

Intimacy with God

a 3 day devotional

By: Kelly Needham

Day 1 - Be Honest

CONNECT

Spend a few minutes saying “Good Morning” to God in your own way and telling him about how you are feeling today. Tell Him about how you slept last night. Ask Him to speak to you through this devotional.

GET in the WORD

Honesty is one of the most important foundations of any deep relationship. It is the ability to be totally honest and vulnerable with someone that causes your relationship to deepen. Usually, our closest friends are characterized by the fact that we can be totally open with them. If you’re having a bad day, if someone hurt your feelings, it is your close friends you go to. If you have an argument with them, you don’t ignore it, but deal with it honestly so that you can be reconciled. If you don’t tell them honestly how you feel, it can cause there to be a divide in your friendship.

We need to make sure that this important factor is a part of our relationship with God. I have often times been upset by the things God has allowed to happen to me, and yet still prayed “Lord I am so thankful for everything you’ve given me.” I used to think that was simply the “right thing” to pray, so I prayed it, even though I didn’t feel that way.

Let’s look at how David was honest with God. Read Psalm 13 and Psalm 22:1-5 and Psalm 10:1.

Do you think God actually forgot about David? Did God forsake David? Of course not! But I’m sure David felt like God abandoned him. It is so much better to be honest with God, even if our feelings about him aren’t true.

Do you ever feel like God has forgotten about you or that He has abandoned you?

Have you ever been honest with God about these feelings? What other feelings do you have toward Him that you haven’t shared?

If we are not being totally honest with God every time we talk to Him, it will keep us from deepening our relationship with Him. It will hinder our ability to know Him personally.

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One time, I had really been praying for God to help me through some really hard situations. I daily asked God to come through for me and help me and waiting patiently for days, weeks, and then months. One night as I was talking with Him, through my tears I said, "God I am tired of waiting for you! Why haven't you come through yet? I am trying to wait patiently, I am doing all the right things, and trying my best to trust you, but everything keeps getting worse! I don't want to wait anymore and I don't know why you are doing this to me, why you aren't coming through?" It was so freeing to simply be real with God, to not feel like I had to pray the perfect spiritual thing, but to simply be honest with how I felt. And that night truly deepened my intimacy with the Lord. I felt so close to Him the next morning while I was reading His word.

Have you ever been this honest with God about how you feel? If not, what has been keeping you from being honest with Him?

Now there are 2 ways to be honest with God: with humility or with pride. It is very important we keep an attitude of humility while being honest with God. Humble honesty recognizes that God is God and ultimately has the right to do whatever He wants and still deserves our praise and thanks. Proud honesty doesn't honor God and causes us to feel like we know better than God or would do a better job than Him. Humble honesty wants reconciliation with God and proud honesty is ready to walk away from God in anger.

David does a good job of modeling humble honesty. Reread Psalm 13 and Psalm 22:1-5. Notice how David's prayers change after He is honest with God. He always remembers the truth about God: that He will always be faithful and that He will in the end save us. Every time David questions God in the Psalms, we see Him return to the truth about God and put his trust in Him. Humble honesty will always wrestle with the truth in an effort to believe God and honor Him. Be honest with God and **yet seek to acknowledge the truth about Him, even if you don't feel it.**

RESPOND and LISTEN

Take some time to tell God your thoughts on these passages. Dialogue with Him about your feelings. Respond to what He has said through His Word. Maybe you want to journal your thoughts or just say them out loud to Him.

Is there anything you need to be honest with God about? Are you mad at Him or how He's allowed your life to play out? Do you feel like He's forgotten you? Are you afraid to trust Him with any area of your life? Spend some time talking to God about how you really feel today and about how you feel about Him. He already knows what's in your heart and He can handle it.

Then take some time to listen to Him. Sit quietly for a few minutes and know that He is there with you, as real as the air you are breathing. We can't build a relationship with someone we aren't willing to listen to.

Day 2 - Listen To God

CONNECT

Spend a few minutes saying “Good Morning” to God in your own way and telling him about how you are feeling today. Talk to Him about any dreams you had last night. Ask Him to speak to you through this devotional.

GET in the WORD

Say that I decided to sit with you at lunch every day because I wanted to get to know you more. I immediately start giving you an in depth account of my day so far. I talk through the entire lunchtime and as soon as the bell rings, I jump up and say, “Great talking to you! See you tomorrow!” and leave. I begin to do the same thing every day. Do you think I will really get to know who you are? Of course not! I need to hear from you to get to know you.

In the same way, we need to practice listening to God through our day, and not just talking to Him all the time. But how do you actually do that? Let me share a story with you that I think will help:

There was a guy named Tim who went to high school with me. We weren’t friends or even acquaintances. I simply knew what he looked like. I never really saw him at school; once in a while I’d see him in line in the cafeteria or in the hallway. Then one year, I had a class with him and got to know him a little better. Within a few months, I had developed a full-blown crush on him. I thought about him all the time, and looked for him everywhere I went. All of the sudden, *I saw him all the time!* In the hallways, after school in the parking lot, and at lunch. I soon learned where his locker was, who his friends were and knew which halls he took to get to third period.

I’m sure many of you have experienced this same phenomenon before. It wasn’t that Tim wasn’t around before. He was always there. I was just too caught up in my own conversations to notice him. He was really still a stranger to me so when he passed by, I didn’t notice. But once I had a crush on him, I began to *look for him*. I always had my eye out for him. Through every conversation with friends, my eyes would be darting around the hallway just to catch a glimpse of him.

In the same way, God is all around us, trying to speak to us. But so often, we rarely hear because we are too caught up in our day-to-day activities. We aren’t looking for Him and listening for Him. But when we begin looking for Him and keeping our eye out for Him, He shows up all over the place! We need to be excited and expect Him to show up and speak to us, just like I was always expecting Tim to come around the corner.

Have you ever practicing “looking” for God in your day like this? If this is a new concept to you, does it excite you to think about trying to listen to God more through your day?

Here are a few ways that I look for God in my day. When a song reminds me of God, I will tell Him in my heart or out loud “Lord, I want to hear from you today! Please speak to me today!” Sometime just saying this 3 or 4 times a day just helps me to be on the lookout for what God wants to say to me. I will also just try and notice things more. If I see a verse on the back of someone’s letter jacket or on the bumper sticker of a car, I will remember it and look it up. Maybe God wants to say something to me through that verse? Maybe He put that verse in my path on purpose.

God’s Word is His vocabulary in which He speaks to us. The more vocabulary we know, the more we are able to understand the language in which He speaks to us personally. For example, Jeremiah 33:3 is one of my favorite verses and when I see the time is 3:33, I remember that verse. It is God’s sweet reminder to me that when I call to Him, He will answer me!

What are some ways you can start listening for God through your day? Be creative!

Read Luke 19:1-6.

Why couldn’t Zaccheus see Jesus? What was in his way?

What in your life might be hindering you from seeing Jesus and hearing from Him? It could be your busy schedule distracting you, or another relationship in your life that is the focus of all your attention. What is keeping your mind distracted from trying to see Jesus in your life?

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How can you “climb over” that obstacle like Zaccheus did to see Christ? Do you want to see Christ enough to climb over it?

RESPOND and LISTEN

Spend some time right now talking to God about how you feel today and what you think about everything you just read. Then spend a few minutes just being quiet and ask God to speak to you. It's good to quiet your thoughts and sit in stillness for a while. It gives God that undistracted time to speak to us and bring things to our minds that He wants us to talk to Him about and deal with. Look for God today and listen for Him! Who knows how He might show up today!

Day 3 - Pursue and Search for God

CONNECT

Spend a few minutes saying “Good Morning” to God in your own way and telling him about how you are feeling today. Share what you feel anxious about today. Ask Him to speak to you through this devotional.

GET in the WORD

Often we complain that God isn’t showing up in our life or that He doesn’t feel real, yet we make no effort to pursue Him.

Read Jeremiah 29:13. What does God say we need to do to find Him?

Now read part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:7-8. Who does Jesus say will receive, will find, and will have doors opened to him?

We all want to have a deep, intimate, conversation-like relationship with God. But to most Christians, God seems distant, intangible, uninterested, and unable to speak personally to them. Might it be because we rarely ask Him to speak to us? How many of us regularly ask for an intimate relationship with Him? How many of us actively seek after Him and keep “knocking” at His door each day asking Him to open it to us?

But God’s Word says that He will be found by those who search for Him *with all their heart!* He will open doors for those who knock, not to those who sit next to the door and complain that it isn’t open.

Let’s look at how David, “a man after God’s own heart”, pursued God. Read Psalm 86

Did you notice how many bold demands there are in this prayer that David prays? Hear me, answer me, guard my life, save me, have mercy on me, bring me joy, hear my prayer, teach me, turn to me. David talks to God so boldly! He boldly asks God to show up in His life, and to answer His prayers. He is persistent and continues to “knock” at God’s door until He shows up.

Have you just been standing by, expecting God to show up in your life? Or have you been pursuing Him and asking Him to become more real?

Are you ever bold like David in your times talking to God? Do you constantly ask Him to show up in real ways? What keeps you from boldly asking these things of God?

Sometimes I have been waiting for God to show up in powerful ways in my life and wondering why He isn't showing up. But as soon as I begin searching for Him and praying, "God, show up in my life today! Speak to me! Let me hear from you today!" and then look for Him to show up (like we talked about yesterday), He does!

RESPOND and LISTEN

Take some time to tell God your thoughts on this passage. Dialogue with Him about your feelings. Respond to what He has said through His Word. Maybe you want to journal your thoughts or just say them out loud to Him.

What do you want to see God do in your life today? Do you want to know Him more? Ask Him! Do you want Him to help you get free from some sin in your life? Ask Him! Start searching for Him with all your heart instead of idly standing by.

Spend some time "knocking" at God's door and asking Him boldly to show up in your life today. Instead of waiting for Him to become more real, pursue Him persistently and beg Him to give you intimate and real times with Him.