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Waiting on the Lord

I want to talk with you guys today about something that the Lord has impressed upon me this past year. It has definitely made a difference in the way I experience and know the Lord, and also a huge difference in the way I relate to the Body. It has to do with waiting on the Lord, looking to Him for life, being quiet before Him, and letting Him search my heart.

Christ is our literal source of life. I know you guys believe that. But that means we have to actually look to Him and wait on Him for life. We are normally so busy filling the silence with our thoughts, our opinions, our imaginations about Christ and Christianity, that we leave very little room for Him to speak to us and impress our hearts with His thoughts. This verse has come to mean so much to me - "Be still and know that I am God." Ps. 46:10

And so I've been trying to reduce the noise and activity in my life, and take time to be quiet before the Lord and experience Him. Not just taking more time to read the bible or read some kind of teaching, but actually facing the Lord with no other distractions at all. Reading the bible or teachings can be a great tool, but we need to know the Lord ourselves, not just through other people. We need to go to the Source. The Lord Himself, His Spirit in us, is our Teacher. He is the one who will guide us and keep us on the path of life. The bible won't do that. A person won't do that. The Spirit can speak through the bible or a person, but you actually have the Spirit dwelling in you yourself, so go to the Source! Look to the Source. Don't rely on anything else.

God does not usually appear in very loud outward ways that stop us in our tracks and force us to listen to Him. Sometimes He does, but not usually. He is usually a still, small voice that touches our hearts with His Light and Truth.

Remember the story of Elijah? The voice of the Lord wasn't in the wind, earthquake, or fire. It wasn't in these loud, outward things. It was a still, small voice. A still, small voice that speaks in the heart. To hear that, to hear Him, we have to stop. We have to stop constantly running around, seeking to fulfill all our goals on the earth. We have to quiet our hearts and be willing to face what He is showing us.

I have been praying, Lord, deal with me about the things that are standing in the way. Bring to the surface the things you want to burn up and purify. Like gold that is refined in the fire, He brings to the surface all the impurities so that we can see them and let Him begin to purify us. It's painful. It hurts. But it's so rewarding. It is true freedom. Most of the time we are so content to hold onto those things,

to keep them buried, and to never come face to face with what's actually in our hearts. And so we keep ourselves busy, we keep our lives loud, and never really quiet ourselves before the Lord long enough for Him to do any work in us.

Even in the church it can be very much the same. We talk and talk and talk about God, but have very little actual experience of Him in our lives. So much of our talk is a cover-up. We make up for in our conversation the lack of what is in our souls. It's much easier to discuss Christian things, to talk about the Lord and talk about the bible than it is to actually experience Christ's life inside our souls. One is very external and based on knowledge; the other is very internal and actually changes our hearts and transforms us into the image of Christ.

Talking and sharing together isn't bad. It is very helpful and encouraging and life giving in its place. But we should be sharing out of what we have seen and experienced of God. If we speak, it should be out of the overflow of His work in our hearts. To come together and speculate, discuss, learn, etc. does not give life. But to truly experience the Holy Spirit teaching our hearts, whether alone or together, and then to speak out from that, gives life.

What we've been doing in our groups in Ohio (and I'm not saying this is the right way or the only way, but it has been very fruitful for us), is coming together and immediately being silent for a period of time. Sometimes it's for ten minutes, other times an hour, but we don't speak until someone has a genuine sense from the Lord to share what He is revealing in them.

It was very awkward at first. I felt like I couldn't turn my heart to the Lord because I was so distracted by who was in the room, what I was going to do after the meeting, what I was going to have for lunch, etc. But it began to occur to me that that's the state of my heart – distracted. And I really needed to see that. The silence and lack of human activity exposed a lot of things in all of our hearts. Why we couldn't turn our hearts away from the world for even just a few minutes? It also exposed a lot of what *wasn't* in my heart. There wasn't very much desire for God there. There was mostly a lot of boredom and apathy. And I wouldn't have ever come face to face with that if I hadn't slowed down and let the Lord search by heart and uncover the darkness that I kept hidden. Over time, as I continued to turn back to Him and wait on Him and look to Him for life, He began to increase my desire for Him. I began to grow into a much greater consciousness and awareness of Him.

Things slowly began to change for us in the meetings, too. After the Lord began to expose a lot of distractions in our hearts, those things started to melt away and we began to truly see Him and experience Him together. And when people speak now, they usually speak because they feel like the Holy Spirit is urging them to and it's for the edification of the Body. It's not just speculation or discussion. It's out from Him. If we're not gathering together to turn to the Lord and experience Him together, then why are we meeting?

This has been a process and it definitely didn't happen overnight. And I'm really not saying this is how

it should be for everyone. I just wanted to share what we have been experiencing. Whether we wait on the Lord in silence together or not, we definitely need to be doing that alone. We definitely need to come to a place of stillness before Him and allow Him to deal with all the loud distractions in our hearts. To allow Him to search our hearts, expose the darkness in our hearts, and begin to change our hearts.

Ps. 139:23-24, "SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART; TRY ME, AND KNOW MY ANXIETIES; AND SEE IF *THERE IS ANY WICKED WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.*" I feel like we could just meditate on this one verse for a really long time and not go any further. Opening our hearts to the Lord, asking Him to search out any wickedness in us. Praying for Him to lead us in the everlasting way. If that could just be the position of our hearts all the time! If we could just never move beyond this. Desiring the Light of the Lord, even though it means the death of us. Desiring what is dead and sinful to be exposed and uncovered so that we can continue in the everlasting way without any hindrance.

One of the things the Lord will do in us when we're willing to face Him is convict us of sin. Maybe that sounds to you like religion, but it's not. It's the work of the Holy Spirit in us, cleansing and purifying His temple. His conviction is a sweet and desirable gift to us. It's how He keeps us in the Light. We can't walk in the Light while we're still participating in the deeds of darkness, and so if we're willing to see, He exposes those things in our hearts in an attempt to deal with them and purify us of them. That is good news! As Christians, we're often afraid of that conviction or don't want to acknowledge it. We don't like to feel bad about anything, and so when that feeling comes, we usually just try to cover it up and sweep it back under the rug. We hide from His searching Light. We think it's better to keep the darkness hidden and "feel good" than to let the Holy Spirit uncover darkness and begin to let the cross deal with it.

To let the Spirit govern our lives is a tremendous thing. To truly let Him be the One who teaches us and leads us in the everlasting way! That we would be filled with the Lord, governed by the Lord, and constrained by the Lord.

I'm sure you have all experienced at times a sense of the light and life of the Lord in your soul, where it feels like His power is actually living through you and your life is not your own. That experience of Him living and filling you is meant to be our experience all the time. We should never run out from that to go live our own lives again. He wants to fill us to overflowing, so that the life that flows out of us is Him. We must learn to abide in that Life. When you sense the power of Christ reigning in your heart, stay there. Don't act outside of where that power leads you. When we act for our own will and interest, that power fades and we are left just living our own lives again. Stay in Him. Abide in Him. I know it sounds kind of mysterious, but it's not. It's just a matter of coming to live by the Light of the Lord. To obey His Light at all times, and learn to live by that Light. Knowing Christ isn't meant to be something we just believe in or talk about; it's meant to be an actual Life that we live in, a Light that we live by. A power that fills us and governs us, so that all of our words and actions come out from His

rule and government in our souls.

So we learn to wait for that Light, that Life. We learn to look to Him for all things. To not go ahead in our own strength, but to wait until we are clothed with power from on high. Luke 24:49. Waiting on the Lord means being dependent on Him for all things, that He would be our daily bread and the Life that fills us. The manna provided and partaken of every day. Waiting on the Lord means only having one Source, one fountain, one Life.

1 Cor. 2:12-13 *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”*

Is. 40:31 *“But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.”*

Ps. 25:5 *“Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.”*

Ps. 25:21 *“Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,
For I wait for You.”*

Ja. 5:7 *“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.”*

Eph. 1:13-14 *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”*

Eph. 5:13 *“But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.”*

Ps. 37:34 *“Wait on the LORD,
And keep His way,*

*And He shall exalt you to inherit the land;
When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.”*

Ps. 39:7 *“And now, Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope is in You.”*

Lam. 3:25-26 *“THE LORD IS GOOD TO THOSE WHO WAIT FOR HIM,
TO THE SOUL WHO SEEKS HIM.
IT IS GOOD THAT ONE SHOULD HOPE AND WAIT QUIETLY
FOR THE SALVATION OF THE LORD.”*

Ps. 139:23-24 *“SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART;
TRY ME, AND KNOW MY ANXIETIES;
AND SEE IF THERE IS ANY WICKED WAY IN ME,
AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.”*