

4 Keys to Restoring Intimacy With God

For 6,000 years, Satan has had a special hatred for women. He has deceived many of them into believing that love and intimacy are the source of much of their pain.

How did they come to this conclusion? Those who were supposed to express love to them in their youth took from them instead of nurturing them with compassionate love.

The result has been that some women have vowed to keep intimacy at a distance. Others have chosen to remain numb, feeling no emotions, no warmth, no passion—believing that if they do not feel then they cannot be disappointed again. Still others have determined that gentleness and intimacy are signs of weakness, and they avoid them for fear of being controlled.

These ungodly beliefs can result in a life of independence or isolation. When a desire for love and intimacy is lost we tend to develop a survival mentality: “I must be strong and tough and unyielding!”

But God doesn’t want us to withhold ourselves from Him and others. He created us—“in His own image” (Gen. 1:27, NASB)—for love.

Because God created both men and women in His image, His nature must encompass both masculine and feminine characteristics (v. 27). The masculine heart cries out to “do,” to form, to create, to initiate, to know, and to rationalize and intellectualize. The feminine heart seeks to “be” and desires intimacy (“in-to-me-see”). It longs for communion, for connection, to bond, to know and to be known.

First John 3:9 tells us that God’s seed (*spermah* in Greek)—that is, God’s DNA—abides in us; therefore, men also

have within them the feminine aspect of God's nature, and women have the masculine qualities. But if you totally separate the feminine qualities from a Christian, he will most likely be driven by hyper-religious activity, reasoning, and the desire to do and to perform. He will be tempted to focus so much on achievement that he has little energy left for intimate, loving relationships.

When Satan deceived mankind in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lost intimacy and hid themselves among God's handiwork. God began the restoration of intimacy by empowering the woman to bruise the deceiver.

Womanhood was not cursed in the Garden—Satan was. God told the devil that femininity would bring great harm to his kingdom (Gen. 3:14-15).

Now Satan fears any man or woman who walks in intimacy, compassion, gentleness, and the ability to give and receive love. He seeks to deceive mankind into devaluing feminine qualities. Thus many cultures and religions place their women under heavy veils of oppression and even perpetuate acts of violence against them.

Could it be that the church has lost some of its authority and power to overcome the accuser by putting a higher value on typically masculine qualities than we do on feminine ones? Could it be that we need a healthier balance of both within men and women before the church is empowered to meet the desperate need of a world that is looking for love in all the wrong places?

To devalue feminine qualities is to devalue empathy, nurture, comfort and intimacy. Women who do this reject a primary aspect of their nature and end up depending on possessions, position, performance, or power to find acceptance and form their identity.

A Return to Intimacy

Many of us struggle relationally through life because we distrust intimacy. Either because of a deficiency of parental love or because we experienced some traumatic form of disappointment in the past, we set up walls of self-protection to keep people out so that we do not suffer more pain.

In our isolation, the enemy lies to us about God's character and purposes for our lives. He tells us God does not love us unless we perform well enough to earn His love.

He wants us to believe that God is angry, aloof or constantly disappointed with us. If he can convince us that God devalues feminine traits or has withdrawn from us because of some sin we have committed, he can cause us to begin striving to earn God's love, thus increasing the depth of our shame, fear and control. Intimacy is then lost.

Here are four important keys to restoring intimacy:

1. Developing a proper image of yourself. Femininity is an aspect of God's nature, and God is love. If you devalue femininity, you are uncomfortable with God and love.

If you are uncomfortable with love, you find it difficult to receive God's love and acceptance, and the enemy can warp your self-image.

Paul implies in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 that without a life of love, we end up giving ourselves to gifts, power, duty and achievement. Why would someone give all his possessions to feed the poor but not make such sacrifices from a motive of love? Why would someone focus on faith, gifting, and service and yet not walk in intimate, caring relationships? Could he be trying to earn love and acceptance by what he does because he does not place a high value on love and intimacy?

Jesus said walking with God is all about love (Matt. 22:37-40). But too often we try to build our Christian

identity on spiritual formulas. We so easily put the Great Commission before the great commandment and end up giving too much of what rightly belongs to loving relationships away to hyper-religious activity.

Intimacy is to precede fruitfulness. It gives evidence of our walk with God to a world in need of love (John 13:34-35).

2. Becoming aware of your need for intimacy. When God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, Adam's needs were provided for: He had food to eat, nature to enjoy and unhindered fellowship with his Father. Yet God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2:18).

Why do you suppose Eve was not created at the same time as Adam? Until Adam's dependence on God was secure and a cry for intimacy with another came forth from his heart, mankind could not be trusted with relationships. When Adam recognized his need for intimacy, God intervened on his behalf. He took one of Adam's ribs and lovingly fashioned for him a helpmate—someone to help meet his need for intimacy.

Then Adam and Eve stood before one another, naked and unashamed, and they were one flesh. They fully knew and were known by each other, with nothing hidden, nothing held back.

Intimacy is what we were created for. We do not have to be married to share intimacy. Interdependency with God and others opens our hearts to it. It is hidden shame and fear that tells us we must be strong, self-reliant and independent of others.

But when we are strong it is difficult to find God's love. Only when we are weak and vulnerable does God's love find us and begin restoring us to intimacy.

3. Embracing your responsibility for intimacy. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:3 that the serpent deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden and in Romans 5:14 that Adam willfully sinned.

The resulting sense of shame influenced them to abdicate intimacy with God, and covering themselves, they rejected intimacy with each other.

Adam was the one to whom God called, saying, "Where are you?" He was the one God first held responsible. But when he was confronted with his sin, Adam laid the blame on the woman, and womanhood lost the trust that allowed her to walk in intimacy with man (Gen. 3:1-12).

Many of the relationship problems we have are a result of our unwillingness to embrace our God-given responsibility for intimacy. If we are chasing after faith, gifts, power and the Christian disciplines but do not pursue love and deeper intimacy in our relationships, then we are not fully submitting ourselves to our Father's mission. He planted His motherly heart in men and women in order for us to be an expression of His loving nature on earth as we demonstrate tenderness, affection, compassion and nurture to others.

4. Recognizing the importance of femininity in restoring intimacy upon the earth. God has chosen feminine traits to help restore intimacy on the earth and to help bring a personal revival that is facilitated through intimacy and love. The more men and women seek to fill the void in their hearts with the Father's motherly love (Is. 49:15-16; 66:11-13; Ps. 131:2), the more value will be placed on femininity and the more the church will be empowered to thwart the enemy's plan to remove love and intimacy from religion and make it a law-based institution that increases people's feelings of shame, fear, and control.

Experiencing God's Love

All theology, religious discipline, faith, gifts, acts of service, and ministry essentially boil down to the basic premise of love and intimacy (Matt. 22:37-40; 1 John 4:7-21; 1 Cor. 13). Being at home in love is the most natural thing for

you to be. But you can't withdraw from the bank what hasn't already been deposited.

If you have never received genuine unconditional love in your own life, it may be difficult for you to demonstrate that kind of love to others. How can you position yourself to experience God's love so you will be in a position to give it away?

First, forgive your parental authorities for each misrepresentation of God's unconditional love to you. Whatever we had to do to feel accepted and loved by them is what we often think we have to do to feel loved and accepted by God. Give them the gift of forgiveness so that you will be released to receive God's love (Ps. 45:10-11).

Second, realize what a loving Father God is (read John 14-17). He does not judge you for the mistakes you have made (John 3:16-18; 5:22-24; 8:1-11; 12:47-48). He wants to run to you and to express to you the affection and acceptance you have been searching for (John 14:18-23; Luke 15:20).

Spend a little time each day just sitting in the Father's loving presence. An experience in the Father's love can transform you in ways that you could never have imagined. He has created the feminine aspect of your nature to demonstrate His compassionate love to others and to help heal the social crisis of fatherlessness in the nations.

Intimacy precedes fruitfulness and overcomes the work of the enemy, who is seeking to destroy the world by devaluing femininity and enslaving us with law and you begin to experience God's naturally expressed affection and allow it to flow through you to others, you will begin to feel secure with intimacy because you are becoming what you were created to be—a gift of God's love to the next person you meet.

Read a companion devotional.

The late Jack Frost is the author of Experiencing the Father's

Embrace. Jack and Trisha Frost ministered healing and restoration to the brokenhearted in conferences and retreats. They built Shiloh Place Retreat Center near Myrtle Beach, S.C., where ministers can come for refreshing, personal ministry and equipping (). Trisha continues ministering today.