

Volume 1, Day 1: WHY Would We Engage God?

It's been my passion to help people have their own deeply meaningful walk with God and know how to engage Him in deeply affectionate relationship. I still get occasional emails or letters from people that say, "I need something more of God. I want this! I'm convinced that it exists for me but I don't know how to connect with God in an intimately personal way."

Jesus died in order to grant you access to the Father so that you could have this conversation that God wants to have with you and begin to engage with Him in the relationship as He desires it. This is not as much about how you build a relationship with God. Rather, this is about how God wants to build one with you. These lessons are going to be encouragement for what you might do to help you engage that relationship and make it very personal and real.

The objective is that you engage God as simply and comfortably as you do your best friends, family and most significant others. Once you discover HOW you can connect intimately with God, you won't need to desperately search for His love any more. These are resources offered to help get you started. Feel free to reach out to me on the web pages of lifestream.org. The hope is it that you will experience this enormous love of God for yourself.

I had a young lady last year with whom I'd spent a weekend in a group discussing intimacy with God. In transit, just as we're approaching the airport, she says to me, "Wayne, you know what I'm thinking?" I asked, "What's that?" She said, "I'm thinking the reason this seems so difficult is because it's much simpler than we dare to believe."

Volume 1, Day 2: God Wants to Be at the Table

I think religion has made Christianity complicated. We think there is much we have to know, to do and to give up in order to make this relationship work. But God's been reaching out for a relationship with you since the day you were born. He's been calling your name, speaking into your heart. The relationship aspect of our faith got lost and twisted by the things that happen in the world we live in. And likely religion told us to perform **for** God rather than relating to Him. Yet the distinctive difference between all other religions and Christianity is that we insist that God desires relationship not bondages to creeds and doctrines.

Learn to relate to Him. Rather than gathering information about God, sit with others in a comfortable place exploring God's persona face to face. Relationship is all about togetherness. I hope that this message will help you start your journey into a deeply passionate love affair with God. You can encourage each other to pursue a genuine and deeply satisfying relationship with God. It's not about teaching. It's modeling a relationship which shows that intimacy with God is possible! It will catch fire.

This entire mutual mentoring program (two in partnership) is not curriculum you need to complete. I'm hoping somewhere in the process, your own time with God will become like a holiday dinner with family banter with God sitting at the table with the family. The good news is that, just as with our best human relationships, our relationship with God occurs at all times in all places. It is a heart connection that transcends time or distance. Relationship at its finest is saturation in affection for another which causes you to think of them frequently and with great pleasure.

Volume 1, Day 3: Breath and Fingerprints of God

Go to a place where you feel rested and peaceful. It might be a favorite chair, walking your dog, in a garden, or at the water's edge. It's not because God's there in a greater way. He's not. But we are more aware of God's presence with us. We see Him most clearly when our hearts aren't striving to learn or earn anything. This is about transformation, not gathering information. As you wake up each morning, ask Him to reveal Himself to you all day. Then keep your eyes, ears, heart and mind open throughout the day.

In a word, be **aware** of His affection for and presence with you. Notice what you hear. Look for His fingerprints on your experiences. This is when you'll begin to get familiar with Him. You'll see Him everywhere. This will endear Him to you. Your relationship will become relevant and genuine. The important thing is not the content of this program. It is that you engage God in your own life as naturally as breathing or loving another person!

As you ask Him to make Himself known to you, give Him enough time to do it. You can't rush courtship. Sometimes it takes weeks, months or even years for love connections to be realized. When you ask Him to do it and you consistently look for his fingerprints in your life, it will become as real as any human relationship you have. He has been trying to make Himself known by you. He does want you to know Him intimately and to feel a passion for Him.

Vol 1, Day 4: Why doesn't God do what I think He should

I received this email, "What does one do when you've lost all sense of God? I just don't get why history has played out like it has and God does not intervene. Even if He showed me, just to put me in my place, that would be better than His cold silence. Why doesn't He speak? And if He does, then why doesn't He make it obvious it's Him and not just in my head. Why does He make it so I have to believe in something that took place thousands of years ago or make it so I have to believe it by what I see in nature or relationships or other people's experiences? Why doesn't He do something obvious? And why does He seem to be so unfair?"

That's a lot of agony. We get the same thing in the Psalms. God, why are you ignoring us? Why do we plead our case with you? And it seems like the heavens are quiet and you don't do what we expect you to do." And if anybody's serious about engaging in a deeply intimate relationship with God, those are going to be the honest questions they have because we know life doesn't go the way we hope it would or think it should.

If God loves us and is involved in our life, then certainly He would make sure the painful things in our experience don't happen. Or so we might think. However, the reality is that God is making Himself known in a very selfish world. We each think that God should act in certain ways. But we fail to believe that He is wiser than us.

Even the leaders of God's defined religion, Judaism, wanted miraculous signs and sensibility to act in ways we see fit. Occasionally God does those kinds of incredible things. Jesus did myriad miracles. It is our own distrust that prevents us from seeing them. We think God should operate in our wisdom, which isn't all that great!.

Volume 1, Day 5: God Isn't Majestic Enough for Me

How many times have you realized long after an event that God was there in it and had a good purpose for it. We mostly miss the obvious miracles because they are simply not majestic enough for us to see the miraculous in them. Further, God's expressions are simple and as quiet as the whispers of 'pillow talk.' He draws us into a relationship rather than impressing us with spectacular signs and wonders. And although we think we would finally be convinced by the grandest impressions, relationship is far more satisfying than miraculous or spectacular happenings.

God invites us to see beyond the misery, or in the misery how much He loves us. God wants us to dismiss the things we've been told about Him which are false or only partially true. God wants us to be in relationship with Him not in awe of Him. Most of all, God wants us to recognize that His purposes for us and for all mankind are different from our selfish, myopic purposes. Some things in my experience happen for the benefit of others and have no particular use in my own life. But then again, isn't relationship about bringing pleasure to another person?

So as you take this journey, suspend your wrong beliefs about all kinds of things. It might be best to just start fresh. Actually that is what repentance is. It is to **'change your mind'** about something. That is to say, it is to **'change what you believe about God, yourself and others.'** Just tell God, "I want to know who you really are, not what I have been told by others or general hearsay. Many of my expectations of You have resulted in my disappointment. I've been upset that You didn't fix this thing in my life or keep sickness from people I love. Help me to see how perfect you are in every relationship way. Let me **feel Your love** for me!"

Volume 1, Day 6: Feeling, Not Trying to Love

It is hard for many of us to overcome the idea that God is distant and cold and will not engage us in a way that causes His love to be felt and received. But I have received thousands of emails from people who have started out with wrong beliefs about God and yet came to find the reality of a deeply satisfying relationship with Him. So, purpose to let God show you His truth about everything. His Holy Spirit is in you for that expressed purpose.

Whenever you wake up each day, just say to God, "If You exist and if You are real, show Yourself to me?" Now, the hard part is this. You cannot have any expectations about what that might look like. God only shows Himself in His ways, not ours. Let God make Himself known to you however He wants to. And if you already believe He exists, but He just **feels distant** from you, then what you want to begin to believe is, "Maybe I've gone about this wrong. Maybe I'm looking in the wrong places." In this case, just say, "Okay, God, what's next? Would You show me Your love today?" These are just things you should explore if you're going to even have a desire to develop this kind of relationship with Him.

Relationship is not about **trying** to do anything. We simply give our hearts to another. In this case it is God. Unfortunately, we submit to Christian rituals and think that's going to make us love God. But unless and until you're convinced God is real and loves you without conditions, You cannot go any further. Only He can make Himself known. As with human relationships, you cannot force it or command it. Love is offered freely, without reservation or it is not offered at all. Let it play out naturally. Love is its own fertilizer. Love begets love. Just give God a nod that you will accept His offer of love and love Him back! You can't rush love. Love is its own rush!

Volume 1, Day 7: Feeling, Not Trying, to Love

You don't need to carve out some special time away from it all, some special quiet time somewhere. You can talk to Him, listen for Him or think about him when you're driving, taking a shower, eating or going for a walk. He just wants You to be up-close-and-personal with you. Just explore that. Let Him convince you. Let Him put His thoughts into your mind. Just go about your daily life with your focus on Him. Find or create quiet places at every point of decision to let God participate with you in them!

One acquaintance of mine told me that in order to increase his awareness of God's presence and love he set his smart phone to alarm every hour to remind him to think about God. In time, that man's soul was transformed into a very loving one! That's what a loving relationship with God can do for you! Look for a positive reason for every pain or trouble which might reveal to others the depth of your love for God.

Discipleship is about developing a relationship with God. In actuality, I think this is what discipleship really is. It's not you building a relationship with Him. It's recognizing how He's building one with you. That changes the scope of it entirely because now I'm not focused on what I'm doing. I'm focused on what He's doing and what brings Him pleasure, and that's when this works.

Discipleship is not learning what the Master does and always doing it. Discipleship is developing a heart that loves what the Master loves. When you love what He loves you will do what He would do in any situation. The best news about our Master, God, is that He not only does love, but also **God IS love's very essence**. Jesus told His disciples to **Love Like Jesus Loves**, with absolutely no reservation or conditions of acceptance.