

How God Fills Us Up at Low Points of Life: Session 2

By Jill Briscoe

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... [audio continues sometime after the official start of session] Lord high and lifted up. And he heard, Holy, Holy, Holy. I saw the Lord. He said, I saw the Lord. Secondly, he said, When I saw the Lord, I saw myself. And basically speaking, I want to give you a frame to think of all this in at this moment. You know I talked about the still small voice. This is poetic. This is using a picture. But what do I mean? When I talk about having time with God, when we talk about quiet time, when we talk about prayer, what am I talking about? Well, I'm talking about having a time in your room, whether you're standing, sitting, lying flat on your face, kneeling matters not. When you can finish it and say, I saw the Lord, and because I saw something of God, I saw something of myself. Now, if those two things don't happen in your quiet time, you're not having a proper time with God. You're probably having a very quiet time. Nothing's happening.

You need a noisy time. Let's rename it, shall we? We're going to have a noisy time. What has God said? Now, it doesn't mean that he's going to say something he hasn't said before. Don't think God hasn't spoken to you because you've not learnt anything new. As a mother, I spent my life with my three kids telling them things I told them before. Every day, 25 times a day. Didn't mean it wasn't important. And God is our Father. We are his children. And it might be that he's telling you again. Every day the same thing. Well, listen then. Learn it. And some people quit having quiet times or never get into it simply because they're expecting to hear something new, something I didn't know. Well, maybe your heavenly daddy is saying the same thing he's been saying to you since you were two years old in Christ.

And as soon as you listen and hear and start and be obedient, you can say the next thing that might be new. There's a lovely verse in the New Testament that says New Testament scribes or prophets or teachers bring out of the treasure or their treasure, the Scriptures, things that are old and things that are new. And I think it's Phillips that says, renders that things that are familiar and things that are fresh. And I love that. And I've thought of that so much because when I finish my quiet time, I sort of get up and I say something familiar, Lord, oh, what a blessing or something so fresh Lord, never heard that before. Something so new, what a blessing. And so sometimes we think, Well, we have not a very good quiet time because it's just the same old stuff. I mean, how many times have I read this? Open up. Undress yourself.

Lord, is this verse saying something to this naked soul of mine it needs to dress itself with? Something familiar or something fresh? I saw the Lord. But when you do that, and God just does it for you, you'll see yourself, it'll be in light of what you learn of God, that you learn something new about yourself or something familiar about yourself that you knew all the time. And you need to be reminded of, like my kids need to be reminded. Pick up your room, pick up your room, pick up your room. 18 years of that three times through to pick up your room didn't mean it needed to be said. And they learnt something familiar about themselves every day of their lives because of what I was telling them. Just the other day, I was about to go out and teach a Bible class at church, and I was late and we live about half an hour away from the church now we moved out to country area. So, it really needs at least three quarters of an hour for me to get there in good time. And I was ready to go. I was in good time.

And we have a prayer calendar with photographs of people and I turned it over. My husband wasn't there that morning and realized that there was a very special missionary that was on that prayer calendar and the photo was there. And as my habit is, I usually pray some scripture for these people. And I was in the Psalms in my devotional time. And so I got into this Psalm just briefly. Looked at the photograph and I came across that first. All the days that you created were ordained for me. And all the stuff you do on those days that I have picked out for you is like God writing on a clean page, basically. And it gave me such a picture of God sitting in heaven in his heavenly study with a clean page. And at the top he put Jill Briscoe October the 11th, and he picked up his pen because this was a day he'd ordained for me. He counted it out.

It's a very important day, very important day. And so his pencil was poised and I knew that what I was going to be written all over that clean white page that day. What I said was going to be written all over that clean white page today. And that that was very important. And I was so overwhelmed with that. Totally overwhelmed. I was about 20 minutes late. And don't ask me why. I don't know where I went to, but I was so overwhelmed with the privilege and responsibility of that ordained. Now it was a Thursday. It wasn't Sunday. It was an ordinary jolly old ordinary Thursday. No, no, there are no jolly old ordinary Thursdays. Every day, if you like, like today is an ordained day! And God is sitting in heaven and how he does it, he can only do it because he's God with his pencil poised, looking at you. And he's saying, I'm ready, I'm ready, I'm ready. What am I going to write? Because this is an ordained day. Ordained means set aside, sanctified.

God has laid his hands on this day. And he's waiting to write. And that's what I mean now. It was a familiar thought, but that was a fresh look at it. And it gave me a view of myself I hadn't quite seen before. I sort of work between Sundays or speaking engagements there ordained days. This is an ordained day because of what I'm doing. But the day getting here was just as much of an ordained day as today. I saw the Lord. I saw myself and the reaction was, Woe is me. Do you want to know about humility? Is that why so many of you came? I'm so glad that says something to me about Biola students. Not too many people want to know how to be humble. It's very simple. If you don't want to say wow is me. Say Woe is me.

And how do you get to say Woe is me by saying wow as him. That's where it starts. Wow, God! You know I heard about a little boy the other day and I love this story. I know I'm going to use it all around the world. Because I just think about it all the time. True story. It was in a secular magazine, I think on a plane or something. My husband read it and shared it with me. He's using it. I'm using it. And this is a boy who was in the park in New York. They do have parks in New York. Beautiful park and lovely flowers and tulips that was in the spring. And this little tiny boy was walking along with his parents. And he sort of lagged behind. And as I caught God's beautiful tulips and the parents went on a bit and realized he wasn't there. And they turned around and they came back.

Come on, Johnny. And he didn't listen to them. And they came back and stood behind him. And he was totally absorbed with this tulip. In his little hands were around the tulip. And he said, Well done, God. I love it! I just love it! I have this vision of this five year old with eyes to see them. He gave us eyes to see them and lips that we might tell. How great is God, our Father, who

has made all things well. Four year old, well done, God. Boy, God's done this well. I heard another story. Colleen Thompson told me she's in Washington pastor's wife, big Presbyterian church there. And as she was riding along in this car with a black preacher, the black preacher saw a black policeman that he knew downtown Washington and he was going on his break. And so they stopped the car and the black policeman got in. And this black policeman is a new believer.

Marvelous. And it was Washington in the spring. And if you've been to Washington, the spring, is there anything quite like all those beautiful flowers we see on television all over the country in Washington spring. And this black policeman in the joy of his new faith, wound down the window and shook his fist a God and said right out loud, out the window, you're such a show off, God. You're such a show off. And I love it! I love it! It's that exuberant worship. Well done, God. Well done. How much of that is there in your heart when you see God and you see what He's made, you take time to smell the flowers, bend over the tulip, say, well done, God? How great is God Almighty? Then you see yourself.

Oh, boy. Then you see yourself and you say, wow is me. I live in the midst of a people of unclean lips. And what's more, my lips are pretty unclean themselves. And, oh, what a miracle verse that is to me when you think about it. What of Isaiah would you say represented his gift. What was his gift? Profit, power, excellence, incredible head and shoulders, I think in his poetry and his use of language above all the other prophets. Now, what did he say when I saw God, I saw how dirty my lips were.

Now I could have understood it if he said, dirty hands, dirty heart, dirty mind. But he didn't. He said, dirty lips. That was the thing he was best at. And if you go into your quiet time and you come out not saying woe is me about the things you're good at, you haven't met with God. You haven't seen the Lord high and lifted up above your situation. You haven't said, well done, God. You're such a show off because you haven't seen yourself in relation to all of that.

And God sent an angel with a coal off the altar to touch his lips. So this has cleansed your lips. This has cleansed your lips. These are the original hot lips of the Bible. Didn't know. Thought Alan Alda thought of those, didn't you? God will only touch your lips if you want to use the picture and the analogy. He'll only make them hot and give them messages that will burn people up or sear into people's hearts.

If you've had that experience in your quiet time, daily, daily, daily. If you're not a daily disciple, you're not a disciple at all. You got to get a vision of God, then you're going to certainly have a vision of yourself. And that will keep you humble. And if God doesn't see you humbling yourself and you humble yourself simply. This is very simple message, folks. If you don't have time with God, then you can't stay humble. And if you do not stay humble, God will take it on his own initiative to humble you. And I want to tell you from experience, it's a lot easier to humble yourself than have God humble you. I remember one time quite early on in my Christian life when I got very proud. I wanted to sit on this platform. It's the only time before or since ever, I've wanted to sit in a platform.

I wanted to sit there for different reasons, which I won't go into all wrong. My husband was the speaker. That was one reason I wanted to sit up there. We just got engaged. I was so proud of him. I was so glad about our love, and I wanted to share it with the world. So I wanted to be on the platform. But there's a side where we got in the platform and I wasn't at his side, I was down this end. He was up there. But that was all right. I was on the platform and for many other wrong reasons, I found that my heart was lifted up. And I knew the Bible said, Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, or God will humble you.

And I thought, but there's nothing I can do. I mean, what you do. Humble, humble, humble, you know. I mean, it wouldn't do it. I mean, what are we talking about here? So because I was very immature. I didn't know, I guess. And maybe now I'm mature. I don't know too much more about it. But I knew that I was proud and it was just funny. It was just as if I was in a car going towards a cliff and there was nothing I could do about it.

And so I just gave up trying to humble myself and thought, Well, I'll wait for the crash, which came, of course. Because I was proud, I was out of touch with the Lord. The offering time came, and, you know, they had those big buckets. This was at a youth Christ rally and a great big auditorium in Liverpool, England, and they started passing these buckets, these plastic buckets, and they passed them along here while, I put my hand in my pocket and I didn't have any money. Stuart was at the other end. I couldn't borrow from him. And so I told a lie. I put my hand in my empty pocket and I pretended to put something in the bucket.

What I didn't know was there was nothing in the bucket. The young man taking the offering looked in the bucket. Nothing there. So what you do when you start on this slippery slope, you tell another lie. If you're like me, I told another lie. Oh, I said, as if it had fallen on the floor. The young man got down on his knees to look for it. Now I knew there was nothing there to look for.

And I kept sort of hissing at him, Go on, go on, go on which he didn't. He was looking for my offering. So I got down on my knees to look for what I knew wasn't there. And we sort of met under the chair, and I sort of hissed to him, go on, go on, go on. Well, by the time I got up, I could see my husband looking at me saying, what is she doing in front of all these people groveling around on the floor at the offering time? This woman that I got engaged to. I got my doubts about this one.

As I sat down again, embarrassed, humiliated, God said to me, Now, then, Jill, after this is over, you will go and find that young man, and you will tell him you told a lie. And I said, oh, God, I couldn't do that. I mean, he'd be so disappointed in me. I'm the Christian fiancé of the speaker. He wouldn't expect that sort of behavior. And I wouldn't like to destroy his Christian faith, Lord. And so we began having this little parley together. And I tell you, I don't know what my husband preached on because I was so challenged by the fact that I had to do what I knew I had to do. And afterwards I did find that young man. He was 17 years of age. And I could take you to the place behind that curtain where I confess that to that young man. And talk about being humbled. And I could tell you what he said to me, which I'm not going to. It was just between him and me. It was a rebuke from God that I will never forget. And God dealt with me through a 17 year old,

in touch, disciple of Jesus Christ. So could I give you a personal piece of advice? Humble yourself. It's a lot easier than letting God humble you. Vision of God, a vision of yourself which will give you a vision of your world. Here am I send Aaron. That's what Moses said, Here am I said, Isaiah, send me. And you'll never say that. You'll always say, here am I, send someone else. If you have had a true time with God, you will come out of it saying, okay, here am I, send me. And God will say to you, Great, we've had a neat time together here. You're all humbled you're already. You've seen me high and lifted up above your situation. Now go and tell this people.

And I can just hear Isaiah saying, oh, no, not this people. What about that people? I mean, he'd been telling this people for six chapters and they haven't listened. They got hard hearts, deaf ears, blind eyes. And unless you know what it is to meet with God and get bigger every day inside, unless you know about that, you will never be able to go and tell this people because this people represent the same old people that aren't listening to you, that aren't seeing the things you want them to see. Those people. And this people will be different for each one of you.

And I well remember being a young missionary mom, full time work husband on the road for months and months on end, locked up to three small children saying, oh, I wish I could get up to that headquarters. Lord, you know love young people. You know that's where I need to be. And here I am in this little tiny English cottage at this headquarters with three small children under school age. Use me, Lord. Here am I. Send me. And God said, Well, go and tell this people. I thought all the teenagers, is that it? And he said, no, this people, because the mission appears between your own two feet.

You start where you are with what you've got, not what you wish you'd have or wish you could be. And this people, for me was little old ladies. Now I was 23, 24. I did not intend to have a ministry to little old ladies till I was a little old lady like now, then I would have a ministry to little old ladies. But God, don't you know I'm young? Don't you know that you gave me these gifts and it's hard for kids. What am I going to do with my little neighbors who are all living in these little rose covered cottages? And he said, Go and tell this people. To cut a long story short, I went with my three children, one in a pram, one in a push chair and the other one walking.

And we began knocking on doors. And in the end, after a long, long time, I got three little old ladies to come to my Bible study and believe it or not, one was blind, one was deaf and one had heart trouble. And this was the passage God took me to. He said, this is this people, Jill, you said, here am I send me. I've sent you. I said, this people, Lord, one's blind, one's deaf and one's got a calloused heart. Yes, this people. Well, the one with the calloused heart went to be hopefully with God very shortly afterwards.

That left me two. A blind lady and a deaf lady. The blind lady get this wouldn't come out at night. I've never understood that. Still trying to work it out. But that was her excuse. So she dropped out. Which left me, guess what with the deaf lady. And I remember sitting there saying, Is this missionary work? I mean is this what we gave up, an incredible career? Stuart gave up in the bank as a top bank examiner. Is this it? I gave my teaching up. All that stuff that God had gifted me with in my background.

Is this it? One little deaf old lady? Go and tell this people here, am I send me this is her. So I screamed into her ear Bible verses for about three months. It's absolutely ridiculous. Lord, she's not even hearing me. And one day her little eyes lit up. And I don't know what it was that God alerted her to. But she came to Christ. And the next day she brought her friend. And the next day they brought two friends. And I ended up with 80 little old ladies all over 70. We had to take all the furniture out of our room because we had a little tiny house. Every single time I would go and gather them and bring them in. And then one day one of them said to me, Wish our daughters could hear you. I said, Bring them so they did.

Now they were between 40 and 50 years of age. So we were moving in the right direction, if you see what I mean. So for another two years, God called me to minister to middle-aged ladies, which I didn't want to do because I wanted to minister youth. And when I was a middle aged lady, I'd do it. But this was my this people. And in the end, about four years later, when God would give me a love for little old ladies and a love for all the rest. And I was willing to do it and didn't care about the kids anymore.

One of them said to me, I wish our daughters could hear you. And I said, Bring them along. And God gave me my kids in that whole valley and a revival broke out. But not until I'd been faithful with one little deaf lady. And I couldn't have done it if I hadn't been on my knees and seen God high and lifted up above my situation and had a vision of myself and let God touch my lips with a coal from his altar. And that's what it's going to take. It's going to take sacrifice and cost to scream into that little deaf lady's ear. Bible verses that I did believe could change her life.

I didn't have too much faith in it, but I believed. And through that one little deaf lady, the whole valley came to hear about Christ. It all depends what happens in your quiet time. Because unless you are reduced, God can never be expanded in other people's vision and humility is really just seeing your size, you see. And also this dust business, that's all we are. Just dust ladies and dust gentlemen, men and women, boys and girls. But dignified by divinity.

That's what makes the difference. And talk about humbling. You mean you want to live in me? I remember lying in that hospital bed saying, all of God in all of me? Me? Yeah, all of God in all of you. That is humbling. And if you want to stay humble, get a good look at God. He'll give you a good look at yourself. Now then we've time for ten minutes or so questions if there are any. And if there aren't, we'll dismiss. Yes, I need my glasses. Is that a hand? No. Any question?

Yes, I love it. Well, now, after 20 years here, I can answer you without blushing, I suppose. And there's nothing to blush about. We met. I got involved in street ministry as a young teacher straight out of college in Liverpool, back into Liverpool and got this mob of street kids around. Didn't know what to do with them. No church would have them in their doors. Somebody told me about a youth center called Cape and Ray Hall, where Major Ian Thomas ministers. I never, you know I was three months old in Christ at this point.

And so I packed this mob of street kids up and took them to the Lake District English Lake District, where there's this big castle, which is a youth center. And Stuart had been involved with that work as a lay person. He comes from very different background from me. He's churched over his head. He'd had it Lord with the church when he was about seven onwards. But he was

very tightly brought up. And of course, I wasn't ever in a church. But when Stuart needed to see something with life, he found this work and it was his salvation, really as an adult. And so he was there helping them in every spare moment. And as soon as I got there, I got asked to leave because I can't remember what they did. They destroyed something before they were in their rooms.

And Major Thomas, who I never met, came along and said, Get these ruffians out of here. They don't belong here. Take them to the rescue mission or something other. And I said to him, in the words of Scripture, sir, you have the words of eternal life. Where am I going to take them to? I was told that you knew what to do with kids. I don't. I've got them here. Now it's up to you to do something with them. And we had this great argument. This is how I met my future boss on the steps with all this leather jacketed, longhaired kids sitting there round waiting to see whether they'd be allowed to stay or not. Well, he did it bless his heart allow us to stay.

And as my husband watched this poor British school teacher struggling with this mob of unbelievably, bad, gorgeous kids, nobody thought they were gorgeous but me. But I did. I think he thought she really needs some help. At least I think that's what he thought. And so that's where we met. Very romantic. Another question? Yes.

When my husband came to know the Lord at the age of five in a Plymouth Brethren home, which is a very, very conservative group of people. He always likes to say that he and his brother were the Sunday school until they grew up and became the youth group. It's one of those churches. And that's how it was. Very tight, very very restrictive, not even sports, no sports

allowed because they weren't Godly. And so it was very, very difficult background for him. And he came to know the Lord. His mother led him to Christ at the age of five. Then I came to know the Lord as a student when I was at Homerton College, Cambridge, as a teacher, learning to be a teacher. And just about to be asked to leave college, I just was not making it in behavior, in grades, in anything. And I got sick, was taken into hospital and it was the girl in the next bed that led me to Christ and sent me out to finish my teaching and turned things around. So it's been a long time. It's been wonderful time.

Yes. A couple more questions. Yes, through my teaching. I just couldn't do anything with them in the classroom. They would, I'd go into a classroom and they'd all be sitting with their backs towards me, leather jackets, chains, you know and I'd say, Come on, kids turn around. Time to go and nobody would move. And I'd do everything you know how to do as a downtown teacher. And one of them might turn around with a knife out and say, We're not having any classes today, Miss. And I'd say, oh, no, my joke. Haha. Grateful for my drama training. And it was realizing that unless I won them to myself, I'd never win them to the Lord that took me out literally on the streets looking for them at night. And I just got a burst and went down looking for them in Lime Street, Liverpool one night and fell in the Providence of God into a ministry. I had no idea what was going to happen, but I found them. I mean, they weren't pleased that I'd gone and found them, but God turned it around. So I got involved in the street ministry, basically because I couldn't do anything in the classroom.

And until I had won a handful of those kids to like me, therefore they would listen to me and I won them to Christ. There was no way I could have continued even teaching in that area. So it was through frustration and failure in my teaching assignment that I fell into the street work.

Yes. I think it's against the odds. I'm writing four at the time. I write four books. Now that sounds really clever, but it really isn't. It's just stupid. But that's what I do. And so the latest one that's just come out is with my daughter. We wrote it together and it's on the life of Hager and Ishmael a single parent, the single parent child. She's just finished a PhD in psychology, and her work has been with the children of divorce. So we take the story of Hager and Ishmael a single parent and a single parent child, and we apply it. And that's my most recent book and the most fun book, because I was working with Judy, and that was real treat. One more. Last one.

Yes. Oh, wow. What's the hardest thing I ever had to go through? And how did I come through it? I must be a child of God's good fortune. Probably doing without my husband's presence for ten years. He was on the road ten months of each year for ten years. I want to be careful what I say here. That was certainly the hardest thing, but there is no way I could be talking to you today unless I gone through that. I mean, there's absolutely no way. God, I was so selfish. I was so self centered. I was such a pampered rich little girl. And what God needed to do was make me a poor little poverty string nothing and show me myself and how he did it was by doing that by literally taking a man in whom I probably would have lost my identity if he'd been there. He's very strong. He's very very charismatic in the right sense of every sense. God's driven servant. And if he hadn't been around, I would have got totally overwhelmed, lost my total identity. And what

God was doing was preparing me for what I didn't know was ahead in the ministry that he's given me.

So, I have to look back and say, Well, I don't even know if I dare say this. I'm glad it's over, because it isn't. He's in South Africa today. He flies to South Africa, and I'm here. So I'm hoping in these last ten years that we have of 15 years, whatever God's given us, our last third, which we're in, that we can be together. But I don't know yet. So I think that's the hardest thing is we are together. He often calls me from the other end of the world. I'm with you, Jill. Well, he isn't, but he is. Because as for me, in my house, we will serve the Lord. We said that a long time ago and for us to serve the Lord because we have similar gifts. And that's very unusual. Usually you don't have a couple with the same gifts. And when you do, it sort of involves a little bit different way of doing things. And that's what it had to be for us. But it's all joy. What a joy. And what a privilege. So, that's probably the hardest thing. It's not very hard, is it? Okay, folks. You're dismissed. Thank you for a good hearing.