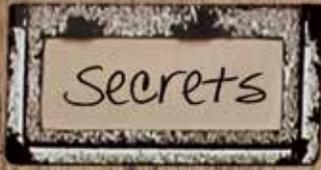


STUDY JOURNAL



SACRED SECRETS

A Living Proof Live Experience

BETH MOORE

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DEDICATION

To Paige Greene, my beloved friend and fellow sojourner, for believing God feverishly with me for this message. Jesus Christ alone could have fed the zeal we all still feel toward this long-lived partnership in serving women. I am crazy about you, Paige. May God keep our knees down, our faces up, and our hands reaching out.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Beth Moore is an author and Bible teacher of best-selling Bible studies and books for women. She is the founder of Living Proof Ministries and speaker at Living Proof Live women's events across the U.S. Beth's mission is to guide women everywhere into a richer, more fulfilling relationship with the Father.

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INTRODUCTION

When we shared the Living Proof Life event in Greensboro, I think we all grew wide-eyed with the sense that God was doing something important in our lives. After the experience, we jointly came to the conclusion that He desired to do a work broader than the walls of that arena. After significant confirmation from the Lord, the LifeWay team and I began working together to take this weekend teaching and create a space in it for you. You were in our hearts every step of the way, and we pray with everything in us that God will reveal Himself through the experience.

I believe God wants to do something deeper in a holy secrecy than can be contained in a weekend. We need time to study His Word and to digest the topic of sacred secrets. To do that, we first broke the event video into five sessions with some bonus segments so it can be used in a group. Then I've taken portions of the material in the weekend and sought to unpack them through several written elements.

The first thing you'll see through this volume is that it has the character of a journal. I do dearly love a new journal. Don't you? We've left you lots of room to talk with God through writing out your thoughts and what you sense the Holy Spirit teaching you. Then rather than a more traditional study, I've tried to give you short catalysts for thought, prayer, and action.

You'll find word studies on some of the terms in Scripture that revolve around the topic. You'll also find questions and a number of verses to stimulate your own study.

Will you humor me as I say that, through the video portion of this series, you will also find a wardrobe malfunction? I'm supposed to watch my video portions before I sign off on them to be published, but I can never make it through more than five minutes. I hate watching myself. When I viewed a few seconds of the opening session, my jaw dropped because my white jeans looked like leggings and my top looked like a short skirt. It somehow did not look that way in the hotel mirror. In case you stumble easily over wrong wardrobe choices, let me say before you ever push play on the video: No, those are not leggings. They're jeans. But I'm not wearing them again on tape. Laughing. But only a little.

My prayer is that you will go beyond what can be accomplished at an event and walk forward into a relationship with Christ that is exceedingly more intimate and rewarding. May God invite you to embrace a whole new journey with Him in the secret places where He longs for you to find Him.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'h'.

WEEK 1

THE THEOLOGY OF SECRECY

I hope you'll find great joy in these pages. We'll revisit some of the ideas we talked about in the video sessions, slowing down so you can take them apart and apply them. I'll be asking you some questions or adding some ideas for you to contemplate. And we'll dip into the rich well of the biblical terms God uses for *secret*.

Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament has a word that corresponds perfectly to the English word *secret*. Rather, we will see that the Bible uses a large number of descriptive terms that may be translated with one of the forms of the word *secret*. You'll find multiple translations very helpful in this regard. I highly recommend using a parallel Bible. One may translate a given word as *secret* while others use *hiding place*, *shelter*, *friend*, or *even treasure*. Please don't be put off or intimidated by this process. Once you get into the original meanings, I think you'll love the dimensions they bring to the concept. A great wealth will unfold before you as you delve into the biblical terms.

You'll note I've left you a great deal of room for your own thoughts. If you watch the video segments, you'll have heard plenty from my big mouth, but what is most vital is that you hear straight from God without any human interference. You'll do that best as you contemplate His Word and spend time with Him one-on-one. Make these pages your own. If my thoughts help, then praise God. If something doesn't connect, then go on to the next thing. This isn't intended to be as progressive as a normal study. I just want to supply you some truths to stimulate your time with the One who is Truth.

I wish I could be there with you face-to-face, but in some ways, as you'll soon discover, that would defeat the purpose. Instead we'll each walk into this journey seeking a glorious encounter with Jesus, the Lover of our souls and the Knower of our hearts.

THE THEOLOGY OF SECRECY

SECRET: What kind of _____ does that word have in you?

Every _____ word is good news.

The Theology of Secrecy: _____

Our triumphs and our defeats erupt from our _____.

Key verse: Psalm 51:6

“Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart” (Ps. 51:6).

Our prayer: Lord, You teach me wisdom in the secret.

Do you love the _____?

Secrets in Old Testament:	Secrets in the Gospels	Secrets from Acts to Revelation:
----- ----- -----		
Mostly _____	Mostly _____	Mostly _____

Point 1: There are _____ secrets and there are _____ secrets.

Video sessions available for purchase at
www.lifeway.com/sacredsecrets

Hebrew Word Study

The most commonly used Hebrew term for *secret* in the Old Testament is *çether* (סֵתֶר). The meanings of the word can include: “a cover” (in a good or a bad, a literal or a figurative sense), “covering,” “hiding place,” “shelter,” “protection,” or “secret place.”

A secret can be a wonderful or a terrible thing, and it can be an utterly beautiful thing. The following two verses illustrate the difference perfectly.

“The person who makes a carved idol or cast image, which is detestable to the LORD, the work of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret (*çether*, סֵתֶר) is cursed” (Deut. 27:15).

“You are my hiding place (*çether*, סֵתֶר);
You protect me from trouble.
You surround me with joyful shouts
of deliverance” (Ps. 32:7).

How would you explain that a secret, on the one hand, could be detestable to the Lord and, on the other hand, something He Himself could virtually embody?

Are you just a little bit relieved that God doesn't just destroy the concept of secrecy and leave us totally exposed? If yes, how so?

If you've heard the suggestion that everything you've ever done or thought would ultimately be shown to everyone, does God's endorsement of some kinds of secrecy encourage you just a bit? Explain.

Our basic thesis is that **secrets manifest**. Say those last two words several times out loud so they'll begin to go in your thoughts from pencil to permanent marker. We will see that the one way we can be absolutely certain something will show up outwardly is to take it into the secret part of our lives.

For starters, think about that principle in the human realm. In what ways do the things we so want to keep secret end up manifesting themselves anyway in one or more of the following areas of our lives? Let's really give these some thought:

How do secrets show up through physical results in our bodies?

How do secrets show up through our personal relationships?

How do secrets show up in our parenting?

How do secrets show up in our ability to trust people?

How do secrets show up in our ability to trust God?

Did you notice that one of the meanings of *çether* is shelter? How can a secret be either a shelter of protection or a shelter of darkness plaguing our lives and hiding us from the light?

Look at some of the other Old Testament passages using *çether* (סִתְּרָה).

“He who dwells in the shelter
(*çether*, סִתְּרָה) of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of
the Almighty” (Ps. 91:1).

How has the Most High been a protection or shelter to you recently?

Have there been ways you feel that God has not been a protection to you? He knows He's been there all along in your priceless life, but He wants you to come to a greater assurance of it, too. He wants you to pour your heart out to Him if you're struggling to believe.

If you need to ask where He was at a certain time or season, Beloved Sister, go ahead and do it! It will do your soul good and, in the days and months to come, watch for Him to give you glimpses and glances of His closeness to you at those times of your life.

Recently I found a letter my grandmother wrote to me at a very painful season in my childhood when she had no idea what I had endured. I felt it was a gift of God illustrating how He'd placed people in my life to show such love to me. Watch for Him to do those kinds of things as you open your eyes to His tenderness toward you.

Oh, Sister, God loves you so much. Even the fact that you're in His Word right this very moment is proof that He will never let you go.

If it's true that what's vaulted in us is the seat of our triumphs and our defeats, then consider the following:

What may be vaulted in you that causes you great stress or shame?

What may be vaulted in you that you need to embrace and appreciate?

What may be vaulted in you that you need to get to know?

If we need tending, how might tending our vaults be a little bit ...

1. like cleaning out old clutter?

2. like draining an abscess?

3. like gathering treasures we'd long lost?

“I will give you the treasures of darkness
and the hoards in secret places,
that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you
by your name” (Isa. 45:3).

“My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths
of the earth” (Ps. 139:15).

In what sense do you get great comfort from the realization that God knows you completely?

In what sense does God’s complete knowledge of you cause you discomfort? (Me, too, so let’s just squirm together while we describe how we feel.)

Hebrew Word Study

Another Hebrew term sometimes translated *secret* is the word *çowd* (סוד), meaning a session, i.e. company of persons (in close deliberation); by implication, intimacy, consultation, a secret assembly or secret counsel.

Psalm 25:14 says,

“The secret counsel of the LORD
is for those who fear Him,
and He reveals His covenant
to them” (HCSB).

Compare the words of Psalm 25:14 with Isaiah 48:16:

“I have not spoken in secret.”

In what ways is the truth of God open knowledge?

In what ways is the truth of God closed to outsiders?

Following the Parable of the Sower (see Matt. 13:3-9), the disciples asked why Jesus taught in parables. He told them:

“To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Matt. 13:11).

What do you think would be the basis for Christ revealing “secrets of the kingdom of heaven” to some and not to others?

What does it mean to you to be an insider with Jesus, that He wants you to be part of His inner circle?

In the New Testament we find the statement that Mary “treasured up all these things (concerning Jesus) in her heart” (Luke 2:51).

Why might it be important and valuable to keep and treasure some secrets?

Why is keeping appropriate confidences so important?

How would you explain to a younger woman or your daughter how she could tell the difference between keeping confidence and protecting a lie? (Plan to discuss this with your group.)

Let's reflect back on the statement "every gospel word is a good word" and how it would be biblically possible to make such a claim. The word *gospel* means "good news" so, because of Jesus Christ who brought it and fleshed it out, every single word it speaks over any situation or condition is ultimately good.

Read Colossians 1:3-6 and jot down ways the segment could prove the point:

Have you ever had to deal with someone with whom you never knew where you stood? Yep, me too. If so, how did that affect the relationship?

How do God's definitive statements contrast to dealing with the uncertainty of people?

You never need to walk on eggshells with God.

Hebrew Word Study

The Psalmists often repeated related concepts with slightly different words. In Psalm 27, note another word revolving around the concept of *secrecy*. The Hebrew word *tsaphan* (צָפֵן) means “to hide” or “treasure up” (“conceal,” “concealed,” “hid,” “hidden,” “hide,” or “keep secretly”).

“For He will conceal [there’s that word *tsaphan*] me in His shelter
in the day of adversity;
He will hide me under the cover
(*cathar*, כֶּתֶר) of His tent;
He will set me high on a rock” (Ps. 27:5).

From what do you need God to hide or conceal you today?

How does using the first meaning of the word *tsaphan* change the way Psalm 27:5 speaks to you: “He will *treasure me up* in His shelter in the day of adversity”?

What do you think it would take to really have the fact that God treasures you filter all the way through your being?

Proverbs 25:2 says:

“It is the glory of God to conceal things,
but the glory of kings is to
search things out” (HCSB).

The above verse came up in my prayer time this very morning, and I nearly burst at the seams thinking about it in the context of the journey you and I are taking together. I hope to prove to you that God created our minds with a curious bent so we would crave a search. We're literally wired by God to wonder.

You've just got to read Acts 17:26-27. Where were our searching minds meant by God to take us?

A friend tells of playing “treasure hunt” with her grandchildren. When she knows they are coming over she composes a set of rhyming clues, each leading to the next. The game turns out to be as great a joy to the adult as the children. Similarly, God knows the joy that only comes when together you seek to find the treasures He has planned for you. He is not playing a malicious game of hide and seek with the things you need.

Write about a time when greater joy came because you had to seek what God had for you.

“For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you” (Matt. 6:32-33, HCSB).

Will you pray the prayer of Psalm 51:6? Father, I know “you delight in truth in the inward being.” Will You please “teach me wisdom in the secret”?

SISTER,

I've got to tell you what happened today because I think God appointed it. The timing was too perfect to be a coincidence. I was at home getting ready for work and the Lord brought something to my mind about our concept that I wanted to make sure I remembered. I grabbed a pen and jotted a note to myself and, instead of writing "Sacred Secrets," I'd reversed the letters and written "Scared Secrets."

I stared at it slack-jawed. That very moment I knew God had caused me to stumble on the entire purpose of our journey. This process is going to be all about switching those letters. God is going to take us from a place of being SCARED of our secrets to the glorious light of SACRED secrets. How can we not love a God like that?

Beth