

RAIS

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CHR

HOW THE RESURRECTION  
CHANGES EVERYTHING

ADRIAN WARNOCK

“Jesus is alive! And, as my friend Adrian Warnock will help you learn, this fact changes everything for everyone.”

MARK DRISCOLL, Founding Pastor, Mars Hill Church; President,  
The Resurgence; President, The Acts 29 Church Planting Network

“The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead separates Christianity from all mere religion—whatever its form. Christianity without the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is merely one religion among many. Adrian Warnock points us all to the centrality of the resurrection for every dimension of the Christian life. Adrian is a first-rate communicator and a man whose life demonstrates the joy of Christ’s resurrection. You will be greatly blessed by this book.”

AL MOHLER, President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Adrian Warnock presents a beautiful picture of why the resurrection matters to each of us. In *Raised with Christ*, the resurrection of Jesus is unleashed to its exalted place where it supplies our new birth, surrounds our new life, and empowers our new mission. With great clarity, Adrian teaches how the resurrection of Christ matters every day.”

ED STETZER, President, LifeWay Research

“*Raised with Christ* is wonderfully accessible to ordinary Christians because Adrian Warnock is, in his own words, an ordinary Christian. Those who follow his popular blog will recognize his sincere and straightforward style, as he explains why the resurrection is not merely a dry doctrine about a past event but a promise that the life of the risen Christ can transform our lives today.”

NANCY PEARCEY, author, *Total Truth*

“Adrian Warnock rightly highlights the common neglect of the resurrection and helpfully shows why this matters. Come and share the excitement of his own rediscovery of this central event of our faith.”

TIM CHESTER, The Crowded House and the Northern Training Institute

“Adrian has helpfully drawn the spotlight back to a strangely under-emphasized element of evangelical faith. He writes winsomely and with fitting enthusiasm. I hope many will find their way to a fuller grasp of the gospel through this highly accessible book.”

JOEL VIRGO, Lead Pastor, Church of Christ the King, Brighton

“Finally, a new generation of readers has a clear and highly readable book on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In *Raised with Christ*, Christians are in for a delightful surprise as they grasp anew all the benefits which flow from Jesus’ resurrection—what an awesome difference it can make in our lives, our churches, and our communities! Thank you, Adrian, for helping to open our eyes to all the glories and the blessings of Christ’s resurrection and the power, present and future, which proceeds from it.”

JONI EARECKSON TADA, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

“An important reminder—for members and leaders in Christ’s Church—that the celebration of Jesus’ resurrection isn’t just for Easter. It’s for every day of our lives. Since Jesus rose from the dead, everything he said and did is not only true, it has a profound impact on how we are to live. This book not only reminds us of that, it also points us toward meaningful application of this life-changing event.”

ELLIOT GRUDEM, Senior Minister, Christ the King Presbyterian Church,  
Raleigh, NC

“This book faithfully expounds the Bible’s teaching on Christ’s resurrection and ours and applies the power of Christ’s resurrection to our lives here and now. Read it and know better the immeasurable greatness of God’s power toward us who believe.”

BOBBY JAMIESON, Assistant Editor, 9Marks

“This is an excellent, ground-breaking book that fills a huge gap in our understanding and experience as Christians. It is high time the doctrine of the resurrection was put back on the map. Adrian has done us a great service in writing this timely book.”

MARK STIBBE, Father’s House Trust, [www.fathershousetrust.com](http://www.fathershousetrust.com)

“Every so often, a book is written that reawakens our soul to some gloriously powerful aspect of the full gospel. The resurrection is such a truth, and this is such a book. Adrian Warnock has been a part of the church I lead since 1995 and has served on our leadership team for more than ten years. It is my delight that he has written this engaging volume on such a life-transforming truth. If you want to know why the resurrection is crucial to your faith, if you want to know where the power for a transformed life comes from, then read this hugely accessible book and gain fresh insight into the most powerful event that has ever happened, the resurrection.”

TOPE KOLEOSO, Pastor, Jubilee Church, London

“Adrian Warnock is brilliantly obsessed with the resurrection! He believes that Jesus Christ being raised from death is the only way to have hope that goes beyond the grave. In this punchy and accessible book, Adrian helps us to look forward expectantly to a life of eternal future joy, united with God, and in this life, to experience the Holy Spirit and preach the good news in the power of the resurrection. I’m thankful to Adrian for reorienting me to this essential ingredient of life and belief. You will be too.”

MARCUS HONEYSETT, author, *Finding Joy*

“Books are often dull, repetitive, or have nothing new to say. *Raised with Christ* is different. It is well-written, well-researched, and well-worth reading. Read this book and Adrian will excite your heart, stretch your mind, and bless your soul with the fantastic, life-changing truth of Christ conquering death. I’m excited to promote this book.”

JONATHAN CARSWELL, founder of The 10 Group of Companies  
(incorporating [www.10ofthose.com](http://www.10ofthose.com))

“This is an excellent book on a much neglected subject. We Christians need to learn again to be Easter people, and Adrian has done us all a great service in producing this book.”

SAM ALLBERRY, author, *Lifted*

“Packed with gems and clear, heart-affecting theology, this is a plum pudding of a book that the church badly needs.”

MICHAEL REEVES, Theological Advisor, UCCF

“Adrian Warnock has a passion to put the resurrection back in the center of our proclamation. He understands that without a risen Savior there is no credibility to Jesus’ claims, no salvation through his death, no reason for Christian living, no explanation of the church’s existence, and no hope of eternal life. This book challenged me to reexamine my own preaching to see whether there was enough of Christ risen in it.”

LIAM GOLIGHER, Senior Minister, Duke Street Church, London

“Congenital heretics, in every generation, take a fiendish delight in warping the gospel. The gospel is centered upon two great facts—Christ’s crucifixion and stand-in death for us to expunge our guilt, and Christ’s return from the grave in his body to secure our salvation and the renewal of all things. The latter is criminally neglected in much preaching and writing. Few books exist that can inspire and excite both preachers and general readers alike concerning the importance of the resurrection as this one does. Warnock’s bang-up-to-date, big-picture approach is a gold mine of glittering insights, designed to shatter our dulled over-familiarity and rekindle an awed sense of wonder.”

GREG HASLAM, Senior Minister, Westminster Chapel, London

“Adrian has provided us with a thorough, thoughtful, and inspiring study of the resurrection. It left me better informed, more eager to live the life, and more thankful to God for the basis of my faith: a risen Lord Jesus and an empty tomb!”

DAVID STROUD, UK Team Leader, Newfrontiers; author, *Planting Churches, Changing Communities*

*Raised with Christ: How the Resurrection Changes Everything*

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Published by Crossway Books  
a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers  
1300 Crescent Street  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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Cover design: Dual Identity inc.

First printing, 2010

Printed in the United States of America

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Italics in biblical quotes indicate emphasis added.

Trade paperback ISBN: 978-1-4335-0716-8

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-0717-5

Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-0718-2

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-2261-1

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### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Warnock, Adrian, 1971–

*Raised with Christ : how the Resurrection changes everything* / Adrian Warnock

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN: 978-1-4335-0716-8 (tpb)

1. Jesus Christ—Resurrection. I. Title

BT482.W37 2010

236'.8—dc22

2009022138

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VP	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10			
15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

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C H A P T E R   F I F T E E N

## A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RISEN JESUS?

*Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

1 J O H N   1 : 3

*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. . . . If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*

J O H N   1 4 : 1 8 - 2 3

*I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him . . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

P H I L I P P I A N S   3 : 7 - 1 1

**THE GREATEST GOAL OF** Paul's life was a relationship with the resurrected Jesus. He considered everything else as worthless compared to this one thing. Paul claimed that knowing Jesus is *the* most critical thing, without which we will not be able to be changed by the power of Jesus' resurrection. We share in his sufferings and carry our cross (Mark 8:34), but by so doing, we share in the power of the resurrection, not only in the world to come, but also in this present world. Paul does not

have to strive to attain to a future resurrection. That has already been achieved for him. Paul's battle is instead the same as every Christian's, that *in this life* we might experience in increasing measure something of what will be ours in the future. We can enjoy some of the future resurrection's benefits right now.

Jesus also promised that he and the Father would make their home with anyone who loves him. Elsewhere Paul describes this in the words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). It is perhaps strange, then, that although some Christians today do talk about a personal relationship with Jesus, those words can somehow sound trite. Many are embarrassed by such a statement and perhaps for fear of being labeled a "crazy charismatic" do not seek such an experience, nor value it if it has happened to them.

Others are too busy seeking the gifts of the Holy Spirit to seek Jesus himself. The extremes that some go to in pursuing subjective experiences repulse many of us. Indeed, much controversy can arise when we speak about the validity of such experiences. We might even conclude that seeking to know God intimately is a sign of immaturity.

Many avoid showing any kind of emotion in response to God and are satisfied with studying God in a purely intellectual manner through Bible reading. We console ourselves with the idea that this is the "mature" approach and look down on those who are full of passion for a Jesus they claim to know. But a man who claimed to love a girl he had never met, but had only read letters she had written, would earn our pity. We were not promised a relationship with a book but with a person. Paul was not immature, and he wasn't foolish. He *was* passionate for his books (see 2 Timothy 4:13), but more so for his relationship with Jesus. There has to be a way for us to pursue a personal knowledge of Jesus without throwing away our biblical anchor. We can love the author of the book he left us, which is intended to reveal the person of Jesus to us.

Unfortunately, over the last few decades the controversy about whether or not the gifts of the Spirit are for today has largely obscured the more fundamental question—*are Christians today able to experience a truly personal relationship with Jesus?* In other words, what exactly did Jesus mean when he promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5) and "I am with you always, to the end of

the age” (Matthew 28:20)? As we consider this question, let’s leave aside for the moment our opinions on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and focus instead on whether an experience of God is available to believers today.

Paul says in Romans, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5). Martyn Lloyd-Jones argues that these words require an experience of God’s love:

Paul says that the love of God is “shed abroad” in great profusion, overwhelmingly, in our hearts. Now that is what we should seek. We believe in God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the doctrines of salvation. All right! But the question that confronts us at this particular point is not that of believing, but love! A belief that does not lead to love is a very doubtful belief, it may be nothing but intellectual assent. . . .

Here, then, is the question—to what extent do we know this love of God to us and how do we love God? We are meant to love him with the whole of our being and there is nothing that can make us do so but the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. . . .

New Testament Christianity is not just a formal, polite, correct, and orthodox kind of faith and belief. No! What characterizes it is this element of love and passion, this pneumatic element, this life, this vigor, this abandon, this exuberance—and, as I say, it has ever characterized the life of the church in all periods of revival and of reawakening.<sup>1</sup>

This language of striving to know more of the power of the risen Christ in us sounds strangely alien to modern Christian ears. However, as one theologian argues, “The New Testament does not exhibit Jesus’ resurrection as merely a prelude to some distant future. For regenerate believers, the resurrection is a present reality known and anticipatively experienced in daily fellowship with the risen Jesus. From the ascended Christ his followers received the indwelling Spirit outpoured at Pentecost; so too they still receive from him the Spirit’s daily filling, and by the Spirit taste even now the powers of the age to come (Hebrews 6:5) and are daily sampling their coming inheritance (Ephesians 1:14).”<sup>2</sup>

Previous generations of Christians spoke warmly about their walk with God. Francis Schaeffer criticized many Christians of his day who had begun to lose this experience of God:

<sup>1</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable* (Eastbourne, UK: Kingsway, 1995), 360–361.

<sup>2</sup>Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, Vol. 3 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 163.

Christianity is not just a mental assent that certain doctrines are true—not even that the right doctrines are true. This is only the beginning. This would be rather like a starving man sitting in front of great heaps of food and saying, “I believe the food exists; I believe it is real,” and yet never eating it. It is not enough merely to say, “I am a Christian,” and then in practice to live as if present contact with the supernatural were something far off and strange. Many Christians I know seem to act as though they come in contact with the supernatural just twice—once when they are justified and become a Christian, and once when they die. . . .

Some Christians seem to think that when they are born again, they become a self-contained unit like a storage battery. From that time on they have to go on their own pep and their own power until they die. But this is wrong. After we are justified, once for all through faith in Christ, we are to live in supernatural communion with the Lord every moment; we are to be like lights plugged into an electric socket. The Bible makes it plain that our joy and spiritual power depend on a continuing relation to God. If we do not love and draw on the Lord as we should, the plug gets pulled out and the spiritual power and the spiritual joy stop.<sup>3</sup>

The above quote is arguing for an experience of living in resurrection power and is much more consistent with what Christians from previous centuries wrote than what we hear or read today. John Owen, for example, wrote a whole book entitled *Communion with the Triune God*. It is remarkable how infrequently experiences such as those described below are mentioned, either during preaching or in modern Christian books. Unfortunately, many Christians are reluctant to talk about their experience of God. In this we differ greatly from Christians in previous centuries. J. I. Packer said that for the Puritans,

Communion with God was a great thing; to evangelicals today it is a comparatively small thing. The Puritans were concerned about communion with God in a way that we are not. The measure of our unconcern is the little that we say about it. When Christians meet, they talk to each other about their Christian work and Christian interests, their Christian acquaintances, the state of the churches, and the problems of theology—but rarely of their daily experience of God.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Francis Schaeffer, *Death in the City*, Chapter 9, in Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996).

<sup>4</sup>J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 215.

## HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES OF JESUS

As a challenge to us to consider whether we are missing out, I will share some of the experiences of Christian historical figures. Some speak of an experience of God, but for others it is the risen Christ of whom they are aware. A clear picture emerges of a personal knowledge of Jesus. These personal testimonies are varied, but they share a number of common features.

**Charles Spurgeon:** “Beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, I think that you and I can say, that to us the surest fact in all the world is that there is a God. No God? I live in him. Tell a fish in the sea there is no water. No God? Tell a man who is breathing that there is no air. No God? I dare not come downstairs without speaking to him. No God? I would not think of closing my eyes in sleep unless I had some sense of his love shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost. ‘Oh!’ says one, ‘I have lived fifty years, and I have never felt anything of God.’ Say that you had been dead fifty years; that is nearer to the mark. But if you had been quickened by the Holy Spirit fifty minutes, this would have been the first fact in the front rank of all fact, God is, and he is my Father, and I am his child. Now you become sentient to his frown, his smile, his threat, or his promise. You feel him; his presence is photographed upon your spirit; your very heart trembles with awe of him, and you say with Jacob, ‘Surely God is in this place.’ That is one result of spiritual life.”<sup>5</sup>

**John Flavel:** “Thus going on his way his thoughts began to swell and rise higher and higher like the waters in Ezekiel’s vision till at last they became an overflowing flood. Such was the intention of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such the full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost sight and sense of this world and all the concerns thereof, and for some hours he knew no more where he was than if he had been in a deep sleep upon his bed. Arriving in great exhaustion at a certain spring he sat down and washed, earnestly desiring, if it were God’s pleasure, that it might be his parting place from this world. Death had the most amiable face in his eye that ever he beheld, except the face of Jesus Christ which made it so, and he could not remember, though he believed himself dying, that he had

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<sup>5</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Sermon No. 2267*, “Life from the Dead,” delivered March 13, 1890 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington; <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/2267.htm>.

one thought of his dear wife or children or any other earthly concernment. On reaching his Inn the influence still continued, banishing sleep. Still, still the joy of the Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of the other world. He many years after called that day one of the days of heaven, and said that he understood more of the light of heaven by it than by all the books he ever read or discoveries he ever had entertained about it.”<sup>6</sup>

**Jonathan Edwards:** “I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fullness of Christ, and his meetness and suitableness as a savior; whereby he has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. And his blood and atonement has appeared sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which is always accompanied with an ardency of spirit, and inward strugglings and breathings and groanings, that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

“Once, as I rid out into the woods for my health . . . and having lit from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer; I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God; as mediator between God and man; and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared to me so calm and sweet, appeared great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception. Which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me, the bigger part of the time, in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt withal, an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, than to be emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him, and to be totally wrapt up in the fullness of Christ; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and that have had the same effects.

“I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of Sanctifier; in his holy operations communi-

<sup>6</sup>David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God's Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition of Ephesians 1, 1 to 23* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), 275.

cating divine light and life to the soul. God in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul: pouring forth itself in sweet communications, like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life.”<sup>7</sup>

**David Brainerd:** “Of late, God has been pleased to keep my soul hungry, almost continually; so that I have been filled with a kind of a pleasing pain: When I really enjoy God, I feel my desires of him the more insatiable, and my thirstings after holiness the more unquenchable; and the Lord will not allow me to feel as though I were fully supplied and satisfied, but keeps me still reaching forward; and I feel barren and empty, as though I could not live without more of God in me; I feel ashamed and guilty before God. Oh, I see ‘the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal.’ I don’t, I can’t live to God. Oh, for holiness! Oh, for more of God in my soul! Oh, this pleasing pain! It makes my soul press after God; the language of it is, ‘Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake in God’s likeness’ (Psalms 17:15), but never, never before: and consequently I am engaged to ‘press toward the mark,’ day by day. Oh, that I may feel this continual hunger, and not be retarded, but rather animated by every ‘cluster’ from Canaan, to reach forward in the narrow way, for the full enjoyment and possession of the heavenly inheritance. Oh, that I may never loiter in my heavenly journey!”<sup>8</sup>

**Howell Harris:** “Suddenly I felt my heart melting within me like wax before a fire, and love to God for my Savior. I felt also not only love and peace, but a longing to die and be with Christ. Then there came a cry into my soul within that I had never known before—Abba, Father! I could do nothing but call God my Father. I knew that I was His child, and He loved me and was listening to me. My mind was satisfied and I cried out, Now I am satisfied! Give me strength and I will follow Thee through water and fire.”<sup>9</sup>

**John Owen:** “Christ is our best friend, and ere long will be our only

<sup>7</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE Online, Vol. 16, 801; <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpb9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy4xNT03ND0lLndqZW8=>.

<sup>8</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, WJE Online, Vol. 7, 186; <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpb9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy42OjQ6NDowOjUyLndqZW8=>.

<sup>9</sup>Cited in D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 282–302.

friend. I pray God with all my heart that I may be weary of everything else but converse and communion with him.”<sup>10</sup>

These quotations are far from unique in their sentiments. Similar accounts are frequently found in the works of Christian leaders of the past. Some of these experiences happened at conversion, while others occurred later on. Often individuals would say they believed their true conversion occurred only when they had received an experience of God for the first time. Assurance of their salvation became secure only after encountering God *relationally*.

### HOW SHOULD WE REACT TO REPORTS OF EXPERIENCES OF JESUS?

After examining the previous quotes, most readers, myself included, will be challenged because their own experience is not so dramatic. Indeed, these experiences are largely missing in modern churches. How can we explain the differences between the reports of Christians of the past and those of many of us today? How should we react when we read such passionate accounts of a vibrant relationship with Jesus?

One possible reaction is to simply advocate a purely intellectual approach to the faith, discounting the validity of such experiences altogether. We might honor the memory of great Christian leaders of the past without pursuing the knowledge of Jesus they enjoyed. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was very blunt in his denunciation of this approach to the Christian life. He referred to it as “dead . . . orthodoxy,” and his description still bites today, decades after it was first written:

There is nothing vital in the religion and in the worship of such people. They expect nothing, and they get nothing, and nothing happens to them. They go to God’s house, not with the idea of meeting with God, not with the idea of waiting upon him; it never crosses their minds or enters into their hearts that something may happen in a service. No, we always do this on Sunday morning. It is our custom. It is our habit. It is a right thing to do. But the idea that God may suddenly visit his people and descend upon them, the whole thrill of being in the pres-

<sup>10</sup>Peter Toon, *God’s Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen* (Exeter, Devon: Paternoster, 1971), 153. Cited in John Piper, *The Chief Design of My Life: Mortification and Universal Holiness (Reflections on the Life and Thoughts of John Owen)*; available online at [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1997/990\\_Let\\_Us\\_Draw\\_Near\\_to\\_God/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1997/990_Let_Us_Draw_Near_to_God/).

ence of God, and sensing his nearness, and his power, never even enters their imaginations. . . .

Do we go to God's house expecting something to happen? Or do we go just to listen to a sermon, and to sing our hymns, and to meet with one another? How often does this vital idea enter into our minds that we are in the presence of the living God, that the Holy Spirit is in the church, that we may feel the touch of his power? How much do we think in terms of coming together to meet with God, and to worship him, and to stand before him, and to listen to him? Is there not this appalling danger that we are just content because we have correct beliefs? And we have lost the life, the vital thing, the power, the thing that really makes worship worship, which is in Spirit and truth.<sup>11</sup>

This idea of church as a place to encounter God through worship and his word is not emphasized today. There is a tendency to divide on this issue of experience. Both sides have reacted to each other at various points. The two stereotypes, that some Christians are obsessed by the latest fad-like experience, while others are theologically correct but as dry as tinder, are not entirely without foundation. But Don Carson, in this succinct statement, urges us to stop overreacting:

Because some wings of the church have appealed to experience over against revelation, or have talked glibly about ill-defined "spirituality" that is fundamentally divorced from the gospel, some of us have overreacted and begin to view all mention of experience as suspicious at best, perverse at worst. This overreaction must cease. The Scriptures themselves demand that we allow more place for experience than that.<sup>12</sup>

In an effort to steer a similar middle course, Lloyd-Jones wrote the following about the church's tendency to veer from one extreme to the other:

The trouble has generally been . . . that people have emphasized either experience or doctrine at the expense of the other. . . . This is something that has been happening in the church from almost the very beginning. . . . When the whole emphasis is placed upon one or the other, you either have a tendency to fanaticism and excess or a tendency

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<sup>11</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Revival* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1987), 68–72.

<sup>12</sup>D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 191.

toward a barren intellectualism and a mechanical and a dead kind of orthodoxy. . . .

As you read the stories of Luther and Calvin and other reformation fathers you will find that they began to fight this war on two fronts. They were fighting a dead, mechanical intellectualism on one hand, and they had to fight these other people who were running to excess and riot on the other. Then in the seventeenth century you find the same kind of thing in connection with the Puritan movement. . . . There were three main sections . . . in the middle you had people like the great John Owen and Thomas Goodwin in London, who constantly emphasized what they regarded as the only true scriptural position . . . which emphasizes Spirit and doctrine, experience and definition. You must not say it is either/or; it is both. These, too, had to wage a warfare constantly on the two fronts. They had to fight the dead, barren intellectualism of many in Anglicanism and in the ranks of Puritanism, and the wild excesses of the early Quakers and various others. . . .

As Evangelicals we find ourselves fighting on two fronts. We are obviously critical of a pure intellectualism and of a dead mechanical church which lacks any life . . . the gospel of Jesus Christ is a life-giving gospel. That is one side; but on the other side we see certain tendencies and we see certain excesses and we say, “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits to see whether they are of God.” And thus we seem to be opposing everything, and so we receive criticism from all sides. . . .

For myself, as long as I am charged by certain people with being nothing but a Pentecostalist, and on the other hand charged by others with being an intellectual, a man who is always preaching doctrine, as long as the two criticisms come, I am very happy. But if one or the other of the two criticisms should ever cease, then, I say, is the time to be careful and to begin to examine the very foundations. The position of Scripture . . . is one which is facing two extremes. The Spirit is essential, and experience is vital. However, truth and definition and doctrine and dogma are equally vital and essential. And our whole position is one which proclaims that experience which is not based solidly upon truth and doctrine is dangerous.<sup>13</sup>

As Jonathan Edwards, a great Reformed theologian who believed in experiences of God for the believer, explained:

So God glorifies himself towards the creatures also in two ways:  
(1) by appearing to them, being manifested to their understandings;

<sup>13</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Life in Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 400–403.

(2) in communicating himself to their hearts, and in their rejoicing and delighting in, and enjoying the manifestations which he makes of himself. . . . God is glorified not only by his glory's being seen, but by its being rejoiced in, when those that see it delight in it: God is more glorified than if they only see it.<sup>14</sup>

John Piper claims that these few words have been the foundation for his entire ministry.<sup>15</sup> Their practical application no doubt explains the passion that is seen in his preaching, which has been described as “God-intoxication.” Piper frequently hints that there is more to our savoring and valuing of God than what the typical modern-day shallow walk with God allows. Piper elaborates:

Is it not clear that the experience varies from time to time and from person to person? Otherwise, Paul would not pray for it as often as he does. . . . These are the two things Paul did again and again. He wrote to his people to direct their minds to the truth of God in Christ. And he prayed that the Holy Spirit would give them eyes to see the glory of what he was writing about.<sup>16</sup>

In recent years in many churches there has been a coming together of a love of the Bible and a desire to know God personally. Those of us in this middle camp need to do more than be content to accept the validity of the stories of others. Some have described themselves as “open but cautious,” and I can understand the reasons for that perspective. However, if experiences are valid and available, we cannot afford to be *too* cautious, passively waiting for God to perhaps one day overwhelm us. Instead we can and should be pursuing a relationship with God. In this process we must test all such experiences by the Bible and avoid the excesses of becoming driven by a desire for experience for its own sake.

Many Christians, myself included, are aware of some level of intimacy with God, yet still long for an increase in the vitality of this personal relationship with our Savior. We long to be as aware of our Lord Jesus as those I have quoted above were.

Can anyone read those accounts and still be satisfied with a lesser

<sup>14</sup>Cited in “The Pastor as Theologian”; [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1458\\_The\\_Pastor\\_as\\_Theologian/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1458_The_Pastor_as_Theologian/).

<sup>15</sup>See *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>See [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1999/1101\\_God\\_Demonstrates\\_His\\_Love\\_Toward\\_Us/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1999/1101_God_Demonstrates_His_Love_Toward_Us/).

experience? Or does reading them make you yearn for more of God? If the latter, let me urge you to join me in praying that God will reveal himself personally to us in the way he has done to many others before us. Please pray for me, as I am praying for you, that we might all know Jesus more.

As this chapter ends, we should ask ourselves, do I *really* love Jesus? Am I aware of his love for me in such a way that I have a strong desire to be holy? Am I devoted to Jesus? Do I glory in him and value him in such a way that when someone looks at me they could say, “His life is all about Jesus”? This doesn’t only mean that we turn up at church on Sunday morning, although it does include that. It’s not simply about listening to worship songs in our car or our own personal time with God. Rather, it means that every moment of every day we actively seek opportunities to give God glory.



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