

Jesus is Calling

On the Devotionals Written by Sarah Young
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“Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke on you and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Jesus, Mt. 11:28-30

I highly recommend [Sarah Young’s](#) devotional books including JESUS CALLING and JESUS TODAY, as part of developing the intimacy with Christ that we all so desperately need.

Intimacy

The intimacy theme dominates Young’s writing. In fact, after reading her for a while I found myself thinking, “Why doesn’t she ever talk about something else?” I had read Oswald Chambers’ devotionals for years and was blessed by his writing, and now it felt like something was missing. A few days later it hit me like a brick. “Wait a minute, how arrogant of me. If we have intimacy with Jesus what else could we need?” Would you challenge that?

You see, it is that intimacy which reveals the Person of Jesus and the life He offers. It interprets and applies His words and other scriptures in a way that we will otherwise miss. It connects us to the purpose and the power of God and becomes the door through which His life flows into us.

This intimacy gives the “seeing” of [John 5:19](#); the trustworthy judgment of [5:30](#); the “bread” of [6:35](#); the “rivers of living water” of [7:37-38](#); and the abundant life of [John 10:9-10](#). It is part of the mystery of the ages,” which is the “Christ in me the hope of glory” of [Col. 1:26-27](#). Read it!

Read [John 14:20-23](#) and note how intimate He can be with us. Is there a condition to that?

Knowing Jesus

In John 17:3 Jesus said, “This is everlasting life: that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ.”

However, it is a lethal mistake to assume that we know Jesus because we have head knowledge of the scriptures. Spiritual vitality is more a matter of heart than of mind. An emphasis on “knowledge” and on correct doctrine is spiritually sterile, and even arrogant as in [I Cor. 8:1-2](#).

In John 5:39-40 Jesus said this to those who value head knowledge over a heart relationship: “You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and these same scriptures testify concerning me, and you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.”

Those whom I respect the most highly are not the ones with a quick answer for every question and a proof-text for every challenge. In [John 5:43-44](#) Jesus spoke of those who like to impress others with their intellectual and theological prowess. They are so different from the [I Cor. 2:1-8](#) model.

Rather, I respect those who have a simple but vibrant belief in and love for their Lord Jesus, and who actively seek Him and follow Him in life.

They are the ones who come to Jesus in the way He spoke of in Mt. 18:3-4, “Truly I say to you, unless you repent and become like little children, you will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 So whoever humbles himself like this little child, the same person is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

“Higher education” and scholarly pursuits are part of God’s calling for some, and they are helpful among us if their fruit points us to Jesus. However, Paul speaks to that in [Philip. 3:1-11](#) and they do well to learn from him. And [I Cor. 1:18-25](#) puts some things in perspective.

Paul’s prayer for us in [Eph. 3:14-19](#) speaks of knowing God’s love in a way that surpasses knowledge. This is something that happens in the inner man and certainly it can only come through intimacy with God. It can’t be a “head” thing!

Sarah Young

Sarah Young holds a Masters Degree in Biblical Studies, but her writing is profoundly shaped by a rich devotion to Jesus that has been formed through deep physical trials, years of missionary work, and the counseling of terribly abused women. She writes out of intimacy with Jesus.

A reluctance to acknowledge the ongoing active and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit often accompanies the intellectual approach to knowing Christ, even though the “Spirit” is the spirit of Jesus Himself. ([Acts 16:6-7](#), [Philip. 1:19](#)) That reluctance is a serious handicap for believers.

[I Cor. 12](#) speaks of the active work of the Holy Spirit and His various and diverse gifts and expressions through the members of the Body of Christ. Consider [I Cor. 14:26](#).

What did Jesus mean in John 4:24 when He said “God is a Spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”? Doesn’t that imply an interactive “spirit” element in worship, and confirm that we commune with Him spirit to Spirit? And why would we think of that as being one-way, i.e. us talking to Him?

Note that in [John 15:15](#) Jesus says we are His friends and that He tells us things. Don’t friends talk with each other, and don’t we listen carefully to one who is a true and trusted friend?

Some are offended that Sarah Young writes in first-person, that is, as though Jesus were speaking to her. But why does it seem strange or inappropriate that those who meditate on the Word, contemplate Jesus, and sit quietly and listen for His voice, could write down things He says to them? It can be in times of need or simply when we are drawn to worship the Jesus of [Heb. 1, 9:11-14, 10:11-14](#), and [Rev. 22](#). Do that!

Young is obviously Spirit-filled but she doesn’t write from a “Charismatic” slant, i.e. where she might say that these are prophetic type messages to her for the Church. Rather, they are simply words that Jesus has spoken to her and which she has recorded for our encouragement.

She makes it very clear that these are thoughts that come to her and they do not have the weight of scripture. And she urges us to subject what she writes, to the test of scripture.

Many dogmatic preachers and authors who reject Young’s writing would want us to believe that their sermons and books represent words that God would have them say to us. How different is that except they’re not using first-person? Don’t they represent themselves to be speaking “truth,” maybe even more than Young does?

Conclusion

Only those who have intimacy with Jesus will do well through the challenges that most Christians (at least secretly) know are coming. The writings of Sarah Young are among the resources that serve us well. She writes in a somewhat feminine tone which can so effectively connect with the tender part inside each of us.

If you want a more masculine tenor I recommend Oswald Chambers’ MY UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST. I’ve never read anyone who understands the heart of God and the fleshly instincts of man, and is able to bring them together as Chambers does. He will lay bare your pride and your compulsion toward self-rule as few others can. Actually, *quite* masculine!

Here’s where Chambers and Young meet. They both point us to Jesus but emphasize that we must let go of our own “way” in order to know Him and the Life He offers. It’s the [Luke 9:23-26](#) thing.

However, Young’s approach is more from the close, warm, “abiding” side, and Chambers more from the obedience side, of [John 15:4-11](#). Read it.

You can read Chambers [online](#), or buy the books of either author very reasonably, and apps are available for your iphone or computer. Do one or the other, or something else - - but let’s get off our spiritual duffs and do *something*!

In difficult times nothing is more important than being able to hear God and follow His leading, and that could mean something very different from what we previously imagined. Probably something other than accumulating guns and gold.

Jesus is calling and it’s time for us to listen. If you still doubt, please read [I Cor. 2:9-16](#) .

[John 7:37-39](#) - [Heb. 12:1-3](#) - [I Peter 2:1-10](#)

[Interview](#) with Sarah Young.

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Ken Stoltzfus, Aug. 5, 2016
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