



Mentoring In Christ

Discussion #5: Relating to God

GOAL: To help a student learn how to form an intimate relationship with Christ through prayer, Bible reading, & praise.

For The Mentor

What do we mean by this this concept?

God has saved us not for a religion where we check boxes of the good things we've done, keep rules, and hopefully stay in good standing with God. He's invited us into a relationship where he serves as Lord of our lives and a perfect heavenly father and we enjoy the privilege of being his dearly loved children. In any relationship, we're invited to share our life with him through the Holy Spirit. We talk to God and he is eager to talk to us—lead us, encourage us, direct us, challenges us, teach us, etc. This is what a good father does. To have a relationship with Christ is to regularly spend focused time with him and be in constant communication with him. This discussion is designed to help students understand our relationship with God more and learn to enjoy the ways God has given us to communicate with him:

- **Prayer** – The opportunity we have to talk to God about anything and everything in life
- **The Bible** – The scriptures that God has inspired and given to us to reveal himself to us. When we read the scriptures, we're hearing what it is that God is wanting us to know about himself
- **Worship** – We often think purely music, but anytime we're speaking or singing of our awe for the Lord and gratefulness to him this is an act of worship and a joy in our relationship with God.

Helpful passages?

On Prayer

- **Luke 11:1-13** – Jesus' friends notice something about Jesus and his relationship with his father in heaven. Their desire is to enjoy the relationship with the Father that they see Jesus enjoying—so they ask him, "Lord teach us to pray." Jesus responds by giving them some things they could focus their prayer about and then a big statement about the access they have to God. God is always accessible (more than any other person in all of life) and he's a perfect loving father who knows what we need the most.
- **Matthew 6:15** – Some of the same teaching about prayer that we see in Luke 11. However, there is also a great statement about the purpose of prayer in our relationship with God. It's not about show for others, but to enjoy relating to God. Much like it is sad when you see some political figure that only relates to his wife for the show of the cameras but behind closed doors he doesn't care. That is a relationship for show and amounts to no relationship at all. We should not pray for show but rather for the enjoyment of our relationship with God.
- **Philippians 4:6** – Instead of worry, we should take our worries and fears to God.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** – This quick and simple picture of sharing our joy and thanks with God. The shortest verse in the Bible (tied with John 11:35) is only two words but a profound picture of our relationship with God...its continual.

On the Bible

- **Matthew 4:1-4** – Jesus demonstrates a real turn your world upside down truth. We need God's word in our lives just like we need physical food. Having a regular diet of truth helps us to see our world accurately, see ourselves accurately, remember who God truly is, and respond to temptation (as Jesus demonstrates here)
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – Paul reminds Timothy of the value and emphasis of God's word in his life and how critical it is for Timothy's continued walk with Christ. It's good for so many different things in relating to God.
- **Nehemiah 8:1-12** – This is a great picture of the power of God's word in our lives. The Israelites gather to have God's word read aloud and explained to them. The impact is deep conviction. In fact as you read on in the story into Nehemiah 9-10 you see that the public reading and teaching of scripture leads to confession and a great revival and commitment of the nation of people to the Lord.

- **Psalm 119 (especially vs 18)** – A long but powerful picture of the value of God’s word in our lives and how precious it is. Verse 18 is a great perspective on our need for God to illuminate the scriptures to us. The Holy Spirit is key in helping us see and understand the scriptures for our lives.

Worship

- **Psalm 92:1-2, 95:1-2** – The Psalms are full of invitations to worship God with song, with music, or your words, loudly proclaiming the greatness of God in the assembly of people. In other words, its good for us to tell God we love him and are grateful for his work in our lives and are amazed at who he is. Times of worship are key for our lives...like in a healthy relationship we tend to tell the person what we appreciate about him/her. We should do this with the Lord regularly.
- **Exodus 15:1-21** – gives us this great picture of the Israelites first response after God’s rescue and deliverance from Egypt...they worship him. There’s this great song of praise and this picture of Miriam leading God’s people in worship. It’s a pattern we see throughout scripture that we should be free and glad to express to God our thanks and praise.

Why this matters?

This discussion really plays off the previous discussion on the Holy Spirit. When we are saved, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives. We’re invited into this close relationship with God. Prayer, the Bible, and worship are ways that we access or enjoy this relationship. Any healthy relationship has regular communication. Think about dating or marriage or even friendship. Those things grow and move forward when there is regular communication. In fact, when we love someone, we crave a lot of communication with him/her. It’s the same with God. In fact those things are models of our relationship with God. We can know him and enjoy him closely...we have this great freedom. But it is through the scriptures, prayer, and worship that we access this freedom we have through Jesus.

An approach for discussion:

I think the most helpful way to talk about reading the Bible and prayer is to put it in relational terms. Students can see relationships with friends or dating or marriage and understand the need for communication, etc. When we start there we can deal with the hardest part of talking about prayer and reading the Bible or singing at church. The hardest part is understanding why we do it and actually wanting to. It is so easy for students to see those things and rituals or requirements or things that you should do to be a good Christian. We need to help students shift this thinking and begin to see those things as relational rather than an obligation or a requirement. When students actually want to read the Bible and pray that’s when we can talk about the really practical stuff of how to do this more effectively and meaningfully or stress coming to youth group more regularly, etc. I encourage you to spend most of your effort making sure a student sees these things relationally and dealing with the why rather than the how to of it.

Discussion with Mentee

Before you read

- Pick a relationship (Dating or a Friend) to talk about: Describe for me what would make a healthy friendship or dating relationship? What would that look like? What would be signs of an unhealthy relationship?
- People who follow Christ talk about how we have a relationship with Christ rather than a religion. What does that mean to have a relationship with Christ?
- To build a relationship with a person, we spend time with them, have conversations, learn about what they care about. What do we do to build a relationship with God?
- What has been your experience with reading the Bible on your own or praying regularly?

Passage(s): Read & Discuss

Read: Exodus 14:29-15:1 & Exodus 15:19-21

- How do we see the Israelites reacting when God saved them from the Egyptians at the parting of the Red Sea? What welled up from them?
- What does this passage tell us about our worship of God? Where should worship come from?
- How is this view of worship coming in response to God's work in our lives different from how religion views worship?

Read: Matthew 4:1-4

- What do you notice is Jesus' response to the devil's temptation? What does Jesus do?
- Jesus is quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 where God is making a point about his word. What is the point about God's word in our lives?
- Why would we need God's word more than we need food? What is it about God's word that is so important to our lives?
- What might it look like for us if we craved God's word like we crave food? How would it look like for us to read and meditate on God's word if we had that mindset?
- What do you think helps people to have this mindset about God's word?

Read: Luke 11:1-13

- What do you think Jesus' disciples observed in him that caused them to ask him to "teach us to pray?"
- As you read Jesus' response to his disciple's question about prayer, what is his main point to them? What's the point of the story in verses 5-13?
- What is the view of God that Jesus is encouraging us to take as we pray to him? What should we remember about our relationship with God and what God is like?
- What is your typical mindset regarding God when you pray to him?

The concept to get across

Rather than talking about the ins and outs of how we should pray and what we should read in the Bible, what is more important is getting the heart clear. God saves us into this relationship with him where we are invited to worship him through our prayers, songs, and listening to him through reading and studying his word. We have to view reading the Bible, worshipping God, and prayer is a privilege in our relationship with God to talk with him and spend time with him rather than something we have to do. As we come to know Christ, what should grow in us is a hunger to know him more and the peace of talking with him about everything in life. Focus most of the discussion on developing a right heart that is hungry to worship God, know his word, and talk to him.

Why this matters

- If a person views prayer and reading the Bible as an obligation, how do you think they will experience the Bible and prayer? If a person views prayer and reading the Bible as something to enjoy relating to God through, how do you think they will experience the Bible and prayer?
- If prayer and reading the Bible is something we are to enjoy in our relationship with God and not an obligation, what advice would you give someone who is having a hard time reading the Bible or talking to God regularly? What advice would you give about how to help someone develop a hunger for God's word and prayer?
- If someone is hungry for God's word and prayer, what advice would you give them about helping them to study the Bible and prayer more regularly in their lives? What could help you do this more regularly now that you are craving his word and talking to him?

Encouraged Response

A few responses that might make sense for a person:

- Wanting to read the Bible consistently and develop a routine and plan with reading the Bible.
- A freedom to talk to God more regularly in prayer. Wanting to pray on their own, with a group of people, etc.
- An admission that they are not very good at reading and understanding the Bible. A desire to get help in reading it more on their own. *(This could be a great opportunity to talk about getting a Study Bible, following a reading plan, reading with people, talking with you as a mentor about what they are reading. This is a chance to encourage not frustrate that desire.)*

- A greater desire to be with God's people worshipping God together.

More Bible To Read On Your Own:

- Psalm 119
- Nehemiah 8:1-12 (Could encourage them to read all the way through chapter 10 and see the response to God's word)

Evidence of Integration

The goal of these discussions is not to get information across as much as helping someone integrate this into their lives. A few things you could look for over time with a person as evidences of the fact that he/she is translating this topic into his/her relationship with Christ:

- The person has developed a consistent time with God that involves reading the Bible (A regular time and goal in reading the Bible)
- A healthy freedom in praying aloud with others. Our public prayer life often reflects our private prayer life and freedom with God. If we are free in talking with God on our own privately it tends to relate to seeing more freedom in talking to God with other people.
- A greater freedom in worship and a desire to be worshipping with God's people more regularly. A person who really gets a healthy relationship with God tends to start rearranging themselves to be around God's people more regularly.
- A growing knowledge of God's word. Someone who is loving God's word tends to read it and begin to have it ooze out into their daily lives, conversations, etc.