

Lauren's Lighthouse Temple, Ghana 2022 Report

Scott & Alicia Crawley

It's Personal

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Whether you consider yourself a Christian or not, I have a question for you. Do you believe it's possible to know God personally? In other words, is God a person with whom people can have a true relationship? And by "person," I mean a unique, identifiable, personal being. Like you or me.

Personally, I used to think I had a personal relationship with God, but I never thought of Him as a person, or as a being who was personally interested in me. My relationship with God was purely transactional in nature until I was well into adulthood. If I, personally, said a certain prayer, God would save me, personally, from hell. From there on out it was my personal responsibility to prove I deserved this, by praying, reading my bible, going to church, and in later years, serving in all the ways I could at church and beyond.

Lot's of "personal" stuff here, huh? But...really?

Turns out, my personal relationship with God was no such thing. I had no sense of love for or from God, just fear on my part, and perceived condemnation on God's. I had no sense of God's character, desires, or traits, just of a vague being I thought I could never please, who had His finger pointed at me most of the time. I failed regularly at being good and doing good; thus, God surely couldn't love me.

But one day, my eyes were opened to an astounding truth: God came to earth as an actual person. I thought I had known this all my life. In fact, my prayer for salvation was to Jesus, my personal (there's that word again) Savior. Sadly, however, I never understood that He was a person who personally came to save me and be in relationship with me. He knew I needed saving. He knew I was broken, He knew exactly who I was. And He loved me anyway. He came for me because I couldn't get to Him. He had never condemned me. I had condemned myself all those years by not believing in His personal love for me.

What a revelation! I wanted more than anything to know this personal God, Jesus. I started to read the bible with open eyes and an open heart. I experienced Jesus for the first time, and received so much healing. But I needed more. I needed to get to know Jesus, truly know Jesus in one on one relationship, just like I had gotten to know the closest people in my life. Enter ***One on One with God***.

I had a neighbor at the time who invited several women from our cul-de-sac to go through a discipleship class together. We met for the first time and began with the bible verse at the heart of the class.

“For my determined purpose is that I may know Him—that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly...” Philippians 3:10 (Amplified Bible)

My neighbors and I spent the next 15 weeks discovering that knowing Jesus didn't have to be like “knowing” the President of the United States. I could say all day long that I know the President, but what I mean is I know who he is and a little bit about him. I've heard him speak on TV. But I have never actually met him, talked to him or gotten to know him. I could say I know Jesus, but what I had meant up to this point in my life was, I know who Jesus is, I know a little about Him, and I've heard and even read his words before.

In **One on One with God**, I actually got to know Jesus, personally, by not only meeting Him every day in the bible, but by listening and speaking to Him as well. (He doesn't have to use an audible voice to speak to us, nor do we need physical ears to hear him. He's GOD.) I learned to recognize His voice, His transformative actions in and around me, and His Kingdom growing in the hearts of His followers. For the next seven years, my true personal relationship with Jesus flourished. And for the three years after that, it carried me through the deepest pit of grief a person can experience. Today, my personal relationship with Jesus thrills and sustains me. He is my life and my heart. I've had to fight for it, but He is worth it.

Last year, I asked Mom Rose (Pastor's wife extraordinaire, and Ministry Leader, Lauren's Lighthouse Temple) to go through **One on One with God** with me. We did it through video, audio, and text messaging. We met for class in person twice while I was in Ghana last year. What a precious time it was getting to know Jesus and each other! At the end of our class, she shared some of what it had meant to her and her relationship with God: *“I used to be doing everything with my husband or waiting for him before...praying, studying the Word of God, and even singing and evangelism. But when I started One on One with God, I realized I am doing it myself...It has made me to read the Bible everyday and in the morning, afternoon and evening. I have understood plenty things about how to saturate my life with the Word of God.”*

While doing the class with me, Mom Rose also began leading a group of women through *One on One with God*. They completed their class just before Christmas. Jochabed, a church leader, shared how her relationship with God has grown:

“The Word of God is a source of new life...One on One with God has helped me to know that when I'm meditating, I'm pondering upon the Word of God, and how to make a picture of it! And also to pray. Wow, to ponder upon the Word of God, to give it a serious thought, and to imagine or create a picture of it, create an image of what I'm pondering upon. Then after that, I'll send it into prayers. I've learned that true prayer becomes a lifestyle...Our God is so powerful, so lovely.”

This is personal relationship with God. So desirable! He is not just a mystery out of our reach; He is available to every one of us. He's available to you. He loves you and wants you, just as you are, to know Him.

Post Script: Mom Rose is now leading LLT senior youth through One on One with God. She has also taken Pastor Godly through the class, and he has started leading other church leaders through it. Church leaders will then take those in their ministries through it, and soon all new members will take the class as well. It is our goal for everyone who walks through the doors of LLT to have a beautiful, transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.



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