

Plunging Into Vibrant, Heart-Transforming Intimacy With Holy Spirit

It's that time of year.

Gyms will be packed. Fitness classes will overflow. Partially completed projects will be dusted off in a renewed attempt at completion, because on Jan. 1, all things seem possible.

Even in the uncertainty of the day-to-day, the hope for better triumphs over the memories of the previous year. We have renewed vision for what can be in our lives as we say goodbye to the old and welcome the new.

By Feb. 1, the laser focus on goals has drifted. By March 1, our motivation and momentum have waned. April 1, well, by then there are other pressing priorities that need attention. As the year passes, many of those good intentions have fallen by the wayside.

The new year seems to bring with it a fresh perspective, but the challenge many times is maintaining that perspective. Sometimes we desire a new start, a time to begin again. New attempts at diets, fitness goals or educational achievements.

Even with the opportunities to attain and achieve more, the Bible is very clear to remind us that even if we gain wonderful things, it will matter little if we lose our souls.

There is something far greater than even our goal list—as well thought out as it is—that will matter for all eternity, and that is our relationship with our Maker. He has made salvation available to us, but He didn't stop there. God so desired an intimate relationship with the one creation made in His image He underscored His desire for us to know Him as Father, giving

us His Holy Spirit.

Almighty God made it possible to know Him and walk with Him through His Son and Spirit. To give us even further advantage, He also gave His Word to protect, strengthen and renew His people.

Because we've been given everything we need for life and godliness, we are able to respond without hesitation, drawing closer to the One who desires for us to be near.

In Mark 7, we see Jesus talk to the teachers of religious law, pointing out an age-old problem highlighted throughout the Bible (Is. 29:13, Matt. 15:8-9).

"These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (Mark 7:6-7).

We can have a relationship with the Lord that brings transformation and renews our thinking, particularly about the commandments that don't always feel practical.

Blessing those who curse you? That rarely makes it into the Top 10 list of favorite activities.

When a person asks you to go one mile, you need to go two? We start to wonder if the Lord doesn't realize that we have other things that need our attention.

But as we renew our minds in the Word, we see the wisdom of the Lord's commands. We move closer into that place of intimacy and trust as our hearts are liberated to love, follow, and joyfully obey. This is beautiful to the Lord. He understands that this is not the easiest thing for us. But the importance of seeking first the kingdom will be proven as the wisest decision as the days pass.

Here are a few steps we can take to launch into success in

2017 and stay on the path of intimacy:

Reading the Word

The inerrant Word of God is inherently powerful. Jesus Himself is called the Living Word, and with every verse and passage, He displays more of His character, cleansing our minds, renewing our thoughts. Through the Bible, we learn truth. Like Jesus, it illuminates, helping us know light from dark, bad from good, and wrong from right.

In the 66 books that make up the canon of Holy Scripture, we gain a better understanding of the nature of our God. We “hear” Him speak through the Word, teaching and guiding us.

For those who may be new to studying Scripture, our “Worship With the Word” sets, streamed lived from the Global Prayer Room, can provide key practice in delving into Scripture. As the worship teams engage in singing verses from the Bible, the Word is unpacked as the Lord brings increased understanding and writes those words on the heart, just as He promised.

Learn More About God

It’s sometimes hard to even believe that the God of unsearchable riches invites us to know Him, or search Him out, as the Scripture says. The God of wonders invites us to come and know Him as Father, to root ourselves in the truth of His strength, unending love, righteousness and holiness.

As we learn more about Almighty God, our desire to know Him grows. His beauty is revealed and we naturally desire more. Like water to the thirsty, He meets the dry places of our souls as He draws us closer to Himself into the place of healing, wholeness and unhindered fellowship.

For those desiring closer fellowship with the good Father, teachings and music focused on His nature and character are vital ways to grow in our relationship. IHOPKC offers its resources completely free, many of which are available

electronically online so that many can taste and see that the Lord is good.

Fellowship With Holy Spirit

A vibrant relationship with the Spirit of the living God is one of the primary connections that causes us to move forward and actually live in the fullness of the reality of what we've been given by God. The third person of the Trinity performs crucial work in our lives, reminding us of what Jesus taught, making those slight—and sometimes drastic—changes within that bring us closer to responding, sounding and thinking like Jesus.

Although it may be challenging to live in a constant awareness that God literally lives in us by the presence of His Spirit, that doesn't make it any less true. In the midst of our day-to-day activities, this truth can take a backseat to priorities, hectic schedules and pressing demands.

The simple act of turning our attention to God helps strengthen the reality of the tangible connection we have with the Lord through moments of prayer. Often, concentrated times of prayer or seasons of seeking the Lord help tune us to the truth of the fullness of God dwelling within, allowing us to better attain the truth of what we've been given and our present situation as children of God.

During the month of February, you can continue the strong start to the new year in a way that will have lasting impact with our week-long devotional and interactive series with IHOPKC leader, Dave Sliker. A pastor and former children's leader, Dave will answer your questions and encourage you toward encounter as you grow your relationship with God.

Question: What are some ways you plan to cultivate intimacy with the Lord in the new year? {eo}

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