

From Sacrifice to Anointing: 5 Steps to Bonding With God

Have you ever known someone who seems to have a special connection with God—someone God uses to accomplish amazing things?

The truth is those people are not more special than you—but their bond with God is likely much stronger than yours. Why is that?

Bonding with God requires that we move through five progressive steps.

. Nothing in this life is free. Someone or something must pay the price for another to gain. There can be no bond between people without a sacrifice—the new parent pacing the floor to comfort a crying baby in the middle of the night, the adult child committing to care for an aging parent, the person putting his or her own needs on the back burner to care for a hurting friend.

In the same way, our bond with God was forged through sacrifice. Jesus paid the price for our salvation so that we could be children of God. Salvation is free to you and me, but it cost Jesus His life. That bond is strengthened when we make sacrifices in return. The Bible is filled with examples of believers who sacrificed greatly to bond with God. Think of Abraham, Hosea, Jeremiah and a host of others. Can you identify the last sacrifice you made to honor your bond with God?

2. Relational bonding. At this stage, sacrificial giving has produced a bond of trust between two people. The child feels secure in his parents' love. The aging parent can rest in the knowledge that she won't be abandoned. The hurting person is assured that he has a genuine friend. Those bonds then become

deeper. Relational bonding comes as we gain knowledge through shared personal experience.

Think of soldiers on the front lines. Not only do they sacrificially lay their lives down for one another, they understand each other in ways others cannot because of their unique shared experiences. This dynamic exists among families, co-workers, athletic teams, musical ensembles, ministries—you name it. The relational bond is strengthened in direct proportion to the amount of time and attention invested in relationships. When we neglect a relationship, the bond will begin to atrophy.

Jesus desired to bond with mankind, and He paid the highest price so that we may be relationally bonded with Him. I challenge you to look through the Bible and see saint after saint who sacrificed in order to be relationally bond with God. There is no shortcut to this kind of intimacy in any relationship. Two words: time and attention.

To get a good view of the relational bonds in your life, try this simple exercise: Write out your weekly schedule in as much detail as possible. Who or what is receiving your time and attention? Where does God fit in the mix? Without that shared experience, His voice will not be familiar to you. Which leads us to the next step.

3. Perceptible bonding. After living and struggling with someone for a long time, you start to think and see life the way they do. My wife and I have many decades of marriage under our belts. I know her patterns, her likes and dislikes, and I can usually predict how she will feel or respond in a given situation. I would know her voice anywhere.

This is the step in our relationship with God when dreams and visions become possible. Does God have a dream for you, some special work that He ordained just for you? As we devote our time and attention to God, developing a bonding relationship,

we learn to recognize His voice as He speaks to us through dreams, visions and ideas.

Think of it this way: When you habitually give your time and attention to something, the spirit of that thing will live in you. If you give time and attention to pornography, the spirit of pornography will hold sway over you. It will fill your thoughts and ideas. Are your thoughts and ideas driven by social media? Sports fandom? An obsession with wealth?

When we consistently pursue our bond with God, we have His mind in us. We can perceive what He is saying. We see things as God sees them. And He can entrust us with His vision, His dream, His big idea for seeing His kingdom come here on earth. He can also trust us with His limitless resources to make those dreams reality. Which brings us to the next step.

4. Material bonding. If we truly bond with God, we gain everything He has. When my wife, Hattie, and I were just dating, we each had our own belongings; however, when we became bonded as husband and wife, everything I had belonged to her.

When you are so closely bonded with God that you can recognize His voice, He will draw unto you the things that you need. I call this the corridor principle: As a man acts according to God's plan and in obedience to His specific instructions, He draws to Himself the desires of His heart—because they are God's desires! The scriptural foundation for the corridor principle is Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you."

Perhaps you have perceived God's specific vision for you. Does God want you to start a new business? To offer a ministry to your community? To write a book? To foster or adopt a child? What is stopping you from pursuing that vision with abandon? God's inexhaustible financial, emotional and spiritual

resources are yours.

5. Power and anointing. The most important things God provides are not things at all. When we step out in obedience to God's directions, we do so under the power and anointing of His Holy Spirit. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power. So set your heart on His desires, take a tangible step of obedience, and marvel as He provides.

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