

Dutch Sheets – Give Him 15 June 8, 2021

The Kiss

In our recent The Pleasure of His Company series, I shared how in 2008, in response to a prophetic word, I put all the programs in the church I was pastoring on pause. **For 90 days absolutely nothing else happened in the church's sanctuary except day and night worship.**

Just as Obed-edom hosted the ark of His presence in his living room for three months, God was asking us to do the same. What the Lord did in response to our act of obedience was nothing short of astounding. **The Person of the Holy Spirit came.** His presence was tangible, weighty, all-consuming. He Himself was our great reward, and nothing could compare with this!

Not only was my life radically changed, so were the lives of hundreds of others. Though it was challenging to facilitate this assignment from the Lord, the God encounters of those who were there would forever remind me that it was more than worth it.

One of those who was transformed by this worship experience was my friend Hal Sacks, leader of the Arizona-based BridgeBuilders International ministry. Hal shared with me recently that as a result of that encounter with the Lord, he has been essentially “ruined for the ordinary!”

The Lord gave Hal a revelation of worship that extended beyond his own life, ultimately resulting in transformation of the Arizona school system and the decline of crime on the Southwest border.

I was so inspired by his story that I've asked him to share it with Give Him 15 today. It is a fitting follow-up to the Pleasure series and segue into prayer posts and will also encourage you!

In September 2008 I spent three days of continuous worship and prayer at Springs Harvest Fellowship in Colorado Springs. From the moment I walked in the door, the tangible, sacred presence of God was distinguishable. The atmosphere was electric. I was so captivated by the glory of God I was experiencing that I could not pull myself away. I rarely left the sanctuary except to grab a shower.

After two days of being saturated in this heavenly atmosphere, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me about what He was doing. His words rang out almost audibly: **“If you kiss Me with your worship I will kiss you with My presence!”** WOW! My heart nearly leaped out of my chest.

At the time I did not fully understand what God was saying. “Lord, is this really You speaking to me? Is this concept even biblical?” I felt there was something more He wanted to show me, and I determined to find out.

When I returned home to Phoenix, **I felt mysteriously drawn into a passionate pursuit of God's presence.** I experienced a growing and deepening hunger for intimacy with the Father. Even stranger was the way I felt compelled every evening to spend anywhere from one to three hours walking and communing with the Lord!

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I told my wife, Cheryl, “I feel like the Lord is literally picking me up by the collar and thrusting me out of the house to spend time alone with Him.”

As I worshiped and talked to the Lord night after night, my heart came alive with renewed passion and strength. He spoke to me those same words I’d heard in the sanctuary over and over, “**If you kiss me with your worship I will kiss you with My presence!**”

The question of whether this was a biblical concept continued to plague me, and the thought drove me into the Scriptures to search out its meaning. I didn’t realize at the time that this revelation about worship was going to alter both my life and my ministry.

A New Understanding of Worship

While exploring the roots of “worship” in the original Hebrew and Greek languages, I discovered a beautiful hidden treasure — a divine invitation from Almighty God to move into a more intimate relationship with Him. If you’ve studied the biblical origins of worship, you will know there are at least seven Hebrew words and six Greek words translated “worship.” The most prominent word for worship in the Old Testament is *sha’chah* and in the Greek it is *pros’kuneo*, both of which mean the same thing: “to kiss” or “adore,” “bow down” and “show great respect,” or “to fall.” In a literal sense, it means “to bow low and throw a kiss!”

Now it gets even more interesting when you look at the word “presence.” In the original Hebrew (*pa’niym*) and the Greek (*pros’opon*), both words meaning “presence” also mean “face.” This begins to sound like an irresistible invitation from my Father God to enter into intimacy with Him.

It is amazing what the Lord is saying here: “If you kiss me with your *kiss*, I will kiss you with My *face*.” It doesn’t get any more intimate than that!

Coming from an orthodox Jewish upbringing, I understand about the ancient Eastern custom of bowing, kneeling, or throwing a kiss as a form of greeting, especially to royalty. In both modern and religious “worship,” the outward physical act reveals the inner heart of respect and honor.

I’m not a musician, nor have I ever considered myself a worship leader. Like many people, I used to have a fairly one-dimensional view of worship: basically, that worship is the musical and spiritual “warm-up” to the message in a church service.

But I’ve since discovered that worship is not simply an *activity*; it’s all about my *proximity* to my Heavenly Father. Worship is a matter of my heart, not something I do or attend. True worship is all about my heart’s focus on *Him*.

Inviting God’s Presence

As I continued to prayer-walk, night after night, I kept asking the Lord, “Why are You calling me to spend this time with You?” I was enjoying these times with the Lord, but I sensed there was something more He wanted to do.

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On those walks, the Father taught me about “**vertical worship**”— worship not just *about* God, but directed *to* Him. This intense prayer and vertical worship became a part of my spiritual core, reminiscent of my Jesus Movement days.

Worship had always been a trademark of our ministry’s conferences and gatherings. Now it was about to become **an important key to inviting God’s presence to our community.**

One day we received a letter from the pastors of Mexicali, asking for our help. Violent crime was increasing on our Southwest border. These pastors asked us to come alongside them to build a wall of worship and prayer along our border. Then one night, while prayer-walking and asking the Lord about what to do, I heard Him say, “**I want you to invite My presence back to the border!**”

We worked with pastors to raise up a wall of worship and prayer “to invite God’s presence” to the 2,000-mile border from San Diego, CA, to Brownsville, TX. We saw immediate and measurable results, with crime dropping dramatically, including the capture of the FBI’s 37 Most Wanted cartel leaders.

This was just the beginning. It was evident that my face-to-face encounters every night with the Lord were not only drawing me closer to Him, but that He had plans to use me and others to carry His presence into our community. Our young team rented high school auditoriums and **prayed and worshiped all night to invite God’s presence to our problem-ridden campuses.** We saw academic scores go up and suicides and drugs go down. We held all-night prayer and worship at City Hall for governmental leaders and law enforcement. The crime rate dropped, and our police experienced divine protection in life-threatening situations.

I have learned that **if we invite the transforming presence of the Lord into every area of our daily lives, into every location we travel to, and into every sphere of culture we touch, He will come! Worship opens the heavens, and God’s presence pushes back the powers of darkness in ways that nothing else can.**

The Lord promises that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us (see James 4:8). When we invite Him into difficult situations in our families, schools, and workplaces through our intimate worship, He will “kiss” our lives and communities with His presence.

Positioning Ourselves for the “Kiss”

In our pursuit of God’s presence and in following Christ, worship will always ultimately be the act of attributing reverent honor and awe to God. We do not need to be worship leaders or musicians to express our worship. We worship God because He is God, and because we have extravagant love for Him.

Intimate worship is rooted in our relationship and intimacy with God — our proximity to Him. I am more intimate with someone I’m close to than someone I do not know well. I will kiss my wife on the lips, but in European style, I may kiss a friend on the cheek. A kiss always comes from the heart. And a loving

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Heavenly Father will always embrace “the kiss” of His child — His arms open, reciprocating with a tangible “kiss from His lips.”

Pray with me:

Heavenly Father, we know that worship is all about You. When we worship You, the heavens open and Your miraculous help, wisdom, favor and resources are released. Today we need You in the most desperate way. Lord, so many families, churches, schools, and neighborhoods are in a spiritual drought, withering from a deficit of Your life-giving presence. Today we cry out to You, reaching upward for Heaven’s rain. Lord, revive us, Your people, and send revival and a great awakening to our land. Give us hearts to seek You, to kiss You with our worship, to call upon You for mercy and help in our time of need. Turn the hearts of Your people, **Your Ekklesia**, back to You! Above all else, cause us to burn with a desire for the exquisite kiss of Your presence.

Our decree:

Lord, we decree that Your church, **Your Ekklesia, is returning to You, her first love!** We declare that Your beloved is seeking You fervently and passionately and the fire of Your Holy Spirit is igniting the altar of Your church with passion and power. God of Mercy, we affirm that Your holy rain is beginning to fall from Heaven, healing our families, schools, neighborhoods and nation. We proclaim that America will not be lost, but she will fulfill her God-given destiny, shining as a beacon of hope to the nations of the earth.

Today’s post was contributed by Hal Sacks, D.Min, author of *Two Nations One Prayer*, a book about the atrocities on the Southwest border and how to pray about them. You can learn more about the work of Hal and Cheryl and BridgeBuilders [here](#). Portions of this post are published in the April-June 2021 issue of *Prayer Connect* magazine, found at prayerconnect.net.

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