

What I Learned About True Revival From Steve Hill

There is a story I share in *Receptivity: Tuning into God's Voice* that illustrates how our position before God affects our receptiveness to God. The story comes from a time when I found myself in the office of my friend and mentor evangelist Steve Hill.

This mighty man of God had been used as a prominent voice in the longest-running revival America has yet to see—a revival that started on Father's Day of 1995 and continued for five straight years. Nearly 4 million people visited the revival and were forever changed, myself included. Steve was mentored by another great revivalist named Leonard Ravenhill, who wrote the classic book *Why Revival Tarries*. That afternoon, I sat across the desk from Steve as he shared with me various stories about what it was like to spend time with Ravenhill. I couldn't help but be humbled by the fact that here I was, sitting before Steve, very much like Steve sat before Ravenhill decades earlier.

The tone of Steve's voice changed as he began to share this story and immediately shifted the atmosphere of the room. Instinctively I leaned in knowing that what Steve was about to share was too precious to be missed. He said, "I was sitting across from Leonard in his office when he called me up out of my seat and asked me to come closer."

Steve said he stood up and walked to Ravenhill's side, but Leonard called him even closer. Steve leaned over to where the two now were face to face. Leonard still called him closer. Steve turned his head—as he brought his ear closer to Ravenhill's mouth, Ravenhill whispered, "Closer." At this point Steve moved in as close as possible. He could feel Leonard's breath against his ear. It was awkward and

uncomfortably close, but it was the exact position he had to be in to hear the next words that came from Ravenhill's mouth.

Leonard said with a soft reverence, "Steve, the Lord has secrets ... but He doesn't shout them. You have to live close enough to God that you can hear the gentle whispers of His still, small voice."

A sense of awe filled Steve's office. It was if we had left the confines of this planet and had been ushered immediately into the Lord's presence. Steve leaned back in his chair, threw his arms into the air and with tears in his eyes began to call upon the Lord. "Jesus we want to hear Your gentle whispers. We want to live so close to You that we can hear that still, small voice. Draw us in, Jesus."

I find it remarkable that Steve, a man who I knew walked so closely with God, could still pray, "Draw me even closer"! Oh that we might learn from such an example. I cherish that moment, but even more, I've taken it to heart. It has produced a deep longing within me to know Christ more intimately. I am willing to be discomforted if necessary to position myself to hear His whispers.

Jesus said to His disciples, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:10). It's true—the Lord has secrets! Even more, the Lord has chosen to fully disclose those secrets, but not to just anyone. His secrets are only available to those who are willing to position themselves properly before the Lord. The disciples found this position away from the crowd, in a private setting. It was in those intimate settings that they could inquire, and Jesus would explain the hidden truths of His parables (Luke 8:9-15).

My friend, there are things that you will never hear from the Lord if you choose to remain content to simply receive it from someone else. You may attend a great church, have a great library of books or listen to the best of preachers, but there

is no substitute for finding some alone time with Jesus to ask Him for the deeper things that are not discussed in the midst of multitudes!

The good news is that those secrets are not reserved for a select few. They are revealed to anyone who is willing to properly position himself before the Lord. It is unfortunate that so many still choose to miss out. They have eyes to see and ears to hear but choose not to see or hear.

If you long for those private settings where His precious secrets are unearthed, let me encourage you to follow the advice of Ravenhill. Get up from your current comfortable position and find a private place to seek the face of God. Throw your hands up and call upon the Lord. Ask Him to draw you close and listen for His gentle whisper. It's the first step to learning to be receptive to His voice.