

Do Not Fear or Reject Intimacy with God, He Desires Your Company



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We're going to examine tonight, the whole idea of intimacy with the Lord. This is probably my most favorite subject because it's the most energizing and rejuvenating and completely restorative thing that we can possibly talk about. There's nothing, nothing more important than intimacy with the Lord and so many people have a real problem with that. They have a problem with being able to see the Lord and to

hear the Lord and to really sense His presence in prayer.

So, we're going to explore some of the reasons why that is, because this is not what the Lord wants. He wants us to be intimately bonded to Him. We are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh through Communion; heart of His heart. He died for us on the Cross; no one could love us more than He does. It's not His wish for us to feel distant from Him and not be able to hear Him clearly. When we're in Heaven, we'll hear Him very clearly. Why can't it be now, on Earth as it's going to be in Heaven? Well, the good news is, yes, it can be!

So, we're going to explore some of the things, the obstacles that get in the way of that. And, I have to say that intimacy is the very heart of our walk with the Lord. The more intimate we are with Him, the more rejuvenating He is, the fuller of His love and His light, and His joy we are and the more we project that out to other people and the more the Lord shines through us and the more we're able to touch people in tender places and bring healing.

So, I'm going to say something that might kind of shock you but, I believe the number one problem that we have with intimacy and why we don't have enough intimacy with the Lord; it's not our work, not our children, not our spouse, not entertainments, not sickness and not homelessness, not poverty, not wealth and not possessions. The number one problem we have is fear. Now, why should we be afraid of the Lord? Well, Satan's done a pretty good job of slandering His character. We're going to go into that. So, there is a lot of fear there, I think. Don't squirm and deny this, okay? No one is listening in on this but the Holy Spirit - so I want you to, if you don't think this is true of you, I need you to maybe turn the video off for a minute and think about it. Think about if there is some kind of secret, hidden fear or outright fear that you have when you come to be in the presence of the Lord.

So, we can be totally honest. Like I said, no one's listening except the Holy Spirit and we want this so badly so, it's important for us not to put up any barriers. Okay now, if this statement hit you right where you live, welcome to humanity because a lot of people feel the very same way that you do.

Why are we afraid of God? Well, feeling worthless and bad about ourselves, to put it simply. But do you know that the Lord healed lepers? Do you know that there is nothing hidden on this Earth that He doesn't know about? So, He has a total view of your life and where you're at and there's nothing, nothing at all that puts Him off about you. Not a thing. Not if you want to get close to Him. That's not off-putting to Him at all. And we're going to go into a little depth on that and why it's not off-putting.

Okay, so I feel that there are basically two sources for this attitude and for these feelings. The number one thing is the most common thing that we have: our own assessment of ourselves when we compare ourselves to, maybe T.V. personalities or church people or people that we assume have a better life and have more character and more goodness in them than we do. And, just comparing alone is so empty, I mean we have no idea what those people are like on the inside or what struggles they've had. So, comparing is something that we do. Society does it and it's just inescapable.

So, that's one off-putting obstacle. But the other one that's really important is we have some very experienced and talented liars whispering in our ears and they're doing two things. The first thing they're doing is telling us how bad we are, the accuser of the brethren. We'll go into that in the Scriptures that I have to bring up that support that. And the second thing, they lie about the nature of God. They lie about His character to the point where we become afraid to approach him. They say he's just like your father who beat you or He's like that mean school teacher that used to slam the ruler down on your fingers.

You know, the demons have just a potpourri of all kinds of ugly things to say about the Lord. They never run out of ugly things to say and to insinuate. So, let's take a look at that in the Scriptures. Now, when the Holy Spirit is dealing with us and convicting us of a sin, or let's just say a shortcoming, He never, ever condemns us. What the Holy Spirit does is, He very gently and tenderly quickens in our spirit that something is not quite right between you and the Lord, me and the Lord and we feel this dis-ease, this unease in our spirits and we want to know, you know, what have I done?

Now, the demons are opportunists, so they'll hitch up to that simple, loving, gentle admonition that something's not right... and they'll throw condemnation on it. And they'll just piggy-back along with condemnation so you'll get slammed with condemnation and self-hatred, as well as conviction. But the conviction part is the Holy Spirit. The other part is not Him at all. So, we have to learn to differentiate between these spirits, between God's Spirit and the spirit of the world and the spirit demons.

Now, in Revelation 12:9 it says, The great dragon was thrown down the serpent of old who is called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole world: he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in Heaven saying Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ has come: for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

So, the Scriptures are very clear that we are under attack through accusation. I was talking to my son tonight and said, "Have you ever felt like you were just bad and you don't have any reason for it?" and he said, "Oh, probably five or six times a day." I said, "Honey that is not the Lord. That's an attack, a demonic attack against your character." And this is what we're dealing with, guys. So, we have a continuous litany of accusation going up before the throne of God about the brethren, about us. And then on top of that, we have them whispering in our ears and saying things to us that are untrue - lying spirits basically. I call this toxic streaming since we're all familiar with the internet. I call it toxic streaming, straight from Hell.

So, let's look at that a little bit. You know, if you doubt that what I'm saying is true, examine the Scriptures and it says well, we're going to talk about the roaring lion and how Satan is constantly looking for ways to devour us, to devour our faith, our hope, and our love. But, I want to talk about a young man. Actually, he was three years old, Colton Burpo. He's written a book about going to Heaven and this little boy at three years old had a ruptured appendix and he was dying. Well, fortunately the Lord saved him;

he came back to life and he goes around telling people about what he saw in Heaven and I think in Hell as well but he talks about what he saw in the spiritual realms. And, he mentions something about there being demons and he was watching what the demons were doing and the moderator said, "What were the demons doing?" and the little boy said, "They were running around and telling lies to everybody." So there you have it. That's exactly what they're doing. The accuser of the brethren.

In 1 Timothy 4 it says the Spirit clearly says that in the latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits; things taught by demons. So, if you doubt that there is an interface, a demonic interface, that is saying things to you, there is plenty of scriptural evidence that there is indeed that interface and it has a very, very erosive effect on our joy and our happiness. We have to learn to see it and to know it and to recognize it when it hits us - otherwise it will just bring us down. We have to learn how to deal with that and the Lord gives us tools. He tells us how. So, these ongoing subliminal suggestions streaming into our consciousness are constantly eroding our confidence in the Lord, in who He is, and who He's called us to be.

In 1 Peter 5:8 it says Be of sober spirit and be on the alert. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in the faith knowing that the same experience in the suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. So, this is something that is common to all mankind. Welcome to humanity. This is the way it is.

Now, I'd like to just explore this for a moment. Have you ever watched lions hunt? I love National Geographic and the Nature Channel and we watch it occasionally. It's wonderful. And we have seen many times how lions hunt. It's not really a pretty sight. I don't like to see the outcome. But it's interesting how they hunt. First of all, they look for an animal that's in a weakened state or separated from the herd. Okay, so a weakened state for us could be something like we're sick with something and it's difficult for us to cope with all of our responsibilities and it's just dragging on us and we're working so hard to just keep up with, you know, making a meal and taking care of the children or whatever has to be done.

So, we're in a weakened state. He looks for those times when you're in a weakened state and I can testify to that. I have four children and I remember there were times you know, when that time of the month would come that cycle when women get very emotional they get very edgy and it's difficult and you just wouldn't believe all the things that would come against me that week. The landlord would complain about something, people would be -- there would be noise out in the field - people were fighting or something and a check would be late that I had to pay bills with. I just - a lot of things came together that just hit me at my weakest point and this is how lions hunt. This is how the Devil does it, he looks for you in a weakened state or separated from the herd. If you don't have anyone as your back up, if you don't have anyone to talk to, to pray with - if you're not going to church, if you don't have a group around you, you're very vulnerable. If you're alone, you're vulnerable. It really helps to have a few spiritual friends, at least.

And so, the lions - one will crawl on his belly, you know, and not move the grass hardly at all and he'll get close, as close as he can and the other ones will cut off the avenue of escape. And then when the lead lion hits the chase and gets going, then the others will jump into and block off the escape route of the animal that he's chosen to bring down. So, they look for someone who is weak, isolated from the herd, they close off the escape routes.

Now, the demons work in a similar way. Let's just imagine for a minute an assignment against you -- a demonic assignment against you to cause you to be exhausted and just collapse because you have a big

Christian event weekend going on and you are one of the ministers. You are part of a ministry team and the enemy doesn't want you to make your presentation. So he's going to do all he can to come against you and to cause you to go down before this weekend comes up, so you'll just back out of the whole situation. That is his goal. So, let's look at that.

So, a lying spirit. Let's just imagine this for a minute. And, you know, these are all tests. It's not like the demons have that much power over us. The Lord gives them permission, just so far. They're on a leash. They can't go any further but He allows these things to season us and to try us in the faith and to see how we'll deal with them and how we'll deal with our brothers and sisters at the same time.

So, let's look at this. A lying spirit stirs up trouble between you and your best friend, who happens to be one of the presenters on your ministry team. And you talk about it and you try to straighten it out, but you guys can't come to an agreement and there's just this grating against each other - and it's not good. Okay, that happens. Then another set of demons picks out a relative that lives far away and is very demanding and impulsive and sends that relative into town to stay with you without any warning. So now, all of a sudden, you've got company on top of everything else. And let's say we're dealing with maybe three days before the event, like a Wednesday.

Okay, then, your regular mailman got the flu and instead of your regular mailman there is a sub and you're waiting for a very important paycheck in the mail that you're going to use to pay your car insurance and your cell phone - which are overdue. And you go to the mailbox to get it and it's not there. It should have been there three days ago. Okay, so you start to get a little nervous. Well, it turns out the sub put the check in someone else's box. Okay now, these are all things that have happened to me personally. I won't say they've happened on top of each other, but I will say they've happened to me personally.

Okay, so then you get to work and you get a call from corporate and the project that you're working on so hard has a deadline, but guess what? They decided to move it up a week, because someone's visiting from out of town and they want to have a presentation ready then. So, now you're under this extra pressure to produce something that you thought you had another week to work out... and you've got ministry coming up.

Okay, so your wife is not feeling real well. It looks like she's coming down with the flu, (just to add another straw to the pile) and you've got to take care of the kids; get them to and from school. And little Michael is pushed off the slide by one of the nasty boys in school and something happens to his ankle and he can't walk on it. So you have to leave work and take him to the E.R. and find out if your son's got a broken ankle.

Now, this is the way the devils work. They just lay it on as thick as they can. The greater the anointing that you have, the work that you have to do, the more you're going to come under attack. The more important your message is, the more you're going to come under attack.

So, it looks like this ministry event just isn't going to happen. You begin to crumble. These are all lions on the hunt. They've surrounded you. You are their prey. You're the target. And their whole agenda is to bring you down. They're closing out the escape routes. Your good friend, your wife, your children, your work, the overdue bills, the threat of losing your car insurance and your cell phone - they're closing off your escape routes. But, you cry out to the Lord, because you know He's faithful. You know He wants you to present at this event on the weekend, and you know He's faithful - and you cry out to Him, "Lord

God, help me!" And of course He hears your prayer. And, He looses His angels, or just perhaps one Word, and things begin to snap and to snap and snap and all these burdens get lifted off of you and all of a sudden - you're free! That's just relying on the Lord.

See, these demons and these lying spirits, they work in tandem. So, a group like that? You probably have Lying spirits, Lying Symptoms that mimic sickness, spirits of Jealousy and Strife, spirits of Fear, spirits of Unbelief. And they love to work together in a nest and in tandem - and I tell, you when I pray against these things, there are so many of them, they have backup. They have those who sent them. So, "in the name of Jesus, I bind you lying spirits, I bind your backup, and I bind those who have sent you." And just get the whole slew of them bound. Send them to the abyss. Some people might argue with me on that but, you know what?

It works.

So, we'll go on. Now, you know the Lord promised that no temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

1 Corinthians 10:13. But when you are tempted, He will provide a way out. So, we know for sure that the Lord is with us and that He will help us through, but we do have a real enemy and we're going to be continually buffeted and tested. It's up to us to use the weapons the Lord has given us to stay clear of these obstacles.

How do we recognize toxic streaming in our consciousness? Well, some people are better at it than others. And it takes a little bit of practice, but I can tell you for sure what it looks or what it sounds like. You'll have a feeling of fear or anxiety. And for no reason at all, you can't think of any causes as to why you should feel that. It's just a vague feeling of anxiety and fear and discomfort. You'll lose your peace. You'll be sailing along in joy and peace and be really happy and just pursuing everything God's given you to do - taking care of your family - and all of a sudden your peace will just evaporate. Now, if you did something, if you talked about someone or you judged or criticized, then that could be it. But, if you didn't do anything like that and this feeling creeps in on you, you're dealing with toxic streaming from demons. And by that, I mean toxic in the sense of saying you're worthless, something bad is going to happen to you, you're bad, you're children are going to get killed. I mean, they'll do anything subliminally to steal your peace.

So, when you start to feel that peace going, you need to suspect right away that you've got some kind of demonic toxic streaming thoughts into your head that are damaging to your peace and damaging to your faith. Also, you'll have doubts about the faith. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, issues that you have resolved in your heart and mind all of a sudden start pounding you again that these things are not really true. You might be feeling guilty or condemned and not have any reason to feel condemned. You might feel depressed or hopelessness or confusion.

Now, make sure that you're properly nourished, that you have had enough to eat, if you're on medication because of an illness make sure you've taken your medication. Make sure you've gotten enough sleep, because these things can be caused also by physical symptoms - so you want to eliminate that at least. But, nonetheless, as I said before, the demons are opportunists and they take advantage of those times when you've maybe forgotten your medication or you haven't eaten or you didn't get enough sleep.

Contrasting that, how do we recognize conviction from the Holy Spirit? Well, we'll sense that something's not right, in our gut or in our heart. Something doesn't feel right. I think I grieved the Lord. I spoke out of turn or I said something I never should have even thought, let alone say. I'll have a check in my spirit that something's not right and I'll feel a need to seek the Lord and find out, "Have I offended you, Lord? Have I said or done something to offend you? What is it that I'm feeling right now?" There are times even, a very beautiful thing - not easy but beautiful, when the Lord will be grieved about some situation and you'll pick up on His grief and He'll come to you for comfort. That's an amazing thing.

Now, there's also accompanying that sometimes a feeling of repentance, like you know you've said something you shouldn't have or thought something you shouldn't have and you start to repent. But there's absolutely no condemnation with this and if condemnation tags onto it then you're talking about demonic interference. The Holy Spirit does not work that way. He does not condemn you. Ever. That's just not His way. He gently convicts you and brings you to a place where you want to change.

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Okay, so, we have these accusers over our shoulder night and day - is it any wonder that we are afraid to face God? This is what I'm talking about, is one of the dynamics that keeps us from that sweet, intimate wedding chamber that He has prepared for His bride. There is this fear in us. And how do we conquer these lies? Well, very often our first thought is how imperfect we are. And our second thought is that God is a strict judge. "Wow, He doesn't want to get close to me and I sure don't want to face Him. Not after the way I've been." So, we'll take escape routes. For women, they'll go nesting and cleaning and tearing everything apart and organizing and cleaning and getting into a big project that'll totally wear them out. For a man, he might stay and work really hard at night at his job. Or he'll sit down and watch TV and start eating - bring on the chocolate. Or, we'll go shopping or we'll look for entertainment. Anything to avoid face-to-face contact with God.

And even this has happened to me many times. When something was going on that was very hard for me to confront, when I was deeply, deeply hurt and wounded and I would run from the Lord, because it was too painful. I didn't want to face how I felt and knew that if I got in front of Him and I felt His presence, I would break down and cry... and I didn't want to go there, so I ran from Him. I, sometimes in my early days I used to run from Him for weeks, weeks on end I would run from Him. Pretty soon my husband started to notice these symptoms and he'd say, "Honey, are you running from the Lord?" and then I'd have to sit down and examine what was going on.

Scripture does say though, (and you know, we need to know this) that God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him. John 3:17 The Lord is for you, He's not against you. He wants to help when you get to this place. He's given us a way out.

And that's the next verse in Revelation. Revelation 12:11 They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

Now, in 1 Peter 1 it talks about the blood For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from this empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors but with the precious blood of Christ a Lamb without blemish or defect. That is, you were redeemed with His very own blood.

And the testimony in Romans 10:9-10 If you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Because, For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

So, Jesus already paid for our sins with His blood and in Romans, it talked about Romans 8:1-2 There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. We belong to the Holy Spirit, we are under His rule now and it's a rule of love.

Now, while I was writing this and preparing for this, I came under attack. For two days in a row I was picking up on this toxic streaming and I was trying to fight it off. Finally, I asked the Holy Spirit, "Why are you allowing this?" and rather than tell you what He said, I just want to read from my journal.

So He said, *"Well, you're teaching on this, don't you think it's good practice? It's not easy, is it?"*

And I said, "No, it's a struggle."

"Exactly. This is what you need to get across to everyone, so they don't fall into condemnation. There will be a struggle, you can count on it. But just as I have taught you - they, too, will succeed in overcoming it when they shift their focus to Me."

And I'll go into that in a moment.

"They cannot combat it directly without being injured or getting toxic waste on themselves, but they can shift their focus so only one thing is on their minds. This will do two things. One, it will change the subject and two, it will infuriate the devils who hate worship and adoration. It works quite well, actually. But, it does take practice."

Okay and then going on. He said, *"Shift your focus to me."* In other words, refocus on the Lord. If you're in the presence of Jesus or the Holy Spirit, I mean where one is the other is but, whatever it is that you're picking up on, whoever it is, shift your focus to them deliberately, because you can't think about two things at once. So, if you change what's going on in your mind to God, then you can't be receiving this toxic streaming.

Then He said, He went on and He said, *"Then they need to know the facts. You struggle, too, and it is work. Just like cleaning out the grease trap. It's not clean or pleasant work, but it must be done. The difference is, you can get a grease trap clean - but the well of condemnation goes so deep it seems like it will never end.* We have a well of condemnation that the demons draw on. Things from our past, our history, that they know about and they throw up in our face. It's a very deep well and this is something that we can't combat directly.

So Holy Spirit said, *"That's why you don't try to fix it or rationalize each event when you're looking back on what you did or someone else did. You don't try to fix it, don't try to rationalize it, you don't make excuses or explain away what happened or give shallow resolutions to forgive. Rather, state your fact. 'I forgive them. I forgive myself. It's under the Blood...'* and then shift your focus. Today is a new day and

I'm keeping my focus on God, not my grease trap."

I love that imagery. That's just beautiful. That is - have you ever smelled a grease trap? - oh my gosh. I don't think there's - well if you've ever walked your dog, there could be a little comparison there but I mean it's bad, bad, bad, bad, bad.

Now, here are the instructions that He gave me, rather paraphrased. *"Things from the past are under the Blood. Keep your focus on Me. When you do this the enemy can't get a foothold, because you're not interested in anything he has to say. Negative thoughts are planned weapons against you, to cause you to stumble and take your eyes off Me. So, when these things come, as they most surely will - I guarantee it, immediately return your focus to Me, to My loving arms, to My beauty and My complete unconditional love for you. Let the sweetness of our union engulf you and let the barriers down and return your focus to Me."* That's His council on how to deal with this toxic streaming that comes against you.

Now, if you really want this intimacy with God and you think He's displeased with you, you're going to sit down and find out, "Are you upset with me?" And you're going to find that out. Rather than believing the lies, you know, rather than believing the condemnation that is groundless, the Lying spirits. Take the time to sit down and find out what's really going on here. And, the Lord promises in Jeremiah 29:13 'You'll find me when you seek me with your whole heart. You surely will find me; I will be found by you.' declares the Lord. You see, that's the very crux of it. If you really want Him badly enough; if you want this intimacy and this relationship badly enough, you'll pursue Him until He finds you.

Okay, now onto the second set of lies slandering God. I want you to picture this for a moment. So, here we are in Genesis. The Lord has created the springs of water to water the whole Earth and to make it fertile. He planted a garden. Can you imagine God planting a garden; how beautiful that must have been? I mean, all He had to do was think of a rose and the rosebush was there with roses on it. Or lilacs or lilies or anything, I mean... *He planted a Garden!* That's amazing.

He was planting it for Adam and Eve. He made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground; trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. He brought Adam all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky to see what Adam would name them. Oh, that's so precious. And the animals were submissive. He brings a tiger up and Adam looks at him and says, "Tiger." The Lord gave him all of that. And then, to top it all off, God Himself even walked with Adam in the cool of the evening and they had fellowship together. Then He created Eve for complete joy and satisfaction that he would have a companion like himself. The most perfect companion for him.

Okay, now there was only one thing that the Lord asked for in return, and that was that basically that "You trust Me and that you obey Me, because I'm asking you not to eat from the tree in the center of the garden. Because if you do, you're going to die." So, the Lord warned them ahead of time.

Now, what happened to this beautiful relationship? In Genesis 3:1-13 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" Did He say that? And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden but God did say you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden and you must not touch it or you will die." "You will certainly not die" the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil."

Well, there's an insinuation. God is trying to keep something good and useful from Adam and Eve. He is depriving them of something important. This is the inference that Satan is making here.

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 leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

You see, Satan is constantly trying to lure us off track with clever packaging and an inference that we'll be better off if we take the offer and ignore God's counsel. He masquerades as a friend until we're hooked, then he pulls his knife out and carves up our lives and turns on the 24/7 streaming of condemnation for our foolishness. He'll goad you on to do something that you feel you shouldn't do and keep goading you and goading you and goading you. And you get weak and you give into it. Then after you've done it, he'll come in and heap the condemnation on top of you. I mean he takes advantage of you coming and going. He examines every way he can make you miserable.

So, going on with Genesis 3:1-13 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day and they hid from the Lord among the trees of the garden. But God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked. So I hid." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you've done?" The woman said, "The serpent, he deceived me and I ate."

Okay, so you know, here Adam's trying to blame Eve and Eve is trying to blame the serpent. It just doesn't work though, doesn't come off. So, let's look at the dynamics of this for a moment. God created the perfect life for Adam and Eve. He asked only one thing: obedience. Satan wanted to steal, kill, and destroy what God had created for Adam and Eve. He slandered God's character by saying that God was withholding something good from him and he also accused God of lying. "You won't die." The woman took the clever packaging and involved her husband and he sinned against God. Then, Adam was afraid, because he sinned - so he hid from God. Fear set in.

This is again the dynamic that can keep you from intimacy with the Lord. Don't let it. Don't let it keep you from the Lord. If you've done something that you shouldn't have done, don't run from Him. He's so merciful and loving and tender. He knows how you feel. It was not God's heart for them to be separated from Him for eternity. So, what did He do? John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world but that the world might be saved through him.

So, the Lord made a provision for what happened. That's how much He loves us. Not just any provision. He suffered on that Cross. Tremendous suffering. Suffering like we'll never know, He suffered. He's on our side. There's no reason to run from Him. There's no reason to hide from Him. There's no reason to cover up because of all our sins. He knows all that. He knows all the dirt on us folks, there's not anything He doesn't know. He's got all the dirt, but He's also got unconditional love.

You know, someday I'm going to share my salvation experience with you and my conversion. But I'll just give you a little taste of it. What basically happened was, I was inundated by this love. Well, first of all, I

felt the weight of all of my sins and all of the things that I had done. I felt the weight of those sins and immediately on the heels of that I felt tremendous love and forgiveness. Just ecstatic love and I knew I was saved. That was a wonderful experience and that's the way He works. He loves us. He loves us. It's His love that brings us to repentance. We have nothing to fear from Him.

Now, to go on with the slandering, because I really, really, really want you to understand that it's important - really important to understand: the Devil is committed to slandering the character of God. Let me give you some examples of how he did that. In the New Testament Luke 6:7 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. What hypocrites. Oh, my gosh, how could the Lord bear with that? Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus that He would heal on the Sabbath. Oh, my goodness, that's amazing.

And then in Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse him saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar. He claims to be the Messiah, the king." Of course that was something you didn't do in the Roman Empire. There was only one head of the Empire.

And in Luke 11:53 When he left there the scribes and Pharisees began to be very hostile and questioned him closely on many subjects. They were plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.

Didn't Jesus say, "Whenever he speaks a lie," speaking of Satan, "Whenever he speaks a lie he speaks his native language. He's the father of liars." John 8:44 But Moses wrote, God is not human that he should lie. Not a human being that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? God is not a liar. He is true to His word. That's in Numbers 23:19.

Why do the devils lie to us about the character of God? I mean, really. What is the most important reason? I believe is that he hates for us to be intimate with God. He hates love for sure. But he hates us to be intimate with the Lord and to come to know His character. Because if we know how much He loves, and if we're healed of the wounds that Satan has inflicted on us (or we've inflicted on ourselves) we'll be filled with His love, filled with healing and we'll bring other people into the Kingdom. So, he's terribly threatened by intimacy and he will do everything to stop you from having intimate time with the Lord. He will insinuate all kinds of things, I mean, I've had him say - you know, your children are in danger, quickly call, you know, such and such. I mean I've had him pull a lot of things on me and I'm getting to the point now, thank the Lord, that I'm a little more aware of when I'm being toyed with. But he'll do anything he can to throw you out of prayer; bring people to the door, make the phone ring.

I mean when you want to get into prayer with the Lord - and this kind of prayer, really... it's essential that you get all of your duties done. Let everybody know, "Mom's going into prayer with the Lord. She will not be disturbed." "Dad's going into prayer, do not disturb him." We really need to do that. So, if we know God as he truly is we'll tell others and then Satan's lies won't work anymore.

Well, on to the Lord's true nature and how He really feels about you. This is my favorite part of this teaching for sure. It is written, Blessed are the pure of heart for they will see God. Matthew 5:8 To have a pure heart, all you need to do is have a committed desire, "Lord, I want a pure heart. With all of my being I am committed to whatever it takes to have a pure heart." If you come before the Lord that way and you give Him your life and your commitment to work with Him on your heart, you already are going to enter into the benefits of a pure heart. God is going to take that as though it were a done deal. That means that you're going to see Him. He promised it. This is not me speaking. I'm talking about what the Lord

promised. Blessed are the pure of heart for they will see God. Matthew 5:8. Nowhere in the Scriptures, in the Old Testament did anyone "see" God, and live. Supposedly.

Okay, so, we have a commitment to have a pure heart. Now, if your heart is divided or tied to worldly things - been there, done that - if you lose your temper with your brother and have judgements - done that too, and not that long ago either... (But you hate these things. I mean you despise these things about yourself. You don't despise yourself. You despise these attitudes.) Then you want to be perfect and you're committed to purity of heart. It's just a matter of time before you get there. He's going to work with you and He's going to take you through every attachment, every god, every idol, and you're going to have a pure heart. He's going to do it.

Now, He'll bring it to pass but I have to warn you, He's not going to bring it to pass unless you present yourself to Him. If you avoid Him, He will not be able to bring it to pass. You have to come to Him and allow Him to work with you and not run from Him. He promised, Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I, too, will love him and show myself to him. John 14:21. He promises this. This is scripture, He promises it. It's true. I've experienced it. My husband's experienced it. Millions of Christians have experienced it. So, if you're imperfect in obedience but sorrowful, He can work with that. He'll bring perfection in your obedience. He'll bring you around to the point where, "You know what? I'm going to obey. It's not what I want to do; I want to do something different. But I know the Lord wants this and I'm going to do it." That's what I'm talking about. He'll do that. He'll accomplish that in you.

Now, I think it's important here to take a look at how hard we try on our own to be holy. This is a big mistake. Because the harder you try the more you're going to fail. This is a job for God, this is not a job for us, guys. Consider that if you began today, by the end of your life do you think you could be perfect? Well, if you said "yes" to that, let me know how you're doing a year from now.

On the other hand, for the rest of us who answered "no", this is the good news. We can't change anything about our character. Not one thing without grace from God. And if we think we can, He'll let us in for a little surprise because the Lord opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6 So, if you come to Him wanting His grace, He's going to give it to you knowing that you're weak. But if you try to do it on your own, you're going to be in for a few hard knocks. Let's put it that way. And, you know, we're partners in this endeavor and He didn't come to call the healthy. He came to call the sick. I don't know about you, but I've got some sickness in my soul. There are things I'm not - that are not holy. And I have things that I need to be redeemed, and need to be changed - habit patterns. But He didn't come to call the healthy. He came to call the sick.

Now, when the scribes and the Pharisees saw that He was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why is he eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?" And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. I didn't come to call the righteous but sinners." Matthew 9:11-13. Okay so, He didn't come for the perfect, He came for the imperfect. So, if you can find one imperfection in your nature, Jesus is calling you. He's coming for you. He's there for you.

Moving on, you know, what a paradox this is. "I'm not calling the perfect. I'm calling you who know you're not perfect." So, a lot of people are saying, "Well, I'm not ready for God yet because I'm still bad." I don't think that's the case at all. I think they're not ready for God yet, because they don't want to change.

You don't have to be ready for God. All you have to be ready for is to stop sinning and to want to change. That's all you need to do. You're never going to be ready for God. That's one of those lies again from the enemy. "Well, you can't go to God in the condition you're in. You have to change your life. You have to change your ways. You're not right with God, could never go to God. Maybe in a few years when you get it down you can." Nope, go there right now. Go to God now, don't wait because He's already got the remedies for you. He's already got the answers.

But the demons would like you to think that you've got no hope and no recourse. No hope and no recourse, because you're too dirty to go to God. What are they trying to do? They're trying to keep you from being intimate with the Lord. That's their whole agenda. Jesus is the one who loves you tenderly and can answer all of your questions and heal all of your ills and set your feet on the right path and make your life right. He's the one who can do this. So, if you are trying to wait until you can do it yourself, you are wasting your time. You're not going to be able to do it without His grace.

Well, let's move on to the most intimate, revealing Scriptures in the Bible: the love letter to His bride. The Lord's love letter. Now, the Song of Songs in the Old Testament is attributed to Solomon. It is said that he was deeply in love and wrote them for his bride. But all Bible scholars agree, and the church fathers agree, that this is a love letter. This is about His love for His Bride. Like so many other places in Scripture, there's a double meaning here. Not only was Solomon expressing his feelings, but the Lord was speaking through him about His feelings for us, and they are tender and beautiful feelings. The language is almost embarrassing it's so intimate. But when you realize that this is a spiritual love letter, there's nothing carnal about it. There's nothing carnal about the Lord. There's nothing carnal in Heaven. Everything is on a beautiful, sublime, spiritual level.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes and your name is like a perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you! Take me away with you - let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. Song of Solomon 1:2-4.

Yes, the King wants to bring you into His chambers and love you into perfection. Preparing you for eternal life in Heaven and make you the most fulfilled and complete person that you could ever possibly not even imagine of yourself.

Now, He does want to kiss you and dance with you and explore the beauties of Heaven with you. He loves to be kissed. The pure exchange of hearts that He longs for from His Bride. He will kiss you in the spirit, because you are so dear to Him. His Bride-to-be and there will be nothing carnal about it.

At this point, when I was writing this, I really did feel the Holy Spirit take over and I want to share with you what I journaled and I felt that this was from Him.

"These kisses from the Lord transform you from merely clay vessels to golden vessels of divine love, soaking in transforming love for you. I heal the woundedness, the scars, the empty places that were once filled with joy but betrayed and lost forever. Deep, painful fissures in your souls that I pour the oil of joy into and bring you to fulfillment, and overflowing with living waters of life, that every thirsty soul you encounter may drink deeply of. But this will never happen if you avoid Me and believe the excuses and lies that the enemy has attempted to sabotage our relationship with.

"Do you have friends that are devastated by divorce? Those fissures of pain can be healed once and for all by My love, if you are willing to seek Me until you find Me, to enter into My rest and allow the oil of joy and gladness to penetrate deeply into the wounds.

"Are you sorrowing over the loss of a loved one who died a painful death from cancer? This fissure also can be healed and filled with understanding and love, so you may pour out this balm on other hurting souls.

"Are you confused and disappointed over your failures? Your dreams unfulfilled? And facing a bleak future with no purpose? Sit with Me. Allow My love to restore your hope. Allow Me to penetrate these dark and lonely places with My love and I will bring you up and out of it. I will lead you into life pastures with crystal springs and show you the destination of your dreams, where all your gifts and talents and dreams will be manifested by My powerful grace working through you.

"I tell you the truth, there is no wound too deep, no dream too impossible, no life unattainable. I will bring you into the fullness of your life, doing the very things you were created for."

Boy, I can testify to that.

"And fulfilling your life beyond your wildest dreams. And best of all, I will be your constant companion. You will never feel alone again. I will never abandon you and at the end of your life, the fireworks will go off as you ascend in My arms into the most perfect place that I've created - just for you."

Again, beyond your wildest dreams. So, this is really what the Lord has in mind for us, Christians. This is what He wants in this intimate relationship. This is nothing to run from. This is something to rejoice over and run to and to take every measure in your life to protect your time and space with Him. And be faithful to do that every single day, whether you miss your time in the morning, do it in the evening. I mean there are times that are unusual where you'll miss this time with the Lord, but if you miss it in the morning, do it in the evening. If you miss it in the evening, do it in the morning. Make a way to be faithful to this. Nothing is impossible with the Lord. No eye has seen, no ear has heard and it hath not entered into the human mind the things that He has in store for those who love Him. 1 Corinthians 2:9

So please, don't waste any more time in prayer and study that has become barren and not bringing you into deep, intimate communion with Him. Something's wrong with your methods if you're not getting any deeper with the Lord. And you know, I had to let go of all my ideas of how to pray and enter into that place with Him. I asked Him to show me, because I wasn't getting very far and I knew there was greater depth, so I asked Him to do it through me and He did.

We have so many preconceived ideas about how to pray. And if our methods are not bringing us any closer to God it's time to lay it down before Him and say, "Lord, teach me how to pray and how to enter into Your presence, how to worship You." I do this frequently. In fact, just about every morning. I confess to Him that I don't know how to pray. "Lord, bring me into prayer and into intimate communion with you, the way You want me to come."

Let me tell you a little story. We have a remote, wilderness retreat where I would go fasting and praying up in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains about 9500 feet, only accessible by an extremely rough road. Horseback in the wintertime and sometimes in the summertime you can make it up in a vehicle. You're

completely alone up there except for the bears and the cougars and the elk and deer - and we've seen all of them on the property up there. We lived there for five years, but we still go there to pray. We have a little chapel up there. One weekend I really had some issues that I didn't know; I just couldn't resolve. I couldn't get any peace about it so I fasted and went up to the Mountain. And I was worshiping and praying and doing everything I could think of to draw close to Him for about 12 hours. I thought, 'Wow, the heavens are brass, what is going on here?' So finally, nothing was happening between the two of us and I thought to myself, 'You know, maybe I'm being a little bit presumptuous thinking that just because I fast and come up to the Mountain, the Lord's going to speak to me. Maybe I'm just a little bit prideful and presumptuous, or a lot prideful and presumptuous.'

So, I repented and I told Him "Lord, I'm sorry. Just because I fast and come up to the Mountain doesn't mean that You have to speak to me. I'm really sorry. I don't know where my head's at. Please Lord, lead me into that sweet place with You." Would you believe that, within ten minutes, I was sailing in His arms? That's all He was waiting for, is my confession of weakness. "I'm too little. I don't know how to do it, Lord, do it through me." That's all it took and we were engulfed in His love and His beauty.

So, no matter how good - how many people tell you they do this, they do that, how wonderful their prayers are - it's really up to the Lord how He wants to bring you to Him. It's really up to Him. And I suggest that if your prayers are not fruitful and ending in the sweet, intimate union with Lord that you put aside the books and allow Him to lead you and enter into His rest where all things are possible.

If you have unresolved issues about the faith, He'll answer you. He'll lead you through the scriptures and answer you. Do you have unresolved issues about your marriage? Or your children? He'll put your mind at complete peace and explain to you what He's doing. Do you desire a deeper knowledge of Him? He'll reveal Himself in ever deepening circles and infuse knowledge into your mind that the scholars don't have. Your belly will burst forth with living waters John 7:38 and you'll be a virtual Eden going through this world bringing refreshment everywhere you go.

Didn't He say, Come to me all of you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:28

So, enter into His rest. Drink deeply of the living waters and then go to this hurting and lost world and dispense what He's given to you to other hurting souls. This is the God of Power and Might, but most of all He's the God of Love and Mercy. He will not condemn you for your sins and failures. The failures that have wounded you; the very things you can't forgive yourself for, He will pour His oil and wine upon your wounds and tenderly dress them with clean linens. Eventually all your ills will be brought to restoration.

This is the Lover of our Souls. He has nothing but good things to share with us. He will bring you insight into your failures and set the stage for new and wonderful learning experiences, so that the delicate petals of your soul will unfold and spread the intoxicating presence of Christ, fragrance of Christ in your world. All He asks of you is that you seek Him until you find Him, and that you turn your life over to Him and ask Him to change the things in you that are creating a barrier in union with Him. You'll be so inebriated in your relationship with Him that you'll be walking in Heaven more than you're walking on this Earth. Your life will be supernatural and filled with consolation.

He'll seek you out and He'll reveal His tender and vulnerable feelings for you, and His sorrows. You'll rejoice in being able to console Him. He will bring His sorrows to you. He will lay His head on your heart, because it's a safe place for Him. Because you love Him, because you're seeking to have a pure heart and you're cooperating with grace to have a pure heart. So many people don't care. He's so wounded by the indifference of man. So wounded that there's so much ungratefulness - and when He finds a soul that loves Him with a pure love, He wants to spend time with that soul. And when He's hurting, He wants to be with that soul. Just like our husbands want to be with us when they're hurting.

He loves you just the way you are. Unconditionally. He longs for one glance in His direction from you, even at the grocery store. He tells me, "*Look at Me once in a while. Think of Me. Thank Me.*" He looks forward to the day when you'll be united to Him forever. He looks forward to that and boy, the surprises He'll have for you!

Beloved, you have nothing to fear from divine intimacy and everything to look forward to. Don't lose another day. Ask Him to accomplish this in you and watch Him bring it forth without harsh measures, without impossible things that you can't do like fasting or maybe going up on a mountain somewhere. Without striving. Lay down the striving and enter into His rest. Without striving. Without effort. Allow Him to bring you into the Bridal Chamber.

Heart Dwellers

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