

Intimacy with God

We now come to the third condition of revival as illustrated in 2 **Chronicles 7:14**.

God calls us not only to pray but to “*seek His face*”.

What does this mean?

“*Seeking God’s face*” brings us to the heart of what revival is all about.

“*Seeking God’s face*” moves us into a deeper dimension of prayer and fellowship with God.

“*Seeking God’s face*” brings us into the realm of praise, adoration, worship, enjoying God’s presence, listening to His voice and responding to His love.

“*Seeking God’s face*” is more than seeking God for what He can do.

“*Seeking God’s face*” is seeking to know God just for who He is, for Himself alone.

Jesus Christ is Revival

In seeking revival we can make the mistake of seeking signs or the experiences and blessings which may come with revival but failing to seek Jesus.

Revival is the result or the by-product of seeking and knowing Jesus more intimately.

To enter into deep and intimate fellowship with Jesus is revival!

Psalms 27:4-9 [NIV] “*One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD. Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Saviour.*”

The “face” of a person in Hebrew “*pâneh*” – [paw-neh] literally meaning “*front*” became synonymous of “*presence*”.

The face also of course gives visible indication of inward emotions.

Humans cannot literally see the face of God because of His holiness and glory.

Exodus 33:18-23 [NIV] “*Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no-one may see me and live.” Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”*”

We will never know God completely, we would have to be God to do that.

For example, on the physical level, no other human will ever know me completely for you would have to be me to do that.

But the more we seek to know another person, through being with them and conversing with them, the more intimate we can become with them.

Marriage is the perfect situation for two people to come to know each other more intimately.

The goal that God has for the church is for it to enter into an intimate marriage relationship with Him.

Genesis 2:22-25 [NIV] *“Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’, for she was taken out of man.” For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”*

God’s plan starts with a physical intimate relationship.

Revelation 19:7-9 [NIV] *“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”*

God’s plan for humans ends with spiritual intimate relationship.

Just as a man and a woman will spend as much time with each other before they make the lifetime commitment of marriage, so we should be *“seeking God’s face”*.

How do we do this?

John 14:8-9 [NIV] *“Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

When we seek to know Jesus Christ then we are *“seeking God’s face”*.

How do we get to know Jesus Christ when He is not here as He was for Philip and the other disciples?

John 14:16-18 [NIV] *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Note that by having an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit we will be having an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

God wants us above everything else to seek to know Him.

God is longing for intimacy with us.

One of the most amazing truths of scripture is that God desires our fellowship!!

God is searching for us.

Hebrews 10:19-22 [NIV] *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.**”*

Through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit we can enter into the very presence of God.

Psalms 46:10 [NIV] *“Be still and know that I am God...”*

We have to take time out of our busy life, seek a quiet place and spend time alone with God, quality time.

God has no favourites, He desires all His children to know Him in this deep, intimate way.

Three requirements for seeking God’s Face

1 Long to be in God’s presence

Just as a man and woman who plan to marry long to be with each other as much as they can.

2 Take time to seek God

Any relationship involves spending quality time with the other person in that relationship.

Take time to worship God, expressing our love for Him, how we adore Him.

Bring our whole life to Him, talking about each part of it as we live it.

Romans 12:12 [Amplified Bible] *“... be constant in prayer.”*

Take every opportunity during the day to talk with God. We can do this in our mind [spirit] without speaking the words.

3 Deal with anything that cuts off our relationship with God

Psalms 24:3-6 [NIV] *“Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Saviour. **Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Selah**”*

Here is a check list of things we must avoid to be able to constantly be in God’s presence. If we desire to be part of *“the generation of those who seek Him.”*

We have to honestly respond to the question, *‘Am I among those who are seeking an intimate relationship with God?’*

Meditating on what we have just learnt

Do I really desire to know God more than anything else in my life?

Sadly it is possible to have a lot of information, knowledge and facts about God and still not know Him personally and intimately.

Do I take time daily to be alone with God?

To know God in the full meaning of the word is ours only if we spend quality time with Him each day.

John 17:3 [NIV] *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

God is offering us eternal life to continue to have an ever deeper and more intimate relationship with Him.

What God is now looking for in our present life is the desire and commitment to *“seek His face”*.

God will then know He can confidently give us the gift of eternal life.

Am I seeking to deal with the obstacles that hinder our relationship with God?

Isaiah 1:13-18 [NIV] *“Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations, I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. “Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

God relates wrong offerings, prayers and style of worship to sin.

God “hides His face” from those who insist on worshipping Him in this Old Covenant way.

John 4:21-24 [NIV] *“Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. **Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.**”*

This time of a new style of worship has come, since the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The linking of spirit with truth throws light on the meaning of *“true worshippers”*.

True worshippers as opposed to those who merely appear to be worshipping by participating in outward ceremonies.

The emphasis is on spirit, for God is spirit.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

Our total surrender of body, mind and human spirit to God’s Will is to worship Him in spirit [“*bodies*” is Greek word “*soma*” indicating the whole of life, body, mind and human spirit [**Job 32:8; 1 Corinthians 2:11**]].

Ephesians 4:30-32 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**”*

Such unloving attitudes hinders the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-24 [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”*

A lack of a burning desire for God’s work in us, that of justification and sanctification, prompted by the indwelling of Holy Spirit, will hinder our relationship with God.

God will perform His part of this New Covenant if we fulfil our part, that of faith and trust in Him and the word preached [“prophecies”] by His New Covenant ministers.

Meditate on the following scriptures and use the thoughts generated by them to converse with our Creator with thanksgiving, praise and worship. This will produce the intimate relationship that God desires.

Psalms 8:1-9 [NIV] *“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”*

Psalms 24:1-6 [NIV] *“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Saviour. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Selah”*

Psalms 27:1-14 [NIV] *“The LORD is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD. Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Saviour. Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not hand me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”*

Psalms 63:1-11 [NIV] *“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. They who seek my life will be destroyed;*

they will go down to the depths of the earth. They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals. But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God's name will praise him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced."

Psalms 84:1-4, 10 [NIV] *"How lovely is your dwelling-place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young, a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Selah" ... "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."*

Psalms 103:1-22 [NIV] *"Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger for ever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children, with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, O my soul."*