



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

OUR INTIMACY WITH GOD

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 63:1-8 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Genesis 1:26 | Psalm 16:11; 42:1-2 | John 14:15

► SUMMARY

Do you have an intimate relationship with God?

Perhaps you wonder if the Creator of the universe would even want to have a close, personal relationship with you. Maybe you feel too unimportant or too sinful to be acceptable to the Lord. But we were created in the Father's image (Gen. 1:26). That means God designed us with the emotional and spiritual capacity to love and know Him intimately.

King David knew how to have an intimate relationship with the Lord. His story is one of the best biblical examples of how sinful humanity can relate to a holy God. Although David was far from perfect, he had learned that only the Father's love could satisfy the deepest longings of His heart (Ps. 63:5). He passionately sought God through prayer, repentance, and obedience. You and I can learn from his example how to enjoy closeness with our heavenly Father.

► SERMON POINTS

Man's Relationship With God

Everyone has a direct relationship with God, even those who refuse to acknowledge His sovereignty. As the Creator and Ruler of the universe, He sustains all humanity. The Lord is the ultimate authority in each person's life. However, the Lord has a distinct relationship with those who have admitted their sinfulness before Him and asked for Christ's forgiveness. If you have trusted in Jesus' death on the cross to pay for your sin debt, you have become one of God's children and have a unique

relationship with Him. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and have the promise of an eternal home in heaven.

Unfortunately, sometimes God's children allow their relationship with Him to become distant. Although they have trusted Christ for forgiveness, they don't have a sense of oneness with Him. Often this is because they haven't been taught how to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to resist sin. They may attend church, but they do not read their Bibles faithfully or know how to relate to the Lord in prayer. As a result, they excuse sin in their lives and don't live in close relationship with the Father. There are also those who are in the process of developing a personal, intimate relationship with God. They passionately pursue the one thing that can truly satisfy the deep longing the Father has planted in the heart of every person. How can you and I cultivate this kind of closeness with the Lord?

Requirements for an Intimate Relationship With God

- **A Spiritual Focus**—For many people, the word *intimacy* is associated primarily with sexuality. But genuine fellowship with God involves relating to Him on an emotional and spiritual level rather than a physical one.
- **Personal Involvement**—The Lord created man in His image so that we could relate to Him on an individual basis. The Holy Spirit lives within every believer, giving each one the ability to develop a personal friendship with Christ.
- **Trust**—Intimacy cannot exist without trust. If you and I refuse to surrender to and obey God, we can't expect to have a deep, personal relationship with Him.

- **Love**—A close relationship with God must be motivated by love, not duty. Remember that He forgave you on the basis of Christ’s death on the cross. You don’t have to earn His love. Let that fact motivate you to freely and genuinely devote yourself to getting to know our heavenly Father better. The more you love Him, the more you will want to obey Him (John 14:15).
- **Openness and Transparency**—Confess specific sins and shortcomings to the Lord. Open your heart and pour out your frustrations and disappointments. Be honest with God, and your intimacy with Him will grow.
- **Two-way Communication**—Most people see prayer as a time to let God know their needs. They rarely listen to what the Lord may want to say to them. But the Father created us for a relationship with Him. Ask God to show you how to hear His guidance for your life, and set aside time to listen to His voice.
- **Time and Effort**—Your Creator—the One who sustains the universe—wants to have an intimate relationship with you. But you must devote yourself to getting to know Him if you want to experience the fullness of friendship with God.

Benefits of Intimacy With the Father

There are numerous benefits to nurturing closeness with the Savior. Here are just a few:

- An intimate relationship with God is powerful and will give you stability. Amid life’s storms, a solid relationship with God is your anchor.
- You will have security. The Father assures believers that He is always with us, ready to help in any situation or circumstance.
- No matter what happens, you can have serenity.
- Knowing God intimately brings quietness and peace to your spirit.
- You can trust that He will guide you through difficulty.
- Communion with God increases spiritual sensitivity.
- You can expect greater biblical understanding as passages becoming clearer.

- You will become more aware of the needs of others and more willing to reach out.

Barriers to Intimacy

Why do people not experience closeness with the Father? The greatest barrier is pride. Some believe they have no need to kneel before the Lord in prayer. They put their trust in themselves and pursue relationships, accomplishments, or possessions instead of a relationship with God, the Father.

A related problem is rebellion. When we deliberately disobey the Lord, we cannot have intimacy with Him. If God is not answering your prayers, ask yourself if you are tolerating sin in your life. Finally, some people never find authentic closeness with God because they are always in a hurry. Take time to read the Bible and meditate on it. Ask the Lord, *What are you saying to me through this passage? How does it apply to my life?* As you seek and listen to Him in prayer, you will grow in your ability to hear God and experience new excitement and joy in your spiritual life.

► RESPONSE

- How would you describe your relationship with God? I pray it is characterized by unity, surrender, and joy. But if you aren’t experiencing intimacy with the Lord, He desires to reveal Himself in a personal way. Let go of pride, confess your sin and rebellion, and devote yourself to getting right with Him. David wrote, “In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever” (Ps. 16:11).
- Only God can satisfy the deepest longings of your heart. My prayer is that you will discover the awesome depth of the Father’s love through an intimate relationship with Him.

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