

Come to the Banquet

creative quiet time with God

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago I was struggling with some anxiety about challenges in my life. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't focus on daily tasks, and I was consumed with worry about the future. I had always been faithful to spend time with God in the morning, reading His word, meditating on Scripture and writing in my journal, but even that was feeling flat. I needed a way to regain control of my thoughts and to restore joy to my time alone with God.

As I sat at my desk one morning before dawn, doodling aimlessly and letting my thoughts wander while reading my Bible, I came across Psalm 108:1; *"My heart is steadfast, O God; I will sing, I will sing praises, even with my soul."* I remember having the thought, "I wonder what soul praise looks like?" On a whim, I typed the word *praise* into my internet search bar and started scanning through the images that popped up. I came across a picture of a flower that made me pause. It was a beautiful photo of a fragile, bright pink blossom unfurled in all its glory. As I studied the image, I thought about how this particular flower was exposing its innermost vulnerable part of itself to the sun for nourishment. And it clicked! Here was a picture of what it looked like to praise God with my soul! Baring my deepest self to His light, seeking the nourishment of the Son; trusting Him for my sustenance and radiating all the glory of His creation. I continued to stare at the picture, mesmerized. Then, slowly I began to write. I wrote and wrote that morning; inspired by the photo. Thus began my new approach to time with God!



As I employed this concept of using images in my quiet time, I began to spend more time with God, going deeper in His word and experiencing more intimacy in my prayers and meditations. I began to verbalize what the images were showing me through poetry, anagrams, writing my own psalms, etc. God became more real to me, through the use of ALL my senses; sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell.

As I continued this process, it occurred to me that it was like sitting at a feast; a banquet that God had spread before me of which I was invited to partake. The story of Matthew 22 came to mind, where a king invited all his subjects to a wedding feast for his son, but no one would come. So he sent his servants out to find people. He told them, *"go to the street corners and invite everyone you can find to come to the banquet,"* (Matthew 22:9). And I knew that this was what God was telling me to do. He wanted me to share the invitation to the banquet with everyone I knew; to teach this method to others.

And so, *Come to the Banquet* is an invitation to experience all that God has to offer us through our senses; to "taste and see that the Lord is good". If you're feeling like your relationship with God has been a little dry, and you long for a more vibrant, personal, intimate time with Him every day, then this notebook is for you. Come to the banquet and discover what God wants to say to you!

Karen