

Living At Eye Level

Study Guide and Retreat Manual

*“Thou hast ravished my heart,
with one of thine eyes.”*

Song of Songs 4:9

*“When You said, “Seek My face;
my heart said unto You,
Your face Lord, will I seek.”*

Psalm 27:8

*“My eyes are ever towards
the Lord.”*

Psalm 25:15

“Seek His face evermore.”

Psalm 105:4

Introduction To Part One

This sharing is set forth simply as an appeal to the heart. In writing this I made a decision to speak more “from the heart and to the heart” than “from the head and to the head”. The wording throughout this booklet is not meant to be mystical or emotional, but a heart cry to see Jesus and live in the realm of His face.

This book is about the motivations of our hearts. If we are truly seeking to know someone than we will want to look into their eyes to find them. Something in our hearts will press past all the external things until we base the relationship on who the person is. This is also true in our

relationship with the Lord. We can look past the realm of the things about God to embrace God Himself. Glorious overcoming union functions in the realm of His Face. Our gaze must be held in the beauty of Him Who is our Life!

The meditations that follow each chapter are written to help create an attitude of seeking the Lord rather than just reading a booklet. The material herein was originally given several years ago for a “Passion For Christ” retreat meant to help stir our love for Jesus. This book can be used as a retreat manual that may function as a guideline for discussion, sharing and personal meditation. In my own life, these notes have encouraged me time and again to keep lifting up my eyes and never stop till I reach the Lord’s true heart in His face. I pray they will touch your heart too.

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Levels Of Relating

Throughout the scriptures the Spirit of God asks us to look up. We are not looking up into heaven, or more deeply into the Eternal Plan; rather we are to lift up our gaze into the very eyes of Jesus. Our relationship with the Lord may lack the intimacy of love and vitality of His Life because we have chosen to know Jesus in a place that is below “eye – level”. To live below eye-level is to live in a place that is lacking the intimacy and passion of face to face fellowship and union. To live at eye-level is to find the place that is HIM. Our sole focus can be to see Jesus; in His soul, in His heart; and in His deep and inward parts. We can set our gaze towards a direct look into His eyes as we desire a relationship that exists at eye-level.

God's heart is crying out through the scriptures that we would see Him. His longing can only be fulfilled through hearts that will turn towards the Lord Himself (II Cor. 3:16). This turning is not about "imagining or visualizing the face of Jesus"; rather it relates to a heart searching to know God face to face by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Only God Himself by His Spirit can open the eyes of our understanding to see the Lord in this way.

What is something if it does not have a face? Anything that is faceless is without identity. What is our relationship with the Lord like if it is with a faceless God? What kind of walk do we have if we relate to God below eye level?

**Let us look at the different "levels" of relating
to the Lord to help clarify this point:**

Hand Level: This relationship is based on what God can do for me. His ability to move in power, bring blessings and help in crisis is a strong motivation for seeking the Lord at this level. In this relationship the works of His hands describe who He is and what He is doing is valued as more important and real than His unveiled face.

Mouth Level: When our gaze stops at the Lord's mouth we have the blessing of knowing the Lord after "the hearing of the ear". We hear the Word of God and share the Word with others. We may even understand by the Holy Spirit the deeper things that the Lord is sharing with us. Our knowledge of the Lord can be very impressive at this level, yet it is still not the seeing of the eye.

Eye Level: To be with the Lord at this level is to know Christ by revelation. This one no longer looks through a mirror darkly but sees face to face, beholding clearly that Christ is their Life (I Cor. 13:12). When we see Jesus in this way, our eyes are filled with the light of His Life and we have perfect clarity. We do not see Bible facts or earth problems,.. We see Jesus! We become filled with His Nature and bear His image.

May our hearts cry out for the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding to see Jesus (Eph. 1:18). May we keep lifting our gaze higher, pressing past His hands and mouth until we see His face and are changed and bear His Likeness.

The Challenge and The Call

The challenge is: At what point will we break the gaze of eye to eye contact with Jesus? What things become more important than seeking His face and heart alone?

The call is: Will we look up higher until we reach His eyes?

It's not how "cold our relationship may have grown", but how low our gaze may have fallen and how far our eyes have strayed. The objective is not to act more passionate, but to look into His face and relate from there. He is not asking us to do more stuff to prove our love for Him, but to lift up our eyes a little higher. Do we cherish our relationship with Jesus?

Meditation: What are the areas in my walk with Jesus that cause me to lower my gaze? At what point do I break eye contact? What is worth coming between face to face fellowship with Jesus? What issues stop my heart from turning towards the Lord?

Discussion: Discuss what it would be like to listen to someone speak with a blindfold over your eyes. In this condition you may hear many amazing things without ever really knowing the person speaking! Your ears have heard wonderful things, but your eyes have never seen the King! This is not the relationship God has for us! In Song of Songs, the Beloved Groom told his wife that her countenance was comely! The Lord wants our face towards Him just like we want His face to fill our eyes!

Distractions

Distractions are things that draw our eyes away from His eyes. What catches our glance more than His face? What is more appealing than the eyes of Jesus? If our eyes are fixed on Jesus, then nothing else has our affections. Distractions grieve Him because they take our eyes away from seeking Him. He desires a face to face, unveiled relationship with us. He desires for His Bride to see Him and not other things.

In what areas do our eyes leave Jesus? We can become distracted by the works of His hands, His illuminated words, or even His anointed ministry. All these things can exist without seeking God's face!

We can choose to lift up our eyes a little higher. At what level is our relationship with Christ at? Is the focus and cry of our heart to not break an eye to eye gaze with the Lord? Is it our desire to know Him that constantly and deeply? In other words, are we determined to dwell with Him in the realm of His face, or do other things become more important at times? Are we beholding Who He is above what He can do for us? Is Christ Himself the sole focus of our heart or do even the things of God distract us away from God Himself?

Meditation: How can I draw closer to Jesus? In what ways can I lovingly turn my heart to see His face?

Discussion: What are some things or areas that can seem good and even godly but can actually become distractions that keep us from pressing deeper until we are abiding in the realm of God's face and true heart?

Ministry or Christ?

In the beginning of the Song of Songs, the Shulamite had been relating to the Lord on a ministry level. She was worn out, burnt out, and her own inward vineyard was a mess. Her heart was longing for more with HIM and was finding everything else to be vanity and vexation of spirit. Her heart was turning towards the Lord Himself, for even the way she desired to receive the Word of God was changing. She wanted to know His words from within the realm of face to face fellowship. She was no longer content to just have the understanding and instruction of the words, she wanted the very kisses of His mouth. She was not seeking knowledge or revelations, but a Person, even her Beloved. Revelations "about" Him were no longer enough, she needed Christ Himself to be revealed as her Life. These other things no longer satisfied her deepest longing. Just the works of His hands or the words of His mouth were no longer sufficient.

As her heart pressed past all her messes and ministries into the Beloved Himself, the Holy Spirit began to open her eyes to see Jesus. Her eyes were opened by the Dove to see the one she loved supremely. Here we see that

a ministry relationship was turning into a marriage relationship. The Lord Himself became the heart and center of everything. We, too, can begin singing the Song of Songs when our hearts and eyes turns towards the Lord Himself!

Meditation: Am I content with the level of relationship I have with Jesus? Will I risk leaving my own vineyard to abide in the Vine Himself?

Discussion: How does a ministry relationship differ from a marriage relationship? How does union with Christ fulfill the ministry requirements while maintaining the intimacy of face to face communion?

Living At Eye Level

*“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away”
(Song of Songs 2:10).*

Eye level is the Lord's level! When we choose to live in Him, then we are coming away from our viewpoints to relate to the Lord in His place, where we have been raised up in Him far above the earth (Eph 2:6).

Just like rising up above the clouds in an airplane, we are finding the Lord apart from and above the earth and all our issues. When we come away to know Him in His place we will have risen above the darkness, clouds and storms of our earth existence. Our desire will be to know God for who He is as we separate our hearts to find Him at His level. He will not have to come down and explain Himself to us or move to prove His power and love in the realm of our earth lives. Our hearts will be so focused on Him for Who He is that all we will see is the bright shining Son as we behold the face of Jesus at eye-level. Our circumstances may not change, but we will be changed and conformed to the image of Christ. We will position our hearts for God to reveal His Son us. **True liberty and freedom will come in our lives when we find our Life in the Son at His level.**

Meditation: In what areas can I “rise up and come away” to the Lord and begin to relate to Him in His place at His level in resurrection oneness?

Discussion: What things create the “gravity” that would try to hinder us from fully coming away to be with the Lord?

Job and the Hearing of the Ear

*“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear,
but now mine eye seeth thee” (Job 42:5).*

Job's relationship with God was on only a hearing level, yet Job was honored as a great man of God. Job did not know that he had not yet seen God with the seeing of the eye. At times he thought God was mistreating him when all along God was bringing him into the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Because Job had heard of God by the hearing of the ear only, he was able to accuse God and be separate from His view during the hard times. It was only by the seeing of the eye that Job entered into God's desired relationship. Before this happened Job was confused and nothing that was happening to him made sense. He was bitter with his situation, angry with his friends, and felt mistreated by God. These were all **symptoms of a veiled face**. Job knew so much about God but he did not know God face to face. Job was a great man of God in the earth, but he had not yet come to the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:15-16) until the very end of the book (Job 42:5).

There can be so many things that are undeniably “of God” in our lives, yet “better” can be the worst enemy of “best”. Although the hearing of the ear is wonderful and much more than most people have, it is still not the seeing of the eye. With the seeing of the eye God becomes our portion and not His actions or His things. A death happens in us where our affections begin to be set only on things above where Christ sitteth (Col. 3:2). Our concern is that we abide in union with Christ, causing our hearts to press into His face above seeking His mouth for answers and explanations, or His hands to fix every problem.

We may have areas we struggle with in our walk with the brethren and even with God Himself, but we must ask ourselves, “Are these just symptoms of a veiled face? Am I open to see God with an unveiled face by the revelation of Jesus Christ?” If we saw God face to face, then maybe our whole perspective would change, just like Job's did. We really do not know anything until we know the Lord face to face. Why be satisfied with the hearing of the ear only when we could also know Him with the seeing of the eye?

Meditation: Am I open to discovering that what I know of the Lord may still be the hearing of the ear? Can I receive this with joy knowing that God wants to show me His face and reveal His Son in me?

Discussion: How can the “hearing of the ear” make us complacent to press on to know God face to face?

The Answer Is In His Eyes

Sometimes we want to find our answers in the Lord’s hands or mouth rather than His face. Yet one look into the eyes of the Crucified and we know that the answer is to go the way of the Cross. We can wait for a sign to guide us in a decision, or search for a scripture or teaching to tell us what to do; but are we using these things to help excuse our flesh and protect ourselves from the Cross? Are we really seeking what these signs and scriptures mean in God’s eyes? If Jesus is our answer, then we will seek His face that we might bear His image in these situations.

Meditation: Do I want the Lord’s heart enough to press past easy answers until I see His face and know His view in every situation?

Discussion: In what ways can we avoid God’s eyes to keep ourselves from the way of the Cross in practical daily situations and decisions?:

“I will instruct thee and teacheth thee in the way thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”

Psalms 32:8

Prayer

“Lord, I want to see You and not things about You. My gaze could stop at Your hands and marvel in Your works and abilities. My eyes could stop and focus on Your mouth where I would hear Your words and learn to speak them. By Your Spirit I might even understand the deeper things that come forth from God’s own mouth. But if I stop my

gaze there, then I have not yet truly seen You and entered into a face to face relationship.

Precious Lord, You are the One thing that I desire above all else. To really know You and be filled with Your Life fulfills my every need. You are my satisfaction, my Light and my Life. I love You. Amen.”

Living At Eye Level Part Two

“Not Breaking Gaze”

Introduction

Have you ever felt so ashamed of yourself that you could not look someone in the eyes? This overwhelming sense of self-awareness can prevent us from seeing the most beautiful thing in the universe... the face of Jesus.

In Luke 22:61 Peter found himself looking into the eyes of Jesus in his lowest moment of failure. Before Peter had the chance to run away in shame he was confronted with the Lamb of God Who was offering up Himself for him. Peter found himself staring into eyes of love and not condemnation. We must not allow our shame or failures to keep us from lifting up our eyes to see Jesus.

We all have areas where we need help. We worry about things, we lack clarity in areas, and we desperately need peace. But the answer is not found in “answers”, but in the Lord’s eyes. Worry comes by departing from His gaze. Fear of man is a lowering of our eyes from God’s eyes to man’s eyes. Confusion comes when we see things separate from the way God sees things.

There are so many things that can keep our eyes far away from the face of Jesus. Yet when our hearts turn towards the Lord, all the veils of separation fall away as the Spirit reveals the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (II Cor. 3:16-18, 4:6). Love for Jesus can motivate our hearts to press past our failures, our fears, this earth and every other obstacle until we see Jesus. His loving eyes will not reject those whom He has died for.

We can embrace the Lord's eyes and be held by His gaze. We can choose to stay above earth level and remain at eye-level with Jesus. When our focus drops down, there is no shame, His loving gaze does not change. We can immediately lift up our heads and return to the relationship we love.

Noah lived in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. From the scriptures we know that Noah in himself was not faultless, but he found something that all those around him missed; Noah found God's eyes (Genesis 6:8). Rather than seeing the problems around him or his own flaws, Noah somehow focused on the Lord's eyes and found grace in them. What a contrast from the doom and gloom all around him! The wonderful thing about Noah is that he actually found the eyes of God! He looked into His face and so can we!

Not Breaking Gaze

To "not break gaze" could be easily defined by the word "behold". Beholding implies more than just a glance. To really drink in the beauty of someone will require a look that can fully take in their person. There is a lingering with the Lord in our hearts that makes us want to hold our gaze and continue to look. Beholding is not a momentary encounter, but a way of relating and continuing in relationship. Beholding the Lord happens when we want to hold His being in our hearts and not let go! If we truly behold the Lord in this way, then we will "be held" by Him through many fiery trials and distractions. Our state of being should be wrapped up in seeing Jesus!

We can cultivate a relationship of remaining held in the realm of His face and embracing that view above all else. Beholding is a relationship, a lifestyle and the manner in which we follow Jesus. Our hearts can become captivated to the point where we will not release our eyes from the

one we love above all else. Our hearts can become separated unto Christ in such a manner that they cleave to Him by remaining focused on Christ alone. Beholding, in this sense, is the continual embrace of the heart wherein our eyes are set upon Jesus.

To break gaze is to set our heart and affections on something short of Christ Himself, allowing our hearts and eyes to fall back down to the earth (Col. 3:2). To blink is one thing, yet to break gaze is another. We all blink from time to time, but let us not release a lifestyle of living at eye level. Things come to us all that momentarily blur our vision, but we must strive to refocus quickly. His face never changes for the Son is always shining in the realm of His resurrection, and we have been seated there in Him. The sooner we lift up our eyes again, the sooner we will find clarity and comfort in the light of His face. We must remember that even when we break gaze, the Lord does not break union with us! His Cross has settled that fact!

Meditation: What areas cause me to break gaze with the Lord?

Discussion: In what ways can we “be held” in our relationship with Jesus through “beholding” Him with all our hearts?

New Covenant Relationship

The New Covenant is based on an unveiled relationship with God that exists through union and changes us into His image (II Cor. 3:13-18). This relationship functions by love for here one chooses to see Jesus and not just hear His laws and obey. We can "turn to see the voice" (Rev. 1:12). We do not have to stop with just hearing and imagining the person from whom the voice came. We can turn, look and seek until Christ is unveiled. Our pursuit is not for knowledge but to know Him Who is speaking.

Can you imagine being married to someone and never seeing the face of the one you were joined to? Would it seem natural that hearing your spouses voice would be enough if seeing their face was a possibility? We can love and honor the heart of God by turning and looking at Him with the eyes of our heart. As we look we can be held in that gaze and changed into that same image by the Spirit as the Son is revealed in us.

Meditation: Are there areas where I have been satisfied to relate to Jesus without seeing His face?

Discussion?: In what ways can our hearts turn to see the voice? Can His mouth actually draw us to press in deeper until we see His face?

*“And Jesus turned unto
His disciples, and said privately,
Blessed are the eyes which see
the things that you see”.*
Luke 10:23

High Intensity

We may begin to pursue the Lord and then back off because of the intensity. Hearing without seeing is much easier but it never takes us directly to the "heart" of the matter in oneness.

Moses' heart wanted to know the Lord so deeply that he pressed higher and higher until he saw the Lord face to face (Ex. 33:11). But the children of Israel preferred to relate with God by just hearing His commands and doing them. God wants to guide us with His eyes, but if we are not face to face with Him then He must use bit and bridle, like with a mule (Ps. 32:8-9). Yet we can let His eyes be enough for us, and free Him to deal with us in the intimacy of love rather than with the rod of discipline or external commands.

In order to truly reach the Lord's face we must press past our natural understanding and imaginations and cry out for the Holy Spirit to unveil the Son to us and in us. Our souls can easily become satisfied with His hands and mouth only. We can become comfortable with knowledge filling us rather than the Son Himself. It is here that our hearts begin to groan for more than works and words. We are hungering for the Lord Himself and know the only place we will find satisfaction is in His face.

It is easier to mistreat someone when you are not looking directly into their eyes because then you do not have to face the fact that you are dealing with a living and breathing human soul. It is the same with God, for to simply hear His words and obey protects us from facing the reality that we are in a relationship with a Person Who has a heart with desires. Only when we know Him face to face will we have to "face" the reality that we

are in union with the Person of Christ, and are called to know Him in the intimacy of oneness.

Meditation; Have I avoided knowing the Lord face to face because it was easier for me?

Discussion: How do words and works begin to cause our hearts to groan for more? Do we really believe that there is more that Holy Spirit wants to reveal to us in the face of Jesus?

Not Seeing By Natural Light

In the Old Testament tabernacle there was the outer court, the holy place and the most holy place. In the outer court there was the natural light of the sun. In the holy place there was light from the candlesticks. But in the holy of holies, the place where God Himself dwelt, there was no natural light. According to the natural senses, it was pitch black in the holy of holies! Here one might assume that God had forsaken them and led them into a dark hole. In that condition the very Holy of Holies would have seemed like a dark and lonely place. But think about it, this is where God Himself was found! To try and see God by our own natural abilities or even religious shadows will keep us in utter darkness. We must have our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit if we really want to see God (Eph 1:18).

Eyes that are shut and hearts that are turned in the wrong direction will not be aware that God is present. This could be understood in what Jacob said at Bethel, "God is here and I knew it not (Gen. 28:16)." If we are born again, then we must see that in the midst of our blindness and the darkness of this earth, the light of God is with us for Christ is in us. God has not abandoned us, but He has made us like the Holy of Holies where His presence dwells. No matter how dark we feel or lonely it seems, if we let God open our eyes we will see that the Lord is in us and the Light of His Life can fill us! True spiritual blindness is that which does not see the face of Jesus.

Meditation; In the darkness of me and in the darkest of situations, I believe that I can set my eyes upon Jesus and be filled with the light of His Life.

Discussion: Why is the true light of the Lord Himself not something we can perceive with our natural senses? How can this help us to trust that Christ is in us as Life even when we do not feel anything?

The Eyes are in The Head

What level we are living at may also reveal what “tree” we are eating from! We will see other people from the place we are dwelling. If we are living at eye-level and beholding the Lord’s heart for others, then our view of others will be filled with His self-giving love. If our view comes from our own eyes rather than the Lord’s eyes, then our judgment is not just.

The only place we can get a log in our eye is when we see from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Our view becomes blocked with issues and things that are not found in the Lord’s eyes. Christ is the Head of His Church, and the eyes are in the Head! God’s eyes must guide our view of things. He is the tree of Life, and His view is far above our earthly perspectives. Even having a “speck” of our own view in our eyes is enough to keep us from being able to help someone who has a log in theirs. The truth is, God’s view is full of His love. Our view tends to be full of self awareness and what is “right and wrong”. Only God’s way of seeing brings Life, because only God sees things in light of the great love of His Cross. We demand changes so that things will look better in our eyes, yet Christ gives His life so that which is dead and off might live. When we see from God’s view we discover that the real issue is not what we see, but the nature and heart attitude that we view others with.

Meditation: Is my view of others coming for the Lord’s eyes ? Do I view them in His love?

Discussion: How does the knowledge of good and evil blind us to God’s view?

“What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard Him and observed Him”. Hosea 14:8

Anoint Your Eyes with Eye-salve

*“and anoint thine eyes with eye salve,
that thou mayest see” (Revelation 3:18).*

The lukewarm church in Laodicea was instructed to anoint their eyes with eye salve so that they might see. Where there is lukewarm-ness there is also blindness. The Lord asked the lukewarm Church in Laodicea to consider their eyes. If our walk with Jesus is lukewarm, then maybe we should also consider the condition of our eyes. In what condition are they? Hard? Turned in the wrong direction? What do they see and by what spirit are they viewing things? If we want to be “hot” for the Lord, then we need to be living at eye-level.

There is a preparation of heart to see Jesus. We must allow the Holy Spirit to begin making the eyes of our understanding ready to see Jesus. We must allow Him to soften our harden views and deal with our carnality. The Holy Spirit will speak to us of our new identity in Christ and our place with Him in resurrection oneness.

In the book of Esther we see an example of such preparation. Before Esther was allowed to go in and see the King face to face she had to be saturated in oils and perfumes for twelve months. And so it is today, we must prepare our hearts to see the Lord. As our hearts soften, they will turn towards the Lord Himself and become positioned to properly behold Him and be changed. The Holy Spirit will overshadow us and help prepare us for the coming forth of Christ at revelation.

Meditation: *God told the luke warm church in Laodicea that they needed to anoint their eyes with eye salve so that they could see. If we are luke warm in our relationship with Jesus, then we can also anoint our eyes with eye salve that we might see.*

Discussion: *How can we prepare our hearts to see Jesus?*

Living At Eye Level Part Three

“The Light Of His Face”

Introduction

In the past chapters we have been sharing different aspects of how our hearts can turn to be with the Lord at eye level. In this chapter we will discuss the Light that our eyes behold in the face of Jesus, and how that Light (which is Christ) guides us and fills us through all things.

Each one of us have our own personal and daily challenges that draw our gaze into the darkness of that which is “under the Son”. Our hearts can become overwhelmed in the face of all that which is outside of His face. In all these things, we are cultivating our hearts to find grace in the Lord’s eyes and discover evermore the depths of His enduring love. Our place is in Him and His Face ushers us into that blessed position of rest from which we can overcome all obstacles. In all that we desire of Him, may we be comforted in knowing that only through His Spirit and by His grace can we enter into true spiritual comprehension that sustains and fills.

“This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” I John 1:5

They Would Not Leave His Eyes

Hebrews chapters eleven and twelve talk about a great cloud of eye witnesses who made it through tremendous obstacles by looking unto Jesus, Who authored and finished their faith (Heb. 12 1-2). Through beholding the Lamb, they were able to follow Him withersoever He went, even when that meant into death (Revelation 14:4). Tremendous suffering and cruel trials of deep loss have afflicted the souls of many saints throughout the generations. These men and women saw something higher and greater than their dark and horrible surroundings. They were eye witnesses of the Lord Jesus, and they held their faith in Him even when He did not deliver them. Beyond circumstance and explanation, a relationship of living at eye level endured. This great cloud of eye witnesses encourages us to continue to fix our eyes on Jesus and endure the process

of being conformed to His image. These men and women chose to lift their eyes in faith and embrace union with Christ at eye level above all else.

Let us continue to consider the people in Hebrews chapter 11 who endured great trials and never got delivered. Such ones may never have understood their circumstances or figured out why God allowed certain things. **Yet they could endure because their relationship with God was not built upon things going on in the earth at “hand level” or information received through the natural senses that could be comprehended at “mouth level”. They related to God at eye level where the Holy Spirit revealed God’s true image in the face of Jesus.** Jesus might say to these eye witnesses, “You have ravished my heart with one of your eyes” (Song of Songs 4:9). It would be easy to accuse the Lord of leaving or failing us during the dark hours, for without seeing the Light of His face we will not comprehend His motivations and the beauty of His heart. But if we relate to the Lord at eye-level, than we will have seen directly into His core and know Him beyond circumstance and explanation. We do not have to turn our gaze from Him under any conditions. We are coming to and joining with the Lord in a way that will fulfill His heart. Our goal is not to simply, “make it through various trials”, but to bear His image and respond like a bride with an unveiled face. How precious to minister to the heart of the Lord in these ways!

Something in the heart of these eye-witnesses must have said, “I may be pressed beyond my measure in this circumstance, but I am not going to break gaze with Christ my risen Husband. I will fix the eyes of my heart on the One that I love supremely and not drop down my eyes to earthly understandings. I will not accuse God of not loving me or having a different nature than the Lamb because I cannot explain my situation. I do not see why this is happening to me, but I see Jesus. I see directly into His eyes and heart and I know His core. He is love in motivation and Lamb in nature and I am joined to Him both now and forever.”

Satan watches as we stand with the Lord in this way and his temptation towards us may come in thoughts such as, “You should accuse the Lord. Just relate to Him at hand level where you can do your Christian duty and outwardly look good but inwardly hold a grudge against Him. In order to believe in Who He is you need Him to explain everything to you and show you evidence in your circumstance that proves He is still with

you.” Yet we are protected from the enemies advances when we determine to relate to the Lord at His level rather than demanding that He come down and relate to us on our earthly levels.

Consider how the eyes of men have narrowly look upon and misunderstood those who have endured the path of the Cross and gone the way of the Lamb. Yet these saints were able to despise the shame by looking unto Jesus. Joseph endured slavery, prison and abandonment. Jephthah offered up his only daughter. Rahab stood her ground and believed despite her condition. Others were stoned, sawn asunder, and cruelly mocked. All of this was endured by a faith that saw what others around them did not see. They are described as a great cloud of eye witnesses (Hebrews 12:1). These people had to press past their circumstances and understandings until they found the eyes of God. They saw the Lord and chose not to break gaze even when torture and pressure tried to push down their eyes of faith. They may not have seen why all those things happened, but they saw the Lord. They chose to fix the eyes of their hearts on the One they loved supremely, and not drop down their eyes to circumstances. They focused directly into His eyes and by the Holy Spirit beheld that God is love and He is Lamb in nature. In Him they saw the most beautiful nature and heart in the universe and nothing was going to permanently turn their gaze from Him. The light in His face was the only light that they chose to walk in.

Meditation and Discussion: Have we looked deep enough into our Lord’s eyes to abide in Him through our darkest hours? Do we truly know Him in Whom we believe? Is our knowing that of knowledge or the undeniable seeing of His heart in His eyes whereby we cannot be shaken?

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore the eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Matthew 6:21-22

God Himself Becomes Light

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord”.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus”.

(II Corinthians 3:18, 4:6)

When God becomes light because we have chosen to know Him face to face, then we do not have to have light on anything else except who God is. God Himself becomes our light. The Light that God is cannot be embraced in understanding Bible doctrines, figuring out His will in situations, or trying to do good things in His name. The Light that God is can only be known in the unveiling of His Person by the Holy Spirit. Our spiritual eyes can only behold this Light in the face of Jesus as the Spirit shows us. We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

Here, in the face of Jesus, we behold Who God is rather than facts about Him. We are confronted with His image, and we behold His nature in such a manner that we begin to bear His likeness. We do not become theologians or great ministers, rather we are changed as Christ is formed in areas that relate to our inward nature. The way we read the bible also changes, for now we are not reading to attain more knowledge about Jesus, rather we are searching the scriptures so that we might SEE Jesus and be made conformable to His image.

A searching of our motives comes with this turning of our hearts. Here, in the face of Jesus, He is all that matters. We have left everything that would bind us to something less than Christ Himself. We have forsaken the paths that would lead us somewhere less than swallowed up of Christ. Our hearts and eyes have pressed into a focus that will make our foreheads as flint, set on seeing Jesus only. This singleness of heart is a blessed state to be in, for here all things have grown dim in the light of Him whom we love. We are simply after the Lord for the Lord Himself.

As our hearts turn towards Christ alone, we will begin to acquire the understanding that comes from eyes that see Jesus. Where darkness once vexed our souls, a light has come that reaches into the core issue with the unveiling of the Person of Christ. We come to know Jesus in His nature, image, and outshining likeness. He becomes the light that will guide us through every circumstance and trial. The Lord is drawing us to come and be with Him on this level. We can become so swallowed up of Him that we see nothing else but His heart and true Person. We will become lost in Him.

Lost, not in the knowledge of the Son but in the unveiled Son Himself. How awesome to lose ourselves in Jesus and never be found outside of Him again no matter what happens in our lives? In this condition of heart and relationship we have left everything but the Son.

As we join with the Lord in this way, the Light of His Life shines in us and a permanent change happens. If we were stripped of everything external, if all remembrance of teachings and knowledge about the Lord was removed from our brain; would our image and nature still be Christ because we knew Him in the intimacy of oneness? Nothing and no one can strip you of your image and your nature because that is WHO you are. Yet such a deep and inward change only comes by knowing God Himself face to face and allowing Christ to be your Light and Life. There are trials and pressures in the earth that can torture out of us every bit of bible knowledge we ever knew, but nothing can remove His image when Christ is formed in you. The Light of His Life remains and overcomes all darkness. This is Jesus Christ revealed as His face is uncovered in you.

Meditation: Does my light come from what I see and understand with my five senses, or does my light come from the face of Jesus? Do I search for answers other places than in the face of Jesus?

Discussion: Is what we have with the Lord based on information and knowledge or the indwelling nature of Christ? If fiery trial comes into our lives, will the Light of His Life sustain us where information and knowledge fail?

Further Discussion: How can true comfort and peace come from knowing the Lord in the realm of His face? How does His Light conquer the tormenting fear found in the darkness of this earth and our darkened understandings?

Part Four: Maturing Love

Introduction

This final chapter takes us to the very core of the Person we are looking at. With all of our gazing and beholding, eventually we begin to see who it is we are looking at! The more fully the Spirit removes the veil from our hearts, the more clearly we will begin to understand that the Jesus we are seeing is a Lamb. As our focus increases, His image will become clearly that of a Lamb in nature. With clarity we will comprehend that the One we are looking to is the Crucified Christ, slain even before the foundation of the world.

This eye-level relationship will ever draw our hearts to abide in Christ, cleaving steadfastly to His Person and drawing from His Life. As branches beholding their eternal Vine, it is vital that we come to see that our Source is of this self-giving nature. We are joining with One who lays down His Life. The tree Jesus cleaved to was a cross. The more we see Him for who He is, the deeper we understand that the Cross will always be central in really knowing Him.

The Lord's greatest beauty can bring our greatest offense. The Lamb is beautiful to look at when it involves the gift of our salvation and the forgiveness of our sins. But when this beautiful Lamb becomes our Life, we must love what we see enough to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and let this same Lamb live, suffer and give Himself through us. In the mature eye-level relationship there will be a knowing of Him in the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death (Phil. 3:10). Eventually our gaze will gather us into a deep union into His Person.

May we never just look upon Him from the desk of a student or with the gaze of a spectator. He is our Life, our Source and our all. Let our eyes be filled with the Light of His face until we bear His nature in true reality of Life. Blessed are the pure (single) of heart, for they shall see God.

Temptations

Living with our focus on the Lord is a process of maturing love. Eye level is the place where our hearts have turned towards the Lord Himself. As our love for the Lord grows, our desire to maintain our gaze upon Him also grows. We will choose to allow all things, whether pleasant or difficult, to strengthen our focus upon our Beloved. The very elements that could be used to turn our hearts away from the Lord will become catalysts that press us more dearly into Him for who He truly is. Jesus said it best when He told us that where our hearts are will be where our treasure is. Our eyes will search for our treasure if we think we have lost it. If our treasure is Christ, then we will not allow Him to be stolen from us through trials and tribulations. If our treasure is our lives in this earth, then our gaze will fall from the Lord when hard times come upon us.

When trial or pain enter into our lives, our natural tendency is to focus upon ourselves. Like chains trying to pull our attention away from the Lord, these situations can tempt us to become self-consumed. No human being more intimately experienced pains in both the soul and body than Jesus did when He died for us. Yet His focus was filled with love for others and not self. The cross did not make Jesus selfish because of the enormous agony caused by the pressure of hatred and sin that came against Him and upon Him. Jesus endured His Cross and used it as a vehicle to give us His Life. Those dark hours made manifest that His gaze was heavenward and not controlled by earthly circumstances, physical torment, or human soulful trauma.

***“His loving eyes will not reject those
whom He has died for.”***

When temptation comes to us through various trials, we will find ourselves wanting to look away from the Lord and focus on the situation at hand that feels and looks so overwhelming. We may feel blinded by the severity of our circumstance, yet the inner man will cry out from within us to turn our hearts towards the Lord. Christ alone is our refuge and strength.

He alone is our Life. If our eyes remain set upon Him, then we will find that His grace is sufficient to carry us through the storm. Like Peter, we will begin walking on waters that should be drowning us. The moment our eyes leave Jesus, the storm begins to draw us in. Yet even then the Lord extends His arm and draws us back to Himself. Each time we step out on those waters with our eyes fixed on Jesus we learn to trust Him. We find out that learning how to walk in the spirit requires eyes that are looking at Jesus. It takes time to learn how to walk and we will fall many times in the process. Yet, in time, the very storms that once “upset our happy Christian life” will help teach us how to walk in union with Christ through everything.

We are beginning our final chapter of “Living At Eye Level” with this section on temptation because our hearts want to grow with the Lord in the ways that He desires. Our relationship with Him is first for His fulfillment and pleasure, and not our own. Living at eye level is not purposed as a method to help us get through this life, but is meant to help draw our hearts to more deeply embrace our place in and with Him as the Lamb’s wife. In this our final chapter we want to truly fine-tune our focus to be in oneness with the eternal Heart of God.

Meditation: In times of trial, pain and difficulty do I drop down my gaze to myself and the earth? Am I willing to turn my eyes away from the storm to see Jesus and learn to walk with Him in the spirit rather than dwelling with my fears in the earth?

Discussion: Why is this tendency and temptation to focus on ourselves possibly a deeper hurt to the Lord’s heart and a greater hurt to our walk than other areas of personal lack where Christ is not formed?

Further Discussion: In what ways can we learn how to “walk on water” with our eyes set on Jesus when the storms of this life come to us?

Behold The Lamb

“Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:35-36).

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14).

John the Baptist told his disciples to behold the Lamb (Jn. 1:35-36). He was telling them to be consumed with seeing Jesus. He did not tell them to become consumed with learning doctrine or ministry work, but to be

overtaken with knowing the Lamb until His nature was formed in them. More important than words, works, teachings or ministry was the command that John the Baptist gave to the disciples, "Behold the Lamb". John was telling them to fix their gaze on the Lamb. They were to follow the Lamb with eyes held by His Person. As they walked they were not to break gaze but continue seeing Him until they were changed and His likeness was formed in them. These disciples would then no longer walk as mere men, but eventually become the apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:14). This city had twelve foundations defined as the twelve apostles of the Lamb. For these disciples to have become apostles of the Lamb, they must have first beheld and followed the Lamb. Their eternal ministry was eventually as those who were laid into the foundation of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14), but this calling would only be fulfilled through conformity to the Lamb. To be changed into His likeness we first must see Him by the unveiling of the Spirit.

John told the men that were going to follow Jesus to "behold the Lamb" so that they might eventually become filled with the Life of Christ rather than conforming to religious Israel. Rather than forming a new religion, these men would know and see the Lamb in such a way that they would function as His Body. Because the title of "Lamb" defines the nature of Christ, it becomes evident that John is more concerned with these disciples being conformed to the image and nature of the Son rather than just becoming trained ministers. To have an exciting experience seeing or learning something, and yet remain the same afterwards means nothing for the Kingdom of God. The ultimate end of seeing the Lord is the increase of His Life through us. We must turn from religion, knowledge, and all others things to behold the Lamb. We must learn how to walk beholding this Lamb and cleaving to Him as our very Life. This is the true call of discipleship.

Meditation and Discussion: Is my walk with the Lord one of beholding the Lamb or living after the natural senses? Is my goal to continue beholding Him until His Life is formed in me, or am I satisfied to occasionally look at Him and then return to my life in this earth?

To Whom Has He Been Revealed?

"Who hath believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed" (Isaiah 53:1).

In Isaiah 53:3, just a bare earthly look at the Lamb caused them to hide their faces from Him in shame. How many would risk it all to press past fear, shame and human misunderstanding to get close enough to walk face to face, in union with the Lamb? What cost is too high that we might look into the eyes of the Crucified and behold His true image? The wife of the Lamb looks at her Husband with an unveiled face and accepts that He is a Lamb in nature. For us to really embrace Christ as a bride will require true love, for conformity to this Lamb will involve the death of our selfishness to give place to His sacrificial nature.

Many people bow their face and lower their eyes when they begin to perceive that the image of the Christ they are seeking to behold is really a crucified Christ. Isaiah cried out, "Who will believe our report, and to whom will the arm of the Lord be revealed?" We can become astonished when we see that the One we have been seeking to behold is as a Lamb that was slain. We must allow the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts to really see who Jesus is. Our eyes, ears and hearts could never comprehend such a One as this apart from the Holy Spirit showing us. (I. Cor. 2:9-10). Our flesh will become offended with His Cross and our soul will try to remove it, yet this is the One Who is high and lifted up. May we never make Him into our own image because we do not like what we see. Rather, may our eyes find Eternity's greatest riches in the eyes of this slain Lamb.

The Bride of Christ is called "the wife of the Lamb" in the scriptures (Rev. 21:9). She has chosen to see the Lord for Who He is and has not turned her eyes away and despised His sacrificial nature. She has embraced the Lamb as her very Life at the cost of her own. Her devotion has gone beyond duties, for she has beheld the Lamb until His likeness was found in her. This "eye-level" relationship with the Lamb has brought forth His increase within and her own decrease.

Many "blink" at the Lamb's way of blessing rather than cursing, and dying for the ungodly. When we do not understand His ways that involve suffering and loss, we may turn our face away from Him. This turning away does not just indicate to us that there are areas of lack of intimacy, but will become "blind-spots" in our understanding of who He is. We can become offended with His "crucified" nature and choose to break gaze with the Lamb. We may wonder, "Why do I stop looking towards the Lord when I get to that point?" The truth is, it will cost us our lives to not break gaze with the Lamb, for His Cross is part of who He is. The real

reason we may bow down our head and turn our eyes away is because we love our own life more than we love His. There is a cost involved to living at eye level, for you will always find the way of the Cross in His eyes.

Meditation: In order to not break gaze am I willing to lose my own life?

Discussions: We can expect that at some point, seeing His nature will offend us. It will require a turning in our life. How can we prepare our hearts for this offence?

Further Discussion: Have we been “blinking” and turning away our gaze when the Cross comes to view in His eyes? If so, then how can we begin to cultivate a new relationship that will continue with Him at these times rather than turning away from Him?

Changed By Seeing His Face

Change does not come through acting more obedient to God's commands, for that is the old covenant way of the law. Christ is formed in us by the Spirit of the Lord because we have turned in our hearts to know Him face to face (II Cor. 3:16-18). This change comes through a relationship of seeking His face and not self focused improvements. We can lift our gaze up from His hands and mouth to seek His eyes, continuing in His Word until we have been brought into the image of the Son (Jn. 8:31,36). We can then be with the Lord by bearing His likeness. As we bear the image of Christ we will be with Him in oneness of kind rather than committed-ness of duty. What we have heard and bore witness to will now be the very Life of Jesus Christ unveiled in us.

When we look past illuminated hearing into the very eyes of God THEN we are changed by seeing the Person who we thought we already knew. Behind the information is a Life that passes knowledge and fills us with all His fullness (Eph. 3:19). But this filling comes only as we desire the Lord Himself. Even the glow on Moses' face eventually went away, but Christ is in us now, and His glory does not fade, for He is our very Life. We know nothing yet as we ought until we see the Lord and allow for the increase of His life from within. May we press past every obstacle until we get to eye level and allow Christ to have pre-eminence as our Life. If we are seeking for true and eternal inward change, then we need to seek the

Lord's face and not the Lord's help. May our hearts turn away from all things unto the face of Jesus.

Meditation: Is His increase worth my decrease? Am I seeking to see something cool and exciting, or to be conformed to the image of Christ?

Discussion: How can we change our daily focus from fixing our outward appearance to knowing Christ and embracing His heart?"

Further Discussion: Do we desire to be with the Lord in oneness of kind or committed-ness of duty? How can that affect the way we seek the Lord?

The Bride Knows Him

The Bride in the Song of Solomon knew what her Beloved's eyes looked like so well that she could intimately describe them; "*His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set*" (Song of Songs 5:12). There is no veil between the face of the Bride and her Groom. There is no more separation on these levels for she relates to Him in oneness. She sees His face and not other things. She bears His glory. What has made her beautiful is not her passion or personality, for she was crucified with Christ. HE is the beauty that now shines out from her, for she has made HIM everything. When the Bride in the Song of Solomon was asked "*What is your beloved more than another beloved*"... She answered by describing HIM. She did not speak of His actions or even His words, but described Who He was from head to foot (Song of Songs 5:9-16). The Bride knows the Lord in unveiled oneness.

Meditation: Like the woman in the Song of Songs, have I seen the Beloved's face so fully that I too could describe not just what He says or does, but what He looks like in His true heart and nature? Am I a reflection of His image and can He be seen in me to others?

Discussion: The Bride's beauty comes from the Lord Himself in her, and not her own passion or personality. In what ways can we change our focus from ourselves to the Lord Himself in us?

"His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters,

washed with milk, and fitly set” (Song of Songs 5:12).

She Has The Light Of His Face

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

The Bride has the clarity of God for her view proceeds out from Him (Rev. 21:2). The glory She bears is the brilliance of one who has Jesus shining out of her. Because she has chosen to relate to the Lord on His level she can show forth the Lord’s heart to others. Her ways make others feel like Jesus has affected and touched them rather than an obedient servant or messenger just did their duty towards them. She has His image - She has His love - **She has the depth of His eyes in the spirit of her words and the essence of her deeds.** Her words bear the influence of His heart and not just information about Him. Her actions display His nature and not just dutiful service. This is because the portion she has chosen is the Lord Himself.

The Lord wants a Bride that truly represents Him in spirit and nature. She must bear in her being His very Life. If someone comes to you desiring to minister, and they have the Word of the Lord and the will of God in their way of proceeding, yet they also have attitudes that are not Christ, how does that affect you? How much more fruitful is it when someone has the image of Christ in the very spirit in which they present the things of His heart? The Lord wants a Bride who manifests Him as a pure reflection of His Person, one who speaks out from His image and knows Him in His core. In times of crisis and confusion she will know Him beyond the circumstance for she sees beyond the earth into His face. She may encourage those around her by saying, “I know we do not understand what is going on in this, but I have light on this, I have clarity concerning this for my view is coming out from God. I know Him, and I will lead you to Him. You can be filled with His heart rather than fear and panic if you look into His eyes. We can know Him in this way and walk through this crisis filled with His peace. His life will be our overflow as He carries us through this storm.” May we truly be those who “know their God”. May we see Him so clearly that we can guide others to dwell in the beauty of His face rather than the darkness of this earth.

The New Jerusalem from above is full of light (Rev. 21:23). She follows the Lamb her Husband not by external command but through a face to face union. She cleaves to Him with purpose of heart for she will not break her

gaze with the Lamb. She will live looking directly into His eyes and her light will not fail for He is in her as her Life and Light!

Meditation and Discussion: As I fall more deeply in love with the Lord for who He is, I will desire to possess Him as Life and not just as something added to me. I want His knowledge to be a savor of His Life in me that will minister His love and grace to others.

Conclusion

***“Behold, He standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice”
(Song of Songs 2:9b).
“Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely”
(Song of Songs 2:14b).***

May Jesus, our Beloved, not always have to look through the lattice of a small window to see us (Song of Songs 2:9). He desires to relate to us face to face. There are so many godly reasons why we may desire to see the Lord’s face, but let us now fully turn our hearts towards Him and consider HIS DESIRE and need to relate to us in unveiled oneness. May we honor His heart in love as a Bride. May we dwell with Him at “eye– level” both now and forever.***

Prayer: Oh Lord, You have given us grace and liberty to seek and know You even at eye-level. Above all else, may we never forget Your face! We pour out our hearts like water before You as we cry out to know You as You truly are. Holy Spirit, open our eyes so that we can see Jesus! Lord, we love You for who You are and not just what You do and say. We love You enough to sense that You desire and need us to see You and know You in this way. May our hearts turn to meet Your need and fulfill Your desire, for You are worthy. Amen.

