

How do I Develop a Relationship with God?

I. Introduction



“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”
– James 4:8



Two Preliminary Questions

- Can a finite human being have a personal relationship with the infinite God of the Universe?
- What does it mean to have a deep personal relationship?



Is it Possible?

- We are so different in many ways:
 - He is infinite, we are finite
 - He is spirit, we have flesh and blood
 - He is holy and righteous, we are weak and sinful
- But we are alike in one very important way:
 - We are personal beings
 - God is a personal being



What is a Person?

- Someone with personality
 - Thoughts
 - Feelings
 - Purposes
 - Desires
 - Intentions
- We are like that, so is God - Psa. 139:1-4; Nah. 1:2; John 3:16; Acts 2:23



Psalms 139:1-4

O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.



The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. - Nahum 1:2

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." -John 3:16



Acts 2:23

this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.



What is a Person?

- Someone who communicates
 - Speaking
 - Listening
- We are like that, so is God - Isa. 38:5



Isaiah 38:5

"Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life."



What is a Person?

- Someone who interacts socially
 - Family
 - Community
 - Friendship
- We are like that, so is God – 1 John 4:8; John 1:1,14; Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18; 3:8-9



1 John 4:7-8

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.



John 1:1, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....14
And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.



Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."



Genesis 3:8-9

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. 9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"



God is a Divine Person

- He has personality
- He communicates verbally
- He interacts socially

Because of our similar personal natures, it **IS POSSIBLE** for a human being to have a personal relationship with God



Genesis 3:22-24

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, **lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever**" 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.



Additional Conclusions

- Our relationship with God is in many important ways the same in nature as our relationship with others
- Our relationships with others can therefore serve as a model for understanding how we relate to God
- The things that make a relationship between human beings work, grow stronger, or grow weaker are the same things that make our relationship with God work, grow stronger or weaker



What is a Deep Personal Relationship?

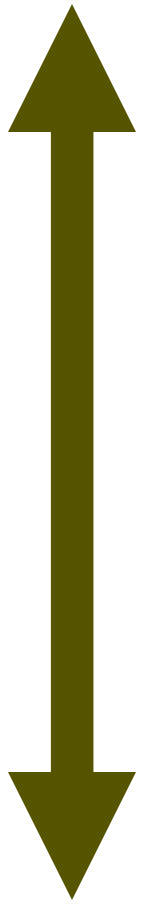


- Depth indicates the level of connectedness in a relationship
- Deeper relationships...
 - Take more time
 - Are shared with fewer individuals
 - Are more important to us
- Different types of relationships have different appropriate depths



What is a Deep Personal Relationship?

- Foreign - Mt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:28-32;
2 Th. 1:6-8





Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then **I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"**



Romans 1:28-32

And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge**, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

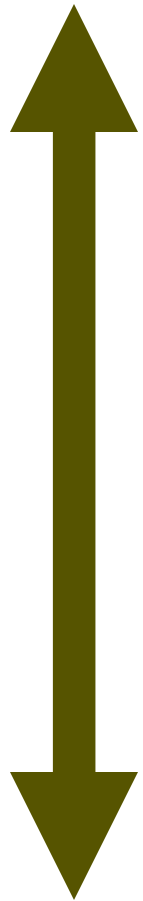


2 Thessalonians 1:6-8

since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, **inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**



What is a Deep Personal Relationship?



- Foreign - Mt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:28-32; 2 Th. 1:6-8
- Familiar - Job 42:5-6



Job 42:5-6

“I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you; 6 therefore I
despise myself, and repent in dust and
ashes.”



What is a Deep Personal Relationship?



- Foreign - Mt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:28-32; 2 Th. 1:6-8
- Familiar - Job 42:5-6
- Fellowship – 1 John 1:5-7



1 John 1:5-7

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.



What is a Deep Personal Relationship?



- Foreign - Mt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:28-32; 2 Th. 1:6-8
- Familiar - Job 42:5-6
- Fellowship – 1 John 1:5-7
- Friendship – Pro. 27: 6,17; Jn. 15:13-14



Friendship

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

- Proverbs 27:6

As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- Proverbs 27:17



John 15:14

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

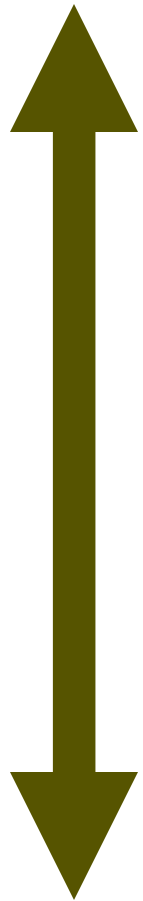


John 15:12-14

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.



What is a Deep Personal Relationship?



- Foreign - Mt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:28-32; 2 Th. 1:6-8
- Familiar - Job 42:5-6
- Fellowship – 1 John 1:5-7
- Friendship – Pro. 27: 6,17; Jn. 15:13-14
- Family – Mark 10:29-30; 1 John 3:14-16; Rom. 8:14-16



Mark 10:29-30

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.



1 John 3:14-16

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And **we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**



Romans 8:14-17

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.



What is a Deep Personal Relationship?



- Foreign - Mt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:28-32; 2 Th. 1:6-8
- Familiar - Job 42:5-6
- Fellowship – 1 John 1:5-7
- Friendship – Pro. 27: 6,17; Jn. 15:13-14
- Family – Mark 10:29-30; 1 John 3:14-16; Rom. 8:14-16
- Fundamental – Mt. 22:36-38



Matthew 22:35-38

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment.



Considering Your Relationships with Men, Brethren and God...

- Which relationships do you wish to be deeper?
- Do you know what it takes to make these relationships deeper and stronger?

The rest of the lessons in this series are designed to examine the requirements for achieving deeper relationships with others and especially with God