Beyond Acquaintance

The Lord is eternal, immortal, and invisible, but it’s possible to have a very real relationship with Him.

Many Christians think of communion as simply the ritual of sharing bread and wine (or grape juice) in remembrance of Jesus’ death on the cross. Yet it means far more than this single ordinance.

Charles Henry Mackintosh, the 19th-century Irish theologian, wrote, “Communion with God is the grand secret of the believer’s strength, and it is, therefore, of all importance that he should clearly and distinctly understand what it means, and in what it consists; and, moreover, that he should carefully guard against everything like a counterfeit of it.”

**READ**[**1 Corinthians 1:9**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=1%20Corinthians%201:9)**;**[**1 John 1:1-4**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=1%20John%201:1-4)**.**

Fellowship—or communion—with God is possible because He invites us into such a relationship. Scripture reveals that ever since the creation of Adam and for the measureless extent of eternity, God desires and takes great pleasure in having fellowship with His beloved children.

But life in the 21st century is busy. Some people barely manage to make any deep connections with loved ones (at times subsisting on social media interactions). How, then, can we fellowship with a God who can’t be experienced through our physical senses? Here are several suggestions:

**• Probably the most obvious way to connect with God is prayer.**Hundreds of scriptures contain the word “pray” or a variation. Verses like [Matthew 26:41](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Matthew%2026:41), [2 Chronicles 7:14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=2%20Chronicles%207:14), and [James 5:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=James%205:16) show prayer a powerful tool that lets us approach God in repentance, adoration, petition, and thanksgiving. A consistent, fervent prayer life also guards us from temptation and confusion.

**• Fasting, accompanied by prayer, can effectively focus our hearts and minds on the Lord and on specific concerns that need immediate attention**([Matt. 6:16-18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Matt.%206:16-18)).

**• Reading the Bible is a way to listen for what God wants to tell us.**Healthy relationships involve give-and-take; communication must be more than a list of requests for the other party to fulfill. By searching Scripture as we talk to God, we invite Him to speak into our circumstances. A glimpse into someone’s heart and mind is a privilege in any relationship—but of immeasurable benefit when the other person is God. Knowing what’s important to Him helps us grow as Christians, learn obedience, avoid pitfalls, and become equipped witnesses ([Ps. 119:105](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Ps.%20119:105); [John 14:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=John%2014:23); [2 Tim. 3:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=2%20Tim.%203:16)).

**• Being still in God’s presence, especially when we feel anxious, may seem difficult because sitting quietly without doing anything is counterintuitive and countercultural.** But in our silence, we can often hear God speaking ([Ps. 46:10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Ps.%2046:10)). And remember, the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf and helps us in our time of weakness ([Rom. 8:26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Rom.%208:26)).

**• Meditation is different from being still before the Lord, which has to do with hearing Him speak to us.** Meditation is taking time to reflect on Scripture and letting it sink in, or contemplating the awesomeness of God and His works ([Josh. 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Josh.%201:8); [Ps. 119:27, 97, 148](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Ps.%20119:27,%2097,%20148); [143:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps.+143%3A5&version=NASB)).

**• Corporate worship is a way for Christians to fellowship with God while simultaneously deriving the benefit of mutual encouragement** ([Heb. 10:24-25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Heb.%2010:24-25)). In some churches, the term seems to have devolved to mean little more than the song portion of the service, but true worship has to do with heart attitude and a desire to connect with the Lord.

**• Obedience and submission to God are not only a *means* to a deeper relationship with God; they are also a *result* of it** ([John 14:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=John%2014:23); [James 2:14, 26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=James%202:14,%2026)). Our works don’t save us, but they do bear witness to our faith in Christ ([Matt. 5:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Matt.%205:16)).

**REFLECT**

• What light do the Scriptures above shed on your own concept of the word *communion*? Are there areas in your relationship with God that need more attention than you’ve been giving them?

• It’s easy for us to get caught up in the whirlwind of earthly activities and responsibilities and relegate quiet time with God to any leftover minutes we have at the end of the day or week. It can be especially tempting to justify this if what’s eating up our time and attention is ministry-related. The Bible, however, warns against letting fleshly concerns govern our minds ([Rom. 8:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Rom.%208:7)). Let [Proverbs 3:9-10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Proverbs%203:9-10) and [Matthew 6:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/index.php?version=49&search=Matthew%206:33) be additional reminders that God blesses us when we put Him first in our lives.

**RESPOND**

• What are some practical ways you can immediately apply what you learned through this Bible study and pursue deeper communion with the Lord? If the thought of carving out extra time for Him seems impossible or arduous, ask God to increase your hunger for Him and His Word.

• Take a mental inventory (or a written one) of the priorities that battle for your attention. Resolve to eliminate any that hinder rather than enhance your communion with God.

**REVISIT**

• If you want a deeper experience of communing with the Lord, try spending some time with [Psalm 119](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?st=3&utm_expid=13466113-11.e_eljl4ZQueab2zC5ghezw.3&search=Psalm+119&version=NASB&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.biblegateway.com%2Fpassage%2F%3Fst%3D3%26search%3DPsalm%2B119%26version%3DNIV). At 176 verses, this psalm can take a while to read, but it also lends itself to helping us go deeper with God. The chapter is divided into 22 sections. Over the next 11 days, read two sections each day. Read slowly, meditating on the words and making them your own prayer to God. Note any verses you want to memorize or reflect on later.

• Brainstorm additional ways to have communion with God (other than those listed above), and be intentional about implementing one or more. If it would help, share your goals with a friend for accountability and support.