

**ENTER HIS PRESENCE: Intimacy With God (Gen. 2:25)**  
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**January 9, 2005**

**THESIS:** To draw Christians into a more intimate relationship with God.

**INTRODUCTION:**

- A. What comes into your mind when you hear the following words:
  - 1. Worship – specific place, attitude, certain “acts” like singing or praying?
  - 2. Intimacy – close personal relationship (as with a spouse or child)?
- B. **Genesis 2:25** – And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.
  - 1. Here we have the “perfect relationship”.
  - 2. As originally created, man and woman were naked and unashamed in the presence of God.
  - 3. This was the way God always intended it to be, but we realize that things changed (Gen 3).
- C. But God calls us into relationship with him, and wants that relationship to be a very close, intimate one.
  - 1. Worship of God is one part of bridging the gap and having an intimate relationship with our Creator, even though we live in a fallen creation.

To understand the situation we find ourselves in, let first consider . . .

**I. GOD’S PLAN FOR RELATIONSHIP**

- A. To “love” someone we must obviously have some type of relationship with them
  - 1. **Matthew 22:35-40** – the Greatest Commandment
  - 2. The command to “love God” is a **vertical** relationship between man on earth and God in heaven.
  - 3. The command to “love man” is a **horizontal** relationship between man and man on earth.
  - 4. If the first relationship is messed up, the latter one will be also.
- B. God is a relational Being.
  - 1. As such, He calls us to worship Him in a relational sense.
  - 2. At the core of God’s being is the Godhood (trinity).
  - 3. There is relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
  - 4. In the Godhood there is perfect love, perfect union and perfect care.
- C. Man’s nature is to desire close relationship
  - 1. Man is a relational being.
  - 2. Man is created in the image of God (**Gen. 1:26**).
  - 3. It was not good that man should be alone (**Gen. 2:18**).
- D. Sin causes a separation from God
  - 1. Fall of man (**Gen. 3:7-8**)
  - 2. As a result of sin, man hid himself from God.
  - 3. Immediately Adam and Eve tried to hide and cover themselves (their nakedness) – or who they really were.

4. We do all kinds of things to cover our nakedness -- who we really are.
- E. God's plan is that we be restored to relationship with Him
  1. God's desire is that nothing separate us from Him. He is so gentle. He is a loving shepherd and husband to His church.
  2. When we come to know God and we understand how He pours out His love for us in the giving of His Son, and we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, we are restored to a relationship with God once again.
  3. After we are restored to God, we must go through a process of "uncovering".
  4. Becoming a Christian is the beginning of a long process of uncovering those places inside us that we're ashamed of.
  5. We must come to the realization that we don't need to be afraid in His presence anymore.

## II. WORSHIP: GOD'S WAY TO INTIMACY

- A. Worship involves a relationship between God and man
  1. "Worship Is. . ." (Brad Watson)
    - a. Connecting with God
    - b. Communing with God
    - c. Talking with God
    - d. Hearing from God
    - e. Adoring God
    - f. Receiving from God
    - g. Being charged with the life of God
  2. We worship for two main reasons:
    - a. To **know** God.
    - b. To **be known by** God.
- B. Ex. Marriage Relationship
  1. Eph. 5:22-32
  2. Not much intimacy if we're separated by space.
  3. By close proximity not indicator of intimacy.
- C. God desires RELATIONSHIP not RELIGIOUSNESS.
  1. God wants us to be one with Him (**Jn. 17:20-23**)
  2. There is a difference between KNOWING God and KNOWING ABOUT God.
  3. We know God thru the scriptures (**Jn. 5:39-42**)
  4. The Pharisees knew the scriptures and the right things to say, but they didn't know God because their heart was not for Him.

ALL ARE RELATIONAL

## III. HINDRANCES TO EXPERIENCING GOD'S PRESENCE IN WORSHIP

- A. Some may object and say:
  1. "I come to worship and I don't get anything out of it"
  2. "I can have a close relationship with God outside of worship"
  3. "When I come to church I don't feel apart of the assembly"
- B. Some hindrances to experiencing God's presence in worship:
  1. Willful/rebellious sin in our lives
    - a. **Psa. 66:18** – *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.*
    - b. **Isa. 59:2** – *But your iniquities have separated you from your God.*

2. Pride
  - a. **Rom. 12:3** – *Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think...*
  - b. **James 4:6, 10** – *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord.*
3. Unforgiving
  - a. **Matt. 6:12** – *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*
  - b. **Mark 11:26** – *If you don't forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.*
4. Pharisaic Spirit
  - a. **Luke 11:39** – *Pharisees make outside of cup and dish clean . . . inward part full of greed.*
  - b. **Luke 12:1** – *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*
5. Fear of Men
  - a. **Prov. 29:25** – *The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.*
  - b. **Prov. 9:10** – *Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.*

#### **IV. HOW DO WE COME TO THE FATHER?**

- A. In spirit and truth – **Jn. 4:24**
  1. Spirit – not just going through a form of worship – **Mt. 15:8-9**
  2. Truth – as revealed by the Holy Spirit – **Lk. 10:25-26**
- B. In love – **Deut. 6:4-5**
- C. In humility – **Lk. 18:9-14**
  1. Contrast Saul (making excuses) and David (I have sinned).
- D. In brokenness and openness
  1. Brokenness – realizing we can do nothing to fix our own situation.
  2. Openness – Adam, Eve, Saul tried to cover themselves before God.
  3. Christ on the cross – image of one totally unprotected with arms outstretched to world hurling insult and abuse upon Him. No barriers on cross.
  4. Jesus is in essence saying “I will allow you to come in and disappoint Me”; “I will allow you to come in because I love you.”
  5. Jesus asks in return “Will you open up to Me?”; “Will you become vulnerable to Me?”
- E. In thanksgiving – **Psalms 100**

#### **V. IN HIS PRESENCE**

- A. Public or private worship:
  1. We're changed -- Cannot meet God and leave unchanged
  2. We're healed -- Christ came to heal
  3. We're cleansed -- By blood of Jesus
  4. We're loved -- By God & Church
- B. A REAL relationship:
  1. If I want a real relationship with my wife, I can't live like this (arms stretched wide apart). I've got to live like this (bear hug).
  2. This is what God wants – to be able to wrap His arms around us with a big embrace that says “I know who and what you are and I'm not afraid of it because I love you.”

- C. As time goes by:
1. We'll learn to run to the shelter of God's presence and become so comfortable with Him that we'll be able to come naked and unashamed before Him.
  2. We'll come to realize that God is not offended by:
    - a. Our waist size
    - b. Our receding hair line
    - c. The stretch marks
    - d. The pimples
    - e. Our wrinkles
  3. God will stretch open His arms and embrace us and say: "I LOVE YOU."
  4. One day, in the not too distant future, we'll see God in heaven, and we won't be strangers to each other. We'll just be entering a new phase in our relationship.

**WHAT WE THINK  
MAKES US UNATTRACTIVE**

**PRAYER:** Lord, we want to know You like this. Lord, we want a full embrace of Your love. We don't want to hold anything back. Help us overcome our fear. Help us peel off the layers of protection and come to know You intimately and no longer feel ashamed of whom we are. May we approach You Father in spirit and truth and be changed, healed, and cleansed through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

**INVITATION:**

- A. Jesus calls each one of us to "Come unto Me" – **Matt. 11:28-30**