



## GROWING DEEPER WITH GOD

When was the last time you were surprised by just how good something is? I experienced this during the online Navigator Lockdown prayer times. As I listened to the prayers offered by others, agreeing in my spirit with people's expressions of worship and their requests, I noticed how deeply encouraged I was. When I shared this with a friend she passed on this quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Corporate prayer offered in the name of Christ is the purest form of fellowship." I had joined the online prayer out of a commitment to pray and discovered that this also deeply encouraged my own faith and walk with Christ.

At the end of last year as our National Leadership Team prayed and thought about this year one of the areas God led us to focus on in 2020 was deepening relationship with God. It was clear to us that God wanted our service to be the overflow of our deepening relationship with Him. Eugene Petersen expresses this well in John 15 in The Message Bible, *'When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant.'* This abundant harvest can be the fruit of Christlike character and the fruit of others coming to know and grow in Christ. Both will naturally come from going deeper with God.

The events of this year make this focus on going deeper with God seem even more important. When trouble comes in life, we need something or someone solid to hold on to. Who better than Jesus Christ who right now sustains and holds together our entire universe? The stories in this issue of Navigate reveal how deepening our relationship with God bears fruit in our own lives and the lives of others even when we face the most challenging of times. May the stories, examples and bible study help you to go deeper with God, and to do this with others.

We want you all to know that our staff and board are continuing to pray for all of you during these uncertain times. Please let us know if there are specific prayer items that we can pass along in our networks.

Yours,

*Simon*

Simon Cayzer  
National Director



# GROWING DEEPER WITH GOD 'TIL THE END

MICHAEL TAYLOR SHARES ENCOURAGEMENT WITH US AS HE LOOKS TOWARD GOING HOME

BY LEAH SIMPSON & MICHAEL TAYLOR



This is a conversation I had with my Dad, Michael in late June about his faith journey with Jesus through the final stages of his terminal brain cancer. It has been deeply encouraging for me to walk alongside my Dad through this part of his journey and see him ‘stand firm to the end’ (Matt 10:22). I hope you find it similarly encouraging.

**Leah:** Dad will you tell me about some of the challenges you are facing at present?

**Michael:** I’m experiencing a challenge around letting go of stuff! Over the years as a parent and husband and work colleague I accumulated many practical responsibilities and facing the prospect of letting go of managing these is hard. On many levels, it feels like I’m not fulfilling the responsibilities that I should be, and that makes me feel like I’m leaving people short. I recently took time to reflect on my marriage vows to Kathryn and this highlighted how important my marriage is to me and the fact that I’m not going to be able to fulfil those vows to the extent that I might have imagined. I am having to learn that God is asking me to relinquish control of this to him.

As I’ve considered this challenge, I’ve realised that this is really at the heart of our own sin. We want to take over from God and manage our lives independently. And when we come into a relationship with God, one of the fundamental things we have to learn is how

to let God be our heavenly Father and let him be responsible for us. Often I’m tempted into taking back control – or at least pretending to take over control. I’m learning afresh how to let go and live in his love and provision.

**Leah:** You’ve started to touch on this Dad, but how has God met you in this challenge?

**Michael:** God has been using many of the visits I’ve had from friends to encourage me. One thing I’ve asked some people to do is give me the scriptures they lean on as they look ahead. For example, this passage from a dear friend has particularly encouraged me:

*But as for me, my contentment is not in wealth but in seeing you and knowing all is well between us. And when I awake in heaven, I will be fully satisfied, for I will see you face-to-face.* Psalm 17:15 (Living Bible)

Isn’t this great! When you are face to face with someone, you are not only hearing them but also seeing them - their smile, their face, and picking up many more of them because you can see their body language. I’m looking forward to being face-to-face with Jesus. When I see him face-to-face I will be fully satisfied. I will be content. Not out of achievement, but in seeing Jesus and knowing there is no problem between us. I will be able to see it in His face.

Just this morning, as I reflected on all the encouraging moments like this that I’ve shared with others, it dawned on me that these people have been God’s very practical way of telling me he loves me. I’m amazed at this. My heavenly Father not only demonstrates his love through his Son’s death but goes on to demonstrate his love for me by bringing into my life lots of little occasions where I’m encouraged and affirmed. It’s like God’s repeating himself over and over saying: “can you hear me Michael, are you listening, I’m telling you I love you.” What more could I ask for?

I am also finding it easier to manage the many small hurdles along the way when I remember there is a big picture in place. Another friend gave me this passage from Ephesians 1:11 *In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.*

We are written into the script and I am enjoying meditating on this. Understanding that I’m part of the bigger purpose feels thrilling and also helps me to feel safe. And this in turn helps me anticipate what’s ahead.

**Leah:** What encouragement do you have for others?

**Michael:** God’s plan has always been built around eternity – the focus of his plan is around us living with

*(continue reading story on page 3)*

# GROWING DEEPER WITH GOD AT THE START

AN INTERVIEW WITH AMANDA SHARP WHO RECENTLY BEGAN HER WALK WITH GOD

BY LIANA FLANAGAN

## What drew you into a relationship with God?

I always knew God existed, that there was a greater power looking over me but I never really acknowledged what it was until I got to a point in my life where I had nothing more than I wanted to live for. I went through so many bad experiences that I gave up hope. I reached out to family who are believers and they led me very gently into believing again that there is more to live for and I do have that worth to live a life.

## What has helped you grow?

I think the biggest thing that has helped me is the Psalms. I feel that they relate to every emotion I've ever had and they always seem to bring back that hope again. Being able to have one-on-one discussions with Liana about life and letting God in, and realizing that God is there for me has really opened my eyes and my heart. Once I accepted that God was always going to show up, it just naturally flowed. Having consistent mentoring, Christian community, the Word of the Day app on my phone - those little nudges every day really help and then it doesn't feel so overwhelming.

## What challenges do you face in deepening your relationship with God as a new Christian?

I lived an immoral life only 9 months ago and there are things I've done for so many years that it's habit and to suddenly not do that and to understand my own self-worth, it's really complicated. There are days where you just feel you want to chuck it in the too-hard basket and do whatever you want again. It's hard to make [faith] at the forefront of everything I do and how I behave. It's so easy to slip into bad habits. That's been the hardest challenge for me - trying to



**AMANDA SHARP**

incorporate it into everyday life, and a bit of fear of being ridiculed.

## What excites you about this journey?

I know that even though I have bad days and bad moments, there is a bigger picture, there is a bigger plan for me. Obviously there are going to be trials and hardship and it's not going to be all roses and sunshine. It's this excitement of the unknown becoming the known. I'm learning that even if I do screw up there is this unconditional love God has for me. He may not like my actions but I'm still worthy of being His child. ☺

## ...MICHAEL TAYLOR INTERVIEW CON'T

him in eternity – and our time on earth as Christians is preparation for that. This life is like a purposeful entre or starter to what is to come. This means there are some things we can be doing now to prepare ourselves for eternity. How we talk to God, how we trust in him, how we receive his love, how we interact with other believers – these will all be part of eternity. Not in the same ways—but still present.

My practical advice, then, is when we disciple someone, we can help them see their relationship with God as an

eternal one. It's a subtle but important shift - we don't live one life now and then start a whole different one in heaven. We have, in part, already begun to live with God in eternity, in heaven it will continue and be completed. For more on this topic, I've found Dallas Willard's book 'Divine Conspiracy' to be invaluable.

P.S. Thank you to all the many people who have already walked some of this journey with me so far, be it by prayer or in person. Feel free to reach out and share the journey home we are all making. ☺

# GROWING DEEPER WITH GOD IN THE DAY TO DAY

BY KRISTINA WAGNER (SHE HAS JOINED NZ NAVS STAFF FROM THE U.S. FOR 3-5 YEARS)

As I've grown in my walk with God, I've become convinced that we do not stumble upon holiness. Our natural bent is not towards God, but to ourselves and to the world. Like Galatians 5 describes, there is this constant tension between our flesh and our spirit. And, at least for me, I gravitate towards my flesh more often than not. This was on display during lockdown a couple months ago. As pleasures of this world were stripped away and how we go about life and work fundamentally changed, I found myself confronted with some questions: Is Jesus enough? Do I attempt to go to other things for life? (The short answer is yes to both). During lockdown, I found it difficult when I didn't have anything to show my productivity. Even if those things were as simple as showing up to campus and interacting with students. I now had space and time to reflect and figure out what I spend my time on and what changes needed to be made in order to abide deeper with Jesus.

After reflecting, I feel like I continue to learn similar lessons. I become convinced every day that God simply wants us to remain in Him. To remember who He is and what He has done. And as fallen human beings, we need to constantly go to God to remember.

Psalm 34:8-10 says,  
*"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."*

*Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing."*



In lockdown, I sought the Lord through early morning prayer with others on our national prayer Zoom meetings, my daily quiet times where I met God in His word, and through scripture memory. All of these spiritual disciplines kept my eyes on God and I continue to practice them even now. I've found that it's more valuable and rewarding to spend time with God rather than doing anything else and, in order to live well, we need to constantly go to the one who is life. ☺

## GROWING DEEPER IN YOUR WALK WITH GOD

*Join us as we look at growing deeper in our walk with God in our study of the Psalms*

The heart of Christianity is not a set of doctrines to believe, even though sound doctrine is vital. Nor is it an activity to pursue, even though the Christian faith is necessarily active. Nor is it essentially a set of disciplines, even though without reading the Bible and praying we will not get far in the Christian life. The heart of Christianity is – to use a phrase from John Bunyan, the great Puritan preacher and writer – “to live upon God.” **You were made for God.** To know Him. To be satisfied in Him. Enjoy Him. Revere Him. Draw strength from Him. Trust Him. Love Him. Walk with Him. Commune with Him.

What are the keys to growing deeper with God in these areas? As we dig deeper into the Psalms we will see, as the writers did, we need one thing in life – God. Not just truths about God. Rather, God himself.

**READ & STUDY Psalm 63** (If time permits also include: **Psalm 36, 42, 84, 103, 130**)

How does the Psalmist talk about God? His need for God? His communion with God? His dependency on God? How does he give thanks and praise to God? How does he express feelings of desolation or despair or guilt because of his sin? How does he cry out to God for help? How does God meet him where he is?

**Respond with Lectio Divina:** Read/Listen; Meditate; Prayer; Contemplate (online: [tiny.cc/navslecdiv](http://tiny.cc/navslecdiv))