

## I. WHAT HAS GOD ASKED US TO DO

- A. Our main assignment is to exalt Jesus with night and day worship and prayer until He finds a place of rest on our region. This means we pursue and prioritize the building and keep a sanctuary from which everything else we do flows out of. It is our centerpiece.

*Psalm 132:5 Until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.*

## II. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD/ INTIMACY WITH GOD

- A. God is a bridegroom God (*Matt 9:1; 25:1*) who desires friendship with us. We have access to the most incredible relationship with the uncreated God and can choose to embrace it. But intimacy with God must be fought for and we have to press in to believe; to believe that He exists, that He is listening, and that He will respond to us.

*James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to You....”*

- B. Salvation is free, but the deep things of God are given according to the hunger we have for them. *Proverbs 25:2* - The concept is likened to the phrase; “The hungry get hungrier, the richer get richer” *Mark 4:25*. If you and I can live without Him, we will. If we can’t, we will have Him in time.

*Prov 2:1-5 If you seek for her as silver and search for her as hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.*

- C. We become masters at many things; we have experts at so many things in our world that we can even begin to adopt this mentality when it comes to knowing God.
- D. God desires to be with us in spite of all our weakness and issues. When embraced, this reality allows us to receive His emotions and affections and in turn give them back to Him. This love is reciprocated. He reveals what He feels and we respond back to Him.

*1 Jn 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.*

*Is 62:5 “And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.”*

## III. GOD IS THE SOURCE OF OUR DEEPEST LONGINGS

*Song of Solomon 1:3-4 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth;...4 Draw me away! We will run after you.... We will remember your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.*

- A. Longing and pleasure originated with God, not with Satan or man. There internal longing is in the heart of each human. If we as humans do not know God or have little knowledge of Him, then inferior pleasures, called sin, seem a worthy fulfillment rather than being a bankrupt system.
- B. He likened His pleasure in us through a wedding in *Matthew 22:2*. He opened up a whole new understanding to the way we would relate to Him and to the lesser pleasures apart from Him.

- C. Longing is an emotional and genuine need, an intangible feeling that ebbs and flows that cannot be reasoned with or dismissed. If not attended to it, it will overtake a person. Legitimately or illegitimately, the longing of human hearts will be filled. We have inherent longings and desires in our hearts.

- \*To be adored
- \*To be magnificent
- \*To give oneself to something with abandon
- \*Longing for to be enjoyed
- \*To be close to another without embarrassment

#### IV. WHAT FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD LOOKS LIKE

- A. Friendship means we obey Christ by what we hear Him say to us, through the Word of God or by the conviction of the Holy Spirit or His leading in our heart. Obeying means doing the things that He has made clear that He has asked of us. As His friends, His desire now becomes our desire.

***Jn 15:10;14-15 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love,... You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.<sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.***

- B. We can't pick and choose which commands we obey. Sometimes we make lists of commands in our mind of those we like to obey while ignoring the ones we think are difficult, unpopular, or too costly. There will be many commands you will obey without understanding in the beginning but the Holy Spirit will teach us as we trust.

***Ps 110:2 Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.***

- C. Friendship requires agreement with Him. We are seeking friendship with one who is called the Holy One and He requires holiness in order for us to be near to Him.

***Ps 15:1-2 "Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth."***

- D. Friendship means willingness to be disciplined. God gets up in our business and rebukes those He loves so that we will not continue on in our sin. Sometimes His voice is louder than others but we still have to make the choice to stay in right standing with Him and respond to His corrections. We resist this reality of God if we don't relate to Him as a bridegroom God.

***Rev 3:19 "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent"***

- E. Friendship means receiving the wounds of God. God wounds those who draw near to Him. We see this painful truth in the life of Job who was one of only a small handful of people in scripture who were directly called a friend of the Lord. God wounded Job deeply. This is an aspect of the nature of God that is actually a sign of trust from the Lord and a mark of maturity of a believer because the Lord is confident that He can wound without fear of fallout.

***Job 13:15-16 “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless person would dare come before him !”***

***Ps 27:6 “Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses .”***

## V. A FRIENDSHIP OF RECIPROCATED LOVE

- A. We can spend our lives learning to love Him well. The effect of God’s love being revealed to the human heart is that it causes us to want to love Him back with all our heart. We want to become really good at loving our friend. Paul’s prayer for the Church of Ephesus was that they would continue to grow in the knowledge of Christ’s love for them so that they could then walk in the fullness that God had for them; for them to love Him back to their fullest potential.

***Eph 3:16-19 “I pray that...he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power...to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”***

- B. We can find ourselves always at His feet. The revelation of God’s love impacted Mary of Bethany so deeply that she spent herself gladly on Him. Mary understood the love that God had for her and so all three times that we see Mary in the gospels we find her at Jesus’ feet; worshiping, listening, crying, or anointing Him. The knowledge of God as an intimate friend touched her in a way that provoked her to respond back to Him in kind.

***Lk 10:38 “Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said.”***

***Jn 11:32 “Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet ”***

***Jn 12:3 “Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil .”***

- C. We can actually measure the depth of our friendship with God according to this scale; how are we doing in the areas of submission to His will, obedience to His leading, righteousness in our lives, willingness to receive His rebukes and even to be wounded by Him? These produce a worship that is a sweet smelling aroma to Him whether you’re on your face, jumping, or seated.

***Is 66:2 for all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist, says the Lord. “but on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.***

***Lev 26:27;31 And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, and I will not smell the fragrance of your <sup>[1]</sup>sweet aromas.***