

Reading Report-River Dwellers

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River Dwellers, by Rob Reimer, is a book teaching how to live in the fullness of the Holy Spirit in order to live the abundant life Jesus promised.

The three main points that impacted me by reading this book were the chapters on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, confession, and cultivating spiritual desire.

First, I was impacted by the chapter on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I have spent most of my adult years taught by the church or being discouraged by my husband from seeking knowledge in this area. God has freed me from these erroneous ideas and has shown me a significant part of my spiritual life that has been lacking. Rob Reimer states, “The baptism of the Spirit is God’s ultimate purpose for His people. He didn’t save us so we could go to Heaven. He saved us so He could fill us so full of Himself we could have intimacy with Him, we could become more like Him, and we could change the world with Him” (25). *River Dwellers* gave me the knowledge I needed to articulate the ideas, heart-tugging, and scriptural conviction that has been in my head for many years. I know this is God’s purpose for me, not just a set of strange erroneous doctrines believed by a particular sect of heretical believers that I have been taught. God has been active in my life through the Holy Spirit, but I now know fully and completely what I have been missing, and I can receive change in my life. If I dwell in the River, I can have a deeper intimacy with God and a more fruitful ministry through the Spirit’s fullness.

Second, I was impacted by the chapter on confession. While reading *River Dwellers*, I was shown a new angle on the importance of confessing my sin and the grief it causes God. I knew I should ask for forgiveness from God and those I have sinned against because I am a follower of Jesus. *River Dwellers* showed me a side of confession that I have not been exposed to before. Reimer says it this way, “Sin separates us from God’s intimate presence. Repentance returns us to the River. We must develop sensitivity to the Spirit’s grief over our sin if we are

going to become full-time River Dwellers” (127). Developing sensitivity to the Spirit’s grief over my sin would change my life. I have felt that I have lived in the opposite situation, becoming numb to my own sin and the grief it must be causing my Savior. Reimer claims, “If we don’t keep our confessions current, we will find ourselves deep into the woods, and we’ll lose sight of the River” (127). I no longer want to live deep in the woods, becoming desensitized to the Spirit’s grief over my sin.

Third, I was impacted by the chapter on cultivating spiritual desire. I learned just how important it is to spend time cultivating a spiritual desire for God daily. I cannot have true intimacy with God without that desire. Reimer states, “Cultivating spiritual desire is a critically important component in developing intimacy with God. Longing fuels my pursuit of God; longing intensifies my love for God; and longing helps keep my eyes peeled for the subtle appearances of God’s Spirit in my life” (111). I have spent too much time trying to get intimacy from other places. My daily time needs to be spent cultivating a spiritual desire, a genuine love for God. My heart is always wandering away from God, so I see how important it is to engage in the activities that help fuel the spiritual passion that ultimately leads to intimacy with God.

Reimer claims, “The key to remaining in the fullness of the Spirit is dwelling in the River of Life” (16). Dwelling in the River to remain in the fullness of the Spirit is the only way my current ministry plan will be successful. God has called me to be a chaplain in hospital and hospice situations. My ministry cannot be successful if I am not remaining in the fullness of the Spirit. Like all in full-time ministry, we need to minister out of the abundance of the Spirit’s fullness in our lives. There is no way that I can give hurting/dying people anything without Christ because I have nothing but death to give. The Holy Spirit has to move in me, using me as

his tool to bring comfort, peace, love, and salvation to these hurting individuals, and the only way I can do that is to stay in the River.

River Dwellers gave me practical ways to improve my personal soul care.

I was reminded how much I need to practice the spiritual disciplines in my life. I had spent many years practicing some of the disciplines and have found God moving when I did, but recently, I have gotten complacent and have not practiced them. Reimer reminded me of the importance of the spiritual disciplines. He says, "If we are going to access God's presence with greater sensitivity, we must engage in spiritual disciplines that get us to the River" (101). Reimer reminded me that if I am not getting spiritually filled by my current use of spiritual disciplines, it is okay, even good, to change my routine or try different disciplines to help me stay in God's presence.

River Dwellers has impacted my life by acting as the agent of change that I needed from God. Unfortunately, in this current season of life, I have not been living in the River but lying on the bank looking for God. I have become desensitized to the Spirit's presence and have been suffering. I have been working and ministering in my own flesh. Reimer describes what I have been feeling like this, "If we continue to get further away from the River, further into the woods, then His voice becomes faint. Our hearts become hard, and conviction no longer gets through to our deadened hearts" (130). I praise God for the love, conviction, and healing that the book *River Dwellers* brought into my life. God allowed me to get out of the River and wander into the woods, but he did not leave me there for long; he gently and lovingly called me back.

River Dwellers is a practical and inspiring book that helps the reader understand God's ultimate plan for the believer to dwell in the River so they can have continual access to the fullness of the Holy Spirit.