

Why Developing Intimacy With Christ Is Vital to Your Faith

Deciding to live in intimacy with Christ is to believe and respond to the work He did on the cross. This allows us to remove the middle wall of petition, granting us access to the holy of holies (see Eph. 2:14). His call to intimacy situates each believer with the privilege of access to His presence, love and grace. This grace requires response to His sacrifice and is a call to live authentically in Jesus and yield ourselves as a tabernacle of the Holy Ghost for intimate relationship with God.

After many years of ministry, it is clear to me there is a need for practical conversation about why developing intimacy with Christ is essential to the spiritual formation process. I have observed new believers as well as those who have been in church long enough to have formed a genuine relationship with God lack intimacy with Him. They know of Him but do not know Him intimately. These Christians struggle to fully surrender to the process of conversion. When speaking with them, most of them had not formed spiritual disciplines needed for growth, such as a Bible-reading and devotional routine, which are essential for experiencing God's call to intimacy.

God's call to intimacy provokes the believer to prayer, personal bible-reading and worship, and there is an internal pull of the Holy Spirit to fellowship with other believers. So settling in a local church under a Bible-believing, teaching and preaching Spirit-filled pastor is absolutely necessary to growing your knowledge for developing an intimate relationship with Christ. The Holy Spirit leads us into the process of growing close to God, and He courts us in learning about and embracing the power in Christian fellowship for growing our faith. He solicits us toward surrounding ourselves with the fivefold ministry so the Holy Spirit can pour into our lives

through the ministry work of other mature believers. Truly, it takes a village to raise a Christian.

This village effort ensures that believers are consistently exposed to God's Word, His Spirit and the community of faith for helping believers discover their way in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a teacher who motivates our passion to know God deeply, as well as how to receive His love and work in our hearts—all leading to intimate relationship with God. It is God's call to intimacy. We must embrace this process if we want intimacy with God.

Embracing the need to develop intimacy with Christ requires the discipline for forming behaviors that include consistent personal and corporate Bible Study and prayer. It also requires obedience to the Scripture through an authentic desire to know and experience God.

It is important to sit before the Lord daily, to bring our hearts to Him for healing, shelter and growth. As we do this, He will develop within us a passion for more of Him. This happens when we make time to be with God, attend church to hear what He is saying to the body, study the Word of God to learn His will for our lives, as well as to refine our spiritual ear to hear from God personally through the Word, biblical teaching and the presence of God.

These intentional practices will encourage intimacy and help us respond to God's call to come to Him daily for knowing Jesus personally. These practices help us form a deeper relationship with Christ. Bible-based teaching, quality time spent with God and being discipled by a strong Bible-believing local church will strengthen your encounter with God. It is crucial to develop habits that cultivate relationship with God. It must be a heart thing.

For more, listen to *The Power of Intimacy With Christ* on the Charisma Podcast Network now. {eoa}