

Practising The Presence of God

2014

Start Using Notes on Wednesday 5th March 2014
As we give thanks for the cross of Christ and
celebrate His resurrection together

Not for Sale

Compiled by
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How to Use these Notes for 42 Days

1. Use with the booklet Forgiveness and Reconciliation.
2. Find a quiet place at home or away from your familiar surroundings to lessen distractions.
3. Make yourself comfortable e.g. sit with a cup of coffee on the floor or in a soft and steady chair.
4. Have your Bible, notebook and pen at hand to avoid moving around.
5. Use the notes a day at a time, spending at least 30 minutes at a time...60 minutes would be a great help!
6. If you sense God speaking to you, do not hurry away from Him...linger on till you are ready to return to your daily routines. If you need more time...continue on the same notes the next day/same day at a different time...let Him be your Companion...let Him love you...you may be surprised by joy!
7. Throughout the rest of your waking hours, be aware of His gentle presence with you. Chat with Him anytime and anywhere e.g. at work in the marketplace, while gardening or doing household chores, while driving or listening to music. He may be looking over your shoulder while you check your facebook account and emails.
8. Greet Him Good Morning and/or Good Night.
9. Meaning of subtitles:

Read: Read to know what God's written word says

Ponder: Think about what you have read as well as some additional food for thought

Listen: Continue to keep ears open to additional passages

Journal: Write down your thoughts e.g. your response to the above, your questions, heart cries or expressions of thanks and praises to Him.

Pray: Talk to Him verbally if possible and have the joy of hearing Him also. After all, He is the Creator of speech! However, feel free to use any means write, sing, play some music, dance, use a visible symbol to express your prayer, not as an icon.

Act: Tangible small or big steps you may like to take as an expression of your desire to follow and please Him above all else and all the way...

Purpose

- To draw God's people towards a more biblical view of God so that we may enjoy His friendship without fear of disappointments for He delights in mankind including you and me!
- To enhance our appreciation and utter indebtedness to Christ for willing (at Gethsemane) to be made the atonement for sin (at the Cross) so that we can go home with Him (at His resurrection and second coming) to our waiting Father. Grace is mercy which is not deserved and cannot be earned.
- To bring us to our knees to worship and love and please Him above all else!

Watch Him...

Listen to Him...

Follow Him...

Introduction

As you put aside more time for God over the next 41 days, enjoy His welcoming presence with no hurry. He must be so glad that you are here to give Him your attention and to listen to His gentle whispers. The Lent period is not for mere remembrance of the God who is far away but for deepening your friendship with the One who is near and within you. God is the One who so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, so that whosoever trusts Him will not be rejected by God into eternal loneliness but be reconciled with Him so that we may *know and enjoy Him forever*, as St. Augustine wrote.

This is a simple exercise appropriate and necessary for all believers the whole year round once one has got into the rhythm of waiting on God. But for those unfamiliar to such a spiritual discipline, this will be an initial simple manageable and gentle exercise to reduce the fat of spiritual lethargy, coupled with an aimless and joyless existence while on earth.

However, unless you have the Holy Spirit living in you as a guarantee of your salvation for eternity, through faith in the Son of God, Jesus, the Saviour of the world, the Bible references will not make much sense. In this case, know that God loves you and waits to come into your heart. Please kneel in your room, seek His forgiveness for all your sins, receive Him as your Saviour and Master and He will send His Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart. You will then hunger and thirst for Him through the hearing and reading of His word. Nevertheless, these meditations are for anyone who desires to know God for the first time or more, even if out of curiosity.

To God be the glory when we have begun to bask in His warm embrace when we feel rejected or ignored in our church or society. Our Father is negotiable, accepting and ever willing to be our Guide for our good. He knows we cannot manage ourselves on our own and is at hand to walk us on... He who cannot lie promises:

(Words in brackets are from the writer.)

Isaiah 30:19-26 (NIV)

¹⁹ *People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem (after Christ has resurrected, this means the body of Christ, His church and bride), you will weep no more. How gracious He will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you.* ²⁰ *Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them.* ²¹ *Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."*

²² *Then you will desecrate your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold (e.g. wrong attachments such as certain exercise/meditation regimes, emotional wounds and addictions); you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!" (In Jesus' Name for only He has the authority to deliver us from the evil one's oppressions and*

forgive all our sins. This is what we will do once we know His direction/will for us in a particular matter.)

²³ He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows. ²⁴ The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel. ²⁵ In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill. ²⁶ The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.

John 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Jeremiah 29:10-14 (NIV)

¹⁰ This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. ^[a] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

**May our Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit
bless and keep you in His truth and grace
as you make time for Him!**

Day 1 Seeking God's Face-I.

Read: Psalm 27

Ponder: Think about David's longing for God...His God and yours.

Listen: *“There is no blessing I would withhold from them that walk in obedience to Me – who follow when I call, and who respond when I speak to them. They are near to My heart and precious in my sight who have eyes to discern My purpose and ears that listen to My direction...”*

No, you cannot find the ways of God amidst the pathways of men. You may feel the wind pass, and yet see only the swirling dust. The earthly clouds out the heavenly. The voices of men drown the voice of God. Only in much solitude (away from people in order to be with God alone) can you begin to sift away the chaff and come at last to the golden grain of truth. The world will confuse you. Silence (setting aside inner and outer noises so as to be able to hear God speaking to your heart) will speak more to you in a day than the world of voices can teach you in a lifetime. Find it. Find solitude and silence – and having discovered their riches, bind them to you heart.

My child, do not fear nor resist My voice. When I speak to you, you shall know that it is I, the Lord God. Yes, even as I spoke to Isaiah, I shall speak to you. Is it not strange that you should be astonished at the way that I speak to you? Instead, they ought to marvel who do NOT hear My voice!”

(From *Listen to the Silence* by Frances J. Roberts, p. 7-8)

Journal (i.e. write down in a notebook your conversation with God):

Pray (your response to God's voice):

*“O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer
As I come unto Thee
O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer
Come and Listen to me.”*

(download tune from internet)

Act:

Day 2 Seeking God's Face-II.

Read: John 17:20-26; Exodus 19:5

Ponder: God has done everything to have those who trust and follow Him; He will never let you go out of His hand. He rose from the dead to testify to His promised friendship with those who would follow Him by grace through faith in Him. In a mysterious way, He has attached us to Himself in love (thankfully in love and not hatred) and we are always one with the Father and the Son. Will He let His 'treasured possession' go?

Listen:

Look to Jesus with eyes of faith...and stay immersed in His loving presence...

"When I promised you green pastures, I did not have in mind religious activity or intellectual religion in outward forms and fleshly service. When I said, 'Come, buy milk and honey without money or price', I was not challenging you to feverish duty but to contemplative fellowship and collective communion with Me. Only by this are souls made strong, hearts made pure, and minds refreshed."

Silence is the state in which all the powers of the soul and all the faculties of the body are completely at peace, quiet and recollected, perfectly alert yet free from any turmoil or agitation...It is something like the waters of a pond. As long as there are movements or ripples on the surface, nothing can be reflected properly, not the trees or the sky. But when the surface is quite still, the sky, the trees on the bank and everything there is as distinct as in reality.

In a similar manner, as long as the soul is not still, there can be no vision of God; but when stillness has brought us into the presence of God, then another type of silence, much more absolute, moves in: it is the silence of a soul which is not only still and recollected but which is overawed in an act of worship by God's presence; a silence in which one prays the soul towards God.

(From Living Prayer by Anthony Bloom)

Paul used a similar illustration to give meaning to our stillness before God, that of the inner being and not mere physical positioning. He talked about His church being a mirror that reflects His image...the more we face Him, though He is currently mostly invisible, the more we reflect His glory to one another and the world. But if we face our ipad, smartphones, dogs, cats, people or anything else more than Him, we will reflect their

likeness instead. Choose who/what you want to reflect. All glory comes from God alone. We do not have a bit of it and can only reflect it.

Journal:

Pray:

“Lord, help me not to be distressed by those who doubt the way You deal with me. I pray that the same blessed privilege shall be granted to them: that our ears may be opened, our spirits become sensitive and receptive to the ministering of the Holy Spirit. Please give us a hunger and a burning desire to fellowship more closely with You as Your children (.....name of your local church). In Your Name I ask. Amen.”

Act:

Day 3 Seeking His Face-III

Read: 1 Kings 19:9-18

Ponder:

“....And after the fire came a gentle whisper...‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”

Note that when God repeated his question, Elijah repeated his answer without much thinking. An exhausted man feels more than he thinks; self-pity had overcome him. God accepted him as he was and allowed him to retire and sent a chariot to bring him home. Gracious and gentle is our God!

Listen:

- Ask yourself, *“What will I be doing at these 41 appointments with God alone?”*
- Keep your answer in your notebook.
- After 41 days, ask yourself, *“What have I been doing during these 41 appointments with God alone?”*
- *Compare and contrast your answers and ask Him why the difference or similarity in them.*

Journal:

Pray:

I come before You, my God, in all of my weakness seeking Your strength. Though I am far from the model You set before my eyes, one day I will see You – and upon that seeing, I will become like you. Amen.”

Act:

Day 4 Silence and Solitude with God

Read: Mark 1:35

Ponder:

After a hard day's work, Jesus needed time alone with His Father...to feel and know His approval, rest and new instructions. He did say once, *"What I see My Father do, I do; what I hear Him say, I say."*(John 5:19; 12:50)

Listen:

"Without solitude it is virtually impossible to lead a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and place for God, and Him alone. If we really believe not only that God exists but also that He is actively present in our lives – healing, teaching and guiding – we need to set aside a time and place to give Him our undivided attention. Jesus says, "Go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place" (Matthew 6:6).

(From *Making All New Things New* by Henri J.M.Nouwen)

"Contemplation does not lead into inactivity. It is in itself the highest actuality of our being. In its compassion it leads to the deepest concern and the fullest activity, according to our particular vocations, for the well-being of the entire human family and its global environment. One cannot steadily see the created reality in the face of the loving and the compassionate Father and not be transformed and transforming."

(From Basil Pennington in *Living and Apocalypse* edited by Tilden H. Edwards)

Journal:

Pray: Write your own.

Act:

Day 5**Who are You, Lord? - I****Read:** Psalm 23:2**Ponder:**

To know God is the reason for our existence. *Christianity is knowing the living God, friendship with God.* However, as believers, let us not forget that Christianity is not mere knowledge *about* God. It is more about entering into an intimate relationship with God. From this angle, knowing God *means enjoying eternal friendship with the eternal Father of all mankind and with His beloved Son, Jesus (1 Corinthians 8:6; John 17:3).* The Holy Spirit has been sent to help us re-enter into and develop this relationship once we have been born again into God's family. Being made in God's image, we are able to respond to and enjoy Him forever, even if our present knowledge of Him is imperfect. Taking off our masks, we can rest in Him. We are actually living our earthly lives trying to know more about Someone who is relevant to us, even if many of us do not yet know Him up close. Let us journey on as we ask and ponder on the question: "*Who are You, Lord?*" (Acts 9:5) Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal the living Christ to you as you set aside time for Him

Listen: John 16:12-15**Journal:****Pray:**

Dearest Father, often, we view You as One who is distant and looking the other way; we think of You as a police officer who leaves us alone to run our lives as long as we do not disturb our neighbour's peace. Please forgive us, we pray, and help us see You as You are and in that seeing, be humbled by Your mercy to us.

Author's note:

Many of us have the above view of God now and then, if not most of the time. Let me try to persuade you from the gospels and human experience, that though God is indeed holy and perfect, He is actually very approachable, forgiving, down to earth and concerned for us. He is looking for all means and ways to draw us to experience the reality of His abundant life...and it is a life that is much better than a happy retirement or a rewarding and exciting career in this IT age! It would be blessed to be under His care... ponder on the lyrics of the hymn:

"Under His wings, I am safely abiding;

*Though the night deepens and the tempests are wild,
Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me,
He has redeemed me and I am His child.*

Chorus:

*Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love an sever?
Under His wings my soul shall abide, safely abide forever.*

*Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow!
How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!
Often when earth has no balm for my healing,
There I find comfort, and there I am blest.”*

Act:

Day 6 Who are You, Lord? - II

Read: John 14:9

Ponder:

“That God exists, that He is great and that He is near, is no secret to us. But where is the secret? Here it is: God was crucified; He allows Himself to be defeated; He has revealed Himself in the poor; He has washed feet; He is Jesus of Nazareth.”
[Adapted from “Why, O Lord?” by Carlo Caretto]

Listen:

Revelation 3:20

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

Journal:

Pray: Write your prayer to God who misses your fellowship and friendship.

Act:

Day 7 Who are You Lord? - III

Read: Read Acts 9:5

Ponder:

If you were Saul at Damascus, how would you feel? What would have hit your mind?

Listen:

Nevertheless, for many people, the thought of God stirs up in them, consciously or subconsciously, a sense of restless discontent, fear, irrationality and/or irritability. When a conflict surfaces in our lives, we wonder if it is because God is untrue to His word or has forgotten us. Is He not who the Bible says He is? Since He has shown Himself to us in history in the person of Jesus Christ His Son, why do we, over 2000 years later, still *not* experience Him enough to trust Him more? Who is God, really, at gut level? Is He great and reliable enough for us to put our lives in His hands? When we kneel before Him in the privacy of our room, do our feelings for Him and what we believe about Him coincide or are they at odds with each other? Are we schizophrenic in our relationship with God; we believe in Him but our feelings for Him are rather detached and He does not seem to be relevant to our mundane existence?

Generally, some of us may not know Him personally yet. We might have heard about Jesus from songs and jingles sung whenever Christmas comes around. What we hear and sing in those songs make us feel warm and good. However, if God is for real, then we must meet with Him to see what He has to say about our beautiful but severely damaged world; we want to ask Him why He has not yet put right all the wrongs we have experienced down here. We are like the Athenians in Acts 17:16-23; we acknowledge there is a sort of greatest being or highest power out there but we do not know His name, and so we call Him "*The Unknown God*" in our heart of hearts.

However, I would guess that most of us are more like Saul the religious Pharisee and scholar, or busy Martha. We often think we already know Him enough until a crisis hits us and makes us stop and ask Him,

"Who are You really, my God?? If You are really who the Bible says You are, WHY has this trouble befallen me? Why does my husband desert me? Why does my child embarrass me? Why does a Christian worker hurt me? Why can't I fulfill my dream for my career? Why do You make so many demands on me...etc. etc...?"

Journal: Who is your God? What's He/he like?

Did you come to know Him gradually or suddenly?
Recall and give thanks or ask Him to reveal Himself to you in a way you can understand!

Pray:

Act:

Day 8 How Did God Dialogue with His people?

Read: Acts 9:1-19; Genesis 15; Exodus 3:1-4:17

Ponder:

Observe how God communicated with His people then. He has not changed.

How do you usually communicate with Him now?

Listen: Isaiah 1:18-20

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 9 Why Do We Need to Know God More? - I

****We are His creation****

Read: Genesis 1:26-27; John 17:20-23

Ponder:

What do you think God means when He said that He created us in His image?

Take time to feel what it is like for the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to be One.

Listen:

What does oneness of God mean?

Does the Trinity function as One in holiness, compassion, mercy, joy, sorrow, strategy, plans, love, truth and grace?

Ponder on the fruit of a life alone with God

“...the soul will bring forth fruit exactly in the measure in which the inner life is developed in it. If there is no inner life, however great may be the zeal, the high intention, the hard work, no fruit will come forth; it is like a spring that would give out sanctity to others but cannot because it has none to give; one can only give that which one has. It is in solitude, in that lonely life alone with God, in profound recollection of soul, in forgetfulness of all created things, that God gives Himself to the soul that thus gives himself/herself whole and entire to Him.”

From *Meditations of a Hermit* by Charles de Foucauld

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 10 Why Do We Need to Know God More? - II

****We cannot live without Him****

Read: Romans 1:19-20; Acts 17:28 (16-34)

Ponder:

The expressions of God’s eternal and great power and His divinity are all around us. He reveals His nature to all humankind, whether we acknowledge Him or not.

We are immersed in Him (like a fish is immersed in water) and cannot survive without Him. Paul the apostle proclaimed that God reveals Himself to us through what is commonly called general revelation.

Listen:

A.W.Tozer writes:

“...Always He is trying to get our attention, to reveal Himself to us, to communicate with us! We have within us the ability to know Him in increasing degree as our receptivity becomes more perfected by faith and love and practice...”

(Renewed Day by Day, Daily Readings for One Year, Vol. 1, A.W.Tozer, June 20 & 21)

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 11 Why Do We Need to Know God More? - III

****He loves us and has a purpose for us...**

Read: Jeremiah 29:10-14; Isaiah 43:1-7

Ponder:

God created us to love us and to show us His purpose for our lives, not to leave us alone. God has gone ahead of us to make sure that the short-term and long-term plans for us have been sorted out, even though we often do not see beyond our day to day struggles of earthly life.

Listen:

In Psalm 139, David, the shepherd boy who became king of Israel, expressed his need and total dependence on God, by talking to Him about his roots and declaring that He could not run away from Him even if he tried... (editor/author's comments are in brackets):

*"O Lord, You have searched me and You know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise
(sometimes we think no one knows where we are);
You perceive my thoughts from afar
(sometimes we think no one knows what we are thinking).
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... (only You can read my mind.)*

*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
(I'm sorry for complaining about my looks and my lot).
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.
(I am certainly NOT "an accident"!)
How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!"*

Imagine you and all God's children being drawn into His Oneness.

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 12 Why Do We Need to Know God More? - IV
(If possible, use this near bed-time)

**** God loves us and is powerful enough to care for us.****

Read:

Jeremiah 31:2-14; Deuteronomy 1:31-33, 32:6-8; 1 Samuel 7:14-16

Ponder:

Isaiah 44

Feel the security of His ownership, His Fatherhood, His constant and attentive love for you...just you and Him...always...

Listen:

Luke 12:22-34

Take time to soak in His ability to take care of you till you see Him face to face and beyond...

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

PS: It is ok if you find it difficult to feel His nearness. Just rest, knowing that He understands how you feel ... The Lord gives to His beloved sleep.....zzzz...zzzzz...zzzzzz... Thanks, Father!

Day 13 Some Things God has said about Himself and His relationship with Us

Read and Ponder:

Psalms 50:21... *"...you thought I was altogether like you...."*

God is not like us though we may like to think that He is. He is actually a caring father to us though we still do not trust Him completely yet. The problem is on our side, not His.

*****God is not like us*****

John 14:5-9...Just after Jesus started bidding farewell to His beloved disciples, He told them that He was the way, the truth and the life and that no man could go to the Father but by Him; at this point, Philip interjected,

"Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us!"

Jesus was hurt that Philip had still not learnt to listen carefully and, therefore, posed an unnecessary request. Hence His reply,

"... 'Don't you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?'"

*****Jesus wants us to understand Him*****

Sometimes we see Jesus as a superhero Who has no feelings because He is so strong. But we must always remember that He is fully God and fully man...a mystery beyond our present discussion. As a human being, He feels and thinks as we do, sinless yet carrying our weaknesses. I am sure He had been attacked by germs at various points in His human life, just like we, too, have been attacked. That is why He is worthy to be our Saviour and Friend. From His reply to Philip, we can be sure that He wants us to know Him well.

Listen:

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 14 Seeing God in His Son

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Hebrews 1:1-3

Ponder:

How are you going to know Christ better in order to know the Father more?

Listen: Be still before Jesus who is divine and a historical reality.

Journal:

1. What were some of my views of God when I was under 12 years old, a teenager, a young adult and now?
2. Which factors most influenced those views?
3. How did I live my daily life (in relation to others around me) and prayer life (in relation to God] according to those views?
4. Share some aspects of your discovery with your small group.

Pray:

Act:

Day 15 See Him in Clarity

Read:

Isaiah 40:28-31; Ephesians 4:29-5:2

Ponder: In the gentle care of our fellow human beings, we see Him clearly.

Listen: John 13:3-7; John 13:12; John 13:34-35

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 16 Miracle Replayed

Read: Ezekiel 16:1-34, 37:1-14

Ponder:

O Lord, to watch You pick someone up from the broken world of abuse, neglect, rejection, addictions, malnutrition...and nurse them to a discovery of Your gracious Fatherhood is like watching the miraculous creation of a baby in his mother's womb!

Listen:

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 17 **The Oneness in the Trinity is Reflected in the Oneness within the Human Community, And Specifically within His Living Church.**

Read: Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18-23; Luke 8:21; John 17:20-23

Ponder:

Womanhood and manhood are precious gifts from God. When treasured and used faithfully, they reflect some of Jesus' perfect humanity and yet incomprehensible divinity in the Trinity. This is a mystery, as Paul concluded in Ephesians 5:29-32.

- Marvel at the symbol of oneness (eternal) between Christ and us through the union of man and woman in marriage (temporal...till death do us part).
- Marvel again at the call to oneness (eternal) with His Son through the same temporal human family relationships when redeemed.
- Can you now guess why same gender marriage is not in His creation master- plan as it cannot be that symbol, especially for those called by His Name?
- After the birth of the church of Jesus Christ, men and women of all ages together reflect His true image, especially as the new creation in Christ...though imperfectly still. The Godhead bodily dwells in our Lord alone as the perfect incarnated Son of Man. We can only reflect His glory.

Listen:

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 18 What is Your Personal Experience of God?

Read: Psalm 50:21

Ponder:

Could it be that we are the ones who create the hindrances to our having the right view of God by our refusal to treat God as God?

From where do we get our first ideas about God? How has He been relating to us? For many sincere Christians, head knowledge about God is rather different from what is really felt for Him. If we cannot *feel* the reality of what we *know* of Him, then how do we express His reality to others around us? Have we been regurgitating what we mentally know of Him, without a deep personal experience of Him, before a watching world?

Listen:

Indeed, to know God is not only to see Him with our minds but also to feel Him with our hearts.

If we do not have a proper view and experience of God, we will not know what He wants of us. Unless we experience His goodness and mercy personally, we will have no spiritual victory in our lives because:

- i. we may be too scared of Him to come to Him for help
- ii. we may not trust Him enough with our lives and secrets
- iii. we may not know how to please Him and therefore live our whole earthly lives striving to find out how to please Him (Ephesians 5:8-10) i.e. instead of first listening to His instructions for us before we serve Him, we try to do things for Him in our own ways and with wrong motives. No wonder, many good willed believers repeatedly mess up others' and their own lives!

Consequently, we say to God and to ourselves,

“Let me get my job, family and housing secure first; then I will ask You what Your will for me is because I am not sure at all whether You will really take care of me...In fact, even if You will, I’m not sure whether You can do it because ...well...this world has been in such a mess since You created it!”

So, we keep Him at arm’s length till we are ready for His intervention (or interference?)!

Sinful man is simply uncomfortable in God's presence e.g. Genesis 3:8-10.

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 19 What does Knowing God Mean to Me?

Read: Deuteronomy 32:6-14; John 8:31-36; Romans 12:1-2

Ponder:

"Do I really believe and feel that God is as described in Deuteronomy 32:6-14?"

Ask yourself: Do I really *believe* and *feel* that God is all He says He is? That:

32:10: He is caring.

32:11 He is like a mother eagle training its young to become independent and confident adults.

32:12 He leads us.

32:13 He encourages us.

32:14 He feeds us with food daily.

Listen: Do we really know God as:

*A grateful sinner loving his Saviour, the historical Jesus, and not an imagined one?

*A once desperate but healed patient following his Healer?

*A victim thanking his Deliverer?

*A child trusting his Father?

*A servant submitting to his Master?

*A student modeling after his Teacher?

*A friend fiercely loyal to his true Friend....?

Journal: Listen to God, journal your thoughts and talk to Him about your life.

Pray:

Jesus I Come

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,

Jesus I come, Jesus I come;

Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,

Jesus I come to Thee.

Out of my sickness into Thy health,

Out of my want and into Thy wealth,

Out of my sin and into Thyself,

Jesus I come to Thee.

Out of my shameful failure and loss,

Jesus I come, Jesus I come;

Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
 Jesus I come to Thee.
Out of earth's sorrows into Thy balm,
Out of life's storms and into Thy calm,
Out of distress to jubilant psalm,
 Jesus I come to Thee.

Out of unrest and arrogant pride,
 Jesus I come, Jesus I come;
Into Thy blessed will to abide,
 Jesus I come to Thee.
Out of myself to dwell in Thy love,
Out of despair into raptures above,
Upward for aye on wings like a dove,
 Jesus I come to Thee.

Out of the fear and dread of the tomb,
 Jesus I come, Jesus I come;
Into the joy and light of Thy home,
 Jesus I come to Thee.
Out of the depths of ruin untold,
Into the peace of Thy sheltering fold,
Ever Thy glorious face to behold,
 Jesus I come to Thee.

William T. Sleeper

Act:

Day 20 Burning Hearts

Read: Luke 24:25-35

Ponder: To read the Scriptures and sense our hearts burning within us as He speaks to our open ears is joy unspeakable!

Listen:

God speaks to us in many ways:

- Directly as for Cleopas and friend
- Indirectly through - our fellow suffering humanity (Matthew 25:34-40)
- nature (Romans 1)

The next time you feel spiritually dry or bored, try walking around any Seremban Tuanku Ja'ffar Hospital open ward. See whether anyone needs comfort or attention...pray quietly in your heart for all. If in Klang Valley you may like to visit a drop-in centre in Brickfields, behind YMCA, run by Trinity Methodist Church PJ call Paul David for enquiries. Continue to listen...

1. *When the poor ones who have nothing share with strangers,
When the thirsty water give unto us all,
When the crippled in their weakness strengthen others,*

Refrain:

*Then we know that God still goes that road with us,
Then we know that God still goes that road with us.*

2. *When at last all those who suffer find their comfort,
When they hope though even hope seems hopelessness.
When we love though hate at times seems all around us,*
3. *When our joy fills up our cup to overflowing,
When our lips can speak no words other than true,
When we know that love for simple things is better,*
4. *When our homes are filled with goodness in abundance,
When we learn how to make peace instead of war,
When each stranger we meet is called a neighbour,*

United Methodist Hymnal No.434

Journal: Your discovery of God and share with your small group/friends.

Pray: For His grace to discover Christ afresh in your own simple way...

Act:

Day 21 Jesus of Nazareth

Read: Luke 1:26, 4:16; John 1:46; 19:19; Matthew 21:11; Acts 3:6; 22:8

Ponder: Do we really know the Jesus of Nazareth ...

Listen: HE

**gave up His glory above as the Son of God, equal with the Father

**was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a God-fearing teenage virgin called Mary, engaged to be married to carpenter Joseph and due to the circumstances of His conception, probably grew up frequently scorned and taunted by neighbours and acquaintances as an illegitimate child...for your sake and mine...

**at 12 years old, fascinated by the first opportunity of brainstorming with intellectual priests in that awesome temple in the city of Jerusalem? He accidentally hurt His parents by a teenage natural desire to express His independence when His hormones surged in those passing turbulent adolescent years, with pimples and all.

**as the eldest son of His widowed Mum in a close-knit Jewish home, must have tasted the burden of financial and emotional hardship. Caught by Joseph's early death as head of the household, the eldest son became the primary support for Mary in the care of a large family of boy and girls. He too learnt submission through discipline...not knowing how much submission He would need in years to come. Those who have witnessed once harmonious Asian siblings being torn apart in one generation (e.g. over the issue of inheritance after their elderly parents died) would appreciate how Jesus fulfilled the role of eldest son well. How he took care of His younger siblings demonstrates how the next generation can continue to be harmonious when the eldest son knows how to care for his younger brothers and sisters. Jesus was a good and faithful eldest brother indeed (deduced from how the family stuck together in a family crisis e.g. Mark 3:31-35).

**for whom marriage was out of the question because of His heavenly Father's vocation for Him, refused to be match-made. Many friends and relatives could have pestered Mummy Mary, demanding to know why her firstborn was reluctant to get married! They probably soon gave up as some gossiped as to why both cousins John and Jesus were both single at 30-31 years of age. However, He ignored their idle talk and persevered, knowing His Father's will had to be fulfilled by His obedience to the heavenly calling.

Yet, all along, He was so *ordinary* that cousin John the Baptist was so stunned when God revealed to Him that younger cousin Jesus was the Messiah. He kept proclaiming to his followers: "*Look...the Lamb of God.....Look...the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world!*" But it did make sense, as John recalled the purity in Jesus' humble and responsible life...it began to make real sense indeed (John 1).

**at 30, at a wedding dinner in Canaan, His Mum had to nudge Him as a sign that God's time for Him has come to show that He was God's anointed Servant publicly. Well, hadn't He often prayed and God performed miracles for them several times at home when funds ran dry? Why not help save the poor bridegroom from serious embarrassment now?

**being committed to serving others, had His mother worried at times. Discerning Mary found relinquishing her good son difficult and probably tried to counsel Him to take adequate food and rest when hampered by the demands of the crowds (Mark 3:31-32).

However, by then Jesus knew that He, having put His hand to the plough, could not turn back; His reply to Mary (that those who obey God are His mother, brothers and sisters) must have caused her heart to ache a while...but not as sharp as when her most dependable and loving Son was betrayed, slandered, slapped, spit at and finally murdered by those He came to love and save...

Yet, though under intense suffering in every part of His being, Jesus never forget His beloved mother, knowing that His siblings would not really bother. Had not He lived with them long enough to know? Therefore, He arranged for His gentle disciple John to take His place as son to Mary, who was actually His God appointed foster mother for His only begotten Son, who became man for us.

**till the end, He obeyed His Father's will. He finally suffered the wild onslaughts of the punishment for all our sins on His wounded body, soul and spirit. Forsaken even by God His dearest and true Daddy, He died an unjust criminal's death for the love of you and me.

No wonder, after He was raised from the dead in glory and sits at the place of authority on the right hand of His Father, the writer of the book of Hebrews said of Him in Hebrews 2:11-18...

"Both the One who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers (sisters). He says to God, His Father:

*'I will declare Your Name to My brothers (sisters);
In the presence of the congregation I will sing Your praises.'
And again He says,
'Here am I, and the children God has given me.'"*

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 22 **Feeling Uncomfortable In His Presence?**

God truly loves you. Do...

Read on: Genesis 3:1-10

Ponder: What does knowing God mean to me personally and daily even though we may sometimes feel uncomfortable as we are aware of His presence? Or do we feel safe and loved?

Listen: Hebrews 12:1-13...Jesus is proud of you if you trust Him

Luke 9:23-26 ...Are you ashamed of Jesus?

John 15:12-17 ...Ponder on the extent of His love for His friends

John 13:34-35 ...To love as He loves in our world of tribulations is to

forgive...forgive...forgive and lay down our lives for one another. We have all failed Him but with His help we shall get up and forgive...forgive...forgive...again and again...because His work for all His children is Christ's ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-21 & Matthew 5:9). Is there anyone that comes into your mind to forgive now? (Matthew 5:14-15 – not about salvation but specific sins after we are already His children by grace through faith in Jesus's atonement for our sins.) The sin of unforgiveness causes deep emotional wounds which hurt us more than they hurt those who wronged us. Will you lighten your load and receive His approving embrace and be an ambassador of reconciliation and joy for God? (See booklet on *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* for a clearer understanding of what God means by forgiveness.)

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 23**God Delights in You****Read:** Proverbs 8:27-31

Ponder: When we look at a baby gurgling in his mother's arms, we smile naturally... The infant cannot do anything for us; he just has to be himself, dependent on another being, receiving nurture and love. That's how God feels when He sees us... no matter that we are fragile, weak and in total need of Him. He delights in us...even if we do not like ourselves much!

Listen: Isaiah 40:1-7; Romans 8:31-37**Journal:****Pray:****I Stand Amazed in the Presence**

1. I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me, a sinner, condemned,
unclean.

Chorus:

How marvelous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be:
How marvelous! How wonderful is My Saviour's love for me!

2. For me it was in the garden He prayed: "Not My will but Thine."
He had no tears for His own griefs, but sweat-drops of blood for mine.
3. In pity angels beheld Him, and came from the world of light
To comfort Him in the sorrows He bore for my soul that night.
4. He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them His very own;
He bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered and died alone.
5. When with the ransomed in glory His face I at last shall see,
'Twill be my joy through the ages to sing of His love for me...

Act:

Day 24 **The Remembrance Meal**

Read: Luke 22:14-22

Ponder: What does Jesus' call to remember Him till He comes again mean to Him...and to you?

Listen: How long has it been since your mind turns to Him in your moments of quietness? Talk to Him about your condition...

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 25 **Discerning the Voice of God Then and Today**

Read: John 10:27-28
 John 21:15-17

Ponder: What is a sheep's relationship with its shepherd in the natural world?
 Am I His sheep?
 How do I tend and feed His sheep as He tends and feeds me (for all His people, not just full-time Christian workers e.g. parents to children, teachers to students, employers to employees)?

Listen...

"The words of the Lord are seeds sown by the sower. Into our hearts they must fall that they may grow. Meditation and prayer must water them, and obedience keep them in the sunlight. Thus will they bear fruit for the Lord's gathering.

(From Life Essential by George Mac Donald, pg. 325 Red)

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 26 **Shepherd's Language**

Read: Psalm 23:4

Ponder: A missionary in modern Cyprus shares:

As I observe the life of sheep with their shepherd all around us, I have noticed that as a sheep grows, it learns the language of its shepherd...his voice, his gestures, his behaviour.

When the shepherd knocks his rod on a hard surface, his sheep hear the knockings and come running up to him. They know that his presence means safety, food, drink and shelter from the rain or scorching heat.

When a little lamb loses its way, that same sound speaks of home and rest as it bounces in frisky steps back to the source of the sound...its Master and its Friend.

Listen:

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 27 **Shepherd and Sheep**

Read: John 10:2-4

Ponder: In order to understand Jesus our Good Shepherd, we need to be willing to become His sheep. Too often, we try to behave like His assistant shepherds without first learning to live as His sheep.

Listen:

Pray:
p. 352 Red

“My God, in the quietness of the desert You spoke to Moses, and in the quiet cave Elijah heard Your voice. Even so, speak to me in the quietness of this place, that I, too, may know the direction of Your will in all the great and small decisions of life. Amen.”

Day 28 “Why Were You Not You?”

Read: Psalm 139

Ponder: Who are you in your parents’ eyes?
Who are you in your own eyes?
Who are you in God’s eyes?

Listen:

The wise Rabbi Bunam once said in old age, when he had already grown blind:
“I should not like to change places with our father Abraham! What good would it do God if Abraham became like a blind Bunam, and blind Bunam became like Abraham? Rather than have this happen, I think I shall try to become a little more like myself.”

The same idea was expressed with even greater pregnancy by Rabbi Zusya when he said, a short while before his death:

“In the world to come, I shall not be asked: ‘Why were you not Moses?’ I shall be asked: ‘Why were you not Zusya?’” (From *Modern Spirituality* edited by John Garvey)

Is this true of me at this stage of my life?

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 29 Heart to Heart Talks-I

Read: Mark 6:31

Ponder: Is Jesus inviting you to go with Him to a quiet place, by yourself, to get some rest?

Listen: John chapter 13

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 30 Heart to Heart Talks-II

Read: Mark 4:33-44

Ponder:

Listen: John chapter 14

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 31 Heart to Heart Talks-III

Read: Luke 10:38-42

Ponder:

Listen: John 15

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 32 Heart to Heart Talks-IV

Read: John 16

Ponder:

Listen:

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 33 Heart to Heart Talks-V

Read: John 17

Ponder: Jesus prayer focus is for His church.
Jesus' longs for His church to be drawn into that oneness with Him and the Father.

Listen: The organism church is the eternal living body of the living Christ.
The organization church is the temporal administrative structure which is to enhance the nurture of the organism church. One day it will not be needed and will disappear, just like the earthly marriage and family institutions when He comes to bring us all home. When the perfect comes, the imperfect will be no more, like what Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 13.

Journal: How does the above truth affect you and your plans for the rest of your earthly life as His steward re. studies, budgets, properties, fashion, missions, singlehood or marriage, family and jobs i.e. careers and vocations?

Pray:

Act:

Day 34 Hear the Shepherd in the Context of the Flock

Read: John 10:14-16

Ponder: I once observed the movements of a flock of sheep. That particular flock was standing still in the middle of their pen with what seemed like apprehension to me as the shepherd had left his sheep dog there to ensure that they remained in that position. However, as soon as they were allowed to move, it needed just one of them to start running and all the rest then had the courage to run in the same direction. American sheep had a type of "flock mentality" similar to the "herd mentality" of our Malaysian cows.

No wonder, then, that when our Lord Jesus mentions that His sheep recognise His voice and follow Him, He uses the plural concept of sheep. I believe He wants us to feel that we belong to Him together and submit to Him together as He shepherds us minute by minute. Nevertheless, when one sheep gets lost, He is ever ready to look for it, find it and bring it back to the flock, never to be left on its own again.

Listen:

- * Is the saying "No man is an island" true in your life?
- * How is individualism discouraged in the Kingdom of God?
- * How may we hear our Good Shepherd's voice and follow Him together within a small group or local church context?

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 35 **Safe and Secure in the Hands of God**

Read: Isaiah 49:16

Ponder: A disappointed, disillusioned, resentful pastor who was forgiven, restored and recharged by the quiet presence of His faithful God, shared after 5 days of retreat with Jesus...

"When God revealed Himself to me again, I felt as if His amazing love, understanding, forgiveness and restoration were being poured on me; I felt like a little lamb, securely held in the Shepherd's palm!"

Listen: Is there any way in which you can identify with the above pastor's experience in his pilgrimage as God's servant (lay or pastor) and beloved child?

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 36 **Hidden for a Purpose**

Read: Luke 5:15-16; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Ponder: To spend resources of time, energy and expenses for prolonged periods of quietness with God seems a great waste to many Christians today unless they are able to see that God sometimes wants His children to be hidden for a purpose. Remember:

Moses in Midian...

David with the sheep...

Jesus in the wilderness...

Paul in Arabia...

John on the island of Patmos...

Listen: Isaiah 43:1-7; Philippians 3:10

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 37

The Message of Gethsemane

Read: Matthew 26:36-44

Ponder:

Ultimately, the message of Gethsemane is:

To be open to God our Father about our weaknesses and feelings in our
communion with Him

To entrust our whole life to Him completely

To depend entirely upon His mercy and love to uphold us

To do God's will only in God's ways

Listen:

* It was at Gethsemane that we understand how secure He was in His Father's wisdom, love and faithfulness so that...

* He could change His prayer (note the difference between Jesus' 1st and 2nd prayer in Gethsemane) to obey Him in being made sin for the world...and consequently lived without God for us (as He cried out in agony, "Father, Father, Why have You forsaken Me?!").

* He trusted His Father to raise Him from the dead....to be with Him again.....and He did!
(Luke 22:14-20; Luke 24:30-31)

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 38**To Submit or Not Submit**

Read: Matthew 26:36-44

Ponder:

Looking at the conditions of our lives at home, in church and in society, one wonders whether or not we make more effort praying that we may bypass God's will for us than that we may do what He has already revealed to us??

P.S. Jesus prayed **once** to avoid His death on the cross for sinful men and women like us, but **twice** to submit to His Father's will for Him. If it was uphill for Him till the end, how much more is it for us?

Maybe we should consider praying **once** that we **may** avoid His will and **a hundred times** thereafter that we **will** be enabled to do His will for us.

Listen:

Journal:

Pray:

Act: Commit your answers to the Lord and humbly seek His enabling to follow Him for the rest of your earthly life, no matter how old or young you may be today. To the Lord, 1 day is as a 1,000 years and a 1,000 years as 1 day!

Day 39 God's Specific Will for You?

Read: Romans 12:1-2

Ponder:

A *Career* is just a job by which we earn a living for daily basic needs or luxuries. A person, therefore, may change jobs rather easily as he may or may not have passion for it. As long as he can do the expected job well and earn a reasonable expected income, he feels contented. He may not really like or dislike the work.

A *Vocation*, however, is a calling. It is an area of work for which a person really feels passionate. He will be inwardly restless until...one day...he is able to fulfill that task e.g. as a compassionate nurse, a caring teacher, an honest businessman, a servant pastor, a gentle kindergarten teacher, a diligent social worker, an efficient engineer, a persering wife and mother, etc.

Listen:

At creation, God gave man and woman the mandate (also a great privilege) of taking care of His world. The targets especially include the care of people, and the animal and plant kingdoms (What else is there in the world do we have?).

His assignment to the human couple was clear:

Genesis 1:27,28

God also ensures that other issues about work (careers or vocations) are clear:

- **Christ alone is to have all the glory:**

Colossians 1:15-20

- **God cares for all, Not just Christians**

Matthew 22:35-40

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 40 Think about the Life of Jesus when
He Walked on Earth in Human Flesh such as Ours

Read: Philippians 2:5-18

Ponder:

Jesus, the Lamb of God sacrificed, became the Good Shepherd;

Jesus, whose poor parents were rejected by busy hoteliers, became the King of kings!

Quote:

STILL HE WALKED

He could hear the crowds screaming "crucify" "crucify"...

He could hear the hatred in their voices,

These were his chosen people.

He loved them,

And they were going to crucify him.

He was beaten, bleeding and weakened... his heart was broken,

But still He walked.

He could see the crowd as he came from the palace.

He knew each of the faces so well.

He had created them.

He knew every smile, laugh, and shed tear,

But now they were contorted with rage and anger...his heart broke,

But still He walked.

Was he scared?

You and I would have been

So his humanness would have mandated that he was. He felt alone.

His disciples had left, denied, and even betrayed him.

He searched the crowd for a loving face and he saw very few.

Then he turned his eyes to the only one that mattered

And he knew that he would never be alone.

He looked back at the crowd, at the people who were spitting

At him, throwing rocks at him and mocking him and he knew

That because of him, they would never be alone.

So for them, He walked.

The sounds of the hammer striking the spikes echoed through

The crowd. The sounds of his cries echoed even louder,

The cheers of the crowd, as his hands and feet
 Were nailed to the cross, intensified with each blow.
 Loudest of all was the still small voice inside his
 Heart that whispered "I am with you, my son",
 And God's heart broke.

He had let His Son walk.

Jesus could have asked God to end his suffering,
 But instead he asked God to forgive.
 Not to forgive him, but to forgive the ones who were persecuting him.
 As he hung on that cross, dying an unimaginable death,
 He looked out and saw, not only the faces in the crowd,
 But also, the face of every person yet to be,
 And his heart filled with love.
 As his body was dying, his heart was alive.
 Alive with the limitless, unconditional love he feels for each of us.

That is why He walked.

When I forget how much My God loves me,

I remember his walk.

I wonder if I can be forgiven,

I remember his walk.

When I need reminded of how to live like Christ,

I think of his walk.

And to show him how much I love him,

I wake up each morning, turn my eyes to him,

And I walk.

Author unknown

Listen:

Journal:

Pray:

Act:

Day 41**Jesus, Joy of My Heart!!****Read:**

*"Then I was the craftsman at His side.
I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in His presence,
rejoicing in His whole world
and delighting in mankind."*

Proverbs 8:30-31

Ponder:

Peter repented, the crowd repented but Judas did not.

Repentance is like getting disentangled from the webs of our past habits, thoughts and words so that we may freely fly in God's will, irrespective of age or situation.

Listen:

Acts 2:36-39

1 John 1:9

John 3:6-8

John 3:16-17

Jesus Laughs!

A New Believer Contractor:

"Since Jesus found me, His presence so fills me with joy that I do not know how to express our relationship except to portray Him as laughing with me.

Here, take a look at what I have sculpted....

it's the portrait of a laughing Jesus!"

One who has been forgiven of his sins and holds a clear conscience before God is able to laugh with Jesus who told His disciples to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world!

Reflect with hymn...**I Know Who Holds Tomorrow**

I don't know about tomorrow, I just live from day to day,
I don't borrow from it's sunshine, For it's skies may turn to gray.
I don't worry o'er the future, For I know what Jesus said,

nourished me with the bread of His word. Above all, He forgave me, He forgot everything, He did not even wish me to remember my past myself.

When, through my tears, I began to tell Him something of the years during which I betrayed Him, He lovingly placed His hand over my mouth in order to silence me. His one concern is that I should muster courage enough to pick myself up again, to try and carry on walking in spite of my weakness, and to believe in His love in spite of my fears. But there was one thing He did, the value of which cannot be measured, something truly unbelievable, something only God could do.

While I continued to have doubts about my own salvation, to tell him that my sins could not be forgiven, and that justice, too, had its rights, He appeared on the Cross before me one Friday towards midday...

I was at its foot, and found myself bathed with the blood which flowed from the gaping holes made in His flesh by the nails. He remained there for three hours until He expired.

I realized that He had died in order that I might stop turning to Him with questions about justice, and believe instead, deep within myself, that the scales had come down overflowing on the side of love and that, even though all, through unbelief or madness, had offended Him, He had conquered for ever, and drawn all things everlastingly to Himself.

Then later, so that I should never forget the Friday and abandon the Cross, as one forgets a postcard on the table or a picture in the worn-out book that had been feeding one's devotion, He led me on to discover that in order to be with me continually, not simply as an affectionate remembrance but as a living presence, He had devised the Eucharist (the Lord's supper).

What a discovery that was!

...He led me to understand that the sign of bread testified to His hidden presence, not only during the Great Sacrifice, but at all times, since the Eucharist was not an isolated moment in my day, but a line which stretched twenty-four hours: He is God-with-us, the realization of what had been foretold by the cloud that went before the people of God during their journey through the desert, and the darkness which filled the tabernacle in the temple at Jerusalem.

...Jesus was not only bread, He was a Friend.

A home without bread is not a home, but a home without friendship is nothing.

...Jesus did not overcome the insuperable obstacle presented by the divinity and enter the human sphere simply to be our Saviour. Had that been all, His work would have remained unfinished, His mission of love unfulfilled.

He broke through the wall surrounding the invisible, and came down into the visible world to bear witness to 'the things that are above,' to reveal to us 'the secrets of His Father's house', to give us in concrete form what He called eternal life.

What exactly is it, this 'eternal life'?

He Himself defined it in the Gospels: 'And eternal life is this: to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent' (John 17:3). So eternal life is, first and foremost, knowledge. It is a matter of knowing the Father, knowing Jesus. But it is not a questions of any external, historical, analogical knowledge which we could more or less imagine, possess perhaps, even now; it is rather a question of real, supernatural knowledge which, it is still surrounded here by the darkness of faith, is already the same as the knowledge we will have when the veil is torn aside and we see God face to face. It is a question of knowing God as He is, not as He may appear to us or as we may imagine Him. This is the heart of the mystery I have tried to describe as the beyond, and which is the key to the secret of intimacy with God and the substance of contemplative prayer.

In giving us 'eternal life', Jesus gives us that knowledge of the Father, which is already our first experience of living, here on earth, the divine life; which is a vital participation, here and now, in the family of God; and which means that while we remain children of man, we are at the same time children of God....

Jesus is the image of the Father, the centre of the universe and of history.

Jesus is our salvation, the radiance of the God we cannot see, the unquenchable fire of love, the one for whom the angles sigh, the Holy One of God, the true Adorer, the eternal High Priest, the Lord of the Ages, the glory of God.

Jesus is also our Brother, and, as such, He takes His place beside us, to teach us the path we must follow to reach the invisible. And to make sure that we understand, He translates into visible terms the invisible things He has seen – as man, He acts as God would act; He introduces the ways of the family of God on to the earth and into the family of man."

From *In Search of the Beyond* by Carlo Correto

Pause in adoration of God the Father and the Son!

Recall

...what Paul proclaimed in Romans 8:31-37 and may your spirit be lifted up with your face looking to Jesus, the Author and the Perfector of our faith!

"For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Pilgrim B. His Joy in Me, My Joy Complete

“He who saw me through the pain and waiting will continue to stand by me through thick and thin. My awareness of His love for me has increased and with it, my gratitude. He is the faithful God whose love will never let me go. Someone once attested that a person who is sure of his God is not afraid to smile and laugh with Him. I know now that He is determined to give me joy!

I asked Him to make me like Mary; He persuaded me to be transformed like Martha was transformed. (Compare the Martha of Luke 10:38-42 with that of John 12:2-3. After the Lord showed her that He is the Resurrection and the Life, in John 12, she appeared to have stopped grumbling!) Waiting on Him is once more turned into delight as my attention is diverted from personal duty to the fact of His eager waiting for me.

It is so good to feel totally forgiven and accepted by the beloved Son of God. As I pilgrim together with others to meet Him face to face, I am encouraged that I can converse with Him and He with me, for in this fellowship alone dwells the fullness of joy. It is joy like that of a bridegroom with his bride. He is not only the God worth knowing; He is the God worth knowing at all cost.

My identity as a person lies in belonging to this God and Father of all mankind. It does not matter whether He made me Chinese or Indian, an Easterner or a Westerner; male or female. It does not matter whether I am richer or poorer, healthy or sick. It does not matter whether my church is Pentecostal, Charismatic, independent or traditional. It does not even matter whether I am labeled a good or a bad Christian. All that matters is that this one and only true and living God made me in His image. He revealed Himself to me in His beloved Son, Jesus; He went out of His way to show His holiness and His mercy to me, a wayward, helpless, sinful creature ... and ... He will not let anything or anyone take me away from His love, ever!

Great is the joy of one who has and knows that she has such a God as her Father!

Worship Him and Rejoice with the hymn writer...

1. The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell, It goes beyond the highest star And reaches to the lowest hell.

The guilty pair, bowed down with care God gave His Son to win, His erring child, He reconciled And pardoned from his sin.

Chorus:

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure, How measureless and strong;

It shall for evermore endure

The saints' and angels' song.

2. Could we with ink the ocean fill And were the skies of parchment made, Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill. And ev'ry man a scribe by trade;

To write the love of God above . Would drain the ocean dry, Nor could the scroll contain the whole Though stretched from sky to sky.

3. When hoary times shall pass away And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall, When men who hear, refuse to pray, On rocks and hills and mountains call;

God's love so sure shall still endure All measureless and strong, Redeeming grace to Adam's race The saints' and angels' song!!

(Lyrics by P.M. Lehman. Arr. by Claudia Lehman Mays.

No. 134 Youth Hymns (1,2,3,4). Pub. by The Alliance Press)

**Let us kneel and worship Him...
in awe of His wondrous love that passes all knowledge!!**

**Sing or Read Hymn...
All That Thrills My Soul
to express your love for
JESUS...Saviour, Lord and Friend!!**

Who can cheer the heart like Jesus, By His presence all divine?
True and tender, pure and precious, O how blest to call Him mine!

Chorus:

All that thrills my soul is Jesus;

He is more than life to me;

And the fairest of ten thousand,

In my blessed Lord I see.

What a wonderful redemption! Never can a mortal know
How my sin, tho' red like crimson, Can be whiter than the snow.

By Thoro Harris

**We Live in the Era After Christ's Resurrection...
 We live in the World But are Not of the World...
 We follow the Privileges and Responsibilities of
 God's New Covenanted Creation
 A Response is Required...**

Day 42 Response to Jesus' Resurrection Life!

Read:

- Luke 24:41-42 - doubt due to disappointment of having seen Jesus 'defeated' by death on a cross.
- Luke 24:41-42 - was Jesus real? He showed them He was as He was able to eat like them. They needed a bridge of something tangible and He understood and gave a sign to them.
- Luke 24:9-11 - the women doubted due to lack of comprehension
- Luke 24:9-11 - men doubted because women's talk seemed nonsensical to them.
- Matthew 28:5-8 - women doubted because their fear and joy got mixed up
- Mark 16:8 - women were fearful and bewildered; they needed time to think as they ran and ran as they think, as usual...(women usually talk as they think and think as they talk)
- John 20:29-30 - Scientifically inclined Thomas got told off!
 - God still speaks to us today just like in Jesus' time, when much "*are not recorded in this Book*" (*the Bible passed down to us*).

Isaiah 65:17-25 - Prophecy To Be Completely Fulfilled...

New Heavens and a New Earth

- ¹⁷ *“See, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.*
- ¹⁸ *But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.*
- ¹⁹ *I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and take delight in my people;
the sound of weeping and of crying
will be heard in it no more.*
- ²⁰ *“Never again will there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not live out his years;
the one who dies at a hundred
will be thought a mere child;
the one who fails to reach^a a hundred
will be considered accursed.*
- ²¹ *They will build houses and dwell in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.*
- ²² *No longer will they build houses and others live in them,
or plant and others eat.
For as the days of a tree,
so will be the days of my people;
my chosen ones will long enjoy
the work of their hands.*
- ²³ *They will not labor in vain,
nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune;
for they will be a people blessed by the LORD,
they and their descendants with them.*
- ²⁴ *Before they call I will answer;
while they are still speaking I will hear.*
- ²⁵ *The wolf and the lamb will feed together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,
and dust will be the serpent’s food.
They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,”
says the LORD.*

What is Your response?

Tell It To Our Resurrected Lord Jesus

May the Holy Spirit increase our understanding of His Word.

Additional Article

JOY

(One Year at the Cross - 7 December by Chris Tiegreen)

“God and eternal things are my only pleasure” (Henry Martyn)

Most of us are good at reactive emotions. We grieve when tragedy strikes, we get angry when injustice is done, we celebrate over good news, and we feel peaceful when all is well. But God asks us to do a strange things in Scripture. He calls not only for our natural, reactive emotions, but also for our supernatural proactive emotions. He urges us to be glad and rejoice forever in something that has not yet taken place. He wants us to celebrate over what He will create.

We're so used to reactive feelings that this request is hard for us to fulfill. It's hard for us to even imagine fulfilling it. When it comes to our feelings, we take a wait and see attitude. We're afraid to invest our feelings in the future, to count our chickens before they're hatched, to get our hopes up only to have them disappointed later. We forget that God isn't guessing about the future. This isn't a speculation about probabilities. This is a rock-solid certainty. There is nothing more inevitable in this world than the fact that there will be a new world. We are given full permission to go ahead and be joyful about this new creation.

This dynamic about rejoicing before something has happened is an integral part of faith. It's just as much an act of faith to celebrate a promise as it is to step out of the boat onto turbulent water or to set foot in a Red Sea that has not yet parted. Our emotions may not be quite as visible as these steps of faith, but they are based on unseen promises just the same. When we invest our hearts in God's future work, we're allowing ourselves to crawl out on a limb of faith. We're telling Him we believe what He says.

What have you invested your emotions in? Are you holding some of them back, waiting to see what God will do about His promises? Too many Christians have mental faith without a heart investment. After all, heart investments are risky. We feel as if we're setting ourselves up for a letdown. But God never let anyone down - ever. Go ahead and rejoice in what you believe!

Be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create. Isaiah 65:18

**Let us Anticipate With All Creation
The Grand Finale
For All God's People!!
Romans 8**

**COME, LORD JESUS...
WE WAIT FOR YOU...PERSEVERE WITH YOU...
WE LOVE YOU LOTS AND LOTS!!!!**

**May the peace of God
keep us every moment of each day and night in Christ Jesus our Lord!**

Suggested Reading List for Growth into His likeness

Available on loan from library at local church (contact Wesley MCS librarian) or the Seremban Reconre House. (Contact warden Helen: 06-6332072)

SPIRITUAL FORMATION - A Process

A. Healing and Deliverance – Putting off old sinful damaged self

- 1 Francis MacNutt, *Healing*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556 (1974).
- 2 John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Healing*, Harper, San Francisco, California (1987).
- 3 D.A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications, Wheaton, Illinois 60187 (1988).
- 4 D.A. Seamands, *Healing of Memories*, Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications, Wheaton, Illinois 60187 (1985).
- 5 D.A. Seamands, *Freedom from the Performance Trap*, formerly titled "Healing Grace", Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications, Wheaton, Illinois 60187 (1985)
- 6 D.A. Seamands, *Living with Your Dreams-Let God Restore Your Shattered Dreams*, Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications, Wheaton, Illinois 60187 (1990). Especially Chapters 8 ("Forgiving the Dream Destroyers") and 9 ("Forgiving-God's Part and Ours").
- 7 D.A. Seamands, *Putting Away Childish Things*, Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications, Wheaton, Illinois 60187 (1982).
- 8 John White, *The Masks of Melancholy: A Christian Physician Looks at Depression and Suicide*, IVP, Downers Grove, Illinois (1982).
- 9 Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*, Image Books, Garden City, New York (1979).
- 10 Ron & Vicki Burks, *Damaged Disciples*, Zondervan Publishing House, Academic and Professional Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530 (1992).
- 11 William and Kristi Gaultiere, *Mistaken Identity: Clear Up the Image of God and Enjoy His Love*, Fleming H. Revell Company, New Jersey 07675 (1989).

B. Devotional – Putting on the new self in Christ

- 1 Gordon MacDonald, *Renewing Your Spiritual Passion*, Oliver-Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee (1989).
- 2 Charles R. Swindoll, *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back ... Persevering Through Pressure*, Thomas Nelson Publishers Inc., Nashville, Tennessee (1980).
- 3 Francis Schaeffer, *No Little People, No Little Places*, IVP, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515 (1974).
- 4 John White, *Magnificent Obsession: The Joy of Christian Commitment* (original title: "The Cost of Christian Commitment) Revised Edition, IVP, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515 (1990).
- 5 Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, Discovery House Publishers, Michigan 49501 (1935)
- 6 Andrew Murray, *Waiting on God*, 2nd Edition (n.d.), Revell, New York (1896).
- 7 Steven Harper, *Embrace the Spirit ... An Invitation to Friendship with God*, Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications, Wheaton, Illinois 60187 (1987).
- 8 J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1973).
- 9 A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, Harper Collins Publisher, New York (1961).
- 10 Thomas A. Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, translated and with an Introduction by Leo Sirley-Price, Penguin Group, London (1952).
- 11 Timothy Pain, 1) *Crucify All Ambition*, 2) *Bury All Individualism* and 3) *Glory in Sacrifice*, a trilogy, Ashburnham Place, Ashburn Christian Trust, Kingsway Publications Ltd., East Sussex (1989).
- 12 F.A. Schaeffer, *The Mark of a Christian*, IVP, London (1970).
- 13 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, translated, and with an introduction by John W. Doberstein, 1st Edition, Harper, New York (1954).
- 14 Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Our Lives*, Harpers Collins Publishers, New York 10022 (1988).

Creation and Spiritual Gifts

- 1 Reginald Johnson, *Celebrate, My Soul ... Discover the Potential of Your God-Given Personality*, Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications Inc., (1988).
- 2 Peter C. Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow ... How to Find Your Gift and Use It*, Regal Books, GL Publications, Ventura, California 93006 (1979).
- 3 Paul Tournier, *The Gift of Feeling*, translated by Edwin Hudson, John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia 30365 (1981).
- 4 Elisabeth Elliot, *Let Me Be a Woman*, Tyndale House Publications Inc., Illinois (1976).
- 5 John White, *When the Spirit Comes with Power: Signs and Wonders Among God's People*, IVP, Downer's Grove, Illinois (1988).
- 6 Leslie Lyall, *John Sung: Flame for God in the Far East*, 5th Edition Rev., Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois (1964).

Other References

- 'Knowing God' by J.I.Packer, IVP 1995
- 'The Jesus I Never Knew' by Phillip Yancey, Harper Collins, 1995
- 'Friends of the Bridegroom' by Lee Bee Teik, A Reconre Publication, 1999
- 'God in the Dark – The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of Doubt' by Os Guinness, c. 1996, Crossway Books 1997
- 'Renewed Day by Day, Daily Reading for One Year, Vol. I, March 4' by A.W.Tozer, Christian Publications 1980
- 'Listen to God's Whispers' by Lee Bee Teik, Reconre Sdn Bhd, 1996
- 'Looking at Creation' by Lee Bee Teik, Reconre Sdn Bhd, 1996
- BSSF (E and BM) A Reconre Publication and Wawasan Pernabur Sdn Bhd respectively
- 18 Booklets (E and BM) A Reconre Publication and Wawasan Pernabur Sdn Bhd respectively
- Listen to Their Heart Cries, A Reconre Publication
- The Heart of Pastoral Counselling, Armour Publishing
- Grace on Time, Trafford Publishing 2012

All Reconre Publications may be ordered from reconre1@gmail.com