

4 Ways to Have a More Intimate Connection With Jesus—Even During COVID-19

Is God interested in a deeper connection to you?

Yes. A thousand times, yes.

The forgiveness of sin and promise of eternal life is breathtaking. Salvation through Jesus is miraculous, undeserved and worthy of our awe. Our salvation, however, can be likened to a doorway. Jesus didn't simply die on the cross so we could go to heaven. His death also made it possible for heaven to come to the earth and be lived out in our daily lives.

A deeper connection to God is within reach and God came as close to us as possible. We have a part to play. This means you and I are as close to God as we want to be.

Your deep longing to be closer to Jesus is an invitation from the heartbeat of God. Unfortunately, rational excuses often distract us and not knowing where and how to start can discourage us. Without a true glimpse of Jesus, we can tolerate the inferior and counterfeit in our lives.

Our busy lives can preoccupy us and keep us from hearing the divine whisper. When this happens, we confuse compromise with tolerance, and authenticity with a dimly burning spiritual flame in our heart. We can neglect ancient, time-worn spiritual disciplines because we become addicted to the next new thing.

Some, however, do not appear to be struggling in their spiritual lives. Instead, a Christian-branded life becomes morally therapeutic, and we slow down on our sacred chase for

a deeper connection to God, because we feel good about ourselves.

For others, shame from the past sabotages us. Regardless of what you think and feel, you, like Moses in the exodus, have been invited to the top of the mountain to hear God's whisper. Like Queen Esther, today, God invites you to cowrite the next chapter of the story.

As a stay-at-home parent, you may feel insignificant and off heaven's radar. As a student, you may arrive home from school discouraged from the popularity game or the bully. Maybe you attend church regularly and feel like you're the only one struggling.

You don't need to settle anymore for anything less than what God promised. And what was that promise God made? Himself. God is your inheritance. The difference between God is nowhere and God is now here is one small, simple space God personally longs to fill. You can start filling that space with God today.

Looking at the spiritual life of Jesus, here are four ways you can deepen your connection to God starting right now.

1. Jesus developed a spiritual rhythm. Jesus deliberately folded spiritual habits into his life. Luke 4:16 tells us Jesus went regularly to the synagogue. Luke 5:16 (CEV) says, "Jesus would often go to some place where he could be alone and pray." If the Son of God needed to have one passion in one constant direction through prayer, how much more do we! Being intentional and disciplined in spiritual things doesn't make you "religious" or "inauthentic." When your employer pays you on time, is he or she inauthentic? Being intentional means you and I pursue what matters most.

2. Jesus prioritized Scripture. When Jesus was tempted in Matthew 4, His response was to meet the deception and lies of the devil with the truth of Scripture. When you read the words

of Jesus in the Gospels, it is evident He knew the Old Testament, which is the Scripture He had access to. When we meditate on God's Word, both the Old and New Testaments, it literally prospers us and makes us successful (Josh. 1:8). The Bible can bring healing to the soul (Ps. 107:20). The Spirit's voice will never contradict Scripture and "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16, MEV).

3. Jesus lived a life of honor. Jesus honored His parents (Luke 2, John 2), the authority of His heavenly Father (Luke 22:42) and earthly authorities (Matt. 22:21). Honor is not compliance or mindless submission. It is knowing each person we come in contact with is made in God's image. Jesus made it clear that whatever we do to the least of these, we do unto Him. A few ways He modeled honor were by: serving others, telling the truth though it was unpopular, maintaining spiritual standards regardless of who He was around and empathizing with those who were hurting. We live in a generation where people believe cynicism empowers their voice as many seek those who will merely agree with their biases. I wonder how different our world would look if Christians were known as being the most honorable and humble people in their school, work environment, neighborhood and gym. Honor is a form of spiritual currency, just like prayer, where the posture of our heart magnetizes the environment and heaven comes to the earth.

4. Interdependence is crucial. Jesus didn't confuse proximity and intimacy. Jesus made no excuses. Jesus could easily adopt the attitude that He didn't need to pray, know the Bible or go to synagogue. In John 5:30, Jesus said, "I can do nothing of Myself. As I hear, I judge. My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me." Jesus spent eternity, before time began, with the Father and the Spirit. When Jesus stepped into time, His experiences

before He became a human being on the earth did not replace His ongoing desire to still connect with the Father and Spirit. The Spirit, descending like a dove, landed and remained. Jesus only said and did what He saw and heard His Father say and do. This is a description not of physical nearness, but of spiritual intimacy.

These are four of the ways Jesus grew spiritually. They are practical, doable and a pattern worth emulating. Posture your heart toward Jesus, intentionally, and watch heaven's reality soak your world. {eoa}

Adapted from The Sacred Chase by Heath Adamson. Used with permission.

Heath Adamson (PhD, University of London) is the author of *Grace in the Valley*. His life was changed dramatically when, at the age of 17, he was rescued out of a life steeped in drug abuse and the occult. Now a sought-after speaker at conferences, seminars, universities and churches, Adamson seeks to bring audiences from simply knowing information about God to actually experiencing God in life-changing ways. Together with his wife, Ali, and their two daughters, Leighton and Dallan, he believes you are God's favorite place to be.