

Session 8 Intimacy with God: My Two Favorite Verses and Prayers

This is session 8, and we are looking at what I am calling my two favorite verses, my two favorite prayers. The reason I am saying that and kind of smiling in one way is because I really have a hundred favorite verses, but these are really my two favorites. I'm really wanting to stir your curiosity. If these verses are new to you, you might ask, "Why would he pick those two verses? Huh, that is interesting." If I can get you leaning into it, then I've gotten you hooked in, and that is what I am trying to do. But they really are my two favorite verses and my two favorite prayers.

However, before we do that, we are going to go back to some months ago in the spring when we were spending an unusual amount of time—I think were about six or eight weeks in a row—at every one of our four weekend services talking about Jesus rescuing us from the Laodicean spirit and from the spirit of dullness. I believe that that is a prophetic word or an emphasis of the Spirit on the body of Christ worldwide, far bigger than our little world here or even just America. I believe the Holy Spirit is wanting to rescue the body of Christ, the darling of His heart across the nations, from a spirit of dullness. He wants to dine with us. He wants to give us gold. These two favorite verses and prayers that I am sharing with you are really a way for us to engage in getting that gold and a way to participate in dining with Him and having Him feed us spiritual meals, feeding our hearts in that intimate way.

I. REVIEW: JESUS WILL RESCUE US FROM SPIRITUAL DULLNESS—BY DINING WITH US

- A. Jesus promised the church of Laodicea deep fellowship with Him. He required that they repent of being spiritually lukewarm and promised to give them “gold” and to “dine with them” (Rev. 3:20).

16“...you are lukewarm...¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire...¹⁹...be zealous and repent. ²⁰I stand at the door and knock. If anyone...opens the door, I will...dine with him... (Rev. 3:16-20)

Jesus promised the Laodicean church deep fellowship with Himself. This is really a word of hope in the midst of a correction and a rebuke. He is really offering them hope. He says in Revelation 3:16—we know it so well, but I do not think we can look at this too many times. Jesus told them in the larger your context even more than just what I have on the notes here—He said, “You do not really know that you are lukewarm.” The problem with being lukewarm is that you do not know that you are. He said, in effect, “But you are, and you are not even aware of it. You have become content with having so little from My table. I have so much more for you, but I want your hunger stirred up.”

Verse 18: “I want you to buy gold from Me,” and it is gold refined by fire. So, He is saying “Come and buy this gold,” and in doing that, verse 19, “You need to be zealous.” It is not just a kind of feeble effort where you passively set your heart for a weekend or a month or two. “Be zealous! Stay with it! Stay in the process.” Because, verse 20, “I stand at the door, I am knocking at the door of your heart. I have more that I want to give you if you are hungry for it. If anyone opens the door”— and I love that word “anyone”— “I will have spiritual meals with them. I will fellowship and I will dine with them. I will come personally and minister to their heart and teach him or her directly from My heart to their heart.”

However, the Lord requires that we are zealous, which is more than us just saying, “Well, I think that sounds good.” No, it is a real determination, not that we do it in the power of our own strength, but we actually do it through conversation with Him. It is actually the conversation with Him that causes our hearts to go forward. It is not some new effort where we are trying to make passion happen in our heart. In effect, He is going to say as

the takeaway, “practical to do” thing, “If you will enter into a more regular conversation with Me, I will change the way you feel. I will change the way you think. I will do things inside of you that will surprise you.”

- B. **Buy from Me gold:** We are repenting in order to “buy gold” or to engage in the God-ordained process of acquiring a deep relationship with God as highlighted in John 13-17. In “buying” gold, we do not “earn” it, but we invest ourselves in a costly way to position ourselves to receive “gold.” Isaiah called us “to buy food” by listening and being attentive in our conversation with the Spirit.

When He says, “Buy from Me gold,” we might automatically think we are deserving the gold, or we are earning it, buying it, purchasing it. But He is actually telling us to engage in the God-ordained process of acquiring gold. It is a process in or by the grace of God. We do not earn it. We do not buy it in that way, but we buy it in the sense that we invest ourselves in a costly way to position our self in conversation with Him because it does take emotional determination and emotional effort to position our self to engage in that conversation, even when the conversation is not lively or inspiring. The very emotional kind of setting our self into that effort is investing ourselves in a way. I mean, never by “staying in a conversation with God” could we imagine that we earned gold just because we are talking to Him, but He says, “Engage in that God-ordained process, invest yourself in a costly way.”

1“Everyone who thirsts...come, buy wine and milk without money 2...Listen carefully to Me... let your soul delight in abundance. 3Incline your ear, and come to Me...” (Isa. 55:1-3)

In Isaiah 55, Isaiah is the one who taught us how to buy things from God. He was the first one that talked about buying something from God with no money. It is kind of a play on words. How do you buy something with no money? Well, God doesn’t really mean purchasing it in that technical sense, but He is saying “If you are thirsty, come and buy this spiritual food from Me.” He is calling it wine and milk here in Isaiah 55. “It does not cost money, but it is by listening to Me and talking to Me.” We buy things from God by entering into that God-ordained process of actually listening to Him, reading His word, and talking back to Him. That is how we buy it from God.

- C. **I dine with him:** To eat together speaks of deep fellowship as the Spirit tenderizes our heart. The teaching in John 14-16 is in the context of the meal the disciples shared with Jesus in John 13. Thus, we spiritually eat the food—the truths and promises that Jesus highlighted in John 14-17.

He says, in effect “If you will do this, I will dine with you. I will draw closer to you than you imagine. I have so much to give you, and I desire to feed you, but I am not going to force-feed you. And I will not make you engage in the conversation with Me, but in as much as you want the conversation, I will stay in it as long as you do. But I will not force you to it.”

The teaching of John 13-17—which in this course, it is our purpose to do five twelve-part series on John 13-17. There are so many implications to so many of those phrases. So, I do not want to just run by it quickly. I would like to camp out here for about a year. We are going to continue to look at it this fall and in the spring, as well, to really break it down phrase by phrase.

In John 13 He is having a physical meal with them. You remember that that is where He girds Himself and washes their feet at the meal, and He tells them to be a servant. Then He actually feeds them a meal—a spiritual meal—in John 14, 15, and 17. So, it is in the context of a physical meal that He gives them a spiritual meal. And so, the Lord has really highlighted these five chapters in John 13-17 for the last time before the book of Revelation that He spoke of a meal was right here, and I have no doubt that that was on His mind, “I am going

to feed you from the spiritual diet that I fed the apostles at the Last Supper, I am going to feed you if you want to be fed by that.”

- D. On March 3, 2021, I had an open vision of **“a door opening to a room that was filled with light.”** I had been praying for grace to open the door of my heart and of our spiritual family more widely for Jesus to “come in and dine with us” according to Revelation 3:20. I understand this vision as the Lord helping us by opening a door of understanding to receive glimpses of His glory (Rev. 4:1) and to *dine with Jesus*—by engaging in the Trinitarian conversation as highlighted in John 13-17.

I have shared this a few times and I love sharing it because I just love reliving it in my own thinking. I think about it quite a bit. I had an open vision. I have had two open visions in fifty years of walking with the Lord. And, as I’ve said, at this pace, I am scheduled to have another open vision by the time I am 100. Okay, so there you go! And what I mean by an open vision is that I was awake, and I actually saw like a movie screen right in front of me. It was quite startling because you do not think it is going to happen, and it is happening, and you think, “This looks like a movie screen!” And it was right in front of me, I was in my office praying right next to the prayer room. I had my lights dimmed slightly, when, all of a sudden, this door appeared! The door opened towards me, and I was looking into this room filled with bright, brilliant, golden light. I was just startled by it.

Again, it took a minute to know what was happening. You think, “This looks like a vision!” but you are not used to having a vision, so it takes the human process involved in that. I was sitting on the couch having just come out of the prayer room, getting ready to go back into another set, and I was saying, “Lord, this thing that You are talking to us about, this knocking at the door of our heart, Lord, as a spiritual family and me as an individual, but as a spiritual family, I want You to help us. Give us grace to open the door of our heart.” We really want that grace, and it is more than just us; it is something that we want for the body of Christ across the nation and the nations of the world because I know the Holy Spirit is speaking this.

Suddenly this door appeared, and it opened, and I was looking at this golden light! You would think that the light would have come out of the room and shone on me, you know, “Glory to God!” but it was not that way. I was looking into a room, and in Revelation 3:20—the passage we are looking at—Jesus said, “Open the door of your heart.”

Then skip two verses and go to Revelation 4:1 He opens the door of His glory and so He is still in the same conversation in Revelation 4:1. There is no chapter break in the conversation. Jesus said in Revelation 3:18 “Open the door of your heart” and in Revelation 4:1 He said, “I will open the door of heaven, I will open the door of My glory.” And He made it clear, “As you open the door of your heart to Me, I will open the door of My glory to you.” This is something bigger than a personal word. This was an encouragement to me as a shepherd. I want to encourage lots of folks: if you will open the door of your heart, He will open the door of His glory. There are only two verses separating chapter 3:20 and chapter 4:1.

- E. John 13-17 is an invitation to Trinitarian fellowship—to engage in conversation with Trinity. This will be emphasized to the end-time Church which will get **caught up in Trinitarian joy** (Jn. 15:11) as key to walking as overcomers who are victorious over the Antichrist (Rev. 12:11; 15:2).

II. MY TWO FAVORITE VERSES AND MY FAVORITE PRAYER—JOHN 15:9 & 17:26

- A. My favorite way to start my prayer times is by praying according to John 15:9 and John 17:26. These two verses set us on the trajectory of being transformed by God’s love.

Now we are going to look and highlight how to really open the door of our heart, how to buy the gold, and how to feast at His table, which really comes down to conversation with Him, as simple as that is. So, I want to highlight what I call my two favorite verses. I have been really prioritizing these two verses for like forty years. I don't exactly remember the time I began. However, for many, many, many years it has been John 17:26 and John 15:9. I have engaged with the Lord around these verses for many years.

I am saying that for only two reasons. Number one, if these verses are new to you, I want you to ask, "Why would he do that? What is in those verses which would make somebody do that?" Again, stirring up your holy curiosity. The second is that I never get weary talking about these two verses. It is just a joy to me to talk to the Lord about it, to talk to people about it, to think about it, study it, read books, read articles and anything else I can find from someone else who has more insight on these two verses. I want it.

So, I am going to read the two verses to you, and then we will break them down a little bit. It is all in the upper room, and it is at the Last Supper. It is in John 13-17, at the final Last Supper, the night before Jesus would go to the cross the next day.

⁹"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide [stay engaged] in My love." (Jn. 15:9)

Jesus makes this most startling statement to them in John 15:9. He says, "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you." That is, "In the same intensity that the Father loves Me, in that same intensity I love you." So, He says, "Abide," or "Stay engaged in this reality. Abide in it. Stay locked into this conversation with Me." I don't mean every minute of every day. That is not what I mean, but, "Stay engaged in the process of understanding what I just told you." So that is John 15:9.

²⁶And I [Jesus] have declared [revealed] to them Your name [glory], and will declare it, that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me may be in them..." (Jn. 17:26)

Then maybe an hour later or not long afterwards, it is in the John 17 prayer time. He is praying to the Father. And in this prayer, He is actually prophesying. I mean He is praying to the Father, but it ends up being a prophecy to us because how many of you know that when Jesus prays something to the Father in faith, you know that it is a prophetic word which is going to come to pass? However, it is also a word of encouragement, of hope, to us that if He would pray this to the Father, and the Father smiles and says, "Yes," I mean we are in the right position; we are in a good place. If Jesus is talking about us this way, this is remarkable.

Here is what He says. He ends the "John 13-17" five chapters, the Upper Room Discourse, with this statement. Here is the crescendo of crescendos! I mean it does not get any more intense or any more glorious than this, the very final phrase, and then it is over. The conversation and prayer of those five chapters. He says "Father,"—He is talking to the Father, verse 26—"I have declared"—meaning, I have revealed—"Your name to them and I am going to continue to declare it! And the reason I am going to declare Your name to them is **so the love with which You love Me would be supernaturally imparted into them.**" That is a remarkable statement!

Jesus is saying, "Father, for three-and-a-half years, through My teaching ministry, through My lifestyle, through My miracles, I have revealed Your name"—in other words, Your personality—"They have seen My lifestyle. They have heard My teachings. They have watched My miracles, and they know what You are like because I have revealed Your name, Your personality, Your glory, to them." It is all the same idea. "And I am going to continue to do it!"

Now they are listening to Him pray, and perhaps they think, "Okay, You are going to continue to reveal the Father," but what Jesus means is, "I am going to the cross tomorrow. Then I am going to die, and rise from the dead, go to the right hand of the Father, then pour out the Spirit, and I am going to keep declaring what the

Father is like to them by the person of the Holy Spirit. And the reason I am going to do this is that I know that as I reveal You, Father, to them in just little installments of inspirations, in little moments of inspiration, it will add up over time.” Just small times, where we talk to the Lord and when we read and a verse inspires us, just little bits of moments of inspiration, they will add up over time. And every now and again we will get a major encounter, but mostly it is in little installments of the Spirit touching us for just a few moments here and there which inspires our understanding and our emotions.

He was saying, as it were, “What I am going to do is when I reveal the Father to you in those conversation times with Me, it is going to supernaturally impart to you the Father’s love for Me. You are going to love Me like the Father loves Me!” And this is going to go on forever and forever! I mean, can you imagine any greater destiny imaginable than being caught up in the love that the Father has for the Son? We feel it! We are liberated by it! We enjoy it, and our hearts are tender. It is like, “This is so satisfying!” This is the destiny of the body of Christ forever and forever, but we do not want to wait for the resurrection to enter into this in a greater way. We can enter into it now. Sure, we are not going to get nearly as far in this age as we will in the age to come, but, beloved, there is a lot more that we can experience, even in this age.

- B. In John 15:9, Jesus declared the two most significant truths (that the *Father loves Jesus*; that *Jesus loves His people in the same intensity*) and gave the most important command (*to abide or stay engaged and in conversation with God* related to these two truths). The kingdom of God is secure forever because of John 15:9ab; our personal lives are strong as we obey John 15:9c.

We are going to look at the first one, John 15:9. I want to break the verse down a bit for you. There are two very significant truths that I call “mountain truths,” meaning that these truths are so big, the implications are so vast, that it is like a mountain of implication and truth for each one of these phrases. So, there are two phrases which are ever so brief. And Jesus is all but saying “I will give you the title of the book, and if you want to develop it more, just stay with Me in conversation and I will break down many, many, many implications of these two phrases. I call them two most significant truths.

Phrase number one, the truth is the way the Father loves Jesus. The way that God loves God. That is a mountain of truth. The way that God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit love, talk, relate and delight in each other from eternity past that is massive! And so Jesus says “The way the Father loves Me,” and He could have paused and said, “There is a whole lot more behind that phrase the way that God loves God. Think on it! That is truth number one!”

“Significant truth number two that is the way that God loves you. I love you in the same intensity that God loves God! I love you like the Father loves Me, like I love the Spirit, like the Spirit loves the Father! I delight in you. I want to relate to you. I want to share with you. I want to partner with you in ways that are parallel to the way the Father partners with Me!” Now we know that there is the uniqueness of Jesus that He is eternally God but in His anointed humanity He is talking about being a man anointed by the Spirit. That is your destiny forever to relate to Him—the Father, Son and the Spirit—in the way that He relates to the Father and the Spirit in His humanity.” And so those are the two big statements, but, again, see them like the title of a vast book in God’s library. “The way that God loves God and the way that God loves people.” Got it!

The Lord says., “Now I will unpack those to you, if you want, from Genesis to Revelation. I will unpack these two truths to you.”

Then He gives what I consider or call the most important commandment in the Bible. He says, “Abide in this love.” Some translations say, “Live in this love.” Abide and live in would be the same. Other translations say, “Dwell in this love,” or “Remain in this love,” and so whether you use dwell, live, remain, or abide here, the

command is: “Stay engaged in this truth!” Do not graduate from it and move on. Now there are seasons in your life where the Lord will highlight a different truth or a different assignment and in those different seasons where we have different points of focus on different truths and assignments; never do those truths or assignments substitute for these. These are always the foundational interaction we have with the Lord. I never want to outgrow this. I never want to graduate from searching it out: “Abide in love, search it out, engage in the conversation. Participate with Me; ask Me more about this!” is what He is saying.

Now when I think of the kingdom of God, I think the kingdom of God is secure forever because the Father loves the Son, because God loves God. Because God loves God, it is going to go right, and then in our lives because God loves us! Because God loves God and God loves us, beloved, the kingdom is secure, and our lives are strong forever! I mean, what a glorious thing to think about the future in deep confidence of the tranquility of family love that can never be broken forever and forever.

And so, Jesus gives them this statement in John 15:9. Now it is interesting in John 15:9—and I will probably say this a dozen times in these five 12-part series that we are planning to do, and we may do more who knows—when Jesus tells them this, “The way the Father loves Me—the intensity with which the Father loves Me—that is how I love you” when He tells them this, literally just a few moments later He tells them, “Oh, by the way, every one of you will deny Me tonight.” And so, He was not talking to them out of some idealism like, “You guys are so amazing!” He was actually saying, “You will all stumble and deny Me tonight, but I want you to know that, even before you stumble.”

Though Peter said, “No! I won’t!” Jesus said, “Well actually, you will, Peter, and you ought to be asking Me to help you instead of correcting My perception.” Peter said, “Oh no! I will die for You!” Jesus said, “No, no, you are a weak and broken man like the rest of them, but I love you. And I want you to know that I love you like the Father loves Me. I know you better than you know you, so when you stumble, you are going to recover because I am going to reveal My passion for you even in your weakness.”

At the end of the day, that is our security, because God loves God, and God loves us, and that is why I have far more confidence in His commitment to me than in my commitment to Him. However, Peter, and I both started the same way. I started like Peter. I was far more confident in my commitment to God, and I did not know much about His commitment to me. “Lord I am going to be....” I was sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years old in high school, and we were all reading missionary biographies, and we were going to go to the nations and try to be martyrs or something as we did not know what we were really going to do. However, we were all “Rah, rah, rah, rah, rah,” and we were so confident in our dedication. We were going to be warriors and zealous! Then I would stumble, fall, and sin, and say, “Oh Lord! I can’t believe I did that!”

I can imagine the Lord whispering, “There is a whole lot more where that came from! You are only shocked as a statement of your spiritual pride! You should not be so shocked. You do not really get who you are. Have confidence in My commitment to you more than your commitment to Me and you will have a lot better journey ahead.”

And it took me a few years to begin to sort that out, then I said, “Hey, that is a good deal actually!”

And that is really what He was telling the apostles right there at that table. He said, “You are going to deny Me tonight, but you know what? I am coming after you!” And the reason we will have a history together forever is because He is always coming after you. Even when you stumble and then say, yes, you do have to say, yes, and you have to respond, but it is because He comes after you, that is why this thing is going to work.

- C. I enjoy starting my prayer times by praying according to John 15:9 and John 17:26.
I intermittently pray in the Spirit while praying through these two Bible verses.

So I love to start my prayer times—though I don’t always do this, but I often do this, and I would like to say I do it every time, but that would be exaggerated—I like to start my day with this, taking these prayers, these two verses and even if it is ten or twenty seconds or ten or twenty minutes—and it is not very often ten or twenty minutes; it is normally several minutes—I don’t know as I’m not checking the time. However, I will do this a number of times throughout the day.

1. “Thank you, Father, for the way You love Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 15:9a). Show me more details! Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about the love You share with the Father and the Son.”

***9*“As the Father loved Me...” (Jn. 15:9a)**

I will stop and I will take each phrase—here is my simple little advice or exhortation—I like to tell God when I see a truth about Him, like God loves God, God loves me—I like to say “Thank You, God, show me more!” It is that simple. I like to say, “Thank You. Show me more.”

A lot of folks will read a verse like this and say, “Wow!” and then they might underline it, and then read the next verse. Instead of just saying “Wow!” and underlining it and moving on to the next verse, stop for ten or twenty seconds, sixty seconds, and talk to the Lord about it. “As the Father loved Me” I love to say “Father, thank You, for the way You love Jesus! Show me more!” And if you will say that, and I do not know how many times, sometimes up to six times a day, and some days I do not say it, but I mostly like to start my prayer time in my days and even when I’m driving for ninety seconds or walking down the hallway to the next meeting just whispering that in my heart. That postures my heart to receive more and more, and if you will turn it into conversation with the Lord, many times nothing notable will happen, but many times a little inspiration will happen, and you never know when. I don’t measure it or count it or try to add it all up. I just want to stay with it. I want to abide in this conversation.

So, I will just say, “Father, thank You, for the way You love Jesus. Thank You for the way You love the Holy Spirit,” or I could say “Jesus, thank You for the way You love the Father,” or “Holy Spirit, thank You for the way You talk with the Father and You delight in the Son. Thank You for the way You celebrate Him. Show me more.” Those are just different ways to say the same thing because you can say “Thank You, Father, for the way You love the Son. Show Me more” or the way You celebrate, the way You delight in Him, the way You talk, the way You partner together, the way that You enjoy each other’s presence, the way You are committed to each other.” Use any one of those verbs in there—it is all the same general category—and say, “Show me more!”

If you pray that for ten, or twenty seconds, often it will stretch out to two or three minutes, and every now and then it will go out to ten or twenty minutes. You do not start saying, “I am going to do this for an hour, or I am not going to do it at all.” No, just do it in little installments of conversation. That is probably not the best way to say it, but in just those little whispers, those short little conversations.

And then I like to say the same prayer another way. Instead of saying “Father, thank You for the way You love Jesus. Show me more,” how about this: “Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about the love You share with the Father and the Son. Let me see what You see, Holy Spirit, about the love that You have, the love You share, the love You enjoy with the Son. Let me see what You see! Let me see what You see and feel what You feel, about the way the Father loves the Son. What do You feel when You look at those two as They love each other?”

Now again, I do not pray every one of these prayers every time as I just gave you eight ways to say the little ten-second prayer. And there are all kinds of ways to say this, but I love to just say “Father, thank You for the way You love Jesus. Show me more,” or “Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about the way

the Father loves Jesus!” Again, there are just different ways to say the same thing and the key is to just get in the conversation. You do not have to make it long. It will become long on its own. Just get into the conversation ten, twenty, thirty, forty seconds, two or three minutes, and when you are done, you are done, then move on. Then in an hour or two or six hours or the next morning do it again, but I like to do this a number of times throughout the day just spontaneously.

2. “Thank you, Jesus, for the way You love me and Your people (Jn. 15:9b). Show me more! Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about the love that Jesus has for me and for others.”

“...I also have loved you...” (Jn. 15:9b)

Let’s go to the first truth which is the way that God loves God. The second truth is the way that God loves me or loves you! Jesus said, “In the way the Father loves Me, I have also loved you.” I like to take that and say, “Jesus, thank You for the way You love me!” Or make it different, “Thank You for the way You love” and name a family member. Or if you really want to get “Sermon on the Mount.com,” say, “Lord, show me the way You love the adversary who is standing against me!” If you really want to go all the way, say “Holy Spirit let me see what You see about that guy in the body of Christ who is really troubling me,” but put your seatbelt on because the Lord loves that guy.

I remember a few times when the Lord let me know how He feels about that guy and I thought, “Grrrrrh, grrrh. Why?”

“Because that is who I am and that is good for you because that is why I love you because of who I am,” would say the Lord.”

“Oh yeah, good point. Okay, good point, okay.”

Ask the Holy Spirit, “Let me see what You see and feel what You feel about the way that Jesus loves me.” I just challenge you to ask the Holy Spirit to show you that. He will show you the way He feels about the way Jesus loves you. I mean, not every time will it be dramatic, but you will get little whispers here and there. And when I get these little whispers—and it is not like I hear it; that is not what I mean by a whisper—just a thought comes that inspires me. And I like to write that thought down. I am a journal fanatic. I like to write down inspiring thoughts. That is why you will rarely see me ever without a notepad or my laptop in the prayer room. I mean you might, every now and then. Because if the singers on the platform are saying something or the guy praying and I am interacting with them, or I have a Bible open while they are singing, and I say something to the Lord or they say something which inspires me, I want to write the phrase down. More times than not, I don’t even re-read it later, so I have pages and pages of phrases, but sometimes I do. I never know when I am going to, but I just love to write it down because when I write it down, it is like I am in the conversation. And when I write it down, it actually grows so I have a sentence or two. Then I add another phrase or two and then another phrase. And when I write, it is a way of staying in the conversation a little bit longer and it is amazing.

When I look back over the forty years of doing this, how many inspiring thoughts have come to me by my writing and saying them back to the Lord. I think,” I have never thought that before, but I like that thought. It is a good thought!” And the Lord could say “And where do you think you got that thought?” Now, I don’t go around saying, “God told me this,” but I just love to capture thoughts even that I say back to God or phrases that inspire me. Now I’ll say something—some of you have heard it so you will know where I am going, but I’ll say it just to get your attention and then I’ll explain it—I am my favorite teacher. My favorite teacher in the body of Christ is me! Hahahaha! I am kind of setting you up to say “What?”

Your favorite teacher in the body of Christ is actually you, though you might not know that because 1 John 2:20 says “The anointing abides in you.” The Holy Spirit is in you, and if you will talk to the Holy Spirit and to the Lord more, you will say phrases that will come from His heart that are tailor-made to your struggle, to your personality, to your strengths and weakness, that have been tailor-made for you.

Nobody will move your heart more. Nobody moves your heart more than your own words. That is just a human reality. That is one reason why the Lord is so adamant that people do not complain because, when we complain whether we know it or not, it is ever so slightly marking our heart. Your words move you more than anybody else’s words do. You might think so-and-so’s words move you more, but you say so many words to yourself that you don’t even count!

And if you will talk to God and capture the little phrases that inspire you, you will find out, when you look back five and ten years later, you will say, “I have gotten more from those little thoughts and inspirations,” and I am not talking about secrets about the names of angels and the mysterious events that are going to unfold over in China somewhere. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about those inspiring thoughts where the Holy Spirit will actually use your own words and your own little phrases, and He will teach you from your own conversation with Him.

And so there you have it! You are your favorite teacher, too! You just might not know it because maybe you have not done that much with it. However, if you stay with it, in a year or two or five or ten years later, you will come back and say, “Oh my goodness! You know I appreciate your stuff, Mike, but I like my stuff a lot better!”

I will say, “There you go! That’s it! You got it! You got it!” The Spirit is in you. He is a tailor-made tutor for your strengths and weaknesses, your personality, your mindset, and your destiny. However, He needs you talking to Him. Talk to Him and capture it!

Again, I just don’t like going to a prayer meeting if I don’t have a notepad, and many times I might not write much down, but I will get those two or three phrases. For years I used to go and type them into my laptop, so now I just take my laptop. I have stacks of notepads that I don’t even know what is in them, but it was fun doing it because, again, it marks you while you are doing it and while it is happening.

3. “I commit to abide in Your love (Jn. 15:9c), help me more!”

9“...abide [stay engaged] in My love.” (Jn. 15:9c)

Truth number one is the way the Father loves Jesus, the way God loves God. “Thank You, God, for the way You love the Son. Show me more!” Truth number 2, Jesus says, “That is how I love you.” “Thank You, Jesus, for the way You love me. Show me more!” Now, number 3 is not a truth, but an exhortation to obey. He says, “Abide in this.” Stay engaged in this. Search out this truth. To abide in it doesn’t just mean conversation. Study it. Talk about it. Ask about it. You know, read books or articles on it or anything you can. I have read so much material over the years just on the love of God, and some of it is really boring, but you never know, so I am going to read it just in case.

Then a little spark of insight will come, and I respond with a “Wow!” That is “searching it out.” That is abiding in this conversation, and so I will put that under this category. And so I’ll stop, and I’ll take that third phrase and say, “Father, thank You for the way You love the Son, Jesus, thank You for the way You love me, show me more!” and then I will say, “Holy Spirit, I set my heart to abide in love. I set my heart to stay in this conversation. Help me!” Instead of “show me more” I say, “Help me. Help me more!”

If you will have that ten or twenty-second conversation, it will take off sometimes, and it will grow to two or three minutes, and when you least expect it, the Lord will give you another insight about that. So, I have come

to appreciate that as the number one commandment in the Bible: to stay engaged in searching out and talking to the Lord about these two truths, and abide in them, stay engaged in them and stay locked into them.

- D. Jesus promised to reveal the Father’s name (glory) and prayed a most important prayer—that the Father’s love for Jesus be imparted in us. I pray, “Holy Spirit, reveal the Father’s glory to me and impart His love for Jesus in me. Escort me into Your sapphire glory (Ex. 24:10; Ezek. 1:26).”

²⁶And I [Jesus] have declared [revealed] to them Your name [glory], and will declare it, that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me may be in them... (Jn. 17:26)

¹⁰...There was under His [God’s] feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone... (Ex. 24:10)

John 17:26—now we are going to my second favorite verse. I mean, I just don’t know how anything is grander than John 17:26, except for John 15:9, I mean, the two of them! I do not know which one is greater, and you do not have to pick; you can just have them both. However, to the Father, Jesus promised to reveal the Father’s name to you. He did it for three and a half years in His ministry, His teachings, in His miracles. and His lifestyle. And now from the right hand of the Father by the Spirit, He says, “I am going to keep giving you inspiring insights to what the Father’s glory—His name or His personality—is like, and what that is going to do is tenderize your heart so that you will love Me by the inspiration of the way the Father loves Me.” I mean, this is amazing!

So, I like to pray that prayer. I say, “Holy Spirit, reveal the Father’s glory to me and impart love for Jesus. Impart Your love for Jesus in me. Holy Spirit, reveal the Father’s glory to me and impart His love for Jesus” or “Your love for Jesus!” Either one, it does not matter. You can say it any way you want.

Now I have studied a little bit about this and just love to add this little phrase to it as well, because there are several times in the Bible where God’s throne is associated to His sapphire glory. I just like to say—because I know these verses and they are special to me—“Holy Spirit escort me into Your sapphire glory!” which means the glory around the throne and all of that. Now, you do not have to throw that in. I just do because I like that. So, I say “Escort me into Your sapphire glory. Let me see the realm of Your heavenly court. I just want to feel it even a little bit, just a little inspiration, and I would love open visions!” However, I will take little inspiring thoughts, but probably because I have prayed this over the years—maybe or maybe not I do not know and I do not have to know but—that door opened and the Lord might be saying, “Hey, you have asked Me, and so I have opened that up a little for you!” or maybe He says, “No, that was just completely above and beyond anything you have even asked.” However, I want more of those encounters, so I am going to keep asking for them. I do not know for sure how He determines to do it, but He opened that door of glory, and I said that I want way more than just looking into a room filled with golden light.

- E. Our words are in His heart, and His words are in our heart—this is foundational to our union (15:7). It starts with words—the Christian life is an ongoing dialogue with a Person. Jesus’ words are *spirit and life* (Jn. 6:63), and His Word is *living and active* (Heb. 4:12). Over time, what He thinks, feels, says, and does gradually fills our hearts. Simple phrases spoken to God can shift our emotions.

*It says in John 15:7, which is just a couple of verses before John 15:9—the verse we just looked at—Jesus said, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...” He said, “If My words will live in you, then ask anything you will.” So, He says, “If you will abide in Me, and My words abide in you.” The idea is that **our journey to go deep in God starts with words**. I just want to make it that simple. I have had people over the years say, “That is so simple!” and I say, “That is the point. It is so simple, anyone can do it, but it is so simple that many people do not do it.” The journey to go deep in the Spirit starts with words. Once you get that clear, you will say,*

“Well, if that is really true, then I am going to start saying more, and I am going to read more so I can say more back to Him, if that is really how it works. If that is really the way you buy gold, and if that is really the way you dine at His table by speaking words to Him.” Now, I mean, that is not the fullness of it, but that is the foundational building block of it.

*The Christian life is an ongoing dialogue with a Person. The Christian life is not just a ministry assignment and a task to do. The Christian life is not just moral ethics as in “Let’s just live morally and let’s just do tasks to serve people.” It is good to do tasks to serve people. That is good. That is really good actually, but the Christian life is much more than that. It is an ongoing conversation with a Person. That is the core, and then we do tasks with Him, but if we do tasks with Him because we are in conversation instead of just working for Him, then we will be sustained in our motivation. A lot of believers work for the Lord without conversation, but if we work **with** the Lord that means conversation in the midst of it. It does not mean every minute of every day. That is not what I mean, and I do not want to exaggerate this because then you will think, “I can never do it.”*

*However, if you will intentionally cultivate the conversation then you are working **with** the Lord and not just **for** the Lord. When you work **for** the Lord and get detached a bit from the conversation, you will get bruised a lot easier, you get burned out a lot easier, and you will get discouraged a lot easier. However, when you are **in** the conversation, you will have that little spark of inspiration that comes, not all-day/every-day, but here and there. And that makes the work doable, actually. You can stay with even the hum-drum of the labor, and even being overlooked and misunderstood, and even rejected when you have done something well and you still get rejected by people, but you have that little spark in your heart that says “Lord! You and I were talking a little bit, and You love me, and I love you, and they do not appreciate what I did, and I am overlooked and bypassed, and someone else got the position I thought I was supposed to get but, Hey! You love me and I love You! Let’s just keep it going!” And it gives you that spark of inspiration in your heart.*

Jesus said in John 6:63, “His words are spirit and life.” His words have a spiritual dimension and life to them, meaning when His words get into your mouth, they touch your spirit and impart life to you. Again, it is not dramatic very often; it is mostly very subtle, but a bunch of little subtle ones add up over the years, and it really starts making a difference.

Over time what He thinks and feels and says and does starts to move our hearts when we talk to Him about them. The simple phrases shift our emotions over time; they really do shift us. However, we have to get in them. A lot of folks will hear something like this, and for a week or two they will kind of go for it, and then it will be like, “Oh, I do not know...” No! Stay with it! And if you get off track, get back on track. I get off track all the time. I mean, probably—I do not really know the number, but probably—two or three times a year I will stop and say “Lord, I am not abiding in this conversation, huh? What happened over these past few weeks that I have not stayed in it! What happened?” and the Lord will say, as it were, “Okay, don’t worry about it. Just start back up again. Acknowledge it and jump back in.” So, when you lose your focus a bit, do not make a big deal of it; just jump back in and get the focus going again.

F. Hosea taught that returning to the Lord includes bringing words to speak to Him (Hos. 14:1-3).

¹O Israel, return to the LORD...²Take words with you, and return to the LORD. (Hos. 14:1-2)

Hosea says this: “O Israel, return to the Lord,” and—this is so interesting—he says, “Take words with you when you return to the Lord” This sounds like what Jesus said to the Laodicean church. He said, “Return to Me!” He said “Repent,” which is the same as return. Jesus said, “Repent. Come dine with Me and buy gold.” Hosea said the same thing differently. Instead of saying, “Repent and buy gold,” he said, “Return and take words” because the way you buy the gold is by speaking words to the Lord. That is how you get the gold. It is in Isaiah 55 where

He says, “Come and buy the milk and the wine without any money, but by listening to Me and by engaging with Me.”

“Take words with you.” If you will talk to the Spirit, He will talk back to you. Now, not necessarily a voice. I mean mostly not a voice, but every now and then you will hear something from Him and, again, I do not want to exaggerate that because for some people, that is all they are looking for, and since it does not happen that often, and they get discouraged. However, the way He talks back to you is by inspiring thoughts coming to you not just when you are reading but sometimes during the course of life. Many times, your Bible is open, and you are talking with Him, and an inspiring thought comes. That is the Spirit teaching you.

I remember years ago, I was asking the Lord from Galatians 5:16 where it says, “If you will walk in the Spirit you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” And we say, “Okay,” Then, a lot of people focus on the lust of the flesh so they grit their teeth, “I am going to resist the lust of the flesh! No, no, no!” The Holy Spirit would tap us on the shoulder and say, “No, no, if you will walk with Me, then you can resist the lusts of the flesh. Turn your attention.” At that time, I said, “Lord, what do You mean?” And a phrase came to me: “If you talk to the Spirit, you will walk in the Spirit.” If you will just keep the conversation going here and there, you will end up walking in the Spirit. It is more than that, but that is the foundational building block of walking in the Spirit: talking to the Spirit.

So instead of putting all of your time doing like the person who says, “I am trying to resist lust! I am trying to resist bitterness and anger! I am trying to resist...,” the Lord says, “No, turn around and focus this way: talk to Me. Then you will actually be walking in the Spirit and will have a lot more energized heart to resist the lusts of the flesh.” So, Hosea says here, “Come and return to the Lord and talk to Him.”

Now when you talk, linger. It is not rapid fire. Do not preach to Him. You are not rapid-fire preaching; you are in conversation with the Father. “Father, in the name of Jesus I really love You! Dah-da-da-da-da-dah...” The Lord gets it all, but the problem is that you don’t. I encourage people, even when they pray in intercession, remember you are talking to the Father. He loves you! Some people pray to the Father like they are preaching against the devil. You know they talk to Him, and they are binding and loosing. “Father! I am telling You!” and the Father could say, “Yeah, I am on your team. We are in this together! I am right next to you. Why are you talking to Me that way? I am Your Father. I love you, and you love Me!”

“Oh yeah, right!”

I encourage people not to preach to God, but just talk to Him and linger and have confidence that He is your heavenly Father and that He likes you. You are not convincing Him; He is actually the One trying to convince you. So, I tell people to linger, go slower, dial down, not rapid fire, not rapid-fire preaching. Linger and pause. I mean, aim for two, three and four minutes on these and, again, not five hours. When I read the Bible, like when I am just reading chapter by chapter, whenever I see a promise like “God loves you” or “God forgives you” I will stop and say, “Thank You! Show me more!”

I use that, “Thank You. Show me more” all of the time and just pause and linger, praying in the Spirit a little bit. Just pause a little bit, and you can do that when you are driving for a minute or two, three or four minutes or so. Just turn some things off and talk to Him. Like, regularly on Friday nights, I love to—I have been doing these Friday nights for the twenty-two years of IHOPKC, and I will drive home which is about three minutes. I live about a minute from IHOPKC and so during my five-minute drive—I just like to say, “Lord, let me see what You see, and feel what You feel about...” and I can say, “my wife, the meeting, the people, tomorrow, tonight, the dreams I am going to have,” etc. I just like to say, “Let me see what You see and feel what You feel about tonight! I am dead tired! What do You think about tonight? Just give me a thought,” and if you will engage in

conversation with Him, it is amazing how many more times He will give you little increments of inspirational thoughts.

- G. In Deuteronomy 30, Moses taught that the command to love and obey God was not *too mysterious* (too hard to understand), nor was it *far off* (outside their ability), nor did they need to *ascend to heaven* (have a heavenly encounter), nor *go overseas* (to receive it at a revival center) to do it. His point is that the power to love God is so near us—***in our mouths*** (30:14)—by speaking to God.

6The LORD your God will circumcise your heart...to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul...¹¹***This commandment...is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.***¹²***It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us...?”***

¹³***Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea...and bring it to us...?”***

¹⁴***The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.* (Deut. 30:11-14)**

Okay, last passage: Deuteronomy 30, Moses taught this at the very end of his life. He has been some forty years in the wilderness, and this is it; he is at the very end. He told them in Deuteronomy 30:6: “The Lord will circumcise your heart, and you will love God.” That is, He is going to anoint you, in essence, to love Him with all of your heart. That is a big promise, right? I mean, that is huge! And that is where God is taking His entire family, all of His people, before it is all over. Forever and ever, we are going to love Him with all of our heart. We want to do that as much as we can in this age, even before the Lord returns, He is going to have people walking in a deep anointing of loving God with all of their heart and with all of their mind.

However, here is what Moses said. Look at verse 11: “Now this commandment to love God with all of your heart is actually not too mysterious.” You see, a lot of folks believe the lie, “I just don’t understand!” Moses is being pastoral here.

I hear that all the time, “What is the secret to passion for Jesus?” I wrote a book called ***Passion for Jesus*** I get asked that a lot, “What is the secret?” I say, “There is no secret. The real issue and the way you get passion for Jesus is actually by growing in your understanding of His passion for you. That is how it works, and then your heart sparks with insight, and you say “Wow, I want to love Him now!” so you do it more out of gratitude because you know that He loves you.

And I say, “It’s not mysterious,” yet people want to know the secrets or key. It is like as if it is mysterious, but Moses said, “Don’t make it complicated. It is not mysterious. It is not too difficult for you!”

And then some guy says—I have heard this for many, many years, and I want to say this kindly as I am trying to bail you out if you are one of the people who says this because so many say it, “I have ADD! I cannot understand. I cannot pay attention! My attention span is only ten seconds,” and so I say, “Okay, then say the same thing for ten seconds over and over.”

Meaning, don’t rob yourself of your inheritance by some argument that you cannot think, you cannot read, you cannot study, you cannot do whatever. The Lord is saying here, “It is not mysterious. It is actually closer to you than you think.”

Then Moses goes on and says, “It is not far off. It is not outside of your ability. You are not too weak. It is not outside, as if it were out of reach. No, it is not.” Moses says, “It isn’t too far off. It is not out of your reach. You are weak and broken human beings in the grace of God, and so it is within your reach.” Verse 12, Moses said, “It is not in heaven that you should say, ‘Have some prophet go to heaven and get an encounter, then come back and lay hands on me!’” No, you don’t need a prophet to go to heaven. The Son of Man came down from

heaven! He already did it! Jesus would say, “You don’t need a heavenly encounter to love Me because you already have One. I have come down from heaven, and My spirit lives within you.”

“Well, if I get a heavenly encounter or the great prophet lays hands on me, then I will love God.”

He said, “No.”

Verse 13, “It is not beyond the sea” Someone says, “Oh, I know! I will go to the revival center over in Europe or in Latin America, over in Africa, over in Asia, somewhere. I can get on a plane and go get it from somewhere!” I have watched that for so many years, I mean people acting on, “Go get it from somewhere” I think that going to places and getting blessed is cool, but don’t go there because you can’t get it in your own walk with God, because you really actually can.

I am not saying that like a big rebuke, I am saying that so a light will go on like, “Really?”

I say, “It is not overseas. It actually is right here!” He said, verse 13, “Nor is it beyond the sea that you should say, ‘Let’s go over the sea and someone bring it’” Verse 14: here is the phrase “The word is very near you! It is in your mouth! That is how close it is to you!”

That is what Moses was trying to say. It is in your mouth, just say it. Talk to God and you will love Him. You do not need to have an encounter, although I love heavenly encounters. You do not need the revival center far away. Like, “Hey, I will go there and get prayed for.” I don’t mind that, but I am not counting on that. The word is near me, and it is in my mouth if I will talk to God. Little by little He will inspire me.

- H. It is a common error to try to live the Christian life without Christ—*without conversation with Him*. We cease from striving to love God and people by continually returning to conversation with Jesus which empowers us to love instead of striving in our human strength to love by our own efforts.

So I say, Lord, here we are! Thank You, Father!

I am just going to end in prayer by leading you in this prayer. Let’s just stand before the Lord for a little bit. And I’m going to lead you in this: John 15:9.

Father, Jesus said, “The way the Father loves Me that is how I love you.” Father, thank You for the way You love Jesus, Show me more. Show me more.

You might not feel anything, but if you do that a bunch, you will feel it here and there more than you think. Do not go for the feeling. Go for the conversation and trust the Lord for the feeling. Trust the Lord for the feeling.

Jesus, thank You that You love me. Show me more. Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about the way Jesus loves me. Jesus says, “Abide in My love.” Holy Spirit, I set my heart to stay engaged in this conversation. Help me more! Help me! I will forget it by tomorrow. Help me! Help me to do this!

John 17:26: Holy Spirit, reveal the Father’s glory to me. Jesus said, “I will declare the Father’s glory” Holy Spirit, reveal the Father’s glory to me. Holy Spirit, reveal the Father’s glory to me and impart His love for Jesus in me. Holy Spirit, reveal the Father’s glory to me and impart the Father’s love for Jesus in me. Escort me onto Your sapphire glory.” Those little prayers, you can say them over and over again, and you will say them a hundred different ways.

So here we are, Lord, and we say we want to abide in You. We do not want to live the Christian life without talking to You. I will to live it talking to You. I want to cease striving by trying to make love rise up in my heart, and I just want to start talking to You and let You awaken it in my heart. So, Holy Spirit, I just come and ask You to come and just touch us now, all over this room. Here we are, Lord.

The big issue is that so many do not believe that it is going to work for them. Stay with it. You may not feel it a lot different a month or two from now, but you will if you stay with it. Stay with it. This is for you. This is your destiny.

Here we are, Holy Spirit. Lord, we want to enter into this conversation with You more and more. Holy Spirit, move across this room, I ask You.”

Thank You, Father, for the way You love me. Oh, we welcome You, Holy Spirit. Father, we love You. Lead us into love with You, Holy Spirit. Father, let us abide in Your love forever, even tonight, this next hour or two. Lord, let us engage more. We want to stay in the conversation the best we can. We open up the door of our heart. Jesus, come and dine with us. Give us the gold of Your Spirit. We open the door of our heart by our conversation with You.

Holy Spirit, come and move on us right now. Come, Holy Spirit, come with the wind and the waves of Your Spirit. In this room, come and inspire us in this room and by the web-stream tonight right now. Touch our mind and our emotions. Thank You, Father, for the way You love us. Show me more! Show me more, Holy Spirit, about the way You feel about the way the Father loves me. Show me more! We say, “Yes, Lord, for the word is near us, even in our mouths.”