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# The Secret Place

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## Part 2

Jesus knew the effectiveness and the power of prayer. He had an intimate relationship with the Father that created both the motivation and the desire to spend time with the Father. He knew what it was like to withdraw to the secret place and His encouragement is for us to do the same. It's in this secret place where we find intimacy which draws out a passionate, honest, outpouring of both praise and intercession. As followers of Jesus we too need to model a life of dependency on God through prayer in the secret place.

How do we enter the Secret Place and what do we do when we are in the Secret Place?

### **A Matter of Perspective**

Often in prayer, due to our lack of perspective we can get the direction wrong. We start downstream with our own concerns and bring them to God. When we shift direction, we realise that God already cares about our concerns more than we do. Grace, like water, descends to the lowest part.

We need the corrective vision of prayer because all day long we will lose sight of God's perspective. Prayer restores our vision to one that more resembles God's. It's this fresh perspective that we get when we enter the secret place.

### **Who Are You Praying To?**

Our belief about God will affect how we pray to Him and how we enter the secret place. We want to make sure that we are worshipping the God of the Bible and not some made up caricature of God. If we are serving a caricature of God, then we are guilty of idolatry.

The prominent characteristic of God is His holiness. All the other characteristics of God flow from this one characteristic.

The root idea behind the word "holy" is different or set apart. When the Bible speaks of God's holiness, it is talking about His otherness (1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 6:1-5)

We cannot know what it means to be holy until we understand that God Himself is holy. Only when we begin with His holiness can we begin to correct the caricatures we may have of God and this affects how you enter the secret place.

### **Our Posture in the Secret Place**

*Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth! Psalm 46:10 (ESV)*

This Psalm brings two commands of equal importance.

- + To be still, allowing God to nourish our inner life
- + Stillness prepares us to know God and exalt Him

### ***Come Confessing***

Besides being good theology, confession makes for good psychology. Prayer is the currency of relationship with God.

We cannot receive healing and be made right with God unless we accept God's diagnosis of our wounded state and allow Him to forgive and heal us. (1 John 1:9)

### ***Come Helpless***

Self-reliance seals off the heart attitude that is most desirable to God – total dependence. (John 15:5)

Prayer forces us to acknowledge our true state of dependency. (Psalm 145:14)

### ***Come Humble***

Humility becomes the step down that makes it possible for God to lift you up. By trying to be strong, we may even block God's power. (1 Peter 5:5-7; Luke 18:9-14))

Prayer invites us to bring our whole life into God's presence for cleansing and restoration. We make the attempt with hesitation, shame and fear, but when we do so we feel those constraints dissolving. Our fear of rejection gives way to God's embrace.

### ***Come Honest***

In vain we sometimes build barriers to keep God out, stubbornly disregarding the fact that God looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

In truth, what we think and feel as we pray, rather than the words we speak, may be the real prayer, that God hears. As we learn to give voice to those secrets, the power they hold over us melts away.

### ***Come Hungry***

Hunger releases the capacity to dream, it keeps us in a place of humility. Hunger causes us to move outside of what seems safe and be motivated to go places we normally wouldn't go and do things we normally wouldn't do.

Come into the secret place with a hunger and expectancy that God wants to talk to you. To reveal His heart and to build intimacy with you. To bless you and to pour out His affection upon you.

### **Into the Secret Place**

Our image of God, more than anything else, determines our degree of honesty in the secret place. Foolishly, we hide in fear that God will be displeased, though in fact the hiding may be what displeases God most.

From our side, the wall seems like self-protection; from God's side it looks like lack of trust. In either case, the wall will keep us apart until we acknowledge our need and God's burning desire to meet it.

When we approach God in awe and wonder of His holiness, we don't find a tyrant but a lover. (Ephesians 3:17-19)

The most important purpose of prayer in the secret place may be to let our true selves be loved by God. (Psalm 103: 10-14)

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What's your most frequent perspective when coming into the secret place to pray?
2. Do you agree with the statement, 'The prominent characteristic of God is His holiness'? Why or why not? What difference does an honest awareness of God's holiness make to coming into the secret place?
3. Which posture, when entering into the secret place, do you find most difficult – confession / dependency / humility / honesty or hunger? Why?
4. How will an understanding of these things change your prayer life in the secret place?