

Dwelling in the Secret Place by Jason Hooper By Todd Bentley

Dwelling in the Secret Place

In this week's teaching we will look at how we can dwell in The Secret Place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. We will examine how we are able to prepare our hearts so that this discipline of devotion emerges from our prayer closets and begins to overtake and invade every area of our lives. Let's begin by taking a quick look at how the Bible describes the Secret Place followed by a short study of the life of Joshua.

The Secret Place

In Psalm 91, we see that the Secret Place is a place of protection (vs. 1-10, also see Psalm 27:5 & 31:20), provision (vs. 11-13, 15-16) and promotion (vs. 14, also see Psalm 27:5). This Secret Place is not reserved for just a few, but is available to all of us! The Bible contains several additional references to The Secret Place that we will also look at throughout this teaching. Some of these passages will also refer to the Secret Place as the Lord's tabernacle or His pavilion.

Recommendation:

It may be helpful to take a few minutes to read each of the verses referenced above before continuing this article. Doing so will also lay a proper foundation for moving forward in this teaching.

Although, at times much of our focus can be on what we can personally receive from God in the Secret Place, we must never lose sight of the Lord's desire and intention for this place of fellowship and intimacy. We are able to see an illustration of this in the account of Jesus and His disciples in Mark 3:13-15. "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons."

Before Jesus ever gave power and authority to His disciples, He gave them an invitation-an invitation to come to Him and to be with Him. That is the same invitation that we have today and this is the place where we receive power, authority, influence and increase in our giftings and anointing. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:1, God wants us to "desire" these spiritual endowments, but we are encouraged to first "pursue love." 1 John 4:8, tells us "God is love." Our pursuit of God must always remain higher on our list of priorities than the pursuit of what God has to give. The truth is as we seek Him, and begin to delight ourselves in Him, He will give us not only the things that we have need of but also the deepest desires of our hearts (see Matthew 6:33 and Psalm 37:4).

As we begin to look at how the Bible describes the Secret Place, let's first look at what Jesus said of The Secret Place in Matthew 6.

First in Matthew 6:6 in regards to prayer: "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."

And secondly in Matthew 6:17-18 in regards to fasting: "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; a your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

In these two passages Jesus teaches us that our personal devotion to the Lord through times of prayer and even fasting in the Secret Place will cause God to "reward you openly." However the heart of these verses is about more than just being rewarded openly it is about finding God in the Secret Place.

Keeping this perspective and continuing to nurture this understanding will continue to cultivate a posture in us that makes it possible for us to dwell in the Secret Place of the Most High. In Psalm 91:14-16 we see three characteristics that move the heart of God on our behalf:

1. An Intimate love for God

Increasing knowledge of God Our pursuit of God

Let's take a look at this passage, and then we will define these three characteristics while looking at how to develop each of them in our own lives.

Ps 91:14-16

"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

An Intimate Love for God

In verse 14, the Lord tells us, "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him." The word "because" means "for the reason that." When the word "because" is used it is showing us why something is being said or done. The word "love" in this verse is translated: to cling, to join, to love or to delight in. The word "deliver" is translated: to carry away or escape. So here the Lord is saying, "For the reason that you have clung to Me, joined yourself to Me, loved Me and delighted yourself in Me I will wrap my arms around you and carry you away from the troubles of this world (Author's translation)."

Increasing Knowledge of God

Verse 14 goes on to say, "I will set him on high, because he has known My name." This speaks of the Lord defending us, promoting us and surrounding us with favor, as a result of our personal revelation and understanding of His authority and character in our lives. The word, "known" is "yada" in the Hebrew, which means "to ascertain, or to find out for certain by seeing." Seeing creates something in us. It gives birth to thoughts, emotion and even conviction. There are things the Lord wants to show us that will draw us even closer to Him and in turn He will empower us and promote us. This type of revelation and understanding was the very thing that Paul was praying for in Ephesians 1:17, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power."

There are many names for God in Scripture and each one carries another truth about who He is and His heart for us. For the sake of time, we will not go into the various names of God in this teaching but I do encourage you to take some time to study each of these on your own.

Our Pursuit of God

Verse 15 begins by saying, "He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will deliver him and honor him." I love how the word, "call" in this verse is translated in the Hebrew. It means, "to encounter." This is more than a casual request. The Lord is saying because of how you seek to encounter me, I will respond to you and act on your behalf. It reminds me of John 14:14 when Jesus said, "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." The word "ask" here means to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire and require. The Amplified Bible expounds on "in My Name" to read: "as presenting all that I AM."

Calling upon God in this way requires a certain specific revelation of who God is. If you are calling on Him for salvation, it is because you have had a revelation of Him as Savior. If you are calling on Him for healing, it is because you have had a revelation of Him as Healer. If you are calling on Him for financial breakthrough, it is because you have had a revelation of Him as your Provider. Therefore, as we encounter the Lord as Savior, He responds by saving us. As we encounter the Lord as Healer, He responds to us by healing our bodies. As we encounter the Lord as Provider, He responds by providing the provision that we are in need of and the names and characteristics of God go on and on.

The word "deliver" here does not mean escape. It means that when we encounter God, He equips us, He strengthens us and He arms us for battle in a way where we will be victorious!

The word "honor" the way it is used here in the Hebrew means much more than the esteem, recognition or respect that it means in our English language. It means to promote, cause to abound with, increase and riches.

Now, who wants God to deliver and honor them? We all do! It comes from encountering God in the Secret Place. Verse 16 goes on to say, "With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation." One meaning of the word, "satisfy" means to "be full of." God wants us to be full of life! "Salvation" is translated: saved, delivered, victory, prosperity and health. I don't know about you, but I want to be full of life, walking in deliverance, victory, prosperity and health! Our pathway to all of this is a life-changing encounter with God that can be only be found in the Secret Place.

Let's begin to draw this teaching to a close with a brief look at a man, whose entire life was changed as he encountered God in his Secret Place.

Joshua Stayed in the Tent

There is a lot being said these days about the emerging "Joshua Generation" that is now beginning to take shape. To understand what this group of people will look like and to see how we can be counted among them, we must look at the life of Joshua and ask what it was that stood out about Joshua and gained the attention, anointing, favor and promotion of the Lord.

When most people think about Joshua, they remember how Joshua was the one who led the Israelites out of the Wilderness and into their Promised Land (see Joshua 6). Then there are those who remember how Joshua and Caleb took their stand before all of Israel to challenge the bad report given by their fellow spies of the "giant" opposition that stood between them and their Promised Land (see Numbers 14:6-10). Still others remember how in Joshua 10, the Lord fought for the children of Israel by raining down hailstones upon their enemies and causing the sun to stand still in response to the prayers of Joshua (see Joshua 10:12-4). However, there is another passage that I believe sums up the heart, posture and life of Joshua. This passage is Exodus 33:11, "So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle."

Although Joshua served Moses well and although he greatly honored the authority and anointing that was on Moses' life, he was not satisfied to live his life in relationship with God through another man's revelation or by another man's testimony. He was not content to know God by His marvelous acts and wonderful works; he had to know His ways! He had to know God for Himself!

In Psalm 103:7 we see how God made known His acts to the children of Israel, but to Moses He made known His ways! Joshua believed that if he would dedicate his life to the presence of God and commit himself to walk in obedience to the Lord's voice he could know God like Moses knew God.

I believe this commitment to the presence of God, The Secret Place, is what moved the Lord to say to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you (see Joshua 1:5)." This passage represents more than the passing of a spiritual baton from one generation to the next. This shows how the Lord responded to and honored the relationship that Joshua had developed with Him. The Lord could tell Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you" because he had a track record of spending time in the tabernacle and cultivating the presence of God in the same manner that Moses did. It is like James tells us in James 4:8, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." We all know that scripture tells us that God will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:5, 1 Chronicles 28:20 and Hebrews 13:5) but there is a difference between the theology of an omnipresent God and the reality of knowing the "friendly counsel of God over your tent (Job 29:4)." Joshua knew that God would never leave Him and that knowledge is probably what caused Joshua to never want to leave God.

Although Joshua's commitment to prayer and the presence of God was most likely a significant contributing factor to the anointing, favor and promotion he received from the Lord; I don't believe these things were Joshua's motivation for pursuing the Lord. Joshua had a genuine hunger to know God. Joshua developed a deep personal intimacy with God as he spent time in the presence of God. Through this devotion the Lord was able to trust him with the greatest responsibility and privilege of his day, leading the children of God into the promise of God.

The testimony of Joshua's life is evidence that our time in the Secret Place is meant to be much more than a one-hour devotional slot where we draw near to the Lord and in turn, He draws near to us. The Secret Place is a canopy of God's grace that is meant to overshadow every area of our life. It is a reality that although it's cultivated in private it is carried with us throughout the world shifting spiritual atmospheres and creating a heavenly kingdom climate!

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