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Teaching Archives

“Realizing the Presence of the Holy Spirit” Rev. Gerie Martin

So many people in the body of Christ are crying out to God today for a deeper, more satisfying relationship. They are crying even as Job cried out centuries ago, “Oh, that I knew where I might find him (Job 23:3).”

Verse 5 of the same chapter goes on to say, “I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me.”

God desires more than we do to be our “friend.” Well, if that’s the case, then how do we allow this friendship to unfold?

Obviously, according to the Word, the first issue is that we must receive Him as our Lord and Savior and His Holy Spirit must live within us.

The second issue before us is this; how do we recognize Him when He desires to communicate with us? There is no dispute that He is within us, but we live so much from our soulish nature, the physical realm---our emotions, self-will and personality---that we are unaware of Him most of the time.

A third issue is the fact that our soulish realm has been trained by the world to be aware of itself; we are self focused and have a stronger sense of self, rather than “Him.” Jesus says to us in John 15:15, “I call you friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I ask of you.”

Last but not least, the friendship with the Holy Spirit within us is based upon our allowing Him to lovingly correct us, mold us and remake us into the image of Jesus. When we allow the Holy Spirit full access and freedom in our lives He will reveal our intents and motives (Heb. 4:12). He will lovingly convict us of our sin so we can be made aware of it and repent, thus restoring right standing and true fellowship with Him (John 16:8).

He teaches us what we need to know by drawing us more closely into the presence of the Heavenly Father (John 14:26). When we wait upon God, the Holy Spirit is allowed time and access to be quickened within our human spirit, stirring us in the love of God (Rom. 5:5).

As we wait upon God, lingering in His presence, each person of the Holy Trinity becomes more pronounced. We learn how to be a more intimate friend with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The word “waiting” means that as we sit quietly in His presence we become intertwined with Him, just as a piece of rope is intertwined with all the other threads that make up the rope. We begin to have His strength, His wisdom and

His understanding of a situation with which we are dealing, etc. In other words, we become one with Him and all He is and has is available to us, when we wait upon Him.

The Holy Spirit is our link to the eternal realm. He literally takes our hand and leads us to the secret "hidden place" as we enter into prayer and meditation each day. Reading scripture and prayer open the door to His abiding place, but it is in the waiting upon Him that we learn to remain with Him there, as described in John 15.

The most crucial pattern for getting in touch with Jesus within us is found in both the Old and New Testaments. We find this pattern in the scriptures that speak of our waiting for God and on God and listening carefully so we can learn to recognize His voice through the indwelling Holy Spirit. This "waiting" upon Him allows Him to well up within us, as water wells up and fills a well; it allows Him to be "alive in us." He is unique and has a personality we can easily recognize when we become familiar with Him, just as we recognized the personalities of those we love in this world. He is waiting for us to pursue and develop the relationship, the unique companionship He desires with us. It is we who hinder and prohibit His life from coming forth through us (Gal. 2:20).

Why does this continue to happen throughout the church today?

1. We do not know god's word. God says the Israelites always erred in their hearts because they refused to obey His voice or His word (Heb. 3:10).
2. We do not know how to relate to the Holy Spirit. By and large the church has failed to teach the people of God how to relate to and be a friend to the indwelling Holy Spirit. We have invited them to receive Him, to be born again, but have failed to teach them how to cultivate and deepen the relationship with Him. We often have no role models for cultivating His ongoing life in us.
3. Another reason the relationship never develops properly is the fact that we like to be in control. Our strong self-will as human beings asserts itself in most situations, causing us to be in control instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to do what he wants to do. We are so used to doing it ourselves, in our own natural, human strength rather than in his resurrection power, that we do not know how to, nor do we want to lay down the control.

A.W. Tozer, in his book *The Pursuit of God*, summarizes the truth when he says, "the Church waits for the tender voice of the few saints who have penetrated the veil and have gazed with inward eye upon the wonder that is God." Yet this inward penetrating is available to every believer. This incredible privilege is what Jesus died on the cross to give us.

Why do we consent to abide all our days just outside the Holy of Holies and never enter in to look upon God? We fail to draw close to Him and years pass and we grow old and tired in the outer courts of the tabernacle. What hinders us? "What but the presence of a veil in our own hearts?"

It is the veil of the fleshly, fallen nature; it is the veil of the unknown, unseen self life of the flesh in the life of the believer which hinders the spiritual life from coming into fullness with God.

Nothing will penetrate this sinful, fallen nature except to look upon Jesus, giving Him opportunity to show us what is really inside each of us. Unless we do this every day we will never allow Him to truly take dominion over our inner life and we will continue to be the same situation in five years as we find ourselves today.

Corrie Ten Boom, in her book “The Hiding Place”, says this; “However deep the pit, God’s love is deeper yet.”

True power with God comes from a result of a daily experience with Him. When we truly know Him as a friend we are able to trust Him. We come eagerly to Him, which allows Him to “draw nigh to us (James 4:8).” We need to learn how to trust Him to such a degree that when we ask for something in prayer we believe completely that God would act out of His highest good for us in any given situation. If we will respect and submit to His conditions and His way of doing things, we will grow in the knowledge and understanding of how and why He works in our lives the way He does (Romans 8:28).

A genuine relationship with God is found not so much in the words we say; the real growth is seen in how we trust God to go about answering the requests that we have made. It is found in the attitude of faith in our hearts long after the audible prayer is over. It is seen in how we act when the response is not what we wanted. When He answers in the manner in which He deems best I must be able to receive that answer with joy and gladness, knowing he is working it out for us and for our best interests.

When we begin to enter into the depth of this kind of relationship we begin to realize that it was God’s love that sought us out in the first place. It was not us “seeking God.” It was Him seeking us to make us His own, to change us into His image and bring us into fellowship and relationship with Him.

When we learn to allow Jesus be the dominant personality in our relationship, when we learn to yield our self-will to God, to live humbly and to allow Jesus live his life through us, we become the vessels through which Jesus loves others unto himself. The love of God seeks us out. He comes with His love to our hearts.

This is the first way the Holy Spirit begins to speak to us. We feel the drawing, the pulling of the love of God; the “wooing” of the love of God in our hearts. Romans 5:5 says, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” When He comes, He comes to stay, never to leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). He is always there, whether we feel him or not.

The bible tells us that God’s residence in our spirit or heart is permanent. He longs to teach us how to meet Him there. As we meditate on His word, our minds will be brought under His loving control and we will learn not to lean on our emotions or our wills. He is always there, no matter what our emotions tell us. He is always there; even when Satan whispers “God isn’t interested in your little problems. See, you don’t feel Him anymore, He’s abandoned you.”

He is always available to us and He is eager to be our friend. He constantly draws us to Him because of His great love for us and His desire to “be friends” with us. We need to learn how to receive His love because He desires us to “grow” in His love; to be able to experience more and more the fullness of His love for us until the well of our souls are filled up and overflowing with the Love of God and we can give it out to those around us who are dying.

I John 4:16 tells us this; “We have known (experientially) and believed (trusted) the love that God has for us.” We can’t come to this place of trust if we don’t spend time with Him every day. We must learn how to go into and experience the secret place of the most-high God; a place of abiding in Him where the great protection of His love spreads out like huge wings over us. To have this kind of relationship of trust and friendship with God takes a commitment on our part.

No relationship in the human arena is satisfying if it is one-sided. This fact is also true in our relationship with God. He designed us this way so we would be dissatisfied with anything that

does not include Him as a part of the equation. If we are looking for what God desires, then we need to understand what He is saying regarding the commitment that you and I need to make.

We must establish a place to meet with Him. We must form new habits in order to develop the relationship. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find a place in your home where you will have the fewest interruptions as you endeavor to spend time with Him. It should be a quiet place, with no television and where family will not interrupt you.

We must establish a time to meet with him. The devotional life is the secret to establishing an intimate, personal relationship. No love flourishes or becomes established without personal time together. Long distance relationships almost always end up on the rocks. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to develop this time. Allow Him to establish the time because if you try to do so, it will fail.

Trust Him in this; He knows your schedule better than you do. We must learn to yield to him in not only where to meet, but when to meet. If we are establishing these things, we have not surrendered control. We are still telling God what to do and when to do it.

We need to relax and receive Him. Becoming aware of the indwelling Holy Spirit is not something that can be forced or produced through any effort of our own, it is a gift from Him (John 6:63). Each day, as we come before Him, take a deep breath, relax, allow the tension and agitation leave you. Isaiah 30:15 says

“In returning and in rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

We must be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to shift us from self-focus to God-focus. As we allow ourselves to linger in His presence we begin to see the vast difference between Jesus and ourselves. We see Him being totally dependent upon God, while we think we can handle things in our own strength. If Jesus was dependent upon the Father for all things, how much more must we submit to the authority of God?

We must come to the understanding that we can never make this relationship come about; rather, we can only yield to what He desires. His desire is to have us lay at Jesus feet the full responsibility and control over everything in and about our lives. We must learn to refuse to do it “our way. Instead, we must agree to surrender self and to do only what Jesus reveals in our time together (John 5:19-30).

The scriptures tell us that one of the principal ways the Holy Spirit functions in our lives is as our teacher. John 14:26 says it this way. “But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said.”

When we move ahead of the Holy Spirit we move back into the flesh and allow it to dictate to us the course of our lives. We need God’s wisdom and instruction in our lives, not human understanding. God wants to teach us how to listen carefully to Him and be guided by Him in order to have “good success” in all that we do, particularly in prayer.

When an answer to prayer is delayed or we have no understanding in a situation the best thing we can do is examine ourselves to see if we are in disobedience of any kind, particularly in the area of a lack of God’s love towards anyone.

John 13:34-35 and 15:9-10, 12 tell us that disobedience of Jesus’ love commandments is the basic reason for unanswered prayer. If we will yield to the Holy Spirit, the resident teacher within us, we will have the answers we need.

Another reason for delayed answers is that we are praying out of our own stubborn self-will more than we realize, and not out of the will of God. We are not in touch with the Holy Spirit within, who will reveal God's will to us (Romans 8:26-27).

A third reason is that God may be working out far deeper and more extensive divine purposes than we can imagine, purposes which take considerably more time to bring about than we would like. But if we will relax and take our minds off of the "issues as we see them," we can see much more clearly through the eyes of the Spirit as He leads us in the way of prayer that will bring about His answers. We are joining in His work of prayer He is never joining in our work.

The great saints of the ages have all spoken of the need for the "emptying out," or a *kenosis* of all we may be feeling so we are receptive and in a calm manner and can hear God's voice when He speaks to us (Phil. 2:5-8).

When we pray according to our own understanding we often attempt to "cause things to happen," which are not of God. Prayer cannot coerce another person's will nor God's will. Prayer releases the working of the Holy Spirit to bring about the will of God; and, when profound purposes are involved, it takes time for God to work them out.

In addition to our commitment to take time with God, enabling us to hear His voice and to pray what He desires, we find there is another factor in this relationship that comes into play.

That additional factor is God's covenant commitment to us.

His commitment is that He will come to teach us. Just think how awesome this statement is. The Father Himself, through the person of the Holy Spirit, comes to teach us and help us. One of His most crucial helps to us is His teaching of His Holy Word. As He teaches us we begin to better understand His nature and what He is seeking to do in us and through us, as well as for us. He will reveal the truth in all situations, helping us to interpret them correctly and view events as He sees them (I Cor. 2: 9-16; Proverbs 2:6).

It is through impressions in our thought processes that God reveals His truth to us. He also teaches from His presence living in our hearts and speaking to us from our human spirit. He activates or brings alive the scriptures as we ponder over them. This is when the "aha's" come to our minds, as He illuminates or reveals Himself in His word to us. And the unique thing we find in this revelation is this; His interpretation of the Word is nearly always radically different from ours. He gently reveals self-knowledge. The Holy Spirit will reveal to us the inner workings of our minds, wills and emotions.

Yet, he is so tender and so kind, that the depth of that revelation, that self-knowledge, will only be what we can bear (Mark 4:33).

"You desire truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part you shall make me to know wisdom (Psalm 51:6)."

Saint Teresa of Avila said this, "Some people are so blind, that when a trial strikes them, they complain to God, 'what have I done to deserve this?' The implication being that they are innocent of a great deal of inner disorder lurking in their minds and hearts."

The inner, loving workings of the Holy Spirit and the loving Father will help us begin to look, through His great love, at the poverty of our souls and spirits and we will find the quality of our need staggering."

As we begin this pilgrimage into God's presence there are areas of our lives that need to be touched by the finger of God, the indwelling presence of his Holy Spirit. We need to present our levels of openness and teach-ability to God. Proverbs 3:5-7 says "Lean not unto your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes." We can have the greatest teacher in the universe within us, but if we are so full of ourselves (unteachable) that we are unwilling to allow Him access to us, we will not profit from His instruction.

THE KEY WORD HERE IS "ALLOW."

The more contact we have with the Holy Spirit, the more His presence begins to soften and empower us to see our desperate need of Him. He will draw us more and more into facing the shallowness of our spiritual walk, our helplessness to approach God in our own understanding and the emptiness of our relationship with Him.

We must begin to wait upon God. We enter a whole new realm of responsive receptivity, not out of our personality or the power of our self-will, but out of our human spirits as we humbly ask the Holy Spirit how to wait quietly upon God to allow Him to manifest His presence. We need to listen for His voice, allowing Him to be the initiator in our relationships (Isaiah 40:38-31).

We are used to taking over, thinking our wisdom is best; but to be truly dependent on God within us is often unheard of, even in the most enlightened Christian circles. We are expected to act out of human maturity tinged with a generalized blessing from God. To allow the indwelling Spirit of Jesus to be activated within us means we cease all conversation and quietly ask the Holy Spirit to teach us to be still, responsive and attentive to Him. Each day we must wait patiently for Him to take the initial step toward us (**Prov. 8:34-36**).

To the degree that we submit to Him in the place of prayer, to that degree will we be yielded to Him in the marketplace and be able to "walk in the Spirit."

The time spent waiting upon God, whether pondering the scriptures through the Holy Spirit's empowerment or gazing upon Him within, means saying to all of self preferences and all means of human control 'you are finished in my life.'

Being willing to learn to wait upon the Lord says we recognize that we are helpless and can do nothing for ourselves. Receiving from Him means He gives me what He wants me to have and I receive it with thanksgiving (Ps. 145:15-19).

Paul said, "I die daily" (I Cor., 15:31). Waiting upon the Lord is a way of turning from self-focus and self-love and dying to what our emotions and minds may be demanding. Waiting is opening up your heart, mind and spirit to an invisible, but oh so real person. He teaches us to behold Him. "But we all, with an open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).

What is our answer to the gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit?
Will we respond to His will or continue to live life as quasi believers, saying we love Him, yet living life our own way?

Love and Blessings, Rev. Gerie Martin