

Intensity, Ecstasy, Intimacy

We will come to God by way of Intensity, Ecstasy or Intimacy. Christians commonly approach God with Intensity and believe that this is what God desires from us. We can try to find our satisfaction in being strong, heroic, and successful while using whatever weapons necessary to win a war for God in order to affect the Kingdom of God and the hearts of others. Although God desires our affection, this would be the least satisfying type of expression. Think about our own relationships. Would it be satisfying in our relationships with children if we received only servitude-type performances from our children based on fear, duty or sheer respect?

Many Christians also approach God with Ecstasy wherein we arrive in church with regular frequency to be lifted up emotionally in the presence of God and experience euphoria with God in the moment. We can really feel the draw during the week to experience it again. These ecstasies may be in the form of songs that make us rejoice, laugh, cry or otherwise express strong emotions for and with God. But once the ecstasy is over, within a very short time, usually within hours or even minutes, the ecstasy has abated and we can be easily ruled by our circumstances again or our daily routine. Then we run from ecstasy to ecstasy living like an emotional yo-yo. Many times this leaves us largely lonely for God as we inadvertently lose sight of Him and His presence with us when the ecstasy subsides in a short while.

Few Christians it seems truly experience Intimacy with God, even though most would say they desire to have it. Intimacy is the state of being fully aware and connected to God's presence in us all day and all night. It might be described by words like belonging, inseparable, warm, loving, affectionate, familiar and comfortable. This is of course the most difficult place to find ourselves - resting in our relationship with God, since we have many things to be responsible for which end up being distractions from God. We have been raised to be self-centered (self-sufficient) and to take care of the things pertaining to our own well-being. This self-centeredness is even taught as a virtue by "owning" our part of the world or being responsible for our life.

But even though in the beginning of the journey to Intimacy with God it seems counter intuitive for us to not focus on the "details" of our lives and let God handle them, once we have practiced this way of living with God enough it will be in this place that we find the peace and rest in all circumstances that Jesus promised. It will then be as difficult for us not to think of God all the time as it was difficult in the beginning to accustom ourselves to thinking of God all the time.

The ultimate in ministry of the Kingdom of God is to reach that point in our experience with God where we can actually resonate with Jesus' words: "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Yet most of us have never learned to appropriate these truths in our daily experience of God.

When Intimacy with God is experienced, we will be able to express our intimate, passionate affection for God with Intensity or Ecstasy or both. The reason Intimacy is the ultimate experience of God is that when either the Intensity or Ecstasy subsides, we remain so fully aware

of God's love and presence with us that we no longer have the same desire toward sinful behaviors and broken relationships in order to escape our insecurity. In other words, Intimacy with God provides a constant supply of Love, Acceptance, Worth, and Security from the one that created us with these needs in the first place. Since it is always the lack of one or more of these basic needs that sends us into sinful behaviors and broken relationships, finding ourselves to be fully loved and our needs fully met in Christ will provide the life source to live above sin's power.

Intimacy in Relationship – return to Eden

From manuscript:

Do you have intensity for God or intimacy with God?

Beth Moore related this story to us when she spoke at Phillips Arena in Atlanta at the Living Proof Live seminar "Full Redemption" in September, 2003. It was about how she came to have a passion for God's Word. As I listened again to this message in January of 2011 in preparation for using "Full Redemption" in a "WOMEN walking FREE" retreat at RELIEF Ministries International in May of that year, the Lord gave me pause and revealed one of the most significant truths to me that I have ever received in nearly 5 decades as a Christian. Read the story and then take in the revelation which follows:

Beth Moore speaking:

I was asked to teach a Sunday School class when I was in my mid twenties. By this time I was already doing a little speaking. But to be honest with you, I was the worst Sunday School teacher you have ever heard in your life. I'll tell you the reason why. Because it is hard to teach a Bible that you never even open. An announcement in the church bulletin described a Bible doctrine class that was starting. I thought, O.K., alright I felt the call. I knew I was going to have to surrender. God was telling me, "You are pitiful. Go. Go. Go." So I went and here's what happened.

This dude, this wide, with a chest this thick, former football player, solid muscle, walks up to the podium and throws open his Bible and he begins to teach. I've never seen anything like it in my life. "You don't want to take this Word lightly!" he said loudly. "This is the God breathed Word! I suggest you inhale!" I never even opened my Bible. I never wrote a note. While he taught, that big old football player cried over his love for the Word. He was the first person I ever saw teach with his white starched shirt pounding, because his heart was filled with zeal.

As soon as that class was over, I ran like a maniac to my car. I locked myself in it. And I screamed out loud, "Lord, I don't know what that was! But I want it! I want it! I want it! I want it!" And God took a stick to a stone in heaven. And He lit a match. And He stuck it in my heart. And I've had it ever since. When I stand up to teach, my heart just pounds, because I can't bear the joy of it. Sometimes I can feel God's presence so heavy on our heads I feel like I can't stand up! I can't stand up!

Later in the seminar Beth stated, "Some things are taught. And some things are caught."

God's revelation to the author of this treatise:

I knew that day that I needed to be "caught" with Buddy Walter's kind of zeal. But it was not until 8 months later that God revealed to me what it was that I really wanted to have as a believer. In May of 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland, as I hugged Beth in the receiving line after her taping of "The Patriarchs" Bible study, I felt like I was hugging Jesus and not Beth. I actually uttered those words. Not to her, but it just came out. I knew then and there that I wanted to be so full of Jesus some day that someone might hug me and think that they were being hugged by Jesus instead.

For the next two years, after God assigned to me a personal mentor such as Beth's Buddy Walters, I submitted patiently to all that my mentor had to teach me. I learned that I had developed an intellectual understanding of God and not an intimate relationship. Once released from mentoring in May of 2006, I knew that somewhere along that journey I had become passionate about Jesus and it showed in every area of my life, work, play, market, home, vacation.

God had promised to give me a passion for Him and had also asked me to take note of how my make-over had occurred so that I could share it with others. God wants every believer to be madly in love with Him. So as directed, I took note of the process or maybe more appropriately perspectives of God which changed. I know that the process is different for each person, but the Lord showed me that there are certain essential perspectives of God that every one must discover before they will become madly passionate lovers of God.

As the teachings for CELEBRATE reLIFE were put into transferrable form, these essential perspectives of God became the focal point of the conferences and retreats. These perspectives are simple, Biblical, and irrefutable. They have nothing to do with doctrine, tradition, or denomination. They have only to do with the desire God has for every believer to be so "in love" with God that they cannot be silent about their lover. And this applies to any person regardless of color, race, or creed.

We had conducted men's retreats, MEN walking FREE, for a few months when we were led to create WOMEN walking FREE. In order to modify the teaching to be better suited to women, we were led to include these Beth Moore teachings. And as I heard Beth say that it was Buddy's zeal that had changed her life, the Lord said to me very clearly, "That was the wrong word. Yes, Buddy did have "zeal." But Buddy had something much much more. Buddy had intimacy." As I pondered what God had just said I realized that there is a tremendous difference between "zeal" and "affection," between "intensity" and "intimacy."

The Lord further clarified to me that you can have intensity without intimacy, but you cannot have intimacy without intensity. The major difference is this: Intensity Leads with Heroic Ferocity and Spears while Intimacy Leads with Humble Tenderness and Tears. One reason the Jews do not recognize Jesus as their Messiah is that they were expecting an "intensely zealous"

leader, but God provided and "intimately tender" Messiah. And the disciple should be like his master. As believer's in Jesus, we should be "intimate" not just "intense."

As I continued to explore the ramifications of this perspective I was overwhelmed at the simplicity and profundity it contained. Cooperation is fueled by tenderness while competition is fueled by ferocity. Most believers' intensity is mistaken for intimacy. Yet most believers would prefer to be an applauded hero than an anonymous care giver. Yet our Master, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples the night before His crucifixion.

I then saw the disconnection between the church and her mission. We mistook the great commission as: "Go and convert people to Christianity, teaching them what to wear, what to say, what to do, and how to look like us." However, the great commission is this: "Go and make disciples who love like their Master." Then John 13:34 & 35 becomes true of the body of Christ. It is NOT our behaviors that lead people to Christ. It is our love, and only our love that will lead them in the way of our Master.

The icing on this cake is this. When you come to the point where you can love like Jesus (notice also Peter with Jesus in John 21), the Spirit of God can compel them by that love to become part of the Body of Christ. When your intimacy with God overcomes your need to intensely hammer God's truth into people, both saved and unsaved, you then and only then become a true disciple of Jesus. He loved unconditionally (both saved and unsaved). He showed mercy unconditionally (both save and unsaved). He forgave unconditionally (both saved and unsaved -- Pharisees and Thief on the cross). And He unconditionally shows favor (both saved and unsaved). The significance of this revelation is this. People without a marital relationship to God can live morally good lives, give to charitable causes, and treat each other with kindness. But ONLY SPOUSES OF GOD can LOVE LIKE GOD! When we fail to do so, we cannot be fishers of men, because LOVE is the only bait that draws them into our fishing nets or CATCHES them.