



Longtime Evangelist Turns Attention to the Attentive Life

Leighton Ford has been “making friends for God” all of his adult life. He served for thirty years with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and continues to head Leighton Ford Ministries. Recently, however, he says that a shift has taken place in his life. The shift is not away from evangelism but rather toward more attentiveness to God.

“Now is a time to pay more attention to my own heart, to deepen my own friendship with God and to walk with others who want to do the same,” Ford writes in his new book, *The Attentive Life: Discerning God’s Presence in All Things*.

“Each of us is called to a life patterned by Christ,” Ford writes. “A life not shaped by inner compulsions, or captive to outer expectations, but drawn by the inner voice of love. To listen to this voice, we need to pay careful attention to where our inner and outer selves disconnect and where they need to come together in a beautiful pattern that reflects Jesus.”

Using the rich tradition of praying the hours, Ford helps readers look at their lives, whether the hours of the day or the various seasons of their lives and spiritual journeys, to determine the kind of attentiveness that each phase calls for:

- the “morning” journey, “when our day starts and where our life begins with all its potential and challenges”
- the “midday” journey, a time of busyness in our day or life, when many of us lose our way
- the “afternoon” time, “when we set out in earnest on an inner journey because we know we have limited time and are heading for home”
- the “evening” journey, the transition from afternoon to evening, “the time to find a way to live with a quieted soul”
- the “nighttime” journey, “the final rest of our soul in God”

Ford explores with readers the aspect of attentiveness as a special lens through which to look at their lives. He explains what attentiveness is and why it’s important, and then explores the idea of God as the One who pays attention and calls us to attention. Ford includes in each chapter “one who paid attention,” people from past and present who learned to pay attention. He also provides “Practicing Attentiveness” sections, sample practices that help readers pay attention.

“Spiritual inattentiveness, I believe, comes in large part from our fear of being known for who we really are. Often we keep ourselves busy and distracted because we fear that if we slow down and are still, we may look inside and find nothing there.”

“Paying attention is not a way by which we make something happen but a way to see what is already given to us.”

—Leighton Ford,
The Attentive Life