

The Key to Successful Intimacy in Your Earthly Relationships

Spiritual intimacy is the cornerstone upon which all genuine intimacy can be built. Therefore, I believe it to be very important in the subject of marital relationships.

Without spiritual intimacy with our Father God, we will lack the capacity to have spiritual intimacy here on Earth with other people.

Spiritual intimacy begins in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. The temptation to be religious, to practice religious forms and expressions devoid of genuine relationship, is ever present in all of us. Intimacy is never about religion—it is never a list of do's and don'ts. Intimacy only arises from a dynamic connection to the living person of God through Jesus Christ.

No one on this Earth can tell you how much food makes you full. It doesn't even seem rational. Could you imagine going to a restaurant, and two-thirds of the way through your meal your waiter stops you and says, "Excuse me, but you're full, so stop eating now"? Is that not the most ridiculous thing you have ever heard? I certainly know when I am full, and I know when I am hungry. It's funny, but when I am hungry, I can act a little differently.

Here's my point: No matter how sincere or knowledgeable a spouse, teacher or Bible scholar may be, they can never tell you how much prayer, Scripture reading, or praise and worship of God you need on a daily basis to be full; they can only encourage you to get enough.

Therefore, you must ask yourself, "Is my spirit being fed

enough through worship and praise, prayer, and God's Word to be filled?" I can't tell you how much is enough, but you do need to eat daily from God's banquet to maintain spiritual intimacy. So, if you're spiritually full most days, great! But if you're spiritually hungry and acting selfish, rude or impatient, then you may need to make some changes.

Examine yourself. What is the fruit of your spiritual tree? Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV) says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

From personal experience, I can tell you that I need to have intimacy with God daily in my life to maintain intimacy with my wife. My flesh loves to be rude and selfish, so I need a certain balance of worship and praise toward God along with prayer and meditation on His love letter to me (the Scriptures).

Make a plan to feed yourself daily. Remember, it's not *religion*; it's *relationship*. No person needs to preach me into eating lunch! When I get hungry, I eat! So commit to behaviors that make you spiritually full. Don't be like the man in Proverbs 19:24 (MEV): "A slothful man hides his hand in his bowl, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again."

Imagine that you're dining in a fine restaurant. The gentleman at the next table has a wonderful meal laid out in front of him, but he is too lazy to put the food in his mouth. Wouldn't you wonder what in the world was wrong with him?

To top it off, you learn that the fabulous meal was *free*! He didn't even have to pay for it to eat it. He simply had to eat.

I think you get the point. Jesus Christ paid the price of spiritual intimacy for us all. Every day He prepares a banquet of spiritual delights so that we can be filled.

All we have to do is show up and eat. I encourage you to make a plan for yourself so that every day you can be filled through the spiritual intimacy that was freely given. Eat up—it's free! {eoa}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books, including 30 Day Marriage Makeover. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, ; on hisFacebook; by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.