

How Do I Experience Fellowship With God

by Don Currin

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith, Scripture internalization, meditation, and prayer in experiencing fellowship and communion with God. It discusses the spiritual nature of fellowship with God, highlighting the need to believe in the possibility of walking closely with Him. The sermon also touches on the role of Scripture in prayer, the significance of meditating on God's Word, and the transformative power of focusing on the character of Christ for spiritual growth.

Scripture: John 14:23, 1 John 1:3, 2 Timothy 3:16, Psalm 119:11, James 4:8, Proverbs 3:5, Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Matthew 4:4, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Faith and Fellowship", "The Power of Scripture and Prayer"

Description

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Transcript

How does a Christian experience fellowship and communion with God? Well, I have to say, never minimize the faith factor. It all begins in a context of believing God. And something that's extremely important is learning to internalize Scripture.

I think reading and then being intentional in your meditation of the Word of God. And through that, as you begin to internalize Scripture, both in memorization, as well as meditation, I feel like that this provides a great context for drawing near to God. But another thing that's very important is also the secret prayer aspect of learning to cry out to God and get beyond sometimes your emotions.

Sometimes emotions come. And as Michael has already mentioned, we're not talking about superficial emotions. But at times the Spirit of God draws near, then your emotions are touched.

And of course, you're very expressive in your worship. But other times, there's no emotion at all. And you choose to obey God and you choose to read and pray to God.

And by that act of diligence and obedience, I feel as if this is the very thing that precipitates real consistent worship. First, I would say you have to believe that fellowship with Christ is possible. Wherever I go, I talk

to people who say, I want to believe what you believe, but I'm just not sure that that's possible, that you can walk with God like that, that you can know God and you can experience God.

So you first have to believe that this is what he has, all he is offering, fellowship with him. You know, that's what John is saying in the first epistle. I'm writing these things to you that you may have fellowship with us and our fellowship is with God the Father and with his son.

And he does not mean for you to interpret him to say, we're writing these things so you can have fellowship with we apostles. No, he's saying you can have the fellowship that we apostles have with God, the father and his son, because fellowship now that he's bodily ascended is spiritual. It's not physical, it's not materials, not based upon the material.

It's spiritual. That's what all John 14, 15 and 16 is about. He's teaching his apostles how to be able to relate to him now, not bodily, but spiritual through the Holy Spirit.

So fellowship with God looks like this. It looks like this. It looks exactly like a husband and wife, only on an even more spiritual, deeper level.

It looks like two people who love each other and relate to each other. It's just that simple. But Jesus is not here bodily.

I was talking earlier, you know, when my wife puts her arms around me and she says, I love you, I can hear that. I can feel that. I can't feel God put his arms around me.

I can't hear audibly his words. I love you, but I've learned. And this is what I think we need to do.

We need to learn how, how to see and how to hear here. Jesus said, he that has eyes, let him see the ears, let him hear. He's just not talking about spiritual understanding.

Of course, that's ultimately what he means. I think he's meaning learn how to see and hear with your eyes, the activity of God around you. God is always active around you and in you.

And you need to learn how to see that, how to observe him, how to be able to detect him the primary way, the primary way. And every other other way is an exception. Not it's secondary.

The primary way is through this book. I'll, I'll never forget because of the background I came from, I was looking for a Mount Transfiguration experience every time I prayed, every time I read my Bible. And it wasn't that way.

And after a while I got so despondent, so discouraged. I'll never forget. I wheeled around in my office, got on my face and cried before the Lord and said, why are you not talking to me? I thought prayer is supposed to be a dialogue.

This is a monologue God. And I'm tired of doing all the talking. That's basically what I prayed.

And at that moment, I understood something just intuitively. I knew prayer is when you express your heart to God. This is how God has expressed his heart to us.

And I, I didn't understand all that that meant, but I began to read, excuse me. I began to pray with this book open. I began to pray the scriptures back to God.

I began to talk with him through his word and providentially I'll, I owe, if I owe Mac Tomlinson anything, it's this that he reprinted George Mueller's autobiography. All you could buy for that point in time was a little paperback, very abridged because the things like that thick is just as little paperback. And I began to read that about this.

And about this same time, this event happened, I was reading in the autobiography and he comes to a little section and he talked about how he spent the first 10 years of his Christian life, really discouraged with his prayer life. He said he could pray everything in 15 minutes or he'd fall asleep and his mind would drift. But when he discovered praying the scriptures, he could pray an hour, hour and 15 minutes.

And he said, I could, I could spend the time. And it was uncanny ironic. He would say that the needs of the ministry were in that text that day that I was reading and praying through.

And it was a confirmation to me that I was on the right track. So what does that look like? Now this is, this is Michael. It won't look just like this for you.

But again, I think the principles are exactly the same. It looks like this. I began in the morning and I say, Lord, your word teaches me to pray.

Open my eyes. I may behold wondrous things in thy law. You've got to do this.

I can't, my mind is not adequate enough. I don't care how high your IQ is. It's not enough.

I said this to some guys this afternoon. So guys bear with me and I'll say it again to the whole audience, logic and human reason can only take you so far. God created it.

He gave it to you. He intends for you to use it, to think upon him. Isn't that the amazing thing? God gave your brain.

Why? Namely, so you could think about him and he intends for you to do that, but that can only take you so far. And my illustration of that is I get in, I want to go to Romania. I get in my car in Dallas and I drive all the way to the East coast.

Eventually I'm going to have to get out of my car. Why? Because that car cannot traverse the Atlantic ocean. So I get out of the car and now I've got to either board a ship or a plane to take me all the way.

Fellowship with God. How do you know when you encounter it? It's really, really easy. It's not hard.

It requires faith. As he's just said, you got to believe this is what the word of God says and rely upon the truth of scripture. When you're reading the text, you're asking God to open your eyes and give you understanding because that's what the spirit does.

I'll send you the spirit. He'll guide you into all truth. He'll take what is mine and he will deliver.

He will give it to you. Jesus lives in you by the person of the Holy Spirit and he communicates truth by the spirit when you believe it. And what that means is this.

The moment that truth of that text is more than just a fact in your brain, but there's a reality of it. You're conscious of the reality of it. You just had an encounter with God.

God just spoke to you. God just moved with you. He just put his arms around you and told you he loves you.

It's that simple. And as you walk through your day, you learn to see him. That's what Jesus said.

My father works and I watch what he does and I just turn around and do the same thing. That was Michael's paraphrase, but that's essentially what he said. I see my father and I do what I see my father do.

He'd learned. Why did he know how to deal with the different people the way he did? Because he was watching the father. He could see God's activity in that person's life and he was gravitated to that because he learned that.

I don't think he just intuitively. I think there was some intuition, but I think he learned it as a man. He grew in stature and wisdom and knowledge.

And I think he learned that. So there might be some follow-up questions. I may have created more than I've answered.

And just a couple of little comments going back to what Michael said about George Mueller. He said he could never pray until he fixed his mind on text. So once again, there's the faith factor because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

So to focus on a text is not just merely casually reading it, but all of a sudden you start meditating upon it. And the more you meditate, as Michael said, God directed him for the events of that day, all of a sudden what emerges out of that text is something that is very solid and substantive and invigorating to your spiritual life. Another quote I just want to mention is what Spurgeon said regarding faith.

Faith is reason at rest in God. And many times don't try to manipulate, don't try to figure things out, but just rest in what God has said in his truth and in his promises. And it's amazing how the spirit of God will begin to engender faith in your heart.

I want to make sure everyone's clear about what I had said this morning and now what I'm saying now. I don't set out to feel something. Don't do that.

That's not what we're talking about because the enemy can give you any feeling and experience you want. You don't want that. You want the reality of the truth.

I was preaching one day and all of a sudden I said to the congregation, you're reading your Bibles too much. And the pastor laughed out loud. And I know that's a dangerous statement.

So let me unpack what I mean. Many of you are reading your Bibles because that's your goal to read your Bible. That should never be your goal.

Your goal should be to believe the truth of God that you're reading and thereby experience him. And what that means is some of you have McShane, and I did McShane for you, not critical. I think there's some help in doing Bible reading programs, but there's also a danger.

Every strength has its own weakness. And here's the danger. You're about getting the gold done.

You're about getting the task accomplished. It may be that God wants to speak to you with the second verse you read that day, but you're reading past it. You're not meditating on that second verse.

He had something to show you, but you'll never know why because you had to read your four chapters that morning. That's what I meant. Prayerfully read and think about your reading.

Look at it from all these different angles. Ask questions of the text because you're not just asking the Bible. You're asking the one who wrote the Bible.

What did you mean when you said that? Why did you say that? What's that got to do with me? I mean, these are things and just think. And it's amazing that in your thinking on the text, God gives understanding and with it, when you believe it, there's reality. One more thing, if I could say, I'll make it just very practical for you guys.

I think the greatest devotional verse in the Bible is 2 Corinthians 3.18, but we all with open face beholding him as in a glass are changed into that same image from one degree of glory to another, even as by the Lord, the Spirit. Now, listen, this is very important. I challenge men and women at times to do this.

If you really want to have a fruitful devotional life, start in the book of Matthew and read in every little snippet of scripture. It might be a verse, it may be a series of verses that speaks of an aspect of the person of Jesus Christ. Write down the verse and then ask God for prayerful meditation and then write down a very brief commentary on what you see in the person of Christ in that verse and take that with you during the course of the day and meditate upon it and let it salivate in your mind and your heart.

And I guarantee you, now listen to this, I guarantee you in three months, your family will especially see a marked difference in Christ's likeness in your life. I'm telling you it's true because you are being changed and the key is meditating, fixing your mind's eye upon Christ. Brothers and sisters, this is the way you're being changed, transformed, even by the Spirit of the Lord into the character of Christ.

So when you go and you come to that verse beginning in Matthew, you're looking for the character, the counsel, the way Christ dealt with various issues, his worldview, anything you write down, write down the verse, meditate on it and then write a brief commentary and take it with you during the course of the day to fixate your mind upon and I can assure you that when three months, everyone and especially your family will see a marked difference in your character as you're being conformed to the image of Christ.

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