

God and I

by Jenny Daniel

This sermon emphasizes the intimate relationship between an individual and God, highlighting the importance of maintaining a close, obedient, and submissive connection with God in all aspects of life. It stresses the need for repentance, forgiveness, and a genuine relationship with God, rather than just religious practices. The sermon also warns against false confidence in one's salvation and the significance of being in step with God, even in the smallest details of life.

Scripture: Romans 1:20, Romans 14:12, Psalm 139:23, 1 John 1:8, Amos 3:3, Galatians 6:9, 1 John 2:28, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Intimacy with God", "Genuine Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Now my subject for today is God and I. God and I. Now in my bedroom at home there's a little picture of me, it's about this size, of me when I was about seven years old, when I gave my life to the Lord. And there's this very shy little face looking at me as I go into my bedroom. And when I look at this picture of myself it's as if this little girl that I was is saying to me, Jenny, how are things going between you and God? So it's just as if as I walk into the room I see this little face looking back at me, it's my face, and says if the question is coming back over the years.

I personally believe that all that is part of our life, all we have gone through and are going through, what we're experiencing right now, what we are facing is all bound up in this relationship, relationship between God and myself. No matter if we're a loner, no matter if we're a child, a teenager, an aunt, a stay-at-home adult, a wife, a widow, a grandmother, or a young working adult, life is essentially wrapped up around the fundamental relationship of God and myself. Does that relationship exist or doesn't it exist? Is it whole or is it fractured? One day when we stand before God, the things that seem so important, you know, I remember as a teenager at boarding school, we had to go to boarding school, who are you going to marry one day? Where are you going to land up? Are you going to marry a farmer? Are you going to marry this or that? You know, all those things that are so big on the horizon, but everything will fade into significance when we realize that after all, life is just really about God and myself.

Now, first of all, we can't ignore the fact that God is. We all know the verse in Romans 1 verse 20, which says, for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. So God says there's no denying, you can't doubt, you can't doubt my existence.

When the airplane drops, who do people call on? Atheists and all. God help us! That's what they call. I remember on a plane when it dropped quite a bit with us, the people just started praying immediately.

Whatever the world says to the contrary, we are constantly reminded through the splendor of creation that God is. It's an unavoidable reality. This life is not really about me, but about God and me.

It automatically then makes me responsible for my conduct. Have you ever wondered why people want to be atheists? Why they don't want to believe in God? Why they want to say that they don't? Well, then they can do what they like. You can do what you like if you don't believe there isn't a God out there.

But the moment I have to acknowledge God's existence, I'm responsible. I'm responsible for what I do. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Romans 14 verse 5. And the accountability is much more exact because God looks in the heart. He looks in the reins.

He searches what we think deep within. And we all know the story of David and when Samuel was sent to choose a king from all the sons of Jesse and everyone came before him and they looked so beautiful on the outside. They looked so godly on the outside.

Samuel said, this is the man. And God said, uh-uh. You look on the outward.

And you know how time and time again we have been misled by what people seem on the outside. What they present themselves as and what they are inside can be rotten to the core. The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart.

We're not only accountable to God for what we say and for what we do, but David says, thou desirest truth in the inward parts. Now there was a little girl and her mom said to her, oh darling, you've been so good today. And the little girl hung her head and she said, mommy, I have not been good.

She said, I have not been good in my thoughts. And God sees everything as it is. He even sees our thoughts, what we think.

And I might have told you this before as a child. I was fascinated by the thought if we could see above everybody's head a little balloon and what they are thinking right at this moment. It would be quite scary, but it would be hilarious.

God sees below the surface each thought and hidden whim, though I may not have done it, imaginings of sin. God sees below the surface, oh, what a solemn thought, my heart exposed, not hidden, wrongdoing, thought, all wrought, everything. Now we have no relationship to start off with.

We're all born in sin. We know that so well, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Whether we have grown up in a Christian home, no matter what we've done, we're all sinners to start off with.

There's a broken relationship between me and God. And God is ever yearning and seeking to reach us and to restore this relationship between Him. And remember what He said to Jerusalem, oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I, but ye would not.

So God is reaching out to us. He's come to seek and to save that which is lost. He wants to reach us, and we have to respond to Him.

God wants to break down the wall of sin that separates us. He wants this relationship to be started, to be restored, for our hearts to be cleansed so that we can have this fellowship, this intimate relationship with Him. Now even in this select group, we may miss and ignore the reality that without meeting with God, without an encounter with Him, we are lost.

We are not a child of God. We are not a daughter of the King. Now I might have told you this story before.

I'm not sure about Roy sitting in church with me. Roy is our middle son. He's at the convention, and he kept me running through life.

And I never used to know what Roy would do next, and one day we were sitting in church, and the minister was doing a sermon on all have sinned. And the minister said, I want to stress every single one of you, whether you attend a church all these years, whether you've done Bible studies or whatever, every one of you has done sin. All have sinned.

Now I started seeing Roy get edgy. So I tried to be ready to grab him, and then the minister said, no, is there anybody in this church that can say they have never, ever sinned? And guess who jumped up? Roy, me! So I said, oh, bowed him down. So the minister says, well Roy, no, that can't be true.

Surely you've told him. No, I've never, ever told a lie. He said, haven't you taken a cookie from the cookie, from the pantry? No, no, never.

And the minister looked at me as if to say, Mrs. Daniel, you better keep a hand on your child. So I literally kept Roy down, and I think I had my hand over his mouth. Well, while the minister with great dignity says, now congregation, I must stress, everybody has sinned, even young Roy.

And I said, shush Roy, I'll explain later. Anyway, so was the minister right? Was the minister right? Have all of us done sin? Are we all sinners? If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar.

So all of us have sinned. Now just before I came to America, there were two wonderful, wonderful things that happened. One was with a very old person, and one was with a young mother of little twins of two.

Now the old person was one of those people that achieve. You know, some people, they just achieve. They like, what do you call it? They are people that just, they like colonialists or whatever it is.

He started institutions, and the institutions are going to carry on hundreds of years after he's gone. He created a blind school in South Africa. He did all sorts of amazing things.

He was a religious man. He went to church. He went to Bible studies.

He prayed. He was an excellent example as a husband, as a father, as a grandfather. He was loved and respected, but despite all these things, his daughter said, I do not know if my father has got a relationship

with God.

You see, it's not religion. It's not Christianity. It's a relationship, and so she was very worried about him, but he kept saying, my girl, don't you worry.

Daddy's on his way to heaven. Everything's fine. Anyway, he ended up with heart failure, kidney failed, and he was still confident, but he ended up in hospital, and he had a collapse, and suddenly they realized this man is at death's door, and so the lady said, please, to the minister, can't you just go and speak to my father? Can't you just try and just, because I am not sure that he is really safe, and so the minister went.

Now, at this stage, the man couldn't talk anymore, so if he said yes, he just nodded his head. If he said no, it's like this. If he didn't know, he just went like that, so the minister spoke to him and said, sir, are you right with God? He nodded his head.

Well, the minister thought, what could I do? He says he's right with God. He can't even talk. What more can I do? So he prayed a prayer for him, and he left the building, but as he was going through the door, God said, how can you leave this man like this? Even if he nods his head, how can you leave this man? He's at death's door.

How can you do that? So the minister thought, I'm going to go back in, so he goes back in, and he told the family afterwards. He gently and compassionately explained the way of salvation. He asked the man, when did you turn? Where did you turn? What was the occasion that you turned? What was the time, the place, the day that you turned from the wrong direction to the right direction? Have you turned? Is there a point of turning in your life where you've turned to God when he saved you yourself? When you started walking with God, that's the relationship.

We walk with God. What was the time? What was the day? Was there a counter? And suddenly the man did nothing with his head. He just stared.

He didn't nod his head. He didn't shake his head. He just stared, and the minister said to him, was there a time, sir? I'm asking you, was there a time? And the man said, there wasn't a time of turning.

And he said, listen here, would you like me to pray for you? I know you cannot speak, but you can follow me in my words. You can just agree with me in your heart. I'm going to pray the sinner's prayer for you, and then you can agree in your heart.

And the man nodded his head emphatically, and the minister prayed. And when he finished praying, the tears were just running down the man's cheeks, and his face glowed. And the minister said to him, sir, where is the Lord Jesus now? And he said he took that weak hand, and he tried to get hold of the minister's hand, and he pulled it, and he put it on his chest, as if to say my body is the temple of God.

He's living inside. That evening the son-in-law came to visit, and the old man was so desperate. He wanted to tell him something, but he couldn't tell him.

But the son-in-law said, he seemed so excited, and of course they realized later he was wanting to tell them what God had done for them. And the next morning, he was gone. God had reached him at that last moment, in a real way, a true encounter.

Young and old, you thought to know that you were on a journey with the Lord Jesus Christ. But was there a time of turning? Was there a repentance of sin in your life? The day that Savior washed you clean, even of the things that are wrong. When you became a daughter of the King, we can all do the right things.

We can look like a beautiful Christian, chaste, everything looks so perfect on the outside, but God looks on the heart, and he knows if there is a relationship, or if it's all just a pretense. Now there was a young mother. This is the other story.

She had two little twins. They were the cutest little twins. I in fact lived after them not so long ago.

But a young mother, she went to church, Bible studies, religious, she had a loving husband, life just seemed wonderful. Everything was panned out perfectly. I mean, you've got a husband that loves you, you've got these twin children, and you looked up to as a Christian, and you consider yourself, you're on your way to heaven, what more do you want? But there were those in the family that thought there is no real relationship with God.

It's not real. There's no life. There's no life.

And so they tried to witness to her, but she didn't want to listen to any of the witnesses. She said, I'm fine, I'm on my way to heaven. Don't be worried about me.

You don't have to worry about me. But a friend of hers got saved, and when the friend got saved, suddenly this friend became burdened for her soul. And then this mother started thinking, my friend was exactly the same as me.

I've always thought she was going to heaven. What's changed? And now she's worried about me. And she became under conviction of sin, and she got saved.

She accepted Christ as Savior. And you know, the thing that she said is so interesting to me. She said to another family member, you know, Christianity, it's not a religion.

It's a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not a religion. It's a relationship.

I just want to please Him. I want to be pure and obedient to Him. And you know what happened immediately? Immediately she was saved.

She was burdened for her husband, and she's trying to reach Him with her life and with her witness. And that's to me a wonderful proof of salvation. If when you get saved, you want other—remember the woman at the well? What did she do when she got the water? She immediately ran to get others and tell them about the water.

And so when we are truly saved, the first thing we'll want to do is for others also to know the Lord Jesus. What a wonder, what a miracle when we meet with God, when this relationship begins, when life revolves now not only about me, what I want, what I plan, what I hope, but that life is really about God, God and me. You know, it's so intimate.

It's so precious. The one was sick and ailing, a life of laurels one, respected, loved, looked up to, for all achieved and done. The other young, a mother with children small and sweet, with loving husband, life seemed fulfilling and complete.

But both were on a journey that did not lead to God. Religiously their footsteps towards hell nearer trod. And then precious encounter, God stopped them on life's way.

They turned to him, surrendered, walked with him. From that day, the one stepped into heaven, the other life ahead. But now each step she's taking will be where God has led.

The relationship with God is a journey. We start a path together. It's his way that I want to do.

It's his will. It's his direction. He is guiding.

I don't walk my own path. I'm going to walk God's path. When I turned and God cleansed me from my sin, I took God by the hand and I let him direct and I have to stay in step with him.

To stay in step with God as a Christian, we have to be submitted to God. We have to remain submitted. If you had two little children and they had their hands together with a string and they were walking together, I can imagine Ruth and Clarissa and now they're walking together and suddenly Clarissa says, I want to go this way.

And Ruth says, no, I want to go that way. What's going to happen? It's going to tug. It's going to hurt.

And eventually that string can snap. We have to be submissive to God, to stay in step. And that's what Amos says.

Amos 3.3, can two walk together except they be agreed? And to be agreed, one has to bow to the other. For somebody to say, I want to go this direction, I have to say, yes, I'll go this direction with you. And so it is in our Christian walk.

God says, this is the way. Yes, Lord. Then I stay in step.

Total submission. Even if we are inch off course, we're going to go further and further away. So too with obedience and submission to God's will.

Now there was a missionary in Africa, her name was Elina Garrett, and she had a dictaphone. Does everybody know what a dictaphone is? You speak into this little machine and then it plays back what you say and then the secretary types what you've said. Anyway, the dictaphone stopped working.

So she tried to fix it. So she shook it, she banged it, she hit it a bit like I do with some things when they don't work. But nothing worked.

Then she got a neighbor in, a nice neighbor, and he came and he said, oh, is it not working? Are you sure it's totally not working? Whatever, it didn't work. And then he took two screws out and he took a screwdriver and he put it in and he did the minuscule twist, just a slight. Closed it up, put the screws in, and the machine worked.

So she said, how did that happen? I mean, you hardly twist it. He said, you know, your mechanism was a 16th of an inch out, one 16th of an inch. And then she said, oh God, just a 16th of an inch and the machine stopped working.

What about my testimony? What about my relationship with God? It takes this smallest little fraction of disobedience to God to mar my testimony. As a wife, as a mother, as a grandmother, granddaughter, etc.,

it's so easy to let our little quick retorts, our responses, our discrepancies, our disobedience slip in and mar our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn't have to be big reactions.

We don't have to stamp our foot and say, I won't do that. It's just the kind of attitude, a sulky face, a sullen silence. Have you ever entered a room? I have many times where the atmosphere is so heavy, you just don't know, you feel you have to cut your way through the room.

There's somebody in that room determined to be morbid, determined to be negative, determined to be gloomy, but they're not satisfied to be gloomy on their own. They want everybody else to be gloomy with them. And so you try and lift up the atmosphere, you tell a little joke, you do all sorts of things, but it's just this gloom is so heavy that you just can't, you can't get it up.

It's a selfish attitude for us as Christians to not rejoice in the Lord, not in our circumstances, to not rejoice in the Lord and to pull others down with us. We need to moment by moment consciously guard our reactions. To rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, even in the difficult circumstances, even in the storms, because He's with us in the storms.

You know, when the things go wrong and things do go wrong, you just have to cling all the tighter to Him. A Christian that is doom and gloom, who spreads depression in a room, is not rejoicing in the Lord. She needs her walk with God restored.

A matron once told me, she said to me, you either influence people positively or negatively. Jenny, how have you influenced people today? Was it positive or was it negative? Can you point to the spot in your Christian life where you stopped tugging to go your own direction and where you said to God, Thy will, only Thine. I want to submit myself entirely to you.

Romans 12.1, I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God. The Lord Jesus said, not my will, but Thine be done. And I think as a Christian, as a Christian, it's important that we submit ourselves totally to God.

We have to be careful to remain in step with the Lord Jesus and that we don't lead others astray by the way we walk and by our attitude. Remember Peter, when he said, Lord, Lord, shall I forgive my brother seven times? And he thought God would say, oh no, no, no, I don't expect you to forgive him seven times. Just two times will be enough.

What did God say? Seventy times seven. That's what we have to be. It's too big a challenge, too difficult, but God expects us to be loving, forgiving, compassionate and understanding.

Now Elena Garrett said there was an Irish missionary that said to her and confessed to her, I realized sadly that I didn't please Christ with my reaction to someone who did me wrong. She said, I regret my treatment of the wrongdoer. She said, she, I was right.

He was wrong, but I forgot how much harder it is to be in the position of one who had done wrong. She said, I made the return path for this person so hard for the offender when I should have made it easy for didn't God instantly forgive me when I pledged to him for forgiveness? I was determined, she said, this lady said that there would be no concession on my part, no halfway advance, even though the prodigal father had run to meet his son that was on his way back, looking out for him, eagerly greeting him. What do we do with people who offend us, who do wrong, who treat us wrongfully? We're in the right, they're in the wrong.

Do we make it easy for them to come back to God? Dear Lord, I was so angry with someone close to me who failed and disappointed. I lashed out constantly. Though she sought reconciling, I did not heed her plea.

I wanted her to feel how she'd made life hard for me. Somehow, I had forgotten the prodigal who found his father watching, waiting with love intact and sound. Dear God, make me so tender with someone who did wrong that they may find it easy to seek God before long.

No matter what others do to us, we need to forbear one another, forgive one another, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. We need to keep that relationship with God intact, and that includes our relationship with others. Whatever happens to us, whatever opposition we face, in all situations in life, even in the ordinary duties of life, do not let discouragement, opposition, breaking down of others, every attempt we do seems to be smashed.

Stop us being patient, forgiving, long-suffering, and kind. And God asks us just to go step by step. God doesn't ask me tomorrow to pass all those storms that are going to lash against me tomorrow.

He just asks me step by step. Step is just one step. The next thing that God asks me to do, then it isn't as impossible.

But as you say, my husband breaks me down. I've got a brother or an older sister or a daughter-in-law that breaks me down. Now, in the 2,500 fuller anecdotes, it says that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there was a man working and editing a dictionary, a very intricate dictionary, and he had to add 33,000 words to this dictionary.

And he proved them and corrected them. And he spent eight years working on this dictionary. And the article says his wife wasn't very happy with all the time he spent on this dictionary.

So she malignantly, when he was out, she crept into his study one day when he wasn't there. She took all those notes, everything, eight years of work, and she threw it into the fire. He came home and he was horrified, heartbroken.

It's all gone, eight years of work. And he says, who has done this to me? And his wife says, I did. It's me.

And you know what he did? What his reaction article says? He just cried out, Dinah, Dinah, thou has given me a world of trouble. And he quietly worked another eight years to replace the papers that had been destroyed. And he got the deserved well done of Queen Elizabeth.

May we in the same way not get weary and despondent, but just carry on. Not be weary in well doing, Galatians 6, 9, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Let's just carry on.

Do you know that we can be ashamed as Christians that the Lord Jesus is coming? Because we haven't kept this relationship clear and intact. 1 John 2, 28, and our little children abide in him. Keep that relationship intact.

That when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed at his coming. It's a close relationship. There's no place for a third party.

There's no place for somebody else's opinion being more important than God's opinion. Now a good measuring stick is to say, if I have the Lord Jesus at my side, because if we walk with him, he is at our

side, will he be happy with this that I'm doing? Because we need to be practical, as young people especially. What I dress like, if the Lord Jesus is standing next to me in front of the mirror, will he be happy with what I look like? And the one lady said she was asked to go to entertainment, and she was very pressurized to go, and she sat at the entertainment, and she said she couldn't enjoy a minute of it, because she thought, oh if the Lord Jesus should come now and find me here, that would be dreadful.

So was she in step with him? Was she walking with him at that stage? No, she was grieving him. Now there was an evangelist who had backslidden for a stage, and he'd come back to the Lord, and he said, I can show you the point where I backslid. He said, I was walking down the road with the Lord Jesus, and I got to a certain house, and I said to the Lord Jesus, you stay right here, you can't come with me into this house.

And he said, I went into this house, and whatever I did in that house, I came out. But he said, you know when I came out, the Lord Jesus wasn't waiting for me. We have to, as the one missionary said, keep short accounts.

We have to walk in submission and obedience with God every step of the way, and that includes the small things in our life, and especially our reactions as Christians. We need to be obedient to God in the small details of life. Only then will we really be walking together.

Now let's look back. Have we been falsely confident that all is right between us and God? Like that old man in the hospital that thought for years he's on his way to heaven, and found at his deathbed that he was on his way to hell. Are you sure that you have started that relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? Remember that old man, remember the young lady, remember Roy in church that said, oh I'm fine, I've never sinned.

Is that what you're saying at the moment, even as a child? We need to be saved. We need to be restored. We need to become a true daughter of the King, and if you can point back to when you accepted the Lord Jesus as Savior, are you walking in step with the Lord Jesus, or are you tugging, are you tugging on the string to go to your own direction? The world is tugging you.

Music is tugging you. Friends are tugging you, and they're tugging you away from that perfect, submissive, intimate relationship with God. One day we're going to stand before God, and everything that seems so important, all those friends, all this prestige, all the other things will fade into nothing, and we realize, life was really only about God and me.

Why did I set such store on those things, when actually all that matters is if I am right with God? In life, things seem important. They fill, consume our life, achievements and acceptance. Who'll choose me as a wife? Sometimes it is our children who are our chief concern, including their appearance, our standards, loose or stern.

But one day at the great throne, those things will fade away, when I, an individual, face God upon that day, one piercing glance confronts me. My soul exposed, revealed, despite the outward chasteness, a sinful heart concealed. Oh, awful words, so final.

Depart, she never came. Repentance sought as sinner, forgiveness in my name. What matters? What the world thought.

Achievements, what of them? If on that day, the verdict, not life, but to condemn. Today, if you're a Christian, God says, how can it be that you have wandered slightly an inch or so from me? No major disobedience, but just your attitude. When parents reprimanded, anger inside had brewed.

Long suffering and kindness, patience and constant care has not been there for others who wandered from God's care. Resentment for the treatment of someone towards me have let my footsteps wander from walking close to thee. Each day, I must be careful that each step that I take is only at God's bidding, as other lives at stake.

Yes, little eyes are watching, and little feet come on. Will they be safe to follow the path I walk upon? Amen.

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