

The Depth of Intimacy

Matthew 6:9-13

Pastor GL Wong

Jesus teaches us through the Lord's prayer how we can deepen our relationship with God in prayer.

3 things you need to deepen your intimacy with God in prayer:

1) Appreciate God as your Father

There are over 20 references throughout the Old Testament to God as Father. It was only until Jesus came and taught His disciples to refer to God as their Father that we see the fatherhood references significantly increase (over a hundred references in the New Testament). In almost all of His prayers, He addressed God as 'Father'. That was a radical departure from Jewish tradition.

Jesus uses the Aramaic term '*Abba*' (my dearest father) in reference to God (Mark 14:36) to show the kind of intimacy He experienced in prayer. He teaches His disciples to refer to God as their Father so they too could experience intimacy with God as their Father.

John 1:12 - While not all men are God's children by nature, His committed disciples have been adopted into His family by grace. Prayer to God as our Father is for Christians only (Ga. 4:4-6). Adoption in the ancient world was for securing an heir. Christians are joint heirs with Christ for God's glory (1 John 3:2).

The child of God knows he is a privileged member of the family and his asking would reflect it. The more we realise that it is a father-child relationship we experience in prayer, the more we realise that bold asking does not come from a demanding spirit; it is a reflection of intimacy. We will only ask boldly when we can appreciate God as a Father truly (Matt. 7:7-11). Only when we appreciate God as our Father can we deepen our intimacy with Him in prayer!

2) Adore God your Father

A common thread in the great prayers we see across scripture is the expression of

great awareness of a great God. In the Lord's prayer, the emphasis on praying to our Father *in heaven* is that God exists on a different plane. He is great, infinite, majestic, almighty and is able to do far more than we can. Prayers that are shaped by thoughts like these cannot be dull! The more we adore Him, the more we will experience intimacy in prayer with Him.

Our adoration to God is very pleasing to Him! It would also make us feel close to Him. A large part of the intimacy we hope to experience is found in adoration. It is not the greatness of God that leads to adoration; it is the greatness of God perceived that leads to adoration. It is only through the word of God that we can truly acknowledge the greatness and excellencies of God. Our prayer life can never be divorced from the word of God! Our word life fuels our prayer life for adoration. The word of God is essential to deepen our intimacy with God in prayer!

3) Honour God your Father

v9 – The name of God is the person He reveals Himself to be. Hallowing God's name is acknowledging that He is separate from us in power and purity. We are to regard God as holy. In the Old Testament, holiness was never something that fostered intimacy. Instead, it placed fear into people's hearts (Ex. 19, 20). Jesus teaches us through the Lord's prayer to ask that God's name be hallowed. The key to unlocking a deeper intimacy with our heavenly Father in prayer is to realise it is not an assertion; it is a petition.

Jesus offered Himself as the answer to our petition of hallowing God's name. He became the true honourable Son who took on the wrath of God on the cross so that the dishonourable (us) can be brought home through repentance as sons of God. On the cross, Jesus gave up the intimacy of calling

God 'Father' so that we may gain the intimacy of calling God our Father. Draw near to God as His holy chosen children through Jesus Christ!