

# **CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER – MIKE BICKLE**

*Transcript: 07/22/01*

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## ***Session 4 Introductory Principles to Contemplative Prayer, Part 2***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus is teaching in John 14, 15, 16, and 17. By way of review from the handout I gave you the other day, there are three categories of prayer. This is a very general breakdown; you can break it down in many different ways.

Number one: intercessory prayer. We're familiar with that one. We labor in prayer for spiritual breakthrough in the lives of others. Supplication: we're praying for our own personal needs and circumstances, etc. There's a lot to say about those. Then thirdly: contemplative prayer, the devotional dimension, where we're enjoying intimacy with the Godhead in love. We're living in the realm of love—love from God and love for God and the inevitable overflow of love for one another, resulting in personal transformation.

I want to focus in on the contemplative part right now. I'm not talking about intercession; I'm not talking about supplication; I'm talking about contemplative prayer. One of the foundational principals of contemplative prayer is found in 2 Corinthians 3:18—beholding the glory of the Lord. There are many principals in verse 18 that I won't go into, but there are three basic directions of our hearts, three different ways that we can behold the Lord.

### **INTERNAL, EXTERNAL, AND ETERNAL BEHOLDING**

This is all by way of review. Number one: we can behold the Lord in an external sense. We're gazing on God's beauty and we're encountering different dimensions of His personality and who He is through the external splendor of God in creation. We look at the acts of God in creation and we trace them back, and they bring us into adoration of the God who has power and wisdom as the source of these acts of creation. We look around, all around, and say, "Lord, we behold Your glory."

Jack was talking about the stars and the sky, and he said, "God, what wisdom, what passion, what abilities, what splendor You possess, and You have given us these mere tokens of the reality that dwells in Your being, in who You are."

You look at the sky and the stars, but you don't worship them as God. We look at them as divine hints of the vast reality that dwells in God's personality. It's more than wisdom and power; it's the very passions that burn in God's heart that motivated Him to create.

So we behold the Lord in the external sense, in the natural world. There's a second way that we behold the Lord: through the eternal gazing upon the throne, the song about the sapphire sea. We worship or meditate on the Word. Many times the direction of our hearts is Revelation 4 and 5, the heavenly symphony, the beauty realm of God where we're coming before Him, gazing upon Him, turning the Word of God into loving dialogue with Him who sits upon the throne.

### **THE GREAT MISSING DIMENSION OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**

That's a very powerful reality, but there's a third direction. It's Him who dwells within us. The same God who sits upon the throne lives within us by the person of the Holy Spirit. Internally we behold the glory of the Lord. The internal beholding is different. It's still the same God, but the focus is neither external nor eternal; it's

internal. This to me is the great missing dimension of contemplative prayer, the prayer ministry of the Holy Spirit within the Body of Christ.

Again, history has given the contemplatives throughout history the name of *mystics*. I shy away from that term because of so many other things that are associated with it. Throughout history there have been contemplatives; most of them were Catholic. Not that many of them—not millions, but hundreds—came forth as shining examples. Their teachings are invaluable to give us inspiration and some practical steps for encountering and beholding. I use the words *encountering* and *beholding* synonymously in many ways. It's encountering the God who lives within us, the indwelling God.

I find it very hard to find Protestant writers who discuss this. Even those who talk on the deeper life in prayer rarely mention the idea of encountering God within us. I was talking to a dear Catholic priest this past week. He said, "You said it wrongly. You talk about how we do this; we don't do this. We teach courses on the historical lives of people who did it. We don't do it anymore." He said, "You flatter us. This is such a great need in the Catholic church as well. We remember Teresa of Avila, but we don't do what she did." Of course, he was saying that in humility, because there are those who do it in the Catholic church, and there are Protestants who do it, as there are in Orthodox and Messianic and in various traditions.

This is the great missing dimension of the prayer life. Some of the Catholic writers will call the internal beholding in itself "contemplative prayer." I think of contemplative prayer differently, as embracing the external, the eternal, and the internal. Some of these books will only talk about the internal beholding as contemplative prayer. My definition of contemplative prayer is broader than that; I think of contemplative prayer as contemplating, beholding; it's the gazing heart of adoration. It's Mary of Bethany, sitting and gazing, whether externally or eternally or internally. It's the gazing heart of adoration in any of those three directions. I refer to it as "contemplative prayer." It's contemplating God's glory in those three dimensions.

### **BEHOLDING THAT LEADS TO AN IMPARTATION IN THE INNER MAN**

Let me emphasize that when you read different books, many will only talk about contemplative prayer in terms of the internal. You might hear this and read a book and think, "Which is which?" Again, there's no clear, finalized, authoritative definition of contemplative prayer. They're all a little different if you're new in this area. There's a vast world of reality of God in the human spirit communing with us. Of course, that's the essence of what Paul was calling us to be in 2 Corinthians 3. In chapter 3:18, when he talks about the glory, he's linking it to internal transformation, which is the Ephesians 3:16-17 principle we looked at so much yesterday. It's the beholding that leads to an impartation of power in the inner man; that's the great missing element.

I don't really want to spend much time on the logic of the whole passage of 2 Corinthians 3. I'm saying that to myself, not to you. "Don't spend time on this. You need to give some practicals, Mike. Listen, Mike."

2 Corinthians 3 is so brilliant. What's really going on is that Paul is contrasting the glory of the old covenant with the glory of the new covenant. To make it short, I'm not going to read it. I was going to read some of it, but I won't. Paul is aiming at the Jewish community. He said, "You guys think Moses was pretty awesome, don't you?"

They said, "Moses? There's no one greater than Moses. Moses is the man. There's only one covenant—Mount Sinai." It wasn't an old covenant in their thinking. "There's only one covenant, and Moses is the man."

Paul says, “Yes, but no. Moses, really important. Covenant at Sinai, really important.”

They said, “What are you getting that?”

He said, “There’s a new covenant. Even the prophets talked about it. The glory of what Moses did was unparalleled in history. However, that is now the old covenant.”

That was a bit of a stinging definition to a devout Jew. They said, “The old one? We think of it as the main one, the high one, the sacred one.”

Paul said, “It’s the old one.” That already was an “ouch,” because Moses has gone down a notch. Paul said, “Major down a notch. There’s a new one. The prophets talked about it.” He said, “As a matter of fact, under the old covenant, the mountain shook with glory and power, the Red Sea was divided by the power of God in the midst of this community, and all these miracles.” He said, “If you really put the two side by side, the old covenant has almost no glory at all by comparison, because of the glory of the new one that surpasses it.”

That was a very hard idea to the Jewish community. In what sense is the new covenant so great in glory that it surpasses the old, and the old has almost none in comparison? I believe the Body of Christ isn’t connecting with this reality. Let’s imagine a panel. The Old Testament men come forth; the old covenant men come forth. The panellist is going to interview them. Paul the apostle is on one side, and all the men are on the other side. The other panellist says, “OK, the premise of the day is that the old covenant has minimal glory compared to the new. What’s the difference?”

Maybe someone speaks out and says, “I know the difference. The old covenant didn’t have healings.”

Elijah says, “I can take care of this one. We had so many healings,” and he goes on and on and on.

The panellist says, “I guess that’s not it.”

“The old covenant didn’t have the glory of God in manifestation like the book of Acts.”

Moses says, “I’ll take care of this one. In one of our meetings, the mountains shook with fire way beyond the book of Acts.”

One man says, “Well, in the new covenant we have prophecy.”

Elisha says, “Elijah, let me handle this one. We did prophecy in the old days. We’ve never seen any of you guys do prophecy like we did.”

Someone mentions miracles, on and on and on. “Oh, I know. Prophetic worship. Nothing like it.”

King David says, “Could I answer this one, please?”

There's a little confusion in the room. "Well, what's this thing that's so glorious that these men really don't have an argument? It isn't about healing, it isn't about prophecy, it isn't about the glory of God in meetings. We could go on and on and on."

Paul the apostle stands up and says, "Let me tell you. It's the glory; it's the great mystery: God lives inside of human beings" (cf. Col. 1:27).

The moderator says, "Moses?"

"He didn't live in me."

"David?"

"It was the external anointing."

"Elijah?" He looks down.

"Elisha?"

"I can't touch that one."

Paul the apostle says, "It's very essence of God's own being living inside of fallen humans, inside of the redeemed. Angels bow before such awesome, sacred mysteries."

John the apostle stands up and says, "Paul, can I add to this? The very seed of God lives inside of humans" (1 Jn. 3:9, paraphrased).

### **THE GLORY OF THE MIGHT OF THE SPIRIT DWELLING IN THE INNER MAN**

Jesus described it as a river, a well springing up with power on the inside. The angels bow down in the face of this great mystery of the ages. The angels see the glory of God in the same way the old covenant men did. The angels are mediators of glory. God uses them for miracles and many, many things, but the seed of God doesn't live in their spirit, in their being. I don't know how to describe the makeup of an angel, but the seed of God isn't in them. We're of the royal family; we possess God's reality and His presence in our being forever. That's the glory of the resurrection: God living in us brought to its full conclusion with resurrected bodies, with all the capacities enhanced by the indwelling of God—our mind, our abilities, and on and on and on. I love to talk about the resurrected body in light of the full consequences of His dwelling within us. Our mental capacity, our emotional capacity, our physical capacity, our spiritual capacity, is brought to its heights in the resurrected body. The resurrected body is the only way that the human frame can contain the indwelling in its fullness. It takes a resurrected body. That seed is in us right now.

Colossians 1:27: this was the mystery from ages long ago. This was the plan that would absolutely overwhelm the angels when they heard it. We're not just redeemed, we're not just forgiven, we're not just exalted to heaven; we're brought into the fellowship of the Godhead as a bride. We're brought into the family as sons and daughters, with the very life of God, that vibrant reality, inside of us. That's what we commune with. This to me, is the great missing element of the prayer ministry in the Church today; it's touching the very core of what

the new covenant is about. It's so superior in glory to signs and wonders and the glory appearing in meetings and all those things that it's almost as though they have no glory in comparison to this. This is the very reality that brings transformation: the might of God in the inner man that the prayer ministry in the Church has almost entirely neglected.

As God established the natural order of generating life on planet earth in eternity past, He had already imagined sons and daughters before Him as a Father. He had imagined a bride before His Son. He imagined something so much greater than the angels—God living in us in the fullness of all that means. Fallen, demonized, human, weak people, cleansed of their sins; the indwelling brought to such heights that it's incomprehensible and none of us can understand it fully in this age.

God established in Genesis 1 the order of how life is generated, the whole reproductive reality in both the human and animal realities of life. The seed is dropped, is deposited inside, and life begins. The Lord says, "It's a dim picture. It's only a hint." It's sacred, awesome, holy, and when the seed is planted, life begins to flow.

He says, "It's a very, very dim picture of this thing called the new covenant that culminates in a resurrected body with the abilities to contain this life." This is what contemplative prayer is about. This is the glory of the prayer movement; this is the glory of the Body of Christ. This is the pinnacle of transformation in this age—contemplative prayer.

### **LIVING IN A VIBRANT ENCOUNTER WITH THE INDWELLING LIFE**

Let's turn the page if you're looking at it. Page 2. I use the term, "communing prayer." It's called living in a vibrant encounter with this indwelling life. In my thinking, I have this as the third category of contemplative prayer. Again, different ones will say it differently, but this is how I discuss it. Beholding is the gazing heart of adoration—gazing on this indwelling life, beholding it as the way to encounter.

The Lord, of course, is sovereign and does what He does, and we encounter God sometimes when we're on the run, fleeing in the opposite direction. We encounter Him as a sovereign kiss from heaven. The way of encounter is the way of gazing, the way of beholding. There are ten or fifteen verses in the New Testament alone that talk about beholding, the gazing heart of adoration, the heart of Mary of Bethany as the way into encounter. The life that's too busy to behold is the life that doesn't encounter deeply in the inner man, which is the majority of the ministry styles in the Body of Christ.

I love how Jack said it. It's a spirit that Martha represents, not just a temperament. It's this way of serving, and even of worshiping; it's a way of relating to God without encounter, without a heart of gazing.

By the way, before I get done with 2 Corinthians 4, this is just a footnote: 2 Corinthians 3 is the new covenant that's established by encountering the indwelling God through the heart of gazing. 2 Corinthians 4 is the fasted lifestyle that enhances the encounter. That's catalytic: it speeds up our ability to receive more in the encounter, which Gary Weins talked about so brilliantly the other day in his seminar, about removing the hindrances to the encountering inside. 2 Corinthians 3-5 really have to go together as a passage that describes the entry into the internal life. It's one passage of Scripture which we have to keep together—2 Corinthians 3, 4, and 5. That's a footnote for those who want to go there later. What Gary said earlier ties that together with chapter 3. He really talked about chapter 4; He used different terminologies.

**“MAY THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT BE WITH YOU”**

Communing prayer. I have 2 Corinthians 13:14 from the NKJV. Paul the apostle talked about the communion of the Spirit: “May you know the communion with the Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14, paraphrased). That’s where I get the phrase, “communing prayer.” It’s communing, encountering the Holy Spirit. The NASB and the NIV call it “fellowship with the Spirit.” Paul the apostle said, “May the fellowship of the Spirit be with you.” Whether you call it fellowship of the Spirit or communion with the Spirit, it’s the same idea.

Well, where’s the Spirit with whom you’re fellowshipping? Is it the Spirit as He’s working in healing out there? Is it the Spirit’s work in the sky? Job 26 says the Spirit is adorned, is beautified in the heavens (Job 26:13). He’s the artist in the Godhead.

“It’s time to make the heavens beautiful.”

The Holy Spirit says, “Can I do that part?” He adorns the heavens.

The Father says, “Go ahead. You’re a phenomenal artist. Show Us the glory that We possess; show all of creation.” The Holy Spirit is the One who adorns the heavens.

**“OUT OF HIS HEART WILL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER”**

We don’t fellowship with the heavens in the most intimate way just by observing; we fellowship with Him in the place where He lives, deep within our being. Any imagery you use is going to fall really short, but the way that I picture this in my mind is this vibrant, bright reality of light living right in our being, in our spirit, in our innermost man. Jesus said in the NJKV, “Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (Jn. 7:38). The other translations say, “Out of the innermost man flows the river.” I have those verses there from John 7. There’s this radiant river, this brightness of glory dwelling in the human spirit, even now the very seed of God. It’s the glory of the new covenant that’s only fully understood when we have the enhanced capacities of the resurrected bodies. That reality is now. The most neglected dimension of the Church today is the glory of the new covenant, communing with that internal life.

There are even books that talk about the anointing, and I’ve read some of them; normally when they talk about it, they describe the relationship with the Holy Spirit in terms of external anointing for ministry—talking to the Spirit a little, saying, “How should we do this? How should we do that?” Most of the books on the anointing and the promise in the Protestant world are about how it operates in a big meeting. There’s an anointing within us. That vibrant life, that radiant life is on the inside of us (1 Jn. 2:20).

We can have what Mary had, that gazing heart of adoration; we can sit at the feet of Jesus and gaze at His eternal glory around the throne. I love that mode. I spend lots of time gazing at the eternal realm, and I spend time gazing on the internal realm.

Someone says, “How do you know which one to do?”

I don’t know; I just do whichever one I do. Every now and then I look at that leaf and cry. I haven’t really done that yet. We talked about how some of the contemplatives did that. I talked to Jack afterwards and he said, “I just don’t picture you crying over a leaf.”

I said, “I’ll get there.” Those of you who didn’t hear that the other day, don’t try to figure out what I mean right now.

**THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH WHOM THE WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE**

Here on the notes it talks about the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it doesn’t behold Him (Jn. 14:17). Jesus is saying, the world doesn’t behold the spirit. How do you behold the spirit? Again, you can behold in the external and eternal senses, but the most powerful way to behold the Spirit, with the gazing heart of adoration, is internal. He has made up His residence within us as the very glory of the new covenant.

**BEHOLDING, KNOWING, AND RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Look at those three verbs: behold, know, and receive. All three of those verbs Jesus used to describe our relationship to the indwelling Spirit. I don’t want to develop them right now, but those are three very important verbs that describe the privilege of the new covenant: receiving, beholding, and knowing the third person of the Trinity. The full implication is that you receive, behold, and know because He is in you. He is in those who receive, behold, and know. All three of those verbs describe different dimensions of the indwelling Spirit’s intimate friendship with the believer. I don’t know that much about it. I have a few ideas, but I won’t develop them here. However, some of these books that I’ve recommended go deep on those subjects. It’s brilliant. They go deep. I’m at the three-year-old level, the five-year-old level. They go deep.

The angel says, “Not really. They don’t really go that deep. For a three-year old, kindergarten level, maybe; I guess that seems deep to you.” Those books aren’t very deep. They’re deep for where we’re living, but they’re not very deep.

**CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER IS CRITICAL TO THE GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT**

I believe the Church at the end of the age is going to go far beyond what the contemplatives of history did. We have to focus ourselves. That’s why a conference like this is so important. Not that, again, we can give all the details, but we’re giving the call. Contemplative prayer is critical to the glory of the new covenant, internal transformation, and the lovesick bride. Contemplation is critical to this. It’s critical to the new covenant. It’s contemplative prayer, the heart of Mary. As Jesus said, “Mary chose the best part. She chose it; it will not be taken from her, ever” (Lk. 10:43, paraphrased). In the resurrection she’ll be living in the fruit of that gazing heart of adoration.

**THE CLARION CALL TO THE LIFE OF INWARD COMMUNION**

We were surprised; we looked all over and this was the only building we could get. Nick said, “It fits 2,000. There will never be 2,000 people. This is contemplative prayer. This is weird for Protestants. We want to go do stuff; we don’t want to encounter in the deepest part of our being.”

I said, “We want to go do stuff, and I don’t know that there’s much interest in a conference about sitting and encountering. There will be in ten years, but I don’t think there is.”

Yet we had nearly double the amount of people who wanted to come to this conference. I said, “Man, I’m really misreading this.”

This is just one little side deal of what God is doing in the kingdom. This could have happened all over the world. The hunger is there, and I kind of misread it a little. I believe that God wants to raise up conferences and ministries that are focusing on this all around the world. I encourage you to ask the Lord what you're supposed to do about this. Maybe the Lord wants you to start hosting some weekends.

It isn't good enough that Barnes & Noble is the one that discovered this reality in the Body of Christ, this hunger. I described that earlier. They're the ones stocking all their shelves with this. I'm saying, "Lord, where are the voices in the Church?" We have Richard Foster and Dallas Willard; they've been saying it for years, but there needs to be an army of men and women in all the different traditions in the Body of Christ, giving the clarion call to the life of inward communion with the Spirit as the way to the glory of the new covenant. This is the glory of the new covenant—not in its entirety, but this is the pathway to experiencing the glory of the new covenant. It's far more than healings, though it wouldn't be bad to see our healing level go from level .01 to even level, just a little more. I believe this is the way forward.

Here on the rest of page 2 I talk about *The Interior Castle*. Teresa of Avila wrote one of the classic books. John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, and Thomas Dubay are names we've been promoting at this conference. They talk a lot about this. Here I give a few points if you're going to read those books. I find those books the clearest there are in history, but let me tell you also, even though they're my favorites and they're the clearest in history, they're still confusing and a little off, in my opinion.

I know you're thinking, "Well, which is it?" I believe there are errors in those books. I believe that they were a little confused even in their own way forward. Even with some of the errors and some of the confusion, it's by far the clearest stuff I can find in history. I give a little on them. They have a lot more insight than I have, but they're not infallible and the terms are little confusing. It takes a bit of work, but as I said the other day, so what if you have to read the book twice? That's not a horrible concept. I have to work through it and say, "Well, John, apparently you contradicted yourself in chapter one and chapter four. I didn't understand you. Theresa didn't agree with John and the other man." So what? Just keep moving forward. We have to discover the way forward in this. Don't read those books as though they're infallible statements from heaven, but they're good inspirations; they're beginning places. They're far beyond where I am, and certainly many of us in this room.

### **"A FOUNTAIN OF WATER SPRINGING UP INTO EVERLASTING LIFE"**

The important biblical text on communing prayer—John 4. Let's read this here. Jesus is talking about the glory of the new covenant: "Whoever drinks of this water" (Jn. 4:13). He's prophesying about a personal application of the glory of the new covenant, the indwelling God. Very strange! When He said this, the woman at the well was thinking, and I'm sure the apostles thought, "I don't think we fully grasp what He just said." He was talking about the glory of the new covenant.

He says, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (Jn. 4:13-14). Drinking of this water. It isn't enough to go to a conference. It isn't enough to read the books. It isn't enough to preach the concepts. We actually have to drink of the water. We have to be involved in communing prayer as a lifestyle, drinking on a regular basis, not just once, but drinking of the water, participating in this reality as a lifestyle, is the condition of the promises. You can't just read the books, teach them to your friends, tell everyone about it, and enter into the well of God. You have to drink on a regular basis. The drinking there speaks of a continual drinking.

**WHEN WE ENGAGE WITH THE SPIRIT, OUR DESIRES ARE TRANSFORMED**

Jesus says, “If you drink this, if you do this communing prayer”—that’s my term, communing prayer—“if you begin to develop this communion with the Spirit, let Me promise you this: your thirsts, your cravings will change. You will find profound satisfaction in righteous cravings.”

Not that the satisfaction will be unbroken in this age. In the age to come there will be unbroken satisfaction. Jesus is talking about now, but He’s also talking about where this thing is going in the big picture of God’s economy. He’s saying the day will come when we no longer thirst, because you will drink forever in the resurrection. We can live in some of this even in this age.

I mentioned the other day that I love how, in the last several decades, God is restoring the inner healing dimension to the Body of Christ. There are secular approaches to inner healing, but there are a lot of kingdom dimensions as well. I don’t like to just write it off with one big, wide brush: “Inner healing does this!”

People who are really focused on it say, “No, we don’t do that. The other men do, so don’t just write us all off in one sentence, because there are so many different approaches.”

In the wholeness, in the inner healing, we must have the element of the revelation of the Father. We must have the element of the Bridegroom. We must have the element of drinking continually. It’s contemplative prayer, and, even more specifically, communing prayer. The thirsts aren’t changed until we drink, until we do the communing prayer. We’re trying to get these people to process their past; we don’t bring them into a living connection with an indwelling Spirit, and yet we expect their thirsts to change. It doesn’t work that way. We have to teach them how to drink of the indwelling water. The thirsts change, and then the righteous ones in this age are profoundly released in us.

I’m not challenging Jesus. I don’t believe the “never thirst” promise is fulfilled entirely in this life. I believe He’s saying that for 99.99% of your life, for billions of years, you’ll never thirst. There are still thirsts even at the height of this communion in this age, but there’s a profound satisfaction in this age. I don’t think we will get it just through intercession. I don’t think we will get it just through supplication. I don’t think we will get it through just beholding, whether external or eternal. We’re going to get it through the internal drinking on a regular basis. Then the thirsts, the very emotional chemistry, the Ephesians 3:16 might, is released in the inner man. He goes on and talks about that.

Look at John 7—wait, John 4; I’m not done with one thing. He says, “The water I will give him shall become”—that’s the key word, become. There’s a process. It isn’t an instantaneous thing. It becomes a fountain. The NASB calls it a *well*. The NIV calls it a *spring*. There’s this vibrant, ever self-replenishing reality within you. It’s moving, it’s vibrant, and it has all the characteristics of a spring, a vibrant activity of the Spirit on the inside. There are ebbs and flows to it for sure, but there’s a becoming. There’s a becoming principal. It’s a process. I want to call us into drinking, and that becoming, that vibrant well, that supernatural activity of Ephesians 3:16 happening on the inside.

Now look at John 7. It’s a little later in the gospel, and Jesus is describing the same idea. He says, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (Jn. 7:38). That’s the NKJV; the NASB says, “innermost being,” the KJV says, “belly,” and the NIV says, “from within him.” It’s something that flows out of the heart, the belly, the innermost being, within him; these aren’t just rivers, but

flowing rivers, and there's such a difference. It's the idea of vibrant, life-giving movement on the inside. It's a well in John 4; it's a flowing river in John 7. It's a river of living water, water that has the dynamics of God's life being released on the inside.

He spoke of the indwelling Spirit. Jesus said, "To him who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said." Does He intend that last phrase, "As the Scripture has said," to qualify the river, or the way we believe in Him? I believe it's describing the conditions of our believing—not the way the river flows, but the way we believe.

### **WE WERE MEANT TO BELIEVE IN THE LORD WITH MANY, MANY DIMENSIONS**

Here's my point: to believe on Him for a twentieth century, Protestant, evangelical Christian, means to come up front. It's what we are: "Come up front, pray to receive Jesus in your heart, say the prayer, you believe on him, you're saved."

I appreciate that, by the way. A lot of stuff happens when that happens, but the Lord says this: "That's an introduction, and there's more to it than that. You need to believe on Me in the way I described—in a wholehearted way. I'm a Father, My Son is a Bridegroom, you're heirs of My kingdom, there's an indwelling Spirit, I've purchased you, you're wholly Mine, I'm wholly Yours. Believe on Me like that and the river will flow on the inside."

Gaze on the inside; the gazing heart of adoration is part of the way we believe. One of the great qualifiers of how we believe is a life of Mary and the gazing heart, not just believing like Martha. It's believing in the way the Bible said we believe, which means living a life, carrying our heart before God in the way the Bible describes, not just the way the traditions of the day describe. The problem of today is that we're believing on Him as tradition says, not as Scripture says. Therefore, we don't experience the flowing river. We were never meant to believe on Him devoid of prayer and fasting, never meant to believe on Him devoid of the Father and the Bridegroom revelation, never meant to believe on Him seeking our own way. We were meant to believe in Him with many, many dimensions, as the Scriptures say.

That phrase, "Believe on Me, as the Scripture says," qualifies the way we believe. It's critical that we do it God's way, and there's a river waiting to flow on the inside of us. The river is already there, but we're not encountering it or connecting with it.

### **THE SPIRIT YEARNS WITH JEALOUSY FOR YOU TO HAVE THIS**

Turn to the last page. We're in our final moments here. This is just my own little thing; do it any way you want. Again, I want to stress this. I'm such a beginner; I'm such a novice. The people who are my heroes in this are really beginners. They know more than I do, but they're still just beginners. There's not some final, authoritative, infallible statement from anyone on these things except for the Scriptures. As one man said, it's an imperfect science. We're inching forward, but you know what? The Spirit is so jealous, He yearns for you to have this (Js. 4:5). If you come with a Bible, a life of abandonment, and a yearning Spirit, a jealous Holy Spirit inside of you—we read some of this stuff to get us jumpstarted—the Spirit will lead us. He really will. He's so jealous, and He's such a great teacher.

My confidence is in the jealous Teacher who lives inside of us, not in how accurate are the books I'm reading as a jumpstart. Those books have been invaluable; they really have been invaluable, but they're just a jumpstart—a little confusing and a little off, but a good jumpstart. You can handle that, can't you? You can handle being

inspired by something that's fallible. It isn't two options, totally right or totally wrong; it's the third option, a bit confusing, a bit wrong, but really helpful. That's the option we don't like. We like it to be totally right or totally wrong. Of course, then all you would be stuck with is Jack Deere's books. Those are the only ones I know that are just totally right, you know?

Three communing prayers. This is my little thing. Change it; do it your own way. There are three prayers I use. I set my mind. I focus externally, internally, and eternally. I'm on the internal communing. I talk to a person—not to a concept, not to a light; I talk to a real person. His name is God the Holy Spirit. I call Him "Consuming Fire." That's my name for Him. "Consuming Fire, seal me with love." I put together Song of Solomon and Deuteronomy 4. "Consuming Fire, seal me with love."

Secondly, I call Him, "Majestic Brightness." "Majestic Brightness, fascinate me with God's beauty, with the beauty of redemption that You have imparted to us, with how beautiful I am within You in the grace of God. Show me many dimensions of beauty."

Third, I call him, "River of Life." "River of Life, immerse me in Your presence. Immerse me."

I use these three prayers a lot. I was taught by the contemplative books some years ago that you don't want a lot of words; you're not machine-gunning your prayers. As a matter of fact, I start by taking a few moments to gaze on this bright, radiant person. He's life, He's God the Holy Spirit. He's very God Himself. He's not just a representative; He's as much of God as the Father and the Son. I gaze on Consuming Fire.

I start with the phrases, "Consuming Fire, seal me with love." I'm using Song of Solomon 8:6: "Seal me with love" (Song 8:6, paraphrased). I speak the phrase, then pause for a moment or two. After a few minutes, I throw away all the phrases and I just say, "Consuming." I reduce the title or the name to just "Fire." Wait one, two, three. It isn't like I'm counting, but I'm giving you the idea. It isn't rushed. I have the whole sentence planted deeply in my being. I say, "Fire," talking to Him as a person. I'll pray in the Spirit and use my prayer language. In 1 Corinthians 14:18, Paul said, "I pray in tongues more than all of you" (1 Cor. 14:18, paraphrased). I use my prayer language and I gaze into that radiant, majestic brightness, that consuming fire. I don't mean pray in the Spirit hard and fast, just every now and then. It becomes wordless in a really short amount of time. There are no words. I'm gazing at the fire. I pray in the Spirit quietly. When I get distracted, I use these words. When my mind gets distracted, and my mind gets easily distracted, I'll go back to words. When I say the words, even gently, out loud, it makes my mind obedient. I really use the words because of the weakness of my mind, to bring it back into order. I don't know how to say it theologically, but there's a lock-in point when I don't say the words. Then a minute, two, three, four, five, ten minutes goes by. It's usually two minutes and then I get distracted; I use the words again and bring it back into the lock-in point. I get distracted, and I find that that's such a powerful reality. I do that in ministry time when I'm waiting on the platform. I put my focus on the Holy Spirit. I see the River of Life; then I change it from "River of Life" to "Radiant River, sparkling like crystal, the River of Life." It's Revelation 22, this radiant river.

"Radiant River, immerse me. Give me some ideas that are on Your heart for the people right now." I wouldn't say every time—that might be exaggerating—but many, many times I lock into the internal gaze of adoration. I pray in the Spirit a little. I'm just locking in there.

I'm waiting. John Wimber taught us to say, "Come, Holy Spirit." I lock into the internal gaze of adoration. Then little ideas, little impressions come up here and there. Those little, dinky manifestations touch me, those divine hints. Then I say what comes to me.

Amen. Let's stand.