

Be Honest with God!

How intimate is your prayer life? Are you open and honest when you talk to God?

Many of us lack intimacy with the Lord because they are afraid to be honest and vulnerable before Him. What often happens is that they want God to see that they trust and obey Him, so they hide their doubts, fears and struggles from Him; but this only leads to a false sense of spirituality and a lack of real intimacy with the Savior.

When we read the prayers of men and women of God in the Bible, we realize that they weren't afraid to pour out their hearts before Him. They weren't concerned about "looking good" or "sounding holy" when they were in the presence of the Lord. They understood that there they had the freedom to express their innermost feelings, and for them this meant they could rejoice, cry, and even complain in God's presence. They truly found their refuge in Him! They applied to their lives that to which David calls us all in psalm 62:8, where he writes: "... Pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge." (NIV)

In psalm 38 we find a wonderful example of how David himself applied this principle to his own life. Read the following prayer:

"My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart. All my longings lie open before you, O Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you... My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away. Those who seek my life set their traps, those who would harm me talk of my ruin; all day long they plot deception... I wait for you, O LORD; you will answer, O Lord my God." (Ps. 38:7-12, 15 NIV)

Note, first of all, David's honesty.

He is not afraid to tell God exactly how he feels, and neither should we. He is not trying to look good or to sound as if he has great faith. He is desperate and he wants God to know it. He is really pouring out his heart before the Lord!

Secondly, note the details in which David describes what he is going through.

He doesn't just say: "O Lord, I place my problems before you; help me." Instead, he tells Him about the pain in his back, about the failing of his strength, the rejection of his friends, etc. He talks to the Lord as if He were that close friend one calls on the phone when one just needs to talk to somebody, and we should do the same. For example, instead of just saying, "Lord, help me with my problems," or, "Lord, bless my plans and dreams," let's take the time to talk to God about those problems or about those dreams. Let's talk to the Lord about our joys and our pains, about our hopes and our frustrations, our victories and our defeats. Remember that whether we have doubts or anger, if we are worried or even if we feel like committing a great sin, we can humbly bring it all to the

Lord knowing that He won't reject us. After all, it is there, in His presence, that we are changed, renewed, strengthened, directed and rescued.

If there is one place where we can be completely honest and vulnerable it is before the Savior. The Bible teaches that the Lord is our Friend (Jn. 15:13-15), our Dad (Rom. 8:14-16), our Beloved (Rev. 19:7-8), and our God (Jn. 20:17). We can always come into His presence with reverent boldness knowing that there we will find His grace (Heb. 4:15-16).

May we learn to always pour out our hearts before God without reservation! I believe that it is when we reach this level of intimacy with the Lord that we can experience the fullness of what David meant when he wrote: "... in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever." (Ps 16:11 NAS) Amen!

In the love of Christ,
Miguel A. Cañete