

## Intimacy with God!!

There are times when I think I know what a word means, but I have found out in my life that I often attribute to a word what I think it means or what I want it to mean instead of what it really means. So I looked up the word "Intimacy" in the dictionary to make sure my thoughts were right. The dictionary defines "Intimate" or "intimacy" as: closely acquainted or associated; very familiar; resulting from careful study or investigation; very close; the state or fact of being intimate...

After finding the definition I said to myself, "Self, that is exactly what I am talking about!" Intimacy with God! A very close association with the Only Living God of all Glory—that is exactly what I am talking about and what I long for in my life. And I have a suspicion we all long for a close, intimate walk with our creator God. We may not have recognized that for which we are searching, but we definitely know we need more than what we have and we long to find the state of being close to God.

The wonderful written Word of God makes it very clear we can truly have this close, intimate relationship with God. As a matter of fact, the Bible makes it clear that God desires a close relationship with all of His children.

*"But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 4:29, NIV)*

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5, NIV)*

*"But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command." (1 Samuel 13:14, NIV)*

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10, NIV)*

*"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." (Psalm 51:17, NIV)*

*"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11, NIV)*

*"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." (Proverbs 4:23, NIV)*

*"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your*

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*joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (James 4:7-10, NIV)*

These are just a few of the verses letting us know we can truly have an intimate relationship with our Father in heaven. You see, this is a heart issue. John Eldredge writes: "...the Christian life is a love affair of the heart...". "Sadly," he writes, "most of us watch the oil level in our cars more carefully than we watch over the life of our heart."

Some how we have come to believe we can have everything God has to offer while we hold out our hearts from God. We hold God at arms length drawing near to Him only when it is convenient for us or when we find ourselves in some difficulty only God can solve. Then and only then do we want to be intimate because we want Him to fix our problem. When the problem is gone we push Him back to arms length so we don't get too close to all He would have for us or have for us to do.

One wise person wrote: "Most of us have just enough Christianity to be miserable." We haven't surrendered our lives. We experience very little of the abundant life. We know what freedom is but we aren't living freely in Christ; we are just miserable in our faith.

Why is this happening? We have no real intimacy with God. This relationship is what we were created for in the first place. Almighty God desires intimate fellowship with you and me right now. For the sake of our eternity and our present, draw near to God and I am telling you as one who has found this wonderful relationship, God will draw near to you...

So we postulate the obvious question: "How in the world can someone like me draw near to God?" I am very glad you asked.

"Talk to God..." --- It is called prayer.

"Learn from God..." -- It is called the Bible.

"Listen to God..." -- The still small voice is still speaking.

"Walk with God..." -- Take Him every place you go.

"See God..." -- He truly is everywhere present.

## Our Schedule for the Next Few Months, God Willing...

### August

21 – Grace Covenant Church Austin, Indiana

22-24 – Revival Red Quarry Christian Church French Lick, Indiana

27 – Purity Ball First Christian Church Scottsburg, Indiana

28-31 – Revival North Charlestown Church of God

### September

4 – Paoli Christian Church

11 – Mt. Pleasant Christian Church Bedford, Indiana

16 – Popcorn Christian Church Bedford, Indiana

18 – Dogwood Community Church Paoli, Indiana

20 – Preacher to Preachers Christian Church of Jasper

25-28 – Burksville Christian Church, Burksville, Kentucky

### October

2 – Paoli Christian Church -- A.M.

2 – Hibernia Christian Church P.M.

4 – Peak's Mill Christian Church, Frankfort, Ky.

"Elder to Elders"

9 – Paoli Christian Church

16-19 – Old Union Christian Church Bedford, Indiana

30 – Paoli Christian Church

## Preacher to Preachers – September 20, 2011

One of the special opportunities we have at Living Hope Ministry is to offer help, direction, insight, inspiration, encouragement and challenge to those who are in the ministry.

On September 20, at the Christian Church of Jasper, we will be host a “Preacher to Preachers” event focusing specifically on preaching. Someone commented that the reason there is so little power in the pews is because there is very little power in the pulpit. As a preacher, this kind of statement challenges everything within me. However, instead of getting upset we have decided to offer the opportunity for preachers of the glorious Gospel of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ to get plugged in to the power source if they aren’t already. And if they have been plugged in for a long time we want to offer an energy surge to help them in all they say and do for Jesus. I make no apology when I say that I preach to an audience of “One”. My desire is to glorify God by lifting up His Holy Son in the power of the Living Holy Spirit through the absolute truth of the Word of God. Every time I am privileged to proclaim the Gospel I want to be better than the time before. Do I always hit the mark? Sadly, I have to say “no”. But more often than not the reason I miss the mark is because I have been neglecting the gift placed within me by my Father in Heaven. I must make myself available for improvement in preaching. September 20, at the Christian Church in Jasper, there will be a tremendous opportunity for me to do just that.

Our speakers will be Ben Merold and Bob Russell, two of the finest expositors of the Gospel that I know. These men not only know how to teach the truth, they have put the truth into practice in very effective and profound ways as they have served our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

Ben will be speaking two times. His themes are as follows:

“How to Question your Preaching” and “Standing for What we Preach”. Bob will be speaking two times as well and his themes are: “Preaching Matters” and “Finding, Filing, and Fitting Illustrations”.

Faithful servants, it doesn’t get much better than this!

You may register by calling the Christian Church of Jasper at 812-481-2410. The cost for the day is \$20 registration due the day of the conference. You will be given time to get your own lunch, and you will have to buy some gas to get there, but just look at what you are getting.

When the French historian sought out the greatest of America he said simply, “America is great because she is good; when she ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.” But he went one step farther. He wanted to know the source. He declared the source was the pulpits of America; they were aflame with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is still the answer! Please come and let’s learn together how we may better declare His glorious name!

## Elder to Elders – Leading in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

On Tuesday night October 4, 2011, at the Peak’s Mill Christian Church outside Frankfort, Kentucky we will be hosting a night for elders. The church has opened their doors so Jack Coffee can be with us to share practical help in church leadership.

We will begin with a great meal at the church starting at 6:00P.M. That will be followed by two sessions led by Jack Coffee. Jack is a retired elder from the Southeast Christian Church and author of the book, “Elders – A Practical Guide to New Testament Leadership...” He is a full energy guy who quickly and easily gets to the heart of the matter.

The two sessions will be: “Motivated to Lead in Christ” and “Leadership Essentials – dealing with Conflict Resolution, Decision Making, Positive Leadership, and Unity in Leadership.” I hope one of the areas mentioned encourages you to come. There is no registration cost, but we will be taking up an offering to

help with expenses.

**HOWEVER!!!!!!** If you are coming we ask that you register at Peak’s Mill 502-227-9800 by September 30, so we can be sure to have enough food ready for all who attend. Yes I know it is another night out. Yes, I know time is of the essence. Yes, I know you are tired when you get home. But I also know we who lead will be held accountable for the things we do, the things we say, and the way we lead. We need all the help we can get to do it right.

## Gifts and Giving!

How can I ever say “Thank You” enough for the blessings you keep pouring out on Living Hope Ministry. The work continues to grow and we need your help. Your kindness and generosity mean more that you will ever know this side of Heaven!