



## choose to grow

The Lord wants to be your friend.

We talk a lot about being in His presence because it's pivotal to everything, but here's something to consider: He loves your presence, too. He likes being around you and hearing your voice. He wants to hang out with you so you can carry His peace and know His voice.

You can expect to hear God for yourself. You don't have to rely on anyone else; He has words for you and He wants to talk to you. It's okay if it takes a while to get used to it, and to start recognizing His voice. It's okay to wonder, "Is that the Lord, or just my own thoughts?" He loves your heart that wants to get it right, that doesn't just want to hear what it wants, that wants to hear the truth and be set free.

Be willing to be surprised, though. His thoughts are not our thoughts because He is better and more loving than we imagine.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.*

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

— *Isaiah 55:8-9*

He knows that the more you hang out together, the more you will reflect Him — and that's not a narcissistic desire of His; the more you reflect Him, the happier and stronger you will be.

He gave up Himself so you could have all of Him. He's not petty and insecure. He wants every bit of you to reflect every bit of Him, so nothing is left that is less than it should be.

And maybe here's the most surprising thing: He's not impatient with you or angry with the timing of your progress. He's not frustrated by your need to grow. He knows you need to grow; He knows it's a process. He is building character, purity, and strength in you step by step, every time you abide with Him.





*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

— *John 15:13-15*

If you are feeling a nudge (or a slam) of correction in your life, don't let pride or stubbornness or immaturity get in the way of it. Don't let the enemy strip blessing from you by convincing you to ignore it. Choose to grow.

*Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord,  
and whom you teach out of your law,  
to give him rest from days of trouble,  
until a pit is dug for the wicked.  
For the Lord will not forsake his people;  
he will not abandon his heritage;  
for justice will return to the righteous,  
and all the upright in heart will follow it.*

— *Psalms 94:12-15*

It's okay to just sit with Him and not have words to say. Waiting in silence and acknowledging His presence are ways we learn to distinguish between God's thoughts and our own thoughts. We don't have to fill in the gaps. We welcome the Holy Spirit into our space and our silence. We can rest and refill for a minute, and trust that He is moving the very synapses of our brains to help us receive His words and wisdom for our day.

*...assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

— *Ephesians 4:21-24*

The Lord is still talking to you. If it seems different, it's because you've changed. He doesn't change, but we do. It's not necessarily wrong.





We grow and our routines have to grow, too. Sometimes we grow faster than those habits and routines can keep up, and it takes a while for them to catch up with the change we're experiencing.

Here's something to remember: God is not offended by the normal activity of your life. But He is easily pushed out by our indulgence in the comfort zone. A little break here, a little slacking there, and eventually our disciplines are out the window and the fault is squarely on us.

What to do? Repent fast, immediately, as soon as you realize. Do it now. He is near, and shame must not be allowed to separate you further. *Jesus, we're sorry for straying. Keep our eyes on You. Remind us of Your nearness, Your love for us, Your goodness to us.*

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

— 1 John 1:5

He knows who you really are. Who you're becoming. Who you've been. Who you're struggling to overcome and who you're meant to be. You don't have to hide from Him. Your progress forward accelerates with honesty and integrity, so be honest with Him about your struggles and desires. Get it out in the open. Lay it all before Him and surrender. He knows anyway, so ditch the pride and let Him love you into wholeness. You will love the you who He wants to make you into.

He is pouring love onto you every morning, giving you a new day to abide and know Him more as you partner with Him.

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

*For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

— Romans 5:1-3, 10-11

