

Greater Intimacy with God - Lesson 4 (part 4) - **Honesty in Prayer / Living Devoted to God**

Once as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly had been to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God. As near as I can judge, this continued about an hour, and kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to serve and follow Him; to be perfectly sanctified and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity. - Jonathan Edwards

Before we begin into this one area of bible study and prayer with God, I want to first share something with you. During the first 7 months of this year, it was a season with Jesus of two things, 1) to deepen and grow and strengthen my intimacy with God, (making Himself and His Word more clear and convicting) and, 2) to prepare me for what was coming. But during all this, without fully recognizing what was happening, there was a degree of honesty in prayer that the Holy Spirit was leading me to that I'd never really experienced in my life with God. At least not to *that* degree. To *this* degree.

When we're talking about "honesty" in prayer, there is a reason why I chose that specific word. We all pretty much know honesty to mean, *being truthful*. Being honest means to tell or represent or communicate the truth. But when you look at people in Scripture coming to a point in their prayer life that they are voicing honesty, there are things that happened in their life to get them there. There were situations and circumstances arranged by God and allowed by God that positioned them to be completely honest with God while in prayer.

Let's look at just a couple of those people and how they came to such a place of honesty in prayer, and what the result that followed in their life.

[Read Psalm 51](#)

What is always before David in verse 3? _____

What does he acknowledge to God in verse 4?

Verse 6 is such a critical verse for us: "Behold, You desire truth [_____] in the innermost being, And in the hidden part [of my heart] You will make me know wisdom."

In the blank above, write the word [honesty]. God desires truth in the innermost being of our life. Nothing else. And for me, where Satan attacks me the hardest is to believe his lies in the innermost being of my life. He will shame me with accusations. He will remind me of sins I have confessed and repented of. He will make sure I think what other people say of me is 'truth' and not what God says of me. And I'm telling you, THIS is when honesty in prayer is challenged. Yes, Satan will do all he can to disrupt your time of 'truth in prayer' by having told you lie after

lie after lie before you ever even attempt to approach God's throne room of grace, much less with confidence as Hebrews 4:16 tells us.

"Therefore let us [with privilege] approach the throne of grace [that is, the throne of God's gracious favor] with confidence and without fear, so that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find [His amazing] grace to help in time of need [an appropriate blessing, coming just at the right moment]." Hebrews 4:16

I literally spent weeks with God in His Word allowing Him to WASH MY INNERMOST BEING with the truth of who HE says I am. There had been such a build up of believing lies and opinions and criticisms and evaluations and judgements of others in my heart and mind that I literally wrestled with God at times in asking Him over and over, "Is this true? Is this really who I am? Is this really how You see me? Is this just me hoping all these verses apply to me, or is this truth from You in how YOU see me?" I'm telling you, when you have allowed so much of nothing but lies and untruth to mirk up your mindset, then when God tells you, "You are Mine," (Isaiah 43:1), you ask, "Really?" only because of how intimate those three words are. When God says He has a plan and a purpose for your life, and that He wants to do more than you could possibly ever ask or imagine, then you ask, "Really? Someone like me?" You see, I had experienced so much in my life that (to be totally honest) beat me down. Experiences and circumstances that Satan was in for one purpose - to beat me down. To wear me down. He wanted me to believe lies, hurtful lies, and he used people I'd never expect to drive those lies in even deeper into my life.

But this past May, June and July, He did spiritual surgery in me! His surgery was to remove all the dross and cancers that were in me from the presence of lies having taken a place in my body. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and He will not share residency with anything that hinders His full occupancy. That includes "lies" trying to bed up in your house! Your body! Lies can't live and thrive in the Temple of God. Period.

Sidenote: That is why, (in time), if a child of God is believing a lie, living a lie or trying to mask a lie, that lie will eventually manifest itself. Sometimes those manifestations are physical - the body begins to have aches, pains, disease, sickness, migraines, etc. And sometimes those manifestations will be mental - depression, mood swings, outbursts of anger, fear, panic, etc. And sometimes those manifestations will be relational - marital issues, nuclear family issues, faith family issues, etc. And then there will be those times when those manifestations are financial - never able to get out of debt, go from one financial set back to another, needing to borrow money, finances are always a struggle, tc.

But back to this past May-July this is when my Father declared ENOUGH! How did He do that? I watched a sermon by Dr. Tony Evans early one morning that was titled, "Intimacy with God." That one message was His way of opening a door to His side. He wanted me to draw as near to Him as He longed for me to and He used that sermon to let me know... "Lisa, this is what I want with you."

Also, I remember one day during those few months, talking on the phone and telling the person on the other end, "I know God has removed His anointing for me," (keep in mind...I had believed years of lies about myself and when I said this, and it was because of circumstances God had allowed - He had allowed Satan to sift me as wheat and part of that sifting was wanting me to doubt big time!! Doubt so many things so that those lies would solidify in my faith.

So, when I said that to them, all I heard next was ... dead silence. They didn't say a word. Yet, their silence spoke volumes to my doubting. Then they broke the silence, but by saying something that drove my faulty belief further in to my spirit.

Later that morning, I was on the phone again with another person and said the same thing to her because I was now convinced it was 'truth.' And since I was believing that it was 'truth,' I wanted her to help me understand just how to live that way now. Without the Lord's anointing. And instead of bone silence, she burst into a prayer! Her soft voice that she always has, became strong and bold and she nearly shouted:

"Father in heaven, we rebuke in the name of Jesus the very words that proceeded out of Lisa's mouth. In Your powerful name, I pray that those words be cast into the pit of hell where they belong. For You, O God, are a redeeming and restoring God and You have placed your anointing oil all over Your daughter's mind, her mouth, her speech, her heart, her desires, her longings, her will...all for the glory of Your Name!" This woman didn't ask me if she could pray, she just jumped right on into that lie and cast it out of the conversation! She heard a bold face lie and she knew right where it belonged! Then the rest of the prayer, was all about the joy of our salvation that allows ALL children of the King, who live with surrendered wills, to know Him and make Him know with the anointing oil of HIS JOY and SALVATION! She prayed with PRAISE and WORSHIP for the next several minutes concerning His mighty hand and work in and through my life. I started weeping. She prayed about me as though she knew a me I didn't know. She prayed for me in a way that I didn't have the courage much less the belief system to pray.

So, what did I do?

After thanking her a thousand times, I got off the phone and for the rest of the day I WORSHIPPED! I turned on my music and I sang to my Father!

Then, I met Him morning, noon and night, and all I had to do was show up and He repeatedly showed me who HE WAS and who He said I WAS. I'm telling you, there were days when I literally felt He was right there in the family room with me! Hours passed that seemed like 30 minutes with Him. This happened, now, for weeks and weeks! THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE in my life that took precedents over meeting with my Father and listening...believing...praying with honesty when I was having a hard time believing Him...and allowing Him to work His Word and His love in me. That is what it was. He worked His love in me!

I'm not trying to play the victim when I say this, but I've been abused in my life in more ways than I want to even share. But some of the residue from those experiences has been having a hard

time getting to a point of confidence in who I am, in God's eyes, and who He says I am. Lauren Daigles song, "You Say" is definitely at the top of my favorites list right now because of the lyrics:

I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up
Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know
Ooh oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe

The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity
Ooh oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
Oh, I believe

Taking all I have and now I'm laying it at Your feet
You have every failure, God, You have every victory
Ooh oh
You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
You say I am held when I am falling short
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe
Oh, I believe (I)
Yes I believe (I)

What You say of me (I)
I believe

I sing that every. single. day. because I am just at that place of praising Him for what HE SAYS!

I will never forget that morning, that sacred morning, for as long as I live, because Libby Williams didn't waste a second on Satan's lie when she burst into that prayer. She took what he was meaning for harm and brought about much good and a whole lot of glory!

Friends, you NEED friends like Libby Williams in your life. You need to find at least one person (if not 2-3) who know the Bible, know the truth of the Bible, know a lie when they hear it, and will pray Kingdom prayers that are bold and HONEST with you and for you. I'm blessed to have that in my longtime friend, Rene' Collins. I don't know where I'd be or even who I'd be without that dear saint of a woman in my life. Not only a woman of the Word of God, but the wisdom of God is in her petite frame from head to toe. Wisdom is not in what you know but in what you do with what you know, and Rene' *does* wisdom beautifully! She will always speak life and truth, while discerning on so many levels. Then there's Randi Johnson, another dear friend, who just today texted me a prayer today that meant the world to me! She also makes me laugh like no other!! We can be talking about the most serious thing and she has that way of bringing it right on up with humor! LOVE that about her! And then my counselor, Ron Mumbower. When you are going through life challenges, I want you to know it is right and good and even encouraged in Scripture to seek godly counsel. His counsel helps me so much in staying spiritually and psychologically grounded when Satan's attacks come. Yes, on that day of attack we armor up in the armor of God, but when you need to know more in "how to wear" certain pieces of armor, then please seek out counsel. Go to a Christian counselor, or to your pastor, or a wise and usually much older trusted friend.

But it was on that day when Libby called that I went back to a list I had made years ago - a list of all the NAMES God has for His own children. We study the names of God all the time, but when I made this list back in 1999, I wanted to know what names He had for us - His own daughters and sons.

******I have included that list as a separate document so you can print it off and add it to your binder.***

Let's go back to Psalm 51 for a minute:

Verse 12 says, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And sustain me with a _____ spirit."

(***We are going to look very closely in this study to what a 'willing spirit' is. What it means to actually live God's will and not a will of our own desire and design. So, put a star or circle Verse 12 in your bible. or on this document.)

Verse 17 brings us to a moment in prayer when David was honest with God in *knowing* what meant most to God:

“My [only] sacrifice [acceptable] to God is a broken spirit; A broken and contrite heart [broken with sorrow for sin, thoroughly penitent], such, O God, You will not despise.

A broke and contrite heart that was repent of sin and was ready for an HONEST intimate relationship with God. David had just been confronted by Nathan regarding a sin he had been concealing for 2 years. God said ENOUGH! It was time for Him and David to have nothing but honesty in their relationship. No more lies. No more masking. No more hiding the sin or trying to live with that constant hurt in his heart. So Psalm 51 was penned by a man who had been “readied by God” to walk with Him in utter honesty!

Let's look at these steps for a minute: This is how I talk with God. I will read and come to understand something, and then will ask questions that help me peel it on down. Peel it like I would an artichoke trying to get to the center - the core - the nature.

But before you look at the steps, let me give you a little intro:

Below, you will find Step 1 is a first necessity in our prayer life because step 1 lays the foundation for Step 2, which lays the foundation for Step 3, which lays the foundation for the GOAL of our life - fulfilling the Will of God. In other words, if we start with the GOAL, “I want to fulfill God's will in my life,” then we need to peel that on down and ask, “So, where does that desire come from?” To desire only to fulfill the will of God, it begins with our having a surrendered will of our own. Our own dreams and desires and ‘want to's’ has to be crucified so that His will truly does become our will. Our own will needs to be saturated daily with the Word of God so that the nature of God fills every pore and cell and marrow of our own will. Because that is when His will becomes our will.

But for us to have a surrendered will, what else needs to happen in our life? Let's keep peeling this thing on down...and look at Jesus in the Garden the night of His arrest. Where was His own will? It was surrendered to His Father's will. He literally said, “Not my will, but your will be done.” So, we need to ask this: what happened in His earthly life for Him to have learned such surrendered obedience? How did Jesus come to such moments in His life that He did not want anything other than His Father's will? What happened was, He demonstrated a *devoted life*. He was entirely devoted to God. The state of His heart was devotion. Even in the face of suffering, He demonstrated thoughts and feelings that were fully devoted to His Father and His will and His Word.

Then, if we keep peeling this on down, the next question has to be, “How did He maintain such devotion? He was fully God, and fully man. So, how did he do this? Scripture says He learned obedience (surrendered and devoted obedience) “from what He suffered.” How can we learn *while* suffering? We must pray in honesty, as we saw David’s prayer in Psalm 51. We pray to God in surrendered and devoted truthfulness *in all things*.

Here are the steps peeled down:

Goal - God’s Will - The one thing we are to desire ultimately is *fulfilling God’s will*.

Step 3 - Surrendered will - A surrendered will is the *only* way to fulfill God’s will.

Step 2 - Devotion - Greater devotion cultivates a surrendered will.

Step 1 - Honesty - When we pray in honesty, we develop greater devotion.

The center of this artichoke, so to speak, is HONESTY. God works in the realm of truth and truth that is in all things in our life.

Honesty *is* Truthfulness. Telling the truth and acting on truth. To fulfill God’s will, it all starts with not only wanting truth, or speaking truth, but *acting and believing truthfully* in all things. Then, there will be a devotion in our life that cultivates a surrendered will that desires to fulfill God’s will.

Before we go much further, let’s do something, ok? Make sure you are in a place where there is little to no distractions. A place where the stillness of that room makes you perfectly content in the quiet. Spend time with your Bible opened to Revelation 4:8 and read that one verse slowly. Repeatedly. Read it out loud, but in a soft whisper. Read it until you are fully aware of that verse speaking about the center of rapturous devotion being inspired only by the holiness of God.

Then, sit and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in this time of bible study and prayer. Ask Him to search the hidden places of your mind and heart, places that you may not even be aware of, that are under a fleshy or worldly influence.

David is who prayed, “*O Lord, you have searched me [thoroughly] and have known me.*” *You know when I sit down and when I rise up [my entire life, everything I do]; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And You are intimately acquainted with all my ways.*” Psalm 139:1-2

Underline the word “intimately.” Now write it out, but add the word *acquainted* beside it.

Now, look at those two words you just wrote in the space. What is that saying to you?

Now, write those two words out again, but this time add those last 4 words in the verse.

When you wrote the word “all” what came to mind?

When you realize that your Maker is intimately acquainted with all your ways, how does that make you feel? Be honest. And realize that He is honest with you, too. Believe what He says.

Will you read all of Psalm 139 now? Write in the space below what you're thinking as you read those verses. What words come to your mind? What word phrase? Is there an image that came to your mind? Go ahead and sketch out. Did a person come to your mind? Write their name out in the space below. As you read those verses in Psalm 139 prayerfully, make note below of what comes to your mind and heart because you are thinking and feeling what you are because the Holy Spirit is with you Counseling, Comforting, and Guiding you as the Word is reading you. Thank God for the reassuring truth of Psalm 139 before moving on, too.

To have intimacy with God, there must be honesty in prayer. If there are any areas in our life that would not pass the test of holiness, if there are any thoughts we are trying to conceal from the Lord or actions we're trying to justify, any sins that have gone unconfessed, any grudges still rooted in our heart, any improper and ungodly view of ourselves, any shame we've been living under, any hurts or egrets that are pilgriming our decisions, any element of our past that is darkening our beliefs of who HE says we are, then friend, we are not praying in total honesty

with God in His throne room of _____. Write the word that goes in that blank. If you aren't sure what it is, read this - Hebrew 4:16.

Honesty is *truthfulness*.

We are to pray in truthfulness.

Think in truthfulness.

Believe in truthfulness.

Reason in truthfulness.

Behave in truthfulness.

And the only way we can do all those things is because of GRACE. God's grace enables us to pray in all honesty.

I've also shared with you a list of **Positive Confessions**. Will you consider reading these every day for the month of January? Read them out loud each and every day, but most importantly...believe them!

Honesty in prayer has a purpose, and that purpose is to develop in us deep devotion. Devotion has such significance in our life. The meaning of the word, *devotion*, is "to devote to **sacred use**." Which means, there is a working purpose in our living devoted - Which means, devotion in its truest sense has to do with worship of God. Devotion is intimately connected with prayer. It does us no good to pray, while knowing in our mind and heart that we are not quite willing to do what He is requiring us to do. It does us no good to pray, while knowing in our mind and heart that we are simply not wanting to fulfill the will of God, but instead we cling to a will of our own.

If we do not know God's will for our lives, it is not because of anything lacking on God's part. Instead, we do not hear Him because we do not have our hearts open to His will. Read John 10:27 - write what that verse is saying to you:

In order for us to know God's will in a matter, it is vital that we first cast aside our own opinions. Why? Because such thoughts shut out the will of God from our hearts. This matter of getting rid of our own ideas as a prerequisite for knowing God's will is so essential that it can never be over-emphasized. How many times do we kneel and pray with our lips, "O Lord, reveal Your will to me, for I am willing to do Your will"? Yet, though we may say it with our lips, our hearts never speak of it, nor desire His will. You see, if there is already a secret desire in us, it is futile to seek the Lord's will. Satan is not afraid of Christians doing good things, he is only fearful of their doing the will of God. As long as he is able to entice believers away from doing God's will, he is fully satisfied. But here's the good news.... the reward we get for obeying the Lord and fulfilling His will is having more power to deny self and to obey the Lord the next time we are tested. In

this life, the Lord manifests more of Himself to us through our willful obedience. AND our joy increases from that obedience.

E.M. Bounds says about prayer and devotion:

Devotion is the particular frame of mind found in one entirely devoted to God. It is the spirit of reverence, of awe, of godly fear. It is a state of heart that appears before God in prayer and worship. Devotion dwells in the realm of quietness and is still before God. It is serious, thoughtful, meditative. Devotion belongs to the inner life and lives in the prayer closet. It is the part of the very spirit of true worship and is of the nature of the spirit of prayer.

Devotion belongs to the person whose thoughts and feelings are devoted to God.

Read Acts 10:1-2 - What was said of Cornelius?

Read Acts 8:2 - Who buried Stephen?

Read Acts 22:12 - What was said of Ananias? What sacred use did God accomplish through him?

After reading the verses in Acts, what came to your mind? Pray with God about those verses and what they are communicating to you about Him.

This is what prayer does - it promotes the spirit of devotion, while prayer also thrives in the atmosphere of true devotion. The attitude of mind and the state of heart implied in devotion make prayer effectual in reaching the throne of grace. You see, God dwells where the spirit of devotion resides. All the graces of the Spirit are nourished and grow well in the environment created by devotion. These graces grow nowhere but here, actually - the absence of a devotional spirit means death to the graces birthed in a renewed heart.

Devotion *engages* the heart in prayer. It is not easy for the lips to try to pray while the heart is absent from it. The charge that God made one time against His nation Israel was that they honored Him with their lips while their hearts were far from Him. (Isaiah 29:13)

The very essence of prayer *is* the spirit of devotion. Without devotion, prayer is a vain round of words. And it's doubly sad to say, much of this kind of prayer prevails in the church today. This is a busy age, bustling and active, and this bustling spirit has invaded the church of God. We hear sermons in the same spirit we listen to a lecture or a great speech. We visit the house of God just as if it were a common place. We look at the minister of God not as a divinely called man of God, but merely as a sort of public speaker, on a plane with a politician or average speech maker

or motivational speaker. Oh, how the spirit of true and genuine devotion would radically change all this for the better!

You see, the spirit of devotion puts God in all things - in all concerns of life - not merely in our praying or churchgoing.

Bounds also says, regarding Revelation 4:8:

“No devotionless creatures reside in the heavenly world. God is there, and His very presence begets the spirit of reverence, of awe, and of fear. If we would be partakers with them after death, we must first learn the spirit of devotion on earth before we get there. These living creatures, in their relentless, tireless attitude toward God and their rapturous devotion to His holiness, are the perfect symbols and illustrations of true prayer. Prayer must be aflame. Prayer without fervor is as a sun without light or heat, or as a flower without beauty or fragrance. A soul devoted to God is a fervent soul! And prayer that is true prayer is all aglow for holiness, for God, for His will, for His glory!!”

Friend, until our next study on “Interceding in Prayer”, I want us to take this study and let all that it has for us marinate in our soul and in our mind. Talk with God about having 1) honesty, 2) devotion, 3) a surrendered will, and ultimately the 4) obedience in fulfilling in His will. It is an invariable fact that our spirits are released only according to the degree of our brokenness. Remember, devotion means “to be devoted to sacred use.” So, wherever we desire to hold back certain areas from God, in those very areas we are spiritually useless. The degree of our usefulness is determined by the degree of our brokenness and discipline. The more we have been dealt with by God, the keener our perception. Which means, the more we learn, the more we discern - and the more we have to give!

Have a blessed New Year!

I love you dearly,
lisa