

Finding Time for Him

If you were to ask me to name the most important principle of Christian living I've ever learned, I would answer you without hesitation. It is the secret of daily communion with God. That is, without question, the No. 1 priority of the Christian life. It is the key that opens every door.

Yet it is the one thing many Christians can't seem to find time for.

When you think about it, that's astonishing. No other group of people since Adam and Eve has had the opportunity to fellowship with God the way we can. The Creator and Ruler of the entire universe has made Himself available to meet with us as believers every day. He sent Jesus to the cross to shed His blood so that we could enter into the holy of holies and draw near to Him any time we desire.

God Himself has flung open to us the door of fellowship and said, "I'm here for you. Just draw near to Me and I'll draw near to you. Spend time with Me and I'll give you the wisdom you need. I'll strengthen you and equip you and help you in every area of your life."

But for the most part, Christians have been too busy to take Him up on it.

"Well, Gloria," you might say, "considering how much we have to do these days, that's understandable."

Is it? Suppose you woke up one morning, walked into your kitchen and found Jesus Himself sitting at your table. Would you be too busy to stop and talk with Him? Would you leave Him sitting there alone while you rushed through the business of the day, talked on the phone, watched television and then fell, exhausted, into bed? No! That would be unthinkable!

Yet that is what we do, day after day, when we let the busyness of living crowd out our time with the Master. That is what we do when we neglect our fellowship with Him. We miss the counsel He wants to give us.

Like Martha, we become “worried and troubled about many things” (Luke 10:41, NKJV). Yet all those things would be taken care of if we would stop and spend time with the Lord. All would be well if we would follow Mary’s example and do the one thing that is needful—spend time at Jesus’ feet.

DISCOVERING GOD’S PLAN

Why is that time so important? Because in those precious hours and moments alone in God’s presence, we truly get to know the Lord. We discover His plan for our lives, and we lay hold of the wisdom and grace to carry it out. As we fellowship with the Lord, we receive His direction and His power to do what we are divinely designed to do.

I know that from experience. The time I’ve spent with the Lord in the Word and in prayer has literally shaped my life. I shudder to think where I would be today without it.

When I was growing up, my world was so small I could hardly think beyond the little Arkansas town where I lived. The only dream I had back then was to hold a simple job. I had no sense of purpose or divine destiny. I couldn’t begin to imagine the life I have now. I certainly couldn’t have asked God for it because I didn’t know this kind of life was available!

Even after Ken and I answered God’s call to the ministry, we had no idea what God’s plan for us was. We were living in a tiny house in Tulsa while Ken attended Oral Roberts University. One day Ken went down to the riverbed to pray about the future and God spoke to his heart, telling him that he was going to preach to nations.

We couldn’t imagine going to nations. We hardly had enough money to drive from Oklahoma to Texas to visit Ken’s family.

How were we ever going to travel to nations?

It didn't seem possible. But now, more than 35 years later, not only have we traveled to nations but we reach out to people worldwide almost every day of the week through our ministry offices and TV broadcasts.

How have we done it? By staying in constant fellowship with God—by spending time with Him daily through His Word and through prayer, by hearing His voice and following His guidance one step at a time.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT

Frankly, I have had to do it that way because I don't have the natural ability or resources to do what God instructed us to do. I know what Jesus said of Himself is also true of me—I can of myself do nothing (see John 5:30). If I'm going to do anything worthwhile, I have to abide in Jesus and be obedient to Him.

That's why I rarely do anything in the mornings before I pray. My time with the Lord is so vital, I don't leave home without it! I make a connection with God the very first thing and talk to Him with my understanding, and in the Spirit with other tongues.

If I have a business meeting, I want to know what He has to say about the issues we'll be discussing at that meeting. I believe for the wisdom of God. I don't want to go in there and be dependent on natural knowledge.

If I am ministering, I have to be anointed by His Spirit, or I might as well stay home. God's wisdom—His way of doing things—is available in every area of our lives, and I know I need it. I can't afford to engage in activity before I've spent time with God.

"That's necessary for you," someone might say. "You and

Kenneth are preachers. It takes the supernatural power of God to do what you do."

Whether you know it or not, it takes the supernatural power of God for you to do what you're called to do, too! Even if you're not in the fivefold ministry, God has a divine calling and purpose for you to fulfill. Ephesians 2:10 says that He has predestined, or planned beforehand, good paths for all of us to walk in and good works for us to do.

But there is only one way we'll ever be able to do them—by abiding in Jesus and communing continually with Him.

Jesus left no doubt about that. He said: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5).

The word abide Jesus used has a sense of permanency about it. It doesn't mean "to come in and go out." It refers to the place where you remain and dwell continually.

When Ken and I travel, we might stay in a hotel for a week. We live there temporarily, but we don't abide there. We abide in our home in Fort Worth, Texas. That's where our belongings are. That's the place we continually return to. That's where we live.

When Jesus said, "Abide in Me," He wasn't saying, "Visit Me when you go to church on Sundays and whenever you have a big problem." He wasn't talking about a sporadic or temporary arrangement. He was instructing us to make that place of dependency on Him and communion with Him the place we continually remain. He was telling us to make it our permanent dwelling place.

And He immediately told us why we must do that. It's because

if we don't, we won't be able to produce the proper fruit in our lives. If we're not continually walking with Him and talking with Him—continually spending time in His Word and listening for His direction on the inside—spiritually we won't be able to accomplish anything.

LAMINATED TO THE LORD

Once we experience the divine power that comes to us as we abide in Jesus, it is easy to see that if we want to live victoriously, we must first and foremost maintain our daily union and communion with Him. That is our most important responsibility.

If we will maintain that union, God will take care of everything else.

Unfortunately, however, many Christians do just the opposite. They become so busy maintaining the other things in their lives that they don't take any time to spend with God. They spend their lives maintaining their houses, their lawns, their cars and their jobs. They even find time to maintain their hair and their fingernails. Yet they neglect the one thing that is vital to their lives and well-being: They neglect their union with God.

To be in union means to be joined together with something or someone. When two things are united with each other, they are joined so tightly together that they become like one substance. You might say they are laminated to each other!

"But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). According to Strong's Concordance, the Greek word translated joined comes from the word meaning "to glue."

When we don't take time to fellowship regularly with the Lord, we don't live as though we're united with Him. Despite our best efforts, we end up doing things He wouldn't do. When we say things He would never say, our actions reveal that we

definitely aren't laminated to Him.

That's why spending time with God each day is so vital. It's during this time that we become unified with Him—not just in our spirits but in our souls. As we read and meditate on His Word or fellowship with Him in prayer, we begin to think as He thinks. We begin to act as He acts and talk as He talks.

As we spend more time with God, we become more familiar with His direction and instruction. We're better able to distinguish His guidance moment by moment so that we can walk out His perfect will for our lives every day.

By spending time in fellowship with the Lord, we become so in tune with Him that when He tells us to do something, we hear Him and obey. We become so closely joined to Him that our desires, thoughts, words and actions become a reflection of the One with whom we are united.

A TITHE OF YOUR TIME

How much time should we set apart to spend with the Lord each day to cultivate the kind of union I've described?

The Bible gives us no hard and fast rule. We must each be led by the Holy Spirit. There may be seasons in our lives when He draws us into extended hours of fellowship with Him. There may be seasons when our daily times with Him, while consistent, are not as long.

In a meeting I attended more than 20 years ago, a prophecy given by a minister I highly respect echoed that thought. He said by the Holy Spirit that if we would just take a tithe of our time—an hour or two out of every day—and spend it with God, our lives would be changed and empowered, all would be well, and we would be a mighty force for God.

When I heard that, I took God at His word. I decided to get up an hour earlier every morning so I could spend time with Him before I began my day.

That decision has proved to be one of the most important decisions of my life. It changed my life and me. Now, spending the first part of my day in prayer and the Word is such a habit for me that even when Ken and I are traveling and I have to get up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, I do it because I am addicted. I must have my time with God!

Just as the Lord promised through the word of prophecy I heard more than 20 years ago, the hour or two a day I've spent with God has continually changed and empowered me. Instead of burning out due to the demands of ministry, my fire for the Lord gets even stronger as the years go by.

Everything is good in my life and the lives of my family. My children and grandchildren are healthy, blessed and serving the Lord. All is well, as He said it would be.

I've discovered for myself that what Jesus said to Martha is eternally true. The best part of the Christian life, the one thing that is truly needful, is time spent with Him. We can be assured of victory in every area of our lives if, through the Word and prayer, we'll draw near every day and sit at the Master's feet.

Read a companion devotional.

Gloria Copeland is the author of *To Know Him* (Harrison House), from which this article is adapted. Gloria is also co-founder and vice president of Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Fort Worth, Texas. She and her husband, Kenneth, are known for their teachings on faith, healing and victorious Christian living. Their daily TV broadcast, *Believer's Voice of Victory*, airs globally on more than 300 stations.