

# Intimacy, Intercession, and Increase

*An Adventure with Jesus to  
Explore a Life of Prayer*

LYNDAL J WALKER



**YOUTH FOR CHRIST**  
INTERNATIONAL

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*To Amanda ... you know why.*



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# Introduction

This devotional has one aim—to encourage a greater life of prayer in the reader. It can be used as an introduction to prayer for those who are new believers or a refresher for those who have been walking with the Lord for a longer period of time, but the primary audience it's written for is youth and young adults who desire to grow in this area. I draw upon personal experience and decades of work with young people to explore this vital topic. It is not a theological treatise, nor an exegetical study, yet at times it will ask the reader to think deeply about certain issues. It doesn't exhaust the topic of prayer by any means, but it gives a taste for further discovery.

The devotional is thirty-one days long so that it can be completed by reading one per day for a month. It is set out in three sections: intimacy (with God), intercession, and increase—with John 17 being a guiding passage. Within each day there are scriptures to read, thoughts to consider, reflections to ponder and action points to undertake.

Interwoven throughout are real-life stories that give testimony to the work of God and the power of prayer in people's lives. The desire is that these stories will inspire the reader to see what is possible through a life of prayer and obedience. As two Moravian missionaries said, as they departed by ship to the West Indies to preach to the slaves, "The Lamb

## Intimacy, Intercession, and Increase

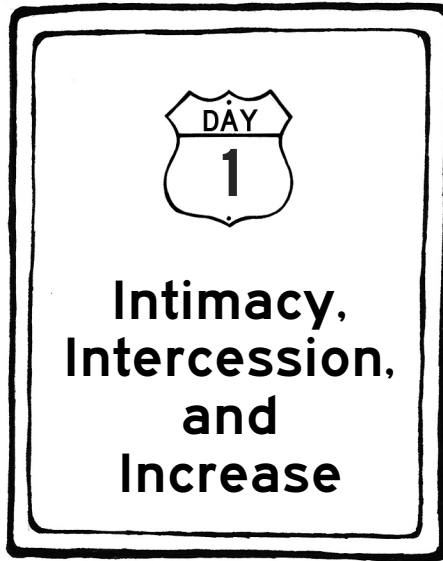
who was slain is worthy to receive the reward of His suffering.”<sup>1</sup>

*Lyndal*

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<sup>1</sup> Felicity Jensz, *German Moravian Missionaries in the British Colony of Victoria, Australia, 1848–1908: Influential Strangers*. (BRILL, 2010). PDF.





John 17

I suggest reading it in two or three versions, perhaps the ESV and also The Passion Translation—for ease of understanding.

## Intimacy, Intercession, and Increase

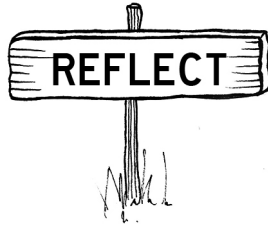
Today we embark on a thirty-one-day adventure to learn more about prayer. But I don't want this to just be about gaining more head knowledge. I want you to be so excited and inspired by prayer that it becomes a part of your everyday life. Prayer is a verb. Yes, the dictionary says it's a noun, but in reality, it all comes down to the doing. So as we start, say a little prayer and ask God to show you what it is you need to learn and put into practice.

The adventure starts at John 17. Why this passage? Because it's one of the most beautiful recorded prayers of Jesus we have. In it, He models two of the most important aspects of prayer, which we will explore in more detail throughout these thirty-one days—intimacy with the Father and intercession. The third aspect we will investigate is the way prayer can be used in evangelism to increase the kingdom. This increase is suggested in John 17:20, where we see Jesus praying for those who would believe as a result of the words of His followers.

Now before you roll your eyes at another one of those Christian alliterations, just think about the meaning of these words and why they are so significant. These three words basically sum up the Christian life. Jesus died and rose again so we could have our sins wiped out, which enables us to live in an intimate relationship with God. He actually enters fully into us, so He gives us His heart for the world. We want to pray for the world and those in it. We want to see the kingdom of God increase throughout the world. Jesus commanded us to “go make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). What an exciting

adventure we get to have as we give ourselves to these things!

Are you ready for the ride? Let's surrender to the driver, King Jesus, and say in our hearts, "Take us where You want us to go."

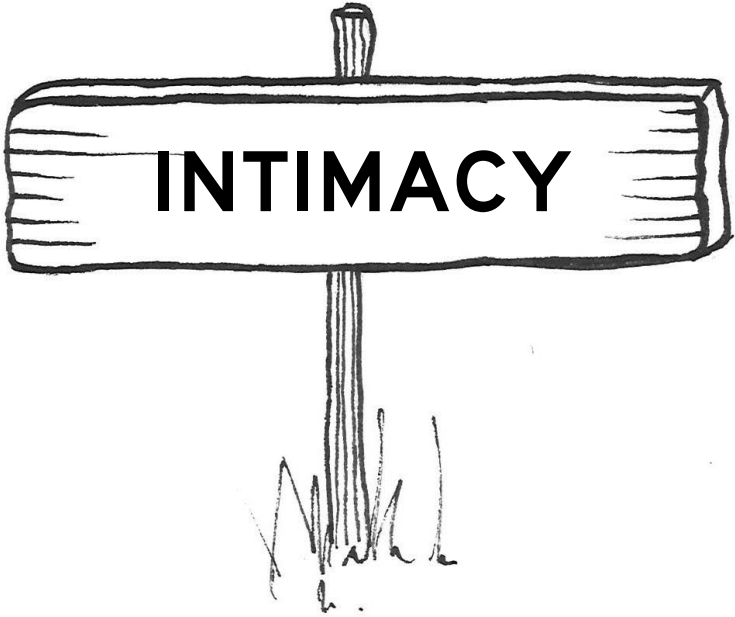


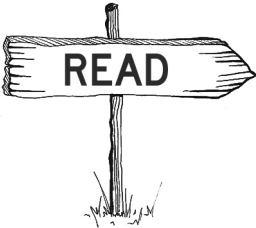
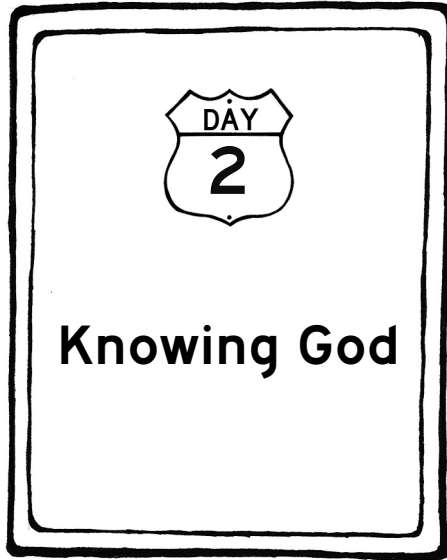
How have you viewed prayer up to this point in your life? Has it been an emergency escape, where you just shoot up a "help" to some being when you are in strife? Does it conjure up images of old people sitting around in a circle, praying very long prayers to an invisible God? Maybe you picture long lists of prayer requests or a long chain of beads and think *How boring*. Is it a have-to of the Christian life? I hope in the next thirty-one days, you'll discover the true meaning and delight of prayer.



Do you have a mentor or someone who is discipling you? This is someone you trust who you can share with, pray with and ask them to pray for you. If not, consider who you may ask to help you in your walk with Jesus. This could be a local youth pastor or youth leader, someone in a Youth for Christ center, or even a more mature family member who you look up to.

# Part 1





Psalm 63:1-8  
Matthew 7:21-23  
John 17:1-3; 25-26  
Philippians 3:10

## Intimacy, Intercession, and Increase

What do you think of when you think of the word “intimacy”? Does it freak you out? Does it give you the warm fuzzies? Does it make you think of things you know you shouldn’t be thinking about? English is a funny language, with so many words having various meanings. Fortunately, the word intimacy doesn’t have too many and we can narrow it down:

INTIMACY (noun) – close familiarity or friendship

The word intimacy isn’t even in the Bible, so why use it? Because, I believe, it conveys a sense of closeness better than any other English word we have. The word the Bible uses is “know,” which is a bit boring but packed with meaning if you dig a little deeper. The Greek word for intimacy is *ginosko*, which was used in John 17:3 and 17:25–27, and it is the same word that was used for an intimate relationship between a man and a woman (see Matthew 1:24–25 NKJV). Now that’s pretty close.

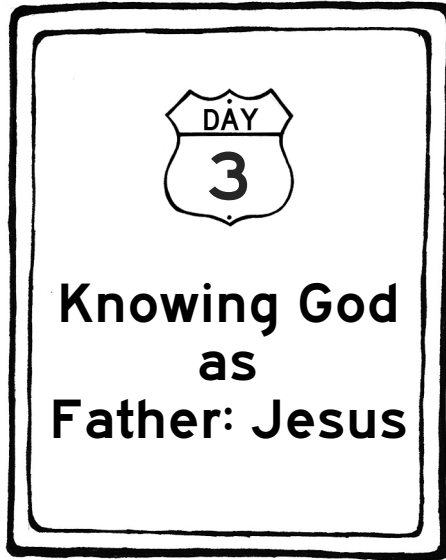
Jesus says eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ. He even said people could be doing all this stuff for God but in the end it wouldn’t count because He never knew them (Matthew 7:23). God desperately desires a close relationship with people, a relationship that begins now, here on earth, and that will last forever into eternity.



Do you really know God or do you just know about Him? There is a vast difference between having head knowledge about Him and having an intimate relationship with Him. Today, why don't you pray and say to God, "I truly want to know you." May this be the beginning of a deepening relationship with Him.



Take some time to make a list of the things you would like to get to know about God. How can you find out these things? You may like to come back to this list at a later date to see if you have found out the answers!



Matthew 3:17; 17:5  
Mark 14:36  
John 17:1-26

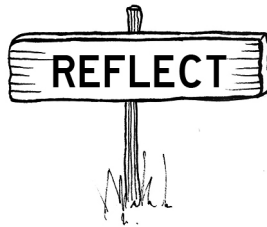


Did you notice that in John 17, Jesus addresses God as Father six times? In fact, if you read all the words of Jesus in John's gospel (the red letters if you have one of those Bibles), He mentions His Father no fewer than *111 times*. Yes, I counted them all. That's not to mention the other verses that *aren't* Jesus's direct words. John is communicating a vital message of the gospel—God is Father. Mark reveals Jesus using the term *Abba* to pray to God. This was the Aramaic word for father, which was used by children to address their dads in the everyday life of Aramaic-speaking people (which Jesus was). This shows God is an accessible, close God who's concerned with our everyday lives, not a distant God who is too busy ruling the universe to have time for us.

Jesus was so sure of His position as a Son, a beloved Son, that He knew He could call on His Father anytime, whether it was in His deepest time of need or to declare His praises (Matthew 11:25–26). He truly knew the love and pleasure of His Father (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). And it was important that Jesus's followers really knew He was from the Father and that they could also have the same kind of intimate relationship with the Father as He did. The love the Father had for Jesus could be *in* them (John 17:25–26). Wow. Now that is a game changer.

You may well be thinking, *No way could I have that kind of relationship with God. After all, Jesus was God's Son.* Well, before you follow that train of thought for too long, just wait until tomorrow's devotion and you'll find out just how beloved you are.

## Intimacy, Intercession, and Increase



What is your relationship with your earthly father like? Is he close and accessible or distant and disinterested? Sometimes it is painful to think about your own dad, but the way you view him can sometimes impact the way you view God. Ask God to show you if you believe some things about Him that aren't true.



Write down what you currently believe about what kind of Father God is like. If you don't know, that's ok. Pray - God, would you please show me what kind of Father you are like as I take this journey with Jesus?