

Listening and Living in God's Presence

Gary Bundy's Spiritual Secret

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by Robby Butler, March 10th, 2014

Gary helped me discover an amazing thing about God; He cares more about relating to me than about changing me, or about what He can accomplish through me.

Somewhere in my church experience I had gotten the idea that God only speaks rarely, regarding major issues, and that it is our responsibility is to study the Scriptures in order to “figure out” how God wants us to think and behave.

But from the moment we met, Gary modeled and taught me that God is eager to discuss with me anything and everything—from my own personal interests and concerns to His grand plans to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory.

Over time, God used Gary and other influences to persuade me that He isn't interested in making me like everyone else—or anyone else. Yes, I can be inspired by what God is doing in and through others. But what He wants to do in and through me is uniquely shaped for me. And His priority is in “hanging out” with me through a conscious stream of interaction with my Friend—who enjoys my company, and my Master—who gives direction only when that is called for.

Gary Meets God

When Jesus caught up with Gary, he was a heavily addicted drug abuser. In the midst of an extended high, when he was out searching for a fresh supply, another “hippie” approached him and said, “I think I've got what you need.”

Two young guys then surrounded him in a booth and said, “We've got what you want, and we can



introduce you to the ‘main man’.” Gary was excited, thinking he was going to meet a supplier.

At the Spirit's leading, one of them asked Gary, “Are you happy?” For the first time Gary felt God talking to him directly, and he broke down crying as he felt he had never really been happy.

This man then told Gary that his “main man” was Jesus Christ, that Jesus loved Gary, and that Gary could come to Jesus just as he was. The moment Gary repented and accepted Christ, he was radically healed, transformed and set free from his addiction. All the heaviness of his life was lifted, and Gary felt pure love for the first time. From that time, Gary lived in an ongoing conversation with God.

One of the first things Gary felt God asking him to do was pray a three part prayer like this:

- Use me to deliver solutions beyond my capability, so that You will be glorified in those solutions.

- I give You permission from this moment on, and for the rest of my life, to do whatever work in me You need, whenever and however You want to do it, so that You can use me as you need to.
- Lead me to always give You permission to be the Lord of my circumstances, so that You will put me wherever You need me to be, when You need me to be there.

To the end Gary's motto was "Hear, obey ... and give it all away!" Out of his rich and abiding sense of God's presence, Gary's primary interest was giving God the glory and teaching others to do the same.

My Divine Appointment with Gary

Gary and I met providentially in 2006, just after my heart cried out to God, "Isn't there anyone in this town whose vision extends beyond this island?" (A year earlier my wife and I had sensed God's leading to move to Anacortes, WA from the mission community I had been in for 25 years, and I was hungry for companionship with others that had a global vision.)

Within days a new contact invited me to meet in his new temporary home in Anacortes. Gary and Barb Bundy had just opened their small home indefinitely to this family of five that was heading toward the mission field. (Over the years I saw such unmeasured generosity repeatedly in Gary and Barb's life as they modeled what it means to steward the King's resources without claiming those resources as their own.)

I have never felt more appreciated in a first encounter than I was by Gary. He had just felt led to write out a vision for global mission base, and grasped immediately the significance of my background.

But Gary wasn't well, and the very evening we met he was hospitalized with a lymph system infection, compounded by an enlarged heart and a heart murmur.

Yet amidst continuing health challenges, Gary never focused on himself. Instead, he accepted

every hospitalization as another divine appointment, blessing and praying for anyone who would receive it. So when he was discharged a week later the head nurse told him, "You were sent to minister to us."

And when friends visited him that first evening in the hospital, he urged them to invite me to their weekly prayer meeting to tell my story. (Thus began the long delight Gary and I shared in introducing our friends to each other. Some years later Gary asked my forgiveness for exaggerating in a gathering that I had introduced him to "every major mission leader" in the Pacific Northwest.)

Gary lived in the expectation and experience of miracles, and this hospital stay was no exception. When he was discharged a week later the doctor told Gary, "You came with an enlarged heart and a murmur, which we couldn't do anything for. But our tests now show that you have the heart of a teenager—normal in size with no murmur. You appear to have an even better doctor; stick with Him." (Throughout our friendship Gary experienced a mix of serious health challenges and miraculous healings. He was always expectant of God's intervention, but never demanding—resting in God's perfect love.)

Learning to Listening to God

Our common interest in technology and how it can serve God's purposes contributed an additional dimension to our friendship. Years earlier, Gary had been CEO of his own software company before a bad traffic accident and extended recovery.)

Early in our friendship, Gary was invited to preach on his favorite topic—hearing God's voice. That sermon, and many subsequent conversations with Gary on this subject, helped me gain a new understanding that God wants us to learn to hear, trust and obey His voice.

As a new believer I had been inspired by Brother Lawrence's *Practicing the Presence of God*, and much later by [Frank Laubach as a modern-day equivalent](#). But Gary became my living example

of what it means to live in God's presence and hear His voice on a continuing basis.

In hindsight I can see many times where God spoke clearly to me as a new believer. But somehow along the way I came to distrust the "still, small voice," and believe instead that God wants us to "figure out" His will from studying His Word and getting advice from others.

Every interaction with Gary challenged me to accept that, *beyond meditating on God's Word and seeking counsel*, God *does* want us still today to *hear* His voice clearly, enjoy His fellowship constantly, and obey His specific leading whether or not we can make sense of it. In fact, it is as we grow to recognize God's voice and following His leading beyond the bounds of our own limited knowledge and reasoning that we "walk by faith" rather than sight, and have the privilege of seeing God do the miraculous in and through us.

Hanging Out Together

Gary was unusual in having time and interest for doing things with me. I could invite him to ride along for a *Perspectives* class I was teaching, or to join me in meeting with visiting mission leaders, and he would often come. On a drive to one *Perspectives* class I asked God aloud to clarify what He had for Gary and me to do together. Gary replied, "I think we are already doing it."

Gary saw every encounter as a Divine Appointment, and God gave Gary a ten-step process to discover God's vision for the other person, identify where they were "hitting the wall," connect them with what God wanted them to receive, and then share the testimony. (See Gary's book [The 7-Year Plan](#).)

Gary was a joyful man who drew others to himself from all stations of life. Executives enjoyed being in his presence, but so did kids (including my own). My son Wesley particularly loved climbing on Gary's lap and playing with his beard, or joining me and Gary for walks through the Anacortes forest trails.

Friendship Over Time and Distance

God led Gary and Barb to move from Anacortes, and our friendship transitioned to occasional phone calls as either of us felt prompted. When I had just a few minutes in the car and no pressing business, Gary was the first person I would generally call. If I asked if he was busy, Gary would assure me that he would always make time for me if he could. And when I asked what times were OK to call, he would say, "Please call any time you feel led." On those occasions when I did feel prompted to call him before 6:00am, he would inevitably be up, and he would say, "Thank you for calling so early and proving that you know how much I love you."

Gary was always surrounded with new and old friends. Many would come just to meet him, then stay several days or return later for weeks or months. And Gary's vision for joint ventures and business development under Christ's guidance spread steadily to unite a growing global network of people who embraced the [Hazon vision](#).

In recent months, everything appeared set for implementation of the Hazon vision except some startup capital, and it was unthinkable to any of us that God would allow Gary to be taken out of the picture at this point.

So when Gary told me about late in 2013 about his most recent diagnosis of cancer, it was with full confidence that God would heal him. (God had already healed Gary of several previous cancers.) And when Gary visited in my home in February, 2014, or we subsequently talked by phone, he retained that same faith and assurance.

So it was a great shock to hear from Barb on March first that Gary was in a coma and "rapidly progressing toward glory."

Temporary and Ultimate Healing

In early 2014 I became aware that a growing number of God's people are discovering anew the authority God wants to give His people for healing the sick, exercised through our faith and obedience, and my understanding was shaped by

the marvelous new book [*Divine Healing Made Simple*](#) and subsequent interaction with the author.

Gary had also often told me about John G. Lake, whose remarkable healing ministry began a century ago in Spokane (where Gary and Barb were living). So I read the newspaper report of [*John G. Lakes' testimony*](#) available through Google's archives, and asked God for the same kind of powerful conviction to arise inside of me for Gary's recover or resurrection.

However a mutual friend helped me understand that, while God *does* want to entrust us with spiritual power and authority, He *doesn't* want to simply repeat with us what He has done with someone else, or have us follow principles or formulas.

What God wants above all else is the kind of intimacy Gary modeled for me, which grows as we interact and become more confident in hearing His voice. Authority to heal or perform other miracles may come as we hear His voice and obey it, but this is secondary.

For several days after I heard Gary was failing, I dismissed the urge to go see him. But then I felt God telling me more clearly to go. So I invited friends around the world to join me in prayer. And as I went forth in obedience, I experienced great personal blessing.

Blessing through Obedience

On the 6-hour drive to see Gary I talked with God about the apparent "stupidity" of driving

I miss being able to call Gary, but now I look forward to seeing one more good friend again when my own turn comes to graduate from this earth.

And through knowing Gary I have come to a new understanding of God's priorities:

- Yes, He wants to work through me to bless others and accomplish great things.
- And yes, He is at work in me to conform me to His image.
- But more important to Him than doing things through me or to me is enjoying my companionship as I listen for His voice and talk with Him about whatever is in front of me throughout the day.

Now when I ask God for increased clarity about what He has for us (Him and me) to do together, sometimes I get further insight. But often God just reminds me, "We are already doing it."

across the state to pray for a friend who would most likely die without regaining consciousness. God reminded me that He uses the "foolish" things of this world to confound the wise, and that I didn't need a particular outcome to be blessed in following His voice. I experienced deep peace in knowing that God is in control and that, regardless of the outcome, I wouldn't be left wondering, "What would God have done if I had gone?"

Regarding my sense of Gary's importance for fulfilling the Hazon vision, God reminded me that:

- God's purposes aren't dependent on any individual. He raises people up as needed.
- And unless a seed falls into the ground and dies it remains only a single seed (Jn 12:24).

Barb also told me she and Gary had discussed the analogy of a football team, in which various players carry the ball toward the end of the field. Gary carried the ball well during his turn.

Like Moses and many other men of faith, Gary did not live to see the fulfillment of all God has promised. But Gary is now enjoying his reward, and God will continue to fulfill His vision in His time and His way.

