**Series 3 - Getting to Really Know God...**

Hi, friends, and welcome to this lesson! In this series of lessons, you've learned many things about God. This lesson is a step beyond, showing you how to really *know* God by developing a close personal and intimate relationship with Him.

This lesson explains several practical and specific things you can do and will want to do to draw closer to God. If you are not already doing these things, it is our hope and prayer that you will want to start right away.

**Lesson 6: How to Build a Close Relationship With God**

*Although God is invisible to us mortals, He can become the most reliable, trusted and loving reality in your life!*

King David poetically described His experience of God's greatness and nearness to us:

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,' even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psalm 139:7-14).

David was inspired by God's omnipresence (He is everywhere present) and His omniscience (He is all-knowing and all-wise). When people are not close to God, they like to think it—whatever "it" may be—is God's fault. Not true. People forget about God, but God never forgets about us. He is always available to you if you "seek Him with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 4:29).

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**Draw Near to God, and He Will Draw Near to You**

The psalmist wrote, "It is good for me to draw near to God" (Psalm 73:28), and hopefully you are learning how good it is for *you*. A relationship with God begins when God calls us or draws us. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up [resurrect him] at the last day" (John 6:44).

After God calls us, He expects us from then on to exercise initiative in seeking to draw near to Him. If we do, we have this very encouraging promise: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8).

The promise of a resurrection to life after death becomes a primary motivator. It is that "better hope, through which we draw near to God" (Hebrews 7:19).

This lesson will cover some specific ways to develop and maintain a close relationship with God.

**How valuable is it to read and study the Bible?**

2 Timothy 3:14-17
But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Proverbs 3:13-15, New International Version
Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she [wisdom] is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.

The Bible is more valuable than all the rest of the books in the world, combined; it is *priceless!*It is the Creator's revelation to His creation regarding His plan and how we should live our lives to fulfill our purpose and to obtain, by far, the best results. Even kings were commanded to read the Scriptures daily (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). The Bible is God's *Word*—God speaking to each of us. We must listen, and listen carefully!

**To make one's Bible study personally "profitable," what is a major key?**

Joshua 1:8, God's Word Translation
Never stop reciting these teachings. You must think about them night and day so that you will faithfully do everything written in them. Only then will you prosper and succeed.

1 Timothy 4:13, 15
Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine...
Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

It's important to not read the Bible in a rush. Take time to really think about what you are reading and you will get a lot more out of it. Meditate and reflect deeply on the meaning of the scriptures and their application to your life. Meditating on God's laws helps immensely to write them on your heart (Hebrews 8:10).

**Can we talk to God at any time and know that He hears us?**

1 John 5:14-15
Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

John 16:23
[Jesus said], "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."

Sincere prayer is powerful because the Creator of all the universe loves to hear our prayers and loves to answer them. The Bible has many scriptures that exhort us to pray and many that give pointers on *how* to pray. God expects us to maintain daily two-way communication with Him—reading His messages in the Bible and talking to Himin prayer. And the more you pray, the more natural it will be for you. The Bible compares the "prayers of the saints" with sweet-smelling incense, because they please God (Revelation 5:8).

**Can we walk with God? And what exactly does that mean?**

1 John 2:6
He who says he abides in Him [Christ] ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

2 John 1:6
This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

1 John 2:3
Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

In the Bible, the word *walk* is often used to refer to one's lifestyle—how we live our life. To walk according to God's Word means to apply it, to put it into action. To walk with God means to obey His commandments and to follow—imitate—Jesus' example. This includes keeping the Fourth Commandment as Jesus did. Observing God's Sabbath day provides a whole day to focus on drawing close to God.

As you see, we must talk *and* walk with God.

**Does spiritual fasting also help in drawing close to God?**

Ezra 8:21, 23
Then I [Ezra] proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions...
So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.

Matthew 6:17-18
"But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

Joel 2:12
"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

Among the spiritual tools for drawing closer to God, fasting is a real power tool! Fasting is valuable when we are faced with a big problem and we urgently need God's help. Even when we aren't faced with big problems, we should fast occasionally as a special form of worship and to draw closer to God. When you sincerely fast, God is pleased and will help you grow spiritually.

**When we meditate on God's ways and His creation, can we learn valuable lessons?**

Romans 1:20
For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

Psalm 143:5
I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.

Psalm 145:5
I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works.

As we discussed in [Lesson 4](http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org/bible-teachings/God-crucial-lessons-knowing-our-creator.htm) in this series, God has two primary means of revealing Himself to humanity: His written revelation—the Bible—and the evidence of creation. Creation is fascinating, because we never cease to learn from it and be inspired by it. From creation we learn many things about the Creator.

**Will we be much closer to God if we stay away from bad influences?**

1 Corinthians 15:33
Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

Proverbs 12:26
The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18
... As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."
"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

We are continually faced with choices. We often must choose between exposing ourselves to bad influences or surrounding ourselves with good influences (including other believers). God is very displeased when we choose evil or what will lead us toward evil. The mind is like a sponge that will soak up whatever you expose it to, whether good or evil, and what goes in stays in, to a great extent.

A computer is a good comparison. A computer's output depends on what was input. Garbage in, garbage out. God knows our every thought. Don't allow experiences and thoughts in that you will be ashamed of when you face God.

**Do materialism and an overly-busy life interfere with relationships?**

Luke 16:13
"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, materialism]."

Mark 4:18-19
"Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."

1 Timothy 6:9-10
But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Money is not evil, but the *love*of money is a major root of evil. So, yes, materialism and a super-busy life interfere with all our relationships and especially our relationship with God. They can choke to death our spiritual life like weeds choke to death the life of garden plants. When money and things become overly important to us, they are becoming our *gods,* which means we are breaking the first of the Ten Commandments (by prioritizing them over God).

**Are satanic and demonic influences a significant danger?**

1 Peter 5:8-9
Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith...

James 4:7
Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Ephesians 6:11-12
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Satan "deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9), so even followers of Christ can be deceived by Satan or a demon when we aren't continually on guard. Satan hates all people, but he especially wants to deceive and destroy anyone trying to obey God. We attract Satan and the demons and become vulnerable to them if we are sinning, dabbling in spiritism or the occult, or letting down spiritually in some other way. And when one walks in the way of the devil, he or she is alienating himself or herself from God.

**What is the ultimate, most powerful way to stay close to God?**

Acts 2:38
Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 8:6-9
For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

How is it possible for a mortal human to have an intimate and ongoing relationship with the divine God? The most important key is God's gift of His Spirit to dwell in one's heart and mind! God's Spirit works to transform human nature to a godly nature and the mind of Christ, so instead of being inclined to selfishness and sin, we become inclined toward love and godliness (Philippians 2:1-5). To receive the Holy Spirit, we must repent of our sins and be baptized.

God desires a close relationship with everyone. In fact, He wants all people to eventually be His "sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

**Apply Now**

Daily prayer is a principle key explained above, and a major part of our prayers should be thanking and praising God for His many blessings. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, *with thanksgiving,* present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6, New International Version, emphasis added). Many, many scriptures throughout the Bible exhort us to thank and praise God in prayer and in song. Psalms 69:30; 106:1; 107:8; and 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 are just a few examples.

God loves the attitude of gratitude! When God answers a prayer, protects us or blesses us in some other way, He's not expecting much in return except our obedience and our thanksgiving. Make it a habit to count your many blessings and praise God for them!

Stop and think about many of the blessings and benefits that God has given you, and make a list of them. You probably will be pleasantly surprised at how many you can quickly think of. And God will be well pleased that you immediately took this wonderful action and step forward.

**Next:** Congratulations! You have completed the six lessons in the "Getting to Really Know God" series. See the [*Bible Study Guides*](http://freebiblestudyguides.org/) home page for your choice of future lessons to study.

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**Related Resources:**

[*How to Understand the Bible*](http://www.ucg.org/booklets/UB)

[Understanding God's Word... Teach Us to Pray](http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn07/teachustopray.htm)

[*Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*](http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/TL)

[The Fourth Commandment: Key to a Relationship With Our Creator](http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/TC/fourthcommandment.asp)

[*Is There Really a Devil?*](http://www.ucg.org/booklets/RD)

[What is fasting and why should I do it?](http://www.ucg.org/bible-faq/what-is-fasting.htm)

[What does the Bible teach about meditation?](http://www.ucg.org/bible-faq/meditation.htm)