



# Intimacy with God

*Evaluating and Rekindling Your Relationship*

*A Bible Study with Timothy H. Gillis*

*a publication of the* **Christian Legal Society**



# Intimacy with God

A Bible Study  
by  
**Timothy H. Gillis**

To Linda  
and  
To Jonathan and Zachary — the most  
important thing in the whole world is to  
love the Lord your God with all your  
heart and with all your soul and with all  
your mind.

With Gratitude to Sunder Krishnan and  
Peter Bocchino for the Apologetics and  
Spiritual Discipline Training provided by  
Ravy Zacharias International Ministries.

Unless indicated otherwise, Scripture quotations are from  
the Holy Bible, New International Version, copyright  
1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society



**Christian Legal Society**

©1997 Christian Legal Society

# *Session One*

## **DOING JUSTICE with the LOVE of GOD**

Introduction — (READ ALOUD)

“Doing justice with the love of God—the faithful practice of law.”

Is this CLS theme just a catchy slogan or is it an important part of the Christian lawyer’s creed? Is it something we like to say or something we actually live?

We know, of course, that God has called us to “do justice with the love of God.” We can even recite Micah 6:8 from memory:

“And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly  
and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

But what does it mean to “do justice with the love of God?” The motto itself is fraught with some important assumptions:

- To “do justice with the love of God” assumes that we understand God’s concept of justice.
- To “do justice with the love of God” assumes that we are equipped with the love of God.

Or more fundamentally, the CLS motto assumes that we Christian lawyers really know and love God.

If we do not really love God—that is, if we are not really intimate with God—we will neither understand God’s justice nor be equipped with His love. Can we “do justice with the love of God” if we are not walking humbly with Him? Can we faithfully practice law if we are not consistently and wholeheartedly devoted to Him?

Before jumping to the automatic conclusion that we love God—that is, that we are really intimate with God—simply because we are Christian lawyers or law students, take a few minutes alone to complete the following three-part self-test. Be honest!

### Self-Test

Part 1: Intimacy Graph: Plot your intimacy with God over the years.

### Part 2: Personal Questionnaire

1. On average, would you describe your personal Bible study as (check ALL that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nonexistent      | <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hurried          | <input type="checkbox"/> A good way to start the day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dull or boring   | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't wait for next time    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult        | <input type="checkbox"/> Exciting & invigorating     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overly organized | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe)            |

2. If you feel your personal Bible study is unfulfilling, what factors do you think cause it to be that way?

3. If you feel your personal Bible study is fulfilling, what factors do you think cause it to be that way?

4. On average, would you describe your prayers as (check ALL that apply):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nonexistent                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Made only in distress    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hurried                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bounce off the ceiling               | <input type="checkbox"/> Good                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unheard                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't wait for next time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unanswered                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Exciting & invigorating  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't understand how<br>to or why to | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe)         |

5. Outside your corporate worship experience at church, do you personally find it easy to worship God? (circle one) YES NO

6. If your answer to question 5 above is yes, what are some ways you worship God personally throughout the week?

7. If your answer to question 5, above, is no, what are the primary obstacles that prevent you from worshipping God?

8. Are you satisfied with your personal evangelism efforts? YES NO

9. Right now, would you describe your relationship with God as (circle one):

Poor      Fair      Good      Great      Never Been Better

### Part 3: How Would You React?

It was never easy for you. To get through law school, you had to work a full-time job and attend law school at night. Between your full-time job and a heavy law school load, you sometimes feel that you lost four years of your life.

Now you are one of only two partners in a successful small law firm. For the past fifteen years, you have worked long hours—at times making great personal, family and ministerial sacrifices—to establish your client base and meet your family's financial needs. You are a smart, seasoned advocate, and you think you provide top-notch representation for your clients.

Your partner ("P") was once your associate. You hired P. You showed P the ropes. You taught P how to bring in business and how to litigate cases. You mentored P. You introduced P to your clients.

One month ago, you learned from another lawyer that P has been secretly plotting to start a new firm and take your three largest clients. Last week, you lovingly confronted P about the rumor, but P just laughed it off. One hour ago, P resigned and took several of your clients to P's new firm. You and your

family will face great financial hardship because of P's actions

In such circumstances, which reaction (of the following four) would be your typical reaction? (choose one)

- You seek revenge.
- You do not seek revenge. You do not forgive P, and you hold a grudge.
- You do not seek revenge. You even forgive and bless your adversary but only because you know it's the right thing to do.
- You do not seek revenge. You forgive and bless your adversary.. and you rejoice in the fact that God has allowed this to happen to you.

[END OF SELF-TEST]

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Either (a) share your graph from Part 1 for the Self-Test with the group or (b) share your answers to Part 2 of the Self-Test with the group. If it looks like you have time, share both.
2. Share your typical reactions to situations like the one described in Part 3 of the Self-test.
3. If you could choose to have one reaction to life situations like the one described in Part 3 of the Self-Test, which one would you choose? Which reaction is the biblical reaction?

James 1:2-4

Matthew 5:11-12

Romans 5:1-5

I Peter 1:3-9

I Peter 4:12-19

Romans 12:14

Matthew 5:43-48

Luke 6:27-36

Acts 5:41

Acts 16:22-25

John 15:9-11, 18-21

John 16:33

Should we be satisfied with the third reaction?



4 Facts are facts We have peaks and valleys (often too many valleys) in our spiritual pilgrimage. Many of us are not now as intimate with God as we have been at some time in the past. Our time with God in His Word and in prayer is too often unorganized, hurried, boring, dull, or even nonexistent—at a minimum, it is inconsistent. Our time interferes with the most important thing in our lives: a relationship with God. And our typical reaction to events that occur in our lives every day is wrong. WHY? (Discuss)

## Conclusions of Session One

After this study, let's look in the mirror, ask ourselves the hard question and start down the road toward reaching some answers—some answers that will affect the way we live. Let's focus our eyes on really loving God so that we can do justice with the love of God. Close this session by inviting God to meet with your group and to draw each individual into a more intimate relationship with Him.

## *Session Two*

### INTIMACY WITH GOD IN HIS WORD

“Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me,’ declares the Lord.” — Jeremiah 2:19

The Lord said, “To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it.” Jeremiah 6:10.

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect Your Word... My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times... Your statutes are my delight. I delight in Your commands because I love them. I delight in Your law.” — Psalm 119:16, 20, 24, 47, 70.

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God.” —Psalm 42:1-2

In this session, we will consider three main issues. First, we will face the fact that it is easy to think that we are intimate with God when we really are not. All too frequently, we cannot hear God speak to us through His Word and His Spirit because our lives are cluttered with unimportant things. Second, those unimportant things that clutter our lives and consume our time are big obstacles that prevent us from walking with God and delighting in His Word. Third, we will examine the practicality and power of God's Word in our lives when we are near Him.

Before engaging in discussion, invite God to join the discussion and draw you (individually) and your group (collectively) nearer to Him.

1 It's easy to think we are close to God when we are not. Read what God says in Jeremiah 2:19:

The people in Jeremiah's time thought they were OK with God.

For example:

- They said, "I am not defiled. I haven't run after Baal." (2:23)
- They said, "I am innocent; God is not angry with me. I have not sinned." (2:35)
- They would pray, "My father, my friend from my youth." (3:5) (to which God responded, "This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can.")
- They acknowledge God verbally (5:2)
- They acknowledge society's need for change, but not their individual needs (6:14-15)
- They offered sacrifices to God (6:20)
- They continued their church activity (7:4)
- They came to the temple in God's name and said, "We are safe." (7:10)
- They said, "We are wise for we have the law of the Lord." (8:8)
- They didn't think they had done anything wrong (8:12)

BUT God saw things differently. What was wrong with the relationship?

Primarily, the people:

- lost their devotion to God (2:2)
- did not know God (2:8)
- forsook God (2:13,17)
- lost their awe of God (2:19)
- forgot God (2:32)
- did not follow Him faithfully (3:19-20)
- forgot God (3:21)
- did not know God (4:22)
- did not seek the truth (5:1)
- did not know the way to the Lord (5:4)
- did not know God's requirements (5:5)
- were not faithful to God (5:11)
- did not fear God (5:22-24)
- found no pleasure in the Word of God (6:10)
- forgot God's commands (7:22-24)
- did not know God's requirements (8:6-8)
- forsook God's law (9:13)

When the people of Jeremiah's day thought they were OK with God, they were not. Do your answers to the Self-Test in Session One show that you are intimate with God or not? Are you more intimate with God now than at any time in your life (see Part 1 of the Self-Test)? Why or why not? Discuss.

2. Finding pleasure in God's Word. Read Jeremiah 6:10 — What are the obstacles in your life that prevent you from finding pleasure in God's Word? Refer to the Self-Test in Session One for help. Discuss.

3. Divide up Psalm 119 among your group members. List out below some of the ways in which God's Word can be powerful in your life. (For example, God's Word produces purity (9-11), stability (152, 165), maturity (97-100) in our lives.) Discuss.

4 Are the obstacles you listed in question 2, above, worth forfeiting the power that God's Word can produce in your life? If not, discuss why the obstacles are so hard to overcome and how to overcome them.

5 In John 8:47, Jesus said, "He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." Later, in John 16:13-14, Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." Does God speak to you through His Word? If so, share a recent example. If not, why not? Are those obstacles listed in the Self-Test acting as earplugs to prevent you from hearing him?

## **Conclusions of Session Two**

C.S. Lewis wrote that "most of us have at times felt a secret sympathy with the dying farmer who replied to the priest's dissertation of repentance by asking 'what harm have I done God?'" There is the real rub. The worst we have done to God is to leave Him alone...."

Close this session by confessing your sins of leaving God alone. Invite Him to draw you into a renewed and intimate relationship with Him in His Word.

## ***Session Three***

### **Intimacy with God in Personal Worship**

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." — Hebrews 12:28-29

We know what worship is, right? We do it (or at least we say that we do it) every Sunday morning.

But what is personal worship? Is it merely listening to Christian worship music, singing Christian songs, reading Christian books or spending a few

minutes “having devotions” every day? In this session, we will consider what it means to worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, in light of the fact that our God is a consuming fire

1. Where do we see the “Consuming Fire” in the Old Testament?

a. At the giving of the Commandments Read Exodus 24:12-18 What did the glory of the Lord look like to the Israelites? What emotions might you have experienced had you seen what the Israelites saw?

b. At the ordination of Aaron and his son. Read Leviticus 9:22-10:3 What things did the fire from the presence of the Lord consume?

c. In Leviticus 9:24 The people rejoiced and fell facedown when they saw fire come out from the presence of the Lord and consume the burnt offering Nadab and Abihu, newly ordained priests, may have become excited by seeing the power of God. In Leviticus 10, what was so wrong with the offering made by Nadab and Abihu? What were the consequences for making an unauthorized sacrifice?

2. In Leviticus 1-4, God set forth very specific and meticulous rules concerning how and in what order sacrifices (burnt, grain, fellowship and sin offerings were to be made). Read, for example, chapter 1 of Leviticus Why do you think God set forth the rules in such meticulous detail? Later, on your own, consider the reason for the order in which sacrifices were to be offered and how we offer similar sacrifices to God today.

3. Read Romans 12:1: “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.”

In light of your answers to questions 1 and 2 above, discuss how you can daily offer yourself to God and commune with Him. For example:

- What does it mean to offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God?

- In light of the Hebrews and Old Testament passages discussed above, how should the offering of your body as a living sacrifice be made?

- If the offering of your body as a living sacrifice is your spiritual act of worship, what then is personal worship?

4 From today on, how will you worship God with reverence and awe, in light of the fact that our God is a consuming fire?

5 In Leviticus, when the fire from the Lord consumed the acceptable sacrifice, the people saw it, rejoiced and fell face down. When you offer your body as a living sacrifice to God, how might others see your sacrifice and how might they react?

### **Conclusions of Session Three**

Archbishop Temples has defined worship as follows: "Worship is the submission of all my nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness, the nourishment of mind by His truth, the purifying of imagination by His beauty, the opening of the heart to His love, and the submission of my will to His purpose. All this gathered up in adoration is the greatest expression by which we are capable "

Worship God in everything you do today Close this session by offering your body as a living sacrifice to God Commit yourself wholly to Him.

## ***Session Four***

### **Intimacy with God in Prayer**

"What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to Him?" — Deuteronomy 4:7.

Have you ever wrestled with prayer? Why do you pray? Why is it so difficult? Why are you so undisciplined? Are you discouraged when you pray for something that does not come to pass? If you pray for "A" to return safely from her trip and she does, do you see that as an answer to prayer or merely

a physical coincidence? If you pray for “B” to recover from a fatal disease, but B dies anyway, do you think you failed in prayer? What’s it all about anyway?

In this session, we’ll discuss what prayer is all about. Set forth below are some discussion questions and Scripture passages (not an exhaustive list) designed to make you think about prayer. May God use these questions and your subsequent study to draw you nearer to Him in prayer.

### 1. Some Problems in Prayer.

#### a. The problem of one-sided conversations

It is difficult to carry on a conversation when you’re the only one talking. As the questions and points below will demonstrate, perhaps God wants the dialogue to be just that—a dialogue between Him and you—instead of a monologue where you do all the talking.

#### b. The problem of misplaced expectations

When we pray for A and B to recover from an illness, and A does but B does not, we sometimes are disappointed. If so, we may have been looking for the wrong thing in prayer.

#### c. The problem of “natural” answers

Consider the centurion’s prayer for his servant’s healing by Jesus in Luke. “Lord, don’t even bother coming to my house. If You speak, my servant will be okay. I don’t care if I’m the only one who knows that the healing was supernatural. Though it may appear to others that his healing was coincidental or natural, I’ll know better.”

### 2. What is prayer? Is prayer just “asking and receiving”? Should prayer be viewed as “getting results”?

Mark 10:27	Matthew 7:7,8
Mark 14:35-36	Luke 11:1-13
John 14:13	I John 5:14-15
John 16:24	James 4:3
Matthew 6:5-15	Others?

### 3. Why did Jesus pray? Take a long time to ponder this question.

John 17	Mark 14:35-36
Mark 1:35	Others?

4. Does the Bible command you to pray?

Luke 18:1-8

I Thessalonians 5:17

Matthew 26:41

I Samuel 12:23

Romans 12:12

Philippians 4:5-7

5. How much prayer is enough?

Luke 18:1-8

Matthew 6:5-15

James 5:13-18

Romans 8:26-27

6. What does prayer really accomplish? In other words, if prayer is just asking and receiving, why don't we receive everything we ask for? (We all know we don't; neither did Jesus when He asked for the cup to pass from Him.) And if prayer is something other than just asking and receiving, what is it? If we are just asking things in accordance with His will, why ask at all?

Deuteronomy 4:7 — Key

Review other passages listed above

7. Is it hard for you to pray? Why? Why not? Do you enjoy praying? Why? Why not? Have you ever gone through a time when you just didn't feel like prayer was accomplishing anything? Looking back, what was God doing in your life at such a time?

8. Do you find it easier or harder to pray when things are going well in your life? Are you satisfied with your answers to that question, or does your answer trouble you?

### **Strongly Suggested Reading**

John White, *Daring to Draw Near: People in Prayer* (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 1977) a study of 10 prayers in the Bible



## Conclusions of Session 4

Our Father, we yearn for intimacy with You. We earnestly desire to love You. We want to hear You speak to us through Your Word and Your Spirit. Yet we have created obstacles that prevent us from walking with You, and we are undisciplined. Too often, we want things from You, rather than an intimate relationship with You. We are often more interested in Your blessing than in Yourself. Purify us. Draw us, O God, near to You. And as we become like Jesus, may our lives through Him overflow to those around us as we do justice with Your love. Thank You for Jesus' sacrifice. Enable us to follow Him. Amen.

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants  
for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God.”

— PSALM 42:1-2



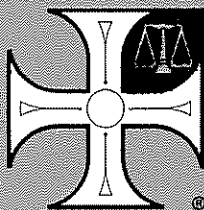
Timothy H. Gillis practices law in the Atlanta office of Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan, where he specializes in tax controversy and litigation. He is a graduate of Georgetown University School of Law and serves on the board of directors of the Christian Legal Society.

*"As a deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God."*

— Psalm 42:1-2

Having an intimate relationship with our Creator is something all Christians yearn for, but find difficult to achieve. The less important things clutter our lives and create obstacles to thirsting after God. This study will help you evaluate your relationship with God and rekindle your desire to draw nearer to Him.

Timothy H. Gillis practices law in the Atlanta office of Sutherland, Asbill, & Brennan, where he specializes in tax controversy and litigation. He is a graduate of Georgetown University School of Law and serves on the board of directors of the Christian Legal Society.



Christian Legal Society

<http://www.clsnet.com>