

RELATING TO GOD THE FATHER

For most, if not all, of us who call ourselves Christian, our heart's cry is to know Him – that is God the Father – in a deeper life transforming way. So why can't we, and if we can, overcome the 'why then how do we get to know Him. What are some possible steps?

It is my hope & prayer that in this series of articles we can answer some of the questions. However you should know this: it is a work in progress – thoughts and observations that are still developing. And (please don't think less of me) an issue that I am still pursuing in my own walk with God. So for those of you that have come further, be patient with me and those who lag behind. And pray for us.

First what is it that stops me cold; dead in my tracks in this pursuit of knowing God deeply. Really knowing him, not simply the theology of God or the attributes of God, or the 'love of God" But really knowing Him in a dear, best friend 'I can really count on you' kind of way?

You, like me, probably know people or even have a spouse, who relates to God this way. But for me it is not that simple. If I am alone in this – don't spoil my dilution just yet. Show me some grace and allow me to explain the problem as I perceive it.

The first thing that hinders me is language. The word we hear most often associated with really knowing God: Intimacy. Words have meaning, and some words have more meaning than others and some words just jump up and slap you. Intimacy is one of those words. What does it mean and do I want that kind of a relationship with God the Father. And what it means to me may not be what it means to someone else. For example, if you ask a woman what it means, you will get one answer with many shades. If you ask a man, you will get a, shall we say, a somewhat different answer. So lets define the word.

From Webster's dictionary:

- Intimacy: 1. the state or fact of being intimate: familiarity
2. an intimate act; esp. illicit sexual intercourse: a euphemism

- Intimate: 1. pertaining to the inmost character of a thing, fundamental, essential
2. most private or personal
3. closely acquainted or associated; very familiar
4. promoting a feeling of privacy, coziness, romance, etc.
5. resulting from careful study or investigation, very close
6. having illicit sexual relations; an euphemism

Why do you suppose this word, when freely used in relationship to knowing God the Father might present a problem to some of us?

The person who has been blessed with good loving & proper relationships, or who has received enough healing, can and does accept this word in its purest sense of loving – closeness & familiarity. And as a result can feel all warm & fuzzy inside. A woman can more easily accept a strong protective God/Father holding them close than most men I know.

It could be argued that those who have a problem with the use of the word intimacy as it relates to a personal relationship with God have a problem of ‘gutter’ thinking. But that is not a fair assessment. In truth, how many of us think of a sexual relationship when using the word ‘intimacy’? To make matters worse, those who think this way, no matter how wrong, have it reinforced by a myriad of Christian authors who write of the need for intimacy with our spouses, and then equate it with sex, and follow by saying if we can’t be intimate in marriage, how can we hope to be intimate with God?!

In all honesty, the word has more to do with really knowing about the facts and feelings of an object or person than it does with sexual activity, but common usage and culture is how most of us understand words. The New Testament itself does not even use the word intimacy. How can we overcome this problem?

Lets start with different words. Words that God Himself uses to describe the relationship

How about wanting to be one with God in mind (Philippians 2), & spirit (John 17). Or wanting to know Him as a True Friend or an Abba Daddy? But also as a Powerful God. - knowing Him. One with Him. A True Buddy ~ ‘BFF’, etc. It is true each of these words or expressions can carry negative ideas depending on our woundedness and history. But the idea is to use the words that best express your thinking of relationship with God that is deep, personal & mutual. Think what best expresses this for you, and then call out to God to develop that relationship with Him in your life.

Mark 14: 36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6

Next: the issue of knowledge