

Heart Talk: No Longer A Simple Act of the Will

HOW TO WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

There are three answers to this question.

FIRST: *To worship God in spirit and truth means to worship God as we ought to worship Him. God is Spirit, so we must worship Him in spirit and truth, that is, with a humble and true spiritual adoration in the depth and center of our souls that God alone can see. We can repeat it so often that in the end it will become a part of our very natures and will be as if God were one with our souls, and our souls one with Him.*

SECOND: *To worship God in truth is to recognize Him for who He is, and to recognize ourselves for what we are. To worship God in truth is to recognize as a very present reality in our spirit that God is infinitely perfect, infinitely worthy of worship, and infinitely distanced from evil. He is infinitely greater than all the divine attributes ascribed to Him by man. What man, lacking in wisdom though he may be, could refuse to employ all his strength to respect and worship this great and infinitely worthy God?*

THIRD: *To worship God in truth is further to admit that we are entirely contrary to Him, but that He is willing to make us like himself if we desire it. What man could be so imprudent as to turn himself away, even for a moment, from the reverence, love, service and continual adoration that we most justly owe Him?*

We can begin to look at these three answers to the question of how we pray in Spirit and in Truth by referring back to what Thomas Merton called, "The Hidden Ground of Love", which was rightly seen as the presence of God that is found in all of creation. This "Hidden Ground of Love" is most readily experienced through the heart and soul of the person who recognizes that God calls all people to share something greater than simply the human experience. This goes beyond "warm fuzzies" and "feel good" moments. In this call of God is the realization

that it is God's plan to elevate all people to a spiritual joining where the manifestation of God is most present. Here the soul of the person meets the Perfect Life. A person praying in Spirit and Truth will see the ideal in this Perfect Life, and begin to seek it more and more, being caught up in the oneness God desires for us.



As we learn to worship in Spirit and in Truth, we realize that our words are completely inadequate to describe God, the fullness of his nature, and the

perfection of his works. Our own works pale to that which occurs through God who simply wills something to be done and it happens.

Because of this experienced inadequacy,

silence becomes our prayer. We have rightfully attempted to sing the praises of our God. Yet, after all is said and done, after we have exhausted ourselves in vocal glory and honor, we humbly submit to that place, that situation, that existence where words are no longer adequate, and our sitting humbly in silence allows God to touch, to speak, to be heard, to heal, to draw us closer, to awaken in Spirit the presence of God. This God presence — first learned in quiet prayer — if nurtured, desired, and sought, is to be found in everyday activity where a mere breath is as a moment of prayer, something seen is realized as a spiritual awakening, and a second of silence greatly enhances the unifying grace of God that is offered to us. Now we move to prayer that joins spirit with Spirit.

We acknowledge that, in comparison to God, we are nothing, our desires are empty, and our words create an ineptitude within. We see ourselves as mere shells incapable of fulfillment that has meaning and purpose. Now, we have positioned ourselves to allow God to do what we cannot do in our own lives. That sense of futility in our verbal expressions and in our ability to join with God, is removed by the Lord so that we may have an insurmountable joy that fosters our desire to further grow in union with God. Our wills are

GOD FIRST

Year Two, Part 12

The Prayer of Awareness



being now conformed to the will of the Father. The “Hidden Ground” is being realized.

The Spirit now enlightens us with the truth about ourselves and about God. We become thankful that God is present to us to give us meaning and purpose. The knowledge we profess to have concerning God, is brought to light. We begin to “know” because of our joining in Spirit with our loving God. Only now is our ability to “know” truly fashioned in oneness with Gods. We are beginning to know as God knows. This is the only way.

And the Spirit now reveals the truth.

God’s desire, will, begins to reveal again just how we are the image and likeness of God. Notice, this is done in spirit. The truth of the matter is that physical realities can only take us so far in knowing and understanding God, who is spirit. Only God, completely spirit, can bring his revelation, his life, to be made known within us. It is, after all, God’s gift.

Spirit and Truth help us become aware:

— we cannot join ourselves with God. We can only accept the invitation offered by God to be joined to Him;

— we cannot affix a time and place to meet God. We can only realize that all time is God’s, and therefore the “Hidden Ground of Love” is eternally present to us;

— we cannot pretend to know God with images of God. We can only know God through the daily conversion of the heart and will.



With heart and mind affixed on the glory that is God’s, on his power, presence, holiness, love, we come to give praise and honor to him with a new Spirit. We pray with words, and move into the silence of his Spirit, which knows nothing but truth. We see how much God plans for us, and we joyfully enter into that plan with anticipation and celebration, with a hope that does not disappoint, simply because it is of God. God does not disappoint when our heart, mind and soul are properly disposed by a Spirit of love.

The completeness of self is being brought to our awareness, not in the physical realities sought or the position and power maintained in a passing world, but now in the only one who can do so in all Truth. We can accept that God is God, and we hold nothing to compare. We can accept that our ways are not God’s ways. For now we see, that God’s ways are so much greater than our own. His ways must be such for us to be loved so unconditionally.

Who would wish to turn from that which gives so much? Who could ever wish to be less complete than what God plans for each



PRACTICING OUR AWARENESS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Past inserts may be found on the parish website at:

www.stjohnthebaptistparish.net



Or, they may be obtained at the parish office during normal office hours.

NOW IT BECOMES A MATTER OF FAITH

Anyone who has been following along with these teachings during the past three months can readily see that we’ve been slowly moving from our reliance on our senses to experience God, to the inner awareness, peace, that helps us become aware of God’s presence. This requires an act of faith. Without intellectually discerning God, without using my senses to feel God, can I have a certainty that God is present?

This takes work. It takes effort on our part. It takes faith rooted in the Spirit of God doing within us what we cannot do alone. Jesus said to Thomas, “You believe because you have seen. Blessed are they who believe but have not seen.” Seeing God in Spirit — in emptiness of self (including the senses and intellectualizing) — is our next step.



FOR THOSE SEEKING GREATER FURTHER DEVELOPMENT & UNDERSTANDING

Watch the bulletin for evening and daytime sessions are scheduled for those having questions, those finding their lives being refocused by the Spirit of God, and those who have now found new gifts and charisms because of this practice. We’ll set these in place in January and February as long as interest is shown.