

LET INCENSE ARISE

BEING A PERSON OF “ONE THING” (PS. 27:4) – COREY STARK

I. KING DAVID, AS A MODEL FOR THE RADICAL PURSUIT OF GOD

A. There is more written about David than any other person in the Bible (besides Jesus). David is a model, revealing how God desires to *relate* to us in our weakness and how we are to *respond* to Him in the various seasons of our life, whether in victory or failure, prosperity or lack (Ps. 86:17; Isa. 55:3-4). David faithfully persevered doing in doing all the will of God in his generation (Acts 13:22, 36), even while struggling with deep personal weakness and failure by having confidence in God’s extravagant mercy (Ps. 51:16-17).

Isa. 55:3 “I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David. 4 Indeed I have given him [David] as a witness [model] to the people, a leader and commander for the people.”

B. David understood he was a sign of how far God’s extravagant love would go in relating to our weakness.

Ps. 86:17 Show me a sign [model] for good... because You, LORD, have helped me.

C. The first description of David that the LORD gave through Samuel to King Saul, called David “a man after God’s heart” (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). David was only a young teenager at the time. He is a picture of what God is *seeking* in His people and what the Spirit desires to *reproduce* in our personal lives and leadership toward others. What God did in David and through him is a model of what God wants to do in others.

1 Sam. 13:14 “The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander [leader] over His people.”

D. Being a person after God’s own heart includes:

1. Pursuing the *emotions* of God’s heart: David diligently searched out God’s emotions. David became a reflection of God’s heart (kindness, meekness, mercy, generosity), because he encountered God’s heart.

Ps. 51:16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit... and a contrite heart—These, You will not despise.

2. Obeying the *commands* of God’s heart: David set his heart to obey God, as an expression of the love he first received from God. Jesus taught affection-based obedience was far superior to duty-based (Jn. 14:15).

Jn. 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

3. Contending for the *purpose* of God’s heart: David pursued the fullness of God’s purpose for his life and generation. God testified David did “*all My will*” and served His purpose in his generation (Acts 13:36).

Acts 13:22 “I have found David... a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.”

II. BEING A PERSON OF “ONE THING”: DWELL – BEHOLD – INQUIRE

A. David’s life vision can be summed up in his radical pursuit of God found in Psalm 27:4.

Ps. 27:4 One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

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B. *Premise:* We have no godly desires apart from God’s Spirit imparting them (Ps. 37:4; Jn. 15:5; Phil. 2:13). Since the carnal mind is continually at war with God’s Spirit (Rom. 8:7), the fact that we desire more of God is the evidence of His divine influence in our lives. We only love Him, because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19).

Phil. 2:13 It is God who works in you both to will [inspire] and to do [empower] for His good pleasure.

C. David’s DESIRE for God was first God’s desire for David (Jn. 17:21, 24). David only desired to pursue God, because God was pursuing David and imparted this desire to him (Ps. 37:4). Like David, our confidence isn’t in our ability to pursue God, but God’s ability to empower us to fulfill the desires He placed within us.

Jn. 17:24 “Father, I desire that they... may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory...”

D. You cannot DWELL on the run. It takes time and intentionality to rest and abide. Mary wasn’t unusually anointed to dwell in God’s presence; she simply *chose* it (Lk. 10:38-42)! I remember asking the LORD, “But who will do all the work?” He said, “You will and you’ll bear more fruit, because you’ll work the *right* way” (Jn. 15:5). *Lovers always outwork workers*. People don’t get “burned out” from *hard work*, but *wrong work*!

Lk. 10:38 Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving... 41 And Jesus answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

E. ALL THE DAYS of his life David was relentless in his pursuit of encountering God’s beauty! He not only pursued God as a young man, but in his later years as well, whether in victory or failure, prosperity or lack.

F. “*Learn from your Father’s*” to understand why only “one thing” is needed (Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4). Encountering the beauty of God in intimacy is the everlasting fount from which all kingdom activity effortlessly flows. The wise virgins prioritized intimacy above activity (Mt. 25:1-13).

1. ***Rev. 4:4 Around the throne... I saw twenty-four elders sitting... (Rev. 5:6; 14:3)***
2. ***Rev. 4:10 The twenty-four elders fall down before Him... and worship... and cast their crowns...***
3. ***Rev. 5:8 The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp [worship music], and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song...***
4. ***Rev. 5:14 The twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.***
5. ***Rev. 7:11 The elders... fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God...***
6. ***Rev. 11:16 The twenty-four elders who sat before God... fell on their faces and worshiped God...***
7. ***Rev. 19:4 The twenty-four elders... fell down and worshiped God... saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”***

G. As we consistently BEHOLD His beauty we are progressively transformed into His image (2 Cor. 3:18).

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

H. To INQUIRE in His Temple assumes personal access. We get to “come to Jesus” and have a two-way dialogue with Him, as we meditate in the Word. Jesus rebuked the “spiritual” of His day for trusting Scripture alone to impart eternal life apart from personally encountering the One who is eternal life (Jn. 5:39-40).

Jn. 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

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III. THE GLORY, PLEASURE & TRANSFORMING POWER OF ENCOUNTERING GOD IN THE WORD

A. There is *two stages* of receiving from Scripture – *milk* and *meat* (Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2). *Milk* is truth obtained from someone else’s digested meat. *Meat* is learning to eat the Word of God for yourself and extract the nutrients (i.e. truth) through the *experiential knowledge* of encounter (Ezek. 2:8-3:4; Rev. 10:8-11).

Heb. 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles... of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age... who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

B. Growing in the experiential knowledge of God is synonymous with growing in *intimacy* with God. I am most *intimate* with those I *know* the most. Therefore, the *more I know* about a person the *more intimate* I am with them. However, this is not purely *cognitive information* gained by memorizing facts about God, but growing in the *experiential knowledge* of how He *thinks, feels* and *acts* by encountering Him in the Word.

C. There are *three stages* to growing in intimacy with God:

1. *Invitation* (menu): Intimacy begins with understanding His *desire* for relationship with us at a deep heart level right now in the midst of our weakness not only once we’ve matured (Song 1:5). God doesn’t need us as anointed laborers, He *desires* us to draw near Him, because He *really* likes us (Mk. 3:13-15; 17:24-26)!

Mk. 3:13 He called... those He Himself wanted... 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons...

2. *Substance* (meat): This is the *relational knowledge* of God gained by personally experiencing Him. This is the “one thing” needed (Ps. 27:4; Lk. 10:42). God doesn’t hide things *from* us, but *for* us to discover (Pr. 25:2). The Holy Spirit was sent to escort us into the deep things of God’s heart and mind (1 Cor. 2:9-11).

1 Cor. 2:9 “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God... 12 that we might know the things... freely given to us by God.

3. *Overflow*: As we encounter God in the Word our hearts are awakened unto *eternal life* (Jn. 5:39-40; 17:3), we receive spiritual *impartation* (Jn. 6:63), experience deep *interior pleasure* (Ps. 36:8), holy *fascination* (Ps. 27:4), the delight of *discovery* (Pr. 25:2), eternal *rest* that flows from our authentic identity (Mt. 16:18), end time *preparation* (Jer. 23:20), personal *transformation* – minds renewed, emotions restored, motives purified, bodies healed, as we delight to do God’s will (2 Cor. 3:18), greater *freedom* (Jn. 8:32), lasting *character development* (Eph. 3:16-19), and radical acts of *selfless love* (2 Cor. 5:14).

Jn. 14:23 “If anyone [experientially] loves Me, he will keep My word”

D. As often as the *invitation* is given, so also the *overflowing benefits* are taught as a motivation to persevere. However, without engaging in the *substance* of intimacy we can never attain to the overflow! Unfortunately, after receiving the invitation and failing to experience the overflowing benefits as quickly as desired, I’ve watched many sincere well-meaning Christians wrongly conclude: 1. The message is *false* and it doesn’t work or 2. They are the *problem* and it just doesn’t work for them. The truth is they need to persevere in substance!

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IV. THE SUBSTANCE OF INTIMACY: ENCOUNTERING JESUS’ MAJESTIC BEAUTY (REV. 1) A.R.K.

A. The *primary purpose* of the book of Revelation is to unveil the unsearchable riches of Christ to *transform the Church* into a fully mature Bride who is made comparable to Jesus as His eternal companion (Rev. 19:7)!

Rev. 1:1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [Father] gave Him [Jesus] to show His servants...*

B. Revelation 1 highlights 52 *distinct aspects* of Jesus’ eternal majesty, strategically given in 14 titles, 10 attributes and 28 descriptions, giving us the most comprehensive picture of who Jesus Christ is today!

C. Titles (14): Jesus (Rev. 1:1, 2, 4, 9 x2); Christ (Rev. 1:1, 2, 4, 9 x2); Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:4); Firstborn from the Dead (Rev. 1:4); Ruler over the Kings of the Earth (Rev. 1:4); Him Who Loved Us (Rev. 1:5); Lord (Rev. 1:10); Alpha (Rev. 1:11); Omega (Rev. 1:11); First (Rev. 1:11, 17); Last (Rev. 1:11, 17); Son of Man (Rev. 1:13); He who Lives and was Dead (Rev. 1:18); Alive Forevermore (Rev. 1:18).

D. Attributes (10): *Blood* washed us from sin (Rev. 1:5); *Voice* like a trumpet; as many waters (Rev. 1:10, 12, 15); *Feet* like fine brass (Rev. 1:13, 15, 17); *Chest* with golden band (Rev. 1:13); *Head* white like wool (Rev. 1:14); *Hair* white as snow (Rev. 1:14); *Eyes* like flame of fire (Rev. 1:14); *Right Hand* (Rev. 1:16, 17, 20); *Mouth* with sharp two-edged sword (Rev. 1:16); *Countenance* like sun shining in strength (Rev. 1:16).

E. Descriptions (28): His revelation (Rev. 1:1); His servants (Rev. 1:1 x2); He sent and signified (Rev. 1:1, 11); His angels (Rev. 1:1); His testimony (Rev. 1:2, 9); He loved us (Rev. 1:5); He washed us from our sins in His own blood (Rev. 1:5); He made us kings and priests (Rev. 1:6); His God (Rev. 1:6); His Father (Rev. 1:6); He is coming with clouds (Rev. 1:7); Every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him (Rev. 1:7); All the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him (Rev. 1:7); His tribulation (Rev. 1:9); His kingdom (Rev. 1:9); His patience (Rev. 1:9); His Day (Rev. 1:10); His appearance behind John (Rev. 1:10); He commissions to write and send (Rev. 1:11, 19); He’s in the midst of the seven lampstands (Rev. 1:13); He’s clothed with a garment down to the feet (Rev. 1:13); He’s girded about the chest with a golden band (Rev. 1:13); He holds the seven stars in His right hand (Rev. 1:16, 20); Out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword (Rev. 1:16); His appearance is deathly terrifying (Rev. 1:17); He laid His right hand saying “Do not be afraid” (Rev. 1:17); He has the keys of Hell and Death (Rev. 1:18); He reveals mysteries (Rev. 1:20).

F. Agreement: Make declarations of agreement to Jesus about *who He is* (titles), *what He’s like* (attributes) and *what He feels, says or does* (emotions, words, actions). Identify the core truths in each of the *fifty-two aspects* (some overlap) and simply declare them back to Him with affection, gratitude and wonder.

1. “You are... the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the Dead, Ruler over the Kings,” etc.
2. “You have... eyes like a flame of fire, a sharp two-edged sword, the keys of Hell and Death,” etc.
3. “You do... hold the seven stars in Your right hand, dwell in the midst of the churches,” etc.

G. Revelation: Ask Holy Spirit for increased revelation of these specific aspects of Jesus’ majesty. Each facet is like the *tip of a massive iceberg of truth* just waiting below the surface that the Spirit will use to escort us.

Jn. 16:13 *When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth... 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine [thoughts, emotions, etc.] and declare [reveal] it to you.*

H. Keep the Prophecy: Make simple declarations of resolve to guard the revealed truths, while asking God to empower us to faithfully express these aspects of Jesus’ majesty in our lives and ministries (Rev. 1:3; 22:7).