



I. Come near – Intimacy - 2

God is relational and intimacy is the goal of every relationship. In the second part of this two-part study we will explore what intimacy means to a Christian.

NOTES & QUOTES FROM PODCAST

Intimacy with our neighbours is the second dimension of Christian intimacy, and a natural outcome of the first which is having intimacy with God. The roots for both dimensions of intimacy lie in love, which is the essence of the great commandment, “*Love the Lord your God ... and love your neighbour as yourself.*” (Matt 22:37-40). Intimacy implies not just a superficial relationship, but something deeper. It involves both knowledge and trust – actually implicit trust.

Jesus puts it this way, “*My sheep recognize my voice. I know them, and they follow me.*” (John 10:27)

1. Intimacy with our neighbours require investment of time by us

The first way to gain knowledge and trust from another person is to invest time with them. I am sure many of you like us have a wide circle of friends and family. Unless we make a conscious choice and effort, it becomes impossible to maintain intimacy with most, if not, all of them.

2. Create and “Intimacy calendar” to stay in touch

Nearly a couple of decades back Shammi and I realized that meeting close friends and family even twice a year would be impossible unless we were intentional. This was true even when we lived in the same city as they did. We had to plan and put the dates in both our and their calendars to make it happen. So, an informal “Intimacy calendar” was born.

3. Create memories with fellowship

We believed that there is no better way to nurture relationships with others than meeting them over meals filled with fun, laughter, God’s word and prayer. Very similar to Jesus’ when He met and dined with Matthew, Zacchaeus and His disciples.

4. Trust is built with mutual “best interests”

Building trust needs a little more than just the effort of meeting. Trust is built when the other person knows you have their best interests in mind. As Paul says in Philippians 2:3-4, “*In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*”

When the other person knows you have their best interests in your mind - not just your own interest, it works like magic. But, this interest has to be genuine and not put on to manipulate relationships.

5. “Tough love” builds Trust and deepens intimacy

In addition to the usual relational elements like confidentiality, respect, support, etc., the most important element that deepens intimacy is ‘tough love.’ It is the ability and willingness to “*speak the truth in love.*” (Eph 4:15) Many times, one is are tempted not to speak up fearing that doing so may put at risk the relationship we enjoy. But, there is a bigger risk - the ruin of our friend – if we don’t do so.

Speaking the truth in love is an important way in which one can demonstrate real love that goes beyond words. It is called – tough love. Tough love builds strong trust.

In the ultimate analysis, we return to the source of all intimacy – love.

Love is the heart, mind, strength and soul of intimacy.

And love is actually a person – Jesus – who is God.

James the brother of Jesus, put it very simply, “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” (James 4:8)

That is the simple reality, come near to Jesus

and He will come near to you.

As you do it, your intimacy with God and your neighbour will witness incredible depth.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Make a list of 15 of your close friends. How many have you visited and had a meal with in the last two months?
- What steps can you take to be more intentional with nurturing your friendship?
- Use a rating scale of 1 to 5, and rate your 15 friends on how much you can trust them, with 1 being ‘Nil’ to 5 being ‘Completely.’ How would they rate you?
- What are some steps you can take with God’s help, to make them trust you more?

CONNECT WITH US

- Ask questions: bystillwaters.always@gmail.com
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/JaywantMichael>

DID YOU KNOW?

The Bible in several places advises us to display the tough love that God demonstrated to us. Are you willing to speak up to correct friends when you know something is wrong? Here is one instance, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, and deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.” (Proverbs 27:6)

This study guide was prepared by Jaywant Michael