

I Am God Breathed

Dr Lois Dodds



Did you know that you are God breathed? This awesome, wonderful truth about who you really are, who I am, came home to me the day I saved Rosa's dead baby. It was a very intimate experience. I had one foot in the canoe when I heard the death wail. Everyone helping me and my companion rushed away up the steep river-bank, leaving me stranded, one foot in the sand, one foot in the canoe. 'Well, we are not going anywhere now,' I thought. 'I might as well go too.'

I followed the disappearing villagers up the bank and through the banana patch to the simple house, four corner posts, a shaky palm bark floor, a thatched roof. About seventy people were crowded into it, a twelve by fifteen foot house. My friend Olive was standing at the corner post with an old man. 'What's going on?' I asked. 'Rosa's baby has just died,' she said.

My mind flashed to all the village babies coughing their little lungs out with whooping cough the last two nights. I thought of all the times my husband Larry had done mouth-to-mouth resuscitation as a doctor in our jungle clinic. 'Oh, could I help? Do you think they would let me try to revive the baby?' 'I'll ask the grandfather,' she said. 'He can give you permission.' She turned to the old man and whispered a few words. He nodded at us, and she said, 'Go ahead!' Scared, but motivated, I squeezed my way through the crowd and knelt down before Rosa. Little Michael, just five months old, was already black and blue. The eerie wailing surrounded me. I gently took baby Michael onto my lap, rehearsing what I had heard my husband tell a hundred times. I began to gently breathe into Michael's mouth, my right hand cradling him while my left hand gently closed his nose.

After each breath I counted, 'One, two, three, four, five, six.' Then I breathed again. I was eager to continue. After about ten breaths Michael gave a little gurgle. I could see his translucent skin was turning from blue to pink. I felt thrilled - it was working! I continued to breathe, count, breathe, count, breathe, ever so gently. Finally Michael cried a great big wail, like a baby taking its first breath after birth.

The people stopped wailing. It seemed we all held our breath as Michael took another breath and then another. 'He's alive,' I thought, 'he's alive! He's alive because I breathed into him.' What if I had been too scared to try? He would still be dead. Feeling transformed, I handed Michael back to his mother's waiting arms. We knelt there together, knee to knee. I'm part of Michael now, part of Rosa, he is breathing my breath. I sat transfigured.

This is how it was for God when he breathed life into Adam. What an intimate way of bringing us life! We don't just go around breathing into people's mouths. That is a very intimate thing to do. But this is how God chose to bring his creation to life. He just breathed life into Adam, the first man, and he became a living soul. And Jesus, Jesus too breathed on his disciples and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

I Am God Breathed

Dr Lois Dodds



So twice now, I reflected, God has breathed his life into me: once at my birth and once again when I welcomed his Spirit into my heart and life. I was only four years old then, but ever since that day I have always felt Jesus with me, breathing his life, his energy, into me. I felt him cradle me in his strong right arm and revive me time after time.

I sat there a long time on the palm bark floor, as it gently swayed with the movement of the people. I could not move. This was like a personal epiphany. Perhaps this is how Mary felt when the angel told her she was chosen to become the mother of Jesus. Jesus lived in her, in her body, and he lives in me: in her, nine months, but in me eternally. His breath is in me. His Holy Spirit is in me.

And you? You are God breathed too. Perhaps you have lost sight of that. Maybe you have forgotten how very, very special you are to him: it is easy when you live in a different culture, far away from home and family. Maybe in this new place no one tells you that you are loved. No one says, 'You are so special to me.' It may seem not just that you are there, but that you make mistake after mistake. People may laugh at you for talking baby talk and taking baby steps. They know the language. It is so easy. Maybe you feel lost or even about to die of loneliness and misunderstanding.

Please, take time right now to remember you are God breathed. It is his breath which you breathe, his Spirit that makes your heart beat. It is he who called you to that difficult place. He asked you to go there to be his breath of hope, of life itself. In him you live and breathe and have your being. When I need to be reminded of how intimately God loves me, I turn to Psalm 139. In this wonderful passage, written so long ago, we read about how intimately God lives within us and with us:

'O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

You hem me in - behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

I Am God Breathed

Dr Lois Dodds



For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious are your thoughts about me O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.....

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'

This is from a poem I wrote some time ago:

'And He lives in me. Yes, in Mary nine months, but in me, eternally.

In her, God-man abides. In me, He promises to stay.

My life, not His, transformed by His coming.

My birth, not His, accomplished at His coming."