

LESSON 48 - INTIMACY WITH GOD

How Can You Increase Your Intimacy With God?

By Brian S. Holmes

Copyright © 2021. Brian S. Holmes. MPowered Christian Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://MPoweredChristian.org>

Excerpted from: Holmes, Brian. *"The Empowered Christian Road Map"* Clearwater, FL: MPowered Christian Publishing, 2020.

Excerpted from: Holmes, Brian. *"Driveway Discipleship"* [The Empowered Christian Series] Clearwater, FL: MPowered Christian Publishing, 2021.

Permission for reuse by ABNSat, Trinity Channel, and their affiliates for use when provided free of charge.

Made available through a partnership with Missionary Church, Inc. <https://MCUSA.org>

Scripture quotations taken from Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.



Do you ask yourself questions like: “How can I know God?” “How can I be closer to God?” “What’s God’s will for my life?” “How would God have me respond?” Intimacy with God is found through Jesus. He’s the radiance of God’s glory, the only mediator between God and man, and who we must go through to know the Father (Hebrews 1:3; 1 Timothy 2:5; Matthew 11:27; John 14:6-7). Think of a good relationship with someone that you’re close to. Do they care more about what you *do* for them than about you, and about your relationship together? I sure hope not! Well, Jesus doesn’t either. It’s essential that you actually know Him and even more important that *He* knows *you* (Matthew 7:21-23). This lesson is about how to increase your intimacy with God through three points: 1) Be Mary over Martha, 2) Relationship over Responsibility, and 3) Presence over Purpose.

1. Be Mary Over Martha. Luke 10:38-42 says, *“Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”* Jesus is our Lord; of course we are to serve Him. He even commands elsewhere for us to be fruitful and do good deeds that glorify our Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16; John 15:8). But Jesus teaches us here it’s *even better* to sit at His feet. To spend time with Him, listening to Him, learning from Him. Another time, at a dinner in Jesus’s honor, we again see Martha concerned with serving dinner to everyone while her sister Mary was more concerned with spending time with and worshiping Jesus in a personal, intimate way. John 12:1-8 says, *“Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume... Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.”... “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”* Mary was led by the Holy Spirit to do the better thing. It’s better to love Jesus and spend time with Him than to pay attention to the

anxieties and busyness of others around you. God is most glorified when in Him we're most satisfied.

2. Relationship Over Responsibility. The reason we should strive to be more of a Mary than a Martha is because your time *with* God precedes your service *for* God. Your time with God will be what helps you know Him, learn about what He cares about, and become more like Him as you allow Him to change you. The stronger your personal relationship with God, the more this will enable your service for Him to be more in-tune with His will. If you strive in your *own desires* for what you God *possibly* wants you're more likely to miss the mark. And if you strive to pursue those efforts in your own strength you'll end up just being a miserable replica. You'll also get exhausted, run yourself into the ground, get burned out, and fall short of your true potential. You need God with you in order to know *what* to do and be empowered by His Spirit to do it. Let your prayer be like David's in Psalm 51:10-13, "*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.*" David prays to God to be: 1) transformed and made holy by Him, 2) filled with His Spirit, 3) kept in His presence, 4) sustained by Him—and *then* to—5) bring lost sinners back to Him. He's only capable of doing the last "service/responsibility" part *after* God strengthens the other "relationship" parts first. Your relationship with God is more important, so focus on this first. If God wanted a perfect world He could create it Himself in one second. But He has allowed us to partner with Him in this because it builds our relationship with Him. And this is God's ultimate goal everything is working towards: for us to be His children who spend eternity with Him. Revelation 21:3 and 7 speaks of the last day: "*Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God... I will be their God and they will be my children.*"

3. Presence Over Purpose. God has made His presence capable of being tangible and perceivable to us, so we can experience it. Since God desires a relationship with His children through Jesus there are many ways we can encounter His tangible presence. These include: baptism, the Lord's Supper, reading and studying His Word, and Holy Spirit-led journaling, mindful meditation, and missional service. The most personal and intimate are prayer and worship. During these, our focus is most clear, our spiritual connection most direct, and our spiritual and natural senses most receptive. This because the *sole intent* of these activities is to encounter, praise, speak to, and hear from, God. When our heart's desire aligns with His desire for us—to delight in Him—His manifest presence will be most intensely experienced. God won't always give you a powerful supernatural encounter every time you're seeking it, but when He does, nothing can compare with it! Pursue Him! E.M. Bounds said, "*The goal of prayer is the ear of God, a goal that can only be reached by patient and continued and continuous waiting upon Him, pouring out our heart to Him and permitting Him to speak to us. Only by so doing can we expect to know Him, and as we come to know Him better we shall spend more time in His presence and find that presence a constant and ever-increasing delight.*" It is in your delight, abiding in the presence of God, that you will both discover and fulfill your highest purpose in life: to know God and be known by God.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, remove my idols. Be the highest object of my affection. Change me. Help me first sit at Jesus' feet, put our relationship first, and seek Your presence. In Jesus' name. Amen.