GOD WANTS TO NURTURE YOU EVEN MORE!
(Sermon)

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Purpose:

Explain how reading the Bible, praying, and doing missionary work are ways God may use to strengthen our relationship with Jesus and nurture us as His beloved church. Awaken each individual to the need to invest in their relationship with Jesus through these methods.

Introduction:

God wants to nurture you even more! What does nurturing mean? To nurture means to care for and encourage the growth or development of. Nurturing is associated with nursing, it has to do with nutrition, and it implies strengthening and preparing for greater and true prosperity.

God wants to nurture His church! He wants to help us grow and truly prosper. How does God want to nurture us? And how can we make sure we are taking advantage of God’s method to receive His nurturing?

God wants to nurture us through Jesus! “Without Me,” Jesus said, “you can do nothing” (John 15:5). The Bible is clear on this . . . “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12). How do we know if we have Jesus?

Do you have a mother? Do you have a father? Do you have a brother or a sister? Do you have a friend? Do you have a husband or a wife? How do you know you have one? You may respond: “I have a husband because we got married and we still live together.” At the same time, someone can argue that even though they got married and still live under the
same roof, their relationship is dead, which is just like not having a husband. These ideas can be applied to other relationships, including the one we have with Jesus.

All relationships are built on three elements that strengthen with time. Just like our relationships with others, our relationship with Jesus can only grow more intimate through these three elements: listening to Jesus, talking to Jesus, and walking together with Jesus.

Interestingly, the Sanctuary serves as a map leading us back to God’s presence using these three elements through the three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place. We can hear Jesus through the Bible, which is represented by the Table of Showbread. We can speak to Jesus through our prayers, represented by the altar of incense. And we can walk a missionary path with Jesus as represented by the chandelier.

Today, we will stop and consider these three elements as the tripod to grow in Jesus. All three legs of this “tripod” must grow evenly to prevent a crooked growth that can lead to our fall. So, as our sermon continues, analyze your relationship with Jesus through these three elements and identify which are the weak legs of the “tripod” that need to be strengthened.

1. Bible (direct way to hear Jesus)

To strengthen any relationship, we must listen with attention.

If “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10), and if “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16), then it is by reading each book of the Bible that we can directly hear Jesus testifying through each of the inspired authors.

The Bible is composed of:
- 66 books
- 1,189 chapters (929 in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament)
How long do you think it would take to read the whole Bible at an average reading speed? It is estimated that it would take about 74 hours and 28 minutes. Approximately three days and a quarter. If you have never read the entire Bible, then you have not spent three days and a quarter hearing Jesus through the full message that He wants to give you.

It is sad to see Christians using the Bible as a cake for special occasions when it is meant to be a daily bread that can nurture us through Christ.

There are seven activities with the Bible in which we can engage:

- **Hearing**: “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).
- **Reading**: “He shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God” (Deuteronomy 17:19).
- **Writing/Copying**: “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:9).
- **Memorizing**: “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11).
- **Studying**: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).
- **Speaking**: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth” (Joshua 1:8).
- **Meditating**: “You shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

It is our privilege to hear Jesus by engaging in each of these activities with the Bible. To do each one with the whole Bible, from cover to cover, is one of the greatest goals we could ever accomplish. God wants to nurture us through the Bible, which is spiritual food for our souls.
2. Prayer

To strengthen any relationship, communication must go both ways. We must not only listen by paying attention, but we must also speak openly from our hearts.

Jesus is our mediator who brings our deepest thoughts to God’s throne. What an honor to be able to talk directly to God through Him. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Martin Luther is known to have had the custom of spending two hours every morning in prayer. But what is even more amazing is the quote in which he said, “I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” How much do you value the time you spend in prayer? What do you depend on the most to succeed in your projects for the day? Remember that when “you work,” you work. But when “you pray,” He works.

Have you ever heard of Jorge Müller? His life of prayer has inspired many. Later in his life, when the miracles from his answered prayers had made him famous, the queen of England came one day to visit him. She happened to arrive during his prayer time, and when Jorge Müller was interrupted to be informed of the honorable visit, he responded, “Tell the Queen that I can’t attend to her now because I’m talking to the King of Kings.” Whose audience do you value the most when you know you can speak freely? Who is your greatest helper, by whom you seek to be understood?

Another inspiring story, little spoken of, is that of Susan Wesley. She is rarely remembered, even though she was the mother of great men of valor. She gave birth to 18 children, including John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, and Charles Wesley, author of more than 6,000 hymns. What did she do to be such a successful mother? Her children testify of seeing their mother go out on the front porch to sit in a chair, fully
covering her head with her apron, for one hour to pray every day. This was her special place and time that everyone knew they could not invade. A mother with so many children could easily justify not having time or a place of escape. How much do you value spending quality time in prayer? Do you have a special place to have your encounters with Jesus?

It is our privilege to enter God’s presence and speak freely, knowing that he wants to listen and help. The Bible presents us with ideas that can be part of our agenda when coming to the King of Kings.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6).

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41)

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2).

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

You can start a prayer journal to add your favorite hymn melodies, singing what is in your heart. You can stick paper prayer requests to one of your walls. You can go out for a
prayer walk, and much more. Use the method that can best help you develop the habit of spending quality time speaking with God.

3. Mission

Finally, to strengthen any relationship, we must accomplish projects together; we must walk together to reach a united goal, doing activities that will provide bonding moments. With Jesus, we can be sure to walk with Him when we accept a missionary challenge. He is eager to walk with us in the direction of saving others.

The disciples of Jesus walked with Him here on earth, always fulfilling a mission. Curing, teaching, feeding, helping, saving . . . were their daily activities.

Praying and reading the Bible should not be an excuse for procrastination to do the work that Jesus calls us to do. Jesus said: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

If you want to be where Jesus is, experience mission. Consider the following calls to action that Jesus has for you:

“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, . . . But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:2, 3, 5).

“For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth’ ” (Acts 13:47).
“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’ ” (Romans 10:14, 15).

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Jesus promises to pour out His Holy Spirit with a missional purpose. It is our privilege to engage in altruistic service, having Jesus by our side to help us each step of the way. You may think that you have no ability to serve. Remember, God is more interested in your willingness than in your ability. With Jesus, success does not rest on our condition but on our disposition. What matters is not our ability but our availability. Limitation is not synonymous with disqualification. He promises to equip those whom He calls through His Spirit. And even when your missionary work seems weak, the Holy Spirit is the one who will work through our altruistic disposition. “Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12).

What ministry are you involved in? How many people do you study the Bible with weekly? Are you intentionally scheduling time to serve, to walk together with Jesus? How many hours of altruistic missionary work do you think is enough? Maybe it is time to pray the prayer of Jabez, asking God to enlarge your territory (1 Chronicles 4:10). It is time to desire more responsibility in Christ. Remember that the most important borders we need God to expand are those that separate us from entering into people’s lives to bring Jesus into their hearts.

Live for something bigger than yourself. Strive to build a legacy with Jesus. What is a legacy? Legacy is a mission that is passed on from one generation to another, an inheritance
that requires responsibility, commitment, and delivery. A dream come true that needs to be preserved, nurtured, and expanded.

**Conclusion:**

Don’t be content with spiritual weakness; God calls you to be a spiritual giant in Christ.

“But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18).

God wants to nurture you through a healthy relationship with Jesus. The three vital elements that can help us experience true growth are listening to Jesus, speaking to Jesus, and walking in mission with Jesus. God is calling us to intentionally enhance all three of these crucial elements (especially one that may be weaker than the others). In Jesus, we can be nurtured to grow farther than we could ever imagine.

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:14-21).

**Call to action:**

A military story recounts that after the end of the United States Civil War, which abolished slavery, a soldier decided to travel down south. During his trip, he encountered a scene that taught him a great lesson. He sat down at a public place to eat his lunch and
perceived an ex-slave looking curiously at the orange that he had pulled out of his bag. He offered the man his orange who quickly took it from his hand with great amazement and looked deeply into the orange, saying, “I never ate one of these.” He smelled it with a long and deep breath, smiling. After admiring it for a while he started biting the skin which he continued to chew as he savored the orange with great contentment and admiration. The soldier, not being able to hold himself back, asked, “Do you like it?” to which the man answered with a big smile: “Yes, my lord, very much.” The soldier then said to the man, “Wait until you get to the inside.”

We are like this ex-slave who may be enjoying the skin of a spiritual life that will only get better as we go deeper in Christ.

Jesus is inviting you to come into a more intimate relationship with him. What will be your answer? What will be your first step to walk closer to Jesus this week?

Stand up as you think of a specific first step that you want to take to get closer to Jesus and receive His nurturing for greater growth. Let us pray together, asking God to help us have this experience of greater nurturing that He wants to give us.