

# 5: THE TUTOR

## *Disciplines to Intimacy*

J. Oswald Saunders said, “We are at this moment as close to God as we really choose to be. True, there are times when we would like to know a deeper intimacy, but when it comes to this point, we are not prepared to pay the price involved”.

All want to know God and experience Him intimately, but few are willing to pursue God with purpose. Intimacy cannot be attained without intention, nor can it be maintained without discipline. There will be no experience without effort, no relationship without reciprocation, no communion without communication, no closeness without commitment, and no trust without transparency.

Our Teacher and Guide longs for us to know Him as intimately as He knows us. In the same way He has committed Himself to communicate with us, He has devoted Himself to instruct us and teach us in the way He has determined for us.

The degree of intimacy we will experience with God in the future is determined by the sacrifices we are willing to make in the present. May we be willing to proclaim as Paul did: *“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of **knowing** Christ Jesus my Lord”* (Philippians 3:8, NLT, emphasis mine).

### WITH MY EYE

In Psalm 32:8 God puts forth a relationship between Tutor and pupil in which there is no greater intimacy. *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”* Just as He *“spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend”* (Exodus 33:11), He expresses His desire to lead by simply gazing into His student’s eyes. But to know His way by the expression in His eyes, the learner must remain close to his Guide and be intimately acquainted with His nature, heart, mind, will and ways.

While this level of intimacy with our Guide is the ultimate goal, it is achieved through time and process. Just as God has committed Himself to communicate with you, He has committed Himself to instruct and teach you so that you may experience the fullest possible relationship with Him.

How does a relationship begin? How does it progress to intimacy? \_\_\_\_\_

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What prevents intimacy? \_\_\_\_\_

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Define your present level of intimacy with God. Are you satisfied with your relationship? Explain.

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Intimacy is about knowing and being known. It is a blending of our heart with another's (God's) so we can "see into" them and they "into us". While the Bible declares that our Teacher saw into the depths of our hearts (Hebrews 4:13) and was familiar with all our ways (Psalm 139:3) before our relationship even began, we will not obtain a deep understanding of His heart and ways unless we are willing to put forth the effort to learn everything we can know about Him.

"Intimacy doesn't happen by default; it happens by design"<sup>i</sup>. Like Joshua, the son of Nun, who did not depart from the temple day or night (Exodus 33:11), the man who knows God most intimately is the one who spends the most time with Him.

In addition to time, what does intimacy require? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read John 14:21, 23. What is the result of pursuing this level of intimacy with God? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does James 4:8 guarantee? \_\_\_\_\_

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Intimacy requires reciprocation; it also requires constant communication, transparency, commitment, vulnerability, self-sacrifice, and trust.

What occurs when one party fails to do these things? Can the same be expected when one or more of these qualities is lacking in one's relationship with God? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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While intimacy cannot be attained without diligence, it cannot be maintained without discipline. Diligence comes from the Latin verb, *diligere*, which translates "to value or esteem highly, or to love". This means that how much you value, esteem, or love someone or something will determine the amount of effort you are willing to put forth to that person or thing's betterment.

Discipline is distinct from diligence in that it requires concerted effort in that which may not be pleasurable in order to bring about beneficial and lasting change.

Based on these definitions, why are both qualities necessary to achieve intimacy? \_\_\_\_\_

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## INSTRUCTED

Your ability to discern God's voice is directly related to the depth of relationship you share with Him. As we've established, He is willing to instruct you, but you must be willing to put forth disciplined effort and follow His guidance.

In Psalm 32:8, the English word *instruct* comes from the Latin word *instructus*—*in* (upon) + *struere* (pile up). The Hebrew word simply means “to impart knowledge to”; its root, “to give insight and understanding” where there was none. As in all relationships, there is a “building up”—a deepening of understanding through knowledge and experience that will progress to trust.

**If you desire to experience deep intimacy with God, to understand His desires and directions by simply looking into His eyes, you must:**

### 1. Be intentional.

Spend deliberate and abundant time in God's Word, alone, without distraction. Create space, time, and opportunity for God to teach you about Himself.

How much time do you spend in His Word daily—not in books or devotionals *about* Him, but in His Word? \_\_\_\_\_

How much time do you spend in materials about Him? What are the pros and cons of such materials? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Can you know someone intimately through others? What danger lies in secondhand information? \_\_\_\_\_

With this in mind, will church attendance alone achieve a deep relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_  
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The definition of diligence stated that we will devote our time and efforts to that which we love. This includes things which are unprofitable to us in our relationship with God. What often deters or distracts you from spending time with God? \_\_\_\_\_  
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“Have you ever tried to set up a meeting with someone without setting up a time and meeting space?”<sup>ii</sup> What resulted? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Your circumstances will dictate *WHEN* you meet with God, but they should never dictate *IF* you meet with Him. If knowing God is your greatest desire, you will do whatever it takes to spend time with Him. What action are you willing to take to order your life to this end? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## 2. Be prayerful.

Continual communication is essential to growing intimacy. Not only is it an opportunity to invite God into all your thoughts and emotions, it is an invitation to examine your heart and direct your actions.

Can intimacy be achieved when one party is only concerned only with self? Why? How does this apply to prayer? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Prayer is as much about listening as it is about presenting your requests. Do you give God opportunity to speak throughout the day? Are you adverse to silence? Is it possible that “noise” is preventing you from hearing Him? \_\_\_\_\_  
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God will also bring people, places, things, and situations to your mind during times of prayer, so that He may instruct you regarding them. Be careful not to dismiss your thoughts as trivial but seek to understand God’s purpose in bringing them to your remembrance.

## 3. Be transparent.

It has been stated that intimacy is the blending of our heart with another’s so that we can see “into” them, and they “into” us.

What does Hebrews 4:12-13 reveal about God’s knowledge of your inner man? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Why is it difficult to acknowledge the truth about our thoughts, motives, attitudes, inadequacies, and sins, even to the One who loves us unconditionally? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Why is this acknowledgement imperative to intimacy and an important aspect of hearing God’s voice? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Once we admit our shortcomings, what is required? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is refusing to examine yourself in the light of His Word detrimental to intimacy? \_\_\_\_\_  
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#### 4. Be expectant.

It has been said that love listens for every whisper; it is eager to hear from the One who speaks and anticipates His answer.

James 1:5 tells us that God promises liberal answers and instruction to those who seek Him for wisdom and direction. According to verses 6-8 of James 1, why would an individual fail to receive His words? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Read Isaiah 65:24 and Jeremiah 33:3.

When you read the Bible, do you approach it as if it is a book written to *you*; as if God can and is instructing, correcting, comforting, and guiding *you*? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
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It is not uncommon for individuals to employ strange methods to get the answers they want. Frantic flipping through the Bible's pages and pointing blindly, or creating liturgical environments are among the techniques that are entirely unnecessary.

God can speak to you through any passage. At all times, He knows where you are in His written Word, in a book, or a devotional. When He does speak through written works, He will illuminate a passage, a verse, or a word in order to gain your attention or speak to your situation. When you find yourself going back to these words or continually thinking on them—record them. Oftentimes it is not until your study of His Word is complete, and information is compiled, that you will understand what God is seeking to communicate.

Why is it helpful to write down your thoughts, questions, and concerns before you approach God through His Word? \_\_\_\_\_  
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#### 5. Be specific.

Clear and concise communication is important to maintaining intimacy. Seeking too much information too soon only creates confusion and uncertainty.

When you approach God's Word, seek answers to your questions one at a time. Step one. Step two, etc. For example: "Should I proceed?" Not, "Should I proceed? When? Where? Who will go with me?" His answer may be: "*This is the way, walk in it*" (Isaiah 30:21). Or it may come in the form of a story: "*They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to teach the Word in Asia... they tried to go, but the Spirit did not permit them*" (Acts 16:6-7).

What do Matthew 7:7-11 and Luke 18:41 convey about the specificity of our requests and God's answers? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you are still unsure, uneasy, anxious, confused, fearful, etc., after you've received an answer, continue to seek Him and wait for clarity. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33).

### **6. Be attentive.**

Intimacy requires an individual to be observant of what another is seeking to communicate. This includes verbal and non-verbal, practical and impractical means.

As you approach God's Word, look for common phrases, words, principles, and themes. Are you hearing the same message repeated through other means?

Why do you believe repetition is one of God's primary means of communicating? \_\_\_\_\_

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In what other ways does God communicate? \_\_\_\_\_

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Oswald Chambers said, "Let God be as original with other people as He is with you"<sup>iii</sup>. While God will never contradict Himself or His written Word, God is creative and unpredictable. Throughout the Scriptures, He "shows up in strange places, at strange times, and in strange ways"<sup>iv</sup>, communicating through burning bushes, talking donkeys, etc.

If God is seeking to communicate something specific, the same concept or idea will appear in several portions of Scripture. You may hear it on the radio, or at the movie theatre; others will talk about it. You may even observe God's message in other creative ways.

### **7. Be practical.**

Do not discard the obvious because God has not spoken to you directly. While He will not go against His Word, He will use what is occurring around you to direct your steps.

Why do we tend to sacrifice the obvious on the altar of the spiritual? In other words, why do we make God's instruction more complicated than it needs to be? \_\_\_\_\_

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How can we be sure that our circumstances are God's means to guide us? See Acts 17:26. \_\_\_\_\_

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## TAUGHT

The next declaration that God makes in Psalm 32:8 is to “*teach you*”. The Hebrew word for *teach* (*yarah*) in this verse means “to accustom gradually to some attitude or action.” It is the kind of instruction that implies deliberate motion—intimacy gained through experience.

Once we’ve learned *how* to recognize God’s primary ways of communicating, we must exercise that knowledge. This occurs through practice—trial and error, and testing. More specifically, by being placed in circumstances that require trust. As the definition states, *yarah* occurs gradually. But, like all trust-building exercises, it increases in intensity.

**If you desire to experience deep intimacy with God, to understand His desires and directions by simply looking into His eyes, you must:**

### **8. Be patient.**

God promises to answer, but it may not be in your timing.

When God does not act as quickly as we would like, our tendency is to take matters into our own hands. We are also tempted to question whether we heard Him correctly and inquire whether the delay is because of a personal inadequacy that He is seeking to correct. While this can be true, God’s delays are often a matter of timing—the working of all things together for our best and His glory (Romans 8:28).

Per James 1:2-4 what is the purpose of waiting? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Romans 5:3-5. If you proceed ahead of God, what can occur? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you wait on His answer *or* wait for Him to act, what will happen? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you proceed ahead of God, your circumstances may prove to be too much too soon. Additionally, you may find yourself in a place you do not want to be. But if you exercise patience, your dependence, your desire, and your expectancy will be increased, and your character will be perfected.

Is the ability to wait confidently upon God a sign of maturity and trust? Why or why not?

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Until it is time for the Lord to fulfill what He has spoken to you, He will confirm and reaffirm what He has said. He will not let *you* forget what He has spoken. His encouragement assures you that *He* has not forgotten.

When God fulfills what He has spoken after a period of waiting, how is your faith bolstered and your willingness to obey increased? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 9. Be flexible.

Isaiah 55:8-9 declares that God's thoughts and ways are not our own. Psalm 25:12 also tells us that God teaches every man in that way that He chooses.

According to Proverbs 16:9, 19:21, 20:24, 21:2, and Isaiah 55:8-9, why can't you be dogmatic about the way you believe God's words will play out? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does Ephesians 3:20-21 reveal about your thoughts and imaginations in comparison to the plans and purposes God has for you? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Be obedient.

Because our knowledge of the future is limited, and His purposes are greater than we can comprehend, we must obey God's instructions without delay. Faithfulness in the present enables and prepares us to obey more difficult instructions in the future. If we fail to heed Him in small matters, we may find ourselves unprepared for what lies ahead.

When God knows He has your heart *and* your ear, He will entrust you with greater things. Read Luke 16:10 and 19:17.

Read 1 John 2:3-6; also review John 14:20-21, 23-24. Why is obedience the greatest measure of our love for God? \_\_\_\_\_

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When you are sure of His instruction, take the first step knowing that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Joshua 1:9 and Philippians 1:6).

## GUIDED

Psalm 32:8 continues, He will teach you... "*in the way you should go.*" This way, this path, this journey is uniquely yours. It is the way that God has determined for you. As we learned in Lesson One, your Guide knows your beginning, and He knows where you're headed, so you can be assured



that He will guide you safely to the end. As Job 13:27 says, “[He] inscribes a print for the soles of [your] feet.”

Finally, if you desire to experience deep intimacy with God, to understand His desires and directions by simply looking into His eyes, you must:

**11. Be secure.**

What do the following verses reveal about God’s knowledge of *your* way? Job 23:10, Psalm 139:1-5, 16, Proverbs 5:21, 16:9, and again, Acts 17:26. \_\_\_\_\_

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You can have security in your life because Your Instructor and Teacher is guiding you through the story He has written for you.

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<sup>i</sup> Batterson, Mark. (2017). *Whisper: How to Hear the Voice of God*. Colorado Springs, Co: Multnomah (p.46)

<sup>ii</sup> Batterson, M. (p.47)

<sup>iii</sup> Chambers, Oswald. (1963). *My Utmost for His Highest*. Westwood, NJ: Barbour (June 13).

<sup>iv</sup> Batterson, M. (p.39)