



connect to reflect

INTRODUCTION

the problem of communion 01 what went wrong in Eden, and what we can do about it



the challenge to believe

1. How might it be possible to pray and study your Bible, but still not have communion with God? If this were so, what would be going wrong? How would you change the situation for "intimate fellowship" to occur?
2. How would you define intimate fellowship with God for someone who is not a Christian?



deepening dependence

Spend time to pray for a greater "intimate fellowship" with God.



steps to re-connecting our hearts to God

1. Ask the Holy Spirit what he wants you to learn from this lesson. What do you sense the Holy Spirit teaching you?
2. This week, what practical steps do you need to take to apply what the Holy Spirit is teaching you?
3. What evidence will you see that indicates that you are successfully applying what the Holy Spirit is teaching you?



passing it on

- INTERCESSION** Who can you pray for that they may experience intimate fellowship with God?
- WORDS** With whom can you share the concept of intimate fellowship with God?
- CHARACTER** How can intimate fellowship with God become characterised in your own life?



open to God's words

Have you ever wondered why it can feel difficult to spend time with God? We might want to, but there is something inside that rebels against this longing. For many of us, it is easier to watch a film or surf the internet than spend time with God. For the Christian, that seems strange, doesn't it?

So why do we have this resistance to being with God?

The answer is found at the beginning of the Bible in Genesis 3:6-8:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden (NIV).

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in Eden, two things happened. First, they felt ashamed because they saw they were naked. They were no longer covered with God's glory.

Secondly, they were so ashamed that they tried to cover up by wrapping leaves around themselves and then tried to hide from God.

From that moment on, everyone born into the world has a natural desire to escape from God. While we were designed to joyfully live in God's presence, sin has become part of our nature. We are born into the world in a state of disconnection from God. But as I said, this was not how God designed it to be. God designed us to live in continuous connection with him.

This means that living as a Christian is like a television plugged into the wall. If you are watching television and someone accidentally pulls the plug out of the wall, the picture disappears immediately. If you want sound and a picture, you have to have continuous power that stays at a constant level. That's why the plug is so important. The plug connects the power supply to the television.

So living as a Christians is *not* like running on batteries. If you have a toy car using rechargeable batteries, you have to charge the batteries before the car will run. Once the batteries go flat, you have to plug the batteries back into the mains charger. It may be tempting to believe that our life with God is like that—charge your batteries with God in the morning by praying and reading the Bible, and



communion with God is defined as "intimate fellowship"—which God has designed to be a state of being

then, and then recharge them later. But that can be a dangerous way to think.

Rather, Jesus says we are branches on a vine (John 15). Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. When we are connected (like the plug), and his nature is able to flow from him into us, we will automatically bear fruit—because his character is now inside us. But we have to be connected at all times. Because the moment we are disconnected, fresh power cannot come into us. When this happens, we face the danger of trying to live like Christians, but without God's power! Living like a branch in the vine means that connecting with God is not an event but a state of being.



"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, NIV)

To become re-connected with God, is to have communion with him—to restore our broken relationship with him. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines communion as "intimate fellowship". To have intimate fellowship, is to share our thoughts and emotions with a real person who is present with us.

Such intimacy is what Jesus promised his disciples,

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23, NIV)

The Christian life no longer has to be theoretical. And we don't always have to be a victim of our sinful natures. Jesus' promise means that such personal, intimate fellowship with Jesus and the Father is possible for you.

We will learn more about how this works as we continue.