

Intimacy with God

Objectives

Provide a practical way to become more intimate with God through “quiet time” guidelines.

Resources

1. “Guide to Quiet Time” St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Washington, D.C.
2. *How to Meditate on God’s Word* Abouna Anthony Messeh (Sermon)
3. *How to Hear God’s Voice* Abouna Anthony Messeh (Sermon)

Scriptural Verse

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord *is* good; blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him” *Psalms 34:8*

Lesson Outlines:

- ❖ “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:14-15)
- ❖ How many of us really consider ourselves friends of our Savior? How many of us still look at ourselves as slaves/servants?
- ❖ What are the marks of an intimate friend? (someone who knows me and who I know—someone who shares my life with me and whose life I share)
- ❖ Is this the relationship we have with God? Is this relationship even possible for us? How can we grow in our knowledge of God? Will God speak to me personally so that I can know Him or is that something reserved for the super spiritual and is better left to them?
- ❖ “I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own” (John 10:14). Do we know God’s voice or are we uncertain whether something is Him or not?
- ❖ We have all been taught the necessity in reading the Bible but very few of us were given a strategy for doing so.
- ❖ This strategy is called “quiet time” and it is simply a time I set aside to be alone with God to get to know Him through His Word and prayer.
- ❖ Steps:
 - **Prepare your heart.** Try to relax and set aside distractions. Ask God to speak to you through His Word for that day.
 - **Read the passage and** reread it slowly. Sometimes, reading it out loud is helpful. Read it until you sense God is showing you something. Sometimes, a verse will automatically jump out at you. Consider this for future meditation.
 - **To further meditate** on the verse, ask yourself whether there is:
 - † Sin to confess
 - † Promise to claim
 - † Attitude to change
 - † Command to keep
 - † Example to follow
 - † Prayer to pray
 - † Error to avoid
 - † Truth to believe

- ✠ Something to thank God for
 - **Respond to what God is telling you** in a journal. Write the verse that spoke to you most personally then write a prayer to God in response. Then, write a personal application. Refer back to application throughout the day.
 - **Conclude by praying** from the Agpeya (whatever rule your father of confession has set for you).
- ❖ Further logistics:
- **Select a specific time.** Choose a time when you are at your best. “In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation” (Psalm 5:3). Morning is recommended because that is the example our Savior gave to us and it shows that God is my top priority AND my mind is less likely to be cluttered with the day’s events. Whatever time you select, though, BE CONSISTENT.
 - **Choose a special place.** “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place” (Matthew 6:6). “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35).
 - **Gather Your Resources.** Bible, writing utensil, journal. “Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the Lord” (Numbers 33:2).
 - **Begin with the right attitude.**
 - ✠ **Reverence** “Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:10).
 - ✠ **Faith** “Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18)
 - ✠ **Obedience** “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).
- ❖ Overcoming obstacles
- **Obstacle of Discipline.** 1st obstacle usually upon waking up
 - ✠ Go to bed on time
 - ✠ Get up immediately, don’t snooze
 - ✠ Beware of “robbers”—late night TV, phone calls, house cleaning
 - ✠ Fall asleep thinking spiritual thoughts
 - **Obstacle of Distractions:** Satan will try to use anything to get your mind to wander during this time. Don’t worry. If you get distracted; just bring your focus back to God and what you were praying about.
 - ✠ Make sure you are thoroughly awake
 - ✠ Read and pray aloud
 - ✠ Keep a journal
 - **Obstacle of dryness.** Sometimes, you will feel that you are not getting anything out of quiet time. Don’t judge by your feelings. Possible causes of dryness to consider:
 - ✠ Disobedience to God
 - ✠ Rushing quiet time
 - ✠ Physical condition
 - **Obstacle of diligence.** Be prepared that Satan will fight against this time! Persevere for consistency

- † Block out time on your schedule
- † Be prepared to fight against your flesh (too tired, too busy, too hungry, etc.)
- † Leave Bible open at night for next day's passage
- † If you miss a day, don't feel all is lost or become legalistic or give up. You are forming a habit and it takes time to get acquainted with new schedule before it becomes comfortable.

Conclusion

The aim of our lives is to get closer to God and to develop an intimate relationship with Him, this can only be done through spending quality daily time with the Lord.

Activities/Discussion Points

Use a passage from the Bible as an example and have everybody write down what they got out of the verses and share with the rest of the class.