

# 6

## Good Morning, Lord Jesus

As a student in Bible school, I was told that to walk in the Spirit I should set aside an hour each morning to pray and read the Bible.

In order to be ready to start my prayers at 6 a.m., I had to get up at 5 a.m. And I did it. Day after day I dragged myself out of bed to pray and study my Bible for an hour.

But one day, I could not do it; I was simply too tired to get up. And throughout that whole day I felt condemned!

The day came when I discovered that if Christ lives in us, we can enjoy a continual dialogue with Him.

At first when I started to have fellowship with Him all day long, I got on my knees at 6 a.m. as usual. The difference was that when I got up off my knees I kept on talking with Him.

One day after I had got up after my morning prayer time, He asked me, *"Why do you kneel down there? Don't you talk with Me all the time, even when you are not kneeling down?"*

It began to dawn on me that when I talked with Jesus all day long, that was a part of real life; it was a meaningful relationship. But praying an hour each morning was not life to me. It was bondage to a religion. I enjoyed my conversation with Jesus all through the day, but my prayer time was a duty-

I believe that a great many people are under bondage to a

religious system in their daily lives because they don't realize that to walk in the Spirit is to be continually conscious of Christ's unending presence within us.

*Today I find that I have an attitude of conducting a continual dialogue with Him.*

*As soon as I wake up in the morning, I stretch and yawn and say, "Good morning, Lord Jesus. How are You?" (I am still in bed, not down on my knees!)*

*He answers me, "Fine. And you, Johnny?"*

*"Wonderful," I reply. "I slept so well last night."*

*"Yes, I saw that."*

*"Oh, I think I will stay in bed a few more minutes, Lord."*

*Because He is my Friend He wants my day to go well so He urges me, "Johnny, get up. You know that when you stay in bed, you end up having to rush. Why spoil the morning by rushing? You are awake, aren't you? You can get up in plenty of time."*

*"Yes, Lord, but...."*

*"Come on, get up. Perhaps Sunday you can sleep in. But today, get up so that you don't have to rush."*

*So I get up and I go to the bathroom to take my shower. As I do so, I continue to dialogue with Him.*

*"Lord," I say, "while I wash myself outside, why don't you wash me inside?"*

*"You really need it, Johnny!" He tells me.*

*When I finish my shower He begins to teach me how to be a good husband. As I leave a puddle of water on the bathroom floor He says, "Johnny, dry the floor of the bathroom—there's the mop. And those hairs in the sink, clean them up."*

*"Lord," I reason, "my wife can get them later. She has more time."*

*"Do it yourself, Johnny," He commands me. "Come on, I want to teach you to be a good husband."*

*"Yes, Lord." And I set about cleaning up the mess.*

*Then He asks, "How do you feel now?"*

*"Great, Lord." It is a really good feeling to show love to other people.*

I go back into the bedroom and I say to myself, "Let's see, which clothes shall I wear today? I will use these grey pants with the blue coat. Oh, but this blue coat is wrinkled. Let's see if this brown coat will do. No, it doesn't fit with the grey pants. I'll have the beige pants."

By this time I have several items of clothing out on the bed, and I am planning to leave them there for my wife to put back.

*Again the Lord says to me, "Johnny!"*

*"What?"*

*"Hang up those clothes."*

*"But my wife can do it."*

*"Do it yourself, Johnny."*

*"Yes, Lord." So I hang all the clothes back where they came from and the room looks tidy again.*

*"Now, how do you feel?"*

*"Great, Lord, really great. Oh, it's time to dash to the office—I'll miss my bus."*

*I am about to go out the door, neglecting to take a moment to kiss my wife, and the Lord says to me, "Johnny."*

*"What?"*

*"You didn't kiss your wife."*

*"But Lord, it's late."*

*"Come on, do it—or she will be upset for the rest of the day."*

*I say to Martha, "Sweetie, bye bye; I'm leaving now." And as I go out the door I stop to kiss her.*

*"Oh, I thought you were leaving without even giving me a kiss," she tells me, relieved to see that I am not neglecting her.*

*"Thank you, Jesus," I whisper, grateful that He knows how to show love in all the little ways that are important to a woman.*

When people hear me tell about talking with Jesus they ask, "What do you find to say to Him?"

Do you think that Jesus comes into our hearts just to speak to us about baptism or the millennium? Of course not. He

wants to teach us how to live—how to be loving husbands and good fathers. So He talks with me all day long, and I talk with Him. We talk about everything.

If we would listen to the way in which many of us pray, we would see that we don't really know Jesus as our best friend.

When you have a friend, you talk with that person by sharing the ordinary things of life. Your vocabulary, your sentences and the themes you discuss are different with a friend than with someone you meet only occasionally. You drop the protocol and you become intimate.

If you have life rather than religion, your relationship with Him will be intimate because you are growing in friendship. What you talk about with Him will be new every day.

I was a single pastor, and Martha was one of the members of my church. One Sunday morning after the service I went outside the church building and there was Martha with a group of girls.

"Martha," I said, "I would like to talk to you in private if possible."

"Do you mean right now?" she asked.

"Well, I think that it would be nice to talk now," I answered.

"Yes, Pastor," she said.

She came to my office and I said, "Sister Martha, I wonder if you have noticed that I feel for you something different than I feel for the other sisters of the church?"

She became pale. "No, Pastor," she stammered, "I didn't notice it."

"Well," I said, "I would like you to start to notice it."

Suppose that after that first Sunday morning when I spoke to Martha about my feelings for her, the next Sunday I had also said, "Sister Martha, I wonder if you have noticed that I feel for you something different than I feel for the other sisters of the church"?

And the next Sunday, and every Sunday after that, "Sister Martha, I wonder if you have noticed\_\_\_\_"

She would have screamed, "Shut up!"

We never would have become married and brought up four children, because a relationship cannot develop when we use the same words of protocol.

That was what I said to her the first time only.

Since then we grew in friendship. I don't have to repeat the same things because we talk, we fellowship, and we are in love with one another. A great depth of intimacy has developed between us in which we share everything together.

But listen to the prayers of many people in church services. Year after year they say the same prayers.

"Dear Heavenly Father, we come into Your presence this morning. We thank You for this meeting. We ask You to be with those who couldn't come, we remember the widows, the missionaries\_\_\_\_"

The next Sunday, "Lord, thank You for this meeting. We ask You to be with those who couldn't come, we remember the widows, the missionaries\_\_\_\_"

How can we always say the same things to the Lord in our prayers?

He must be really bored with all that protocol. Sometimes I think He must ask Himself, "Is that a cassette playing, or is it the person himself?"

God is your Father. Jesus is your brother. He lives within you! He wants to experience a relationship with you, not to listen to your religion.

The church is the bride of Christ; we are in a relationship with a person who is to become our husband. We are in love with Him, and He is our best friend. In one of our hymns we sing, "Friendship with Jesus, fellowship divine." But this has to be our experience.

We also sing, "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today. He walks with me and He talks with me, along life's narrow way." Is that really your experience? Do you walk and talk with Him in all of life's situations?

I go to the supermarket quite often to do the shopping.

If you are like me, when you go to the supermarket you tend to buy many things that you don't need. When I see something on one of the shelves I say to myself, "I'll get that."

*But while I am shopping, Christ is still living within me. So He says to me, "You don't need that, Johnny."*

*"Thanks, Lord," I tell Him. You see, He helps me with the shopping. And He will help you if you will listen to His voice.*

Sometimes I hear gossip. "Brother so-and-so, that tremendous preacher..." then out comes some shocking rumor about that brother,

"No!" I say.

"Yes," the person reassures me.

A little while later I am with another brother. "Did you know what happened with so-and-so?"

*At that moment a voice speaks within me, "Don't say it."*

Before I knew that it was the voice of Jesus, I went ahead and said what I was going to say. Then I felt bad. But I have learned to listen to that voice and obey it. This is what it means to obey the commands of Jesus under the new covenant.

I can't tell you about many of my conversations with Jesus because you would be shocked. Many of you wouldn't believe that I actually talk to Him in the way I do. But when there is a deep friendship between two people, there is a closeness in which you can share everything.

*As I am walking back from the supermarket, I see a nice tree and I say, "What a beautiful tree, Lord. Oh, look at those flowers'."*

*Then a pretty woman passes in front of me. "Wow, what a woman!"*

*"Johnny!"*

*"Lord, don't tell me she is not pretty."*

*"Yes, Johnny, but..."*

*"When I told You what a nice tree that was, You were glad. When I mentioned the flowers, You also were pleased. Now I say, 'What a beautiful woman,' and You get upset. Lord!"*

*"But, Johnny, you know what I mean."*

*Then I admit, "Yes, Lord, I know what You mean."*

Someone asks, "Brother Ortiz, do you pray like *that*?"

So I ask them, "What do you think? When I see a nice woman, do you think I say, 'Lord, this is not for You, don't look'?"

You know, there are people who wait until the next evangelistic meeting to make their confessions?

The Lord says, *"Come on, I was right there with you—and you have waited until the meeting to tell it to Me!"*

Jesus is there with us all the time—not just to forgive us our sins, which He also does, but to prevent us from falling. If we had a continual fellowship with Him, holiness would come easily to us.

*"Lord, look at that woman," we might say.*

*"Johnny, be careful."*

*"Yes, Lord. Thank You for reminding me, but she is beautiful."*

He won't forbid me to say that she is beautiful. But because we are talking continually, He keeps me from going any further. Remember, we can lust with our eyes as well as with our bodies.

Perhaps you say, "Brother Ortiz, how do you know that Jesus speaks to you? It can be the flesh that speaks to us, or it can be Satan."

Listen. If we don't know this, then we know nothing; because those who are led by the Spirit, those are the sons of God.

The Lord promised, "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My ways." And Jesus said, "The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth — He will teach you all things."

If it isn't as clear as clear can be how He talks to us, His promises are meaningless.