**EQUIPPING, May 12, 2023**

*****Don't miss the Deeper Dive Activation at the end of the notes.*****

Welcome and Greeting-Great to have you all here. We are continuing on our journey as Christ-followers and my plan tonight is to follow up on some of the topics Tim so powerfully shared in our Equipping Session from last month.

Some of what Tim taught us last month that we are going to take another dive into is;

- **Experiencing the Holy Spirit, and living by His impulses**
- **Surrender**
- **Obedience**
- **And Freedom**

- **Experiencing the Holy Spirit, and living by His impulses**

**Tim said:** ***To know the Holy Spirit is, above all, to experience Him, to open oneself to His influence, to say 'yes' to His impulses, and to let Him be the Source of everything one does-Surrender is the measure.***

To know the Holy Spirit is to experience Him. I am **not** going to camp here very long tonight because we plan on spending a number of sessions on the Person of the Holy Spirit, but I do want to hit on Tim's thought: ***To know the Holy Spirit is, above all, to experience Him.***

The Apostle Paul in one of his powerful prophetic prayers in Ephesians prays that *we would come to know practically, through experience for ourselves the love of God, which far surpasses mere knowledge without experience.*

The Holy Spirit longs to have encounters and experiences with you. He wants a relationship with you of extreme intimacy. Intimacy is high on Holy Spirits agenda for you.

God wants to establish intimacy with the Holy Spirit as a way of life for you. He longs for the Holy Spirit to be Your Source for life. How does He do that? He takes away everything else that you might rely on as your source.

Having an intimate, deep relationship with the Holy Spirit should be the driving force of your life. It really is the biggest battle in the church these days, because you having an intimate friendship with Holy Spirit, intimidates the enemy, more than anything else, so the enemy works really hard to distract you.

**So—how do you live with an extreme INTIMACY with Holy Spirit?**

- You live as though He were beside you all the time.
- You live internally as though no one else exists, but you and the Lord,
- and you can turn towards Him anytime you want, because that's the reality.

In that same prayer in **Ephesians** Paul prays *that the Holy Spirit would settle down and make Himself at home in your heart.*

So, when does Holy Spirit settle down and feel at home in your heart?

- When He feels accepted.
- When He feels wanted
- When He is not treated like a guest but as family
- When He is not ignored
- When He is invited to be a part of your life.
- When you consider Him an intimate friend.

Experiencing the Holy Spirit is simply turning your heart of affections towards Him all throughout your day and building an intimate friendship through conversation and connection

It is that unceasing dialogue with the Lord that keeps our ability to hear Him at a really high level. PRACTICE THE PRESENCE! Throughout the day just keep lifting your thoughts to Him. **That is experiencing the Holy Spirit.**

I have to tell you, there is something really powerful happening in the spirit world, and it is getting stronger and stronger, and it is all about the Father releasing a renewed passion for intimacy.

All across the world, we are seeing this incredible hunger, birthed by the Father Himself, for intimacy, and many, many, many people are responding. Many are so hungry for more that there is this desperation that says, I don't even care how it comes, I just want it.

So, again, we are going to really pursue this subject in the coming months, but right now, I feel like we should, at least, invite the Holy Spirit to draw close right now and connect with each of us personally at invite us to come closer.

**If you are feeling any tugging internally, that is the romance of the Spirit, calling you to come closer,** then receive this prayer:

*Father, the stirring we feel right now in our heart, the hunger that we are experiencing is because You put it there, and all we have to do is simply respond. I say yes Lord, I long for encounters and experiences with Holy Spirit, that take me into new levels of friendship and intimacy with Him.*

*Holy Spirit, we sense Your Presence here tonight so tangibly, we sense your passion and your zeal, and we stand in awe and astonishment at your level of love for us and your commitment to us.*

*We love the way you lead us to Jesus.*
*We love the way you show us the Father.*
*We love the way You love others through us.*
*We love the way You love us, even when we are not having a good day.*
*We love the way You love us even when we fail.*
*We love the way you love us even when we choose to ignore you.*
*We love the way you love us even when it seems the rate of our development is slow motion.*

*We love the way you love us the exact same way when we are having a great day, the same way as when I am struggling.*

*Holy Spirit--we want to know you more.*
*We want to know you better.*
*We desire a deeper intimacy with you.*
*Do something deep in our spirit, and draw us into a greater love-relationship with You.*

*You amaze us Holy Spirit. Please, right now, right where we are sitting, would You please give us a fresh infilling of Your Presence, and birth a hunger in our heart to know you more. Thank You Lord. Amen.*

**Okay-so, as Tim said:** ***To know the Holy Spirit is, above all, to experience Him, to open oneself to His influence, to say 'yes' to His impulses, and to let Him be the Source of everything one does-Surrender is the measure.***

Tim put himself in with great company when he combined the words '***Source and Surrender,'*** because Solomon did the same thing when he combined both Source and Surrender in **Proverbs 15:33-***The* ***Source*** *of revelation-knowledge is found as you fall down in* ***Surrender*** *before the Lord.*

**So, who is the Source of Revelation knowledge?** The Source of Revelation-knowledge is the Holy Spirit. That is why Tim said it is so important to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit's influence, say yes to His impulses, and let Him be the Source of everything.

- Revelation-knowledge comes directly from the Holy Spirit to our spirit.
- The Spirit does not speak to our mind.
- The Spirit speaks directly to our spirit and our spirit then reveals that revelation to our mind.

Remember in **Matthew 16** when Jesus asked the disciples who do you say I am, and Peter responded by saying: *You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.* And Jesus said to Peter:

*Simon, you are so blessed because you did not obtain that knowledge from friends or teachers, but that revelation came directly from the Spirit of God to your spirit.*

Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 2:14-***The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.*

The natural man cannot receive revelation from the Spirit.
Anything that does not make sense to our rational mind is automatically rejected.

Then Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 2:9-10:** *Eye has not seen, ear has not heard and the heart has not received all that God has prepared for those who love Him, for those who hold Him in affectionate reverence, and for those who are ready to promptly obey Him.*

**Verse 10:** *Yet to us God has revealed them by and through His Spirit, for the Holy Spirit searches the heart of God and reveals the secrets of God's heart to us.*

Don't you love that? The Holy Spirit, whom Bill Johnson says is the greatest of all search engines, searches the heart and thoughts of God and reveals those thoughts to our spirit, who in turn, speaks that revelation to my soul, my mind, my emotions and my will. **That is the spirit-led life.**

The spirit-led-life-comes through surrender. As Tim said: ***Surrender is the measure.***

- **Let's talk about surrender.** We have been hitting this subject a lot, the past six months. Apparently, the Holy Spirit simply won't let us leave this until He feels we really have a handle on it.

I believe one of the most difficult spiritual battles we fight is the battle *to surrender; to submit and to yield* our soul, our mind, our emotions our will, **our self-life,** to our spirit.

- **The starting point for surrender must start in the will.**
- The discipline of surrender begins when you engage your will in favor of the inner man of the spirit.
- **My spirit must rule over my soul, my mind and my emotions, by an act of my will.**

- **Our will is the vehicle that God uses to establish faith and it is the vehicle that governs our mind and our emotions.**

- To live a surrendered and yielded life, <u>our will constantly has to be given over to our spirit.</u>

If our will is not surrendered and yielded, our stubborn will, will run the show.

There are a high percentage of 'soul-driven' Christians. Soul driven Christians are those who are ***very active in their emotions, their intellect and in their physical appetites, without any input from their spirit.***

For soul-driven Christians:

- Whatever God is asking of you
- Whatever God is doing or is not doing in your life
- Whatever circumstance and event is happening in your life.
- All those things have to make sense to your natural mind before you say yes, or before you can be at peace.
- What you have then done, is reduced your experience of God to an intellectual or emotional process, and your soul, your will is influencing you more than your spirit. That is pride.

**Philippians 2:13**: *God works in us both to will and to do.* Often before God can do anything with us He has to get ahold of our will.

Surrender is living with the attitude of Jesus: *Father, not my will, but Your will be done.*

Personally, for me, this is spiritual warfare. This is where I lean on Holy Spirit to release His power on my behalf, where I come to Him and say: *I am willing to lay down my will, please help me Holy Spirit.*

*This is often a struggle for Me Holy Spirit, so I yield to you to come and empower me to submit my will, to take my stubborn self-will and surrender it to my spirit.*

David illustrates this warfare of **surrendering our** will, throughout Scripture. In **Psalm 9:1-2,** David gives four, 'I will' statements in the midst of battle:

- *I will give thanks to God with all my heart.*
- *I will tell of all your marvelous works.*
- *I will be glad and rejoice in you,*
- *I will sing my praises to Your Name, O Most High*

In the midst of warfare, David surrenders and yields His will to God.

In **Psalm 27:4-8** He gives four more 'I will' statements

- *I will seek the Lord and dwell in His house*
- *I will offer sacrifices of joy.*

- *I will sing praises to the Lord.*
- *I will seek Your face Lord.*

David is putting a command on his will to align with his spirit.

In **Psalm 42:11**, David finds himself in another 'spiritual warfare' battle, and he speaks directly to his soul, his mind, his emotions and his will. He says: *Why are you so down cast, so discouraged soul? Why are you so depressed? Hope in God, for I will praise Him.*

In other words, I know my self-life, my will wants to be depressed, but my spirit is praising and worshipping God, so line up soul, because we are going to praise the Lord. That is ruling in your spirit. That is submitting your will, your self-life, to your spirit.

We see so many disturbed Christians because they are unable to rule in their spirit. **Proverbs 16:32** says-*Greater is he that can rule in his spirit, then one who can rule a city.* I love how the Passion Translation reads: *Do you want to be a mighty warrior? It is better to be known as one who is patient and slow to anger, and rule over your soul, before you attempt to rule a city.*

In warfare we must choose to exercise our ability to line up our will with God's will. We are in a battle and there are no easy victories.

**<u>If you have a flabby will it needs building up.</u>**
You need some kind of exercise program for the will.

I can't tell you how many times throughout my life when I have been in some crisis-event, some difficult circumstance and it has gone on a while, and **I want my will to be done, so** I finally call out to God to get me out of this circumstance, only to hear the sweet Voice of the Lord saying,

*Well Gary, I would really prefer if you stayed in this process, and let me increase your faith and trust levels and develop more of My Nature in you. This is a great opportunity to surrender your soul, our mind, your emotions and your will to Me.*

*No Lord, I don't think so, just get me outta this! Not your will but my will be done here!*
*No Gary, I am going to keep you in this, but I am here with you.*
*But I want out of this.*
*No!*
*Okay, then I want to be God.*

You see, if you want out of something, and He has determined to keep you through it, because He knows this is a great opportunity for your development, you are not going to enjoy life for a while.

I have discovered in my stubborn will, that it is not beyond God to allow some kind of 'event' into My life, that He could have easily prevented by His Power, to help me in the development of reducing the power of my will and self-life.
**Okay, the next thing Tim talked about was: Freedom and Obedience. Tim said: Freedom is the ability to choose what is right. If you cannot choose what is right you have hooks.**

- **FREEDOM—**Let's take the first part of this: **Freedom is the ability to choose what is right.**

To choose what is right is all about 'obedience', and again ***HUMILITY*** plays a big part in obedience.

- Humility means I obey what the Spirit is speaking to me, because He is Lord.
- I do not obey so God will do something for me. Obeying is not manipulation.
- I obey because I have surrendered and yielded my life to the Lord.
- I obey because I have given Him Lordship of my life.
- I obey because I love Him, and I want to please Him with my life.

Jesus was talking with His disciples in **John 15,** and in **verse 14** He said: *If you love Me, you will keep my commandments.* In other words, *your love for Jesus will manifest in your obedience.*

I used to read that verse as a command, because it does say, *if you keep my commandments,* but what I sense the Holy Spirit is revealing in this verse is that Jesus is saying:

- *If you love Me, it is going to show up in how well you will protect those things I tell you that are important to me.*

The Passion Translation of **John 15:14** reads: *You show that you are my intimate friend when you obey all that I command you.* Obedience comes out of friendship.

The reality is: Friends are way less concerned about **disobeying** than they are about **disappointing.**

**The goal is not just obedience. The goal is friendship.**

God never intended for His followers to be human-robots, where we hear Him say take two steps stop. Now turn around. Take two more steps. That's not wrong, but **God is interested in something much deeper and much more profound.**

- Christianity was never intended to be dialed down to discipline.

- It was never meant to be reduced to discipline.
- You can discipline your way through the Christian life and have certain good effects or positive things that take place **because principles are true and truth works.**

- But we were not born to merely walk a tightrope of obedience out of discipline.
- We were born to burn with passion for God. Obedience comes out of passion and love.

**Let's take the second half of that statement-If you cannot choose what is right you have hooks:** The Shulamite maiden in the Song of Songs, the future bride of Jesus, identified those 'hooks', as 'troubling-foxes.'

In **Song 2:15-**The Lord comes to his beloved and calls her to come away with Him, to come and explore the depths of His love, and she so longs to say yes-but she cannot, because her ***conscience*** is convicting her, **because** of the 'hooks' in her life.

She calls them 'troubling foxes': she says to her Beloved Jesus: *You must help me catch the troubling foxes that hinder our relationship. They raid our budding vineyard of love, to ruin what I have planted within you.*

The Shulamite maiden is manifesting huge HUMILITY and VULNERABILITY here. The one thing that keeps us from ***admitting, addressing or dealing*** with those 'HOOKS' those 'LITTLE FOXES' is 'pride'.

Pride is what protects our 'self-life' and allows these 'troubling-foxes' to remain in our life.

No one else may know about these 'little-foxes' in our life, but we are aware of them, and we allow them to remain **because our 'pride' empowers us to justify them.**

*I don't need to deal with these little issues. God totally understands what's happening. He knows my weaknesses. He knows I struggle with this hidden lifestyle, with these secret compartments. He understands Me. He is the One who made me this way. He's cool with it.*

But the reality is, He is not cool with it. There are these little secret things that are hidden, and they defile our conscience. **That is a by-product, a fruit of arrogance and pride.**

I love how Jesus responds to the Shulamites request to help her with these 'troubling foxes'. It is the same way He deals with us. He comes to her so ***kindly and tenderly***, and He touches those things in her that will not travel well where she is going.

Now the Holy Spirit never touches something in our life to make us feel bad, guilty or shameful. He is touching it because He has scanned our heart, and He knows that we are ready to make a Divine exchange with Him, where we give Him that which will not travel well, where He is taking us, and He exchanges it with something that will travel well.

Then in the exchange He always releases wave after wave of His passionate love for us into our heart, and we are so overwhelmed with Him, that we do not want anything in our life to rob us of that love, so we readily make the exchange.

**I have personally discovered that, that are two parts to getting free from addictive habits, from the troubling foxes, from the hooks.**

- #1-You have to have a desire to be free and you have to choose to be free. A couple of days ago Tim said, *sometimes you have to sacrifice who you are for what you could be.* And sacrifice is costly. King David himself said, *I refuse to give God any sacrifice that does not cost me.* There is no sacrifice apart from inconvenience. You have to step beyond what is convenient.

- #2-You will never experience freedom from addictive, destructive passions until you replace them with a new and holy passion. **When you experience the fulfillment of intimacy with Jesus, it is really easy to lay aside the counterfeit. Why would I want this inferior pleasure when I compare it to that!**

**OKAY, ONE LAST ONE: <u>Obedience</u>**

**TIM-True devotion - costs you. OBEDIENCE will cost you: When you risk it all to *believe*, you are stepping into agreement with heaven. Faith w/o risk is a contradiction (John Wimber: "faith is a 4 letter word - 'r-i-s-k'") Unbelief will kill your inheritance. Humility opens the way.**

There are two absolutes God is always looking for from His followers. One is love. The other is faith. And when it comes to obedience that costs us, faith as risk, what's probably even more important is-enduring faith.

- The definition of enduring is: *to remain firm under misfortune and pressure without yielding.*

The one thing that wars against faith and especially against enduring faith is: **Unbelief. Tim said, unbelief will kill your inheritance.**

**Unbelief or enduring faith** both come into play when crisis-events, delay's to answers and breakthroughs, and living through circumstances we simply do not understand: *Can*

*we remain firm, in faith, hope and trust, when we stand in the face of* adversity, crisis, disappointment, delay's to breakthroughs and times of mystery?

**The Lord is taking us on this journey. And it's a journey where faith is important, but enduring faith is more important, because enduring faith builds character, humility, stamina, and greater levels of trust.**

With enduring faith, the Holy Spirit is able to build something in us that becomes a lifestyle.

I have shared this particular story months ago, but it fits well here, and the Holy Spirit is prompting me to share it again. It is a very bizarre story, but it illustrates *extreme obedience and enduring faith.*

The story is found in **Judges chapter 20,** where the Israelites go to war against the Benjamites. They approached the Lord and inquired about going to battle, and the Lord said YES. So, they hear and obey, and we read:

*So, the children of Israel rose in the morning, put themselves in battle array and fought with Benjamin. On that day Benjamin cut down to the ground 22,000 men of the Israelites.*

The people of Israel heard the Word of the Lord, and they obeyed, and they lost 22,000 men in the battle. This was clearly not what they were expecting. They were devastated, as we read in verses 22-23: *They wept and wept.*

But what amazes me is what they did next. We read in **verses 22-23:** *Then the people, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line. Then they inquired of the Lord: Should we go out to battle again? And the Lord answered, Yes, go back into battle.*

So, they did. And the next day the Benjamites struck down another 18,000 Israelite swordsman. Two times they heard. Two times they obeyed. Now they have lost 40,000 men.

No question, in this moment, our faith will be under attack.

The Scripture tells us: All of Israel came up to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord. They fasted and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord, and then once more, they stood before the Lord and asked:

*Shall we yet again go out to battle against my brother Benjamin, or shall we cease? And the Lord said: Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand.*

And we read: *They placed themselves in battle array again—and the battle was fierce, but the Benjamites did not know the disaster that was upon them, and the children of Israel that day- destroyed 25,100 men, all by the sword.*

Three times they heard the voice of the Lord.
Three times they obeyed.
Two times ended in disaster, disappointment and discouragement.
Yet, each time, they picked themselves up.
They put themselves in battle array.
They humbled themselves before the Lord.
They lived in enduring faith.

You see, as Christ followers we live in this tension between what we understand and this realm called mystery.

- We cannot afford to only live in what we understand, because then we are not growing or progressing anymore.
- All we're doing is traveling the same familiar roads, we've traveled all of our Christian life.

Trust implies I do not understand, but I am surrendering my will to you, because I trust You.

None of us enjoy delay's to answers. No one loves times of endurance, but when I look back on my life, I see that some of the greatest opportunities for growth, and for the Nature of God to be developed in me, came in those kinds of moments.

Let's pray: *Father I thank you for Your wonderful Presence tonight and for your incredible intentionality towards every person in the sound of My Voice. Your intention towards us is huge, and your love for us is massive, astonishing and it is amazing.*

*My prayer tonight Holy Spirit, is for You to take everything we shared today on freedom, surrender, obedience and passion, and impart to each one of us what we need to see upgrades in our intimacy and closeness with you; upgrades in our freedom; upgrades in our passion, obedience and surrender.*

*I pray for courage, strength and passion to flood our heart, because that is how it ignites in us. I ask that you would do violence to any passive spirit you see in any of us, in the Name of Jesus. Just kill that spirit of passivity.*

**Now as I finish this prayer if you are personally in agreement, let the Holy Spirit know, however that looks for you:** *Holy Spirit, help me with my troubling-foxes. Forgive me for my passivity in dealing with them. if you discover any spirit of passivity in me, I ask you to show me, so I can put it to death. I am choosing to come and present*

*myself to you day after day, and I will hunt down any 'little foxes', and allow You to overwhelm them with your passionate love. I will make all Divine exchanges with You Holy Spirit.*

*I want the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I want to be filled up to overflowing with all the goodness of God. I want to live a life that is outrageous, full of joy and peace and laughter, full of warfare and fighting, and conquering and overcoming, and being victorious. I want with a deep and every growing friendship and intimacy with You Holy Spirit.*

*I want to live a life where no-one' s safe from a blessing when they are around Me, because You overflow through Me, Holy Spirit. I pray for this in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

## Opportunities For A Personal Dive

Okay, before we close I want to give you an opportuntity for a personal dive into some of the topics Tim and I have been sharing. You can just listen, because these three opportunities will be emailed to you as part of the package Karissa will be sending out with the notes and the audio of tonight.

- **Experiencing the Holy Spirit, and living by His impulses; Hearing His Voice:**
    - Spend some intentional quiet time this month with the Holy Spirit. Quiet all the background noise, maybe put on some quiet contemplative worship music, and ask the Holy Spirit questions. Bring something with you to write on and write what you hear. That will be Him.
    - Practice the Presence this week. As soon as you are conscious in the morning, connect with Holy Spirit-Good Morning Holy Spirit. As I start my day, I invite you to be a part. Order my day and let's hang out together. Then practice staying conscious of Him, throughout the day.

- **The starting point for surrender must start in the will.**
    - My spirit must rule over my soul, my mind and my emotions, by an act of my will. In **Galatians 5:19-21** we see a list of the fruits of the soul. In Verses 22-23 we see the fruits of the Spirit. Take some time with Holy Spirit this month and ask Him to show you times when you have not surrendered your will, and reacted with a fruit of the soul, and the times you have surrendered your will and responded with a fruit of the Spirit. This is an on-going process. Never be discouraged, or feel frustrated, guilt or shame. Simply recognize it and feel the love of God and move on.

- **Holy Spirit, help me capture my 'troubling foxes'.**

- This is personal, and it takes desire, humility and vulnerability. Are you ready to say-*Holy Spirit I am ready to deal with these hooks. I am ready for some Divine exchanges.*