



SERIES: DEEPER LIFE

Drawing Closer to God: Five Steps to a Deeper Relationship

Life Reference: Colossians 1:9-12

Focus Verse:

“But take diligent heed . . . to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Joshua 22:5).

*Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

(Author Unknown)

“Just a Closer Walk with Thee” is an old, familiar hymn that we have heard sung many times. We agree with the emotion of the song and really do long for something



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more in our relationship with God. But how do we develop that close bond, the intimacy we desire? How do we move to the next level?

James 4:8 gives us a good starting point.

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

Our deeper relationship begins with a conscious action on our part. We determine to move closer to God. He in turn draws nearer to us.

A story found in Joshua 22 provides further insight into how man develops and keeps a close relationship to his Creator. In this passage, the tribes of Israel now inhabit the land promised them by the Lord. The last verse of chapter 21 concludes that, "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

As chapter 22 begins, Joshua addresses the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, whose inheritance lay on the opposite side of the Jordan River from most of the tribes. They had faithfully fought beside their Israelite brothers until the entire land was in their possession. Now, it was time for them to return to their own apportioned inheritance. But first, Joshua gave them a charge to maintain their relationship with God.

"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Joshua 22:5).

If we look at the key words within this verse, we see that they give us a step-by-step guide in developing our own relationship with God. We are to: *love, walk, keep, cleave,* and *serve*.

1. **Love**

The first step in growing our relationship with God is love. This love is one of total commitment, one that affects every area of our lives.

Deuteronomy 6:5

"And thou shalt love the LORD the God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Matthew 22:37-38

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."



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God desires our love, but it must be given freely and without reservation. Love cannot be compelled by another. It is a conscious decision that we make. As our love for Him deepens and grows, so does our desire to please Him in all we do.

This present world operates in direct opposition to the things of God. Therefore, the more we love God, the more we will hate evil and the things of the world. Our love cannot be divided between the two.

Psalm 97:10 "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil."

Romans 12:9 "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

Philippians 2:15 "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world"

I John 2:15-16 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

2. Walk

Our strong love for God will cause us to forsake our previous life of sin and begin to walk in all — not just some of — His ways.

**"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked"
(I John 2:6).**

Amos 3:3 questions, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" When we choose to walk with God, we are determining that we will match our steps to His. We decide that we will share the same desires, values, and purposes as He does.

How should we walk with God? Here are just a few of the things Scripture reveals:



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Deuteronomy 5:33	According to His commands
Deuteronomy 8:6	In His ways.
Psalm 26:11	In integrity
Psalm 84:11	Uprightly
Proverbs 2:20	In the way of good men; keep the paths of the righteous
Isaiah 2:5	In the light of the Lord
Romans 6:4	In the newness of life
Romans 8: 1, 4	Not after the flesh
Romans 13:13	Honestly
Galatians 5:16, 25	In the Spirit
Ephesians 4:1	Worthy of our calling
Ephesians 5:2	In love
Ephesians 5:8	As children of light
Ephesians 5:15	Circumspectly (cautiously, vigilantly)
Colossians 4:5	In wisdom
III John 1:4	In truth

In Psalm 143:8 David prayed that the Lord would "cause me to know the way wherein I should walk." We need not fear. The Lord will be with us, showing us the way to go. He will provide guidance and lead us the right way.

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8).

3. Keep

The third step, to keep God's commandments, is a natural progression of the previous steps. If we love Him and walk with Him, we will also obey Him.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

God does not set His laws to make life difficult for us or to make us unhappy. While a child may not understand the danger in forbidden actions, the vigilant parent will set boundaries for that child's safety and wellbeing. The child may not understand the restrictions or the reasoning behind them, but that does not make the rules any less essential. The same is true with our heavenly



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Father. His laws are for our good, even if we do not always understand why. They demonstrate His love and protection.

Obedying God brings His blessings into our lives. Look at some of the ways we benefit from our obedience to His Word:

Exodus 19:5	We will be a peculiar treasure of God
Deuteronomy 5:29	It will go well for us and our children
Joshua 1:8	We will have success
I Kings 3:14	We will be blessed with long life
John 5:24	God will give us eternal life

4. **Cleave**

The word *cleave* is not frequently used in modern language. It has two opposite meanings, but as used in Joshua 22:5 denotes clinging to or being faithful. Some translations of this verse read "to hold fast." When we cleave to the Lord, we are not divided in our love but have dedicated ourselves completely to Him. We are unwavering in our commitment.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

It is impossible to truly serve God with a divided heart. Matthew 6:24 tells us that we cannot serve two masters at the same time. Our emotions will be divided. Our loyalties will be divided. The verse goes so far as to say we will love one and hate the other.

In Psalm 86:10 David prayed:

"Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name."

When we cleave to the Lord and seek a closer relationship with Him, we do it with a united heart. Nothing else ranks higher in importance to us than God. We have only one Master, and we willingly, wholeheartedly serve Him.

Are we able to meet the condition of discipleship as given in Luke 14:33?



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"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

5. Serve

The first four steps we have followed in drawing closer to God — loving Him, following Him, obeying Him, and clinging to Him — create in us a desire to serve Him with all our heart and soul. It is the least that we can do.

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Ephesians 6:6-8).

The New Testament Book of James begins with the words, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." The words are a simple statement of what James perceived as his position within the body of Christ. There is so much more he could have said of his accomplishments in the ministry, the lives he had touched with the gospel, the leadership he had provided. Instead, he simply called himself a servant of God. That was sufficient.

Each of us will fulfill many roles during our lifetime. We will enjoy many accomplishments. God may use us to touch many lives for Him. Whatever area He chooses to place us, we are, like James, really nothing more than "a servant of God."

This is the greatest title that we can ever hold.

Life Response:

It is not enough to know the steps to a closer relationship with the Lord. We must also diligently pursue that bond. This means that we will give "careful attention, painstaking effort" to the matter. We will be persistent and tireless, not a slacker.

Proverbs 13:4 tells us, "The soul of the lazy man desires, and has nothing: But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich" (New King James Version). It is not enough to say we want more of God unless we are willing to devote ourselves to pursuing more



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of God. Desire without diligence does not bring the relationship that we seek. But if we seek, we will be rewarded with the richness of knowing God with greater intimacy.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

More Deeper Life References:

Deuteronomy 10:12, 20
Psalm 31:23
Psalm 26:3
Job 23:11
I Thessalonians 4:1
Psalm 119:105

Deuteronomy 26:16
Hebrews 3:14
Hebrews 10:22-24
II Peter 3:16-18
Romans 12:1

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SERIES: DEEPER LIFE

Drawing Closer to God

Study Sheet

Life Reference: Colossians 1:9-12

Focus Verse:

“But take diligent heed . . . to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Joshua 22:5).

We often express a desire to develop a closer relationship with God? Yet we are uncertain as to how we can develop the intimacy with Him that we desire?

James 4:8 gives us a good starting point.

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

Life Reflection:

Have you desired to move into a more intimate relationship with God?

Do you feel that you are growing in your relationship with Him? If not, what is distracting you from doing so?

If we look at the key words within the focus verse, we see that they give us a step-by-step guide in developing our own relationship with God. We are to: *love, walk, keep, cleave, and serve.*



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1. Love

The first step in growing our relationship with God is love. Read Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37-38

Life Reflection:

What words would you use to define true love?

Do you feel that modern society has trivialized the meaning of love? If so, how has this affected the way many form personal relationships?

If so, has this trivialization of love somehow affected how we demonstrate love to the Lord?

This present world operates in direct opposition to the things of God. Therefore, the more we love God, the more we will hate evil and the things of the world. Our love cannot be divided between the two.

2. Walk

Our strong love for God will cause us to forsake our previous life of sin and begin to walk in all — not just some of — His ways.

**“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked”
(I John 2:6).**

Life Reflection:

Have you ever walked with someone whose steps were either longer or shorter than yours? Did it make it more difficult to comfortably walk together because you were “mismatched”?

What comparison can you draw from this in your daily walk with the Lord?



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In Psalm 143:8 David prayed that the Lord would “cause me to know the way wherein I should walk.” We need not fear. The Lord will be with us, showing us the way to go. He will provide guidance and lead us the right way.

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psalm 32:8).

3. Keep

The third step, to keep God’s commandments, is a natural progression of the previous steps. If we love Him and walk with Him, we will also obey Him.

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3).

Life Reflection:

Can you think of a time when obedience to God’s Word was a protection to you?

What do you think the consequences of disobedience would have been in the same situation?

4. Cleave

The word *cleave* is not frequently used in modern language. It has two opposite meanings, but as used in Joshua 22:5 denotes clinging to or being faithful. Some translations of this verse read “to hold fast.”

It is impossible to truly serve God with a divided heart. Matthew 6:24 tells us that we cannot serve two masters at the same time.



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Life Reflection:

Have you ever had a job in which you were responsible to two or more people with each giving you tasks to do? How did you choose which assignment to do first when each insisted his was the most important and pressing?

How do you think God feels when we try to serve “two bosses”?

Are we able to meet the condition of discipleship as given in Luke 14:33?

5. **Serve**

The first four steps we have followed in drawing closer to God — loving Him, following Him, obeying Him, and clinging to Him — create in us a desire to serve Him with all our heart and soul. It is the least that we can do.

Life Reflection:

Do you feel that you have the heart of a servant in living for the Lord?

Each of us will fulfill many roles during our lifetime. We will enjoy many accomplishments. God may use us to touch many lives for Him. Whatever area He chooses to place us, we are, like James, really nothing more than “a servant of God” (James 1:1).

This is the greatest title that we can ever hold.

Life Response:

It is not enough to know the steps to a closer relationship with the Lord. We must also diligently pursue that bond. This means that we will give “careful attention” to the matter. We will be persistent and tireless in seeking after Him.



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Life Reflection:

What steps will you take this week to seek a deeper relationship with the Lord?

If we seek, we will be rewarded with the richness of knowing God with greater intimacy.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

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