

-Welcome/Introduce sisters!

-News/Updates

-Pray In

Does God feel far away?

The one thing I ask of the LORD, the thing I seek most is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple. (Psalm 27:4)

The above verse written by David is an excellent illustration of what it looks like to have a relationship with the Lord. In your life, is having an intimate relationship with the Lord on your priority list or is it THE priority of your life?

When pursuing a relationship the Lord it is important to understand that He doesn't want our religious tendencies instead He wants our obedience and our hearts to be renewed through repentance. Again this is something David understood when he wrote to the Lord saying, "You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God" (Psalm 51:16-17).

What does having a close relationship with the Lord look like to you?

What are some pressures or influences that pull you away from being in close relationship with the Lord? How do you identify when this is happening?

The following are four types of influences that you may have already mentioned or have yet to think about. Read them one at a time and reflect and share if you have experienced or are experiencing any of the following aspects of distraction.

Sin- Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Hebrews 12:1

Possessions - For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:10

Misplaced Affections- Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15

Over commitment - Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:16

Now that we have identified areas that may be pulling us away from the Lord, as a group, discuss what it means in practice to 'approach the throne of grace with confidence' that is

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mentioned in Hebrews 4? Hebrews 4:15-16 – For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. **Let us then come BOLDY to the throne of grace** that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.

When we truly seek, we will find. With any relationship, if we invest time and love, the relationship will grow. Our relationship with God is certainly no exception. It is the highest, the deepest, the richest relationship we can experience on this Earth. And it's worth the effort. (Jeremiah 29:13)

Use this time to discuss ways and ideas you can be intentional in your pursuit of the Lord. What steps can we take to help ourselves and others to grow in maturity and relationship with God?

The bible tells us that God knows everything about us! He loves us, He is not surprised when we fail. He understands our weaknesses. In Psalm 139 David writes a detailed song on the precision of how well He know us. Even when we do things to distance ourselves from God He still pursues us, He still listens, He still knows. And unlike people in this world, God is not waiting to condemn us but rather love and embrace us.

*Take home: During your quiet time, reflect and meditate on Psalm139 and Jeremiah 29:13. Soak in how much God loves you and desires to have a relationship with you. You can approach HIS thrown of grace with boldness, because He loves you!