

# INTRODUCTION

*Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt  
bountifully with you.*

Psalm 116:7

Weariness is written on our faces. We can't quite put our finger on it, but comments like, "I am so stressed out," and, "I'm so busy I don't know which end is up anymore," are heard every day. Always running, working, doing, learning, practicing, achieving, moving, climbing, pushing, thinking . . . we are plagued with a nagging feeling that something has been left undone.

Modern technology with the promise of a better life has thrown us into a tailspin. Constantly bombarded with high tech noise, we face choices so vast they overwhelm us. Our personal computers take us across the world in seconds, our televisions offer hundreds of channels, and even our cars have become offices from which we conduct the business of life over cellular phones. Yet, the unprecedented rate of change insists that we must run with the pack or be forever lost in the dusty dreams of simpler times.

Into all this commotion, God beckons, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10, KJV). But can we hear Him? When we stop for a break, can we slow the pace of our minds enough to enjoy His gentle presence? Or is our faith just one more contribution to the cacophony of causes that demand our attention?

In truth, our only hope in this changing world is God who does not change. He is not taken off guard by the strides of science or the growth of technology. They are like clothes that wear out to Him. "Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end" (Psalm 102:26–27, NIV).

This is God's perspective, but we struggle to internalize it. Many Christians long for a simpler faith—a deeper walk with God in the midst of the chaos we call life. Perhaps you do, too.

Are you:

- Hungry for a fresh touch from God?
- Weary of always running but never seeming to catch up?
- Well-equipped with knowledge about God but short on *knowing* Him?

Do you:

- Desire to slow down the pace of your busy life and be quiet in God's presence?
- Crave greater intimacy with God?
- Try to spend time in prayer but find yourself distracted or bored?
- Wish you could experience a new fervor in your pursuit of God?

If so, I want to invite you to join me on a life-changing journey in the presence of the living God. Today, this very moment, He bids you come and sit at His feet where you can experience reflection in place of restlessness, meditation instead of mindless activity, quiet in the midst of clamor, and waiting on Him rather than running about. This book calls you to the only kind of prayer that can create balance in the busyness of life.

Perhaps you aren't familiar with the term "contemplative prayer." It is an ancient term for a form of prayer that has been almost lost to the modern world. Very simply, contemplative prayer is communing with God through quiet moments of meditation, listening, and reflecting on Him. It is our re-

sponse to God's call to "be still, and know."

This is called the "inner prayer journey" because instead of rushing into prayer with an agenda or grocery list of requests, we quiet our souls until God can speak and we are able to hear His gentle voice. His Word breathes new life into our spiritual walk as we let *Him* write its truths on our heart. We enter a love affair with the God of the universe.

My prayer is that this book will help you begin the journey and provide the tools needed to make contemplative prayer familiar and meaningful. As you peruse the pages and practice its truths, may you become the *soul at rest*.