

## #17 THE VISITATION AND A SPOKEN WORD.....

This experience occurred during a time of great inner testing and a time in which I had a sense of heavy despair and worthlessness. I had been a Christian for several years, and the Lord had placed me in a state of total inactivity and apparent uselessness. I questioned my worth in God's kingdom and felt a complete failure. I had fasted and prayed and waited but it seemed to no avail. This is the dark hour of the soul! Several months had passed in this state of mind. Then one morning I awakened and lay in bed not wanting to rise and face another day of sameness and grief.

*I awaken one Sunday morning and, as I lie in bed and ponder in a somewhat discouraged state, a presence walks into my room. Because I am a house guest at the time, I think perhaps one of my hosts has entered. I lie awake but with eyes closed and this person walks over to my bed and kneels down beside me. I, being of the analytical sort, assume one of my hosts feels led to pray for me, so I will not open my eyes and cause possible embarrassment. This person then reaches over and takes one of my hands and holds it gently. He begins to stroke my forehead with his other hand. At this moment I discern that this is a spiritual experience, and a great awe and peace seem to envelop me. This person then speaks these words to me, "How often must I prove to you your value to Me? You are of intrinsic value to Me." Well, my friends, I do not know what the word "intrinsic" means, and my curious mind thinks, "I will open my eyes for just a glimpse of this person." I did so quickly and shut them just as quickly as I see this man dressed in white looking down at me with a very pleasant smile on his face. Awe-struck, my heart pounding, I lie quite still. This man now bends over and kisses me on the forehead and instantly disappears.*

I calmly pondered this supernatural encounter. It seems as long as the visit lasted that the revelation of the Lord Jesus' presence was hidden from me. Only later, when I considered the reality of what had transpired, did I fully understand this experience. I thought of the Scripture found in Luke 24:16 that relates how the Lord, after His rising from the dead, appeared to two of His disciples and they did not know Him. Their eyes were restrained so that they did not know Him. So were mine! If I had fully understood I most likely would not have remembered His words because of His awesome presence.

This is what was revealed to me about this visitation from the Lord. You and I often equate our value to the Lord by how useful we are to Him. We often assume He loves us because we obey and serve Him well. Yes, He is pleased when we obey and serve Him faithfully, but He loves us for another reason. It is God's nature to love; He loves for God is love. He really has no "because" in it. In speaking to me, He used an unfamiliar phrase, "intrinsic value", whose meaning I looked up in a dictionary. It simply means something or someone has value just because they are. God loves us simply because He is love and He loves mankind. He loves us not more or not less for what we do or do not do. However, it is important to remember here that although God will always love the wicked sinner and will love that person to the very gates of hell, He will not or may not reveal that manifestation of His love to those who do not receive Him or His Son.

God loves all His children with perfect love. Yet some seem to receive, understand and experience that love more than others. It is not that God is different toward His saints, but that some have learned quicker that faith and obedience are a sure means for knowing God in a more personal and intimate way. Those who walk closer to the Lord and who are more faithful to His will often will know Him and His love in a deeper way. Yet, God has not changed; it is we who put ourselves into a place where He can reveal more of Himself to us.

Let the reader understand that some revelations are necessary for the believer to confirm ministry and calling. Extraordinary revelations are sometimes God's extra grace being bestowed to meet a believer's needs at that time or for a future time of hard trial or warfare. Often those who may not have come from well-balanced, loving homes may need additional grace to compensate for their extra insecurities, rejections and weaknesses. Those who are multi-talented and gifted may not need as much direct encouragement and uplifting as others. Those who are called to more difficult ministries (requiring greater suffering for the Lord's sake) will often be granted, as was Paul the apostle, added grace for the need.

We do not live by our out-of-the-ordinary experiences; we live by faith and trust in God and His Word. Lastly, some get more revelation than others for they have been proven faithful in little and so He gives more. If we are not faithful to what He gives us, it is highly unlikely He will reveal deeper things.

There is another point I would like to clarify concerning God's love. People often misunderstand the love of God as a love that forgives and forgets all and demands no proper response from man. This is a sadly mistaken idea! God's love will never cause Him to lay aside His other attributes of holiness, justice and righteousness. People associate God's love as being like theirs, a mere human sentimentality. So is their so-called love for God. It moves God not in the least if our love is not shown by our turning away from sin and obeying His commandments. Many say they love God, yet they serve their own selfish natures. Let us not think we can believe what we will about God. He is a father and loves mankind, but He is not like an earthly father who may excuse our sins and allow us to live as we please. That concept is not scriptural. Remember and meditate on these words in I John 2:4-5:

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected.”

### **On Fasting.....**

Because it is closely connected with the above experience, I would like to share here on the important subject of fasting. It was the Lord's visit that prepared me to complete a long fast. The Holy Spirit led me to abstain from food for forty days and nights, and to diligently seek His will. I finished this by His grace without bodily harm and lost over 45 pounds. Now I do not recommend long fasts for everyone! I have been in fasting often over a period of many years, so I am aware of all the precautions and physical pitfalls.

Many Christians are afraid of this word “fasting” and it is true that the practice has been frequently abused and misunderstood. However, any serious reader of the Bible will eventually be confronted with the subject of fasting. To discover God's thoughts on this matter, read Matthew 6:16-18:

“Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father who is in the secret: and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.”

The Scripture reads “when we fast”, so we can rightly assume we should be fasting at certain times. No legal times and means need to be mentioned. God will give us instructions, or we will get desperate and seek God for His guidance. Let it be understood that fasting in itself is not spiritual! It is a tool like prayer and Bible study, and has its place in the Christian’s life. Fasting is simply abstaining from food for spiritual reasons. It is a great form of self-denial to which Christ commands us as faithful disciples. It is not an option!

Prayer and giving are also mentioned in the same chapter of the above quoted Scripture. All three were spoken of by our Lord as to be mainly done in secret before Him, often to keep us from pride and feeding our egos. Fasting has a way of humbling our minds and emotions so as to be more in tune to our spirits that are to be controlled by God. Fasting is neutral. I mean that it is not good or evil in itself. Great saints have fasted; so have people in the occult and in demon worship. It’s simply a tool to help us subdue our fleshly and natural appetites and to make us more open to the spiritual realm (which realm is the choice of the faster). Now some say we need not fast. Well, my friends, if the perfect Son of God needed to fast to prepare for ministry, how much more do you think we need to do so? If we can not master our own bodies and desires, how can we learn to master spiritual matters?

Fasting is also a weapon to use in our warfare against our adversary. When Jesus was baptized with the Spirit He was immediately driven into the wilderness to be tested by Satan. Only after He fasted and stood firm did He descend from the mount of temptation in the power of the Holy Spirit. Just because many have perverted and abused fasting in the past is no reason to reject the practice. Satan loves it when we do such things. He robs us of useful tools that can be used against him. Fasting, if done properly, will open us more to the many methods used by the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself. We may or may not have visions, dreams and deep revelations, but we will receive greater and fresher insight into His Word, will and purposes for us and for the body of Christ.

Yet on the other hand no amount of fasting and self-denial will cause God to hear our prayers if we are being rebellious and close-minded to what He has already given us. It is like reading the Bible several hundred times and feeling we are super spiritual. It will profit us nothing if we are readers and hearers of the Word only; we must be doers as well and apply the Word. Better to read and heed the Word than to continue to read and never obey. To move up further in spiritual matters we must die deeper to fleshly allures. To know Christ and His ways more deeply we must be brought to death and the cross more often.