

Joyce Meyer: How to Take Your Relationship With God to the Next Level

When it comes to your relationship with God, how do you rate it? Do you judge it by how often you go to church? Or how many Scripture verses you've memorized ... maybe the length of your prayer time? Does any of that really matter?

Well, the answers to these questions are yes *and* no. Yes, there's a benefit to attending church. Sure, it's good to know the Word of God. And prayer—well, you really can't pray too much. But it doesn't matter whether you're sitting in a pew every time the church doors open or even if you can quote the whole Bible. It doesn't matter how long *or* loud you pray!

That may sound like a contradiction, but it's not. Yes, go to church, worship and fellowship with other Christians. Certainly, we should learn God's Word and know how to apply it to our lives. And like I said, you simply cannot pray too much. But *no*...none of that impresses God or proves anything to Him. He is not logging your prayer hours.

You see, Christianity is not about our weekly church attendance. Many people go to church often and hear many sermons, but hardly put much of what they learn into action. But real Christianity is about having a personal, intimate relationship with Christ. It's about learning how to live an abundant, purposeful life.

We can go to church each week and hear a powerful, life-changing message every time, but when we hear a sermon, we need to focus on what really touches our life in a personal way. That's most likely the thing God wants to deal with us about. Then, we need to go home and meditate on it, study more about that subject in God's Word and spend time in prayer

seeking how to apply that truth to our life.

That's what intimacy with God is all about. It's a personal relationship with Him. It's Him being involved in our lives, and it's knowing He's aware of and concerned about all the details—even the seemingly insignificant or non-spiritual details.

I remember years ago when my husband, Dave, and I used to be in a bowling league. God had recently touched my life in a powerful way. On my way to bowl one evening, God spoke to my heart and said, "Why don't you ask Me to help you bowl?" Bowl? God? He will help us with everything we're concerned about—our health, our finances, raising our children, or whatever it is we need. That's how *personal* a relationship with God is! He is concerned about everything that concerns us. We don't have to divide our lives into the sacred and the secular. Ephesians 6:10 (AMP) says to "be empowered through your union with Him." Our whole life is sacred because God is in it!

So, why does it seem like some people are much closer to Him than others? Does God have favorites? Why do some seem to have a deeper relationship with Him? Why can't we all have that?

I think the answer is simply one thing: Intimacy. *We*—not God—determine our level of intimacy with Him. We are each as close to God as we want to be. And the closer we get to God, the more intimate we become in our relationship with Him and the more we grow and mature spiritually. In other words, we grow up.

David had the right idea. He said, "One thing I have asked of the Lord, and that I will seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord [in His presence] all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty [the delightful loveliness and majestic grandeur] of the Lord and to meditate in His temple" (Ps. 27:4 AMP).

David was more concerned with seeking God's face—His presence—than seeking His hand—what God could do for him. He simply loved God. And because of that, he grew in character, excellence and integrity, and became a mighty king.

Jesus had many followers. Twelve of them were close friends that He spent much time with. Three of them went with Him into special situations and circumstances to minister to someone. And then there was one who actually called himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved!”

All of these people spent time with Jesus. Some were closer to Him than others, but He loved them all. And He loves all of us. God will never love any of us more than He does right this minute. He has a plan for each one of our lives. The *one thing* that's more important than anything is spending time with Him. The only question is: How close do you want to be?