

Heart Reflections

Reflecting on our personal walk with God
by Pr. Michael Taylor

The goal of this section has been to encourage and equip you with the tools and mindsets necessary to have a personal and meaningful walk with God that you can continue long after these guides have ended. In case you missed it, there are a few key ideas that need to be stated here that apply to all of these practices:

- 1) Intimacy requires intentionality. If you want to have a deep and meaningful relationship with God, it takes intentional effort. Satan will do whatever it takes to make sure that you don't accidentally find time for Jesus throughout the day. The idea of regularly scheduling some intentional time for God shouldn't be a shock if you know anything about the Sabbath (if you don't, that's okay...we'll get to that in a future lesson). God was intentional about setting aside sacred time in Genesis 2, and He hopes that we're just as intentional in our efforts to connect with Him. The same is true for the content of our worship habits; we should approach our time with God with some sort of plan for what you're going to do.
- 2) Everyone has a different plan. Though everyone should have a plan for their devotionals, prayer time, worships, etc., we are all unique and our habits should reflect this uniqueness. As we saw in the lesson on praise & worship with Martha and Mary, Jesus is sensitive to the unique personalities and approaches of each of His followers. The suggestions of S.O.A.P. and A.C.T.S. were just two of many ways that you can structure your devotionals and prayer time, and I mention them because they work for me personally. It's not that they work, period. It's that they work for me. You need to work with God to find the habits that are most effective in connecting you with Him and His Word, prayerfully asking Him to shape your overall time commitment, the timing of the various things you do, and the form & content of those habits.
- 3) Because He's the center of all of this, our habits should come from Him and be focused on Him. There are all kinds of spiritual habits that people have come up with that make them feel better about themselves but do little to connect them with God. He is the one who designed the devotional practices we use, because the only way we could know God is through how He reveals Himself to us. He gave us these awesome tools because He knows that (if used properly) they'll help us connect with Him. But that's

a big IF. We have a habit of misusing or misunderstanding the tools and doing things that hurt our walk with God instead of helping. We take a spiritual habit like fasting and make it about how we feel about ourselves ("soooooo hungry") instead of how we're able to know God better. Or we put the focus on the tool instead of on God; such as if we read the Bible in like a textbook that gives us information and makes us smarter, instead of treating it like a love letter that helps make our relationship stronger.

What is one thing you've taken from this section that you know will help your walk with God? _____

What is one new thing that you learned or realized about how to grow in your walk with God from these lessons? _____

What is one thing you still don't understand about having a personal relationship with God that wasn't explained or wasn't explained well enough? _____

Which of the habits that we studied is most helpful to you for connecting with God? (Circle) Bible Study Bible Devotionals Worship Prayer

Which of the habits that we studied is least helpful to you for connecting with God? (Circle) Bible Study Bible Devotionals Worship Prayer

Which, if any, devotional habits would you like to learn more about? (Circle any that apply.)

Bible Study Bible Devotionals Worship Prayer Fasting Meditation
Simplicity Service Art Confession Baptism Communion Silence

Describe your ideal routine for growing in your relationship with God. What would you do, how long would you spend on it, where would you do it, etc.?
