

Spirit-Filled Pastor: Why His Presence Must be Our Pursuit

Read Time: 4 Minutes 9 Seconds

Although God is everywhere, or what theologians call omnipresent, there is a marked difference between a believer who is dry spiritually and dead inside compared to one who is full of passion, desire and fire.

The corridors of church history are filled with stories of Christians being spiritually dead but then coming alive.

What changed? What happened? In short, they pursued God like never before. They abandoned their idols, repented of their lukewarm-ness, and sought God—His presence was their pursuit. When you seek God, you will find Him (Jer. 29:13).

Are You Thirsty?

The pursuit of God is what holds everything together—from finding peace and joy to overcoming the enemy and finishing strong. Sadly, many believers do not finish well because their pursuit of God gets pushed to the side.

Seeking the presence of God must be your all-consuming passion. Moses cried, “Show me Your glory!” Joshua lingered in the tent with the presence of God (Ex. 33:11), Isaiah said that he saw the King (Isa. 6:5) and the disciples waited in the upper room for His presence (Acts 1:13).

These were life-changing moments, and you can have one as well. Are you thirsty? It all begins here: “Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink” (John 7:37).

The Cost of Intimacy

Mark 14:3 tells us that Jesus was at Bethany reclining at a

table when a woman with an alabaster flask of very costly ointment broke the flask and poured it over his head. It is here, and in many other places in Scripture, that we realize that intimacy has a cost.

God must be a priority even when we don't feel like pursuing Him. Pursuing His presence doesn't always mean that we feel His presence. That's why Hebrews 11:6 is so important: "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Your perseverance will eventually be rewarded.

No Accident

We also read in Mark 14:4-5 that there were some present in Bethany who scolded her with these words, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor." The woman realized, as should we, that there is no such thing as wasted worship.

It's not by accident that Jesus was at Bethany, which means "a place of poverty." Unless we humble ourselves and become "poor in spirit," we will never experience a deep, meaningful and impactful relationship with God. His presence must be our primary pursuit.

Pride Prevents Intimacy

Sadly, many mock deep experiences with God because they've never experienced God. And I believe that this is at the heart of the current "worship wars." Granted, there are legitimate concerns with some things that are going on, but many who say that worship is "too emotional," or is "brainwashing," say it out of fear, callousness and pride. Pride prevents intimacy.

In the same way that a kink in a water hose prevents water from gushing out, pride prevents a downpour of God's Spirit into your heart.

A proud person can't be corrected and is unteachable. Pride elevates instead of lowers; it boasts instead of breaks. Pride is the greatest hindrance to a spiritual breakthrough. This is no doubt why 2 Chron. 7:14 begins with "If My people humble themselves."

It's been said that God has to break a man and cleanse a man before He can fill a man! Listen to You must be Broken to be Filled.

If it's Important, it's Urgent

In Mark 14:7, we discover the urgency of intimacy when Jesus said, "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me."

When it comes to pursuing God, it's not about perfection but affection. Worship is not an experience, it's a person. Where do your affections lie? Do you value the time that is spent in worship, or would you prefer to hurry through it? Are your church services designed to wait on God and pursue Him, or to get congregants out before the line at the buffet forms?

Unlike Martha in Luke 10, the woman previously mentioned chose worship over work. She chose waiting on God versus rushing through the experience. This also serves as a stark warning to workers: Don't let work replace worship.

Many Workers Struggle with Worship

After being in the ministry for over two decades, I have noticed that many workers, especially volunteers, tend to hide from worship with more work. They'll serve and serve, but rarely do they have intimate moments with God.

Instead of being in prayer meetings, they serve in other areas. Instead of being engaged in worship services, they find a project or task to be involved in. Worship is difficult

because it exposes hypocrisy, challenges mediocrity and lays us bare before God. It's not easy, but it is essential.

What Flows in Flows Out

Seeking the presence of God encourages the filling of the Spirit that pushes out the deeds of the flesh. Don't miss that, it's key: What flows in, flows out. Arguments, complaining and gossip all happen when we're filled with work more than we are filled with worship.

You can once again refuel the fire of the Spirit by taking time today to repent of a cold and callous heart. Let His presence become your pursuit. The more you seek Him the more you'll find Him.

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