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# Foreword

You are invited! Yes, you are invited to become a fellow traveler on a road trip. This journey will take you to new places, to exciting mountain peaks, to incredible views, to pristine valleys. You will not be the same at the end of this adventure!

In the 1970s, I was in my teens and part of a wonderful Christian youth group. We would get together with young people from all across North America and have car rallies. These would be two- or three-hour races through a city or across the country with check-ins, things to find, and some tough spots. Timing was critical. It was a race. Such an event would never happen today for safety reasons, but back then, before seatbelts were mandatory and before airbags existed, we would race from point to point just trying to get through the rally as quickly as possible. In each car we would have a driver, a navigator who had a big paper map spread out on his or her lap, and possibly one or two riders in the back seat. It was lots of fun, good fellowship, and very dangerous! The whole goal was to get through it as quickly as possible to get to the finish line.

This is not a car rally! The adventure Lyndal is inviting you on here is entirely different. I have personally taken this journey, each day of it. I can assure you that it is a great adventure and stretching, but the way to win is not with speed. You lose if you go fast. The way to win is to slow down and enjoy each leg of the journey.

## Intimacy, Intercession, and Increase

I am reminded of the soul-searching verse in Psalm 27:8 where the psalmist has heard the Lord say “Come and talk with me.” He responds, “LORD, I am coming” (NLT). How many times in my childhood did my mother ask me to do something to which I responded “Coming!” but then I continued with whatever I was doing? It used to drive my mother crazy, and I think my wife feels the same way sometimes!

God beckons you on this journey because He wants to spend time with you. He wants to take you to new places. He loves you, and He wants your company. Get up and start! Don’t answer “Lord, I’m coming” and then stay where you are. God bless you on this journey, and stay safe!

—Dave Brereton, International Director, YFCI



# 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 sometimes further discovery using online media.

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

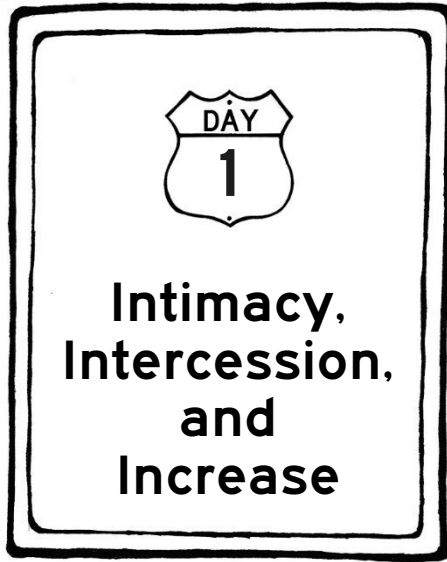
## Intimacy, Intercession, and Increase

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

*Lyndal*

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<sup>1</sup> Felicity Jenz, *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



## Explore a Life of Prayer

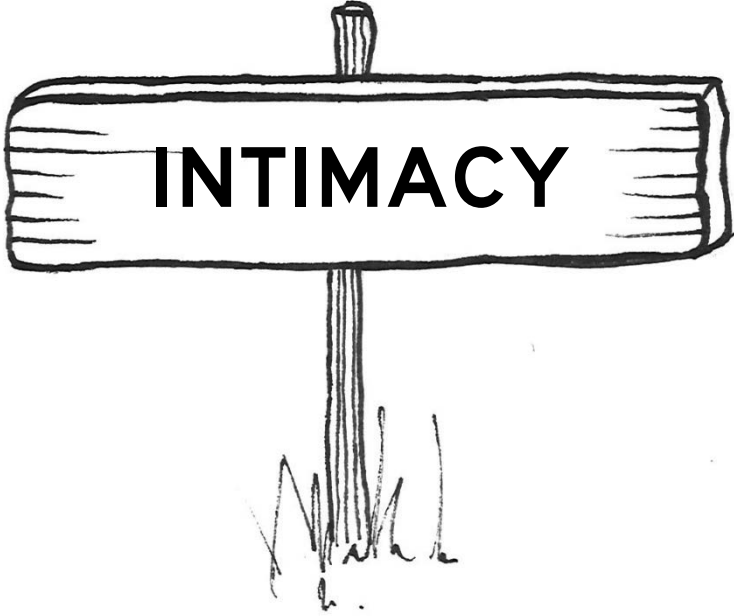
adventure we get to have as we give ourselves to these things!

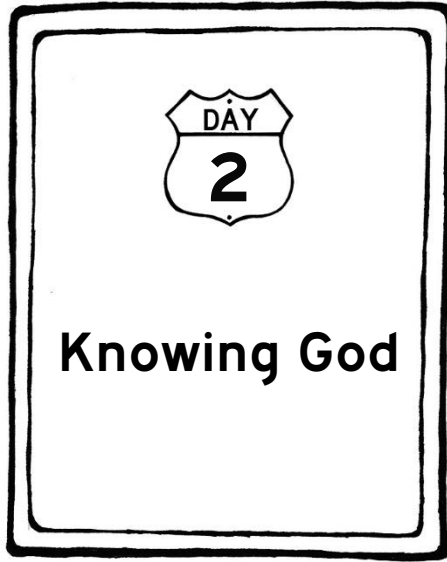
Are you ready for the ride? Let's surrender to the driver, King Jesus, and say in our hearts, "Take us where You want us to go."



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.

# 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:

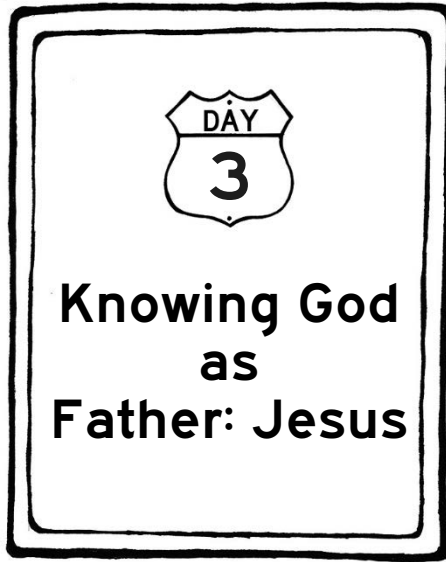
INTIMACY (noun) – close familiarity or friendship

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.



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.