

A Prayer for When You Want to Be Loved

By John Ortberg

“Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.” 1 John 4:11 (NLT)

Everyone wants to be loved, to be liked, to be celebrated, to have someone who accepts us no matter what. We want to have people to turn to when a crisis hits. We want to have someone in whom we can safely confide our secrets. And there’s a reason for that.

We were made for connection.

We were made for intimacy.

When we experience intimacy, we can take on whatever life throws at us. Without it, even our greatest accomplishments ring hollow. After all, where’s the joy in success if we don’t have someone we love with whom to share it? That’s why I believe the pursuit of intimacy is the greatest, most worthwhile pursuit there is. Granted, for most of us, pursuing intimacy is not as simple as adding more fiber to our diets. We have to work at it. But it’s worth it because deep down, we know being close to another human being matters like nothing else in the world. And being close to God? That takes things to a whole new level.

Maybe having an “intimate relationship with God” feels like one more obligation in an already-overwhelmed life. After all, intimacy is tricky enough to pull off with a real, live, flesh-and-blood person. *How can we hope to have an intimate relationship with someone we can’t even see?*

It’s not as hard as you might think — especially when you stop to consider what intimacy really is.

Intimacy isn’t built on grand, elaborate gestures. Rather, it’s made up of a thousand tiny, everyday moments of interaction. Every time we share an experience with someone, we build intimacy.

It’s asking your kids how their day went when they get home. It’s asking — and caring about — what your spouse wore to an event. It’s noticing a downcast face and offering a word of encouragement. It’s a private wink to a stressed-out colleague in a fractious meeting that says, “We’ve got this.”

A single note of music is an insignificant thing. But if you put enough of them together in the right way, you get Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Likewise, a single encounter may not amount to much, but if we share enough experiences with someone ... *that’s* how we build intimacy.

And it’s what God’s Word urges us to do, as seen in today’s key verse: *“Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other” (1 John 4:11).*

Because God is always present, intimacy with Him is possible every moment of our lives. He’s already here. We just have to show up and spend time with Him.

When you need help, tell Him. When you are joyful, recognize His goodness behind the joy, and take time to praise Him. When you see beauty, recognize the hand of the Artist and thank Him.

Give it a try. You may just find that an ordinary day — such as today — can become the most intimate day with God you have ever spent.

But wait — there’s more.

If intimacy *is* a shared experience, then perhaps the ultimate example of an invitation to intimacy is the Incarnation — that mystical, miraculous moment when God chose to become more like us. He could have loved us from a distance. But God wanted to do more than just love us. He wanted to be intimate with us. Through Jesus, God shared our loneliness, fatigue, anxiety and sorrow. He shared in our joy and our pain. He provided comfort in our despair at feeling forsaken.

The Incarnation tells us that the story of our world is the story of God's hunger for intimacy. His pain over the loss of intimacy in the Fall, His determination to recapture it and His fierce joy at its redemption.

If that's the case, then maybe we're already closer to God than we think we are.

Maybe intimacy with God isn't just something we can do, but something we can also receive.

And maybe, just maybe, we can rest in that for a while.

Lord, thank You that we were made for connection and intimacy with others and with You. We pray You help us grow closer to those who matter most in our lives. Thank You for loving us so deeply. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Editor's note: This content originally came from the article "**Everyone Wants to Be Loved.**"