



Week of Jan 12th-18th 2014

Chapters 8-14

the **gathering**
of the Inland Valley



Dear Family of God,

Happy New Year! We are excited and filled with faith for the new opportunities that will be afforded to this spiritual family in 2014!

We together as a spiritual family are truly blessed. As we approach what the Lord desires us to put our hands to this year, we are grateful so many have responded to fast and pray for month of Jan. The Gathering of the Inland Valley has covenanted with the Lord to be led out of His voice and not out of ritual and/or tradition.

I want to remind us of what the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy as he left him back in Ephesus to teach, reprove, encourage, oversee and to put things in order.

Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:18-19 *“Instruct them to do good, **to be rich in good works**, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”*

Let us heed these words of Paul to Timothy as we enter into the good work of fasting and prayer together as a spiritual family.

Blessings as we take yet another step together on our spiritual journey. May you all grow closer to the Father through Christ and enjoy your fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Ministers of the Gospel,

Mark & Joana

Contents & Components

4 Keys to hearing the voice of God–

Instructions for how to dialogue with God in a journal format!

Core Values:

ENCOUNTER

- Jesus in His *Word*, by His *Spirit*, and through your *Life!*

PARTICIPATE

- Practically engage God's heart and message!

IMAGINE

- Learn to access Divine strategies for your life and others!

CONNECT

- Learn to go deeper and hear God's voice and wisdom for your daily life!

How to get the most out of this Devotional

The devotional material is designed and laid out where each section builds on the one before it. You can take as little or as much time as you want each day in your time with the Lord. For maximum impact engage with every component every day.

4 Keys to hearing the voice of God~Mark Virkler

KEY #1- God's voice in our hearts sounds like a flow of spontaneous thoughts. Therefore, when I tune to God, I tune to spontaneity.

The bible says that the Lord answered me and said..... (Hab. 2:2). Habakkuk knew the sound of God's voice. Elijah described it as a still, small voice. I had always listened for an inner audible voice, and surely God can and does speak that way at times. However, I found that for most of us as spontaneous thoughts, visions, feelings or impressions. For example, haven't each of us had the experience of driving down the road and having a thought come to us to pray for a certain person? We generally acknowledge this to be the voice of God call us to pray for that individual. My question to you is, "What did God's voice sound like as you drove in your car? Was it an inner, audible voice, or was it a spontaneous thought that lit upon you mind?" Most of you would say that God's voice came to you as a spontaneous thought.

So I thought to myself, "Maybe when I listen for God's voice, I should be listening for a flow of spontaneous thoughts. Maybe spirit – level communication is received as spontaneous thoughts, impressions, feelings, and visions." Though experimentation and feedback from thousands of other, I am now convinced that this is so.

The Bible confirms this in many ways. The definition of *paga*, the Hebrew word for intercession, is "a chance encounter or an accidental intersecting." When God lays people on our hearts for intercession, He does it through *paga*, a chance encounter thought, accidentally intersecting our thought processes. Therefore, when I tune to God, I tune to chance encounter thoughts or spontaneous thoughts. When I am poised quietly before God in prayer, I have found that the flow of spontaneous thoughts that comes is quite definitely from God.

KEY# 2 – I must learn to still my own thoughts and emotions, so that I can sense God’s flow of thoughts and emotions within me.

Habakkuk said, “I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart...” (Hab. 2:1)

Habakkuk knew that in order to hear God’s quiet, inner; spontaneous thoughts, he had to first go to a quiet place and still his own thoughts and emotions. Psalm 46: 10 encourages us to be still, and know that He is God. There is a deep inner knowing (spontaneous flow) in our spirit that each of us can experience when we quiet our flesh and our minds.

I have found several simple ways to quiet myself so that I can more readily pick up God’s spontaneous flow. Loving God through a quiet worship song is a most effective means for me (note 2 kings 3:15). It is as I become still (thoughts, will, and emotions) and am poised before God that the divine flow is realized. Therefore, after I worship quietly and then become still, I open myself for that spontaneous flow. If thoughts come to me of things I have forgotten to do, I write them down and then dismiss them. If thoughts of guilt or unworthiness come to mind, I repent thoroughly, receive the washing of the blood of the Lamb, and put on His robe of righteousness, seeing myself spotless before the presence of God.

As I fix my gaze upon Jesus (Heb. 12:2), becoming quiet in His presence, and sharing with Him what is on my heart, I find that two – way dialogue begins to flow. Spontaneous thoughts flow from the throne of God to me, and I find that I am actually conversing with the King of kings.

It is very important that you become still and properly focused if you are going to receive the pure word of God. If you are not still, you will simply be receiving your own thoughts. If you are not properly focused on Jesus, you will receive an impure flow, because the intuitive flow comes out of that upon which you have fixed your eyes on. Therefore, if you fix your eyes upon Jesus, the intuitive flow comes from Jesus. If you fix your gaze upon some desire of your heart, the intuitive flow comes out of that desire of your heart. To have a pure flow you must first of all become still, and secondly, you must carefully fix your eyes upon Jesus. Again I will say, This is quite easily accomplished by quietly worshiping the King, and then receiving out of the stillness that follows.

KEY #3 – As I pray, I fix the eyes of my heart upon Jesus, seeing in the spirit the dreams and visions of Almighty God.

We have already alluded to this principle in the previous paragraphs; however, we need to develop it a bit further. Habakkuk said, “I will keep watch to see,” and God said, “Record the vision” (Hab. 2:1 &2). It is very interesting that Habakkuk was going to actually start looking for vision as he prayed. He was going to open the eyes of his heart, and look into the spirit world to see what God wanted to show him. This is an intriguing idea.

I had never thought of opening the eyes of my heart and looking for vision. However, the more I thought of it, the more I realized this was exactly what God intends me to do. He gave me eyes in my heart. They are to be used to see in the spirit world the vision and movement of Almighty God. I believe there is an active spirit world functioning all around me. This world is full of angels, demons, the Holy Spirit, the omnipresent God, and His omnipresent Son, Jesus. There is no reason for me not to see it, other than rational culture, which tells me not to believe it is even there and provides no instruction on how to become open to seeing this spirit world.

The most obvious prerequisite to seeing is that we need to look. Daniel was seeing a vision in his mind and he said, “I was looking....I kept looking...I kept looking” (Dan. 7:1, 9, 13). Now as I pray, I look for Jesus present with me, and I watch Him as He speaks to me, doing and saying the things that are on His heart.

Many Christians will find that if they will only look, they will see. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. It is as simple as that. You will see a spontaneous inner vision in a manner similar to receiving spontaneous inner thoughts. You can see Christ present with you in a comfortable setting, because Christ is present with you in a comfortable setting. Actually, you will probably discover that inner vision comes so easily you will have a tendency to reject it, thinking that it is just you. (Doubt is Satan’s most effective weapon against the Church.) However, if you will persist in recording these visions, your doubt will soon be overcome by faith as you recognize that the content of them could only be birthed in Almighty God.

Key 3: Continued

God continually revealed Himself to His covenant people using dream and vision. He did so from Genesis to Revelation and said that, since the Holy Spirit was poured out in Acts 2, we should expect to receive a continuing flow of dreams and visions (Acts 2:1-4). Jesus, our perfect example, demonstrated this ability of living out of ongoing contact with Almighty God. He said that He did nothing on His own initiative, but only that which He **saw the Father doing, and heard the Father saying** (John 5:19,20,30). What an incredible way to live!

Is it actually possible for us to live out of the divine initiative as Jesus did? A major purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection was that the veil be torn from top to bottom, giving us access into the immediate presence of God, we are commanded to draw near (Heb. 10:19-22). Therefore, even though what I am describing seems a bit unusual to a rational twentieth century culture, it is demonstrated and described as being a central biblical teaching and experience. It is time to restore to the Church all that belongs to the Church.

Because of their intensely rational nature and existence in an overly rational culture, some will need more assistance and understanding of these truths before they can move into them. They will find this help in the book ***How to Hear God's Voice*** by the same author.

Key#4 – Journaling, the writing out of our prayers and God's answers, provides a great new freedom in hearing God's voice.

God told Habakkuk to record the vision and inscribe it on tablets.... (Hab. 2:2). It had never crossed my mind to write out my prayers and God's answers as Habakkuk did at God's command. If you begin to search Scripture for this idea, you will find hundreds of chapters demonstrating it (Psalms, many of the prophets, Revelation). Why then hadn't I ever thought of it?

I called the process "journaling," and I began experimenting with it. I discovered it to be a fabulous facilitator to clearly discerning God's inner, spontaneous flow, because as I journaled I was able to write in faith for long periods of time, simply believing it was God. I did not have to test it as I was receiving it, (which jams one's receiver), Because I knew that when the flow was over I could go back and test and examine it carefully, making sure that it lined up with Scripture.

You will be amazed when you attempt journaling. Doubt may hinder you at first, but throw it off, reminding yourself that it is a biblical concept, and God is present, speaking to His children. Don't take yourself too seriously. When you do, you become tense and get in the way of the Holy Spirit's movement. It is when we cease **our labors** and enter His rest that God is free (Heb 4:10). Therefore, put a smile on your face, sit back comfortably, get out your pen and paper, and turn your attention toward God in praise and worship, seeking His face. As you write out your question to God and become still, fixing your gaze on Jesus, who is present with you, you will suddenly have a very good thought in response to your question. Don't doubt it, simply write it down. Later, as you read your journaling, you, too, will be amazed to discover that you are indeed dialoguing with God.

Some final notes: No one should practice this without having first read through the New Testament (preferably, the entire Bible), and being submitted to solid, spiritual leadership. All major directional moves that come through journaling should be submitted before being acted upon.

 **ENCOUNTER**

Write the verse(s) that stands out the most to you word for word in the space below.

 **PARTICIPATE**

When did Philip first arrive on the scene of scripture? (Hint reread chapter 6)

V.12 states that many believed Philips preaching about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ and many were being baptized.

Who do you suppose did the baptizing?

Are you authorized to baptize people? Why or why not?

 **IMAGINE**

Pray in the Spirit (Jude 20) for 2-5 min regarding your authority to baptize. Make a verbal declaration to the spirit realm regarding your authority ask the Holy Spirit to empower you lead someone to Christ and baptize them.

 **CONNECT**

Journal question: Call some one from your EPIC group and share with one another your insights and thoughts from this chapter. If you are not in an EPIC group consider attending one from the list on the back of the bulletin.

 **ENCOUNTER**

Write the verse(s) that stands out the most to you word for word in the space below.

 **PARTICIPATE**

V.19-20 How long did Paul wait to begin to proclaim Christ?

Have you ever spoken out boldly for Christ?

Do you think this only for people like 'Paul' and a select few, or does there seem to be an expected pattern emerging from followers of Jesus?

Pray this prayer if you desire a greater boldness: Lord Jesus baptize me a fresh in the power of your Holy Spirit to proclaim your word with greater boldness. Lord Jesus I desire a greater boldness in my witness.

 **IMAGINE**

Pray in the Spirit for 2-5 min:

Ask the Lord to show you 3 possibilities where you can have a greater boldness to proclaim the name of Jesus.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

 **CONNECT**

Journal question: Lord Jesus can you show me what I look like when I'm being bold for you?

ENCOUNTER

Write the verse(s) that stands out the most to you word for word in the space below.

PARTICIPATE

What is the significance of Peter's vision and his resulting ministry to Cornelius' household?

IMAGINE

Pray in the Spirit for 2-5 min regarding you personally crossing cultural barriers like Peter did. Briefly record below what the Holy Spirit showed you regarding this subject.

CONNECT

Journal question: Lord can you show me how this can apply in my life? And what benefit does this practically have in my life?

ENCOUNTER

Write the verse(s) that stands out the most to you word for word in the space below.

PARTICIPATE

Notice how Peter shared his experience with others who were in opposition with Him regarding his obedience to the voice of the Lord.

What experience(s) have you had with Holy Spirit that have changed your view on things and have caused you to have conflict with others who still think how you used too?

Principle: You never have to defend or argue for God, only share your personal experience with your opponents. Especially family and friends. This is how you use your testimony to proclaim Jesus.

IMAGINE

Pray in the Spirit for 2-5 min regarding being resisted by others. List three areas/people where your testimony will come in handy.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

CONNECT

Call someone in the church this week and encourage them in their walk with the Lord. Share with them what you learned from this chapter.

 **ENCOUNTER**

Write the verse(s) that stands out the most to you word for word in the space below.

 **PARTICIPATE**

Compare v.5 and v.7-10 What are your observations?

 **IMAGINE**

Pray in the Spirit for 2-5 min regarding fervent prayer by the church and the release of Angels. List 3 areas our church needs to engage in fervent prayer in this season.

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

 **CONNECT**

Journal question: Lord who in the fellowship needs my fervent prayer right now?

 **ENCOUNTER**

Write the verse(s) that stands out the most to you word for word in the space below.

 **PARTICIPATE**

Reread Acts 1:8 Then look at your bible map (if your bible doesn't have maps in the back, then google 'map of Paul's first missionary journey) and locate Antioch and Cyprus.

According to the outline of Acts 1:8 how far has the Word spread?

Circle one:

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth

 **IMAGINE**

Pray in the Spirit for 2-5 min asking the Lord to show you your 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth.

What did the Holy Spirit reveal to you about your mission field?

 **CONNECT**

Take a minute and thank the Lord for the faithful witnesses who carried the message of Jesus' gospel across the seas and down through the generations and for the person who proclaimed to you.

Journal question: Lord how can I be more mission minded?

 **ENCOUNTER**

Write the verse(s) that stands out the most to you word for word in the space below.

 **PARTICIPATE**

What spirit was operating in the opposition?

What does this spirit want to do people who proclaim the Word of God with boldness? (see v.5)

What was their response? What was the wisdom of their response?

 **IMAGINE**

Pray in the Spirit for 2-5 min on v.10. Record your insights and/or what the Lord showed you.

 **CONNECT**

Journal question: Lord why did you choose me?

(Note: v.14 Luke calls Barnabas an apostle equal with Paul)

