

Eileen Murphy

Dr. Walborn

Spiritual Formation

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### Guyon Paper

When I first began reading “Experiencing God Through Prayer” by Guyon, I was skeptical. The idea of sitting in stillness in between praying to listen to God was something completely new to me. I had never heard of it before, not even in church. As I read the book I made sure to continuously check the word of God to make sure everything was lining up and that this was not a false doctrine. Looking back I know it was the right thing to do but it also feels kind of silly that something so simple as sitting in stillness with God is not widely practiced in Christianity. The scripture that got me to be open minded about this book was Lamentations 3:21-28 because it mentions sitting alone in silence and waiting quietly on the Lord.

The first time I practiced stillness in God's presence I was already angry before I started because I believed I was not going to hear anything from God. After praying, reading the word of God and sitting in silence, I heard nothing. This made me feel angry and disappointed but in the next class I learned that sometimes the way we see our earthly fathers skews the image of how we see our heavenly Father. My father has been physically absent for the past couple years and before that he was emotionally unavailable, always angry and quiet. I put these characteristics onto God without even noticing it. After realizing this is probably why I did not hear anything in my time of stillness, I decided to look into who God is and separate that from my earthly father. God is good, He can be trusted, He is patient, He loves me and He is perfect. I meditated on those for days and scriptures relating to them so they would really stick in my

heart. After having a more accurate view of Him is when I began to hear him in my times of stillness.

A couple of times as I prepared myself to sit in silence with God I felt nervous to begin because I did not want to fail by not hearing anything. I was worried that I would sit in silence and God would try to speak to me but I would somehow miss it or mess up or maybe even make something up in my own mind thinking it was God. This made me nervous and I started the timer over multiple times because I had wasted time overthinking.

One of the first times I heard God in a moment of stillness it was something I had never experienced before. After praising God and praying, I sat in silence. I sat in a chair in my room early in the morning before anyone was awake. As the timer was going down from 8 minutes, thoughts began coming into my head but I did not push them away this time. This time I decided to ease my anxiety that I would allow any thoughts that were not blatantly against God, then after I planned on opening the bible to see if what I experienced or heard matched up with what I opened the bible to. As I sat in silence I had a “daydream” about going to my local park and walking my dogs. In this “daydream” while I was walking my dogs there were many geese. I could see myself walking on a familiar path in the park while passing a man that was talking on the phone. The man speaking on the phone seemed hostile and was speaking very loudly on the phone. I could not really make out what he was saying except for “Dennys”. I just heard him say Denny’s over and over. After this daydream I opened the bible to a random page and it was Isaiah 43:1 “But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine”.

The thoughts of me making things up in my own mind and it not being from God came up again. Although I was feeling insecure about this whole experience, I decided to continue and

take a chance. I decided that with this daydream I am either going crazy or God is speaking to me in a way I never thought I would experience. The only way I could find out if this was God speaking to me is if I investigated it by going to the park with my dogs and seeing what happens.

I took my dogs to the park and I parked my car in the exact same spot from my daydream. I was so nervous but my curiosity was stronger. We walked down the familiar path I had seen in my daydream while looking for a man speaking loudly about a Denny's restaurant on his phone. As I was looking for this man, I started to become discouraged because it was not looking like my daydream. I specifically saw and heard many geese in my daydream but there were none in the park that day which was extremely rare. I was scoping people out to see if I could find the man, but I couldn't. Disappointed, I started making my way back to the car, but on my way I noticed a man who it could be. I still was not sure but I decided I would step out in faith. As soon as I decided in my mind that I would step out in faith, two geese flew over his head and honked loudly. Those were the only geese I saw that day and they flew directly over this man just when I was about to give up. It was the geese that I saw in my moment of stillness with God.

I approached the man as he stood outside his car and asked if he knew anyone named Denny. He became a little hostile and asked me why I was asking for Denny but then he calmed down and said yes, that his brother's name was Deny and he was just on the phone with him. I told him that God has a message for Denny and I read him the scripture I got that morning. I told him that God is calling Deny out by name and wants a personal relationship with him. The man's face softened and he explained to me that his brother was sick with cancer and he could not believe that God had a message for him. He was so amazed he kept thanking me but I kept telling him I didn't do anything that it was from God. His entire attitude shifted and he was so

grateful and happy. I was just as happy and surprised. I gained something that day too. It wasn't me and it was not a daydream it was the Holy Spirit. God really was speaking to me.

This book and class have been life changing and I genuinely will carry this with me for the rest of my life. It has grown me spiritually and I have had supernatural experiences happen frequently like I have always yearned for ever since I read the book of Acts. It reminds me of the book of Acts and all the good things the disciples did by the power of the Holy Spirit. It reminds me of Jesus' promise to the disciples that when he leaves another will come that will empower them to do the works of the Lord. That same Holy Spirit is what is at work here. Also this experience has made me even more grateful for Jesus and his sacrifice. I am able to have these great experiences and closeness with God thanks to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that reconciled us back to God and for that I'm so grateful.