

The Seventh Dwelling Places

Chapter 3 (summary)

Interior Castle

Saint Teresa of Avila

Deals with the wonderful effects of this prayer that was mentioned. It is necessary to pay attention and heed these effects, for the difference between them and the previous ones is remarkable.

... This little butterfly has already died, with supreme happiness ... because Christ lives in it. Let us see ... how this life differs from the life it was living ... The **effects** are the following.

2. The **first effect** is **forgetfulness of self** ... The soul does not know or recall that there will be heaven or life or honor for it. It employs all it has in procuring the **honor of God**.

The words His Majesty spoke to her produced the **deed** in her ... that she look after what is His and that He would look after what is hers ...

The soul experiences strange forgetfulness ... It no longer would want to be anything in anything, except when it understands that ... from itself something could **increase** the **honor** and **glory** of God even one degree. For this purpose the soul would gladly lay down its life.

3. Don't think, daughters, that a person fails to remember to eat and sleep ... and do all he is obliged to in conformity with his state in life...

The soul's pain lies in seeing that what it can do by its **own efforts** amounts to **nothing**. For no earthly thing would it fail to do all it can ... for the **service of God**.

4. The **second effect** is the soul's great **desire to suffer**... An **extreme desire** is left in these souls that **God's will** be done ... If He desires the soul suffer, well and good; if not, it doesn't kill itself as it used to.

5. These souls have a **deep interior joy** when **persecuted** ... and **no hostile feelings** ... Such a soul gains a love for its

persecutors ... that if it sees them in a trial it feels **compassion** and would take on any burden to free them...

These souls recommend their persecutors to God and would rejoice ... if He would bestow on them the favors granted them so they would no longer **offend God**.

6. These souls have experienced trials and afflictions in order to **die** so as to enjoy the Lord ... Yet they have just as great a desire to **serve Him** and that through them He be praised ...

They do not desire to die but to live many years **suffering** the greatest **trials** if ... the Lord will be **praised**, even in something small.

If they knew ... in leaving the body, the soul would enjoy God, they would not pay attention to that ...

They do not desire to be in glory. Their glory lies in helping the **Crucified**, especially seeing Him so **offended** and few there are ... who look after His **honor**.

7. Sometimes these things are forgotten and the loving desires to enjoy God and leave this exile return, especially when the soul sees how little it serves Him.

But it turns within and sees how continually it experiences His presence. It then offers His Majesty the **desire to live**, the most costly offering it can offer.

It has no more fear of death than it would of a gentle rapture ... May He be always blessed and praised.

8. These souls no longer desire **consolation** or **spiritual delight**, as the Lord is present with them; it is His Majesty who now lives...

There is a great **detachment** from everything and a desire to either be **alone** or occupied in something that will **benefit a soul**.

There are no **interior trials** or **dryness** but only a remembrance and tender love of our Lord.

When it becomes **distracted** the Lord awakens it ... This **impulse** comes from the **interior depths** of the soul and is

experienced most gently ... This experience is an ordinary and frequent one ... As fire does not shoot its flames downward but upward ... this interior movement proceeds from the **center of the soul** and **awakens the faculties**.

9. If there were no other **gain** in this **way of prayer** except to understand the **care** God has in **communicating** with us and in **beseeking** us to remain with Him ... it seems all the **trials** endured would be **worthwhile** for the sake of enjoying these **touches of His love**, so gentle and penetrating.

... When one has reached the **prayer of union** the Lord has this **concern** if we do not grow negligent in keeping His commandments.

When this **impulse** comes to you, ... from this **interior dwelling place** where God is in our soul, praise Him very much ...

That **note** is His, written with intense love ... He wants you alone to understand it and what He asks of you.

Do not fail to respond even though you may be occupied. For it will often happen that our Lord will want to grant you this **secret favor in public**, it is easy, since the response is interior, ... to make an **act of love**.

In many ways He will **teach** you what is pleasing to Him and the time ... He hears us, and this delicate touch, almost always disposes the soul to do what was said with a resolute will.

10. ... In this dwelling place ... there are **almost never** any experiences of **dryness** or **interior disturbance** present at times in all the other dwelling places. The soul is almost always in **quiet** ... wholly sure that the favor comes from God ...

The **faculties** and **senses** have nothing to do with what goes on in this dwelling place. His Majesty reveals Himself to the soul and brings it to Himself in that place where the devil will not dare enter, nor will the Lord allow him to enter. Nor does the Lord, in all the favors He grants the soul here, receive

any assistance from the soul itself, except ... in surrendering itself totally to God.

11. Every way the Lord helps the soul and all He teaches it takes place with such **quiet** ... that the work resembles the building of Solomon's temple where **no noise** was heard.

So in this temple of God, in this dwelling place, He and the soul **rejoice together** in the **deepest silence** ... In my opinion, the **faculties** are not lost here ... they remain as in **amazement**.

12. ... When the soul arrives here all the **raptures** are taken away. Only once in a while are they experienced but **without** the **transports** and **flight of the spirit** ... Nor do the great occasions of **devotion** cause the soul concern as before.

The **reason** could be that in this dwelling place either the soul has found its **repose** or seen so much that nothing **frightens** it; nor does it feel the **solitude** it did before since it enjoys such company.

In sum, Sisters, I don't know what the cause ... Perhaps His Majesty wished to make **known publicly** what He did with these souls in **secret** ... His judgments are beyond all that we can imagine here below.

13. These **effects** ... are given by God when He brings the soul to Himself with this kiss sought by the bride.

Here an **abundance of water** is given to this deer that was wounded. Here one delights in **God's tabernacle**. Here the dove Noah sent out to see if the storm was over finds the **olive branch** as a sign of firm ground discovered amid the floods and tempests of this world ...

In the end, people must always live with **fear** until You give them **true peace** and bring them where peace will be unending.

14. ... The more favored they are by His Majesty the more they are afraid of themselves. Through His grandeurs they have come to a greater knowledge of their miseries. Their sins become more serious to them.

They often go about like the publican not daring to raise their eyes. At other times they go about desiring to die so as to be safe; but with the love they have, soon they again want to live to serve Him.

They trust in His mercy. Sometimes the many favors make them feel devastated, for they fear that just as a heavily-charged ship sinks to the bottom, they will go down too.

15. I tell you, Sisters, that the cross is not wanting but it doesn't make them lose **peace**. For the storms pass quickly. The fair weather returns. Because of the **presence of the Lord** they soon forget everything. May He be ever blessed and praised by all His creatures, amen.