

*“Our closeness with the Lord Jesus is a direct social relational closeness -- where Jesus Christ becomes our best friend.” ~ T George Homsher*

### **Week 11: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part One)**

Posted: 9/19/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

The author recalls that during the 1970s there was much talk about developing a close relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a wonderful time to enjoy the love of the Lord Jesus. Much of the teachings were accurate in helping Christians to develop a social closeness with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of it, however, took a pragmatic form that steered Christians into a relationship with the Holy Bible instead of with Jesus (this makes sense when one realizes that pragmatic individuals are naturally uncomfortable in relationships). In a roundabout way, this approach sought to teach Christians that they could have a close relationship with Jesus strictly through the Bible--and that this relationship was going to be one-sided in its ability to socialize. We could pray and speak to Jesus and learn what Jesus was saying to us through the Bible, but Jesus wasn't going to speak to us directly in our heart and mind. Those who sought to have Christians develop a relationship with the Bible presented that this intimate relational approach was to be feared, because it would be putting a person in the evil realm of the spiritual. Of course the problem with this is that it is not Biblical; we cannot have a relationship with the Bible, because the Word of God reveals that the relationship we need to have is with God.

The Bible is the infallible perfect word of God that emphasizes and teaches mankind how to develop closeness to God. This is a closeness that is in the arena of relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is not a closeness that is steeped in the new age or occult teachings of the evil Emerging Church (a church that is at the forefront of the great falling away here in the end times). This is a closeness that is most deeply intimately linked with the Lord Jesus Christ.

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*John 10:3-4 "And the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. The sheep follow him: for they know his voice." KJV ~ The Lord Jesus Christ*

*John 10:16 "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." KJV ~ The Lord Jesus Christ*

*Second Corinthians 13:3 "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you." KJV ~ The Apostle Paul*

## **Week 12: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Two)**

Posted: 9/23/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

The verses above represent some of the teachings in the Bible that demonstrate how our relationship with the Lord Jesus is meant to be. These verses clearly show that our relationship with Jesus involves Him speaking to us (directly communicating to us), and our ability as Christians to hear His voice. It was such an important key point in the time of the Apostle Paul that the carnal Corinthians sought to question Paul's status by doubting whether he heard Jesus speaking to him. Of course they did this by bragging about their own proof that Jesus was speaking to them in a mighty way, which we know was false.

The verses above reveal the social intimate involvement that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to have with each individual Christian. To bring more light to the subject, one of the major reasons for divorce in America is that men are not communicating (speaking) their thoughts and emotions with their wife--after a certain point in time wives are leaving their husbands. This speaks to the rejection and lack of intimacy that one intensely feels when someone close in their lives is not speaking to them. Are we to believe that God's love does not involve some form of direct communication (speaking) from our Savior Jesus to us?

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52%

## Week 13: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Three)

Posted: 9/30/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

In an April 27, 2010 article entitled *Most Americans Believe Jesus Speaks to Them* written at christianpost.com, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/most-americans-believe-jesus-speaks-to-them-44926/> some exciting news on the subject of Jesus speaking to the Christian individual was discussed:

*“A majority of Americans believe Jesus speaks to them in some form or another, finds a new survey. Fifty-two percent of Americans said Jesus speaks to them by influencing or connecting directly with their mind, emotions or feelings, according to a survey conducted by The Barna Group...”*

It is refreshing to see that the majority of Americans believe Jesus speaks to them. The most powerful form of communication is speaking, and to experience Jesus speaking to us as individuals is the ultimate in relational closeness to Him. The Lord Jesus is in us and we are in Him (1 John 4:12-16; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10 KJV), and that incredible intimacy includes the ability to hear Him speak to us--not just for us to speak to Him.

As a side note on the power in speaking, it can be noted in the way the politicians or leaders of countries can sway the people. It is why we as Christian individuals need to speak out, and declare our love for Jesus and voice the name of Jesus.

The secular world's spoken embarrassment of Jesus and His name has filtered into the Christian movement. We can turn this tragic occurrence around if we speak of Jesus and declare His name. A simple way to do this is to say, "Jesus bless you" when they sneeze or when we're saying goodbye to someone. Also, maybe we need to start a movement playfully called "Jesusianity".

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## *A Block to Our Closeness*

### **Week 14: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Four)**

Posted: 10/7/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

We continue to look at the April 27, 2010 article entitled *Most Americans Believe Jesus Speaks to Them* written at christianpost.com, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/most-americans-believe-jesus-speaks-to-them-44926/>.

Another fascinating finding was noted; that there is an interesting block for many Christians in drawing closer to Jesus:

*“Though the latest Barna survey shows that the majority of Americans believe they have a personal relationship with Jesus, it did not ask respondents how important that relationship is in their life.*

*But two years ago, Barna conducted a study that asked that question and found that the majority of Americans did not rank their relationship with God as the most important in their life.*

*Seven in 10 American adults said their family was more important than their relationship with God...”*

What’s preventing a lot of people from developing a close relationship with Jesus, more than any other, is ironically their relationship with a family member(s). It shows how powerful relationships are in our lives and the need for the Lord Jesus to take front and center in that arena. Colossians 3:23 (KJV) says we are to be unto Jesus not men (people), and the only way we’re able to do this is if our relationship with Him is the most important relationship in our lives. If we have this closeness with Him than our love for our family members will grow, and be even more powerful. It’s not one and not the other, but an emphasis on what God wants for our lives; we can have both relationships, but one has to be more important than the other(s).

Two other side notes of interest in the article were that the younger someone was the more prone they are to not own any personal relationship with Jesus, and second that individuals past the age of 40 are more likely to put God highest in their relationships with others.

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***Our Closest Friend vs. the “Accountability Movement”***

**Week 15: Developing A Close Relationship With Jesus (Part 5)**

Posted: 10/14/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

God exists in three separate equal persons (individuals): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our love for them is the same, and our relationship with them is in the spiritual realm.

As the Father desires, our closest social relationship is to be with the Lord Jesus Christ more than with Father, and less with the Holy Spirit. It is a relationship where Jesus Christ can become our best friend (John 15:10-15 KJV).

The closer we become to Jesus the less we are unto people, and the less people can impact us negatively. Most Christians are "on pins and needles" worried about what everyone else thinks, and not enough about what they think and what our Lord thinks. A large dose of this came into the evangelical Christian movement with what the author calls the "accountability movement." This movement has brought millions of Christians into a closer relationship with people and not the Lord Jesus. Its foundation is using the group therapy model, a model which enables the group to become God. In the case of the "accountability movement" the add-on is one's friend (partner) also becomes God in a co-dependence. We're living in a world in America where more and more people are trying to control us, and act like God in our lives. When we draw closer to Jesus we will have more courage to deal with these situations openly by facing our fear of rejection--we will be less prone to cave into the bondage that it creates.

Another important reason so many Christians need to draw closer to Jesus is their troubled backgrounds, and the highly negative impact that it had on their lives. When Jesus Christ becomes our closest friend He helps us to face the problems in our backgrounds, and He becomes more important than any family member or other individual of influence. Many Christians did not get much love from those that raised them, but they can be filled with incredible love from the One that will lead them in their adult lives helping them to avoid "the sins of the father" (Exodus 20:5 KJV).

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## *Our Spiritual Dependence*

### **Week 16: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Six)**

Posted: 10/20/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

In looking at how we can develop a socially close relationship with Jesus, it all begins with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to be brought into the good spiritual arena of life; for we worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24 KJV). In addition, the Spirit miraculously gives us new life (John 3:5-7; Titus 3:4-6; Ephesians 4:22-24 KJV) in the form of our new self (Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:9-10 KJV). Perhaps the greatest thing that the Holy Spirit works in us ongoing is to reveal, glorify, and manifest Jesus to us. This is discussed in Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's incredible book *He That Is Spiritual*, where he says, *"The Spirit does not speak from Himself. His purpose is to reveal and glorify Christ (John 16:12-15). The Spirit is made known to us by descriptive titles, such as "The Holy Spirit," or "The Spirit of God"; but His name is not disclosed. Though He does not reveal Himself, He is, nevertheless, the cause of all true spirituality. His work is to manifest "the life that is Christ" so completely that one can say: "For to me to live is Christ"; but the sufficient power back of this possible out-living of Christ is the in-living Spirit of God, and this as a result of the Spirit's filling."* (*He That Is Spiritual*. Chafer, Lewis Sperry. 1918. Database WORDsearch Corp., 2008). In terms of our social closeness with the Spirit, this reading shows us a large reason why we're not relationally close to the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit does not speak from Himself and we don't know His name. Although we're not as socially close to the Holy Spirit a balance comes in that He is irreplaceably vital for us to live out a successful Christian life--without the Spirit we're sunk.

There are many Christians who are afraid of the Holy Spirit, because the thought of the Spirit conjures up thoughts of ghosts or spirits of the evil realm. If we take time to get to know the Spirit in God's Word and inside of us, because He is a person, we will become less fearful of the Holy Spirit, and come to love the Spirit more and more.

There's another reason that many are confused about the Holy Spirit and see Him as the hardest person of the Godhead to understand, it's because the Spirit is in the background and in the foreground of our lives at the same time. The Holy Spirit is in the background of our lives, because our focus should be overwhelmingly on the Lord Jesus, and not as much on the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in the foreground of our lives, because we need to depend most on Him, even more than the Father and the Son, in our spiritual Christian walk.

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## *Our Dependence on the Holy Spirit*

*Ephesians 5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be Filled with the Spirit;" KJV the Apostle Paul*

### **Week 17: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Seven)**

Posted: 10/28/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

The need to depend most on the Holy Spirit can be seen clearly in the following verse. The Apostle Paul in First Corinthians 12:3 says, *"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"* (KJV). The Spirit's powerful involvement in our individual lives (Ephesians 3:16) is paramount if we are to have any serious level of success living out our Christian faith.

Our need to depend most on the Holy Spirit can also be seen in the words of Dr. Charles C. Ryrie in his book *The Holy Spirit*. (*Holy Spirit, The*. Ryrie, Charles C. 1965, 1997 Database WORDsearch Corp., 2006).

Dr. Ryrie shows that when we walk by faith we live in dependence on the Holy Spirit. A great Biblical source for the evidence of this can be found in Galatians 3:1-5. The faith that we need would include the strengthening and development of our fundamental Christian faith. It would also include developing areas of our faith like knowing the Lord Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us. However most powerfully, as we shall see, it involves a faith that is borne by love as John 3:16 says, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (KJV). God's love came first and then our faith came second.

In looking at Dr. Ryrie's passage, note the union he presents between walking in dependence on the Holy Spirit and the Spirit having full control of our lives. We are weak and feeble beings with our flesh, the old self, Satan, and the world still involved in our lives, and we urgently need the help of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us and to bring control over the entire negative. The result of this full control and filling (Ephesians 5:18) by the Spirit in our lives is a victorious Christian life; the "Spirit-Filled Life":

(Continued week 18)

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## *Our Control by the Spirit*

### **Week 18: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Eight)**

Posted: 11/4/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

(Continued from week 17)

*"...Finally, the Spirit-filled life is a dependent life. "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16)...*

*...In this verse in Galatians the Christian is reminded that in order to walk and make progress in the Christian life he must walk by faith, which means to live in dependence on the Holy Spirit...*

*...This continual walk of dependence is needed, as the following considerations imply.*

*1) The standards are high...2) The enemies are powerful...*

*...Only by walking in dependence on the Spirit--that is, by letting the Spirit have full control--can the Christian ever hope to make the progress that is consistent with his profession.*

*Thus to be Spirit-filled is to be Spirit-controlled. And to be so controlled requires dedication of life, victory over the reigning power of sin, and constant dependence on the Spirit. These are the conditions, and when they are in place, the Spirit's control automatically follows..." Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chapter 18). *Holy Spirit, The*. Ryrie, Charles C. 1965, 1997 Database WORDsearch Corp., 2006.*

There are different ways to develop a close relationship with Jesus in the Spirit's control, but there's a powerful simple way that the author has used to great benefit. It's the approach that Howard Blandau, psychologist taught him many years ago--it's simply relating to Jesus in faith in a relational loving way.

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## *A Personal Testimony*

*Romans 5:5 "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

### **Week 19: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Nine)**

Posted: 11/10/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

As we saw in Week 18 we develop a dependency on the Holy Spirit by walking in faith. This walk in faith needs to be linked with a faith that the Apostle Paul says is by love. Faith by itself is a sounding brass, but a working faith borne by love is in the heavens. He says in Galatians 5:5-6 *"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love (KJV)."*

Howard Blandau, psychologist, taught me many years ago to simply relate to Jesus in a socially relational loving way, one with affection (Colossians 3:1-4), and I would draw closer to Him. We can love Jesus; because the Holy Spirit sheds His love in our hearts (Romans 5:5) - we don't have to overwork it, because the Spirit does the large part by shedding the Spirit's love. When we relate to Jesus in a loving friendship way it is allowing our faith to be born and quickly strengthened, and that automatically allows us to be dependent on the Holy Spirit. We don't need to worry about being dependent on the Holy Spirit at this point, because we wonderfully already are. To say for example, "Jesus I love you" takes ownership and focus and demonstrates the power of our love for Jesus, and this gets our faith established. So it can be said that it is love that is preceding first and faith that is being born out of that love second. The author can describe this in his personal testimony.

For quite some time, from day one when I started seeing Howard Blandau in his counseling practice at the *Professional Counseling Center*, he had spoken to me about the urgent need to draw relationally close to the Lord Jesus, and how the most powerful way to hear Him speaking to me was in my mind. The Apostle Paul in First Corinthians 2:16 states, *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (KJV)."* Howard gave me the powerful insight from this verse of how our mind and the mind of the Lord Jesus are in oneness/union. This is where Jesus speaks to us with His mind to our mind, and vice versa--a conversation in heaven with the mind of Jesus and with our new-self mind. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, *"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20 KJV)."*

(Continued week 20)

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## *A Personal Testimony*

### **Week 20: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Ten)**

Posted: 11/18/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

(Continued from week 19) I had developed the ability to hear the Lord Jesus in my mind first in my counseling sessions as a Christ-centered counselor, but didn't have breakthroughs away from the counseling setting. I heard the Lord Jesus speaking to me in the sessions, because as a 27-28 year old young private practice counselor (and Western Pennsylvania director of the Professional Counseling Center) I was trying to help individuals in very complex situations. To express it simply, I was the one in the need of deep help to help me care for my clients. I was amazed how the Lord Jesus would speak to my mind and bring thoughts to my mind that would help clients release their emotions or bring an understanding to the difficulties that they were encountering.

It was in this highly stressed situation that I realized that I needed the Lord Jesus' closeness outside of the counseling sessions as well. All Jesus Christ-centered counselors need to deal with the stress that goes on with their counseling sessions to help others, a stress that can easily find its way into a counselor's mind and emotions when they leave the office and head home--I was no exception. I was bearing the burden of a lot of clients on my shoulders, and I needed Jesus to bear the burden instead (Matthew 11:28-30).

As the months passed by, I found myself back home in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I was strolling around at a local park trying to cope with the intense stress of a growing counseling practice. I began saying to the Lord, "Lord Jesus I love you." Although I hadn't heard Him in the past, this time was different, because Jesus responded and spoke to my mind (non-audibly) and said, "George, I love you to." Immediately, I knew it was Him and tears began to come down my face. Along with my recommitment to the Lord Jesus when I was 15 years of age, I never experienced this kind of love with the Lord Jesus. It was a breakthrough that has changed my life forever, because I finally had the love of God I was looking for on an ongoing basis.

Many years have passed since that event, and my closeness and love with the Lord Jesus has continued to get stronger through the years. It is something I hope and dream every Christian can have. It is something that I have a strong desire to help Christians learn how to have. It's a love and a closeness that I desired to have with Jesus Christ ever since I became a Christian at the age of eight. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11 KJV), and He can love anyone in the same wonderful way.

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## *Experience Jesus' Love*

*Ephesians 3:17-19 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." KJV the Apostle Paul*

### **Week 21: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Eleven)**

Posted: 11/25/12 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

There are some who are openly opposing experience in the individual Christian's life (like the kind the author revealed in his personal testimony in weeks 19 and 20), and putting a lot of guilt on Christians for openly talking about their experiences.

They present it in such a way that experience becomes the lived-out elements of the Christian's life in the dark arena of spirituality. This is an unreal view of what experience is and its importance in our lives; it's trying to say the sky isn't blue when we all know it is. A good way to respond to this is to playfully say, "Well (in *I Love Lucy* "Lucy-style"), I guess it's not important to take a resume to my next job interview." Experience is a very important part of each person's life, and we are shaped mightily by it (i.e. one's background). We shouldn't run from it, but understand how we are influenced by it, and how it can be a powerful thing in our lives if we have positive, helpful, or learned experiences. The Bible is filled with the experiences of countless Godly men and women that we revere, and we learn much from how they handled their experiences. The Father brings us through experiences of our own in our life to help us reach others for His glory, and His perfect love.

Let us not forget an incredible life-changing experience an individual had in the Bible. The Lord Jesus spoke audibly to a non-Christian murderer of Christians (the eventual Apostle Paul) that was also audibly heard by other presumed non-Christian men. To say Jesus speaks to Christians, who are blessed with more grace than non-Christians, in our mind and heart shouldn't be a controversial statement, but a part of the Biblical message God has given us.

The Lord Jesus had numerous experiences in His life here on earth including His death. Did the experiences that He had not impact His life mightily? Are we to tremble in fear or be in bondage of guilt that we're having experiences in our lives or are we to accept like our Savior that experiences are a part of an individual's life that can be both good and bad?

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## *Satan Speaks to Us*

***Matthew 4:1-3 "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said..." the Apostle Matthew KJV***

### **Week 22: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Twelve)**

Posted: 1/13/2013 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

In week 13 it was seen that although many Christians believe that Jesus speaks to them there are almost as many that believe He does not speak to them. Many Christians who believe this would contend, however, that Satan speaks to them in one fashion or another. What's borne out from Satan speaking to them is that many a Christian is caught up in the ongoing battle with the devil; they're spending a lot of time, energy, and focus on what Satan is saying--the wrong focus with the wrong one speaking.

As we can see from the Lord Jesus' temptation in the above verse He was clearly spoken to by Satan ("the tempter"). If Satan was speaking to Jesus our Lord will he not seek to speak to us as well? We need to withstand Satan's wiles (Ephesians 6:11 KJV) and to quench his fiery darts that seek to disrupt our faith (Ephesians 6:16 KJV) by the enemy speaking to us in our mind and heart. This is not to be done with an over-focus with Satan, but an in-love relational closeness and focus with Our Lord--giving the spoken thoughts of Satan to the Lord Jesus in obedience unto Him (second Corinthians 10:5).

The Father has not allowed us to be "hung out to dry" to the spoken attacks in our mind and heart by the devil, but has given us the spoken words of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ in our mind and heart--His mind unified with our mind (First Corinthians 2:16 KJV) that is founded in love. A love that can say, "Greater is He that is in me speaking to me inside then he that is outside of me in the world speaking to me inside (1 John 4:4)." The devil speaks to us from the outside of us the Lord Jesus speaks to us from the inside of us--the power is greater within us then that which is on the outside trying to come in--glory unto our Savior.

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## *An Enduring Love*

*Hebrews 13:5-6 "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. KJV"*

### **Week 23: Developing a Close Relationship with Jesus (Part Thirteen)**

Posted: 1/20/13 by T. George Homsher, M.Ed.

In closing this series on developing closeness with our Lord, it needs to be mentioned that our closeness is to be semi-private and it is not to be used for control. It is semi-private in that we need to have some limits to talking to others about what Jesus is speaking to us in our mind. Our intimacy with Jesus is so incredible that there's something wonderful about keeping it less public. It can be controlling in that some individuals seek to use Jesus speaking to them as a way to control others. If a person says or insinuates something like, "Jesus spoke to me and said we have to do it this way,"-- then "Bye-bye buddy".

Our development with our in-love relationship with Jesus will grow throughout our lifetime. When we hear Him speaking to us, calling us by name, letting us know how much He loves us etc. -- it has a wonderful grip on us that most anyone will not depart from. We will learn simply and quickly how to develop a fellowship with the Lord Jesus that is ongoing throughout each day; a fellowship of lifelong friendship.

Jesus is always there and He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). I recall (if I may personalize this) one of the most powerful moments in my life. My ministry in Western, PA was coming to an end and I was holding on for dear life with a hope that it wouldn't die. In the midst of this high level of anxiety and uncertainty, when I was off on my own, the Lord Jesus spoke in my mind, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." It wasn't audible, but it was the closest thing I ever experienced to that. This assured me that Jesus was always going to be there for me (no matter what), and it released within me a ton of emotion. Both of these things Jesus promised kept me going for the many months when my life was in difficult transition to my greatest job that I ever had, raising my daughter Bethany (ages 2-12) as a House Husband, and a Home School Dad—the greatest years of my life.