

The Most Important Thing

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

The answer to that is yes and no. Yes, there's a benefit to attending church. And it's important 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 if you can quote the whole Bible. It doesn't matter how long or how loud you pray! That may sound like a contradiction, but it's not. Yes, go to church. Yes, worship. And yes, fellowship with other Christians. It's also vital that you learn God's Word and know how to apply it to your life. 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 your weekly church attendance. Christianity is about having a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It's about learning to live an abundant, purposeful life. Is that the kind of life you live?

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. That's where God wants to meet us. Then we need to go home and meditate on it, study more on the 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 nonspiritual ones.

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, and on my way to bowl one evening, He spoke to my heart and said, “Why don’t you ask Me to help you bowl?”

Bowl? Yes. God will help us with everything we’re concerned about—our hair, our finances, our raising of our children and whatever else it is we need, even if that “whatever else” is learning how to bowl better!

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 tells us to “be empowered through [our] union with Him” (AMP). We can trust God with every single part of our lives because He cares about everything about us!

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 boils down to one thing: intimacy. We determine our level of intimacy with Him. We’re each as close to God as we want to be. And the closer we get to Him, the more intimate we become in our relationship with Him and the more we will grow and mature spiritually. In other words, we grow up.

David had the right idea. He said, “I have asked the Lord for one thing; one thing only do I want: to live in the Lord’s house all my life, to marvel there at his goodness, and to ask for his guidance” (Ps. 27:4, GNT). David was more concerned with seeking God’s face than His hand. He simply loved God. And because of that, he grew in character, excellence and integrity, and he became a mighty king.

It’s the same way with Jesus. He had many followers. Twelve of

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

All 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, though, is spending time with Him. That’s more important than all the “right” things you may do, day in and day out. The only question is: How close do you want to be?

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