



The Invitation to Intimacy

How many people do you know?

If you have become a part of the Facebook crowd, you may be tempted to look at the “Friends List” for a quick answer. A friend of mine maxed out his allotted friends list with his first 5000 and had to set up a second list with a separate page. He has the memory of an elephant, but I can’t imagine that he actually knows all of his followers. He has traveled widely and written a pile of books, so many on the list connect with him, because they admire him and want to pick up those pearls of wisdom he posts from time to time.

Knowing. It’s a rather loaded word. Recognizing a name is certainly not knowing someone. Even knowing where people went to school, where they live, what kind of job they have, the names of their kids or parents, along with all kinds of tidbits about their histories doesn’t mean you really know them.

After my dad had been in the ministry for many years, he shared with me something he had learned from a close friend and mentor early in his life: in the end, if you have more than a couple *true* friends, you are fortunate. That’s not skepticism. People come and go in your life, but the number of people who stay at your side, who are still there when the years have passed and the miles have taken the luster off the chrome and pitted the paint job, that is the friends list that really counts.

Those few friends are more than just acquaintances, even close acquaintances. These are the people you really intimately know, and who really intimately know you.

A relationship of intimacy is what God invites us to enjoy with Him. And it is prayer that expresses and evidences this intimacy. Prayer pulls back the veil that hides the holy place of God’s presence from the meagerness of our human capacity to know and experience Him.

But we must not be naïve at this point. We can set aside time for specific pray moments, even adopt a disciplined practice as part of our daily schedules, but the veil is not removed because we seek Him. The place of intimacy is available, because He seeks us. It is His desire to covenant with us, to be filled with the joy of experiencing our hunger and thirst for His righteousness. Even the desire for that relationship comes from Him.

His delight to walk with Adam in the cool of the evening shines anew in His yearning to draw close to us (James 4:8). Notice the intimacy of John 14:23, as Jesus speaks of His desire to come close to those who love Him and have a heart to follow His directives of grace. To those, He affirms that He will reveal Himself to them, even set up His place of abode with them. This is the language of closeness, affection, and a deep warmth, the language of intimate bonding.

That is the agenda of authentic prayer. In the bond of His tenderness we can truly and profoundly know Him and begin to share even His thoughts. By the ministry of the Spirit of God who knows the very mind of God, we can know His mind as well (John 2:14-16).

We are invited to share our burdens with Him, even cast them on His shoulders, but in the end we are incapable of doing that outside of a trust that comes from knowing Him in the intimacy He longs for us to find.

Taking Our Next Step Together

Lord, replace the meagerness of our agendas with the agenda of Your grace.

May we hear and embrace Your call to discover more and more who You are, to truly cry out with the Apostle Paul, “I want to know Christ” (Philippians 3:10 NLT). Birth within us anew a deepening passion to live in such intimacy with You that we can sense and share the impulse of Your heart for those very people and issues we seek to lay before You.