

CHAPTER 1

AN INVITATION TO INTIMACY

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

JEREMIAH 33:3, NIV

What if God does not demand prayer as much as gives prayer? What if God wants prayer in order to satisfy us? What if prayer is a means of God nourishing, restoring, healing, converting us? Suppose prayer is primarily allowing ourselves to be loved, addressed and claimed by God. What if praying means opening ourselves to the gift of God's own self and presence? What if our part in prayer is primarily letting God be giver? Suppose prayer is not a duty but the opportunity to experience healing and transforming love?

MARTIN L. SMITH, *The Word Is Very Near You*

THE ETERNAL, SOVEREIGN, MAJESTIC GOD of the universe wants to be intimate with us! He wants us to call, to cry, to sing to Him. He longs to love, to refresh, to encourage us. He wants to answer our call and to tell us great and unsearchable thoughts. God wants us to know that He is always ready to commune; He is always ready to listen. He wants to be so much a part of our lives that we would naturally come to Him at all times. He tells us that

we have freedom to call to Him wherever we are, about anything on our hearts. He delights in being involved with His children, and prayer is His gift and His invitation to intimacy.

 PRAYER OF PREPARATION

As you begin this chapter, pray with Julian of Norwich (fourteenth century) for a desire to respond to God’s call to intimacy:

God, of your goodness, give me yourself; for you are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In you alone do I have all.¹

 GOD INVITES US TO PRAY

1. God continually declares His desire for fellowship with us. How do the following Scriptures portray God’s desire for our intimacy with Him?

JEREMIAH 29:11-14 

ROMANS 8:14-17 