

**STEP INTO GOD'S  
TOUCHABLE AND TANGIBLE PRESENCE . . . AND FIND FREEDOM  
FROM YOUR DESTRUCTIVE HABITS!  
(*Destructive habits part 5*)**

This is the last part in a five part series that I have been writing to you for the last few months. I find it is the most difficult to communicate. But it is also the most important.

And that's because if any of us are ever to be free from the destructive habits in our lives . . . it is imperative that we begin to daily experience God's presence filling the void of emptiness within our hearts. A void that if left unfilled causes each of us to be pulled toward some destructive habit just for the momentary relief it can provide.

Please understand this - God's presence within you is your only hope! And that's because your ability to feel His presence, is also the only thing that has the power to permanently take your pain away. So how can you consistently experience God's touchable presence in your life each day?

First, I must state that God can reveal Himself to any of us anytime He wants to. He is not limited by your or my knowledge. But please, understand what I am trying to communicate within this letter is not the exceptions of His presence within our lives, but rather how you and I can experience an intimate closeness with God *moment by moment* on a daily basis. . . . And I believe there are stepping stones within scripture that God gave to pave the way for us!

**STEP ONE: is the simple fact that you must *believe* GOD REALLY WANTS TO TALK TO YOU! AND, THAT HE WANTS TO COMFORT YOU, MOMENT BY MOMENT, BY THE PLACING OF HIS ACTUAL PRESENCE *WITHIN YOU!***

Listen to this scripture! Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God, *for he who comes to Him (Comes into God's presence)* must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Did you hear that? To come into God's presence you must *number one, believe that He exist.* And *number two, that He will reward you with His presence when you seek Him!* In other words, you must believe that God exists and that it is actually possible to experience His touchable and tangible presence! And . . . that He WILL reveal Himself to you, *if you seek Him.*

Now why do we sometimes have a problem with this - *with thinking that God will reveal Himself to us?* Could it be because deep inside we still believe that somehow we *must earn that privilege* with how "good" we have been?

Most of us are more than aware of all of our failings. Don't you think that is true? We remember all of the things we've done wrong in the past that we can't take back or change. How we still struggle with destructive habits. And as a result. . . aren't there times that every emotion inside of you screams out, "Surely God can't possibly want anything to do with me? He can see how retched I am. He knows what a failure I have been! Why would He want to talk to me?" *Please believe me . . . there is a way over this emotional wall of rejection!*

## **STEP TWO: YOU MUST SURRENDER YOUR LIFE BACK TO GOD!**

How do you do that? First, you must recognize the truth that if you want God in your life in a touchable and tangible way . . . then there must be a complete and total surrender to Him as your Lord and Master.

What does that mean? In the *King James* version of the Bible, our relationship to God is many times referred to as that of a "servant". (Matt. 8:9, 10:24-25, 25:21,23, Mark 10:44, Luke 19:17, 22, John 8:34,35, 13:16, 15:15,20, Rom.1:1, I Cor. 7:22, \*Phil. 2:5-7) But in all of these scriptures, the *Greek* word here would have been better translated a "slave" of God. *And that distinction is of major importance to us.*

A servant in the time of Christ was someone who worked for another person. They usually were paid some small wage. May have lived in the home of the person they served. And if faithful . . . could often count on a lifetime of employment.

Ahh, but a slave on the other hand . . . had no rights! None at all! He could demand or expect nothing from his Master. He wasn't free to come and go. And if paid anything at all . . . well, that was totally up to his owner. In other words, *the care of his life was entirely dependent upon whether his master was good or bad.* And that was because, *he belonged to his owner.* He was property.

Scripture says that you and I are not our own, we have been bought with a price! (I Cor. 6:19-20) And just as Jesus did, we are called to take upon ourselves the form of a "slave"! (Phil. 2:5-7) Read the passages. You and I are called to be . . . the "slaves" of God.

Now listen. This is important. This relationship, this choice to become "God's slave", is a decision that must be renewed every day! Just walking down an isle sometime in your life, making a confession, praying, filling out a card, and joining a church is not

enough! Listen to Jesus' words in Luke 9:23. "If anyone would come after Me, he must *deny himself* and take up his cross **DAILY** and follow me." The Amplified version of the Bible further explains the phrase "to deny" as being "to disown, . . . to give up myself". In other words, you must give up the right to direct your life, "to call the shots", to be in control! You **MUST** become . . . *a slave to God*.

And in this verse, Jesus also clearly states that for you or I to follow Him, this act of personal surrender must be something that is repeated *EACH AND EVERY DAY* of our lives!

Is that easy? No, of course not. If you are like me, probably most of your life you have strived and struggled to live independent! Isn't that true? But God knows this about us. And that's why you and I must . . .

### **STEP THREE: MAKE A "DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE" UPON GOD!**

Hebrews 4:11 tells you and I to "labor to enter into that (God's) rest . . .". The implication being that it's difficult for a person to learn to live in the rest that God desires for him. Now why is that? The scripture prior to verse 11 states that a person who has "entered into (this) rest, he also has ceased from his **OWN WORKS**." Think about that. Each of us must recognize that in ourselves and by our own efforts . . . we will never measure up, never be righteous. And if you really believe this, then you realize that you must now also cease from your **OWN** futile efforts . . . to be righteous. Because, for you to understand and begin to live in this rest, God's rest, you must embrace the words Jesus spoke in John 15 . . . "for without Me, **YOU CAN DO NOTHING!**"

What was Jesus saying? That no matter how much you know about God, how disciplined you become, nor how sincere your heart . . . *it will never be enough!*

Accept that fact! And *declare your declaration of dependence upon God!* Announce to your own heart, and mind and soul . . . "**I always will need a Savior! I will always need you Jesus!**"

Now, stop for just a moment and ask God to reveal every area within your own heart where you are still depending upon your own abilities and efforts. (Tension, pressure and stress can be a sign that in some area of your life you are still struggling to live independent from God.)

As God reveals those areas, *stay in prayer* until you are able to place the *outcome* of whatever is causing you fear, tension, pressure, stress, etc. into His care. How will you know? *The tension, stress and fear will be gone!*

## **STEP FOUR: MAKE CHRIST THE "FIRST LOVE" OF YOUR LIFE! . . . THE FIRST SOURCE YOU LOOK TO FILL YOUR EMOTIONAL NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS!**

In Luke 14:26 Jesus tells you and I that if we want to follow Him, then somehow our love for Him in comparison to our love for others (mother, father, brother, sister, wife or husband, children, even ourselves) must become so great that that it is like the difference between love and hate! Jesus is saying that without exception, He must be the first source that you look to fill your emotional expectations!

He goes on to say (verse 33) in the same passage, that within your heart there must also be a willingness to give up any dependence upon material possession for its ability to fill your needs. And that if you really want to follow Him, He must be your "first love" - Not just a supplier of your "God substitutes".

What do I mean by that? You can no longer emotionally look to money, or jobs, or the attaining of possessions to take away your fears, or make you feel important, or secure. *God must now become* that emotional source of security within your life!

At this moment, ask God to become your security, your sense of value and importance. Tell Him you are sorry for looking to any other person or thing to make you feel completed, whole, or healed. And now, be still . . . and allow Jesus to take away your fears. But remember - this is important - you must renew this commitment within your heart to God - **DAILY!** And finally, . . .

## **STEP FIVE: EMBRACE THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

In the last conversation Jesus had with His disciples before He was crucified, (John chapters 13-17), He told them how He was going to go away, and that they would not be able to go with Him. But Jesus also said that the only way they would ever have an intimate relationship with God . . . would still have to be through Him. Then He explained how this relationship could be possible.

Jesus told them that He would send the "Comforter". And that this Comforter would be the Holy Spirit. He explained how up to this point, the Holy Spirit had been *with them* . . . but now it would be different.

## **HE WOULD BE *IN* THEM!**

And as a result, the union of Christ in them, and them in Him (John 15) . . . **WOULD NOW BE POSSIBLE!**

Stop again. And right now, take the time and renew your relationship of dependence upon the Holy Spirit! Don't you understand He is the only one who can make God touchable and tangible in your life! He is the Comforter who brings the peace, joy, love, and righteousness of Jesus' presence within you. And without this relationship with the Holy Spirit, please understand . . . within your heart, God will never be any more than just collected intellectual knowledge from timeless old stories.

Now go back and reread this letter. Then pull aside from everything and spend time with God. Surrender to be His slave! Make Him your "first love"! And allow the Holy Spirit . . . to bring Jesus alive within you! - **Touchable and tangible!**