

ALAN TAYLOR MINISTRIES

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Spending Time with God

Developing your personal relationship with God is a beautiful thing. Think about it, you can intimately know the Creator of the universe; He even desires to be the closest one in your life. It's a shame that most Christians will never get to know this type of fellowship with God. It took me years to discover how beautiful and close God wants to be with me. Like most believers, I spent too much time trying to earn God's favor, instead of embracing His Love.

I missed out on being close to Him for many years, because I didn't realize how much He wanted to be with me. God had to get it across to me that He was waiting to spend time with me. All through scripture we can see where Jesus set an example of fellowship with His Father. Luke 5:16, *"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."* What was the reason that it was so difficult for me to be close to Him? Why was it so easy to serve Him, but so difficult to be alone with Him?

The answer is that I felt unworthy, and I feel that many believers struggle with the same symptoms as I did! I was constantly attempting to prove my worthiness to God so that I could receive His love, and I feel that many people struggle with the same issue: constantly striving to be worth the love of an amazing Father. It seems good at the time, because you are trying to live right, do right and give your life to God. When you're doing very good, you feel very close to God.

Many of us have built our relationship with Him on this weak foundation, and many never grow out of it. The problem is that it is a very shallow relationship; everything feels safe and secure when you're doing good, but when things are difficult or you are struggling in an area, then you feel that God is distant to you. In those times that we need Him the most, we don't reach out because we don't feel worthy. I would hear myself say, "When I have it together, then I'll reach out to God," because I didn't want Him to reject me. In the hard times, instead of receiving His embrace, I would strive to prove my worthiness to Him. The ups and downs that I used to go through in my relationship with my Heavenly Father disappeared when I realized His love for me is based on Him, and not on me. It says in Romans 5:8, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* This simply means that if He loved you when you were the furthest away from Him as a sinner, then why would He not love you now as His child.

His love for you is based on Him, and never on how well you perform. You are free to receive a love that is not earned by you, every moment of every day. One preacher told me that if I had a bad thought then God would leave me, and I would have to get his attention to forgive me. I know that sounds crazy today, but at the time, to my unworthy heart, it made total sense.

Psalms 139:8-9 tells us that God does not run from us, even if we end up in hell. *"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there."* There is such peace to know that God is not touchy and moved by my imperfections. In fact «SALUTATION», your greatest cheerleader is your Heavenly Father. He believes in you more than everyone else. He believes in you even if you don't believe in yourself.

Don't wait until you are perfect to spend time with God. Unworthiness was causing me to look at myself as the basis to keep God from leaving me. My close, special times with God were limited to the days that I felt strong, which caused an unbalanced view of God with myself. God told the people of Israel in Leviticus 26:12, *"I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."*

Our relationship with Him becomes deeper when we go to Him in the midst of our failures. When I stop being afraid of God, and begin to embrace His love for me, I found incredible peace and strength. It's a wonderful experience to go into God's presence expecting rejection and finding an embrace of encouragement. If you allow it, He will prove to you that He loves you.

When my children were tiny they enjoyed spending lots of time with me, but as they get older they are also becoming more independent. This sadly means that it becomes harder to get them to focus their time with me, their dad. Still though, when they go through a struggle and fall down and scrape a knee, or come home with hurt feelings from school, it is during these moments when they are extra vulnerable, that I love to swoop in and comfort them. These are the same moments, when you feel the least deserving, that you can see just how much He believes in you. Don't ever be timid in reaching out for God's love. When you are struggling, God is excited to be there to comfort and strengthen you.

The times that you learn the most about His love for you is when you feel the weakest. He will prove to you over and over that He is with you through the thick and thin of this life. Feel free to run boldly into His arms every day, because His love for you never changes. He is waiting to spend time with you.

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