



Remembering

Relationship

A call to return to the
Core of Christian
Purpose, & the desire
of the Heart of God.

Also, the beginning of
a how to manual;
because Jesus is
practical.

Anita Aldridge

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Foreword

Thanks so much for joining me!

Deep River & Fire is all about Relationship, Restoration and Reformation.

I want to explore real, deep, restorative, intimate relationship with the God Of All Things in the place of our ordinary lives; and watch the power of that relationship change everything in and around us, without our having to do anything more than be intentional with Jesus in our every-day.

My Story

I grew up in the pews, and as a young person felt frustrated by what felt like a lack of Power and Presence in the Christian experience. Jesus was there, but where was the powerful God we are taught about and read about in the Bible?

I believe we have largely forgotten what it means to be the true body of Christ- the Church, and often confuse it with the structure of the 'church' as we now understand it in the west. This has lead to systemic and systematic wounding (often unintentional), isolation and abuse for those who participate in all levels of structural church. People get left behind. Often, we don't remember how to take responsibility for our own relationship with Jesus and aren't equipped to do so. As a body, we were not meant to operate from within such structures.

Many years later, I have found the powerful Jesus, I have had power encounters with Holy Spirit and come to know real peace dwelling in the Heart of Father God. I have found friends who also know these things.

My Purpose

Deep River & Fire is a place to remember together how to be in a purposeful, power-filled relationship with Our Amazing God, and how to model that relationship to others; including the next generations and those who do not yet know Him; with the purpose of a permanent reformation in the way Christianity is experienced by all who come across her.

I am committed to the restoration of the Bride of Christ and will share my relationship with God with you. Here, we can encourage each other in our relationship with God in our ordinary lives and see Him at work in us, through us, for us, and around us.

I love Our Beautiful God. I love our beautiful church. I want to see each person living fully healed, intimate, powerful, power-filled, peace-filled, purposeful lives. The life they were made for. Their God-life.

This is my passion.

My passion is Him and you; brought together to change your world, so we can change the world, so HE can change the world.

God Bless You Very Much

Anita

Remembering Relationship

Somewhere along the way we have reduced what it means to follow Jesus into something that fits our existing lifestyle.

Rather; saying yes to Jesus automatically changes us, not only from death to life, but also fills us with two parts of the triune God-head. We immediately become filled with the Resurrected Life of Christ and Holy Spirit.

However, over time, over the years since the experiences of the earliest church, the intimate knowledge and everyday experience of the Power of the indwelling Presence of God has been bred out of us. Christianity has instead been reduced to one of a number of powerless moral lifestyle choices, rather than being the power-packed intimate relationship with the One True God as modelled in the early years of the church.

For the two thousand plus years since the Resurrection of Christ, Christianity has flourished in places where it has been driven underground. In those places, the Power of the Presence of God is more readily found in the ordinary experience of the every-day believer.

Here in the West – in developed nations, where we have enjoyed so much freedom for so long, and indeed have in many instances, abused those freedoms and the position Christianity has enjoyed - or exploited as a political power - the true experience of Christianity has grown soft.

We have forgotten the implication of the tearing of the veil in the temple at the time of Jesus' death on the cross. We have forgotten this means there is no longer any separation between God and His creation. We have forgotten what it means to be in this place of intimate connection with the God Who Created All Things.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. Matthew 27:51 (NIV)

**But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:16-18 (NIV)**

Intimacy with God has been bred out of us. We have forgotten how to be naturally supernatural beings. As the church, we write the power of the New Testament experiences off as "not relevant in the 21st Century", but the whole world is crying out for Power Encounters which Christians should be experiencing and then bringing into the world as a natural part of their ordinary, everyday lives.

Why would there be so much call for so many different things to answer the naturally supernatural part of humanity if there wasn't an aspect of God's character missing from ordinary life?

**I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children [sons] of God to be revealed.
Romans 8:18-19 (NIV)**

We have seen many half reforms, but no true return to the intimate connections with God and with each other which really make power encounters a truly natural part of everyday life.

These half-reforms have been resurgences toward reminding us who we are, but so far they have not yet been fully successful long term.

We have ourselves to blame for this.

Humans look for a leader, we look for someone to rise so we can follow. Someone else to bear the burden. On the other side of this same coin we also dream of being the person with the glory. We want to be the leader and have all the people follow us.

Difficulty is, when it comes to the realities of the Kingdom of God, it should never work like that.

The Kingdom of God is already being led by one Man, and one man alone. Jesus. God, who became Man.

Unless we are ready to sacrifice everything we are to follow Him,
nothing is ever going to change.

**But small is the gate and narrow the
road that leads to life, and only a
few find it. Matthew 7:14 (NIV)**

Restoration

Having spent the last approximately 1700 years reducing the importance of intimacy with All Of God, putting systems back in place between people and God, and burying the knowledge of how to be in intimate relationship with Him; we need to make a decision about whether we are willing to continue in our lifestyle, cheapening Grace or whether we will pursue the lifestyle of The Narrow Way, and regain what we have lost:

The fullness of a Power filled Relationship with the God of All Things, expressed in the ordinary of our lives the same way it was expressed in Peters' life when he walked down the street in Acts 5 and his shadow healed people-
to the same effect.

Part of the difficulty we face has been the increasing focus on a quick-fix culture. God is not about doing things quickly, rather He has always been about taking time. He loves to unfold things, unpack things, hide things, dwell in mystery, be in relationship.

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. Proverbs 25:2 (NIV)

This is where we get tangled up.

To get to the place of deep intimacy with God which is needed so we can manage the level of Presence required for these things to happen; we need time.

Lots of time.

Deliberate, concentrated, focussed, relationship building time.

It is more than possible. Peter was a denier, he was a rough as guts, stinking, net mending fisherman. He didn't head off to study theology, ministry, psychology, or any other 'ology'. What he did was get to know God.

He spent a concentrated three years with Jesus when He was here in body, and then he had both Jesus and Holy Spirit after the ascension.

He knew God. That's it. He got to know God. He knew God until he was so full of All of God that God spilled out of him all over the place. Peter didn't do a thing except walk down the street, and God healed people as he walked past them.

**As a result, people brought the sick
into the streets and laid them on
beds and mats so that at least
Peter's shadow might fall on some of
them as he passed by. Acts 5:15
(NIV)**

By re-making deep intimacy with Jesus the normative Christian experience in our ordinary lives, the same way Jesus modelled it, and the early apostles and church lived it; with God we can turn the tide back from a fast-food, take-out, self-help, good-moralist Christian lifestylism into the full force deep running tsunami power experience each individual relationship with Jesus is meant to be.

Christianity was never meant to be a 'pleasant' experience. It was meant to be a power experience. We are in relationship with the Creator of All Things, in order to fulfill our part in the work of redemption which Christ finished on the Cross and with His resurrection.

This requires integration. Complete personal integration with the person and lifestyle of Jesus and Holy Spirit.

It requires us to do as Jesus did. To walk in such close relationship with God that we only do what we see the Father doing.

In order to accomplish this, all we need to do, is concentrate on our relationship with Him. There are no works to do.

Only being with God.

Intimacy with God needs to be our number one priority. Above all other things; all other relationships, all other responsibilities, all other 'good' or 'right' possibilities, we need to determine to choose God first to the absolute exclusion of all others.

This immediately sounds extreme. It is. But it is also the safest place to be. He does not fail to honour our responsibilities, as we do not fail to honour Him above them. The best thing we can do for our family, our job, our friends, our nation, our call; is to place and chase our relationship with All Of God above them all.

Our relationship with God is exactly that, a relationship. We need to be prepared to do things the long way around. He has always been the God of the long-range-view. At least as far as we see things! The problems created in Eden weren't fixed overnight- not in our sense of the word, even though they had already been fixed before they happened as far as Father, Son and Holy Spirit were concerned!

**...the Lamb who was slain from the
creation of the world. Revelation
13:8 (NIV)**

Reformation

It's important to become long-range-thinkers.

Begin to think about your relationship with God in terms of setting the foundation for your great-great grandchildren (or great-great-great etc. grandchildren) the longer-term we think, the longer-term we pray, the deeper the well we will dig, the hotter the fire we set, the longer and brighter and bigger the reformation will be created.

This is not about revival in one generation, nor even two or three. This about reforming the ordinary Christian experience forever. Relighting the fire of the New Testament experience in these days, making it as normal an expression of our daily relationship with Jesus as it was when Peter walked down that street and his shadow healed people.

Jesus changed the shape of the world forever. He and Holy Spirit are present in us in power, and we can know this Power in our ordinary lives.

Our relationship- and therefore experience- with God is only different from Peter and the early apostles because of our choice to position it ahead or behind our other "responsibilities".

We can get to know God this same way. It is His greatest desire to be with us, and in us and work through us in this same way- and in even greater ways than they knew!

Jesus himself said this!

**Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.
John 14:12 (NIV)**

- Pray dangerous prayers. Prayers which challenge the status quo of your relationship with God. Pray for more; deeper; further in. Ask Him what needs to change in you to bring you closer together, be prepared for Him to surprise you with answers which you don't expect like 'nothing, just love me' as well as pointing out things we might typically expect...
- Make choices in every moment to live directly connected with Holy Spirit. Carrying His Presence with you until it becomes an unconscious part of who you are and how you live.
- Carry on your prayer times outside your prayer closet. Continue to talk with All Of God, all the time. On the bus, in the car, while you're with friends, playing sport, in the bathroom, out to dinner, doing the dishes, playing with the dog, meeting new people, at work, doing the gardening, at the beach, wherever you are, talk to God. Ask

His opinion, tell Him how you feel, listen to His heart, get used to His voice.

- Deliberately model your relationship with God for your children and grandchildren. Expect them to understand more than you think they will. Children have less barriers to the Spirit of God than adults think. Expect to be challenged by their relationship with God, and do not stop them moving beyond you in experience or power.
- Seek out like-minded people. Wherever they are, no matter where they are, if they are on Facebook or in a local congregational setting, spend time with people who are also God chasers. Become accustomed to difference and peaceful in the face of it. Understand Christ is King, and we are expressions of His grace.
- Allow Him to change your perspectives. All your perspectives. Expect to know things you don't understand, expect to do life, 'church', mission, outreach, work, shopping, relationships, phone calls, driving, everything you currently experience- differently, and yet, the same.

This is not about becoming the next 'big thing'. It is about bringing the Power of the One True God to ordinary places.

Every person who is in a relationship with Him has the same Jesus. Which means it is possible for every person to experience the same level of relationship and outworking with God as the early Christians did.

We need to remember we are in relationship and put our relationship with Him first.

God Bless You Very Much

Anita

More About This

If you want to read more, find tools to help in your daily relationship with Jesus, or contact Anita: Visit the Deep River & Fire website.

www.deepriverfire.net



Deep River & Fire: Into the Deep, The Fire, The Height, The Long Glorious Run

Many Thanks

To: Papi; thinning the line between You and I is my favourite thing, I could never have articulated this was what I was looking for...I owe you my life.

Tracy & Michael Voss, The Obed Community, my family, extended family & friends, Beta Readers, Tribe Writers, and Norbert; you keep me sane, tell me I'm not mad, and have made sure what I say makes sense to other people. All of these things are a skill!

This is a small sample of those who have been part of the journey so far. Most of whom are lumped into a category, because trying to list you all at the end of a short book would mean there are more thanks than book...!

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