



PART 1: Connecting with God

CHAPTER 6

No Short Cuts

Jesus admonished His disciples saying:

“Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with sure-fire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires total attention.” (Matthew 7:13-14 MSG)

There are no substitutes for seeking the Lord wholeheartedly. As we gain spiritual insight, the truth about God overshadows ‘religion by convenience’. As we gain living understanding, our tendency to procrastinate diminishes. The prospect of connecting with God activates a dynamic response—one that sweeps us off our feet and compels us to follow. Persistent hope fuels this quest with perseverance and patience.

No matter how clumsy we may feel, waiting on the Lord aims our devotion in the right direction. It stimulates faith with an assurance for things hoped for and a conviction for things not yet seen. Though awkward at times, deliberate waiting provides opportunities for intimate communion. Anticipating His presence inspires meaningful moments of thoughtful contemplation through prayer, praise, and bible study.

Distractions abound and disappointments occur, yet God remains focused on the priority of our relationship. His commitment never wa-

vers. With, unfailing love He leads us and with everlasting strength He guides us to the place where His glory dwells.¹

It's time to wake up to the fact that we are not as strong as God intends for us to be. Like a blind beggar calling out for mercy, we need Jesus to restore our sight.² We rarely see what God is doing, we rarely hear what He is saying, and we rarely follow where He is leading—mainly because other concerns occupy our attention. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit executes high impact initiatives to save condemned souls, to heal confused minds, and to restore broken relationships.

Pursuing a viable connection with our Heavenly Father involves a lifelong process. Waiting on the Lord removes barriers of separation while activating beneficial rewards. Waiting engages our faith to absorb the facts and experience the truth. Anchored in hope, it instigates timely encounters with a heightened sense of awareness.

Untapped Opportunities

If we are honest, most of us meander through life sheltered from spiritual reality. We tolerate seasons of seclusion isolated from our Heavenly Father and distracted from Jesus. Encounters with the Holy Spirit are far too sporadic. We hardly notice God's presence as He forgives our sin, purifies our soul, and meets our fundamental needs. We barely glance toward His glorious majesty as He redeems and restores us.

So far, we have yet to comprehend the profound advantage that Holy Spirit offers us today. We detect hints of His fullness but fail to gulp from His abundance. We scarcely touch the generous supply of God's infinite provision. Occasionally, we squint to behold a fraction of His accomplishments. To date however, our restrained embrace distorts reality. It spins the facts with incomplete evidence and pollutes our opin-

¹ Exodus 15:13

² Luke 18:35-43

ions with biased views. Instead of realizing the intense passion behind God's love, we settle for slivers of charitable goodness.

Most of us hardly even know God. Be honest—when was the last time you referred to your Heavenly Father by His name? Do you even know His proper name? He tells us His name in Exodus 3:13-15.

We settle for vague approximations and shortened abbreviations without realizing how much more He offers. Connecting with God provides more than a Bible study for good living or a religious ceremony for good feeling. Jesus activated a radical life-transforming journey that extends beyond this tangible world.

Creation Reveals God's Invisible Attributes

Sights and sounds propel us toward spiritual reality. They bring God into focus. Paul put it this way:

*...that which is **known about God is evident** within them; for **God made it evident** to them. For **since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood** through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (Rom 1:19-20 NAS)*

A closer connection with our Heavenly Father is possible because Jesus made it possible. Sporadically thinking about Him is different from a dynamic dialogue infused with intimate communion. Pondering the possibility of a connection is not the same as connecting in faith, hope, and love through our mind, will, and emotions.

Random musings about an invisible deity are insufficient. We may read the Bible periodically, say some prayers occasionally, and go to a church meeting intermittently. Religious activity, albeit to our advantage, cannot satisfy our yearning for a connection with the magnificent presence of Jesus, Holy Spirit, and our Heavenly Father.

When God reveals His invisible attributes through the things that He made, no one can improve upon His methods. He knows the best way to articulate His eternal power. He knows how to manifest His divine

nature. All creation points directly toward its Creator with assertive priority.

Now is the time to stop going through the motions and to start connecting with a focus that is more deliberate. End this charade of barely knowing God. Look again at the awesome possibilities. Revisit the advantage that Jesus arranged when He ascended into heaven. Unpack His inexhaustible wisdom and revelation. Now is the time to rend the heavens and plunge into His word in concert with His Spirit. This season offers more spiritual reality and divine awareness than we realize.

