

# Commune

*The Ways of a Presence-Centered Life*

**God Inhabits Us with His Presence**

**Chapter 8, The Presence-Centered Life**

By Bill Elliff

*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. Colossians 3:16*

## Talking with the Father

1. Would you say that you are better at... reading the Bible or praying?

2. How would you describe your communication with God?

(Check all that apply).

Through His Word ...

- ☐ I read the Bible sporadically.
- ☐ I read the Bible about once a week.
- ☐ I read the Bible most days.
- ☐ Honestly, it's fairly boring to me.
- ☐ I don't feel like I'm communing with God, just reading a book.
- ☐ I have trouble understanding the Bible. It doesn't seem personal to me.
- ☐ Often, I feel like I'm actually hearing from God (not audibly, but genuinely).

I read the Bible but...

- ☐ I can't wait to get to my Bible most days.
- ☐ It's a joy to commune with Him.
- ☐ I come to the Bible with anticipation that God is going to speak to me.
- ☐ I memorize and meditate on the Bible at times.
- ☐ I'm not happy about this,  
but I find I can go many days without even thinking about praying.
- ☐ I don't really know how to connect with God in prayer.
- ☐ Prayer is boring to me. I say the same things over and over again.
- ☐ I wonder if prayer works or makes any difference.

Through prayer...

- ☐ I try to pray, but I don't feel I 'm talking with God.
- ☐ I pray when I get in a crisis or have a real need.
- ☐ I find myself praying almost every day.
- ☐ I look forward to a dedicated time each day to meet with God in prayer.
- ☐ I am learning more and more how to pray about everything.
- ☐ Prayer is as natural as breathing to me.

3. If you could have what you desire, what do you wish your communing with God would look like in a normal week? (Be specific).
4. What would be some steps of action you could take to have that kind of communion with Him daily?

*All Scripture is inspired [God-exhaled] by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Hebrews 4:12-13*

### **"Thyself"**

I read Thy word, O Lord, each passing day,  
And in thy sacred page find glad employ.  
But this I pray: save from the killing letter.  
Teach my heart, set free from human forms  
The holy art of reading Thee in every line;

In precept, prophecy, and sign.  
Till all my vision filled with Thee,  
Thy likeness shall reflect in me.  
Not knowledge, but Thyself my joy, For this I pray.

—J.C. Macaulay

## Communing through the Living Word

5. According to the following verse, what will regular intake of the Word of God do for us?

*All Scripture is inspired [God-exhaled] by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

6. Which of these things have you experienced?
7. When you read and study God's Word, does it seem like just a book to you, or do you feel you are communing with God? Why does it feel that way to you?
8. How could you approach the Bible in a way that would lead to greater, more intimate communion with the Father?
9. What did you learn from the story of the missionary?

*Pray without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5: 17*

## Communing through Unceasing Prayer

10. What is the closest you have ever come to a day of unceasing prayer? What prompted it? What kept you in prayer throughout that day?
11. Why do you think continual prayer is so hard to maintain?
12. What would be different about your life if you were in continual communion with God throughout the day? What would you have that you are not experiencing now?
13. Do you think God is interested in continual communion with you in prayer? Why or why not?

*"You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you. Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations."*

**Exodus 30:6-8**

*When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **Revelation 5:8***

## **Morning and Evening**

14. Do you have a habit, a rhythm for how you spend time in God's Word and prayer? Describe it.

Which of these things hinder you from establishing set time for you with God in the Word and prayer?

- I don't see the value.
  - I don't prioritize this time.
  - I don't prepare for it.
  - When the time comes, I value sleep or other things more than meeting with God.
  - When I try to meet with God, my mind begins to wander and I get distracted.
  - I'll be honest, I 'm not sure I know how to spend concentrated time with God.
  - I don't think God really wants to meet with me?
15. Meeting with God in the mornings begins the night before. Sometimes there are unavoidable hindrances to this (a sick child, a work schedule, etc.). How can we compensate for such times so we don't lose this precious essential "morning or evening" routine?
16. What adjustments do you need to make this week to begin to make this stronger in your life?

17. Over the next three days, seek to set this fresh routine in your life. Ask God for His help in this. Remember, His presence is your greatest need and your presence is His great desire.

### **Everything Prayer**

*Be anxious for nothing, but in **everything** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**Philippians 4:6-7**

How often do you worry?

- Every day
- Almost constantly
- Occasionally, when there is an overwhelming issue
- Almost never

18. Read Philippians 4:4-6. What is the connection between worry and prayer?

Look at these verses. What do they teach us about the Lord's concern for everything in our lives?

*For though the LORD is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. The LORD will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Your hands* **Psalms 138:6-8**

19. Why would you think God would be interested in talking with you about everything? What benefit would such constant communication be to you? To Him?
20. Ask the Lord today to help you experience "everything prayer." At the end of the day, record what this experience was like.