

CHAPTER IV: How to Cultivate the Spirit's Companionship

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”

Amos 3:3.

Now this is what is known as a rhetorical question; it is equivalent to a positive declaration that two cannot walk together except they be agreed, and for two to walk together they must be in some sense one.

They also have to agree that they *want* to walk together, and they have to agree that it is to their advantage to travel together. I think you will see that it all adds up to this: *For two to walk together voluntarily they must be, in some sense, one.*

I am talking now about how we can cultivate the Spirit's fellowship, how we can walk with Him day by day and hour by hour—and you won't object if I say “you.” Sometimes we preachers preach in the third person, and you can develop a habit of thinking in the third person. We don't talk about “us”; we talk about “they.” I don't like that. I think we ought to get personal about this.

There are some of you who are not ready for this sermon at all. You are trying to face both ways at once. You are trying to take some of this world and to get some of that world over yonder. You are a Christian, but I am talking about an advance upon the first early stages of salvation and the cultivation of the presence of the Holy Ghost, so that He may illuminate and bless and lift and purify and direct your life. You are not ready for this, because you haven't given up all that you might have the All. You want some, but you don't want all; that is the reason you are not ready.

You who have not given up the world will not be able to understand what I am talking about. You want Christianity for

its insurance value. You want just what a man wants when he takes out a policy on his life, or his car, or his house. You don't want modernism, because it hasn't any insurance value. You are willing to support this proposition financially. He would be a poor man who would want insurance and not be willing to pay for it. If Jesus Christ died for you on the cross you are very happy about that because it means you won't be brought into judgment, but have passed from death into life. You are willing to live reasonably well, because that is the premium you are paying for the guarantee that God will bless you while you live and take you home to heaven when you die!

You may not be ready because your conception of religion is social and not spiritual. There are people like that. They have watered down the religion of the New Testament until it has no strength in it. They have introduced the water of their own opinion into it, until it has no taste left. They are socially minded. This is as far as it goes with them. People like that may be saved. I am not prepared to say that they are not saved, but I am prepared to say that they are not ready for what I am talking about. The gospel of Christ is essentially spiritual, and Christian truth working upon human souls by the Holy Ghost makes Christian men and women spiritual.

I don't like to say this, but I think that some of you may not be ready for this message because you are more influenced by the world than you are by the New Testament. I am perfectly certain that I could rake up fifteen boxcar loads of fundamentalist Christians this hour in the city of Chicago who are more influenced in their whole outlook by Hollywood than they are by the Lord Jesus Christ. I am positive that much that passes for the gospel in our day is very little more than a very mild case of orthodox religion grafted on to a heart that is sold out to the world in its pleasures and tastes and ambitions.

The kind of teaching that I have been giving has disturbed some people. I am not going to apologize at all, because, necessarily, if I have been traveling along thinking I am all right and there comes a man of God and tells me that there is yet much land to be possessed, it will disturb me. That is the

preliminary twinge that comes to the soul that wants to know God. Whenever the Word of God hits us, it disturbs us. So don't be disturbed by the disturbance. Remember that it is quite normal. God has to jar us loose.

But there are some who are prepared. They are those who have made the grand, sweet committal. They have seen heaven draw nearer and earth recede; the things of this world have become less and less attractive, and the things of heaven have begun to pull and pull as the moon pulls at the sea, and they are prepared now. So I am going to give you these few little pointers to help you into a better life.

Point one is that the Holy Spirit is a living Person. He is the third Person of the Trinity. He is Himself God, and as a Person, He can be cultivated; He can be wooed and cultivated the same as any person can be. People grow on us, and the Holy Spirit, being a Person, can grow on us.

The second point is: Be engrossed with Jesus Christ. Honor Him. John said: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

I ask you to note that the Spirit was given when Jesus was glorified. Now that is a principle. Remember that He came and spread Himself out as a flood upon the people because Jesus was glorified. He established a principle, and He will never, never flood the life of any man except the man in whom Jesus is glorified. Therefore, if you dedicate yourself to the glory of Jesus, the Holy Ghost will become the aggressor and will seek to know you and raise you and illumine you and fill you and bless you. Honoring Jesus Christ is doing the things which Jesus told you to do, trusting Him as your All, following Him as your Shepherd, and obeying Him fully.

Let's cultivate the Holy Ghost by honoring the Lord Jesus. As we honor Jesus, the Spirit of God becomes glad within us. He ceases to hold back, He relaxes and becomes intimate and communes and imparts Himself; and the sun comes up and heaven comes near as Jesus Christ becomes our all in all.

To glorify Jesus is the business of the Church, and to glorify Jesus is the work of the Holy Ghost. I can walk with Him when I am doing the same things He is doing, and go the same way He is going and travel at the same speed He is traveling. I must be engrossed with Jesus Christ. I must honor Him. “If any man serve me, him will my Father honour” (John 12: 26). So let’s honor the Lord Jesus. Not only theologically, but let’s honor Him personally.

The third point is: Let’s walk in righteousness. The grace of God that bringeth salvation also teaches the heart that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. There you have the three dimensions of life. Soberly—that is me. Righteously—that is my fellowman. Godly—that is God. Let us not make the mistake of thinking we can be spiritual and not be good. Let’s not make the mistake of thinking we can walk with the Holy Ghost and go a wrong or a dirty or an unrighteous way, for how can two walk together except they be agreed? He is the *Holy Spirit*, and if I walk an unholy way, how can I fellowship with Him?

The fourth is: Make your thoughts a clean sanctuary. To God, our thoughts are things. Our thoughts are the decorations inside the sanctuary where we live. If our thoughts are purified by the blood of Christ, we are living in a clean room no matter if we are wearing overalls covered with grease. Your thoughts pretty much decide the mood and weather and climate inside your heart, and God considers your thoughts as part of you. Thoughts of peace, thoughts of pity, thoughts of mercy, thoughts of kindness, thoughts of charity, thoughts of God, thoughts of the Son of God—these are pure things, good things, and high things. Therefore, if you would cultivate the Spirit’s acquaintance, you must get hold of your thoughts and not allow your mind to be a wilderness in which every kind of unclean beast roams and bird flies. You must have a clean heart.

Point five: Let us seek to know Him in the Word. It is in the Word we will find the Holy Spirit. Don’t read too many other

things. Some of you will say, “Look who’s talking!” Well, go ahead and say it, I don’t mind; but I am reading fewer and fewer things as I get older, not because I am losing interest in this great, big, old suffering world, but because I am gaining interest in that other world above. So I say, don’t try to know everything. You can’t. Find Him in the Word, for the Holy Ghost wrote this Book. He inspired it, and He will be revealed in its pages.

What is the word when we come to the Bible? It is *meditate*. We are to come to the Bible and meditate. That is what the old saints did. They meditated. They laid the Bible on the old-fashioned handmade chair, got down on the old, scrubbed board floor and meditated on the Word. As they meditated, faith mounted. The Spirit and faith illuminated. They had nothing but a Bible with fine print and narrow margins and poor paper, but they knew their Bible better than some of us with all of our helps. Let’s practice the art of Bible meditation.

Now please don’t grab that phrase and go out and form a club. Don’t do it! Just meditate. That is what we need. We are organized to death already. Let’s just be plain Christians. Let’s open our Bible, spread it out on the chair, and meditate on it. It will open itself to us, and the Spirit of God will come and brood over it.

So be a Bible meditator. I challenge you: Try it for a month and see how it works. Put away questions and answers and the filling in of blank lines about Noah. Put all that cheap trash away and take a Bible, open it, get on your knees and say, “Father, here I am. Begin to teach me.” He will begin to teach you, and He will teach you about Himself and about Jesus and about God and about the Word and about life and death and heaven and hell, and about His own Presence.

I have just one more point: Cultivate the art of recognizing the presence of the Spirit everywhere. Get acquainted with the Holy Ghost and then begin to cultivate His presence. When you wake in the morning, in place of burying your head

behind the *Tribune*, couldn't you get in just a few thoughts of God while you eat your grapefruit?

Remember, cultivating the Holy Ghost's acquaintance is a job. It is something you do, and yet it is so easy and delightful. It is like cultivating your baby's acquaintance. You know when you first look at the little wrinkled fellow, yelling, all mouth, you don't know him. He is a little stranger to you. Then you begin to cultivate him, and he smiles. (It isn't a smile at all. He has colic! You think it is a smile, and it is such a delight.) Pretty soon he wiggles an arm, and you think he is waving at you. Then he gurgles and you think he said "Mama." You get acquainted!

Is this for ministers? This is for ministers, certainly. Is it for housewives? Yes, housewives, and clerks and milkmen and students. If you will thus see it and thus believe it and thus surrender to it, there won't be a secular stone in the pavement. There won't be a common, profane deed that you will ever do. The most menial task can become a priestly ministration when the Holy Ghost takes over and Christ becomes your all in all.