

**HOW TO GROW CLOSER TO GOD**  
**#SermonCloseToGod**  
**Growing Like Jesus Grew - Part 3**  
**Dr. Mark Jackson, February 19, 2017**

**Luke 2:52** And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (NIV)

**John 1:18** No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like. (CEV)

**Deuteronomy 30:20** Love the Lord your God. Obey him. Stay close to him. He is your life... (ICB)

**Five Keys To Prayer**

**1. BE STILL**

**Psalms 46:10a** Be still, and know that I am God! (NLT)

**Psalms 131:2** But I have stilled and quieted myself, just as a small child is quiet with its mother. Yes, like a small child is my soul within me. (NLT)

**Luke 5:16** Jesus would often go to some place where he could be alone and pray. (CEV)

**2. BE SINCERE**

**Jeremiah 29:13** You will find me when you seek me, if you look for me in earnest. (LB)

**Matthew 6:5-6** And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat? <sup>6</sup> Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace. (MSG)

**Psalms 145:18** God is close to all who call on him sincerely. (LB)

**3. BE SIMPLE**

**Matthew 6:7** And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. (NASB)

**Matthew 6:9-13** With a God like this loving you, you can **pray very simply**. Like this: Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. <sup>10</sup> Set the world right; Do what's best— as above, so below. <sup>11</sup> Keep us alive with three square meals. <sup>12</sup> Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. <sup>13</sup> Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You're in charge! You can do anything you want... (MSG)

#### **4. BE SORRY**

**Isaiah 53:6** All of us, like sheep, have **strayed away**. We have **left God's paths** to follow our own... (NLT)

**Isaiah 59:2** But your **iniquities have separated you from your God**; your sins have **hidden his face from you**, so that he **will not hear**. (NIV)

**Psalms 66:18** If I **regard iniquity in my heart**, the **Lord will not hear me**. (KJV)

**James 4:8** **Come close to God**, and **God will come close to you**. **Wash your hands**, you sinners; **purify your hearts**, for **your loyalty is divided** between God and the world. (NLT)

#### **5. BE SURE**

**1 John 5:15** And if we **know that God listens** when we pray, **we are sure** that our prayers have already been answered. (CEV)

**Hebrews 4:16** Let us then **approach the throne of grace** with **confidence**, so that we may receive **mercy** and find **grace** to help us in our time of need. (NIV)

**1 Timothy 2:5-6a** God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself, is between them to bring them together, <sup>6</sup> by giving his life for all mankind. (LB)

**Hebrews 11:6** Without faith no one can please God. Anyone who comes to God **must believe** that he is real and that he rewards those who truly want to find him. (NCV)