

RESTORE MY SPIRIT, O GOD



Inspiration for Regaining
What's Been Lost

RESTORE MY SPIRIT, O GOD

Inspiration for Regaining What's Been Lost

Jeffery J Horacek, O.D.

In Loving Memory of My Parents

Joseph B. "Pep" Horacek

January 21, 1927–November 13, 2012

Avid Sportsman, Navy Seaman, Husband, Father,
Carpenter, Architect and Builder

Heart of gold that never failed to give to those in need.

Arlene A. Apfelbeck Horacek

March 16, 1930–October 18, 2009

Teacher, Wife, Mother,
Administrative Assistant

Heart of love that never failed to care for and encourage.

Introduction

Restore My Spirit, O God is the second book in *The Renew Devotional Trilogy*. The first book, published in February 2017, *Renew My Heart, O God*, is a devotional dedicated to the healing and renewal of your heart, the wellspring of your soul, by bringing you hope, encouragement, and healing through the light and love of Jesus Christ. The last book in this series, currently being written, *Revive My Soul, O God*, is a devotional designed to empower you to become the whole person of wellness and completeness that God knows you to be, while overcoming life's daily strife and struggles.

Restore My Spirit, O God—Inspiration for Regaining What's Been Lost is much more than a daily devotional—this is your spiritual handbook, your spiritual guide—to be used alongside your Bible to reconnect your severed and lost spirit with God's Spirit and to stay connected and become spiritually mature, active, and vibrant. Since the Garden of Eden, our spirits have become separated from God, and we must reconnect with God in body, soul, and spirit, or we will never be complete or exist as our Creator intended for us to fully be. Written in an easy-to-use daily devotional format, this spiritual handbook and guide contains the essential tools required for you to become spiritually wise and mature in God's eyes. To get there, however, will require that you diligently use these tools effectively and continually.

In this book's next section, "Topics by Month," you will find for each month the topics of discussion that will inspire and empower you to grow to spiritual maturity. All the essentials are here—prayer; spiritual warfare; worship; discovering and utilizing your spiritual gifts; the spiritual disciplines to keep you in tune with God's Spirit; the indwelling and empowering Holy Spirit; knowing God through His attributes and character; knowing God through His powerful names; knowing Christ through the Cross; knowing Scripture, truth, and true spirituality; the importance of love, purpose, faith, hope, and trust; standing firm with patience and perseverance, in attitude and character, and refusing to fail; with service, leadership, and spiritual principles that are timeless—yes, all that and more is waiting for you inside. Let your spiritual journey begin—you can start anywhere, just start today!

At the end of this book is also an index, "Quotation, Scripture, and Title List," which lists the first four words of each quotation used and author, the Scriptures, and the title for each daily devotion. Hopefully, this will also assist you in finding those topics of special interest to you. Most of the time, I have once again primarily used the NIV (New International Version) as the Bible version of choice, since it is relatively easy to read and an excellent thought-for-thought translation. In addition, I have frequently used the NKJV (New King James Version), especially where its use of capitals helps us to fully identify God and His various names, which is often lacking in other versions.

To be the best spiritual student, it would be good for you to have a few translations or a parallel Bible where you can see the various translations side by side. This truly gives you a much fuller understanding of God's Word. My personal favorite translations are the New International Version (NIV), the New King James Version (NKJV)—the most memorable and melodious, the New American Standard Bible (NASB)—known for its word-for-word translation trueness, and the easy-to-read-and-understand New Living Translation (NLT).

I hope and pray that you will enjoy and engage in the format of this devotional, as I've used timeless quotations for the human witness and Scripture as God's witness to the truth, and may my commentary guide and direct your thoughts and be an inspiration. My ultimate mission is to bring the light and love of Jesus Christ to the people of this troubled world to heal their hearts, minds, souls, and spirits. May you become that person of wholeness, wellness, and spiritual maturity that God knows you to be. It's time to connect—God's waiting for you inside.

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6b NIV).

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;” (Ezekiel 36:26a NIV).

Prayers and blessings,

Jeff

Topics by Month

January / 8

Christ, Worship, Holiness

February / 40

God's Love, Our Love, Forgiveness

March / 68

Peace and Joy, Wisdom, Prayer

April / 99

Prayer, The Cross, Spiritual Warfare

May / 133

Spiritual Gifts, Obedience and Service, Spiritual Disciplines

June / 167

Spiritual Disciplines, Gratitude, Patience

July / 206

Perseverance, Dedication, Respect, Leadership, Character

August / 233

Character, Our Thoughts, Attitude, Attributes of God

September / 265

Refuse to Fail, The Holy Spirit, The Names of God, Principles

October / 294

Truth, Spirituality, Scripture

November / 317

Scripture, Faith, Trust

December / 341

Purpose, Hope, Christ



Not By Might
Nor By Power
But By My Spirit
Saith The
LORD *Of* Hosts

Zechariah 4:6

January's Awakening

Start the New Year with a Prayer

Start the year off right. Be God's instrument. Be God's light.

January's Awakening, Day 1—For New Year's Day

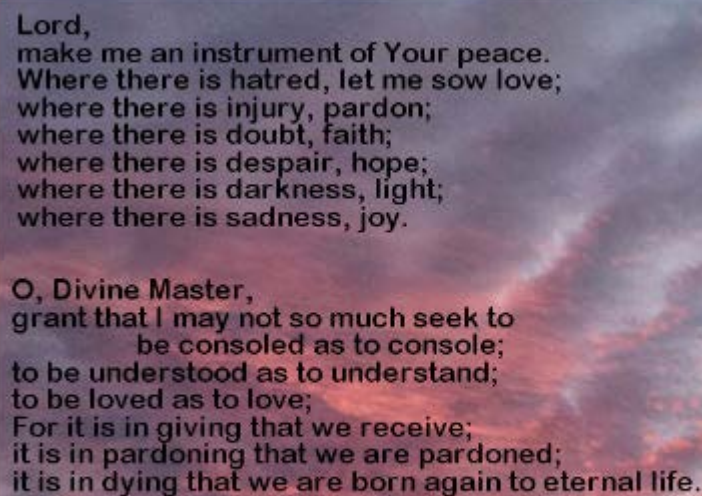
We are told to let our light shine, and if it does, we won't need to tell anybody it does. Lighthouses don't fire cannons to call attention to their shining—they just shine.

—Dwight L Moody

In a world characterized by loneliness and despair, we can reach out in love to those around us. Or, as St. Francis once said, we can "preach the gospel all the time; if necessary, use words."

—Phil Callaway, *Making Life Rich Without Any Money*

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18–20 NIV



Lord,
make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to
be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi

Have you resolved to make positive changes in your life for this year and beyond? Are you prepared to be God's instrument of peace, love, forgiveness, faith, hope, light, and joy? Are you seeking first His kingdom and determined to bring as many as you are able with you?

Start this year off right. The most powerful resolution that you can make in your heart is to adopt that prayer as your mission statement for this year. Just imagine the possibilities if a multitude embraced that prayer and put it into action each day. Be a contagious Christian of the distinguished and admirable kind. God wants you, and this world most certainly needs you.

Live Priorities

Set priorities. Better still, live priorities. To see the miracles happen, you must intimately know the Miracle-Maker.

January's Awakening, Day 2

I believe in the power of Jesus Christ to resolve any difficulty, to remove any weakness, to heal any disease.

—Norman Vincent Peale

My order of priorities reflects the level of my commitment to Christ. Whoever or whatever is in first place, if it isn't the Lord Jesus, is in the wrong place.

—Charles Swindoll

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33 NIV

As a believer, you have the authority to tap into that same phenomenal power of Christ Himself. But it takes your unswerving belief, unwavering faith, and unrelenting dedication to Him to bring about those miracles in your life and in the lives of others. Priorities. If Christ is first in your life and you are diligently seeking Him and His righteousness, then you will witness those miracles in your life and, through prayer, be able to witness the miraculous in the lives of others as well.

Becoming a mature believer living in the fullness of the power of Christ takes persistence, perseverance, dedication, and commitment, with a humble and contrite heart following hard after Him. Resolve in your heart to become that believer of power, living each day in the fullness of Him. Break the chains, release the restraints, and open your heart, mind, and spirit to embrace Him in all His glory and splendor. Pray each day: "More of you, Lord, and less of me."

The Historical Jesus

The question is not so much the existence of the historical Jesus, but rather, was Jesus who He claimed to be?

January's Awakening, Day 3

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.

—Flavius Josephus, Jewish historian, Epitome from *the Universal History of Agapius*

The doubts which have been cast on the historical reality of Jesus are, in my judgment, unworthy of serious attention.

—James Frazer, non-Christian writer

No serious scholar has ventured to postulate the non-historicity of Jesus.

—Otto Betz

This is certainly not a dissertation or treatise on the historicity of Jesus but meant only to prompt your heart and mind to solidify your faith in who Jesus is to you. There is sufficient evidence outside of our Gospel accounts concerning the person of Jesus to place Him with certainty in history. But that evidence only concerns the man. Jesus claimed to be much more than mere man, and that's what most skeptics or those refuting the claims of Jesus would have an issue with. That is where your faith must take its leap and embrace not only Jesus the man, but Jesus our God. History can only assert His humanity. Faith must assert His divinity, and certainly trusting the Gospel accounts of His miracles and statements and resurrection should be sufficient evidence to take that step of faith.

When someone asks you why you believe in Jesus, you should be prepared to give a reasonable response as to the reality of the historical man and why you have faith to believe He is also your God.

Authoritative Teacher and Miraculous Healer

Authoritative teaching and miraculous healing while proclaiming the good news of the kingdom accompanied Jesus wherever He went. He was no ordinary man.

January's Awakening, Day 4

I tell the Hindus that their lives will be imperfect if they do not also study reverently the teaching of Jesus.

—Gandhi

[Jesus is] our divinest symbol. Higher has the human thought not yet reached. A symbol of quite perennial, infinite character; whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest.

—Thomas Carlyle

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Matthew 9:35 NIV

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Mark 1:22 NIV

Jesus taught as one with authority because He was the Authority. The Living Word was teaching the Written Word, which had already been conceived in His mind before the Word had been penned and even before the beginning of time. As Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom was at hand, He provided tangible proof by casting out demons, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, mobility for the lame, feeding the thousands, calming the sea, raising the dead, forgiving sins, and brought eternal hope for the broken. Signs, wonders, and miracles were the norm that accompanied His teaching. No, not an ordinary teacher; no, not an ordinary man. Crucified, three days dead, and resurrected to life, seen, touched and experienced by many, and then ascended into heaven, witnessed by many—positive proof that He was who He claimed to be. One with the Father, God had come.

Conqueror and Light of Day

His is the light that overcomes the darkness. He is the One who conquers by His spirit.

January's Awakening, Day 5

Pythagoras, Epicurus, Socrates, Plato, these are the torches of the world; Christ is the light of day.

—Victor Hugo

Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mahomet, and Napoleon.

—Philip Schaff

Many a great mind has come and gone throughout history, attempting to explain the world and self and God Himself. Some have left indelible marks on current thinking, leaving a positive legacy in our knowledge base. Others have not. So too have the great leaders of the war machines of history left their infamous mark on the people and nations of our world. In all these things, change has come, but not always effective or positive for the betterment of all mankind. Changing thought patterns and political boundaries do not always result in enlightenment or an increase in the standard of living.

Christ, however, has left an indelible mark on all humanity and has provided the ultimate in the human experience as to the illumination of truth and the pathway to the pinnacle of existence of the human body, soul, and spirit. While others have been flickering candles, Christ is the intense, inextinguishable light of day. He is the conqueror who has captured the hearts and minds of the people, not by power or might, but by His spirit. There has never been, nor will there ever be, one more powerful and effective as His irrepressible light penetrating into the deepest darkness of the human condition.

Jesus Is Lord

Jesus boldly declared in numerous ways that He was God. And He showed it.

January's Awakening, Day 6

Of all the great sages and prophets throughout world history, Jesus alone claimed to be God-become-man.

—Luis Palau

He said that he was in existence before Abraham and that he was "lord" of the Sabbath; he claimed to forgive sins; he continually identified himself, in his work, his person and his glory, with the one he termed his heavenly Father; he accepted men's worship; and he said that he was to be the judge of men at the last day, and that their eternal destiny would depend on their attitude to him.

—J. N. D. Anderson

Take hold of Jesus as a man and you will discover that he is God.

—Martin Luther

"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" John 8:58 NIV

Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Luke 6:5 NIV

But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, take your mat and go home.” Matthew 9:6 NIV

Jesus answered: “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 that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. John 14:9–10 NIV

Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. John 9:37–38 NIV

For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. John 5:21–23 NIV

There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. John 12:48 NIV

As the above Scriptures testify, only God Himself could claim what Jesus claimed and perform those claims in full as Jesus did. Jesus identified Himself as “I AM,” *Yahweh*, LORD, the personal name of God. He declared that He was Lord over the Sabbath, the sacred and holy day of rest that God established at His creation for the entirety of all that exists. With authority, He forgave the sins of those who came to Him. He declared that He and the Father were One and interacting as One. He freely accepted the worship of those who recognized Him for who He was. He stated that judgment had been entrusted to Him by the Father, and that He, in fact, was the only way to the Father. To reject the words of Jesus is to reject the heavenly abode and God. Yes, Jesus is Lord.

Lord and Best Friend

Jesus is our Lord, Savior, and Best Friend, sparing nothing for our benefit, not even His life.

January’s Awakening, Day 7

Situations will not cloud my vision from seeing the clarity of God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

—Alex Uwajeh, *The Power of Positive Affirmations*

When I understand that everything happening to me is to make me more Christlike, it resolves a great deal of anxiety.

—A. W. Tozer

If we are to be just like Jesus, we must have regular time of talking to God and listening to his Word.

—Max Lucado

The unique characteristic of our God, especially in the person of Jesus Christ, that distinguishes Him from all other pagan deities, is that He is a personal God acting as our best friend. He is not there to condemn or control or coerce or to use or abuse or cause us to sin, but to be as a best friend to empower, encourage, uphold, and uplift us to the highest level and hope in Him. He is the true pathway to heaven; our road of hope here, our trail to find peace, and in our journey through life, He is there as our Lord, Savior, and Best Friend who has spared nothing to bring us closer to Him.

To Believe Is to Worship

Believing in Him is worshiping Him with each breath and heartbeat.

January's Awakening, Day 8

To believe God is to worship God.

—Martin Luther

The great thing, and the only thing, is to adore and praise God.

—Thomas Merton

We should dedicate ourselves to becoming in this life the most perfect worshipers of God we can possibly be, as we hope to be through all eternity.

—Brother Lawrence

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Psalm 29:2 NIV

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Matthew 4:10 NIV

We were created by God to worship God. That is the simple yet most profound truth. The angels were also created by God to worship and serve Him, but they are of a different created order, being spirit, not physical beings. We are not forced nor coerced to worship, as God wants

us to come willingly to worship and commune with Him. Our Creator wants to be intimately involved in our lives, and He wants us to be intimately and spiritually connected to Him. Worship connects us to Him as it is our spirit actively reaching out to Him, praising Him for who He is and what He has already done for us. For the Christian believer, the practice of worshipping God should be as essential as breathing in and breathing out.

Worshipping His Holiness

Are you gaining ground in your spiritual walk? If not, you need to worship God's holiness and let it permeate and reset you.

January's Awakening, Day 9

Worship is the highest and noblest activity of which man, by the grace of God, is capable.

—John Stott

We are saved to worship God. All that Christ has done for us in the past and all that He is doing now leads to this one end.

—A. W. Tozer

To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.

—William Temple

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, Hebrews 12:28
NIV

Since worship connects us with God, it also connects us to all that God is. That is why worship is so critical to our Christian walk. Connecting to Him connects us to His holiness, which serves to purify our hearts and minds and resets them from our sinful self to the holiness we are to strive for and which we will ultimately regain when we are glorified at the Rapture. Scripture continually admonishes us to be holy as the Lord God is holy. The only way we can continually move forward in this holiness direction is to praise and worship Him and connect with the only essence of holiness in existence—Him. Therefore, believer, if you truly want to become spiritual and connect with God and all that He is, you must continually be in a stance of praise and worship directed solely to Him.

Worship Combats Original Sin

Are sin, self, and Satan winning the battles for your allegiance, or are you wholeheartedly worshiping God?

January's Awakening, Day 10

Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy of that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin.

—William Temple

Make every effort then to let God be great and to ensure that all your good intentions and endeavors are directed to him in all that you do and in all that you refrain from doing.

—Meister Eckhart

When the remembrance of God lives in the heart and there maintains the fear of Him, then all goes well; but when this remembrance grows weak or is kept only in the head, then all goes astray.

—Theophan the Recluse

Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word. Isaiah 66:2 NIV

The Fall of Mankind

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Genesis 3:6 NIV

The Fall of Lucifer, who is now Satan (prophetically, some of this is yet to come)

"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest

trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.” Ezekiel 28:12b–19 NIV

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. Isaiah 14:12–15 NIV

Worship puts self aside and acts in selfless submission to the One who is worthy of our respect, honor, praise, and adoration. That is why worship is essential to our entire essence of being. Self is the most significant and profound stumbling block that we must continually battle and overcome. Disobedience to the directive of God and serving self was mankind’s original sin in the Garden of Eden.

Lucifer, probably the most beautiful and magnificent of all God’s angels, knew his beauty and splendor and, in pride, aspired to be like God and to be worshiped himself as god. Mankind was Lucifer’s target, and now as the fallen angel, Satan, he indeed has been successful in turning many hearts from God to him. Remember, for now, Satan is the prince and ruler of this world.

There is a battle raging all around us emanating from Satan and this world to do anything and everything but worship God. And additionally, an even greater battle rages deep within us that constantly pulls and separates us from Him. Thankfully, all is not lost, for we have the Holy Spirit within us to keep the world, Satan, and self from winning those battles. We must worship the Lord our God with all that is within us.

Gazing and Praising

The secret to this difficult life is continually gazing upon God and praising Him in everything. Turning calamity into blessing is the answer and elixir for this life.

January’s Awakening, Day 11

Many have found the secret of which I speak and, without giving much thought to what is going on within them, constantly practice this habit of inwardly gazing upon God.

—A. W. Tozer

If any one would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and all perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For

it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you, therefore, work miracles, you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit; for it heals with a word, and turns all that it touches into happiness.

—William Law

*Let us, with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for He is kind:
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.
Let us blaze his name abroad,
For of gods he is the God:
He, with all-commanding might,
Filled the new-made world with light:
All things living he doth feed,
His full hand supplies their need:
He his chosen race did bless
In the wasteful wilderness:
Let us then with gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for he is kind.*

—John Milton

In this instantaneous, lightning-speed existence, we all want immediate results, quick fixes, a pill to cure every ailment and problem, and the elixir of life waiting at hand to drink and gain immortality and the ascension into divinity. Preposterous? Maybe not! What if the formula for the elixir is right at hand? What if it's already a part of your God-designed nature, secretly tucked away in your spiritual genetics? Maybe the formula is all too simple, and we just miss it, looking for the extravagant, exotic, and other-worldly constitution.

Maybe we just need to tap into what's already there—to gaze inward and upward to Jesus, our author and finisher. Maybe we need to be thankful for and embrace everything that comes our way, not as a calamity or evil, but that by which God can transform anything into an ultimate blessing. The answer may well be simply a change of attitude from deep within. It's called *practicing the presence of God*. Gazing upon and praising God, come what may, undaunted by it all, knowing that blessings can come disguised as tragedies. And if you're not so sure, just look at the Cross on Calvary's hill.

Worship and the Presence of God

Our worship and praise bring us into the ultimate of all human experience—the very presence of God. How often are you in His presence?

January's Awakening, Day 12

I worshiped God as often as I could, keeping my mind in His holy presence, and recalling it as often as I found it had wandered from Him. I found no small pain in this exercise, and yet I continued it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my business not only at the appointed times of prayer, but all the day long; for at all times, every hour, every minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thoughts of God.

—Brother Lawrence

The most fundamental need, duty, honor and happiness of mankind is not petition, nor even contrition, nor again even thanksgiving—these three kinds of prayer which, indeed, must never disappear out of our spiritual lives—but adoration.

—Von Hügel, Friedrich

To rise to the pinnacle of spirituality, to enter into the very presence of God, and to clearly hear the Divine Whisper and embrace His essence fully, one must continually be in the stance and mindset of praise and adoration. Nothing else will bring you closer to God than worshiping Him and having a mindset and heart overflowing with praise. Having a repentant heart and one full of thanksgiving is critical also. But it is our worship, praise, and adoration of who God is and all that He has done for us that breaks through those seemingly impenetrable spiritual barriers.

If you feel that you are having difficulty hearing God's voice and knowing His direction for your life, worship and praise Him. If you feel as if your prayers are being blocked or unanswered, worship and praise Him. If you are just beside yourself in one of life's darkest moments, worship and praise Him. It sounds like the cure-all and, quite frankly, it is—worship and praise Him. Being in the very presence of God is the ultimate healing and human experience possible. Practice being in His presence. Practice it often.

Created to Worship

Are you praising His holy name frequently every day? That is what you were created for.

January's Awakening, Day 13

I was not born to be free. I was born to adore and to obey.

—C. S. Lewis

Praising God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion. In prayer we act like men; in praise we act like angels.

—Thomas Watson

The glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God.

—Irenaeus

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" Revelation 7:9–12 NIV

You were first and foremost created by God to worship God. That is the spiritual connection that binds us to Him. You were not created for "self," and you were not created to be a "little god." You are God's pinnacle of creation, in His image, created for His good pleasure, and designed to commune with Him and be forever in His presence. Since that is essentially your reason for being, you will have a more rewarding life if you do so.

It just takes a moment, at various times of your day, in your heart and mind and with your voice, to say, "I praise you, Lord, for who you are and thank you, Lord, for all you've done for me! I glorify and worship your holy name!" That is a great way to start and end your day, and to begin a moment of meditation or prayer or a reading of the Scriptures, and at any time you feel overwhelmed. Those few words can be the most profound and powerful words you may ever speak, especially if spoken often.

Be the Hymn of Praise

Worship God with all that you are.

January's Awakening, Day 14

The prophetic spirit orders that God be praised with cymbals of jubilation and with the rest of the musical instruments which the wise and studious have created, since all the arts are brought to life by that breath of life which God breathed into the body of man: and therefore it is just that God be praised in all things.

—Hildegard of Bingen

Look at the very birds on earth—how they shame us!

Dear little creatures, if you watch them when they are singing, you will sometimes wonder how so much sound can come out of such diminutive bodies.

How they throw their whole selves into the music, and seem to melt themselves away in song!

How the wing vibrates, the throat pulsates, and every part of their body rejoices to assist the strain!

This is the way in which we ought to praise God.

—C. H. Spurgeon

One day all Christians will join in a doxology and sing God's praises with perfection. But even today, individually and corporately, we are not only to sing the doxology, but to be the doxology.

—Francis Schaeffer

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. Psalm 63:3–4 NIV

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Psalm 100:1–2 NIV

Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. Psalm 47:1 NIV

Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Psalm 150:1–6 NIV

With my mouth I will greatly extol the Lord; in the great throng of worshipers I will praise him. Psalm 109:30 NIV

Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:18b–20 NIV

Praise and worship should encompass the best of all that you are in reverence and awe. Individually and corporately, playing all sorts of musical instruments, singing, respectful dancing, shouts of joy, sometimes quiet, raising hands lifted high, clapping, standing, bowing, kneeling, or prostrate before the Lord—all these and more may be part of your devoted worship of the Lord. It should be done from the heart and with the proper mindset and always with due respect to the Lord and respect for those around you as well. It need not be reserved. We cheer quite boisterously at beloved athletic games, why not be exuberant toward the One who spared nothing for you? Be the hymn of praise, don't just sing it.

Vain Worship

Make sure you're worshipping the right God and that it comes from deep within, not just superficially.

January's Awakening, Day 15

Nothing else so soils the work of God and makes unclean what is clean as the deification of creation and the worshiping of it as equal to God the Creator and Maker.

—Symeon the New Theologian

So let us hold to this rule, that all human inventions which are set up to corrupt the simple purity of the word of God, and to undo the worship which he demands and approves, are true sacrileges, in which the Christian man cannot participate without blaspheming God, and trampling his honor underfoot.

—John Calvin

*Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King,
Never was grief like thine!
This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days
Would gladly spend.*

—Samuel Crossman

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught. Isaiah 29:13 NIV

They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules." Matthew 15:9 NIV

We need to evaluate our lives and do some deep introspection on a regular basis. We should be certain that there are no "human inventions" that are corrupting the Word of God or undoing our worship of Him. True worship comes from the heart and is not superficial, nor does it simply follow the proper rules of liturgical church orderliness. Rules are fine to follow, but worship is not about following the rules of man.

Likewise, it is also equally important for us to remember that God created us in His image, and that we were given dominion and charge over this earth that He made. Our responsibility is to be better caretakers than we have been. But we are never to put God's creation or the importance of it above Him. We have duties and responsibilities in the care of our earth, but that should never come before our heart and mindset of worshipping Him.

Better we must become in all aspects. Better caretakers of our earth. Better in keeping His Word undefiled and untainted. Better in keeping our hearts and minds in purity through Him. And better worshipers of our Lord, God, Savior, and Creator. He is, and always will be, still in control, regardless of our performance.

Take a Knee and Bow

Humility, penitence, submission, obedience—not the words that self or the world embrace, but words required of His worship.

January's Awakening, Day 16

The more a man bows his knee before God, the straighter he stands before men.

—Author Unknown

Worship reminds us of values the world makes us forget.

—Author Unknown

And what greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’ Daniel 7:27 NIV

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Psalm 95:6–7a NIV

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9–11 NIV

The ultimate and perfect exercise to restore you physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is to bend the knees frequently and bow low before God in worship. It is exponentially more effective in renewing your heart, restoring your spirit, and reviving your soul than all other exercises combined. Worshiping God with all humility, with sincere repentance, in reverent submission and unequivocal obedience will do more to propel you onward and upward than you can imagine. You will become the person of God that He wants you to be. So take a knee and

bow down before God—there’s nothing more significant that you can do in this life. In heaven, worship will be our continual act of joy.

Worship in the Spirit and in Truth

Shed the superficial skin of halfhearted worship and bind the true spirit of worship to the entire essence of your being. God is everywhere at every moment—worship Him that way.

January’s Awakening, Day 17

God is not moved or impressed with our worship until our hearts are moved and impressed by Him.

—Kelly Sparks

Many a professing Christian is a stumbling-block because his worship is divided. On Sunday he worships God; on week days God has little or no place in his thoughts.

—D. L. Moody

We may be truly said to worship God, though we lack perfection; but we cannot be said to worship Him if we lack sincerity.

—Stephen Charnock

Worship that pleases God comes from an obedient heart.

—Author Unknown

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

John 4:23–24 NIV

Make it a point in your life to turn your days into days of worshiping God from deep within your heart, from your spirit, and in sincere truth. The key to this life is not worshiping God occasionally on Sundays or special holidays in a programmed service, but seeing God in everything and worshiping Him for it every moment and every day of your life. Worship, like reading the Bible and prayer and meditation, must become a lifestyle that is ingrained into your essence of being, such that it is as essential and as normal as your heartbeat and breathing. That is what worshiping in your spirit and in truth is all about—it is an innate part of you that cannot ever be removed or diminished from within you. Make your worship of God an inseparable part of your everyday existence.

Divine Holiness

The Divine Holiness—unapproachable, incomprehensible, unfathomable, and unattainable.

January's Awakening, Day 18

A true love for God must begin with a delight in his holiness, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this.

—Jonathan Edwards

We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.

—A. W. Tozer

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

Psalm 24:3 NIV

I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy. Leviticus 11:45 NIV

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15–16 NIV

The holiness of God is central to the essence of who God is and that which makes Him God. Holiness will always be a bit of a mystery till the day we, as redeemed humanity, are imparted with it once more by God when we receive our glorified bodies at the Rapture. Only two humans, Adam and Eve, have ever experienced holiness and know what it is to have it and what it is to lose it. Holiness is all or none, there is no in-between, and once it is lost, the only source is God Himself.

We may imagine the holiness of God as "wholly otherness." Holiness separates God completely and infinitely from every other created thing. His essence transcends purity and moral perfection and complete righteousness, as God's holiness makes it utterly impossible for Him to think any wrong, say any wrong, or do any wrong. One day when we have our holiness imparted back to us, we will be able to stand in His holy presence and still be in total awe.

The Beauty of Holiness

Is the beauty of holiness indelibly etched into every aspect of your heart and mind?

January's Awakening, Day 19

To be holy is to be morally blameless. It is to be separated from sin and, therefore consecrated to God. The word signifies "separation to God, and the conduct befitting those so separated."

—Jerry Bridges

He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen that is worth seeing: for there is no other true excellence or beauty.

—Jonathan Edwards

Remember your ultimate purpose, and when you set yourself to your day's work or approach any activity in the world, let HOLINESS TO THE LORD be written upon your hearts in all that you do.

—Richard Baxter

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Ephesians 1:4a NIV

Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. 2 Corinthians 7:1 NIV

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 1 Thessalonians 4:7 NIV

If you could fathom or imagine, perhaps, the most majestic mountain valley with crystal streams flowing through, never touched or seen by humans, in an immaculate and pristine state—that might only begin to bring into visualization the beauty of holiness. Maybe the most brilliant of diamonds with each facet sparkling in unimaginable radiance and clarity, or maybe simply the brightest and purest of the most intense white light that is impossible to gaze upon—that's the beginning of the experience of the beauty of holiness. Mere words cannot describe the beauty or true essence of God's holiness.

Even harder, maybe, for us to imagine is that we were created that way, in God's brilliant image. Yet free will evidently wasn't satisfied, and now mankind is but a very dismal and dim reflection of what we were created to be. But we live this life not for what we have become and what free will has stripped from us, but for the upcoming day when our salvation is complete. Even though we are tarnished and tainted, we are still a representation of God's pinnacle of creation, and as such, we are admonished, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to be holy as He is holy—or at least to strive to fittingly be our absolute best. Let "holiness to the Lord" be firmly etched into your heart and mind, every thought and word and deed.

Our Pursuit of Holiness

Arise at once and press on to pursue holiness and don't stop till you've won the prize.

January's Awakening, Day 20

Christian holiness is not a matter of painstaking conformity to the individual precepts of an external law code; it is rather a question of the Holy Spirit's producing His fruit in the life, reproducing those graces which were seen in perfection in the life of Christ.

—F. F. Bruce

The pursuit of holiness is a joint venture between God and the Christian. No one can attain any degree of holiness without God working in his life, but just as surely no one will attain it without effort on his own part.

—Jerry Bridges

It matters but little whether this eminent state of holiness be gained by a bold, energetic, and determined exercise of faith and prayer, or by a more gradual process—whether it be instantaneous or gradual, or both the one and the other. The great matter is, with each and all of us, that we lose no time, but arise at once, and “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

—Thomas N. Ralston

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:22–25 NIV

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12–14 NIV

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 1 Corinthians 1:30 NIV

The Ten Commandments were given to us to show us what sin is. But holiness is so much more than that—it goes way beyond our actions and our words to every thought manifesting in our minds. As believers, thankfully, we have the Holy Spirit within us to guide us in every thought, word, and deed. Yet the difficult part is that it is a fully cooperative effort between our old self

and our new life in Christ, in agreement with the directive of the Holy Spirit. We are admonished to continually forget the old self and put on the new—manifesting in increasing fashion the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we are not growing exponentially in these attributes, then we are not living in the Spirit but living in our old flesh, and hence, we are still drowning in our sin and not swimming to reach His holiness shore.