

Feel For the Lord

By Don Potter

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I was watching a carpenter friend of mine one day and I noticed that his work always has excellence in it. I thought, "This brother has a lot of integrity". After watching a while longer, I realized that the reason he has so much excellence is because he has a feel for carpentry. Quickly my memory bank went through all the musicians I've known who had a feel for music. They just played in a way that you could close your eyes and feel safe about what you're hearing. I don't know why I felt safe when they played but I think it has something to do with an inner authority and a confidence in what God made them to be. Suddenly the next two thoughts came, "Can we have a feel for praise?" and "Can we have a feel for the Lord?" The answer to that is yes and yes. The Lord directed me to John 14:16-17 and began to open up some wonderful things to me.

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; {that is} the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, {but} you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. (John 14:16-17 NAS)

At the end of verse 17 Jesus says "**but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be with you**". When Jesus uses the word "know", He doesn't mean you will get to know the Spirit of Truth through the mind but through the senses. The Greek word is *ginosko* and it means "to know experientially; be conscious of; be aware (of), feel, (have) know(-ledge), perceived, understand". Jesus is instructing His disciples to come to know the Spirit by feeling Him or sensing Him experientially. In other words, you will have a feel for the Spirit.

This is the same Spirit that the world cannot receive because they do not see Him. Of course that means we must be able to see Him, which caused me to realize I had some work to do in the area of my feelings.

Feelings

This idea of feeling the Spirit of God is a little strange to some as we have been taught to not trust our feelings. I've heard, "don't worry about feeling anything, just do it anyway". The real truth is that we need to feel the Lord around us all the time and when we don't we should be alarmed and start asking why He's not there. Our senses will send out an alarm every time if we are not too afraid to have feelings. Remember, being controlled by your feelings is very different from learning to have a feel for the Spirit.

The Lord takes this idea very seriously and makes many statements that show this to be true. ***"And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. (John 17:3 NAS)*** The word "know" here is the same Greek word. Our eternal life is dependent upon getting to know God and Jesus the Son through the perceptions gained by experience and feelings for Him.

Religion says the only way to know the Lord is through the law. Tradition says, keep these few man-made rules and all will go well for your life and maybe as a bonus you can come to know the Lord. Read the words of Jesus: **Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (John 17:22-23 KJV)**. When Jesus says *"I never knew you;"* again, the Greek word *ginosko* is used. The words of Jesus paraphrased are, "I never had experiences with you, or I was never allowed to be aware of you, I don't have a feel for you."

I don't want to linger on this scripture too long but I want to remind you of what it says. "Many" is the first word of it. That means many, and not only that, but they will have the true ability to prophesy, which means to speak the inspired word of God. If that is not enough, many will cast out demons and do "mighty works." "Mighty works" is *dunamis* in Greek and it means performing miracles. It is clear we must have a relationship with the Lord and not with ministry.

I know from experience that there are times when I've felt dry in the Spirit and yet when someone needed ministry I was able to move in the Spirit and minister. I was able to hear the Lord for that person's life and even pray deliverance for them. I've been a part of a mighty work for the Lord, and known miracles that would be considered real ministry by most. I have also known that something was missing at times and lately I feel I must find my way to a truly exposed relationship with Jesus. Ministry has not given me a closer relationship with Jesus anymore than working at a factory will. However, I can work at a factory and learn to have a relationship with the Lord but my job is not the source of it.

The other shocking discovery was being in fulltime ministry allows less and less time with the Lord, as it demands more and more of that time. Since the gifts are without repentance, (Romans 11:29) then the lack of power will not be your guide, but not sensing Him should. One can minister with power without a real relationship with the Lord. All this to say, just because someone moves in the gifts of the Spirit, does not mean they have a close relationship with Jesus, and if you think going into full-time ministry will improve your relationship with the Lord, think again. Only the most disciplined people will be able to force enough time into their lives to seek the Lord and develop a close relationship with Him. Still those who are able to get that time will often not have any real relationships with others and suffer the problem of not loving one another (see John 13:34).

However, there is hope. After seeking the Lord about this and asking if I was allowing myself to be known by Him, He simply reminded me, "*if you have done this unto the least of these, you have done it unto Me.*" (Matthew.25:40). That means that every time I'm real or vulnerable in front of others, I'm vulnerable in front of my Lord. Every time I reveal my heart to those I'm ministering to, I reveal myself to the Lord. This is not a very popular ministry technique as many still believe there must be a front of perceived perfection in those who minister. Still, I think a great hunger for the Lord is breaking out among those who minister and brokenness will be the result. Remember the Lord will judge the leadership of the church before He starts on the church (see Malachi 3:3-4).

Starting To Have Feelings

In the many places that we have traveled, I see more and more people starting to have feelings they never had before and they don't know why. Sometimes when I start to play the guitar a little in the beginning of a meeting, some will begin to cry. At first I thought, "They hate this music already," but the Lord showed me, that there is a great void in the body of Christ concerning feelings and He is beginning to wake us up to them. The people are not crying over my guitar playing but over the presence of the Lord.

Once in a Friday night meeting, the band was going at it with all their might and the banners were waving and the dancers were jumping all around and I was watching this and waiting to start my teaching that I had so painstakingly prepared. After the intensity of all this died down some I thought I will just play a little on the guitar before I start to teach my great wisdom. As soon as I started playing some people began to cry and then others joined that and finally the pastor gave up his cool and most were just in tears. Needless to say, my great teaching was not on God's agenda for that night but His presence and the feeling it brings. We all just soaked in His presence for while and God was not willing to let this stop any time soon. He would have stayed all night if we had had the fortitude.

While in Germany recently at a ministry school I started to play the guitar as I pondered the language barrier. Many began to weep, and I knew God had already bridged this barrier in one moment. Though I did some teaching most of the time was spent ministering to the Lord and that was all these young students needed. When I spoke of having feelings for the Lord they all began to cry and later shouted a victory shout for the freedom.

This subject is trouble in many places and those who refuse to believe it is true are generally the most emotional when the Lord breaks through on them. Others hold on to their stoic personalities and fail to notice God altogether. However, this is dangerous. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: *Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* (Ephesians 4:18-19 KJV).

This is Paul encouraging the church at Ephesus to not walk in the futility of the mind as do the Gentiles. The word "heart" at the end of verse 18 means thoughts or feelings. I know this scripture sounds harsh when referring to believers who attend church regularly, but the idea here is not your church attendance record but your relationship with Jesus. That relationship has two parts. The one we have with the Lord privately and the one we have with the Lord corporately.

Emotions Of Jesus

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.(Luke10:21 KJV)

Jesus was rejoicing after seventy of His disciples returned saying, "**Lord even devils are subject to us in through thy name.**" The word "rejoiced" means to jump for joy, and to whirl about. This was an emotional experience and the Lord was showing His feelings. Keeping in mind Jesus only does what He sees the Father doing and only says what He hears the Father say (John 5:19). This means the Father has feelings too and isn't afraid to have them or expose them.

This emotional experience came from Jesus knowing the Father, but then the Savior goes on to say: **All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him (Luke10:22 KJV).**

Before this time no one was really able to know Jesus. No one was presently able to know the Father unless the Son reveals Him. There were men in the Old Testament who had a relationship with the Father but things were long since dead in Israel concerning intimate fellowship with God. Without the Son no one would ever come to know or have experiences or feelings for the Father. According to this Luke 10:22 scripture the only way to have feelings and experiences with the Father is when the Son reveals Him.

It seems that there must be consideration given to the idea of feelings for the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Though the arguments mount against emotionalism in the church, I have failed to find a scripture warning against people with too much zeal for God, or warnings about those who show too emotion when praising. In fact we have Jesus saying to the Pharisees after they wanted all the shouts of praise to stop, "**And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (Matthew21:16)**

"Babes" means a simple minded person or an immature Christian. It is easy to find an immature Christian; they are the ones who are shouting the loudest and causing the most disruption when they praise the Lord. I guess they haven't learn how to sit on their feelings yet.