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# Pursuing His Presence

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## Intimacy

Worshipping as the Riverlife family has never been a spectator sport. You aren't like a fan in the stands cheering on the team up front. You are more like a player, a part of the team, and so in our adaptation of coming together online you are not like the sports fan who will now be spectating just in the comfort of your living room. You are more like the player having to adapt to still being on the field out of your love for the game, or in our case out of our love for God, without the crowd around you.

What's going to be the key to you staying as a participant in the Kingdom of God rather than shrinking back to becoming a spectator? What is it that will enable you to play just as hard without the accolades of the crowd and the environment not spurring you on?

It's going to come back to your deepest motivations. It's going to hinge on your intimacy with God.

### **Behind the Veil**

Last year here at Riverlife we talked a lot about removing the veil – becoming unveiled in the presence of God. You can't pursue His presence and not be unveiled. It's the freedom of being unveiled by the Spirit that allows us to be in His presence.

It's the Spirit enabled life that brings the glorious transformation we find when we behold Him. Behind the veil is the intimate place of communion with Holy Spirit, the freedom and life we all seek—it is born in the realm of the Spirit. If we turn to God instead of ourselves, the veil is removed. In those moments He begins to show us and give us the fullness of His love for us.

- + When we live behind the veil we live from God.
- + Living behind the veil is all about living as one who already has an inheritance and is seated with Christ as a son or daughter.
- + Living behind the veil understand that the greater always flows to the lesser.

## 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

It's the Spirit that brings "freedom", the kind of freedom that allows God's new covenant people to be, as Moses was, in intimacy with God, in the glory of God, Christ himself, as though looking at Him in a mirror.

As a result, the Holy Spirit not only gives us the life of God but serves for us as God's presence and enables us to see God's glory so that we are being transformed into His likeness.

## **Living Behind the Veil**

By the Spirit we not only come to know God but come to live in His presence in such a way that we are constantly being renewed into God's image. This is true intimacy with God.

Intimacy - To be fully known and fully accepted.

It is the Holy Spirit's job to produce Christlike character in you. This requires you to have an intimate experience or encounter with God that becomes the new normal for living in intimate relationship with Him. Intimacy becomes another key to pursuing His presence!

Only the Holy Spirit has the power to make the changes God wants to make in our lives (Philippians 2:13).

Christlikeness is not produced by imitation, but by inhabitation (Colossians 1:27).

Engaging God – Head, Heart and Hands.

## **How to Live in the Glory**

To live in the light of God's glory is to be open to intimacy with the Holy Spirit.

Several things help us become open to the Spirit:

1. *Humility*
2. *Desire*
3. *Intimacy*

Busyness is the enemy of intimacy. Intimacy is about attentiveness, being still and present. We are made for intimacy.

Our lives are, first and foremost, lived for Him. Our main task in life is simply to get to know and experience Him more. As we put Him first, He delights in pouring out His love and power through us, so that it touches the lives of others. Jesus spoke about our essential need for connection with Him - like the branches of a vine, drawing life from their source. From this place of connection, of abiding in Him, we yield rest, peace, intimacy and lasting fruit.

The pursuit of His presence involves intimacy in our worship. Worship should change us, bring about transformation to our lives as we allow God to be at work in our hearts.

Conforming is about behaviour, it's about what we get out of it. Conforming can be what happens when we are swayed by the crowd around us.

Transforming is about our character, why are we in the game? What's motivating us to be on the field still when the crowd is no longer there?

## **Conclusion**

A key to becoming the community of God we desire to be amongst our city is dependent upon how intimate we are as we pursue God's presence. I believe God wants to bring us into a new understanding of His glory. I believe that God wants to allow us to see His glory, to meet with Him face to face, to see His glory manifest amongst us. We are not to be fearful of this – we are in good hands.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. How does it feel to be worshiping in a different setting through a different mode? What attitudes might be helpful to make the most of these online worship gatherings?
2. What does intimacy with God look like in the practicalities of your day-to-day lifestyle?
3. If busyness is the enemy of intimacy, how can some potential time in isolation due to Coronavirus become an opportunity for intimacy with God? Share some practical thoughts about how you can do this while remaining in connection with the church family.
4. To live behind the veil is to live in intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit. Read - 2 Corinthians 3:16-18. Which aspect (humility/desire/intimacy) do you need to work through to a greater extent so you might turn towards the Lord?
5. How in our current environment do we allow times of intimacy with God in His presence, overflow into acts that will bring Him glory to those in need around us? Share your ideas, make some plans and let the overflow of your times of intimacy bear fruit.