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River Dwellers

The last time I picked up *River Dwellers* was about an year ago in ISF, and I am incredibly thankful that I am reading it at this exact point in time, once again. It is probable and possible that although I processed the actual words, I did not understand or resonate with what Dr. Reimer had written. I loved God, had experienced His love in a tangible and resounding way but, still felt skeptical about a *flow* as it wasn't something I had personally experienced. The river I was familiar with had always been choppy, and often shallower in places because my own pride and shame led me to walk to the banks. As I read in 2020, I am thankful because I can *finally* resonate with the yearning, with the joy of the journey towards becoming a “full-time River Dweller” (173).

Being a full-time River Dweller firstly, means seeking and knowing a Person. When we know Him and have become immersed in the River—there are key identifying factors. He would desire to ultimately have us stay within the River, the best way He could was to give us Himself (25). He may not come the same way and may arrive differently to different people but surely when He does, it is unable to be missed. The unmistakable characteristics for the person baptized in the Spirit include bold witness, power, and prophecy (28-36). Without a doubt, after an encounter with the living God and His love, the evidence following after is the distinctive hearing of His voice. Prior to ATS, I had no grid for prophecy and did not know that it was open to every child of God that is dwelling in the fullness of His Spirit, I thought it was reserved for the holiest and most special—turns out, that's tremendously false. This revelation reshaped the way I view ministering to others and ultimately redirected the way I viewed God speaking.

How fortunate we are to have a God who speaks and speaks in so many ways. Because He speaks, we are able to cultivate a sense of His presence and must be in pursuit of doing so constantly (38). It was always meant to be an ongoing flow, not the choppy current I perceived it to be (26, 93). But recognizing His Presence requires practice and requires a passionate, *ongoing* pursuit and longing for Him (101, 111). In the past, I have found myself to be in positions where I *think* I'd like to grow deeper in my relationship and intimacy with God but found myself falling short and oftentimes not having a real yearning or longing. I grew accustomed to being dull and lacking desire for Him when my own laziness and religion had left me comfortable sitting on the riverbanks rather than genuinely discovering what it could be like to be in constant flow with Him. Without self-condemnation or pointing fingers, a lot of it had to do with lack of resources on spiritual disciplines and bad teachings; but ultimately, I had not stayed long enough to discover what it might mean to be in flow with Him. I was not willing to pursue the time and cost for living in the fullness of the Spirit.

Probably the most meaningful lesson learned on living in the fullness was that just as much as there are means and disciplines to *stay* in, there are numerous reasons and causes that could easily lead to climbing out. Staying in the river is a choice. Merely desiring to stay in is not enough, there are actions that determine whether we do dwell. If we don't live in the light, if we choose sin, also, if we lack self-awareness. In my soul care journey and emotional breakthrough journey, one of the greatest lessons I've learned is that God cannot address what you are unwilling to acknowledge or confront and the Holy Spirit sheds light to the things keeping us out of the River (134).

The Holy Spirit also sheds light on the "Dashboards of the Soul," different gauges that shed light to how our soul is doing (138). I learned to shut down what Dr. Reimer calls "gauges"

and to attempt at compartmentalizing them, when really that was adding to the problem of my diseased and broken soul. Over the course of the soul care journey, I realized that I was believing a lie that told me I should figure out my soul's issues on my own before going to the One who could probably take care of it way faster than I ever could; I put up walls and guards as a twisted means of "taking care" of my heart's sickness. That clearly wasn't the intention of the Father that simply wanted an intimate, trusting relationship (143). The choppy flow alluded to previously had been the result of ignoring my gauges and ignoring the brokenness indwelling in my heart and soul, it's not surprising to not have a yearning for One I was unwilling to allow in.

Ultimately, being a full-time River Dweller isn't even about me dwelling in the River (although graciously, a natural byproduct is that I do) but it's about being a "conduit," being someone who from the overflow of their river-dwelling, will bring others in as well (172). I believe that as a leader, if all I've taught my past and future students is to simply mimic or do what they believe is correct, I've failed the mission. Although not currently serving in a ministry, in my past and future ministry context, my deepest desire is that those I serve would learn to *love* God. Not for what He can do, not for the miracles He can provide but simply to know Him, to delight in His Presence, to dwell where He dwells because of being so in love with Him—it's not possible without being totally in love with Him and flowing in the fullness.

Although the three main points are summarized, sometimes it's the little anecdotes and things in the book that deeply encouraged me. There are many doubts that become alleviated by the simple vulnerability written in the pages. Things I did not have a grid for or language for suddenly become tangible. One such example being the top first paragraph of page 23. It might not be as integral to the main points of the book but, it released me, and I believe it's the anointing of peeking into the life of someone that lives in the River.

With integrity, I have read this book

Thoroughly and Entirely— ____%

Quickly but Completely—100%

Thoroughly but NOT Entirely— ____%

Quickly and NOT Completely— ____%

Not at all— ____%