

# HEART MOTIVES - PART 6

## A LISTENING HEART!

This month I want to talk about the *heart motive* of having a **listening heart**. A heart condition that causes you to be able to hear God speak to you personally.

Isaiah 40:28-31 says, "*Do you not know? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint, neither is weary? . . . He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: **But they that WAIT upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.***"

If you've heard very many people speak on this passage in Isaiah, then you probably have heard one or more of *three* predominate interpretations. And if you are somewhat analytical in your thinking, then most likely you also realized that the differences between each explanation usually hinged around the verb "**wait**" used in verse 31. Now at the risk of being redundant . . . will you take one last look at the passage with me?

The Hebrew word translated "**wait**" here literally means "to bind together". Just as you would twist cords of string together to make a rope. Twisted together in an effort to cause what was *two at one time*, . . . *to be bound together into one*. **So much so, that EACH NOW BECOMES PART OF THE OTHER**. Now where within scripture have you and I been given such an illustration? *Of two becoming one?*

We first find it used in the account of the first marriage in Genesis 2 where God commands in verse 24, "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they **shall be one flesh.***"

But one of the most remarkable accounts of this "coming together of two to become one" is found in John 15, the abiding chapter. Remember, Jesus saying "**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: **But without me you can do nothing.****"

Now listen very closely. This binding together into one here is used to describe the relationship of *Christ in us*. A relationship so important that we are told it is "our hope of glory". And that when we are "*in Him*", it is from this place that we "move and have our being."

In other words when you chose to live in this relationship, then at that moment in time you also become bound together - one with Christ! The two now one - Christ in you, you in Him!

Knowing this, isn't it easy to understand, and quite feasible to see that the interpretation of the word translated "**wait**" in Isaiah 40:31 could be speaking of someone who is **bound together** with God! So tightly interwoven that the two *have now actually become one!* . . . But now, just for a moment let's take a look at another possible interpretation.

Another explanation often used for the word "**wait**" here, is "to serve, to wait upon", . . . as a slave or servant would serve their master. And if we chose this meaning the interpretation can be supported and backed-up by multiple passages of scripture. One of the best being found in Phillipians 2:5-7.

*Here we are exhorted to "let this same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let Him be your example in humility. Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God (possessing the fullness of the attributes that make God - God) . . . did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained. But stripped Himself of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the position and place of a slave."*

Accepting this explanation for the word "**wait**" in Isaiah, the implication would be that when you, on a *daily basis* surrender your life and rights to God, to such an extent that you have become His slave, (a bond-slave) . . . then you are promised, as a result of your choice, that according to Isaiah 40 *you will now receive an inner strength. (The actual presence of God within your life!)*

But wait. A third interpretation of the word "**wait**" in Isaiah 40 is one that *simply means* you must patiently *tarry, look and expect* the coming of the presence of God in your situations. *And as a result of your great expectation, you are promised the miracle of God's touchable presence in your life!* . . . A presence that consequently, now restores your strength and, provides the direction you need within your life.

Now these are the three primarily most widely taught interpretations of the passage found in Isaiah 40. . . . Aaahh, but may I suggest the possibility of just one more? Could it be possible . . . that **ALL THREE** of these are correct?

The Hebrew language is extremely expressive, and understanding that any of the three interpretations that I have just briefly explained, on their own might be correct . . . then could it be possible that God wants to communicate each of them to us? And that the word translated "**wait**" here actually contains all of the meanings suggested?

If so, then what God would be saying to you is that when you begin to feel overwhelmed by life, . . . **if you will pause and be still in that moment, tarry and wait, and once again surrender all that you know of yourself, - all of your expectations and needs for emotional wellness into His care.**

. . . And if you will **abandon yourself to Him entirely!** *Rejecting anything that has become a God substitute! Anything that you have begun to daily think about, and expect, and look toward to fill the emptiness, loneliness, and desperate need for love (apart from just God's abiding presence) . . .*

. . . And if you will **surrender your past, your future, and your present into His care.** *Recognizing "you are not your own", and begin to live each moment of each day as God's servant and slave . . .*

. . . **Then God promises in that moment that He will bind Himself together with you!** Twisted together so tightly that you are no longer separate and individual. So much one, that it is no longer possible to tell where you start and He begins. So united that the only way to now describe this union is that, ***God abides in you and you abide in Him!***

And miraculously - as the scripture says - because of this union, you find you are beginning to feel as if you are soaring over your problems. As if you had "wings like an eagle"! Able to fly over the greatest difficulty life can throw at you! Able to run in the most hectic of situations, but strangely somehow no longer weary as a result of them! And able to walk through the greatest storms and disappointments any person could ever imagine, and STILL not emotionally collapse!

Could it be that this is what God is saying to you and I from this passage in Isaiah?  
*I am convinced it is!*

Now finally can I talk to you about what I believe is the greatest difficulty in you and I developing a heart that is able to *listen* to God? In order for you to hear the voice of God you must **learn to quiet your heart!** Or learn how to *emotionally and spiritually be still* inside as you pray!

Think about this for a moment. When most of us go to pray don't we usually approach God with a list of things we want Him to do or fix? And isn't it also true that somewhere in the back of our minds, we usually have predetermined how we believe God should solve the problem or fix the person? Come on, be honest . . . isn't that true?

And as a result, our prayer lives usually go something like this. We go to God upset, quickly work down our list of needs, even indirectly telling Him how we think He should answer our prayers. Say goodbye (Amen) and then leave and go do what we think is important in our lives! Right?

Have you ever had a conversation or discussion with someone, who even before the discussion began, had already made up *their mind* how the conversation was going to end, how the problem was going to be solved, and maybe even how you were going to change? *How did it make you feel?*

. . . *Like they never even heard a word you said?* Is that how you felt? Or maybe afterwards you even thought to yourself, "what a waste of time that was!" And possibly left thinking you would never have another discussion with that person, because, "they are too opinionated, too stubborn! Everything has to always be their way!"

*Do you ever think God might feel this way about us? Does He ever think, "Why even bother trying to talk to them. They never listen."*

Now listen very closely. In order for you to be able to hear God, to have a heart that is able to listen you have to *come into His presence with an open mind and heart*. In other words you have to have "spiritual ears to hear".

And in order for you to do that, it will usually be necessary for you to first spend time in prayer until you come to a place within your own heart . . . *that you have released your desires and cares to God! To such an extent that you are now okay with Him answering your prayer ANY - WAY - HE - WISHES!*

Did you hear me? *Now don't misunderstand me.* I'm *not saying* that you no longer have an opinion or a certain way that you wish things would work out. That may not change. But what I am saying is that you must stay in prayer until **emotionally** you are okay to release the person, or situation into God's care! And can in complete honesty then say, "I trust You God . . . and I am okay with *however* things turn out!"

Now why is this necessary? Because it is only in a *place of rest, a place where you have emotionally released everything*, that you will have "ears to hear" . . . ears that have the ability to hear God speak to you personally about your problems.

I Kings 19:11-12 says, "*And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of gentle stillness and, . . . a still small voice.*"

If in prayer you learn to trust God, and can move past the emotions created by the storms in your life, you will also discover a heart that is able to listen. . . . **And a heart that has now found the ability to hear God speak!** *God bless you!*