



Unit 1: Who Is God?

Learning to know and love God for who He is, His character, attributes, and being.

Lesson 6 Intimacy with God

Day One ***Seeking God***

In lessons 1–5, we studied five of God’s attributes—His goodness, mercy, love, sovereignty, and holiness. In lesson 1, we also discovered or reviewed the basis for our love relationship with God—faith in Jesus Christ. Closeness or intimacy with God is only through Christ Jesus.

Definition: *Intimacy* is defined as a close, familiar, affectionate, and loving relationship with another person. *Intimacy* with God goes far beyond mere human feelings and emotions—it reaches into the very core of our being and manifests itself through holy and godly actions.

Knowing and loving God is a lifetime pursuit. It is an exciting and joyful adventure drawing us into a holy, divine, and loving union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The goal of our search is true and sacred intimacy with the Lord.

Seeking the Lord is a lifetime quest because there is always more to learn about Him—His nature, character, and intentions. Notably, three of God’s attributes—omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence—provide limitless opportunities. They present us with God’s infinite knowledge, infinite power, and infinite love to pursue and understand.

Knowledge, power, and love are three attributes of the Lord that we should strive to fully experience in drawing near to Him. Consider one example—God’s infinite and unconditional love. His love gives us confidence that we are known, accepted, and enjoyed for who we are. Accordingly, God’s love emboldens and inspires us to plumb the depths¹ of His being.

Sometimes we are satisfied with our relationship with God, and sometimes we hope and pray for more intimacy. When we really want a deeper connection to God, our hearts are stirred to seek Him. Our desire is for the Lord Himself, and not just for His blessings or gifts.

1. Where are you in your relationship with God? On a scale of 1–10, with 10 being extreme desire to know God more intimately, rank your desire to know God better.

¹ “To plumb the depths” means to explore or investigate thoroughly and deeply, especially regarding complex or profound subjects or ideas. It implies delving into the deepest aspects or intricacies of something to gain a comprehensive understanding.

Definitions: *Discipline* is the practice of *self-control*, guiding one's actions and behavior according to an orderly or prescribed standard. *Self-control* is restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires. *Self-discipline* is the ability to control one's own behavior, emotions, and impulses to follow personal standards and values. *Spiritual disciplines* are practices revealed in the Bible that foster spiritual growth in the life of a believer.

In this lesson we will refer to the spiritual disciplines as faith practices. It seems better terminology for today since it takes faith to develop the spiritual skills recorded in the Bible. Plus, one needs faith not only to recognize these practices but reliance on the Holy Spirit to enable understanding, ability, and most importantly, action.

Faith practices can also be commands that we are to obey. For instance, prayer is not only a faith practice but a direct command in Scripture. Believers are instructed to pray without ceasing and to continue steadfastly in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 4:2). Without obedience, intimacy with God cannot deepen because disobedience reveals a lack of love and desire for God (John 14:15).

The Christian life takes discipline and self-control. If we do not practice self-restraint and live out biblical patterns of behavior, we will succumb to our sin nature and the devil's temptations. Neither of these outcomes will bring us into a closer relationship with the Lord. At the same time, we cannot control ourselves without God's help; we must cooperate with His Spirit to lead disciplined and holy lives (Galatians 5:22–23).

Since seeking the Lord *is* a lifetime pursuit, we are listing it as the first faith practice we will explore in this lesson. The other five faith practices we will address are *confession*, *prayer*, *submission*, *Bible involvement*, and *solitude*. These are all ways to draw nearer to God.

(1) *Seeking the Lord*

We all travel through various stages in our quest for a closer relationship with God, so our personal journey will be unique and continually evolving and guided by the Holy Spirit. May this lesson serve as a tool to steer and inspire you to explore the profound depths of God's being, fostering a deeper love for Him and a selfless commitment to serving Him.

2. Read Jeremiah 29:13. What will happen when we look for the Lord with all our hearts?

You will seek me [LORD] and find me when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13
(Seek means to look for, be near to; seek one's presence.)

In Jeremiah 29, the Lord was talking to the people of Judah—they were going into captivity through their own disobedience and rebellion. They were to settle in Babylon, the land of their captors, and go about their normal lives. However, when the time was right, they would look for God and find Him; then He would return them to their home in the southern kingdom.²

² The split of Israel into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah occurred around 930 BC, following the reign of Solomon.

Even though the Lord was specifically talking to the people of Judah, Jeremiah 29:13 is also a divine promise or principle that applies to everyone. Whether in need of forgiveness, rescue from enemies, or desiring a closer relationship, when we seek God we will find Him. He will restore us or take us deeper into His heart, our home. It will always be in His timing and may even be in a way we do not understand—nonetheless this holy principle stands firm.

Seeking God with all our heart means dedicating our entire being—thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions—in our search. It is a wholehearted, sincere commitment to developing our relationship with God. Seeking God with all our heart also means doing everything to enhance our relationship with Him, including self-discipline and self-control.

The truth is—we are only as close to God as we choose to be. Why not choose to have a radically intense, loving, and supernatural connection with God? Make the choice and pray to seek God with all your heart. This is the first step is knowing God more intimately.

3. Ask the Lord to help you seek Him with all your heart. Trust Him. Pray the same prayer for anyone the Lord places on your heart. *I have prayed.* Yes No (Underline One)

Early in God's relationship with the Israelites, He reminded them of His goodness to them in bringing them out of Egypt and slavery. Through Moses, the Lord warned about disobedience, rebellion, and idolatry. If the Israelites disobeyed God's laws and commandments, they risked being destroyed or taken captive by hostile nations. Even then, if they repented and turned to the Lord, He would be merciful, forgive, and not abandon them.

Read Deuteronomy 4:29 and answer questions 4–6:

But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. Deuteronomy 4:29 (Cf. Psalm 119:2, 10)

4. After warning the Israelites about disobedience and their likelihood of being held captive in foreign lands, what does the Lord promise?

5. What is the condition the Lord places on finding Him?

6. How do you think Deuteronomy 4:29 can be applied to your life today?

(2) Confession

We covered seeking God as the first of six faith practices we will address in this lesson. Now, we look at the second faith practice: confession—admitting or acknowledging wrongdoing or guilt before God. For a more complete study regarding confession see Unit 3, Lesson 9, *The Name*, which includes a confession guide is included (pp. 23–26).

James, the half-brother of Jesus, also exhorted (urged) the Christian community to seek God. He also cautioned that their requests and desires for God should not be rooted in self-indulgent motives or personal pleasures. James was concerned about the envy and selfish ambitions he observed in the church. These were the world's way of living and doing business, not God's.

James warned about being double-minded—seeking to be friends with God *and* friends with the world. Friendship with the world makes us enemies of God (James 4:4). In ancient times, being friends with someone meant sharing the same viewpoint. Therefore, a friend of God aligns with His ways, wisdom, and will—rather than the world's values, reasoning, and pursuits.

Read James 4:8 and answer questions 7–9:

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. James 4:8 (Washing hands symbolize spiritual cleansing and moral purity. Double-minded is defined as being indecisive, wavering.)

7. What happens when we come near to God (v. 8a)?

8. James authored the book of James after Jesus' death and resurrection. Therefore, how do Christians wash, purify hearts, and not be double-minded (See Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:9)?

9. How are *you putting*, or how will *you put* these commands of spiritual cleansing and moral purity into practice?

James is being realistic. Christians continue to sin after being born-again due to our free will and sin nature. This tendency to sin was inherited from Adam and Eve, who rebelled by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Because of this sin nature, we are rebels, often choosing our own way over God's ways.

It is essential to recognize our tendency to make wrong, and therefore sinful decisions. It is also essential to repent and ask God for forgiveness when we do sin. Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection made our forgiveness a reality.

10. Are you confessing your sins daily and asking the Lord to forgive you in the blood of Christ Jesus? Yes No Sometimes (Underline One)

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #1–10 with your discipleship team.

It takes discipline to acknowledge our wrongdoing and seek forgiveness. Ideally, we should confess immediately when we rebel against God. Yet, we may not always recognize our sin due to worldly distractions or self-interest. When the Holy Spirit does convict us of our wrongdoing, we should confess right away.

—End Day One—

Day Two

Know Jesus—Know the Father

Faith practices are attitudes and behaviors revealed in Scripture that promote spiritual growth and draw Christians closer to God. In other words, maturing or growing in faith promotes obedience and draws us into a closer relationship with God. For this reason six faith practices are highlighted in this lesson. Two of the faith practices—*seeking God* and *confession*—were briefly discussed in day one. The remaining four—*prayer*, *submission*, *Bible involvement*, and *solitude*—will be emphasized in days three through five.

Our goal is not the practices themselves, but in how they draw us nearer to God. Although they require effort on our part, we are enabled to practice God's commands and will through His grace and power of His Spirit.

11. Read Titus 2:11–12. How *can* we say “no” to ungodliness and live self-controlled lives?

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. Titus 2:11–12 (This present age refers to the period between Jesus' first coming—His birth—and His second coming, when He will return as Judge.)

During this present age, we are called to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives, resisting ungodliness and worldly passions. This age precedes the future age—the fulfillment of God's kingdom—where sin and evil will be no more, replaced by an eternity of bliss.

Jesus is the foundation of our relationship with God. His arrival ushered in the age of grace, characterized by God's favor. Jesus not only demonstrated the way to live out one's faith but also sacrificed Himself on the cross to implement the way for our restoration and reconciliation with God.

At the moment we place our faith in Christ, we experience a general repentance for all past sins. Repentance involves acknowledging sin, turning from it, and turning toward God—it is essential for receiving forgiveness and reconciliation with Him. Refusing to repent is a deliberate choice to turn away from God and remain in sin.

It is unrealistic for most people to recall every past sin when they first believe. Even the criminal on the cross was assured of paradise without listing his sins (Luke 23:39–43). However, a heart *willing* to repent is necessary. The Holy Spirit may bring specific sins to mind for personal confession either at that moment or later in our journey of holiness.

Which comes first, repentance or faith in Christ? Both are essential for salvation and interwoven throughout Scripture (Luke 24:46–48; Acts 3:19; Ephesians 2:8–9), making it unwise to prioritize one over the other. It is much like the classic question: Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Both remain necessary throughout the believer's life, and a prolonged absence of either faith or repentance may raise doubts about one's salvation (1 John 1:6).

Action Step

12. Prayerfully consider: Have you repented and placed your faith in Christ? With the Lord's help, are you following Christ, confessing your sins, and turning from wrongdoing?

Yes | No (Underline One) If you answered no, explain why.

The Lord's forgiveness gives us access to Him—the one, true, holy, and living God. Jesus' death and resurrection opened the door to a loving relationship with God the Father. In fact, Jesus is the door—to know God the Father, we must know God the Son. To develop intimacy with the Father, develop intimacy with the Son.

Consider Jesus' words in John 17:26: *"I have made you [Father] known to them [disciples], and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."* Not only does Jesus make God the Father known initially, He also continues to reveal the Father, deepening our understanding and capacity to know and love Him.

In John 14, Jesus told His disciples that He would be leaving and preparing a place for them. Perplexed, Thomas responded, *"Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"* (John 14:5). Thomas and the other disciples had interpreted Jesus' words as referring to a physical location on earth, assuming they merely needed directions for the journey. However, Jesus was speaking of His forthcoming death, resurrection, and the promise of eternal life. He was going to the cross and opening the spiritual door to God the Father.

Read John 14:6–7 and answer questions 13–19:

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." John 14:6–7 (Cf. Hebrews 10:19–22)

Definitions: In John 14:7, the Greek verb translated *know* is *ginóskō* (γινώσκω). In this context, *know* implies a deep, intimate, *experiential knowledge*, or comprehension, rather than just factual knowledge. It suggests a close relationship, personal acquaintance, and profound understanding. *Experiential knowledge* includes personal experiences and interactions.

13. How did Jesus respond to Thomas' question about knowing the way (v. 6)?

14. Explain what it means for Jesus to be *the way and the truth and the life* (v. 6)

15. Is there any way to have a relationship with God the Father other than through Jesus, His Son (v. 6b)? Yes | No (Underline One)

16. In your own words, define the word "know" in the context of verses 6–7.

17. Explain why *you* would or why *you* would not want to experience God in a deep, intimate, and loving relationship?

18. Answer true or false: When Jesus said to Thomas, “*If you really know me, you will know my Father as well,*” He was implying a deep, intimate knowledge of the Father, indicating a profound relationship and spiritual connection. True | False (Underline One)

19. Why is it necessary to draw close to Jesus to draw close to God the Father? (See Hebrews 10:19–22)?

Just as the word *know* carries a deeper meaning in John 14:7, so does the word *way*. The Greek word for *way* refers to a means of entering into something. Thus, Jesus is the means of entering into a saving relationship with God—He is the spiritual map and the pathway to the Father.

Additionally, *way* also signifies a manner of living and acting—a way of life. When Jesus declared Himself *the way*, He included both meanings. He not only grants access to God but also sustains our relationship with Him. In Christ, we are made and kept pleasing to our heavenly Father.³

Jesus did not only say, *I am the way*, but also declared Himself to be *the truth and the life*. Truth signifies complete trustworthiness, full disclosure, and ultimate reality. In John 14:6, Jesus proclaims Himself as the embodiment of divine truth and revelation—the very personification and incarnation of God’s nature. The standard by which all reality is defined.

Similarly, *life* refers to spiritual life, eternal life, and natural life—the fullness of existence found in a relationship with God. Jesus is the source of this life, offering it abundantly to those who follow Him. As the preincarnate Son, He shares in God’s eternity (1 John 5:20).⁴ As God, Jesus *is, was, and will always be* (Revelation 1:8; Hebrews 13:8).

20. Read John 17:3. According to Jesus’ words, what is the main purpose of eternal life?

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #12–20 with your discipleship team.

³ In the course of time, God established a new covenant through His Son. In this covenant, Jesus not only reconciles us with God but also fulfills its requirements on our behalf. As the guarantor of this better covenant, He secures our relationship with God, ensuring an enduring closeness through His divine identity (Hebrews 7:22).

⁴ “Preincarnate” refers to the state of existence before Jesus took on human form—Jesus’ existence as the divine Son of God before his birth on earth. “Eternity” is an attribute of God that refers to the timeless and infinite nature of God’s existence (Psalm 90:2). It signifies that God exists outside of time, without beginning or end. This attribute is often described using terms like “eternal,” “everlasting,” or “unchanging.”

Knowing Jesus means knowing the Father, and the more we draw near to Him, the more we are transformed by His love. This love compels us to respond—not only in personal devotion but also in action. Just as Jesus came to reveal the Father and reconcile us to Him, He now calls us to participate in His mission.

Jesus' mission did not end with His resurrection. As the Father sent Jesus, He now sends us into the world. Loving God naturally leads to loving others, and this love is expressed through obedience to His command: *"Feed my sheep"* (John 21:17). We are commissioned to make disciples, leading others into the same life-changing relationship with Christ that we have experienced.

21. Read John 20:21. How did the Father send Jesus, and how is Jesus sending *you*?

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." John 20:21

To follow Jesus, we must be sure of who He is and what He requires of us. Despite being with Jesus for three years, Philip was still seeking clarity about Jesus' relationship with the Father.

Read John 14:8–11 and answer questions 22–28:

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." ⁹ 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'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. John 14:8–11

22. What do you think Philip meant when he asked Jesus to show him and the other disciples the Father (v. 8)?

23. Why did Jesus respond, *"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?"*(v. 9a)

24. Explain Jesus' words, *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."* (v. 9b)

25. Since Jesus is no longer on earth physically, how do *you* see, know, and relate to Him? (See Matthew 18:22, John 4:24, 5:39, 14:13–14, 14:21, 14:26, 20:29; Romans 1:20)

26. Who was living in Jesus and doing His work (v. 10c)?

27. What evidence were the disciples to believe that would prove Jesus was in the Father and the Father was in Him (v. 11)?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #21–27 with your discipleship team.

Philip, being one of the early disciples, had been with the Lord for three years. Yet, Philip wanted more evidence from Jesus about His relationship with the Father. Philip may have been asking for some kind of tangible demonstration and visible display that would prove Jesus' claim of divinity.

Do you detect the disappointment and perhaps a hint of sadness in Jesus' response to Philip? *"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?"* Philip, despite his physical proximity to Jesus, revealed through his question that he had not grasped Jesus' identity and the power of His heavenly mission.

Before criticizing Philip, think how we may disappoint Jesus. He may be asking us similar questions. *Do you really know me? Are you really seeking to comprehend and understand me? Why don't you want to draw closer to me . . . and the Father?*

Jesus then turns from addressing Philip to addressing all the disciples (v. 11). "Believe" in the original Greek is plural and imperative. So Jesus commands all His disciples to trust in the works they had seen to substantiate His claims. What works had they seen? The works are the signs and miracles through which Jesus glorified God. He healed the sick, caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, cleansed lepers, walked on water, calmed the storm, fed thousands with little food, preached the word, knew people's thoughts, and raised the dead.

The life of Jesus is the life of God. Seeing Jesus and His works is seeing the manifestation or appearance of God. It does not mean actually seeing the Person of God the Father with the naked eye, for He is Spirit and invisible. It does mean that Jesus is God in the flesh (incarnation). God's Spirit lives in Jesus and Jesus' Spirit lives in the Father. Together with the Holy Spirit they are one—the divine mystery of the Trinity.

Growing in our love relationship with Jesus, means acknowledging Him before others. He is worthy of honor, praise, and glory. Take time today to speak lovingly and truthfully about Him.

28. Read Luke 12:8–9. What action, according to this passage, demonstrates that we know and love Jesus?

"I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God." But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God. Luke 12:8–9

—End Day Two—

Day Three

Prayer and Submitting

The original disciples had the privilege of walking, talking, and learning from Jesus in person during His time on earth. However, for disciples today, deepening our relationship with Him comes through seeking Him in the church, worship, Scripture, prayer, obedience, and the Holy Spirit—faith practices that all begin at the cross.

The cross of Christ stands as a profound revelation of God—a pivotal point and central focus for human existence. Humanity survives because God, through suffering and forgiveness, chose redemption over annihilation. In embracing the cross, we encounter the Lord’s enduring message of grace and hope.

To know the cross is to deepen our bond with Jesus. What unfailing love and compassion! What a selfless and sacrificial gift to you, me, and all people. By remaining on the cross in excruciating pain, Jesus willingly accepted and embraced God’s plan to restore humanity to Himself.

Jesus endured the cross through humiliation, insults, and rejection. Jesus persevered on the cross for humanity to have the opportunity of a loving relationship with God. Jesus also persisted on the cross to defeat Satan and his evil forces (Hebrews 2:14–15) and through His suffering revealed the power and glory of the one and only Triune God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Read 1 John 4:9–10 and answer questions 29–31:

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:9–10 (An “atoning sacrifice” refers to a sin offering that satisfies God’s righteous wrath, providing forgiveness and reconciliation with Him. Some Bible translations use the terms “propitiation” or “expiation” to convey this meaning.)

29. How did God show His love among us (v. 9)?

30. How do *you* live through Jesus (v. 9)?

31. What is love according to verse 10?

After Jesus’ death, He was raised from the dead and reigns as our living Lord. Therefore, to live through Jesus is to make Him our reality—our very life. It means we exist in His presence, walking in His ways by faith, while eagerly anticipating the day we will experience His fullness, face-to-face. Living through Jesus is both our present journey and our eternal hope.

Not only does Jesus give us life, but He also gives us our identity, purpose, and strength. Those who trust in Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross are spiritually sustained, empowered, and guided

by Him. Our spirits have been made alive, immersing us in a vital union with Christ. Through Him we are enabled to live righteous and holy lives with divine favor.

In 1 John 4:9–10, the apostle John contrasts human love with divine love. These verses highlight the fact that God’s love is not dependent on our love for Him, but is rooted in His own nature. It is founded on His covenantal love, demonstrated through Jesus’ atoning sacrifice. This divine love is not a temporary or conditional arrangement but a steadfast commitment that transforms us. As we abide in Christ, His love shapes our identity and empowers us to reflect His love in our relationships with others.

Consider the remarkable bond of the Father and the Son, characterized by perfect love and mutual affection, which existed before the foundation of the world (John 17:24). Though separate Persons, the Father and the Son are one in divine nature and attributes, sharing perfect intimacy, unity, and relationship.

Read John 10:30 and answer questions 32–33:

“I and the Father are one.” John 10:30

32. How does Jesus describe His relationship with God the Father?

33. What is the significance of Jesus saying that He and the Father are one?

While Jesus’ statement in John 10:30 speaks specifically about His unique relationship with the Father, it also serves as a model for believers. The oneness of the Father and the Son—rooted in essence, purpose, and will—transcends human experience. However, *being one* also expresses unity, agreement, shared identity, and deep intimacy. Through Jesus’ perfect obedience and sacrificial love, we are invited into a similar relationship of oneness with God the Father.

Before Jesus was arrested for crimes He did not commit, He *prayed* for all believers to be one just as He and the Father are one. *Prayer* was vital to Jesus—it was one of the key ways He maintained closeness and intimacy with His Father. By His example, *prayer*—both talking and listening to God—should also be central in our relationship with Him.

Prayer is the third faith practice disciples must develop to grow closer to the Lord. For further study on prayer, see Unit 3, *Christian Leadership, Lesson 12, The Praying Leader*.

(3) Prayer

Read John 17:20–23 and answer questions 34–39:

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they

may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” John 17:20–23 (In this context, “glory” refers to the divine presence, honor, and unity that Jesus shares with His followers, reflecting God’s character and mission in the world.)

34. Who is Jesus praying and talking to (v. 21)?

35. Who is Jesus praying for (v. 20)?

36. What does Jesus pray for believers (v. 21)?

37. What will cause the world to believe that the Father has sent Jesus (v. 21)?

38. Explain the meaning of glory (v. 22).

39. Why is unity so important within the body of believers (v. 23)?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #29–39 with your discipleship team.

As the divine Son, Jesus was never without the Spirit or the Father. Yet, in His humanity, God the Father gave Him the Spirit at His baptism (Matthew 3:16). In John 17, Jesus speaks the future as it seamlessly flows from the present, meaning what God has set in motion is already taking effect in His disciples.

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus gives all His disciples glory—His divine presence and revelation. By the Spirit of glory, Jesus makes His presence known, and believers are united with God, sharing in the oneness of the Father and Son—unity, intimacy, and shared identity. However, no matter how close we draw to God, we will never fully share in the totality of His divine nature (Exodus 33:17–23; Isaiah 42:8).

This unity is not merely organizational or superficial—it is a deep spiritual connection rooted in faith in Christ. It transcends cultural, ethnic, and doctrinal differences, uniting believers in God’s Spirit across diverse backgrounds under the banner of Christ.

Christian unity reflects the reality of Christ’s message and the transformative power of the gospel. When believers display genuine love and unity despite differences, it becomes a compelling witness to the world.

Unity in the body of Christ is rooted in intimacy with God. Jesus’ perfect relationship with the Father serves as our model for knowing God more deeply. The closer we are to God, the more we grow in unity as the body of Christ.

Read John 3:35–36 and answer questions 40–41:

The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. John 3:35–36 (“Placed everything in his hands” signifies entrusting someone with control, power and authority.)

40. Does the Father love and trust the Son (v. 35)? Yes No (Underline One)

41. What does verse 36 reveal about the Father and Son's relationship?

There is no Father without the Son and no Son without the Father. They share a stunning love connection and a bond that is unbreakable. It is firm and shatterproof—it is permanent.

42. What is *your* part in building a stunning love relationship with God that is firm and shatterproof?

The fourth faith practice disciples must develop to grow closer to the Lord is *submission*. It is yielding oneself to God's authority and will. It involves humility, obedience, and a recognition of God's Lordship and sovereignty.

(4) Submission

43. Read John 6:38. Explain this verse in your own words.

For I [Jesus] have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him [God] who sent me. John 6:38

By emphasizing His obedience to the Father's will, Jesus sets an example for His followers and underscores the importance of aligning one's actions and intentions with God's purposes. Jesus' words in John 6:38 reflect His humility, selflessness, and perfect submission to divine authority.

Jesus was in constant communication with God the Father and willing to submit to His plans even though it involved personal sacrifice and suffering. That meant talking, listening, and acting in accordance with God's will. How earnestly do you talk with God and submit to His plans?

44. How good are you at listening to God? Rate yourself on a scale from 1–10, 10 being the best.

45. Will you be in constant prayer and voluntarily submit to God's plans? Yes No (Underline One) If not, why not?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #40–45 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Three—

Day Four

Bible Involvement

Some of the faith practices overlap. For example, how can we confess our sins without praying? We have to communicate our sins to God and ask for forgiveness. It is the same with *Bible Involvement*. We cannot interact and immerse ourselves in the Bible without talking and listening to God. By definition, the Bible is God's Word, and therefore demands our active attention.

(5) Bible Involvement

As mentioned earlier, faith practices or disciplines are those attitudes and behaviors revealed in Scripture that foster spiritual growth in the lives of Christians. Our goal is not the practices themselves, but in how they draw us nearer to God. For this reason we are discussing six faith practices. Previously, we considered four of these practices, *seeking God, confession, prayer, and submission*, we now focus on *Bible involvement*.

Why do we call this faith practice Bible *involvement*? The word *involvement* signifies active participation, engagement, and inclusion in something meaningful. It goes beyond simply reading or studying the Bible—it means fully engaging with Scripture as a way to communicate with God, allowing His Word to shape our hearts, minds, and lives.

The Bible is inspired by God. It is alive and powerful, not originating from human will but from the Holy Spirit, and enduring for eternity. Its timeless wisdom and guidance offer a glimpse into the heart and mind of God. Engaging with the Bible is engaging with God.

God is the source of the words written in the 66 books of the Bible. The Holy Spirit inspired or directed human authors to record the Lord's words and messages for all people. The Bible is God speaking to all people, at all times.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17 and answer questions 46–48:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16–17 (Rebuking is defined here as exposing wrongdoing.)

Definition: The Greek work translated *God-breathed* in 2 Timothy 3:16 is *theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος). The word is used in Scripture as communication that has been ordained by God's authority and produced by the enabling of His Spirit. In addition to *God-breathed*, it can also be translated as divinely inspired or inspired by God.

46. What part of the Bible is ordained for God's communication to people (v. 16)?

47. Why is 2 Timothy 3:16–17 meant for all people, at all times?

48. Who is the servant of God to be equipped for every good work (v. 17)?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #46–48 with your discipleship team.

49. Read 2 Peter 1:21. How were prophets able to speak God’s words?

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21

Moses, a prophet, was inspired to write the first five books of the Bible. Not only did the Lord inspire Moses to write the Pentateuch⁵, but the Lord appeared to him in various ways on a number of occasions. Additionally, there were times when the Lord spoke directly to Moses without any visible appearance or form.

50. Read Numbers 1:1. Who spoke to Moses?

The LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. Numbers 1:1

God spoke to Moses and the people of Israel, and He speaks to us today. However, it is wise to discern what the Lord’s words meant for Moses and the people of his day, and how they apply to us today. While God’s words—His promises, commands, and judgments—are eternal and unchanging, cultural contexts shift, and certain aspects may require a deeper understanding. For example, the dietary laws given to Israel in the Old Testament were specific to their time and culture, but the principles behind them—obedience and holiness—still hold relevance today. God’s truth stands firm throughout the Bible.

51. Read Exodus 20:22–23. What was the reason the Lord spoke to Moses (v. 23)?

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: ‘You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven.’²³ Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.” Exodus 20:22–23

God’s Word speaks the same truth today—the Lord is worthy of all honor, glory, and praise. No one comes close. These same words speak to us today—do not put any gods or idols alongside God. Exodus 20: 22–23 also means that we are not to place anyone or anything above or equal to the one, true, living God. This is a loving and life-giving warning. The Lord is revealing an important part of our relationship with Him—He is to be first and foremost in our lives.

⁵ The Pentateuch refers to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) in Judaism and Christianity. These books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In Jewish tradition, the Pentateuch is known as the Torah, which is considered the most sacred text and forms the foundation of Jewish law and theology.

Read Hebrews 4:12 and answer questions 52–56:

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

Definitions: The *soul* is a word with a variety of meanings derived from context. In fact, in some cases it is used synonymously with spirit. However, in Hebrews 4:12, the *soul* refers to the physical essence of humanity with its mental and emotional aspects. *Spirit* is defined as that higher, nonphysical, distinct aspect of humanity which connects us to God. *Joints* are where two bones meet in the body. *Marrow* is the soft tissue found inside bones, responsible for producing blood cells and storing fat.

52. In Hebrews 4:12, is the “*word of God*” identical to the “Bible”? Yes No (Underline One)

53. How do you know the words in the Bible are not dead and unproductive (v. 12a)?

54. How is the “Word of God” described metaphorically (symbolically) (v. 12b)?

55. What does the “Word of God” judge (v. 12c)?

The recorded words of God are not merely lifeless marks on a page, but an outpouring of His profound and powerful creative will. God’s words are so immensely powerful that He spoke the universe into existence (Genesis 1). Through the Old and New Testaments, God’s divine intention and requirements have been preserved to speak to us today.

The author of Hebrews uses figurative language to describe how exacting and deep God’s Word penetrates. It goes right to a person’s heart. Both soul and spirit, joints and marrow convey God’s Word dividing between the physical and nonphysical, the seen and the unseen. No matter how people act or represent themselves on the outside, God’s Word has the ability to reach into our innermost being for judgement, transformation, spiritual growth, and holy intimacy.

God’s Word is not idle but always working. It is moving, motivating, and transforming hearts and minds. The Bible is one of God’s holy and distinctive ways of interacting with His people.

56. How would you react if God appeared to you and began speaking?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #49–56 with your discipleship team.

If God began speaking to us, most of us would react with profound reverence and respect. So why do we not always treat the Bible, God’s Word, with reverence and respect? Throughout history, the Jews treated the Old Testament as a sacred text, the living embodiment of divine

truth and wisdom from God. Christians followed suit treating the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, with profound reverence and care.

Approaching the Word of God is approaching the *Triune* God. Not only is the Holy Spirit responsible for our understanding and interpretation (1 Corinthians 2:9–13) of the Bible, but Jesus *is* the Word of God (John 1:1–4, 14). Therefore, seeking intimacy with God requires approaching the Word respectfully with an open and humble heart.

For those who have been reading the Bible for a long time, there is another caution—“familiarity breeds contempt.” This saying comes from Aesop’s fable, *The Fox and the Lion*, in which a fox, initially in awe of the lion, becomes so accustomed to the lion’s presence that it loses its sense of reverence. The phrase highlights how, when people become overly familiar with someone, they may start to overlook their value and take them for granted. This can lead to a decrease in respect, admiration, or appreciation for the person or thing. As we become more acquainted with something, we can lose the initial sense of awe and reverence we once had.

Action Step

Prayerfully consider your relationship with God’s Word. Answer questions 56–59.

57. Do I read the Bible daily, expecting to meet and hear from God? If not, why not?

58. Do I treat God’s Word with respect and reverence? If not, how will I remedy my failure?

59. Am I so familiar with the Bible that I take it for granted? If yes, how will I learn to approach it with awe?

60. How sensitive am I to God’s Word? Do I talk and listen to God while I am reading it? Do I write down and do whatever God impresses on me? If not, how will I become more sensitive?

Jesus was extremely sensitive to God the Father and God the Spirit. He listened and watched for God. Jesus obeyed God and acted upon what He heard and observed. Jesus had a tender and soft heart toward God—always open and sensitive to the Father’s leading no matter how difficult the assignment.

61. Read John 12:49–50. How do these verses speak to Jesus’ sensitivity to God the Father?

“For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. ⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” John 12:49–50

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #57–61 with your discipleship team.

Being sensitive to God's Word, means being responsive. Jesus was responsive, which means He reacted quickly, strongly, and positively toward God and what God desired. One of the ways we can react faster, firmly, and favorably towards God is by memorizing Scripture.

By committing Bible verses to memory enables us to remember and act upon its truth in all circumstances. Not only will our reaction time be quicker, but the knowledge of Scripture will make us more in-tuned and sensitive to the Spirit's guidance. The Spirit will also use memorized verses to speak truth, love, and hope into our lives when we need it most.

God made people with different physical appearances, personalities, gifts, and talents. Therefore, Bible memorization may be easier for some than others. In fact, with all the faith practices, some may be more or less challenging for you to engage in than others.

This is the reason they are called "faith" practices. It takes faith in Jesus to participate in every single one. We can do nothing without Jesus—but in Him we can do all things. Faith triumphs over all fleshly weaknesses. Therefore, we *can* seek God, confess, pray, submit, and immerse ourselves in the Bible.

Take courage—trust in God. When you ask for more faith, the Lord will increase it. When you seek Him, You will find Him. When you confess your sins, He will forgive you. When you pray, He will answer. When you submit to God, His will is done. When you are involved in the Bible, God makes His presence known.

The more we practice or exercise our faith, the stronger it becomes. This follows the biblical principle of diligence, hard work, and dedication (Proverbs 22:29; Colossians 3:23; 1 Corinthians 9:24). It is similar to other worthwhile goals people pursue in life. When students study harder, they get better grades. When athletes submit to rigorous training sessions, their skills improve. Even in relationships, when we invest time and effort into nurturing them, they tend to flourish.

Therefore, commit to investing time and effort into nurturing your relationship with the Lord. Meet God in His Word. Allow Him to work in your life. Believe He *will* work in your life, draw you near, and give you joy and purpose in His presence.

62. Read and meditate on Psalm 130:5. What is the Lord impressing upon you?

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. Psalm 130:5

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer to #62 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Four—

Day Five
Solitude

(6) *Solitude*

After discussing five faith practices—*seeking God, confession, prayer, submission, and Bible involvement*—we now turn our attention to *solitude*. This is the final faith practice covered in this lesson. However, there are other spiritual disciplines, such as fasting, journaling, meditation, and simplicity, that you may choose to explore and apply to your life as the Lord leads.

Solitude is simply being alone. Biblically, solitude means spending time alone with God without any external distractions or interruptions. Solitude enriches all of the faith practices we have discussed. Without distractions it is easier to concentrate on seeking God, recalling sins, praying fervently, understanding God's will, and hearing God speak through His Word.

Withdrawing from family and friends gives us an opportunity to focus on God. Free from distractions, we can set aside other voices, views, and opinions, turning our full attention to His voice, His will, and His plans. Just be still as the Lord ushers you into His presence.

Jesus empathized the importance of solitude by His actions. He had a holy habit of withdrawing to solitary places. Even though Jesus was in constant communication with God, He still took time to be alone with Him. Jesus' example should inspire us to regularly seek a solitary and personal audience with our heavenly Father.

Read Matthew 14:23 and answer questions 63–65:

After he had dismissed them [disciples], he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone . . . Matthew 14:23

63. After Jesus had dismissed His disciples, what did He do?

64. When Jesus went up on the mountainside, who was with Him?

Solitude and prayer were consistent in Jesus' life. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He withdrew into the desert to pray and fast for forty days (Luke 1:1–14). While seeking God for communion and strength for His ministry, God also allowed Jesus to be tested. The devil tempted Jesus to sin in various ways such as choosing physical needs over spiritual, using divine force, and having worldly power.

The devil fears our closeness to God. Therefore, he and his demons will try all the tricks of their trade to keep our thoughts far from God. Impure thoughts may occur, anger toward another, grumbling, pride, self-pity, or any kind of self-centered intentions. Be on guard and rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance. Reading and meditating on God's Word can hinder and halt spiritual attacks.

Jesus emphasized the importance of solitude in various situations. For example, Jesus sought solitude before choosing His disciples (Luke 6:12–13), after healing the sick and casting out demons (Mark 1:32–35), and when the people tried to make Him king by force (John 6:15). Jesus also wanted to be alone with God in times of grief (Matthew 14:10–13) and anguish (Luke 22:39–44). Meeting privately with God is a continual pattern He graciously laid out for us.

65. How can understanding Jesus’ practice of seeking solitude inspire you to spend more time alone with God?

God designed people similar, yet unique. Some of us relish our time alone with God, while others are much happier in a crowd of people. Jesus did both—and so should we. If you find it difficult to be alone, pray for God’s favor and grace to help you. If you find ministry among people difficult, pray for God’s favor and grace to help you.

Since some faith practices may be challenging, while others are a breeze—remember the goal: *intimacy with God*. Take time to face and conquer the more difficult faith practices to demonstrate your resolve and desire to know and serve God more fully.

In Day One, we emphasized the importance of seeking the Lord with all our hearts when desiring a closer relationship with Him. God promised the people of Judah that if they sought Him, they would find Him, and He would bring them back from captivity (Jeremiah 29:14a). Again this was a promise given to the people of Judah regarding their physical captivity at the hands of the Babylonians, but it is also a divine principle or promise we can apply to our own lives today.

For those people wholly or partially held captive by Satan, there is hope for release.⁶ Life can be extremely difficult—pain, loss, loneliness, adversity, uncertainty, and the challenges of navigating relationships and responsibilities. These hardships may lead some to blame God and turn away from Him. While this response is tempting and often encouraged by the enemy, it only worsens our problems and takes us further from God.

God loves all people so much that He devised a plan for our release from sin and Satan long before the Jews’ physical captivity in Babylon. The Lord inspired Jeremiah to remind the people of His earlier promise by prophesying about a new leader—an Anointed One, the Messiah.⁷ This is the Messiah from the line of David who came to save and rule all people—everywhere—for eternity.

Read Jeremiah 30:21–22 and answer questions 66–68:

‘Their leader will be one of their own; their ruler will arise from among them. I will bring him near and he will come close to me—for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?’ declares the LORD. ²² “‘So you will be my people, and I will be your God.’” Jeremiah 30:21–22

⁶ We are referring to spiritual captivity, but there are also Christians who are physically held captive by entities directed by Satan and his evil forces, such as those imprisoned for their faith or caught in human trafficking.

⁷ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/jeremiah/30-21.htm> (accessed 3/11/2024).

66. Who is the “leader” who will arise from among the Israelites (v. 21a; Matthew 1:1, 16, 2:6)?
67. Why is their “leader” near and close to God (See Leviticus 10:3; Hebrews 4:14–16, 7:25)?
68. How will their “leader” bring people close to God (See John 3:16; 1 Peter 3:18)?

The Lord had not abandoned the Jews to foreign rule, but would restore Judah and Israel according to His covenant (promise) with them (Exodus 6:7–8). Through the Lord’s mercy and compassion, He uses judgment, punishment, and salvation to restore His people to holy relationship. This divine restoration comes to completion through the new covenant effected by the new Leader dying on a cross for the sins of humanity.

Therefore, our intimacy with God is interlinked and interwoven with Jesus. As we come to know Jesus, we come to know the triune God. This is not just a matter of trusting Jesus for our salvation, but spending time with Him daily. Prioritize Jesus above all else, and you will encounter genuine intimacy with God. *Never forget this close connection or interdependency between our relationship with God and Jesus.*

Read and memorize Hebrews 1:1–2. Answer questions 70–74:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. Hebrews 1:1–2

69. Memorize Hebrews 1:1–2.
70. In the past, how did God speak to the ancestors of the Jews (v. 1)?
71. Define “last days.”
72. How does God speak to us in these last days (v. 2)?
73. How are you actively listening for Jesus’ to speak?
74. Who has God appointed the heir of all things (v. 2)? Through whom did God make the universe (v. 2)?

Accountability: Recite Hebrews 1:1–2, number 69; Share your answers to #65–68 and #70–74 with your team.

The author of Hebrews is referring to ancient times, beginning with Moses, who recorded God's words in the first five books of the Old Testament. God spoke to Moses in a variety of ways—from the burning bush, the cloud and pillar of fire, the tent of meeting, the Urim and Thummim, dreams and visions, as well as direct communication. For over 3,500 years, God spoke through many prophets, with Malachi being the final prophet of the Old Testament. These prophets shared God's messages, each following His guidance to communicate with His people.

With the ascension of Jesus, the world has entered the last days. These are the days before Jesus returns to set up His kingdom on earth (Revelation 20:6). Today, God speaks to people through His Son with whom He shares the same eternal mind and being.

Jesus speaks through Scripture and through His Holy Spirit dwelling within His followers. As a result, He can also speak through our Christian communities. Our role is to actively listen and follow His guidance. A great way to start is by waking each morning with a sense of holy anticipation, eager to hear from Jesus, take His hand, and walk with Him throughout the day.

Great reverence should be afforded to this relationship since we are talking with the heir of all things. That is, all things whether visible or invisible, have been made for Jesus. This inheritance was established before the world was created. In addition, God the Son is the eternal and divine agent of the created universe. Yet incredibly He desires to call us friends (John 15:15).

This morning the Holy Spirit reminded me of a song sung by Michael W. Smith and written by Kelly Carpenter titled "Draw Me Close to You." These stanzas capture the heartfelt longing to draw nearer to God, surrendering all to experience the warmth of His embrace and the assurance of friendship. It is a tender reminder of our deepest desire to be in communion with God and abide in His loving presence. Here is first stanza and chorus:

Draw me close to You	You are my desire
Never let me go	No one else will do
I lay it all down again	'Cause nothing else can take Your place
To hear You say that I'm Your friend ¹	To feel the warmth of Your embrace
	Help me find the way, bring me back to You ⁸

—End of Day Five, Lesson 6, and end of Unit 1: *Who Is God?* Study—

Congratulations on completing Unit 1: *Who Is God?* Study! Excellent job. We pray studying about God and His attributes will bring you peace and knowledge in serving and honoring Him.

Next—Unit 2: Blessing Others, Lesson 1: Preparing to Witness

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⁸ "Draw Me Close to You", words by Kelly Carpenter; lyrics © Integrity Music, 1994.