9 (NIV)



Res a new day dawns there is something we can be certain of - there is a river of God flowing for us. This River of his presence is full of **delights**. We get to drink from this River because God loves us to enjoy his presence. That is why it is called a **river of delights**. To delight means to take great pleasure or enjoyment. We are designed to enjoy God and take great pleasure in him. We may know this intellectually, but is it our day-to-day experience with him? It can be! He gives the thirsty the joy of continually drinking from the River. Better still, we can jump right into the River of delights. Go on, try it today!

Open invitation

21

You've always given me breathing room, a place to get away from it all, a **lifetime pass** to your safe-house, an **open invitation** as your guest.

Psalm 61:3-4



This is wonderful news. We do not need to wait for a special invitation to draw near to him in intimacy. We already have an **open invitation** - a **lifetime pass** to come through the veil and be a guest in his very presence. From God's side of things it is all done. He has prepared the place and by the Holy Spirit has opened the door. Now he is simply waiting for us to accept and come into his presence. Trust the one who gave you the invite - it is his party after all. The angels are waiting right now to see who will use their pass today. Will you? Come on in and see where he takes you.

Working up

22

God—you're my God! I can't get enough of you! I've **worked up** such hunger and thirst for God, travelling across dry and weary deserts. So here I am in the place of worship, eyes open, drinking in your strength and glory. In your generous love I am really living at last! My lips brim praises like fountains.

Psalm 63:1-3



Wur bodies have been designed to "cry out" if not satisfied by the essentials of physical life. It is the same with our soul and spirit, but it can be easier to ignore these 'unseen' needs. Through neglect we can end up suffering from a slow dehydration and starvation of our inner being. We have been created with spiritual needs that must be satisfied if we are to experience fullness of life. There is a vital part which we must play ourselves. We must "**work up**" our desire for him. His presence is then attracted to our spiritual hunger and thirst and he will come and satisfy us with his generous love, strength, glory and life. Then I will declare, "God - you're my God! I can't get enough of you!"

Run and play

23

Because you've always stood up for me, I'm **free to run and play**. I hold on to you for dear life, and you hold me steady as a post.

Psalm 63:7-8



Father God is our heavenly Daddy. I'm **free to run and play** with him. To some this may sound as if it is being too familiar with God? It's not! We are family! He longs to have fun with his children. We may have missed out on this kind of relationship with our natural father, but we mustn't let this stop us knowing and experiencing Father God as he really is! He desires to **enjoy** us. We are so conditioned to having to produce something for him that we have forgotten the art of play - just having fun for funs sake! When was the last time you just had fun with him? Are you free to **run and play** with him today?

The closest of all

24

As those out to get me come closer and closer, they go farther and farther from the truth you reveal; In your love, listen to me; in your justice, God, keep me alive. As those out to get me come closer and closer, they go farther and farther from the truth you reveal; But you're the **closest of all** to me, God, and all your judgments true.

Psalm 119:150-151



We have all experienced seasons in our lives when it seems as if enemies surround us and are pressing in from every side. During these times I have often felt so consumed by a situation that this has totally 'unsettled my world'. However, there is a greater reality "... you're **the closest of all** to me..." Soaking is about experiencing his closeness - even in the midst of turmoil. Tell your heart today, "God all your judgments are true". Everything he says is true and the best news we can ever hear. Ask him now, "What do you want to say to me today?" Write down what he says. If any action is required - do it with the confidence of one who is **close to God**!

Bubbling love

25

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— for your **love** is more delightful than wine.

Song of Songs 1:2 (NIV)



The root meaning of the word 'love' in this verse is boiling, bubbling love! This paints a wonderful picture describing how we can experience God's **love** - a deep **bubbling** within. Wine speaks of sweetness, intoxication and exhilaration. Sometimes I wonder at what point in history church we started believing that we shouldn't expect tangible encounters with his love and presence. Actually, it doesn't really matter. There will always be those, whom for various reasons, don't want to drink the fullness of the wine of the Holy Spirit. What does matter is what you and I believe and expect in him. Let's soak deeply in his presence and get intoxicated in his boiling, bubbling love today.

Dark, yet lovely

26

Dark am I, yet **lovely**...

Song of Songs 1:5a



Oike Bickle says about this verse: "in my humanness and immaturity, I am beautiful to him." Many of us have a deep-rooted ungodly belief which goes something like this, "only when I'm performing well for God am I desirable to him." The truth is that even when things are not going so well, when I'm confronted by the harshness of my own failure and weakness, even then – I am **lovely** to him. The word **lovely** used here means to 'be at home with' and 'to be beautiful'. It seems too good to be true, but it is! "Dark am I, yet **lovely**". I'm not just declared righteous in a legal sense, but I'm so **lovely** and desirable to him that he wants to be with me!

My fragrance

27

While the king was at his **table**, my perfume spread its **fragrance**.

Song of Songs 1:12 (NIV)



The word 'table' used here can also be translated 'embrace'. What an intimate picture of our love relationship with him. When we are in the presence of our lover King, something happens to us that can touch and affect him. There is something beautiful and **fragrant** that goes forth from our spirit when we are in his intimate presence. We have the ability to release spiritual perfume (yes, even the guys) that he loves to smell. He enjoys it when our love fragrance mingles with his in intimate **embrace**. So, as you soak today let your perfume spread its fragrance. The King loves it!

What's next Papa?

28

This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's **adventurously expectant**, greeting God with a **childlike** "What's next, Papa?"

Romans 8:15



Whany times in my relationship with God I've reached a point where I'd lost the expectation of more of him. Many of us have been there and some of us are in this place now. The question we should be continually asking ourselves is this, "How do I break through into a new place of intimacy with him?" The answer is very simple. Come to your Daddy with a **childlike** "What's next, Papa?" Expect that he will do something to make himself real to you. It is not complicated. He is our Daddy and we are his beloved children. When we exercise an **adventurously expectant**, childlike faith, our Daddy can't help but reveal himself to us. "What's next Papa?"

I'll never let you down

29

Don't be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have. Since God assured us, "I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you"

Hebrews 13:5



We have all been **let down** by others and had people walk off and leave us in various ways in our lives. We may still be carrying with us a lingering rejection and hurt from these experiences. The problem is that these inner hurts can have a negative impact on our being able to walk in an intimate love relationship with God. Because others have let us down, in our heart we are asking the question. Will God **let me down**? We may know theologically that this will never be the case, but do we really know it deep, deep inside? God, your loving Daddy is saying, "No matter what you experience in life, I'll **never let you down**, I'll **never walk off and leave you**."

Bold & free in his presence

30

And how **bold and free** we then become in his presence, freely asking according to his will, sure that he's listening. And if we're **confident** that he's listening, we know that what we've asked for is as good as ours.

1 John 5:14-15



Think of the difference in confidence we have in getting an answer from someone if we send them an email compared to when we ask them **face-to-face**. There is nothing more discouraging than asking God for something when we are not certain that he is listening. When Father God seems distant it is as if our prayers can be 'lost in transit'. But, when we know he is near and we sense his love and presence, there is a **confidence** and boldness to ask and receive. You and I are **bold and free** in his presence today, so let's ask him with confidence that we have his ear and that what we ask for is as good as ours!

A beautiful thing

31

... a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a **beautiful thing** to me.

Matthew 26:7-10



Jesus said to the woman, "She has done a beautiful thing to me". When we give ourselves to love him with reckless abandon it is likewise a **beautiful thing** to him. Jesus also said to those who complained about what the woman had done, "why are you bothering this woman?" In our case this 'bothering voice' often comes from within our own soul. "You are too busy today". "There are more important things you need to do". "You've been less than perfect recently; he doesn't want what you have to offer". Jesus says to this voice, "Why are you bothering them?" "They are **about** to do something **beautiful to me**." So, with this inner voice silenced, go ahead and do something beautiful to him today.

He's right there and he's striding ahead

32

"Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated. Don't give them a second thought because God, your God, is **striding ahead** of you. **He's right there** with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you."

Deuteronomy 31:6



Jf you are anything like me you often come up against "enemies" in your life. Some of these "enemies" come from within us and some from the outside, but nevertheless the battle rages! What could give us more security than the reality that God is both **right here** with us and that he is also **striding on ahead** of us? He does not put us through the fire just to wait and see if we emerge out the other side. God is with us in the fire. He is not leaving! Let's declare today: "In the midst of my enemies, you will not leave me and you will not let me down."

Surprised to be Loved

33

He stood me up on a wide-open field; I stood there saved—**surprised to be loved!**

Psalm 18:19



We know that God loves us, but when we experience his loving presence it often comes as a shock. So much of the normal daily 'traffic' that passes through our mind is negative. When his fragrant love comes to us our spirit shouts, "Wow, this is good! Where have I been all this time?" Do you believe he wants to take you by surprise with his love today? In fact he wants to do this so often that it is hardly a surprise anymore. His love for us never diminishes even when we have been bad. Every day is a new opportunity to be **surprised to be loved**.

Gaze on him

34

"Step out of the traffic! **Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything.**"

Psalm 46:10



Glenn Bickle often speaks of the practice of "**gazing upon him** with an adoring heart". The Most High One invites you and me to behold him lovingly. Would he exhort us to gaze on him if he didn't intend to reveal himself to us? No way! The more we seek to fix our eyes on him, the more he reveals of himself to us. We primarily use the eyes of our heart to see him, but he will also be revealed to our natural senses. Spend some time soaking today by **gazing upon him** with an adoring heart. Journal what you see and experience.

Holding his hand

35

Now you've got my feet on the life path, all radiant from the shining of your face. Ever since you **took my hand**, I'm on the right way.

Psalm 16:11



Has I walk my son to school, I don't need to tell him to **hold my hand**. I will suddenly feel his little hand slip into mine and hold on. There should be a natural ease in our intimacy with Daddy God. There are some who seem to place such an emphasis on living before God in 'reverent fear' that this kind of intimacy is just not possible! All I can say is that nothing delights my heart as a father more than feeling that little hand slip into mine. How much more does the best Father in the universe delight to take each of his children's hands and guide them on the path of life? Slip your hand into his today!

Intimately at home

36

"I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain **intimately at home in my love**. That's what I've done--kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love."

John 15:9-10



Iesus gives us the most wonderful of invitations, "make yourselves at home in my love". This raises the most important of questions. How do we do this? Jesus said that if we keep his commands, just as he kept his Father's commands, we will be at home in his love. Deep in my heart I was always afraid that I had never fully kept Jesus' commands and so was not worthy of his love. The truth is just the opposite. We are already unconditionally loved. If we follow the **pattern of life** which God has designed for us we will find ourselves **intimately at home in his love**. Listen to Jesus today and obey what he shows you to do. Then you will find yourself a little more at home in his love.

Standing tall in his presence

37

You know me inside and out, you hold me together, you never fail to stand me tall in your presence so I can look you in the eye.

Psalm 41:12



At times in my life I have felt somewhat intimidated before others in the Body of Christ. There seemed to be a constant stream of negative thoughts saying, "If you want to be accepted then you must perform according to the expectations of others." But, how does our Father see us and relate to us? Firstly, he **knows us inside and out** (like no one can ever know us). By all rights we shouldn't even get a foot in the door with a perfect God. Instead, he **stands us tall in his presence** and enables us to **look him in the eye**. As you stand tall in his presence and look him in the eye what is he saying to you today?

Absolutely nothing!

38

Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a **wedge** between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture . . . **absolutely nothing** can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

Romans 8:35,39



Things happen in our lives that seem to drive a **wedge** between us and an ongoing experience of God's love. The significant people in our lives have fallen short of fully representing God's love to us. This has created real hurts and wounds in us. These can become like an immovable wedge, keeping us from experiencing the fullness of God's love. However, Jesus love is so powerful and active that **absolutely nothing** can keep us from it. This is not a denial of the pain we carry, but a declaration that there is something greater - Jesus love. Forgiveness, healing and restoration will flow in our lives because Jesus has **embraced us**. Receive his loving embrace today.

You are special to me!

39

God said to Moses: "All right. Just as you say; this also I will do, for I know you well and **you are special to me**. I know you by name."

Exodus 33:17



God related to Moses in the intimate way of a friend while the rest of the nation stayed at a distance. Why was this privilege seemingly given to Moses and not to the rest of God's chosen people? I don't know the answer, but I do know that things are different now. Through the work of Jesus we can now each declare that we are **special to him**. We each have been given the privilege of intimacy with God! Let this become a revelation to your spirit which makes you feel like you are the 'best of the best'. God's heart of love has enough room for billions of unique, one-of-a-kind children. Hear him whisper to you, "I know you well and **you are special to me**. I know you by name."

Noticed because of him

40

If you're abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It's the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the **notice** of others.

1 Peter 4:14



Throughout history many believers have undergone persecution because they chose to make a stand for Christ. However, many of us have experienced various forms of abuse from within the Body of Christ as we sought to follow him wholeheartedly. While at times this may have been due to our own ungodly words and actions, there is another dynamic at work. The more we live in the presence of God, the more we will see resistance rising up against us from some quarters. Others can and do become threatened by the expression of our growing intimacy with God. Be encouraged, that no matter what others say and do, if it is him being seen in us, that is all that matters! Let's continue to be '**noticed**' because of his Spirit and glory in us.

Personal & free

41

... Is it not clear to you that to go back to that old rule-keeping, peer-pleasing religion would be an abandonment of everything **personal and free** in my relationship with God? I refuse to do that, to repudiate God's grace. If a **living relationship** with God could come by rule-keeping, then Christ died unnecessarily.

Galatians 2:21



Gt is all too easy for us to consider the Galatian believers and their tendency to gravitate back towards rule-keeping religion, as something that was unique to them. The truth is that each of us have areas of rule-keeping, peer-pleasing religion lingering in our lives. In each of these areas we have rejected a **living, personal and free relationship** with God. Jesus didn't die to make us good rule-keepers and man-pleasers. Through the power of the Cross we can be set free from every legalistic, peer-pleasing tendency so we can experience everything that is personal and free in our relationship with him. "Holy Spirit please reveal to me any 'religious' area in my life and release me into the **freedom** Jesus has won for me."

Testimony of experience

42

Israel served God through the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him, who had themselves experienced all that God had done for Israel.

Joshua 24:31



There is a saying that goes something like this: "A man with an experience of God is never at the mercy of a man with a theory about God". Intimacy with God is not primarily a doctrine or a theology, but a reality of being with him and responding personally to a revelation of his love. While it is good to know all about God's love and presence, we are designed to **experience** him. Let's ask him to saturate us with his love and presence every day. Then we will be able to look back on our lives and tell everyone all that we have **experienced** through what he has done for us. What a testimony!

Blazing love

43

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for **love**burns like **blazing fire**, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away.

Song of Songs 8:6-7 (NIV)



Gur heart can be deceitful and resistant to the good things God has for us. Yet here is the most wonderful news! His blazing, fiery love is like a seal over our heart which cannot be quenched or washed away. We don't need more methods and formulas to try and live a life pleasing to God - we need more of this fire! More fire in our hearts mingling with his fire in a blaze of holy intimacy. As you soak put some fuel (desire, hunger, passion) onto the **fire** in your heart. He has already sealed your heart with his **blazing love** and it cannot be quenched. Let the fire within blaze up today.

The river of God

44

He measured off another fifteen hundred feet. By now it was a **river over my head**, water to swim in, water no one could possibly walk through.

Ezekiel 47:5



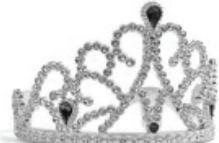
Ezekiel experienced a supernatural river that was continually rising. Our experience in the River of God can be the same. There is a river of his presence flowing for all his children. God's desire for us is that we would come to the place where we are willing to let his **river** flow right **over us**. He wants us to experience the river of his presence, love, power and glory. Many of God's children have paddled around the edges of the river and maybe even got in up to the knees. He desires that we not just 'paddle in his presence', but be fully **immersed** and swept off our feet. So, go ahead a jump in!

God's somebody...

45

But down the road the population of Israel is going to explode past counting, like sand on the ocean beaches. In the very place where they were once named **Nobody**, they will be named **God's Somebody**.

Hosea 1:10



Watching my son grow I have seen the many attempts of the enemy to sow seeds of rejection into his life. The hurtful words others say can be followed by the declarations such as: "I'm stupid" or "I'm not good enough". The Holy Spirit spoke to me the other day saying, "adults are just like children, but with more wrappers". It is easy to feel like a nobody when measured up against all the other 'super-saints' in the Kingdom of God. The enemy did everything he could to ensure that we grew up feeling like a Nobody - rejected and alone in the world. Well, there is God-news (typo intended) for us. We were once named **Nobody**, but now we are named **God's Somebody**.

Here-for-us

46

With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter into **Christ's being-here-for-us** no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying **black cloud**.

Romans 8:1



Living under 'a continuous, low-lying black cloud' is no laughing matter for those who have experienced this. Many of us have endured through seasons of condemnation, despair and depression in our lives. Father God has one single enduring solution for us - enter into a renewed intimacy with the Son. Enter into a freshness of relationship with the one who is **here for us**, Jesus. If you have been experiencing that **black cloud** in your life recently, today is the day for the light of **Jesus presence** to break through again. The fateful dilemma is resolved. We no longer need to struggle on our own to overcome. Come to Jesus — he is here for you!

The old dog

47

Stay alert; be in prayer so you don't wander into temptation without even knowing you're in danger. There is a part of you that is **eager, ready**. But there's another part that's as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire. "

Matthew 26:41



Gow well this describes us! There is a lazy old dog in each of us that wants to keep us away from the place of intimacy with God. But, there is another part of us **eager and ready** for anything in God! This is the part of us that we must spend time to recognise and nurture. This is our inner spirit man. After years of trying to get the lazy old dog moving, I've come to realise that this part of me just doesn't want to get moving despite my strenuous effort! We can waste a lot of time and energy with this old dog. There is a better way! Let your spirit man take the lead in your life.

Spirit diver

48

But you've seen and heard it because God by his Spirit has brought it all out into the open before you. The Spirit, not content to flit around on the surface, **dives into the depths of God**, and brings out what God planned all along.

1 Corinthians 2:10



Our wife shared with me the other day that when she was a young believer a teaching that was often coming from the pulpit was: "Don't glorify the Holy Spirit". She shared that it took many years for her to realise that this kind of teaching had created a resistance in her heart to the Holy Spirit. Why is it so important that we have absolutely no resistance in our lives to the Holy Spirit? Because he, the Holy Spirit, is the one who **dives into the depths of God** and brings out what the Father has planned for us. We cannot receive the Father's best without an ongoing and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Past all appearances

49

It's an unbreakable spiritual lifeline, reaching **past all appearances** right to the very presence of God

Hebrews 6:19



For us as God's children there is an ultimate reality. This reality goes right past every other **appearance** and brings us directly into his wonderful **presence**. It is all too easy for us to get caught up in other appearances! "How do I look?" "What are others thinking about me?" To enter into intimacy with God we must find a way past these 'appearances'. He has provided the way! This is what I love most about soaking. There is no need to put on a spiritual act or be concerned about outward appearances. Soaking is the place of coming right into his intimate love. Let's make use of this unbreakable spiritual lifeline today to come right into the presence of God.

Holy and beautiful

50

God hasn't invited us into a disorderly, unkempt life but into something **holy and beautiful**-as beautiful on the inside as the outside. If you disregard this advice, you're not offending your neighbors; you're rejecting God, who is making you a gift of his Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8



We place much emphasis on looking beautiful to others on the outside. However, God has invited us into the place of inner beauty. The Holy Spirit is actively working in this place. When we were indwelled by the Spirit of God our spirit was infused with a holiness that leaves the angels breathless. The more time we spend nurturing this **inner** part of ourselves the more beautiful we are able to become on the outside. Let's declare over ourselves, "He has made me **holy and beautiful** on the inside". Today, let this beauty of God within show to all those around you!

All you've got!

51

Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you; love him with **all you've got!**

Deuteronomy 6:5



God's desire is that we pour out extravagant love upon him. Imagine what it would be like to love him with **all we've got**. Over the years I've seen some of his children doing this and at times have judged them in my heart. But the truth is that God is strongly attracted to the **extravagant** love of his children. If we want to know him intimately, we must get free enough to love him with all we've got. This may mean dealing with some pride and religiosity. Let's decide today to let nothing hinder us from living a life of extravagant love for him. He is worth it!

Manifest presence

52

Then **God came and stood before him** exactly as before, calling out, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak. I'm your servant, ready to listen."

1 Samuel 3:10



She young boy Samuel had a personal encounter with God. God himself came and stood before Samuel and spoke to him. Samuel experienced the manifest presence of God. God's presence can be broadly divided into three categories. His omnipresence (he is everywhere all the time), his indwelling presence (he lives in us) and his **manifest presence** (an intensification of his presence to the human senses). We need a child-like faith and expectation that believes he will come and stand before us and speak with us. I live for these moments of encounter with him. Lord I'm ready to listen. May now be one of those moments!

Love that lasts

53

I'm after **love that lasts**, not more religion. I want you to know GOD, not go to more prayer meetings.

Hosea 6:6



She cry of God's heart for his people is, "I'm after **love that lasts**, not more religion" Thank God that he doesn't want more 'religion' - he simply wants us to love him and know him. We can attend all the right meetings and do all the right Christian things and yet not experience real intimacy with him. Religious activity in itself can never bring intimacy. His plan is simple. He wants to captivate us with a real and ongoing **experience** of his love so that the love he desires from us might flow back to him. Only this kind of intimate **love will last**, consuming us in this life and forevermore.

Respond again

54

"And now, here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to start all over again. I'm taking her back out into the wilderness where we had our first date, and I'll court her. I'll give her bouquets of roses. I'll turn **Heartbreak Valley** into **Acres of Hope**. She'll respond like she did as a young girl, those days when she was fresh out of Egypt. "At that time"—this is God's Message still—"you'll address me, 'Dear husband!' Never again will you address me, 'My slave-master!'

Hosea 2:14-16



Shere is no denying that the hurts and disappointments of life are real. However, if we linger in **Heartbreak Valley**, before we know it **Acres of Hope** seems so distant. The intimacy we long for in relationship with God and others can become constantly affected by the pain we carry within ourselves. Whichever place you find yourself in today, declare his words over yourself. "Here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to start all over again ... I'll turn Heartbreak Valley into Acres of Hope." Your lover Bridegroom says to you, "I'll court her. I'll give her bouquets of roses" Let's respond to him and experience the freshness of intimacy with him as we revel in Acres of Hope, freed from Heartbreak Valley!

A fire within

55

"I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama--compared to him I'm a mere stagehand--will **ignite** the kingdom life within you, a **fire** within you, the **Holy Spirit** within you, changing you from the **inside out**.

Matthew 3:11



There has been precious little change in my life when I've tried to change myself. Despite good intentions, I've slipped back into old ways and patterns. The Kingdom truth is that real change only comes from the **inside out**. What we need most is to experience the **fire** of the **Holy Spirit** within us! Yes, it is important that we cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit by changing our outward behaviour, but Kingdom life comes from an **ignition** of the Holy Spirit within us. Today, in his presence, invite the Holy Spirit to bring change to any area you are struggling to change. "Come Holy Spirit and ignite the Kingdom of God within me!"

Back to square one

56

"I'm telling you, once and for all, that unless you return to **square one** and **start over** like children, you're not even going to get a look at the kingdom, let alone get in."

Matthew 18:3



Who enjoys receiving the admonition to return to square one? If we are honest our adult sensibilities protest against the thought that we would need to start again with anything. As soon as we have any heart attitude that says to us things like: "I'm pretty good at this" or "I can do this on my own now", we need to hear the Spirit saying, "Time to return to **square one** and **start over** again as a child". No matter what the level of our knowledge, our accolades and our Christian experience, the kingdom of God always belongs to those with hearts like little children. Come to him today with a childlike trust that will open kingdom doors and the heart of the King to you.

Living personal presence

57

... whenever though, they turn to face God as Moses did, God removes the veil and there they are—**face-to-face!** They suddenly recognize that God is a **living, personal presence**, not a piece of chiseled stone. And when God is personally present, a living Spirit, that old, constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We're free of it!

2 Corinthians 3:16-17



Ghere we have the clearest picture of who God is and how he wants to relate to us. God is a **living, personal presence**. The Israelites saw the contrast between their struggling to fully obey the Law and the experience Moses had of seeing God **face-to-face**. Although in Christ we are redeemed from the curse of the Law, we face a similar challenge! We must choose between a Christian walk based on rules and methods and a walk where we are growing in intimacy with God. While methods are not necessarily bad in themselves, without a growing experience of his presence we have missed the vital essence of belonging to him. Let's put everything else aside today and love him who is personally present with us!

Pour on the Love

58

And may the Master **pour on the love** so it **fills your lives** and splashes over on everyone around you, just as it does from us to you.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-12



As I soaked this morning I had a vision of a fountain of crystal clear water. From a distance it looked about knee high, but as I came closer the fountain was gushing high enough for me to stand under. I found myself completely immersed in its flow. I expected to have the sensation of falling water pounding on my body (like standing under a waterfall), but to my surprise I experienced an almost overwhelming sense of his loving presence **filling my life**. The words that came immediately to my spirit were: intoxicating love. So, today, may he **pour on** you his intoxicating love so that it fills your life and splashes over on everyone around you! What a way to live!

A deeper consciousness of God

59

You call out to God for help and he helps--he's a good Father that way. But don't forget, he's also a responsible Father, and won't let you get by with sloppy living. Your life is a journey you must travel with a **deep consciousness of God**.

1 Peter 1:17,18b



The Christian mystics of old were much maligned for the emphasis they placed on knowing God with them all the time. One of the greatest needs and privileges we have is to be aware of **God with us** as we travel through life. I'm certain that God does not want to be 'confined' to a certain number of minutes a day, but to give us a **deeper consciousness** of himself. So, why put aside a specific time to soak and focus solely on him? I find that when I do this there is an overflow into the rest of the day. I'm more attuned to him during the day after a good start to the day. Let's make a good start in his presence today that we will carry with us for the rest of the day!

The best invitation ever!

60

Grace and peace to you many times over as you **deepen** in your experience with God and Jesus, our Master. Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who **invited us to God**. The best invitation we ever received!

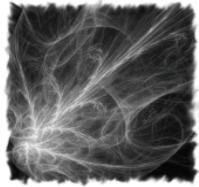
2 Peter 1:2-3



Today's Scripture summarises in a nutshell the main themes of this devotional journey into intimacy. God's plan was always that we would experience an ongoing and **deepening** relationship with him. We have been given everything we need to come personally and intimately close to him. There is nothing that we are lacking to be able to live a life that pleases him! This is the best **invitation** we have ever received. As we soak in him today, let's accept afresh his invitation to a life of intimacy.

When **God lives and breathes in you** and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus, you are delivered from that dead life. With his **Spirit** living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

Romans 8:11b



When God's Spirit is living in us we are as **alive** in God as Jesus! If we want a **model** of the kind of life we can live we need look no further than the relationship Jesus had with his Father while he walked on this earth. Jesus constantly heard what his Father was saying and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit did what his Father was doing. It is the same for you and me! God literally **lives and breathes** in us by the Holy Spirit. Our greatest need is to develop an intimacy with the **Holy Spirit** that allows God's very life and breath to flow in us. Only then will we be truly alive.

Every morning you'll hear me at it again. Every morning I lay out the pieces of my life on your altar and **watch for fire to descend**.

Psalm 5:3



We often think of God's fire in terms of judgment and purification. While this is true, in Scripture fire also represents his burning love and passionate desire for us. What a wonderful picture of daily renewal and restoration. Every morning we can place the pieces of our broken lives on his altar and wait for his **fiery love to fall upon us**. Then, throughout the day, watch in amazement as he does marvels with these broken pieces. There is no better way to live!

Look! Listen! There's my lover! Do you see him **coming**? Vaulting the mountains, leaping the hills.

Song of Songs 2:8



God is **coming**! What a picture. He will leap mountains and hills to find us and satisfy his desire for intimacy with us. Are we ready and waiting for him? Do we truly expect and even anticipate an ongoing experience of intimacy with him? One commentator has written, "Love can bound over mountains, but it cannot leap over the wall of the beloved; it is strong but never uses force. She must come out from behind her wall and willingly venture into the openness of springtime." **Come** out from behind your 'walls' today with the expectation that he is **coming** for you. Do you see him coming?

Content with who I am

64

"You're blessed when you're **content** with just who you are--no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of **everything that can't be bought**.

Matthew 5:5



Gf we are honest, many of us are not fully content with who we are. Our core identity often rests in what we do and what we think others think about us. If we are to experience intimacy with God there is a place we must find. This place is being **content** with just who we are. The only thing he really requires from us - is the real us! There is no fooling God anyway. Authentic intimacy grows as we love him from the 'real us'. In this place with him we find ourselves the proud owners of everything that can't be bought. So today be content with who you are and love him with the **real you**.

Where I want to be

65

It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your **treasure** is, is the place you will most want to be, and **end up being**.

Matthew 6:21



G've usually thought about this verse in terms of physical things (money and possessions), but it seems that Jesus is talking just as much about our love and affections. What a mind-blowing truth! We will **end up being** where our **treasure** is. When our love, devotion, affections are invested in him, we will end up being with him. This sounds like real intimacy to me! Remember the man who sold everything to buy the field so he could gain the pearl and the treasure? We have the same choices to make as to where we will make our 'investments'. As we soak today, let's place our most precious treasures in him by loving him with all we have.

A better Father

66

As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So don't you think the God who **conceived you in love** will be even better?

Matthew 7:11



Gany of us have struggled to various degrees in life due to a lack of real love from our earthly fathers. It seems to be the understatement of eternity that the love of God is better than the love of even the best of our fathers! When did God start loving us? Before creation he was already planning for you and me to experience his wonderful unconditional love. The very first thought God had of **conceiving** us (not just the whole human race, but specifically you) was a **loving** one. Having been conceived in his love we are now able to live in the ongoing reality of our Daddy's love. He never changes. Neither does his love for his children. Put everything else aside and soak in your Fathers love today.

A real rest

67

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? **Come to me.** Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a **real rest.**

Matthew 11:28



Have you ever had a vacation that was just too short? You return to the routine of life feeling as though you never really rested. While it is certainly good to get away for physical rest and refreshment, only Jesus can show us how to take a **real rest.** Only he can lead us to the place in his presence where we **recover our life.** Have you ever given out so much that there is nothing left in you to give? Nowadays we call this burn-out. Wherever you are at today, Jesus is still saying, "**Come to me.** Get away with me!" No tickets needed. No hotels to book or places to travel, just a 'get-away' in the intimate presence of our Lover King. Jesus, here I come!

Open communion

68

Spirit can be known only by spirit--God's Spirit and our spirits in **open communion.** Spiritually alive, we have access to everything God's Spirit is doing, and can't be judged by unspiritual critics.

1 Corinthians 2:14b



Our spirit longs for real and unhindered **communion.** We were created to relate to God. Soaking prayer is a wonderful place to learn and practice this Spirit to spirit relationship. Why is this so important? When we commune with God we have full access to everything God's spirit is doing. The Holy Spirit brings heaven to earth and allows us to participate (if we are willing). There is more great news. We don't need to be concerned at all by those who judge us as we walk in this Spirit life. More Holy Spirit!

Embraced by him

69

Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant--dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be **embraced by him.**

Philippians 3:8-9



Have you ever tried to embrace a person who is not 'comfortable with love' and found the person as 'stiff as a board'? This is how it can be in our lives in pursuing intimacy with God. We can carry all sorts of junk which hinders us from receiving and responding to the **embrace** of Jesus. I'm so thankful that he doesn't wait until we are perfect before revealing his love to us. However, he often brings us to a point where something must be dealt with before we can go deeper into his love. Unforgiveness, anger, anxiety, judgments, selfishness, hopelessness, pride. "Holy Spirit, please speak to us now and show us the trash we need to dump at the Cross, so we can be free to **embrace Jesus and be embraced by him.**"

"I like what I see in you"

70

But Noah was different. **God liked what he saw in Noah.**

Genesis 6:8



Have you ever wondered why God chose Noah? We know that he was a righteous man in a world full of wickedness, but I don't think God chose Noah just because he 'kept the rules'. God liked what he saw **inside** Noah - the **inner life** of a man who desired Him. God saw a man who was pursuing him and would pursue him no matter what the cost. When we have this same heart to pursue him God says to you and me, "I like what I see in you". He 'sees' our desire to pursue him and this **attracts** his presence to us. So, go ahead and enjoy the presence and favour of the One who likes what he sees in you!

Wonderfully significant

71

But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why are you giving her a hard time? She has just done something **wonderfully significant** for me.

Mark 14:6



Here are times when the extravagant love a fellow believer shows towards Jesus disturbs our comfort zone. We can easily find ourselves judging them in our heart. But, Jesus did not focus on whether the woman was fully 'doctrinally correct' or whether she had every sin issue in her life resolved. Jesus' focus here is on one thing - the **preciousness** of her offering of love. Let's pray: "Father I ask that you forgive me for the times I've judged others in their devotion to you. Thank you for all the **wonderfully significant** acts that I've been privileged to see done for you. Help me to be like this woman - more concerned about loving you than what other people are thinking and saying."

Beauty by revelation

72

Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her **beauty**. Everything he does and says is designed to **bring the best out** of her dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness.

Ephesians 5:26-27



Gn his love for us Jesus has one supreme purpose - to bring out the best in us by transforming us to be like him. Jesus words evoke the **beauty** of his bride. It is important that we hear God's voice. Much of the time we are looking for answers to problems or for direction in our lives, but Jesus is often simply speaking words to bring forth the beauty of God in us. When we receive his Word as spiritual revelation there is a release of the beauty of God into us. Mike Bickle speaks of, "the incomparable joy of being beautiful before a beautiful God". Hear Jesus saying to you today, "You are my beautiful, dazzling and radiant bride."

A taste of heaven

73

The Spirit of God whets our appetite by giving us a taste of what's ahead. He puts a little of **heaven in our hearts** so that we'll never settle for less.

2 Corinthians 5:5



We have the wonderful privilege of experiencing heaven now. Yes, it is true that the full manifestation of heaven will be in the age to come, but don't let anyone tell you that we can't experience the reality of heaven now. Heaven is the very dwelling place of God, the place where he lives in unrestricted glory. His presence to us is a manifestation of heaven on earth. It's a place where his revelation flows freely. Have you had a **taste of heaven**? Has your appetite been whetted by his heavenly presence? As we soak today, let's ask him for a fresh taste of heaven. Let's embrace his presence that he puts in our **hearts** so that we will never settle for less! This is the only way to live!

Master keys

74

"And that's not all. You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, **keys** to open any and **every door**: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven."

Matthew 16:19



Wow! Jesus has given us **keys** that allow complete and free access to God's kingdom, to open any and **every door**. With these 'Master' keys there are no more barriers between heaven and earth. We have free access not only to the resources of heaven, but to the King of heaven himself. With these keys we have the King's authority to bring heaven to earth, but the **way** he desires us to do this is in intimate relationship with him. There are 'doors of intimacy' waiting to be unlocked, opened and entered through. He is simply waiting for a "yes" from you. Use your Master key today and open a new door into his presence. We say "yes"!

His surprises

75

But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a **surprise** for you:

Luke 1:30



The surprise awaiting Mary was truly awesome. Do we believe that our Heavenly Daddy wants to surprise us as well? Children love good surprises and if we are honest, so do we. Despite our feigned embarrassment, we love it when people take the time to prepare a surprise for us. It makes us feel special. Our problem is that we often try to "plan" our interaction with God to the point where we have little expectation of being surprised by him. Today, he wants to **surprise** you with something new. So, put aside "the plan", wait expectantly for his surprise and receive it!

Beautiful inside and out

76

Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her: Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty, **Beautiful inside and out!** God be with you

Luke 1:28



The angel Gabriel could see something beautiful in Mary - the beauty of being 'beautiful with God's beauty'. If an angel stood before you now and said to you, "You're beautiful with God's beauty!" How would you feel? How would you respond to him (God not the angel)? This may be more difficult for us men to receive, but we are not talking about feminine beauty. God is eternal beauty. Every manifestation of beauty in the natural and spiritual realm is a reflection of the beauty of God. Here it is! Receive it just as if an angel of God was standing right before you, because this is God speaking to you. You are **beautiful inside and out** with God's beauty. Oh Yes!

The main course

77

The Master said, " Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is **essential**, and Mary has chosen it--it's the **main course**, and won't be taken from her.

Luke 10:41-42



The Lord has prepared for us a banqueting table in his presence. Sometimes I wonder if we have become too content with entrees and side-dishes that we often miss the real banquet. Experiencing real intimacy with him is the **main course** of belonging to him; the truly life-changing and full-filling part. He himself is the main course of the banquet! There is good stuff in the Christian life that we can rightly benefit from, but without a regular intake of the '**main course**' we can miss out on the best of the best that he wants to give us. When we choose intimacy with him, this can never, ever be taken from us.

Gushing fountains!

78

Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst--not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, **gushing fountains of endless life.**"

John 4:14



Gow is life for you at the moment? Does it feel as if you are struggling through deep mud of life's circumstances? Or maybe you are surfing on the crest of a wonderful wave of his love and favour? We live most of our lives somewhere in between these two places. The real question is: What is your expectation of the life he wants to give you today? Do you expect a trickle of life or a **gushing fountain of endless life** to burst forth from within? Let's drink deeply today of the water of his love and presence and wait for the spring of his life to burst forth from within us. This is the way I want to live!

Become like him

79

All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we **become like him**.

2 Corinthians 3:18



Gspent many years as a Christian striving in my own strength to become like him. I knew that God already lived in me by his Spirit, so why wasn't I becoming 'brighter and more beautiful'? The analogy of a house is helpful here. At salvation God is welcomed in the front door of our 'house'. We become a child of God and are placed on the path of transformation into his likeness. But, he still needs to be welcomed into every room in our house (lives). In a sense he continues to **enter** different 'places' in us. When this happens we become brighter and more beautiful in this place and we become **more like him**. Let's invite him to enter a new place in our lives today.

The thirsty bride

80

"**Come!**" say the Spirit and the **Bride**. Whoever hears, echoes, "**Come!**" Is anyone thirsty? Come! All who will, come and drink, Drink freely of the **Water of Life**!

Revelation 22:17



Gt is very interesting that the Spirit and the Bride both say "**Come!**" The invitation is given to whoever is **thirsty** to come and drink freely while the echo from the Spirit and the thirsty ones is also "**Come!**" Even as the One who gives us the water of life - the Holy Spirit - is saying "**Come**", we as the thirsty Bride can say over ourselves, "**Come!**" The Spirit invites the bride and the Bride invites the Spirit. So come and drink freely of the water of life". Speak this out today and listen to your own words. Let the invitation resonate in your spirit, so that your spirit cries out, "I've come to drink today". Then drink freely!

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RESOURCES

Here are a few additional resources which I hope will help you further along on your journey into intimacy with God.

Soaking music

Alberto & Kimberly Rivera – <http://www.rainingpresence.com>

Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship – <http://store.tacf.org>

The Elijah List – <http://www.elijahshopper.com>

Books

Face to Face with God by Brian Johnson (Charisma House, 2007)

Spiritual Slavery to Spiritual Sonship by Jack Frost (Destiny Image Publishers, 2006)

The Lost Art of Practicing His Presence by Jim Goll (Destiny Image Publishers, 2005)

The Pleasures of Loving God by Mike Bickle (Charisma House, 2000)

The God Catchers by Tommy Tenney (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000)

THE MESSAGE

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