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"Why Have A Personal Time With The Lord?"
Psalm 1; 4:3-8; Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16

"How blessed in the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scoffers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he does meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2).

"But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him. Tremble, and do not sin. Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still (Selah – think of that). Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the LORD. Many are saying, 'Who will show us any good?' Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us O LORD! You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:3-8).

Matthew records these words concerning Jesus, "After He (Jesus) sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone" (14:23).

Luke adds, "But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray" (Luke 5:16).

Paul told the young pastor Timothy to "be diligent to present yourself approved unto God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Peter tells us to be ready to give an account of the hope that is in us (I Peter 3:15).

As David was meditating on the Word of God, as He meditated on the LORD on his bed, as Christ got away to pray to His heavenly Father, as Paul and Peter talk about knowing God's Word and being able to talk about our hope intelligently, what was happening in these verses in the lives of these different individuals??

May I suggest to you that David, that Jesus Christ, that Paul and Peter had an understanding of the necessity for having a personal time with their Lord.

But why is it a necessity for believers in Christ to have a personal time with the Lord each day?

I. Our Heavenly Father desires to meet with us personally.

How do we know that??

1. Old Testament teaching.

****Adam & Eve.**

When we turn to Genesis, the first book in the Bible, we find that God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, the Garden of Delight, to cultivate it and keep it. It must have been a beautiful and gorgeous place. But after Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from the Lord. Then Genesis 3:8-10 tells us that "They (Adam & Eve) heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees in the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said (Adam) I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself"

Of course God knows everything actual and possible, He was just getting Adam's and Eve's attention as He came to Adam and Eve. Due to their sin they felt guilty before God and hid from Him.

But what's of interest here is that evidently before this time of sin of Adam and Eve, God had been coming to them and having fellowship with them. The text doesn't tell us about this fellowship. But Adam and Eve were created with a spiritual make-up, with a mind, emotion, and will so that they might be able to respond to God in their minds with thoughts about God and express those thoughts to Him, love God in their emotion, and serve Him with their wills.

This time of God coming to Adam and Eve after their sin against God was different because of their sin against their Creator, and they were ashamed of what they had done and were full of guilt.

But the text seems to indicate that God's coming to Adam and Eve was not something out of the ordinary. One would think that it was an everyday experience for Adam and Eve as they cared for the Garden of Eden. God came to fellowship with them and they in turn fellowshiped with the LORD getting to know Him on a more personal level. It's hard for us to imagine what might have gone on between the Lord and Adam and Eve.

****Abraham – Genesis 18:1-8**

In this classic passage we have three visitors coming to Abraham in the heat of the day. It became apparent soon that one of these visitors was the LORD in His preincarnate state. Abraham gave them oriental courtesies along with a meal. God came to fellowship with His friend Abraham. God in this instance also had some information for him regarding Sarah that she would have a son in her advanced old age, and that He was going to have to bring judgment on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah where his nephew Lot lived. In the last part of Genesis 18, there is the dialogue between the LORD and Abraham as to how many righteous people would have to be living in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in order for God to save the immoral cities. The bottom line was that if God found 10 righteous in these cities, He would not destroy the cities. God didn't find 10 righteous in the city but spared Lot, his wife, and two daughters, although Lot's wife looked back while escaping the cities, disobeying the angel of the Lord, and she turned into a pillar of salt.

This entire chapter is a beautiful picture of God's love for Abraham and His desire to have fellowship with Him and to personally engage Abraham in His plans for Abraham and Sarah, and Abraham's extended family.

2. New Testament Teaching.

Of course the classic passage that our heavenly Father desires to meet with us personally is found in John 4:23 where the Lord Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well "But an hour is coming and now is when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers."

We looked at this passage in John 4 when we considered, "Why Worship?" But it is so applicable to our discussion today of why the necessity of a personal time with the Lord. For our Heavenly Father is seeking to meet with us personally. The Lord desires our fellowship.

Our heavenly Father wants to get together with us. Yes, He is seeking us to get together with us.

In fact the word, seeking, means to search after, to look for. The word for seek is also in the present tense, meaning that our Heavenly Father always desires to have a personal time with us, to enjoy fellowship with us, and then for us to respond in giving Him His worth in our personal lives.

II. The Reason our heavenly Father desires to meet with us personally.

1. He has created us initially to have fellowship with Him, to meet with Him personally.
2. In spite of our sin and rebellion, He has provided us forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Christ, so that now He can have fellowship with us. John penned in I John 1:3 – "Indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."
3. He knows that His meeting with is necessary for us to have a daily renewing in and a refocusing of our minds, our emotions, and our wills on who He is and what He has for us in His Word.
4. What our heavenly Father wants to do for us is to be able to develop us in our relationship with Him so that He becomes more personal in our lives so in that process our lives will truly glorify Him.

In Psalm 73 the writer is having a challenge understanding why those who reject God, the wicked are prospering. As a believer in the LORD, he seeks to live a pure life, but at the same time is having so many struggles. He is very upset with God until He goes into the sanctuary of the LORD, where the presence of the LORD resided in the Old Testament worship system. There he realized that those who reject the LORD will perish, but in his faith in the LORD, God is the only One He has in heaven and on earth. Yes, the LORD is his strength and portion forever.

God was there waiting for this man whose thought process were getting way of out balance, thinking the thoughts of men. But when the Psalmist came into the presence of the Lord, the Lord met him personally and

changed his thinking to understand that the Lord was all that He needed in life, and that He was His refuge in the midst of His challenges.

The Psalmist's response after He realized that the Lord was all He needed in life, "But as for me, the nearness of God is my good: I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works."

God comes to meet with us to encourage, to renew, to refocus us in our thinking, our emotions, and our wills, so that in it all He might be glorified and our lives might be enriched with His spiritual blessings of grace and love.

John Piper puts it this way: God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

III. The Meaning of our heavenly Father desiring to meet with us personally.

**Our heavenly Father is always there to meet with us- John 4:23

**Our heavenly Father never tires of searching us out – He does it constantly and continually no matter how long we have known the Lord as our personal Savior. He never tires of wanting to meet with us personally. How phenomenal is that!!! In fact, the LORD rejoices over us with shouts of joy (Zephaniah 3:17).

**Our heavenly Father never leaves or forsakes us. He is always there waiting for us to meet with Him!

** Our heavenly Father, then, is completely dependable and reliable. He says what He says, and means what He says. He is totally trustworthy.

** This is truly amazing grace. That's why coming into God's presence is called the throne of grace. The Creator of the universe, and the One who provides the believer redemption through faith in Jesus Christ, desires to meet with each believer personally to provide encouragement and meet needs. Our worship and fellowship brings glory to Him.

IV. The privilege the believer has in meeting personally with his heavenly Father.

Since our heavenly Father desires always to meet personally with us, it is certainly the believer's privilege to be there to meet with His God. **Yes, it is the privilege of each believer to meet personally with his Lord who is desirous to meet with him.**

Think of Mary who was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to him teach in Luke 10:38-42. Martha was certainly fulfilling a wonderful task in preparing a meal for her Lord. But she missed that what Mary was doing was learning from her Lord truths that could not be taken from her. **Evidently for Mary, it was a privilege to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from His word. And to think that she was sitting at the feet of Him who was her Creator and Redeemer – God in flesh.**

V. The exhortation the believer has from his heavenly Father to meet personally with Him.

1. Hebrews 4:16

Since we have this great High Priest who sympathizes with us in all of our temptations and struggles, "Let us draw near, let us approach, is the idea, with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

"Let us approach continually, at any time," is the idea here. This is a present exhortation (by the construction of the verb here) that God gives us to approach His throne of grace. As God provides us the privilege to meet with Him personally, He is also exhorting us, encouraging us to meet with personally.

God is telling us that He not only desires to meet with us personally, He give us the privilege to do so, and in the process, our heavenly Father encourages us to meet with Him personally.

Obviously God is telling us something very important here!! What is it? God is telling us as followers of Jesus Christ that it is impossible in our lives to survive spiritually and to have a dynamic spiritual life without having a personal time with the LORD each day.

2. II Timothy 2:15.

When Paul wrote to young Timothy, he told him to be in earnest to be able to present himself approved by God a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling the word of God correctly or accurately (II Timothy 2:15). This is the great AWANA verse, but I believe Paul was telling young Timothy to have a personal time with the Lord so that he would know what God said in His word in order to share it with others. Of course it's through the Word of God that we meet God personally.

3. I Peter 3:15.

Peter tells us to "sanctify – purify – set apart (command) Christ as Lord in our hearts so that we may be able to give an answer- an apology, is the word, meaning to be able to tell why we believe what we believe to everyone who asks us to give an account for the hope that is in us, yet with gentleness and reverence."

Again a personal time with the Lord gives us the opportunity to let God speak to us through His Word, and to let God teach us so we can talk intelligently about our faith. It's in that personal time with the Lord that we continue to acknowledge Him as Lord of our lives and let Him change our lives into His image.

God exhorts to come into His presence boldly to meet personally with Him. He knows that we can not have a dynamic spiritual life without meeting with Him each day.

VI. The mechanics of meeting with the Lord personally.

So how does this all work – you and God getting together.

1. We need to recognize that God is always there waiting for us to meet with Him.

2. We need to understand that getting together with the Lord is going to take some effort on our part.

All of us have different schedules and different demands on our lives. Sometimes it is difficult to find a time to meet with the Lord personally. You will be blessed if you take the time each day to meet with the Lord.

3. The time of meeting with the Lord personally is going to vary from individual to individual.

Some like to have personal time with the Lord in the morning, some in the evening, and if a mother has small children, she may have to find some time during naps of the little ones. God knows what's going on in our lives, and He is there all the time, we just need to take time to recognize that He is there and spend time with Him.

4. The meeting itself with one's heavenly Father.

- It should center on reading God's Word – taking a Psalm. Remember that Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to Jesus' word, His teaching. Or taking a book in Bible and taking a chapter or several verses in the chapter. Say, taking I John and spending time reading through it each day. There are all kinds of devotional helps today available. Perhaps you use one. I like "His Utmost For His Highest" by Oswald Chambers. You can even have your personal time with the Lord over the internet if you go to: www.biblegateway.com you will find different versions available for reading. If you like to write things down that the Spirit of God is teaching you, you will find in your bulletin this morning a sheet for that purpose. I have more of these available.
- Meditate on what one is reading.
- Letting the Word of God focus us on who God is and what God means to us.
- Asking what do I see, what does it mean, and how does it apply to me.
- It's also a time for confessing any sin in one's life to the Lord. Of course this can be done at the time one sins against the Lord.
- It's a time of praising the Lord for His goodness, grace, and holiness.
- It's a time to ask the Lord for His guidance and direction and to have His discernment.
- It's a time of bringing one's needs and requests to the Lord in prayer.
- It's a time of intercession for different members of one's family, of the church family, of friends you know.
- It's a time to enter into spiritual warfare in asking the victorious Christ through His blood to bring down the strongholds of immorality, greed, and covetousness in our land.
- It's a time to ask God to cause our leaders in government to be convicted to follow His righteousness.
- It's a time to enter into asking God to spread His word through our missionaries and other people who are standing for Jesus Christ.

The believer's meeting with God should be one that finds one's spirit satisfied and refreshed in the Lord as one fellowships with the Lord through His Word, meditating on His word and praying to Him. One pastor suggested that you pray for different things on different days rather than trying to cover all the topics on one day. In fact the time one spends with the Lord may vary each day.

I have a little pamphlet here entitled "7 Minutes With God – How to Plan a Daily Quiet Time." It talks about investing the first 30 seconds in thank the Lord for His love and care and asking the Lord to cleanse one's heart

so that one will be open to the Scriptures as one reads. It is suggested that four minutes be used to read a passage in the Bible, letting that passage or verse speak to you. Then engage in 3 minutes of confession, adoration, thanksgiving and Supplication – or in prayer for different needs.

The challenge is to adjust one's schedule to have a personal time with the Lord each day. If one misses a day, one should make a special effort the next day to meet personally with the LORD. The longer one misses meeting with His Lord, the easier it will be to think that its not a necessary part of one's life.

But there is one more area. The believer meets with one's heavenly Father, and then when that meeting is over, life is still there, things to do, a family to care for perhaps, work, other responsibilities.

VII. Life after the believer has met personally with His Lord.

1. A greater understanding of who God is in His person.

He is holy. He is a God of love. He is a God of grace. He does care for me. He is in control. Look at Psalm 40 where the Psalmist thirsts for the Lord. As he does so, he find his life in despair, but then he starts thinking about the LORD commanding his lovingkindness in the daytime; and His song being with him in the night, a prayer to the God of my life. He even acknowledges that he thinks God has forgotten him, as he vacillates in his thinking, **but finally he realizes God is there, and says to himself, "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.**

Even though the Psalmist had despair and doubts in his life coming into the presence of His Lord changed his attitude and outlook. He realized that God was there and his hope.

2. A greater sensitivity to the reality of God living in one's life.

Go back to Psalm 73 which we mentioned awhile ago. What changed the life of the psalmist? Coming into God's presence gave him a renewed understanding of God's holiness and love and all that he needed in life was the LORD, and He would deal with those who were wicked or against him. He realized that God was alive and involved in his life.

3. A greater understanding of what sin is and a sensitivity to sin when one does sin with quick confession to the Lord.

The Psalmist in Psalm 119: 104 – From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."

4. A greater desire to do what's right and to please the Lord.

Again the Psalmist in Psalm 119:11 – "Your word I have treasured – hid - in my heart that I may not sin against thee."

5. A greater evidence of Christ's character in one's life.

One who has a personal time with the Lord each day should give evidence of the character of Christ in one's individual life and conduct (Galatians 5:22-23).

Love of the Lord, for Him and others.

The Lord's joy, satisfaction.

The Lord's peace in the storm and with others.

The Lord's patience – endurance – in the tough times of life.

The Lord's kindness – consideration of and respect of others.

The Lord's goodness – doing that which is His will.

The Lord's faithfulness – keeping one's word and being reliable and dependable.

The Lord's gentleness – sensitive to the needs of others.

The Lord's self-control – letting God's indwelling Holy Spirit control my thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

When we start getting a little hard to live with, a little rough on the edges, it may be that we haven't been spending personal time or enough personal time with the Lord. Perhaps it's a way to check up on our attitudes when they are not Christ-like.

6. A greater contentment in one's spirit as the believer knows that the Lord, his Friend, is going to work out all things for him and his family's good and for God's glory.

The one who has a personal time with the Lord knows that his Friend Jesus is going to make all things right for his life, his family, and for the world.

Psalm 37:1-7a gives us the perspective we need as we have a personal time with the Lord.

"Do not fret because of evil doers. Be not envious toward wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Trust in the Lord do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desire of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him!!

May that be our experience as we have our personal time with the Lord each day.

Now I realize that many here today may have a personal time with the Lord already. I trust that these reminders encourage you to keep on enjoying your time with your Lord. If you don't have a consistent personal time with the Lord, I encourage you to try to carve out some time each day in your schedule to meet with the Lord, for He is waiting for you to meet with Him.

Our students can have a personal time with the Lord, and I have encouraged that in our Bible Instruction Class now in process. Habits formed now will become life-long practices that will enrich and grow one's relationship with the Lord. Also small children can be helped to start personal times with the Lord. Those who are still younger love to be read to and prayed with a bed time. Such also is a foundation for developing a personal relationship with the Lord.

I am thankful for the opportunity God has given me to have a personal time with Him. A relationship I started a number of years ago as a young lad.

Remember the Lord is waiting to meet with you. Yes, He is beseeching you, imploring you to meet with Him on a daily basis.

Answer His call. Your life will never be the same. You will be changed daily for time and eternity.