

Introduction: There are great differences between following a religion and pursuing a relationship with God. This study is focused on nurturing and growing in your relationship with God.

## **In the Secret** - The Spiritual Discipline of Secrecy

1. Living our life first and foremost before God: Abstaining from causing our good deeds and qualities to be known.
  - Tame our hunger for fame, justification or just the attention of others.
  - Thomas a Kempis: "There is a great 'tranquility of heart' that comes to those who rise above 'praisings and blamings.'"
  - Dallas Willard - "The frantic efforts of religious people and groups to advertise and certify themselves is a stunning revelation of their lack of substance and faith."
  - Secrecy at its best teaches love and humility before God and others (Philippians 2:3).
2. Secret place of 'doing' with only God knowing and seeing – Praying, giving, fasting...
  - In Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus speaks about this important aspect of believing life: '*When you do good deeds... when you give... when you pray... when you fast...*'
  - Don't do it for the audience of people, but... for your Father... *who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*
  - Secret place of prayer where only God knows.

## **God Invites us to His Secret Place**

1. *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust. ~ Psalm 91:1-2*
  - This is a place of habitation, protection, covering, a place of refuge, safety, deliverance...
  - *In the time of trouble; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me. ~ Psalm 27:5*
  - *You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence. ~ Psalm 31:20*
  - This is not necessarily a 'taking out of,' but a 'surrounding' in the *midst* of.
2. Helps in developing your own 'secret place' with God.
  - Talk with Him, in prayer and fellowship. Live in the awareness of His presence.
  - Consistently 'feed on His Word' in Bible reading and study.
  - Live a life of thanksgiving and worship before Him.

## **The Secret Place with God** – Place of Relationship and Devotion

1. Relationship
  - Experiencing God's presence in every area and dimension of our life.
  - Listening and hearing God's words of love, acceptance, approval, forgiveness...
  - Enjoying the peace, joy, beauty, love of life and love of other people – (Psalm 8)
  - Listening, hearing and responding to His direction, shaping and correction...
2. Devotion – Results of Living a Life of Worship and Prayer
  - God's 'treasures' and 'riches' -
    - *I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of **secret** places, that you may know that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel (Isa 45:3).*
3. Place
  - Primarily not a physical place, but a place of relationship and devotion.
  - There can also be physical places where you 'meet with God.'