

A Sneak Preview of “Secrets”

Sometimes we read things out of curiosity, for information, or simply for enjoyment. But, we are more selective when we have needs, sometimes urgent needs that must be met at any cost. If you are satisfied with your life now and feel that you have no real personal needs, you will close this little book rather quickly.

The truth is, ---we are all trying to fix our broken lives in the midst of a broken world and, of course, none of us has all of the answers. This preview of “Secrets” is designed to highlight critical needs that all of us have and which none of us completely understand. No doubt from time to time you too feel a sense of anxiety, maybe even despair, without knowing why. This book is designed to help you define what is behind these needs and then to reveal secrets that can work together to give you a satisfying and meaningful life.

This is the book I wish I had found early in my journey, while searching for answers before I knew what questions to ask. Along the way, I heard many interesting and helpful things, but they failed to answer my core needs. Now I want to share with you some revealing insights that can be helpful. I found it exciting to uncover truths through which God could give me a greater sense of purpose and satisfaction. For many years those insights were unclear due to unsolved mysteries. Now each time I review them, the answers they offer become increasingly obvious. As we work through these together, we will experience the satisfaction of realizing God’s amazing love and His desire for a personal intimate relationship with us.

Hopefully these secrets will become your own, but none will sink their roots deep and bear fruit based on a single cursory reading. They will become yours only as part of a carefully considered journey in which your needs become clear, your questions are highlighted, and you find satisfaction. The psalmist encourages us to **“Taste and see that the Lord is good...”** (Psalm 34:8). My hope is that this preview of these secrets will whet your appetite to take this journey with me. Indeed, you too will find that the Lord is good beyond your wildest imagination.

JOURNEY TO A GREAT LIFE

The hallmark of true love and fulfillment is our desire to meet critical needs and bring satisfaction to our loved ones. But our love will only be rewarded to the extent that benefits are experienced mutually. The most common deterrent to experiencing true love is our resistance to being open about our own needs. Our resistance arises from the fear of feeling exposed, criticized, and of losing respect. Being aware that we have needs is easy. The hard part is putting them into words, and expressing them personally. But, only then do they become real enough for those we love to hear and respond. The answer to our desires for fulfillment will remain a mystery as long as the nature of our needs remains uncertain and hidden.

These uncertainties and their answers are no mystery to God who loves and understands us completely. His desire is to address the needs of our hearts and to give us a walk of confidence and a life of resting in him. Only when we are open with

God about our needs can He offer us answers. His answers are very personal. In fact, they are family secrets, and those secrets can only become ours in a loving relationship with Him. It is crucial to understand that the quality of our relationship with the Lord will be a major factor in the quality of our relationships with others.

Does God Really Keep Secrets?

God is eager for the message of His love and care to be freely available to everyone. Yet, the Scriptures often speak of His secrets. The psalmist tells us, **"The secret of the Lord (His intimate counsel) is for those who fear Him (who truly stand in awe of Him)"** (Psalm 25:14).

Jesus explained that He often spoke in parables as a way of keeping His message a secret to those who are unwilling to respond to His love. His intention is that those who have purposefully closed their eyes and ears will neither see nor hear. With great delight, He said to His disciples, **"Blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear"** (Matthew 13:10-16).

The truth is, God has never wished for His secrets to remain secret. The intimate counsel He gives is hidden in plain sight. He reveals it in a timely manner to those who truly want to be closer to Him. However, His secrets remain a mystery anytime we have become so satisfied with what we know and the way we see things that we have little hunger and thirst to have more of Him and for Him to have more of us.

The "secrets" address eight specific areas of critical need that have long been a puzzle to many of us. He knows that resolving each of these will lead us to a more personal knowledge and intimacy with Him and with others. We must no longer allow these puzzling needs to go on blocking our way to great relationships.

Because so many of us have been slow to uncover and understand these secrets, perhaps they have also been hidden from you. Your own discovery and the experience in personalizing God's secrets will usher you into a life of fruitfulness. And, if indeed they become yours, you will not want to keep them a secret.

The apostle Paul could not withhold these secrets as they became clear to him... **"We speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began"** (I Corinthians 2:7).

As we begin this journey into the arena of God's secret wisdom, we soon realize that this is not a one-time venture, it is an ongoing cycle of an increasingly greater and more personal discovery. Each of the secrets confronts one of the most confounding obstacles to having a fruitful life. As we continue to study and to grasp the essence of each, we will realize that each discovery is built upon the previous one, and each will prepare us to more fully enjoy the benefits of each following secret and how they will enrich our relationship with Him and with each other. We should never cease to be amazed as we discover, step by step, just how much God loves us and what He will do for us and with us.

A Brief Preview of The Eight Secrets

Secret #1 ---The Secret of Finding Completeness (Our most basic need)

Everything truly valuable in life is achieved through relationships that are meaningful and complete. This fact has escaped us because, since infancy, our major struggle has been with the terrible feelings of inadequacy and shame. Instead of facing the fact that those feelings result from being incomplete, we determine that the solution to our inadequacy is in becoming stronger, more skillful, and more personally independent.

We resist even considering the idea that in the beginning God purposely designed and created us to be incomplete. Since Adam was the first man, and was God's perfect design, we are curious to hear God say, **"It is not good for the man to be alone."** The truth is, He made us in His own image because He wants to personally meet each of our needs and give us the joy of experiencing intimacy and completeness with Him.

Our challenge is to realize that our much-needed completeness is only gained through personal intimacy. That brings us to the frightening truth that intimacy is only achieved through a relationship of mutual vulnerability. That faces us with the conflict we feel between our basic need for intimacy and completeness and our strong desire to feel personal independence.

The focus of Secret #1 is to realize that our incompleteness and needs are purposeful, and then to grasp the significance of developing vulnerable relationships with the depth of love, acceptance, and interdependence that will make them effective.

Secret #2 ---The Secret of Coming Closer

The fallen nature we inherit from Adam includes a strong sense of insecurity, inadequacy, and fear. Unfortunately, this creates a desire to develop independence and self-reliance. This desire works against developing healthy relationships with God and with people. Instead of daring to be vulnerable, many of us prefer to wear a mask of confidence and to develop our own version of completeness. This homemade version is accompanied by a protective shield which guards against others seeing who we really are. If we work hard and feel comfortable in our masquerade, we can appear to be quite normal, sometime even special. This is possible because everyone around us is trying to do the same thing, and some of them have not devised a mask as deceptive as ours. Unfortunately, in relationships like these, every effort to come closer results in tragedy for one or both.

Secret #3 ---The Secret of Living With Confidence

Yes, we are all born incomplete. And as long as we remain incomplete, our only confidence will be self-confidence. That will begin to fade as we are faced with everyday fears and failures. The basis for true confidence becomes ours only when we become "a new person in union with Christ." **"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."** (2 Corinthians 5:17)

However, this wonderful gift will not automatically result in a life characterized by confidence. That comes gradually as we release our insistence on being

independent. Hopefully, the joy of a confident life will become ours as we understand and personalize Secret #3. There is no other solution. The new life begins with being *“in union with Christ.”*

Secret #4 ---The Secret of Appreciating Christ’s Daily Care

When Jesus told His disciples about His coming death, they were troubled about losing Him. So, He explained that after His resurrection He would return. But this time, He would come without a physical body so that He could live within each of us. Our problem is that too many of us have little idea of exactly what Christ is doing *as He lives within us.*

To help us appreciate just how invested He is in our lives, God has provided a graphic illustration which we can see as we observe the way He designed our physical bodies. I can promise, you will be astonished at seeing the extent of His personal care as you study this picture in Secret #4. It should make an amazing change in the way you relate to him daily.

Secret #5 ---The Secret of Enjoying a Clear Conscience

Adam and Eve were given a clean and healthy conscience to help them make good decisions. Unfortunately, they yielded to temptation, and with the entrance of sin, their conscience was defiled.

As sons of Adam, we inherited that defiled conscience which primarily acts to accuse and fill us with guilt. Thankfully, Christ’s sacrifice has provided total forgiveness. However, many Christians fail to realize that He also provided the cleansing of our conscience. Without understanding this cleansing, we are likely to remain dominated by guilt and by rarely enjoying a sense of complete forgiveness. Secret #5 will help you experience the amazing freedom and enjoyment that comes with understanding what it means to have a cleansed conscience.

Secret #6 ---The Secret of Counting for Something

All of us have a deep desire for our lives to count for something valuable. The good news is that God has that same desire for each of us.

The key element which distinguishes success from failure is found in what God calls *“resting.”* To most of us, that does not make sense. That is precisely why it has remained an unrevealed secret to us. When you understand the relationship which God sees between working and resting, you will be surprised and delighted at the difference it can make. Hopefully that delight will become yours as you study Secret #6.

Secret #7 ---The Secret of Embracing Change

Life’s journey begins during the immaturity of childhood when our desires and energies are mainly focused on comfort, pleasure, and having our own way. And, if left to our own devices, we are likely to continue struggling in the clutches of these self-defeating satisfactions.

From the very beginning God’s plan has been that each of His children be ultimately *“conformed to the image of Christ.”* John assures us that when Christ

returns, we will experience that total transformation. Knowing that our Lord could return at any moment makes that even more exciting. But the truth is, the joy of our transformation is not simply to be anticipated as a future blessing. His plan is for the process to begin now, moment by moment, as part of our present experience. We see this more clearly when we realize that the word Paul uses for “transformation” is our word “metamorphosis”, the process through which an ugly worm becomes a beautiful butterfly.

God never intended for a transformed life to be an option. It is not simply reserved for a few. Secret #7 is designed to help you see how His design for you can become a reality. It will also enable you to be involved in fulfilling the last great commandment.

Secret #8 ---The Secret of The Last Great Commandant

Jesus made clear the first is - loving God. The second is – loving one another. Unfortunately, the third – making disciples is one that very few Christians even attempt. The excuse is: “I don’t know how.” Secret #8 will build on the power of developing relationships. It will enable us to discover the joy of being fruitful and of multiplying the kingdom.