

Book Review: *River Dwellers* by Dr. Rob Reimer

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Rob Reimer uses the analogy of the “river” to represent living in alignment and in the life of Jesus. Throughout the book, *River Dwellers*, he thoroughly and deeply expounds upon what living in the river looks like. The analogy that life in the fullness of the Spirit is like living in the River is found in several places in the Bible. When Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman at the well, He said, “The water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 5:13). Jesus is the source of living water. Again he says in John 7:38, “Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” In Psalm 46:4, it says, “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.” And in Revelation 22:1, “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Rivers flow with water, and it is much easier to float in the river than to resist it and go against the current. This analogy that living in the River is an accurate portrayal of what it’s like to live in the fullness of the Spirit. Three major takeaways that stood out to me are the effects of the fullness of the Spirit, how the Spirit calls out to us, and how to navigate the bends of the river.

Reimer says, “When the Spirit comes in fullness, there are three results, according to Scripture: bold witness, power, and prophecy.”¹ Living in the fullness of His Spirit is never just for our own benefit. Reimer says, “God doesn’t fill us with His Spirit just for our benefit – He fills us to spill us.”² These three results (bold witness, power, and prophecy) are not for our own benefit. These are all an outpouring of grace upon our lives so that we can spill over and minister to others. The portion of this chapter that impacted me the most was when Reimer talked about prophecy. Prophecy according to 1 Corinthians 14 is designed to strengthen, encourage, and comfort. It is meant to be done in love. Reimer says, “Paul tells us to eagerly desire the gift of

1 Reimer, Rob. *River Dwellers: Living in the Fullness of the Spirit*. Franklin TN: Carpenter’s Son Publishing, 2015. 29.

2 Reimer, 16.

prophecy, because it is a pathway to love.”³ When a prophetic word is given, there is a manifestation of the Lord’s presence. It gives the giver and receiver access to the River of Life – “the Spirit of God is revealed in a true prophetic word.”⁴ The desire for prophecy grows in me as I read this.

Another point that stood out to me was how the Holy Spirit reaches out to us and calls us into His presence. It is fascinating how Reimer made the correlation of our boredom with the calling of the Holy Spirit. We often “misdiagnose spiritual hunger, and because we feel an emptiness inside, we are associating it with physical hunger.”⁵ “We often find physical solutions to the spiritual hunger through a snack, and sometimes people run to sinful things, like drinking too much, drugs, and pornography. When we feel that spiritual hunger, the proper response is to go to God and drink from the River. Reimer suggested reading biographies and stories of people who stir up a hunger to know Jesus more.

Part of navigating the river is self-awareness, and knowing when to slow down or deal with disappointment. One thing Jesus promises is peace. Where the Spirit of God abides, there is peace. Reimer says, “I have found, in this quiet place with God, I can have a still center even in the midst of turbulent circumstances.”⁵ In the chapter, “Twists in the River Bend,” Reimer highlights a few core principles that can help you process and go through “soul-robbing disappointments.” These three principles are: God redeems suffering, keep doing the right things, and fight for the right perspective. These three principles will help you to keep your eyes on God, guard your heart, surrender in trust, and to not be overcome by darkness.

This book is directly applicable to my present ministry context. It is relevant to every believer. Living in the river is at the core of living life with Jesus. Reimer often says in his book

³ Reimer, 73.

⁴ Reimer, 107.

⁵ Reimer, 142.

that we are to live full time in the river; to be full time River Dwellers. The river is where the ministry of the Holy Spirit flows, and it is the place where we should also flow out of. For one, I am thoroughly committed to living life in the River. Without the fullness of the Spirit, I feel “off.” I know when I need to spend more time with God when I lose patience for people, become critical, lose compassion for people, and isolate myself from others. When I draw closer to God and go into the River, I am filled once more with joy, my heart is at peace, and I have access to the heart of God again. As I am the worship leader at my church, I want to help others get back into the River when they veer off into the woods. I expect miracles when I am a full time River Dweller and others are there with me.

This book impacts my theology of soul care by providing me with a biblical analogy of the River. Living in the River is living in alignment with Jesus. His spirit flowing through me will bear fruit like the vine and the branches. Some practical commitments I have made while reading this book is spending 15 minutes Monday through Friday between 3:30pm and 3:45pm. This is during my work hours, and I have found a space where I can sit in His presence and pray. I have done it this past week, and it has been a great addition to my soul care. I pour out burdens and negative thoughts and emotions that come up throughout the day. And I have been able to finish the rest of my work day with joy and gratitude.

With integrity, I have read this book

Thoroughly and Entirely— 100 %

Quickly but Completely— ____%

Thoroughly but NOT Entirely— ____%

Quickly and NOT Completely— ____%

Not at all— ____%

Bibliography

Reimer, Rob. River Dwellers: Living in the Fullness of the Spirit. Franklin TN: Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2015.