



General Topics :: You're As Close To God as You Want To Be

You're As Close To God as You Want To Be - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/6 9:33

This is actually the second half of the article titled "Four Circles of Intimacy-(you're as close to God as You want to be)" by J. oswald Sanders.

I identify with this so much. I think that intimacy proceeds holiness. As I have sought after Jesus, to be near Him, to love Him, to know Him, to know His heart and thoughts-- this has resulted in my thirst for holiness because I want to please Him. Seeking after holiness before seeking "Him" results in phariseeism (is that a word?)

I have never sought after holiness as a "thing" in itself. I seek after Christ- for He Himself is my holiness. He produces holiness in me. The more I keep my eyes on Him alone and not seek after a "thing", then all goes accordingly.

Jesus and His Disciples

From among those early followers who had evidenced their faith in Him, Jesus chose seventy and sent them out two by two to preach for Him. Later, after a night of prayer, He chose twelve to be with Him for training - to learn His ways and imbibe His Spirit. Within the twelve, there emerged a circle of three with whom Jesus became especially intimate. They were closer to Him than any of the others. Within the circle of three, there was one who appropriated the special place on Jesus' breast, and through whom the disciples channeled questions to the Master. "He, leaning back thus on Jesus' breast" (John 13:25) is the way John described his privileged position. Seventy, twelve, three, one! In which group would we be found?? Each of the disciples was as close to Jesus as he chose to be, for the Son of God had no favorites. We are similarly self-classifying.

G. Campbell Morgan wrote concerning the special three:

There can be no doubt that these men, Peter, James, and John, were the most remarkable in the apostolate. Peter loved Him; John He loved; James was the first to seal his testimony with his blood. Even their blunders proved their strength. They were the men of enterprise; men who wanted thrones and places of power.... Mistaken ideas, all of them, and yet proving capacity for holding the keys and occupying the throne. What men from among that first group reign today as these men?

On four special occasions, Jesus admitted them to experiences from which they learned precious lessons. On the occasion of the raising of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:51), they were granted a preview of their Lord's mastery over death and saw His gentleness with the little girl.

On the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:1), they gained clearer insight into the importance of His impending death, although they grasped its significance very inadequately (Luke 18:34). There, too, they had a preview of His glory and majesty. "We beheld His glory," recalled John. (John 1:14) "We... were eyewitnesses of His majesty," said Peter. (2 Pet. 1:16)

On the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3), they marveled at His prophetic discernment, as He shared with them the sweep of the divine purposes and the inner secrets of God.

In the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37), they glimpsed in the sufferings of the Savior something of the cost of their salvation, although they were at a loss to interpret His agony.

Those were some of the privileges of the inner circle. Could any of the twelve have been among that favored group? Were the three specially selected by the Lord? With Him there is no favoritism. Their relationship with Him was the result of their own choice, conscious or unconscious. It is a sobering thought that we too are as close to Christ as we really choose to be. The deepening intimacy of the three with Jesus was the result of the depth of their response to His love and training.

They recognized that intimacy with Him involved responsibility as well as conferred privilege. The Master had told them that "whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother", (Mark 3:35) There are some ties that are closer even than those of kinship.

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What excluded some disciples from the inner circle? If **perfection** were the criterion, then Peter the denier and James and John the place-seekers would have been excluded. But they were included, If it were **temperament**, then surely the volatile Peter and James and John the fire-eaters would not have found entrance.

Why then did John have the primacy in the group? Because he alone appropriated the place of privilege that was available to all; **It was love** that drew John into a deeper intimacy with Jesus than the other apostles. Jesus loved them all, but John alone appropriated the title "the disciple whom Jesus loved." **If Jesus loved John more, it was because John loved Him more!** Mutual love and confidence are the keys to intimacy.

It would seem that admission to the inner circle of deepening intimacy with God is the outcome of **deep desire**. Only those who count such intimacy a prize worth sacrificing anything else for are likely to attain it. If other intimacies are more desirable to us, we will not gain entry to that circle.

The place on Jesus' breast is still vacant, and open to any who are willing to pay the price of deepening intimacy. We are now, and we will be in the future, only as intimate with God as we really choose to be.

The whole article can be found at (<http://www.lastdaysministries.org/articles/fourcircles.html>) Last Days Ministries

Re: You're As Close To God as You Want To Be - posted by Rahman, on: 2004/8/6 14:59

--- Seventy, twelve, three, one! In which group would we be found?? ---

Ouch Sister Chanin ... so many of your post hit like the freight train i didn't hear coming ... You're posts ring with love ... and often times "tough love" ...

At this point i want to see myself as amongst the 3, and in the guise of Peter, but the Lord has been at me for some time now to be like John ... You probably don't know this but He's using you more and more to my relinquishing to who He wants me to be ... i'm begining to see that "love" is a much stronger power than "brashness" and "boldness" ... God is telling me that it's all good to want to walk water like Him, but it's better for me, and especially those around me both saved, and unsaved to be in His bosom position ... Keep posting sis! ... our Lord wants you to know that there is at least one acknowledging your ministry of "surrender & love", and i dare say so are many others who let you know, and a silent multitude you'll never know till your book is opened ...

i praise God for you, even tho you may think you sometimes come across a 15 in the Lord ... He suffers the children, and out of the mouths of babes comes gems of wisdom ...

Oh, also let me tell you that this did not escape my notice from another thread you posted on (i forget now) ... You posted;

--- I moved out of Christian City, rented a place in the wilderness for 3 years to get "re-trained" by God Himself. And am now on my way back into Christian City for little visits to try to share God's truth. ---

Hallelujah!

Re: - posted by ravin, on: 2004/8/6 15:24

My Bible has that he chose the 12 first or am I reading some thing different. It calls them by name. the 70 came after. those who were to be with him.

Re: intimacy - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/6 15:40

Ravin, hmmm. not sure about that one.

Rahman, for some odd reason no matter what I read or study or what next "thing" I am learning about; the Lord continues to bring my focus back on Him alone. If my focus gets off of Him then things go haywire. He won't allow it for long. Christ is my doctrine and my theology- thank the Lord, or I would be off on some tangent every week. When I start to lose that "First Love" feeling then I know right away to spend some major time in the quiet just ministering to Him. Just relishing Him and appreciating Him, just for Him- not for me.

Quote:

-----The place on Jesus' breast is still vacant, and open to any who are willing to pay the price of deepening intimacy

Interesting sentence because there is a cost to be this close to Him. Last year in March I wrote this, before I knew anything about theology. It was more out of my hunger for Him and to minister to Him. I had found Him as my First Love again.

I Will Not Be Satisfied With A Seat In Heaven

While many believers are satisfied to just accept grace by faith- and be satisfied that they have secured a seat in heaven ; I am not and will never be! No, I desire to call on my Lord to be so near to me that I may hear Him speaking to my heart -- risking to hear Him tell me what I may not want to hear.

Yes, it is my desire to hear the truth even if it means that He shows me the many things wrong with me and how He expects me to work on them and give them over to Him.

Yes, I risk it all for Him. I will never be satisfied with just "security"- but I want to experience all the love the Lord has for me, all the richness of having a closer than close relationship with Him.

Knowing I will have to continue pressing harder, going up higher, and pursuing Him with everything in me -- it is worth it all!!

Even on the days where I feel I am taking a rest from pursuing Him -- His Spirit is suddenly calling me and I know that, not only have I been pursuing Him- but that He is pursuing me as well!!

Thank you, thank you, Lord!

Though the rest of my days may never be full of ease and comfort (and I'm glad for this)- they will be glorious and rich because I am in love with my Lord! and He is in love with me!

So, let others have their "secured" seat in heaven. Let them live the rest of their lives for themselves. I'll give Him every bit of me- and more if He asks! I really don't care what I get in return. He is enough for me!!!

Re: You're As Close To God as You Want To Be - posted by butterflies (), on: 2004/8/18 13:18

Chanin,

This holds such an awesome truth. It is something that God has taught me over the last three years of my life. My light for God never went out; however I did put it under a table so it wouldn't shine.

I was so self-reliant. I didn't have a surrendered life over to the Lord. I am sure there are still areas that need to be turned over to Him. I find that the closer I draw to Him the nearer He gets. The more my hunger for Him grows, the more hunger for knowledge and closeness I want with Him.

I recently surrendered something over to the Lord that was still not in His control. I was finally brought to my knees and I prayed to Him and asked Him to take it from me. How blessed I have been since! My hunger has grown and I find myself only thinking about what He wants in my life rather than self-direction.

Re: close as you want to be - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/18 13:47

Jennifer,

It definitely is a process but that initial surrendering, that initial wrestling with the Lord (like Jacob) is such a big milestone. When we let the Lord win that one, we know we are His, He gives us a new name- and a new "limp". :)

It is amazing isn't it, the hunger that comes from this kind of intimacy with the Lord. When you know that you are not your own anymore 100%, you are willing to give it all up to Him-- whatever He asks of you. You know the Father is just blessing. We are finally loving Him in return with all our hearts.

Praising Him with you!!

In Him, Chanin

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/8/18 18:44

Quote:
-----This is actually the second half of the article titled "Four Circles of Intimacy-(you're as close to God as You want to be)" by J. Oswald Sanders.

Thank you so much for sharing this Chanin, the subject of the thread itself: "You're as close to God as you want to be" has been something the Lord has been driving into my spirit for the last 6 months. I have heard it in sermons by Ravenhill, Daniels, and have read the same thing in a few other places, especially in the word of God this concept has come out to me.

Re: - posted by butterflies (), on: 2004/8/19 10:12

Chanin,

I have found over the last few days that only in Him are we truly ever satisfied. God has taken my darkness and made it totally light. When there are times that rear themselves I may be prompted to get prideful, God sends the feelings of peace and humility waving over my soul. I am brought to my knees no matter where I am, earlier I ran to the bathroom and bowed at the toilet to pray, now that is the funniest position the Lord has had me in so far, but praise His holy name I still did it. :)

Re: close to God - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/19 10:25

Quote:
-----I am brought to my knees no matter where I am, earlier I ran to the bathroom and bowed at the toilet to pray, now that is the funniest position the Lord has had me in so far, but praise His holy name I still did it. :)

ha ha. I am assuming you were at work. :-(

I think the work place for many people is a huge test of character and shows the evidence of how close to God we really are. (or should say "how satisfied in Him we are"?) Especially when you around around people who may be hard to get a long with.

Maybe someone should write a book called "Humility in the Workplace". :-)

In Him, Chanin

Re: LOL - posted by butterflies (), on: 2004/8/19 12:07

Chanin,

Oh yah, I am at work. I never bowed down at a toilet ever to pray. This is funnier than me bowing down on a floor laid out with fleas to pray.

Look where the Lord asked Jeremiah to go, in the dust on his side to lay there for days and days for the sins of Israel. Asking him to pack his bags and dig a hole in the wall during daybreak and walk out of the city.

All are signs of faith and how I praise Him for them.

Re: - posted by formidable (), on: 2004/8/23 10:17

i find it really is "how much are you prepared to give up" to have him.

how much will you die to self,tv,computer, friends, these are all good but in light of jesus christ the only God who ever died for me then i must die to live.

i find the overwhelming thing the Holy Spirit is saying to me is "intimacy" he looks for a people to share his burdens. he wants to be our only love, my first love he is & if this brings me a label from friends, family , church, whoever i dont care as intimacy is what i desire his presence more than life, him my only love