

**THE  
POWER  
OF HIS  
PRESENCE**



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**THE POWER OF HIS PRESENCE**

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*To Joyce*

*godly wife and mother,  
cherished sweetheart,  
wise counselor,  
and  
best friend*

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## *Preface*

**R**eal salvation is not getting man out of earth into heaven, but getting God out of heaven into man. That seems like a simple truth. So why did it take me so long to know it?

It is not that God has willingly hidden these things. Yet, as a young Christian I was evidently blinded to a discoverable secret that literally saturates the Word of God.

I came to Christ for salvation as a teenager. I meant every word of it when I gave my heart to Christ. My young heart was filled with zeal and a love for the things of God. At that time, I gave all I knew of me to all I knew of Him.

Yet there was little victory in my daily walk. My small blips of overcoming and victorious living were rare moments in my continuing struggle. Raging hormones, a combative personality, and an untamed tongue were tools I placed in Satan's hand to build a prison house of failure for me. It seemed that I lived there most of my days.

By the grace of God, I managed to hold on, to keep myself sexually pure and away from the more vile and open sins, but my life could not be described as victory.

Every so often I would venture from my prison house of failure. I would rededicate my life and make promises. Now I had a fresh start. I would do better. But resolve, resolution, and repentance were not enough.

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I was sincere when I said I wanted to do better. I promised I would try harder. I had learned determination on the football field, and I thought perhaps I could “gut it out” in my Christian life. But before many days or even hours had passed, I had failed again. Back to the dungeon!

If I had only learned then what I know now. There is only One Who has ever lived the Christian life. His name is Jesus. If the Christian life is being lived through you, it indeed is not you but Christ who lives in you:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

Indeed, of all of the truths that I have finally learned, I do not know of one that is more encouraging and life changing than the marvelous and vital truth that God is alive and well in me through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Yet it is possible to be a Christian like I was and not be aware of this. Paul had to remind the believers at Corinth, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). He reminded them again in 2 Corinthians 6:16, “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’”

It may take us this lifetime and into eternity to finally understand and grasp all that this means, but I know this: God meant it to be a bright, living reality in our daily lives! God wants to change the mundane into the momentous and drudgery into delight. He wants to turn struggle into victory.

## PREFACE

So in these pages I want to explore with you some implications, applications, and, yes, some common misunderstandings of what it means to have God inhabit your humanity and make you a dwelling place with a Royal Resident.

I have not arrived, but these truths are helping me move on to maturity and victory. And I am eager to share with you what the Holy Spirit is teaching me.

In our journey together we will touch on theology and some very important doctrines, but I want to give you a word of caution. I have learned that one can know theology and still not experience the power of God. And I also know beyond a doubt that one can experience Christ without a full understanding of Christian theology. Thankfully, we don't have to choose between the two. Sound doctrine and holy living make up the norm for a victorious Christian.

One of God's great ways of communicating spiritual truth so it is easily understood is by use of illustrations. The Bible abounds with these. Jesus used illustrations over and over as He taught. The vine and the branches, a farmer's field, and a pearl are but a few examples.

One of the clearest illustrations and object lessons of spiritual truth is the Old Testament temple. This magnificent building, constructed according to a precise pattern, was given by the Master Teacher to help us grasp spiritual truth. Therefore, as we consider our experience of Christ, we will begin with the truths taught by the Old Testament temple.

Not to worry. We are not going to embark on a complicated study of the intricate details of the temple. Nor will we go down long and come up dry theologically. As you will see, our study is really about you and the victory that God has provided for you.

In the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people. In the New Testament, He had a people for His temple. Our very

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bodies are holy temples. And the Lord Himself is the Royal Resident who lives within us. What a staggering thought!

This truth of the fullness of the indwelling God is so very vital and valuable to each one of us. There is no greater truth than to discover that the great God of glory has condescended to indwell mortals such as we. No wonder Paul wrote, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

I pray that these words will become a bright, living reality in you and that you will discover the key that unlocks the treasure house of a thousand other spiritual riches. Drabness and discouragement can be a thing of the past. You are a residence of the living God! Living supernaturally is the most natural thing a Christian can do.



## CHAPTER ONE



### *Where on Earth Does God Live?*

In order to understand and apply all of the benefits of Christ's indwelling presence, I want to begin where God began revealing the truth that He would dwell among His people. That beginning point is God's instructions to Moses. The Lord came to Moses and told him to have the children of Israel bring Him an offering for the building of the tabernacle, "that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

Don't miss the importance of what God said. The great God of creation, the God who inhabits eternity, wanted a place to dwell among His people! No, the tabernacle could not contain the infinite God, any more than the temple could. But this sanctuary, which was later made permanent in the temple, was the one place on earth where God would meet with His people for instruction, worship, blessing, and atonement for sin.

You can really see the importance of this dwelling in Exodus 29:45, where God said, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God." But wait a minute. Was He not Israel's God before this? Yes, He was, but the construction of the tabernacle/temple would mark a new day in God's relationship with His people. This structure would

be a visible, daily reminder of His presence—and, more importantly, of His rightful place in the people’s lives.

Calling out a people to be His dwelling-place on earth was God’s purpose from the beginning. He made that clear in Exodus 29:46:

And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, *that I may dwell among them*: I am the LORD their God (italics added).

As the late Bible scholar and professor Dr. Merrill Unger observed, “The tabernacle and all that pertained to it was typical of the presence of God with His people.”<sup>1</sup>

Since the tabernacle was a prototype for the temple that would come later, it is important to remember God’s command to Moses concerning the building of the tabernacle:

According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it (Exodus 25:9).

## **A House for God**

Many centuries after Moses, when Israel was safe and secure in the land, God put the desire in King David’s heart to replace the tabernacle with a more permanent building in Jerusalem, a place where God would continue to dwell among His people. As we know, David was prohibited from actually building the structure, an honor that fell to his son Solomon.

This new building was called “the temple,” but it is interesting that it was often referred to as God’s “house,” a

place of settled habitation.<sup>2</sup> Don't miss the point: *each stage of God's habitation among His people was more permanent than the one that preceded it.*

Since Paul called you and me temples of the Holy Spirit, let's look more closely at the Old Testament temple. I said this would not be an intricate study of the temple's details because that is not our purpose here. Rather, I want to take you on a brief walk around and through the temple.

When God designed the Old Testament temple, He designed it with the same three major parts or sections that the tabernacle contained. It is here that we get to the heart of our study because the three-fold pattern of the temple teaches us something very important about the nature of our God and about us as His temples in this age.

If we could walk up to that great temple of Solomon's, we would see the first section, the outer court, which was visible to all and visited by all. It was here in the outer court that external worship took place.

Next, and further in, was the holy place. This was a more restricted place where only the priests could go for worship and service to God.

Last, there was the holy of holies. This was the innermost court, absolutely off-limits except for the high priest, who was a prefiguring of Jesus. The high priest would enter the holy of holies once a year to make atonement for the people. It was here that God dwelt in His *shekinah* glory between the cherubim that covered the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant.

## **A House of Three Rooms**

This house of three rooms conformed to a precise pattern. We have already seen that God commanded Moses to be very

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precise about the original design for the tabernacle. Note also the detailed directions given by David to Solomon for the construction of the temple:

Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat. And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things (1 Chronicles 28:11–12).

Then the Bible says, “All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern” (v. 19). The reason for all this precision is that the tabernacle and the temple were to be grand object lessons. They were to teach us something of the nature of God and the nature of man.

One reason for this grouping into three areas is that the God we know and worship is a triune Being, one God in three distinct Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In fact, as we look at the world around us, we can see how all that God has created reflects the Holy Trinity in some way. For example, all space is triune in dimension: height, width, and depth. Each dimension is distinct from the other two, and yet all three are a part of the same, and no part exists without the other.

The same thing is true of time. Time is triune: past, present, and future. We cannot even imagine one element of time

without the other two, and yet the three are always distinct from each other. Together these three components make up one basic entity—time.

Obviously, no illustration can adequately explain the Holy Trinity. Scholars have raced their theological motors to try and find an adequate, rational illustration of the Trinity. But all examples break down somewhere, and I am glad they do! The one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is unique. Therefore, God cannot be truly compared to, or illustrated by, anything. We can only know the truth of the Trinity by revelation. “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One” (Isaiah 40:25).

## **Man: A Royal Residence**

The truth of the Holy Trinity is certainly one of the mysteries of the faith. However, it is important to remind ourselves of God’s triune nature because as the highest expression of His creation, we reflect His nature. If we are going to appreciate and appropriate all that it means to be the temples of the living God, we need to understand more about man’s makeup.

The threefold nature of man is seen in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, where Paul wrote: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole *spirit and soul and body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (italics added).

Since we know from 1 Corinthians 6:19 that the Christian is God’s temple, God’s house, we can see how the Old Testament temple—with its three distinct but related parts—illustrates the New Testament truth of man’s triune nature. Borrowing the imagery of the temple as God’s house, it could be said that we are a house of three rooms.

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I am aware that some theologians prefer to think of man as a dichotomy, as having only two parts to his nature: the body as the material part, and the soul and the spirit lumped together as the immaterial part. There is some truth to this approach because we are definitely both material and immaterial. But the Bible still speaks clearly of spirit, soul, and body. The spirit and soul may never be separated, and they do not operate independently of each other, but they certainly may be differentiated.

I believe that human nature consists of three parts because we are created to know three worlds: the spiritual world, the psychological world, and the material or physical world. Roughly speaking, we can think of these as the world above us, the world within us, and the world beneath us.

These three worlds are related to the three parts of our human nature—spirit, soul, and body. Understand this and many wonderful truths will come into focus. When a man is rightly related to the material world with his body, he is healthy. When he is rightly related to the psychological world with his soul, he is happy. When he is properly related to the spiritual world with his spirit, he is holy.

God's aim is that ultimately we are to experience all three realities: health, happiness, and holiness.

### **The Outer Man and the Material World**

The body is what the Bible calls the “outward man” (2 Corinthians 4:16). The human body corresponds to the outer part of the Old Testament temple. That outer court of the temple was the place of sacrifice and, interestingly, our bodies are also the place of sacrifice. Paul commanded us to present our bodies as “a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1).