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## **The Secret of Saying “Yes”**

**C**hris and DeeAnn Abke were feeling overwhelmed by a looming financial challenge. In desperation, they took some time late one evening—after settling their kids into bed—to pray and seek the Lord’s help. As they sat together on their living room couch, making their petitions known to God, suddenly an audible voice began to speak, “If you need help, call 9-1-1. If you need help, call 9-1-1.”

*They heard the voice say this about four or five times, and then it stopped. Mystified, Chris and DeeAnn just looked at each other.*

*The voice seemed to be coming from the garage, so they cautiously opened the door and flipped on the garage lights, not sure what they would find. Everything was in its place except for a small toy ambulance, belonging to their son, that lay by itself in the center of the garage floor.*

*Chris picked up the ambulance, pushed a button next to its emergency lights, and the voice began to speak, “If you need help, call 9-1-1.” As they wondered aloud how the toy had activated of its own accord, suddenly the Holy Spirit seemed to nudge Chris with these words, “If you need help, call 9-1-1—Psalm 91:1.” Going back to the Scriptures, the verse had an entirely new meaning to them as they read it together: “He who dwells in*

*the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”*

*Chris and DeeAnn understood this incident to be God’s way of directing their hearts to a renewed commitment to that secret place relationship with Him. The inference was that God would direct their steps related to their financial needs as they gave themselves to the intimacy of abiding in the presence of the Almighty.*

I share my friends’ story with you because I am absolutely convinced the power of heaven is unlocked on earth when we devote ourselves to the secret place of the Most High. Therefore, I have written this book with the singular purpose of stoking the embers of your personal prayer life. I pray that you will say “Yes!” to a daily, fervent pursuit of Jesus in the secret place. *My earnest prayer is that with each devotional you will gain renewed momentum and a holy fascination to pursue the greatest pearl of human existence—a personal, intimate, passionate, living relationship with the glorious Creator of the universe.*

One of the best kept secrets of our faith is the blessedness and joy of cultivating a secret life with God. Imagine the sheer delight of it even now. You’re tucked away in a quiet nook; the door is shut; you’re curled up in a comfortable position; the living word of God is laid open before you; Jesus Himself stands at your side; the Holy Spirit is gently washing your heart; your love is awakened as you meditate upon the gracious words of His mouth; your spirit is ignited and your mind is renewed; you talk to Him, and He talks to you in the language of intimate friendship.

Ahhh, it doesn’t get any better than this!

Hell will do everything in its power to misrepresent and distort the exuberant delight of this dynamic reality; this present world system is strategically designed to squeeze out your time and energy for the secret place; the church usually focuses its best energies on getting saints busy; and there seem to be relatively few believers whose secret life with God is so vibrantly life-giving that it kindles a contagious desire in others to follow their example.

I connect viscerally with the pain of countless believers who

carry the conviction that the secret place is central to an overcoming life but who struggle on a regular basis to maintain the secret place as a daily lifestyle. I know what it’s like to live below what the Christian walk could be and yet feel almost powerless to change anything. I’ve watched myself return persistently to the sources which are no source. For example, when wanting to get revitalized from a draining day, we will look to television, as though its distractions will renew us—only to be left empty for the umpteenth time. Or, we will attend a church service in the hope that the preacher’s walk with God will infuse us with fresh energy for the journey. But deep down we know that sermons and teachings, although edifying, can never replace the carrying power we find when we sit at His feet and hear His word for ourselves.

We don’t need to add another condemning word to the berating voices we all know so well. What we need, rather, is for our eyes to be lifted to the glorious hope we already carry within. My desire is that I might share some secrets—lessons I’ve learned mostly by doing it wrong first—to empower you toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ.

When we learn to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, we are positioning ourselves to discover the key to true kingdom fruitfulness. Reproductive power is unlocked in the shadow of the Almighty! One of the best Bible examples of this truth is found in the life of Cornelius, the first Gentile believer. Cornelius was a devout Gentile who committed himself to the secret place of prayer. His piety is described in the Book of Acts as fourfold: he gave regularly to the poor; he lived a holy lifestyle; he practiced fasting; and he adhered to the secret place of prayer. It was because of those four pursuits that God filled Cornelius and his household with the Holy Spirit and made them the firstfruits of all Gentile believers. It’s as though God said, “Cornelius, because of your passionate conviction for the secret place, your life is the kind of example that I can reproduce in the nations. So I’m designating you to be the first Gentile to receive the Holy Spirit, because I’m going to take your devotion to the secret place and export it to every nation on earth!” By making Cornelius the catalyst for the redemption of the nations, God was giving a powerful endorsement to Cornelius’s priority of cultivating a hidden life

with God. The eruption of fruitfulness from his life must have caught even him off guard!

Many of you reading this book have a call to neighborhoods, to cities, and also to nations. As you devote yourself to the secret place with God, He will birth something within you that will spread, in His time, to the four corners of your sphere. It's an awesome secret: *The call of God burning in your breast will be uncontainable and unstoppable as you devote yourself to the fiery passion of intimate communion with the Lover of your soul.*

Won't you join me in pressing forward into new dimensions of kingdom power and glory? The face of Christianity is changed, generation after generation, by those who discover the power of the secret place. I pray that with the reading of every page you will join me in saying "Yes!" to the secret of the centuries.

"What is this secret?" someone might ask.

The secret place *is* the secret!