

The Honeycomb Ministries (Bible Studies Manual)

WAYS TO EXPERIENCE AND SUSTAIN INTIMACY WITH GOD (HOLY SPIRIT)

1. What does intimacy generally mean?

One could describe intimacy as the experience of truly knowing and being known by another person. An intimate friend is someone we feel very close to; they know us at a **deep level** rather than at a superficial level.

The **Cambridge dictionary** explains ‘intimacy’ as being in a **close** or **personal relationship** with another individual or entity or possessing **detailed knowledge** or **understanding** about someone or something obtained from **consistent studies** or **experience**.

2. Is it possible for a mortal being to share intimacy with an immortal God?

- The points below highlight God’s desire and pursuit to develop and maintain intimacy with man.
 - a) The nature of God’s relationship with man after creation revealed His desire to harness and sustain intimacy with man: *“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”* (Genesis 3:8 NKJV)
 - b) God’s desire to satisfy the needs of man (everything man would need was provided for by God): *“The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”* (Genesis 2:18 NIV)
 - c) His benevolence towards mankind even after they had sinned: *“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”* (Genesis 3:31 NIV)
 - d) His desperate desire to reconcile man back to His original level of intimacy: *“But God clearly shows and proves His own love for us, by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8 AMP)
 - e) On the platform of faith: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me.”* (Revelations. 3:20)
 - f) Through the medium of the Holy Spirit: *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.”* (John 14:16 NIV)

3. How does intimacy with God look?

- a) God walking with people normally suggests closeness, intimacy, and fellowship (for example: Noah (Genesis 6:9), Enoch (Genesis 5:24), Abraham (James 2:23), etc. God communicates His plans and decisions to such individuals and uses them as partners to accomplish His purposes.
- b) The model of marriage is used to demystify or illustrate the relationship between the church and Christ. *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for.”* (Ephesians 5:25 NKJV)
- c) Friendships premised on unconditional love: *“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.”* (1 Samuel 18:3). *“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!”* (Isaiah 49:15).

4. Which attributes of genuine human relationships can be used to exemplify intimacy with God?

Total trust, unwavering honesty, mutual empathy, kindness, forgivingness, commitment, constant appreciation, humility, awareness of roles and responsibility, in-depth knowledge of one another, sacrifice, patience, contentment, consistency, mutual respect (free will), self-control, quality communication, love, growth etc.

5. Is intimacy with God a choice or a requirement for believers?

Ideally, intimacy with God is what every individual should yearn for and pursue in order to benefit from the full package of salvation. *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5) This notwithstanding God gives man the free will to make this decision.

Joshua’s words re-empathised God’s position regarding this in Joshua 24:15 NIV, *“But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”*

Although God is always careful to indicate to man His utmost desire regarding the extent of intimacy He desires, He doesn’t impose. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”* (Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV) He however, places the alternative choice coupled with its consequences to man and permits him to decide for Himself. *“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,”* (Deuteronomy 30:15 NIV); *“There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death”* (Proverbs 14:25 NIV).

6. To what extent does God desire to get intimate with man?

- a) As close a man desires: *“Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near.”* (Isaiah 55:6 NIV). *“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD...”* (Jeremiah 29:12-14). *“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* (James 4:8 NKJV)
- b) An eternal relationship: *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* (John 14:3 KJV). *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”* (John 10:28-30 NIV)

What are the ways to experience intimacy?

1. Acknowledge and treat the Holy Spirit as a personal companion and leader (How?)

- a) Relate with Him as one would with a friend: seek guidance, consult, and take instructions from Him as one would with a leader. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”* (Proverbs 3:5-6)

How do we know the Holy Spirit is a person?

His human attributes: The Holy Spirit is first of all referred to with the third person singular pronoun “He” in scripture, which is clearly a reference to a person. Furthermore, “the Bible presents a person as a substance that can do personal and relational things (such as speaking, thinking, feeling, and acting)” (Tailor, 2013). He teaches, helps, and reminds believers (John 14:26); He speaks (Acts 8:29); He expresses emotions (Ephesians 4:30); Man could lie to Him (Acts 5:3-4); He gives gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11); He bears witnesses (Romans 8:16) etc.

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come (John 16:13).

- 2. **Cultivate both spontaneous and routine (uninterrupted) times of fellowship in addition to corporate church services.** Immerse yourself in word study, prayer, and worship by allocating a designated time to engage in prayer, dance, worship, and praise, etc. as individuals would do with the people they care about. Spontaneous engagement in these activities in a consistent manner will enable believers to eventually develop a lifestyle of intimacy with the Lord.

"In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly." (Psalm 5:3 NIV). "One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon." (Acts 3: 1 NIV). "On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night." (Psalm 63:2 NIV).

Aside from the regular periods of fellowship, "surprise" your companion (the Spirit of God) with random meditations, worship songs, etc. while allowing Him to reciprocate the gesture.

3. **Develop regular but varied systems of interactions with Him:** Include a variety of activities in your daily quiet time with God to avoid a boring, monotonous routine. For instance, the word of God could be engaged with in the form of personal scripture reading, audio Bibles, commentaries, watching or listening to sermons, reading some Christian literature, hymns, spirit-filled worship, etc. Including a wide range of activities plays a role in spicing up and enriching our Christian experience and enables believers to build deep intimacy with the Spirit of God. *"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8 NIV)
4. **Be delighted to fellowship with Him at all times:** Remember that the decision to get intimate with God is a personal one, and therefore nothing should be done out of compulsion, obligation, the desire to please anyone, or just to eliminate personal guilt. David loved to fellowship with God and meditate on God's word; hence, he exclaimed, *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"* (Psalm 119:103 NIV). *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD!'"* (Psalm 122:1 ESV).
5. **Make His interests your priority:** Do not be overwhelmed by your personal needs and desires, but allow the priorities of the Father to remodel your thought patterns and actions. Below are some scriptures spelling out some of God's priorities.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9 NKJV). "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33 NIV).

"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" (Haggi 1:4 NKJV). "...The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:31-40).

6. **Be determined to please Him:** Resolve to please the Lord through your faith in Him.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6) emphasises the importance of obedience to His word and instructions as a sign of devotion towards Him. "If you love me, keep my command" (John 14:15).

Be generous with your time, services, and resources at all times. We can touch the heart of God by going above and beyond in our services or sacrifices to Him. Solomon's sacrifice triggered the affection of the Lord to present Him with a 'blank cheque' (2 Chronicles 1:6-12). Give your companion a 'treat' on a regular basis by rendering quality services or engaging with Him, not only at your convenience. **(What kinds of treats come to mind?)**

Be determined to be an addicted lover of Christ. *"Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NIV). "Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky." (Philippians 12:14-15 NIV) Let God be the one you seek to please at all times. "Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (Acts 5:29 NIV).*

7. **Be sincere and honest in your dealings with Him:** The Lord knows the heart and intentions of man and therefore cannot be deceived by words or actions from a corrupt heart. *"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV).*

Remember the faithfulness of God and endeavour to do likewise as He empowers because He cannot be mocked. *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7 NIV) "God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19 NIV). "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." (Matthew 15:8 NIV).*

A 'healthy' intimacy with the Lord cannot thrive on hypocrisy; therefore, all actions and words should be fueled by a right state of the heart before God. *"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139: 23-24 NIV).*

8. **Be determined to be useful to Him:** Enrolling in the Lord's service fundamentally requires sanctification and the availability to work for Him. Furthermore, serving the Lord with talents, skills, and gifts is paramount. There are times when one may need to enrol in institutions to enhance or learn new skills in order to be able to work better for the Lord.

"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work." (2 Timothy 2:20 NIV). "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do". (Ephesians 2:10 NIV). "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." (1 Peter 4:10 NLT).

9. **Be loyal and jealously protect His interests and assets:** Loyalty is more than words. True loyalty will result in actions and a lifestyle that portray love and determination to stay with Him. Peter and the other disciples denied and abandoned Jesus, although they had pledged loyalty (Matthew 26:33-35). Proudly propagating the gospel and enduring afflictions are all indicators of one's loyalty to Christ.

It is essential to publicly declare and demonstrate one's love for Him when presented with the opportunity. Acknowledging the love of God and blessings at the slightest opportunity and giving credit to Him reinforces the believers' loyalty to Him. Furthermore, be willing to support and intercede for projects that concern His Kingdom. Believers must also ensure that their actions and utterances do not harm the body of Christ.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile." (Romans 1:16 NIV).

"But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven." (Matthew 10:33 NIV)

Below are some inspiring quotes regarding loyalty to God:

- *"Faithfulness to God is our first obligation in all that we are called to do in the service of the gospel."* - Iain H. Murray
- *"God continually tests people's character, faith, obedience, love, integrity, and loyalty."*
- Rick Warren
- *"Beware of anything that competes with your loyalty to Jesus Christ."* - Oswald Chambers

10. **Engage in endeavours that will make Him proud to have you as His Bride:** Be determined to live a life that will only bring glory and honour unto His name.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16 NIV).

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20).

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)

11. **Study from and about Him:** endeavour to imbibe information from the scriptures and expositions from: Christian literature, audios, videos, Christian resources, Christian channels that broadcast fellow believers' testimonies and experiences, etc. Exposure to information of this nature makes one accustomed to God's dynamic personality, especially in relation to His varied dealings with man.

"The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by. Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the

earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.” (I Kings 19:11-13, NIV)

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” (Proverbs 18:15 ESV).

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.” (Proverbs 25)

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV)

12. Desire His power and attributes: intimacy with the Holy Spirit facilitates a renewal of mindset to conform to the patterns of God. Believers in this category experience quicker activation of the gifts of the Spirit and endowment of the power of God to exercise dominion over the works of the devil.

“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Philippians 3:10, NKJV).

Jesus gave them this answer: *“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does”* (John 5:19 NIV).

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.” (Romans 8:11, NIV)

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13, NKJV)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem.” (Acts 1:8, NIV)

13. Be prepared to pay the price of self-denial that comes with intimacy: developing a close relationship with the Lord requires high levels of sacrifices, such as: pleasure, luxury, time, resources, relationships, delicacies, sleep, dignity, etc. It is worth mentioning that the self-denials involved aren't a one-off activity but a daily, recurrent culture that needs to be imbibed to ensure sustenance, continuity, and growth.

“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow me continuously.” (Matthew 16:24, ISV)

“Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life.” (Mark 10:29-30, NLT)

“Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” (Luke 9:58, NIV)

14. Consistently share your thoughts, plans, fears, concerns, etc. with Him: The core binding agent of every close relationship is the intentionality attached to the sharing of both general and classified information. People who have developed intimacy with the Lord do not only go to Him for guidance and support when they have exhausted all their options. They keep Him informed, updated, and seek His consent regarding even basic or “trivial” matters; and He is always faithful in reciprocating the gesture regarding His plans and exposing those of the enemy.

“It’s not us, my lord the king,” one of the officers replied. “Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom!” (2 Kings 6:12, NLT)

“I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.” (Psalm 34:4, NIV)

“The LORD said, “Shall I keep secret from Abraham [My friend and servant] what I am going to do, (Genesis 18:17, AMP)

“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You, Lord, know it completely...” (Psalm 139, NIV)

15. Keep a journal or any means of compiling details of your experiences: The Bible contains details of people’s experiences and encounters, which we read for encouragement, empowerment of faith, lessons about life, etc. Similarly, having a means of conserving personal experiences and testimonies of one’s walk with the Lord will enable the believer to track their growth process, provide encouraging reminders on future intimacy endeavours, and serve as a manual for mentoring others.

“Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.” (Joel 1:3, NIV)

“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deuteronomy 11: 18-19, ESV)

“Then the LORD said to me, “Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.” (Habakkuk 2:2, NLT)

16. Keep certain experiences secret: It is essential for believers who are aspiring to build intimacy with the Lord to be discrete in the dissemination of information and encounters they obtain from the Lord. Take note that not all information, revelations, visions, dreams, trances, etc. are for public consumption. Ask the Spirit of God for guidance regarding what to share, what to keep, and what to deliver in due season.

“Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah” (Matthew 16:20, NIV)

“And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.” (Revelations 10:4 NIV)

“Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!” So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?” This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.” (John 21:20-24, ESV)

- 17. Desire to know Him beyond the ‘logos’ of scripture and what others have said:** An undeniable indicator of intimacy with Christ is when a believer’s relationship with God isn’t only premised on scriptures and the experiences of others but on the platform of individual validations based on the compendium of personal experiences or encounters.

“They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.” (John 4:42, NIV)

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.” (1 John 1:1, NIV)

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16: 13-16)

How can we maintain and strengthen our intimacy with God once we've developed it?

- 1. Don’t take the relationship with God for granted:** Complacency and familiarity have robbed many of their ability to experience higher levels of intimacy. Don’t stop making efforts to enhance your intimacy with Him; every day is a fresh opportunity to make new strides in the growth process of a believer. Never assume you know Him enough, there are always new and higher dimensions of the knowledge of God.

“I assure you, believers, by the pride which I have in you in [your union with] Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. I face death and die to self.” (1 Corinthians 15: 31, AMP)

“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.” (Psalm 143:8, NIV)

“When I remember You on my bed, I meditate and thoughtfully focus on You in the night watches.” (Psalm 63:6, AMP)

2. **Help others to also develop and build their intimacy with Christ:** Every benefit derived through Christ is essentially for the benefit of others. Intimacy with the Lord is a rare investment made in us through the Spirit of God.

“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.” (2 Corinthians 1:4, NLT)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV)

3. **Consistently vet your intentions:** Ensure that your motivation to remain intimate with Him is premised on genuine love for Him, to abide by His will, and to promote His agenda.

“May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10, NLT)

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33, NIV).

4. **Don’t get weary of waiting and trusting His timing.**

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9, NIV)

5. **Guard your initial passion for intimacy** and endeavour to be a witness of this relationship to others.

“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.” (Revelation 2:4, NIV)

Reference

Taylor, J. (2013, December). *How Do We know the Holy Spirit is a Person?*

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/how-do-we-know-the-holy-spirit-is-a-person/>