

*Meeting with God*  
Session 6  
Passion with a Plan

*I have learned to see the Bible as kindling for a holy fire. Scripture is meant to inform us, and thus to inflame us. It is meant to illuminate our thoughts of God, and thus to ignite our affections for God. ...We Christians have in the Bible a treasure that the modern world does not even believe exists, namely, Truth. And we also have a prayer-hearing God who is able to orchestrate events and transform our lives for his glory in the spiritual conflict engulfing the world today.*

—Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr.

Meeting with God must be a discipline. Otherwise our flesh will find excuses to avoid it. So we must have a plan to follow to make our time with God consistently profitable. But discipline is not enough. We must seek God with all of our heart, and that includes emotion. If something is important to us, we pursue it and protect it with passion. So we *plan* our meetings with God, and we pursue him with *passion*.

## I. Passion for God

### A. Psalm 84

1. This is a song about the Temple, the one place in the world where a believer could come to meet with God and know his favor and presence prior to Jesus sending the Spirit.
2. Note the longing and the joy that comes from longing fulfilled (v 2).
3. Note the strength that results from meeting with God, even as they go through periods of weeping (vv 3-7).
4. Note the urgency of prayer (v 8).
5. Note the promises believed with confidence (vv 11-12).

### B. Proverbs 2:1-5ff

1. The LORD does not give wisdom to the half-hearted. You must strive to lay hold of his word and earnestly seek him for it.
2. Wisdom is by grace, so it is free, but that does not mean that God gives to those who count his wisdom cheap.
3. Given this, what should be the tone of our meditation on Scripture and our prayer?

### C. Psalm 119:97 “Oh how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.”

1. Seeking God in Scripture should be our joy and delight. It should never be a “have to” but instead a “get to.”
2. If the Bible is a “get to,” it becomes our default reading material.

### D. Jeremiah 29:12-14a “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, declares the LORD...”

1. This is God’s promise to the Israelites who were in exile in Babylon.
2. Though the LORD had decreed their return, to find favor and fulfillment of promises, they had to seek the LORD with totally devoted hearts.

### E. Emotion for God cannot be empty, it must be fueled by a heart passionate for God and for his concerns, evidenced by conformity to his will.

## How to Cultivate Passion for God

1. Meditate on your low estate before God. Consider your weakness when compared to God's power and knowledge and your sinfulness when compared to his holiness.
2. Meditate on the extraordinary, immense love of God that he would send his Son to die in your place. Consider what Jesus gave up in experiencing the wrath of his Father and being separated from fellowship as he hung on the cross.
3. Give thanks—to God—in all circumstances and for all his gifts to you.
4. Sing songs of praise to God. Use recorded music if you need help.
5. Pray aloud. Raise your voice. Pray the prayers of Scripture, especially Psalms, with your voice.
6. Give praise to God in a tongue you have not learned (1 Cor. 14:2,4; Rom. 8:26-27).
7. Fast. Fasting cultivates a sense of weakness before God as your body becomes weak in its awareness of hunger and loss of energy. This works in two ways: first, it makes you aware of your dependence on God, and second, it creates a hunger for God.<sup>1</sup>
8. Take an extended time to seek God in a non-distracting place. This could be three hours or three days, but it creates time for your soul to be at rest and to focus.

---

<sup>1</sup> The best book I know of that gets at the heart of fasting is John Piper's *A Hunger for God* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 1997). The best biblical and practical guide to fasting is Arthur Wallis' *God's Chosen Fast* (Fort Washington, Penn.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1968).

## II. Planning for Meeting with God

- A. The value of routine—Henry and Richard Blackaby, in their book *Spiritual Leadership*, note that routine is not confining, but liberating:
- “Routine is to some [people] like eating broccoli is to children—an unpleasant, albeit necessary, task. Some [people] go to great extremes to avoid being locked into routines. Yet wise [people] use routines to ensure that priorities are not overlooked. ...Routine saves time. If [people] habitually spend time with God first thing in the morning, they don’t waste time each morning considering what they should do first. Their schedule has already decided that.”<sup>2</sup>
- B. A regular time
1. Nothing in the Bible says that the early morning is mandatory for meeting with God, though morning prayer is an assumed practice of Scripture (e.g. Psalm 5:3; Mark 1:35). However, it is the least distracting time of day when the typical person can give his full attention to God.
  2. *But I’m not a morning person!* Neither am I. Here are some ways to make sure you are wide awake:
    - Take a hot shower, or wash your face with warm water.
    - Drink something warm.
    - Dress warmly.
    - Sit in a place not conducive to sleep.
    - Use bright lights.
    - Get enough sleep. It’s rare when I’m able to say that my time from 10:00-11:00 p.m. is more beneficial to me than my time from 6:00-7:00 a.m.
- C. A regular place—free from the things that typically distract you.
- D. Collected books, paper, pens, etc.—so you don’t have to go searching for them.

---

<sup>2</sup> Henry & Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God’s Agenda*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001) p. 206, 208. (Note: I’ve taken the liberty to insert the word “people” where the Blackaby’s use “leader.”)

### III. Strategy for the meetings

#### A. Growth in knowledge of God

1. “Basic research”—in the scientific world, this is study for the sake of finding what can be found, as opposed to...
2. “Applied research”—which is study for the purpose of application to a specific problem.
3. In our case, we should regularly study the character of God and the content of his book for no other reason than that it is valuable and enjoyable to know more about God and his ways. But we should also bring the issues of our lives and how our hearts respond to them to our times with God so that we can grow and change in conformity to his character and will.
4. Since our greatest danger is our pride and the center of our relationship with God is the Cross, study of Jesus’ death on our behalf should be a regular part of our meetings.

#### B. A plan for prayer

1. Choose a pattern
  - a. The Lord’s Prayer
  - b. Thanksgiving/praise, confession, petition
  - c. The prayers of the Bible
  - d. Pray the truths and concerns of Scripture from the passages of the Bible that you read.
2. Lists of requests or people

#### C. The value of recording ideas and prayers

### IV. Extended Meetings with God

#### A. Three hours to three days

#### B. Plan a place and create a schedule and collect materials.

#### C. Work the plan, but be flexible as the Holy Spirit gives direction.

## Group Discussion

1. What are the benefits to having a plan for daily meeting with God?
2. What works against us making a plan successful?
3. If you already have a plan or pattern to your meetings, what is it? If you do not, what would be ideal for you?

## Developing a Plan

Write down here plans that will help you make your meetings with God profitable. Come to your next small group meeting ready to share your plans with the members of your group.

Time for daily meeting with God \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

### God's Word

- I want to meet with God through this book of the Bible.

(OR)

- I want to know God through this topic.
- I will read these portions of Scripture.
- I will read or listen to the following to help me understand Scripture.

### Prayer

- I will follow this pattern for my daily prayer.
- I will make petition for these people.
- I will pray for God to work in these situations until I can see that His kingdom has come.

## Developing a Plan

Write down here plans that will help you make your meetings with God profitable. Come to your next small group meeting ready to share your plans with the members of your group.

Time for daily meeting with God \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

### God's Word

- I want to meet with God through this book of the Bible.

(OR)

- I want to know God through this topic.
- I will read these portions of Scripture.
- I will read or listen to the following to help me understand Scripture.

### Prayer

- I will follow this pattern for my daily prayer.
- I will make petition for these people.
- I will pray for God to work in these situations until I can see that His kingdom has come.