

The Word was with God and was God in the beginning, and that Word has invited us into a relationship of unity. For this to take place, there are a few truths that we must unite ourselves to, so that we can experience the relationship with Christ that He desires to have with us. Spend some time this week making that a reality.

Day 1

Conviction

In order for us to have the proper relationship with God, we must first have our eyes opened to see reality clearly. The first aspect of reality that we must see is the glorious perfection of God. When the ancient Greeks tried to conceptualize god, they saw a number of deities that were much like humans but more powerful. They were vengeful, spiteful, angry, petty, and generally capricious. They were prone to rape, murder, deceit, theft, and all manner of behaviors we find repugnant. In reality, the God who created the universe is glorious and perfect in every way possible. He is the superlative of every category that can be named, and He made us in His image. The problem is, we are not anything like He is. We are like the Greek Pantheon, not like the Hebrew God. Conviction is simply this: understanding the reality of who God is and who you are. When this happens, the weight of our sin becomes more apparent, and we realize that we destroy everything we encounter, and we despair of our lives. Getting to the place of true conviction is very uncomfortable, and we erect numerous barriers to ever having to deal with the despair that it inevitably brings. A very wise evangelist once said that his method was only for the few, because he attacked every barrier to the despair that true conviction brings, and not very many people could do that to someone else. Have you reached the place of conviction? If not perhaps your relationship with God is one of convenience.

Verses: Hebrews 11:1, 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, John 3:19-21

Prayer Topics: Confidence, Reality, Truth

Day 2

Helplessness

Once we reach the uncomfortable place of conviction, the next step is not any better. We generally set about trying to fix our problems once we become aware of them, but the problem here is so significant that we are truly unable to solve the problem. You may try very hard for a while, even for a long time, but you can never meet the standard. You are not perfect, and you never will be perfect, no matter what you do. What shall you do about your imperfection? You can fudge the numbers in your favor, but that makes you increasingly blind and insane. You can lose touch with reality, and that makes you very unattractive to others, making you isolated and even weirder. You can blame others, becoming angrier and angrier at the conservatives, the liberals, the foreigners, the natives, the neighbors, the friends, the people who refuse to be friends, and eventually everyone. Then finally, you can turn the guns on yourself as you despair of ever reaching the standard. It is your fault, and if you punish yourself enough you can reach the state of perfect justice. The problem is, as you punish yourself, you become ever worse as you lose the energy to achieve any kind of standard through a process of learned helplessness. Who shall save you, wretched man, from your body of death? Thanks be to God, who has delivered us through Jesus Christ our Lord. There really is only one way of salvation, for if there were many ways, you wouldn't call it salvation. It would be a minor inconvenience. Praise God today for the salvation He provides.

Verses: Romans 8:26-27, Hebrews 4:15, Proverbs 3:5

Prayer Topics: Dependence, Ideal, Responsibility

Day 3

Christ the Savior

When was the last time you meditated on Christ? Have you really seen Him? Do you know Him? What was it like for Him to not consider equality with God something to be held onto? What was it like for Him to empty himself? What does that mean? What things did he empty himself of? What was the result of that emptying? What sacrifice was involved? When Jesus became a servant and took on a human form, what was it like for Him? What did He feel? What did He think? What pain was involved? What was it like to see the humanity He created and loved living in sin, suffering, and dying? What was it like to have his love and desire to save met with hatred, scorn, and rejection? What was it like to make real connections with His disciples, yet see them misunderstand Him so greatly? What was it like to endure the cross, and be forsaken by the Father? What does that forsakenness entail? How could He endure it? What kind of love does He have for the Father and for me that he would willingly endure that? How then should I live in light of His glory and his love for me? These are just a few of the questions that are worth pondering today. I'm sure many of you have your own. There is great value in spending some time today in meditation on these things.

Verses: John 3:16, Psalm 119:9-11, Colossians 3:1-4

Prayer Topics: What relationship do I have with Christ? What kind of relationship would I like to have with Christ? Is my life different with him than it would have been without him?

Day 4

Answer the Call

Jesus calls us to follow Him, and we see in the gospels what it meant for the disciples to put aside their own plans and lives to follow Jesus as He ministered on the earth and then after His ascension as the church was formed. What does it look like for you? A couple of weeks ago we asked about what it would be like for Jesus to live your life, what kinds of things would he do differently? Have you given that any thought over the interval? When you answer the call to faith in Christ, there is a cessation of work and a beginning of work. The cessation involves stopping all that we were doing to justify ourselves. We no longer bend the standards to our behavior, no longer scapegoat others, and no longer prosecute ourselves. We allow Jesus to do his work on our behalf. We point to Him. But there is also a beginning of work, and that is the joyful response to our salvation. This really isn't even work, but worship. We celebrate who we are by living as who we are. We follow, and we do so joyfully, knowing that there is nothing better than living in the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit. What does it look like for you to live your new life? What joyful pursuits are yet to be explored. What new adventures await? Your new life is here. Live it.

Verses: Romans 8:28, Acts 2:21, 2 Timothy 1:9

Prayer Topics: Repentance, Joy, Gratitude

Day 5

Trust

Your new life is not a list of rules, but a new loyalty, a new attachment to a living person. You go with Him where he goes. You do what He does. You trust that there is nothing greater than to be connected

to the God of the universe, that having an allegiance with Christ will leave no good thing on the table, there will be nothing of value missed or left behind. There is no sacrifice that will not yield fruit, no suffering that will not be met with future joy, and no joy now that will not be magnified in the future. When Jesus walked the earth He trusted completely in the Father, and He knew that what was present was light and momentary in comparison to what was to come. Can we live in this kind of trust, a trust that results in a complete union, a new loyalty, an unwavering allegiance in Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith? What kind of life awaits? Let's find out!

Verses: 1 Corinthians 1:10, Psalm 133:1, Ephesians 4:3, 2 Corinthians 13:11

Prayer Topics: Genuine Joy, Peace, Happiness