

3 Psalm 27:8 Steps to Sweet Fellowship With God

Our few days in Ireland were lovely. While there, one of our hosts took several of us to tour the lovely gardens of Powerscourt Estate. *National Geographic* has ranked the gardens the third most beautiful in all the world. They were exquisite in every sense of the word. The vibrant colors, beautiful paths, waterfalls and intriguing rock formations were all breathtaking.

At one point on the path, we came across a small stone archway. A few of us had read *The Secret Garden* as kids and loved it, so we immediately wanted to explore. But the beautiful rock archway also reminded me of the invitation God extends to us in Psalm 27:8 (NLT), “My heart has heard you say, ‘Come and talk with me.’ And, my heart responds, ‘Lord, I am coming.’”

As I looked at the beautiful stone entrance arch to the “secret garden,” I was reminded that God delights to spend time with me. He invites me to come in, shut the door and have intimate conversations with Him. Jesus invited us, in Matthew 6:6, “But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.” It’s almost as if Jesus is saying, “Come away with me to the secret place. Close the door. Let me hear your intimate thoughts. I love you and I love spending time with you. I want to hear your heart and I want to share mine.”

I love that the God of the universe, the mighty Creator, desires and craves an intimate relationship with me! He longs for me to come to the secret place and simply be with Him. There have been times in my walk with God when I’ve pressed in deeply in prayer and felt as though I’ve been fighting a

battle. There have been other times in prayer when I've kept organized lists of what and who I'm praying for. There have been still other times when I've written out my prayers with Scripture for each of my 11 grandchildren. There have been times when I've wept on my knees as I've asked God for wisdom for one situation or another. No one prayer method has been more valid than another. Each of those times has strengthened my intimate relationship with Christ.

Recently, a friend asked me, "Becky, what do you do when you spend time with Jesus?" Great question! Very simply, here are three things I do when I spend time alone with God:

I shut the door, get on my knees, put in headphones and listen to praise music. Why do I shut the door? Jesus said to do that so that He could be with us alone and have our complete attention. Why do I put in headphones? So that I don't get distracted. I want to give my entire focus to the King of the universe. As I listen to the worship music, I spend time praising God for who He is and what He's done. I ask that He bring my spirit and will into union with His.

I meditate on Scripture. I may read a little or a lot. There are no rules. I read and meditate on what the Scripture is speaking to me. I practice being still and silent. I listen for the whisper of God's voice in His Scriptures and in my heart. I listen intentionally, ready to receive instruction and obey. He promises, "Then I will pour out my thoughts to you" (Prov. 1:23b, NIV).

I pour out my heart in prayer. I often write out my prayers. I simply share everything that is in my heart with Jesus. I voice my desires. I give Him my concerns. I may even at times open my hands to remind myself to give over every worry. At times, the burdens of life threaten to consume me. As I faithfully pour out my heart to the Lord and praise Him, He strengthens my ability to trust Him.

Friend, God's invitation is so astonishing and intimate. He longs to hear your heart and share His with you. What does it look like for you to accept His invitation to the secret place? {eoa}

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