


...FOR THOSE SEEKING THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE *Holy Spirit*

# LutheranRenewal

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## Understanding Hiddenness and Manifestation

by Graham Cooke



At certain times in life we feel the presence of God very tangibly. Our whole life seems touched by His presence and we freely enjoy being with Him. At other times, God seems to be distant or even absent. We don't feel His presence in the same way as we did—maybe not at all. We don't experience the sense of peace and wellbeing that we enjoyed before. Why is this? Is it normal? Is it because we have done something wrong?

I believe the answer lies in understanding the ways of God more fully and deeply, and learning to live accordingly. This article focuses on the area of *hiddenness* and manifestation and seeks to help the reader to discern these “seasons” of the ways of God. Living within the flow of these seasons is a critical spiritual discipline to learn. Once you understand them and learn to flow with them, you will enjoy a real sense of freedom and will not be buffeted by emotions or circumstances as you once were.

*Manifestation* describes the times when you feel God's presence and His touch upon your life in a very immediate way. He is just *there!* Those times are wonderful

and effortless. But God also brings seasons of hiddenness into your life, and although He is still very much with you, you don't feel His presence in the same way. It seems at times that God strips away all the external paraphernalia of your life and denies it to you. At those times, you have to believe that you have peace with God, because you don't feel it in your emotions.

*Manifestation* is about experiencing all that God is doing. *Hiddenness* is about possessing the things of God through His Word by faith. During times of hiddenness, you must learn to rely on the promises that God has made to you through the Bible.

Perhaps the simplest way to explain it is to say that manifestation is a time of *blessing*; hiddenness is a time of *building*. God desires to bring you through seasons of hiddenness because He wants you to learn the discipline of walking by the Spirit.

Developing an ongoing walk with God by the power of the Holy Spirit is a discipline. Practicing faith is a discipline. Hiddenness is God's way of establishing these disciplines in your life. Once established, they prevent the enemy from invading your life and touching you, because regardless of your emotions, you know how to find the presence of God; you have a constant assurance of His presence and His commitment to you.

Understanding the fact that sometimes God is hidden and sometimes manifest will ground you in your faith and help you to have a more consistent walk with Him. Whether it's a “good” day or a “bad” day, you will know how to live in the grace of God. Some days you will

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feel very close to God, and other days you won't – but it won't matter, because you will know that you can live, enjoying God's presence when you feel it, and enjoying living in your faith when you don't.

Hiddenness connects us with God's wisdom, and wisdom is the revelation of who God is and the internal recognition of how He likes to work in our lives. Faith depends upon one thing—upon your understanding of

the nature of God. Faith which is "earthed" in a sure understanding of the nature of God and what He is like will never be short of things to believe for. You know what God is like, you know that He is faithful, that He'll never leave you or forsake you, that He's made provision for you, you know God never changes...and so on.

Faith in the nature of God is what keeps you moving even when situations are against you. Because you know that God is faithful, when a situation seems bleak or even impossible, you know just enough to

wait for Him to come to your aid. "I know You, Lord, You're here somewhere. I'm just going to wait until You come or wait until You speak. I know You're doing something. I haven't figured out what it is yet, but I'm just going to wait because I know You." *"From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living"* (Job 28:20–21a).

Real wisdom is hidden from us until God reveals it to us. He often chooses to do that in the place of hiddenness. Hiddenness is God's training ground. In hiddenness God is teaching us the wisdom of how to walk with Him, how to know Him, how to understand Him and how to live a life of reverent fear. David said, "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, *And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom*" (Psalm 51:6), because he understood eventually that hiddenness and wisdom went together. Likewise, Paul said,

*"However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the*

*hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory"* (1 Corinthians 2:6–7).

In times of manifestation, we cannot hear deep truth. If we do hear God speak while we are enjoying a season of His blessing, often we don't understand what He is saying. Times of manifestation are about experiencing God. They are about moving in a flow of body ministry—participating in the peace, joy and life of God. Hiddenness is a different thing altogether—it is about understanding the deep things of God.

*"Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.' But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken"* (Luke 18:31–34).

After Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, suddenly things began to come clear for His disciples. Much of what He had told them while they were enjoying His presence, they had not understood. When they saw Him, resurrected and standing once again in their midst however, numerous things He had said flooded back to them and suddenly they made sense. A time of manifestation it is not a time to understand deep truth, but to experience God, which is what He wants for us. Hiddenness is where we start to process really deep truth.

In our Christian lives, it is the Holy Spirit who promotes the internal development of our "inner man"—our spirit. We don't gain spiritual maturity by accumulating knowledge, but by increasing in godly wisdom. This kind of wisdom comes from above and cannot be gained by academic study. James chapter 3 tells us that there are two kinds of wisdom—one is earthly and natural. Often this kind of wisdom appears to have some merit, but is usually rooted in the value systems of the world. If we take too much notice of this kind of wisdom it can lead us into a place where we become vulnerable to demonic influence as we become philosophical about our beliefs. By contrast, the supernatural wisdom that James refers to is pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruit and unwavering in its convictions about God. You will increase in this "supernatural" wisdom as you learn to be with God in hiddenness. The wisdom you gain from this experience can give you a whole new perspective on situations in your life. It

will produce in you a rest and a peace which, frankly, will be astonishing to you.

There is an intriguing verse in Revelation chapter 2 that says,

*"To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat" (Revelation 2:17b).*

What I find interesting about this particular verse is that it was spoken to a church in Pergamum that was situated in the middle of occult territory. The leaders had deliberately planted a church in the center of a demonic stronghold. How's that for bravery! They had picked the darkest place they could find to plant their church. Other Christians had been martyred there and there was tremendous opposition to the Gospel. Yet, despite the constant persecution they suffered, God spoke to them of "hidden manna". This was their "inheritance" word if you like—that in the time of greatest persecution, they would know how to live in the secret place of God. He would provide additional revelation for them—hidden manna.

It is very significant to note that God did not aim to take away the oppression, but to provide more revelation. Why? Because if we are going to learn to be overcomers, then we must allow ourselves to be developed internally. God is more interested in the state of our inner man than our outward circumstances. The hiddenness of God is all about that internal development. In times of manifestation we focus outwardly on God and the blessings He showers on our lives. In hiddenness we devote ourselves inwardly to God, yielding to Him in the things that He wants to do in our life. The Lord wants each one of us to be able to live from the

inside out, and to fully understand the process of internal development in Him.

## **"TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES**

**I will give some of the hidden manna to eat."**

Revelation 2:17b

In manifestation we revel in our experience of the presence of God and we are surrounded by Him. We hear His voice, we're touched by Him, there's lightness in our spirit, a joy in His

presence. There's a strength, an ease in worship and prayer in times like that. The love of God fills us and there's a release of His anointing. There's an enjoyment of God—His favor. God loves to show Himself to us in those times and seasons.

In hiddenness God is still there, but He's hiding Himself because He wants to teach us a different way of living – one that does not depend upon our experience of Him. Now we have something much deeper by which to pro-

cess our lives. He removes the visible in order to teach us to walk by faith, not by sight; to teach us how to live inwardly.

I believe that it is hiddenness which establishes our capacity to rest in the Lord. Hiddenness promotes a "quietness of soul"—our mind and emotions stilled before God. We have to learn how to submit our emotions to the discipline of life in the Spirit. To be able to bring yourself to a place of peace is an important discipline to have. Although it takes some time to learn, it is possible to develop it to the extent that you can bring yourself to a place of peace within a few seconds, regardless of the circumstances affecting you. It's just a discipline. It's no different from learning to drive a car or use a washing machine.

It is evident from the Scriptures that God has used this strategy of hiddenness for a long time. Early on in the Old Testament we see it in His dealings with Jacob:

*"Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.' "*  
(Genesis 28:16)

Here we see retrospective revelation, in other words looking back and realizing that God was there with you. It's OK to live there, but what God really wants is progressive revelation – where we trust that He is with us whether He is "visible" or not. That's the training which working within hiddenness can give you. It provides you with the ability to recognize God when He is present, not after the event.

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Graham will be speaking at the August 5-8, 2009  
Holy Spirit Conference,

## **"The Prevailing Church."**

Brochures will be sent with the May newsletter.





*Ché Ahn*

## Heaven invaded the Equipping Conference!

We've had confirmed stories of physical and emotional healing, lives that were refreshed and empowered, and evidence of increased intimacy with the Lord. Thank you, Father!"



*John Arnott sharing at Communitas, a young adult house church*



*John Arnott*



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**The April Bulletin, "Stop Making Excuses"** by Paul Anderson, will be posted on our web site: [LutheranRenewal.org](http://LutheranRenewal.org)

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