

The single most important thing you need to do as a Christian

The single most important thing you need to do as a Christian is ...

- ... NOT going to church, though that's very important.
- ... NOT reading your Bible, though that's also important.
- ... NOT prayer, though you must do that.
- ... NOT sharing your faith, though you should.
- ... NOT even loving other people, though that is essential.

But none of those is the single most important thing.

The single most important thing you can do is ***let yourself be loved by God***. Many people overlook this, and suffer as a result.

4 reasons why letting yourself be loved by God is the single most important thing you can do as a Christian

(1) Letting yourself be loved by God empowers you to love. What are the most important commands? Jesus tells us that the two most important commandments are to love God totally and to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-39) How do we carry out those commandments? The Bible is clear. Apart from Christ we can do nothing. (John 15:5) And we love because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19) Until we let ourselves be loved by God, we cannot carry out the two greatest commandments.

(2) Letting yourself be loved by God repairs your shield of faith. The enemy tears down our faith by implanting painful lies in our hearts; lies that confuse us about the true character of God and our place in His heart. When we allow ourselves to be loved by God, the One Who is Truth repairs this damage to our heart, so our faith is strengthened and the flaming arrows of the evil one no longer harm us. (Ephesians 6:16)

(3) Letting yourself be loved by God permits God to do what He loves to do most. This may be the most important reason of all. God does not force His love upon us, but when we open ourselves up to His love, He is delighted to pour it out on us. God loves to love us. I have four children. I love each of them dearly. But sometimes one of

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them is unwilling to receive my love. I try to hug, but I'm pushed away. I try speaking words of encouragement, and my motives are questioned. I serve, but my actions go unnoticed. I set up quality time and this child complains that the time is wasted. I give gifts, and they are not appreciated. If you are a parent, you might understand what this means. I see my child suffering, feeling unloved, yet I do love. (I'm in this for the long haul. I'm not giving up. I'm not discouraged. But I share this to try to give some inkling of how God must sometimes feel; ready and waiting to love his children who feel unloved.)

(4) Nearly every human disorder could be cured if we let ourselves be loved by God. Addictions would cease, because what we really crave is the love of God. Conflicts and hatred would end, because deep, deep down the thing we're really fighting over is our share of the love of God. When we let ourselves be loved by God, we discover that there's more than enough love to go around. Poverty would cease because we would discover a new reservoir of abundance that would open up the floodgates of productivity and generosity.

8 ways in which we can let ourselves be loved by God

(1) Invite God into your hurts. Embracing the presence of God in the place of our pain is one of the most important things we can do. God is the One who comforts, soothes and heals. Keep bringing Him back to do that work of love inside you. All of us need this.

(2) Invite God into your lies. All of us believe lies. We would like to think that we don't, but we do. The primary strategy of the enemy is deception, and his main area of focus is deceiving us about who God is, who we are, and what place we have in God's heart. He wants us to believe that God has abandoned us, that God doesn't really like us, that God is disappointed in us, that we are too shameful to be totally forgiven, and the list goes on and on. By keeping those lies buried just beneath the surface of our awareness, the enemy is able to exert tremendous influence over our lives. But when we come to God and say, "Xyz feels true and this is where I learned it, but what do You have for me" the God who is Truth can set us free with His loving truth. (John 8:32,36)

(3) Invite God into your desires. All of us have desires, good, bad and ugly. Do you know why desires are so important to God? Because hidden inside our desires is the heart of God. Our desires may be corrupted, but we cannot escape our identity as humans made in the image of God. Suppose, for example, that someone desires to have

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an affair. The object of that desire is really just an illusion. The real core desire is to be loved by God. The more we let ourselves be loved by God, the less that other man or other woman has any pull on us. God satisfies our desires with good things. (Psalm 103:5) When we delight ourselves in God, He is delighted to give us the desires of our hearts. (Psalm 37:4) Bring your desires to God – whatever they are, even if they are shameful – and let Him satisfy those desires with good things. Don't give up. Be persistent and you will experience profound change.

(4) Bring your sins to God. Sin separates us from God. But sin loses its power when we resist the temptation to go into hiding, but instead bring it out into the Light, into God's presence and allow Him to lovingly remove it from our lives. Remember, sin is often a perceived solution, so if we are letting ourselves be loved by God by inviting God into our hurts, lies and desires, sin loses most of its power.

(5) Spend quality time with God. Did you know that God loves to just hang out with you? Go for a walk, sit in a church, listen to music together – whatever works for you.

(6) Invite God into your work. Did you know that God loves to work? God spent six days creating, one day resting. God loves to go to work with you. Invite Him along.

(7) Receive love from others graciously and with gratitude. Receive it as a gift from God for that is what it usually is. Receive it as one of God's ways of loving you.

(8) Open the door of gratitude. Just think – God created you! If God had not created you, you would not be here. Jesus came to save you from everlasting destruction. Jesus died for you! Gratitude opens the door for the presence of God to come into the dark places and seasons of our lives. (Psalm 50:23, Psalm 100:4) Through gratitude, let God's presence and love gain a foothold in your soul. From there you will be transformed.

These are just a few of the reasons why we must let ourselves be loved by God, and a few of the many ways we can do that. But please understand, we never outgrow this. We are never too “mature” to be loved by God. As we grow, His love will overflow from our hearts to many others, but we all need to be resupplied or our wells will run dry.