

Practice the Presence of God - Ron Stullenbarger -

In John 17:3, Jesus states one of the most important truths in all of His High Priestly Prayer. He says, *"And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* Eternal life is knowing God intimately — not just knowing about God, knowing of God, or knowing others who know God, but truly knowing Him yourself.

This comes with growth and maturity. I can confidently say that I was saved when I obeyed the gospel, but it took years for me to discover the wealth of relationship available to me through Jesus. I went to church, heard about God, served Him, and tried to live according to biblical principles, but I didn't really know the God I was spending so many hours devoted to. I hadn't really received His love for me. I hadn't experienced the peace and joy of His constant presence. I wasn't experiencing the abundant life that only comes from a personal, intimate relationship with God.

The truth is that God longs to be known by you. Jesus didn't die for the sole purpose of getting you to heaven. He sacrificed His life that you might truly live while here on earth. You are created to intimately know the God who formed you, saved you, and sustains you. And you will never find lasting peace until your life becomes wrapped up in the reality of His nearness and love.

The hope for all of humanity rests in relationship with the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent. Nothing in your life will be set right or brought in line with the power of Christ's death until you know the living God. You will not fully experience transformation and freedom from the depravity that surrounds you until you've counted *"everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus [your] Lord"* (Philippians 3:8).

How deeply do you know your heavenly Father? How real is He in your life? What are you still using to fill the void that can only be satisfied in intimate relationship with Christ? Come before your Father and surrender your past, present, and future. Ask Him to guide you into a deeper revelation of His reality, nearness, and love.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 says: *"Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."*

As you enter into prayer, spend time getting to know in greater depths the *"steadfast love, justice, and righteousness"* of your God. Ask God to make the reality of His presence and nearness known to you in these moments.

"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).