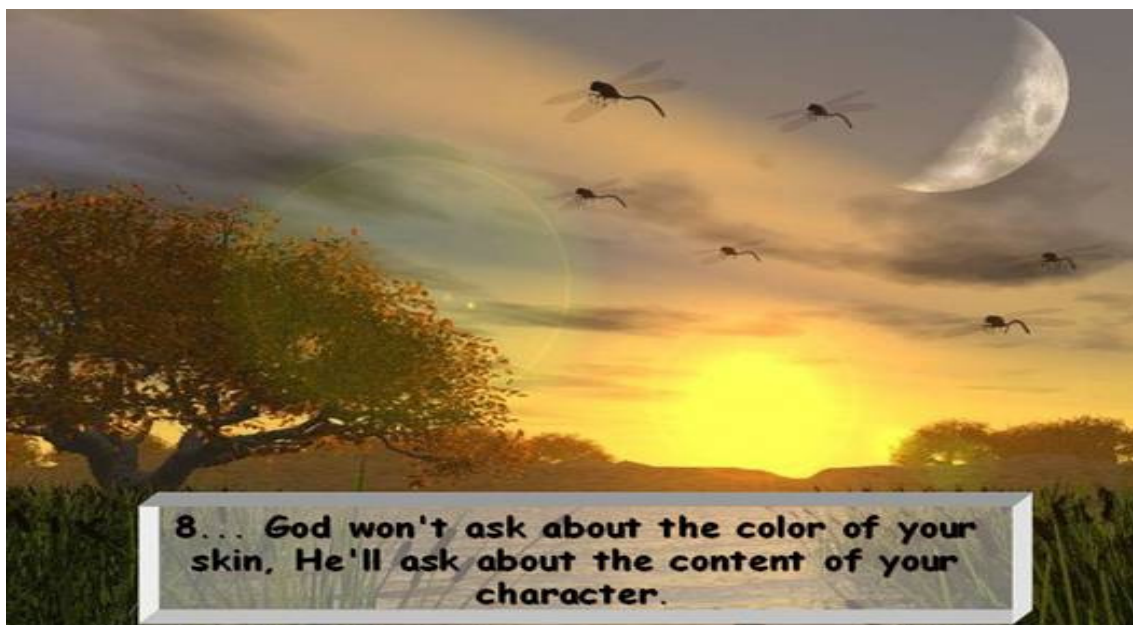


Faith, Not Emotions Builds a Living Connection with God



Graham F. Watts, Sr. & Curtis Johnson

VISION: To hear the midnight cry, "The bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him" (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

MISSION: Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3) to be glad, to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

VALUES: Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb's fine, clean and white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

OVERALL AIM: Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to inquiring minds to prompt the following inquiries: "Are our feet on the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the Father" (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

26 **PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY**

27
28 This study discourages reliance on feelings as a test of religion.

29
30 **OBJECTIVE/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH**

31
32 To help believers recognize signs of a living connection with God.

33
34 **SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT**

35
36 **"It is unsafe to trust feelings or impressions; these are unreliable**
37 **guides"** (Faith and Works, {FW} 52.3). "Your feelings, impressions
38 [and] emotions are not to be trusted; they are not reliable" (Our
39 High Calling, {OHC} 103.4). "Dependence upon impressions is one of
40 the special deceptions of Satan" (Testimonies for the Church, Vol.
41 Two, {2T} 505.1). **"Religion** is not merely an emotion, a feeling. It
42 **is a principle... interwoven with all the daily duties... of life"**
43 (2T 505.2). God gives "...great and exceeding precious promises
44 that... [we can receive] the divine nature..." (2 Peter 1:4).
45 "[Begin] a life of simple, childlike trust, not relying upon feeling
46 but upon faith. [Cease to] dishonor Jesus by doubting His precious
47 promises. He wants us to believe in Him with unwavering faith" (Mind,
48 Character and Personality, Vol. 2, {2MCP} 537.3).

49
50 **Trust God's promises.** Rely on His "...more sure word..." (2 Peter
51 1:19). If we "Turn... at [His] reproof; [He] will pour out [His]
52 spirit unto [us]... [and] make known [His] words unto [us]" (Proverbs
53 1:23). God never leaves us (Hebrews 13:5); our names are engraved on
54 His palms (Isaiah 49:16). In our darkest moments, we can say, "I
55 know my Redeemer lives..." (Job 19:25). In sore trials, when our
56 sense of acceptance with God wanes, we can know that "[He]... grants
57 [us] according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with
58 might by His Spirit in the inner [person]" (Ephesians 3:16). "A
59 1,000 may fall at our side and 10, 000 at our right hand but it shall
60 not come near [us]" (Psalms 91:7). "God is our refuge and strength,
61 a present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). "The Lord of hosts is with
62 us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalms 46:7 & 11). Fear not
63 (Psalms 46:2); "be still and know that [God is]..." (Psalms 46:10).

64 **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

65

66 "...In quietness and confidence will be [our] strength" (Isaiah
 67 30:15). "There may be no ecstasy of feelings—as in intense delight,
 68 bliss, rapture, excitement, thrill, elation, happiness, joy or
 69 pleasure—but there [will be] an abiding, peaceful trust" (Faith and
 70 Works, {FW} 38.4). **Feelings and impressions are dangerous guides**
 71 **because "...The way of man [of Genesis 5:2] is not in himself; it is**
 72 **not in man that [walks] to direct his steps"** (Jeremiah 10:23). "The
 73 heart is deceitful... and desperately wicked, who can know it"
 74 (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, we **CANNOT** trust our impressions and
 75 feelings to guide our religious experience because "who can
 76 understand his errors..." (Psalms 19:12)?

77

78 **There is a way that seems right unto the man of Genesis of 5:2, but**
 79 **the end of that way is death** (Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25). This
 80 situation describes the broken internal compass problem, which
 81 characterizes people formed in iniquity and conceived in sin (Psalms
 82 51:5). A brief example follows. **"Peter thought himself strong.** He
 83 said, 'Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life
 84 for thy sake' (John 13:37). [Jesus said], 'Verily I say unto thee,
 85 that this day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, [you]
 86 shall deny me thrice' (Mark 14:30). However, Peter spoke more
 87 vehemently, 'If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any
 88 wise' (Mark 14:31 in This Day With God, {TDG} 260.2). **Peter fell**
 89 **because he did not know his own frailty"** (TDG 260.3).

90

91 **Important lessons emerge from Peter's experience.** Attempts to self-
 92 navigate in holiness fail. "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It
 93 does not submit to God's law, it [cannot] do so" (Romans 8:7, NIV).
 94 Hence, the Psalmist asked for a clean heart, a right spirit (Psalms
 95 51:10) and "... cleansing from secret faults" (Psalms 19:12, Modern
 96 KJV). He declared obedience to God's Word as Clorox for the soul
 97 (Psalms 119:9) so that humans might love the Lord..., walk in His

98 ways and keep His commandments, statutes and judgments, cleave unto
99 Him and serve Him (read Deuteronomy 30:16 and Joshua 22:5).

100
101 **We should trust Jesus, the master navigator!** He leads besides the
102 still waters (Psalms 23:2), in the paths of righteousness (Psalms
103 23:3 & Proverbs 8:20). Let us review one example from sacred
104 history. Jeremiah wrote to the elders, priests and prophets whom
105 Nebuchadnezzar... [took captive] from Jerusalem to Babylon (Jeremiah
106 29:1). In his letter, he communicated God's promise to repatriate
107 Judah after 70 years of Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 29:10).
108 Coupled with the promise of repatriation, God assured the exiles that
109 everyone who searches for [Him with the whole heart will find Him]"
110 (Jeremiah 29:13).

111
112 **Following the path where Jesus leads is a recessive, human trait.** We
113 quickly grow impatient and follow our own ways. As Israel settled
114 into nationhood (Genesis 12:2 & 46:3), love waned and disobedience
115 AND oppression flourished (read Ezekiel 36:17-20). With the passing
116 of time, Micah asked two searching questions. "Will the Lord be
117 pleased with thousands of rams or with [10,000] rivers of oil? Shall
118 I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for
119 the sin of my soul" (Micah 6:7)? God gave the answer to the
120 questions the Holy Spirit prompted Micah to ask. "He [has] showed
121 thee, O man, what is good; and **WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE,**
122 but to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8).
123 Moses echoed a similar theme in an earlier period. "**AND NOW, ISRAEL,**
124 **WHAT [DOES] THE LORD THY GOD REQUIRE OF THEE?"** And like Micah, Moses
125 gave the answer: "but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in **ALL** His
126 ways, to love Him and to serve the Lord thy God with **ALL** thy heart
127 and with **ALL** thy soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12). These Old Testament
128 calls to fear, to serve and to love God find their parallel in the
129 New Testament, where John the Revelator communicates to people
130 everywhere, calling upon them to "Fear God, give glory to Him ...and

131 worship Him..." (Revelation 14:7). This background provided the
 132 impetus for the study question of this lesson.

133

134 **STUDY QUESTION**

135

136 What does the Lord require of me so that I connect with Him?

137

138 **ANSWER SOURCES: HOLY BIBLE**

139

140

141 **SEARCH FOR GOD WITH THE WHOLE HEART**

142

143 1. **Jesus stands at the door of our heart and knocks, asking for an**
 144 **invite to fellowship with us** (Revelation 3:20). God creates a
 145 thirst, a.k.a., a longing, a desire in the mind for sacred, holy
 146 and spiritual things that we might come to Jesus and take of the
 147 water of life that He freely gives (you must read Isaiah 55:1;
 148 Revelation 21:6 & 22:17). Moreover, if we believe on Jesus,
 149 "...out of our belly flows rivers of living water" (John 7:38). An
 150 intentional insertion of sacred writings might help illustrate the
 151 centrality of Christ in our connection with God. When Jesus walked
 152 in Palestine, "The condition of the people made [the] appeal [to
 153 take of the water of life] very forcible. **They had been engaged in**
 154 **a continued scene of pomp and festivity, their eyes [were] dazzled**
 155 **with light and color, and their ears regaled with the richest**
 156 **music; but **THERE [WAS] NOTHING IN ALL THIS ROUND OF CEREMONIES TO****
 157 **MEET THE WANTS OF THE SPIRIT. [THERE WAS] NOTHING TO SATISFY THE**
 158 **THIRST OF THE SOUL FOR THAT WHICH PERISHES NOT.** Jesus invited them
 159 to come and drink of the fountain of life, of that which would be
 160 in them a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life" (The
 161 Desire of Ages {DA} 453.4). May God help us that we avoid the evil
 162 of forsaking Jesus, the fountain of living waters, the source of
 163 enduring happiness and peace and pursuing broken cisterns, a.k.a.,
 164 sources, offering happiness and peace that are as changeable as
 165 circumstances can make them (Jeremiah 2:13 & FW 88.2). "[We]

166 need... deeper draught, a.k.a. drink, at the Fountain of truth...
 167 [to] ...honor God with [our] influence and [our] substance..."
 168 (Testimonies for the Church, Vol. Two, {2T} 167.2).

169
 170 2. **Our desire to know God must parallel the thirst of a deer** (read
 171 Psalms 42:1). When we thirst like the deer, we will have the
 172 assurance: "You shall seek me and find me when you search for me
 173 with **ALL** your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Pursuing Jesus with divided
 174 loyalty is akin to simultaneously looking at two objects 175
 175 degrees apart. We must "Seek the Lord while He may be found [and]
 176 call upon Him while He is near (Isaiah 55:6). "The kingdom of
 177 heaven is like [a] treasure hid in a field; which when a man
 178 ...found, he ...[sold] all that he had and bought the field"
 179 (Matthew 13:44). The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant
 180 man, seeking goodly pearls" (Matthew 13:45), "Who, when he had
 181 found one pearl of great price ...sold all he had and bought it"
 182 (Matthew 13:46). "All that the Father gives [to Jesus] shall come
 183 to [Him]; and [all who] comes to [Jesus, He] will... [NOT] cast
 184 out" (John 6:37). Our desire for God must rise to the level of
 185 insatiable, a.k.a., always wanting more of Him. The section that
 186 follows unpacks the idea of a living connection with God after we
 187 have searched for God and found Him.

188
 189 LOVE THE LORD; KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, STATUTES & JUDGMENTS

190
 191 1. **People talk more about love than they actually know about it.** In
 192 Ezekiel 33:31, God described the house of Israel as follows,
 193 "...They sit before thee as my people and they hear thy words, but
 194 they will not do them for **with their mouth they show much love,** but
 195 **their heart goes after their covetousness.**" Loving God is more
 196 than experiencing feelings and impressions. "God demonstrated His
 197 love toward us in that **while we were still sinners, Christ died for**
 198 **us**" (Romans 5:8, Modern KJV). "God's... love [for] the world [led
 199 Him to] **give His only son...**" (John 3:16). "...God was in Christ

200 reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses
 201 unto them..." (2 Corinthians 5:19). Selfless love is giving.

202
 203 2. **People are naturally self-centered.** They assert that they love
 204 God, whom "No man has seen..." (1 John 4:12), yet hate people
 205 around them (1 John 4:20). The disparity between claims to love
 206 God and negative affect toward others are in opposition. "...If we
 207 love one another, God [dwells] in us and His love is perfected in
 208 us" (1 John 4:12). "[If we] keep [God's] word ...verily is the
 209 love of God perfected [in us and] hereby know we that we are in
 210 Him" (1 John 2:5). Does our love for God rise to the level of
 211 obedience to Jehovah to be others-centered rather than self-
 212 centered, which fulfills His command to love one another as He has
 213 loved us (John 13:34)? Let us not espouse the word of God as the
 214 house of Israel embraced Ezekiel: "...Thou are unto them as a very
 215 lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice and can play well on
 216 an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not"
 217 (Ezekiel 33:32).

218
 219 3. **God teaches people how to love.** "If a man [of Genesis 5:2] loves
 220 [God] ...s/he will keep My words and My Father will love him, and
 221 we will come unto him and make our abode with him'" (John 14:23).
 222 When God, who is love (1 John 4:8), abides in us through His Holy
 223 Spirit (1 John 3:24), "...the [Spirit disperses the] love of God...
 224 in our hearts... (Romans 5:5), enabling us to "...Keep His word...
 225 [because] the love of God [is] perfected [in us]..." (1 John 2:5).
 226 Hence, the Spirit speaks through holy men, saying: "If you love me,
 227 keep my commandments" (John 14:15); "[You] that love the Lord, hate
 228 evil..." (Psalms 97:10). How deep is our love for God? Is it
 229 skin-deep, where are centered mere feelings and impressions without
 230 self-denial, obedience and long-term commitment to service?

231

232 4. **God rewards His lovers.** "The Lord preserves all them that love
 233 him..." (Psalms 145:20). "Love the Lord, all [you] his saints, for
 234 the Lord preserves the faithful" (Psalms 31:23). The concept of
 235 faithfulness appears in connection with love to communicate that
 236 love endures all things. Paul explains this theme when he said,
 237 "love suffers long and is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4). It is
 238 important to emphasize the longsuffering nature of love because
 239 "**Whom the Lord loves He chastens...**" (Hebrews 12:6). Therefore,
 240 Solomon admonishes us to "**...despise NOT the chastening of the**
 241 **Lord; neither be weary of His correction**" (Proverbs 3:11), "**for**
 242 **whom the Lord loves, He corrects...**" (Proverbs 3:12). Hence,
 243 loving God means more than having ecstatic feelings for Him; it
 244 involves keeping His words and commands, departing from evil and
 245 being faithful to God's everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3) and
 246 everlasting covenant (Jeremiah 32:40 & Isaiah 55:3). When you
 247 frame love in this way, it stands in stark contrasts to
 248 infatuation, a.k.a., temporary passion, obsession or craze that
 249 humans' display, which behaves like mercury upon exposure to sudden
 250 temperature changes.

251
 252 5. **God set His love upon ancient Israel** (read Deuteronomy 7:7). After
 253 distributing His love to them, God said, "Know therefore that the
 254 Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and
 255 mercy with them that love Him and keep his commandments to a
 256 thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9). "[You] shall love the
 257 Lord [your] God, keep his charge, his statutes, his judgments and
 258 his commandments always" (Deuteronomy 11:1). "**IF** you faithfully
 259 obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God
 260 and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, **THEN I**
 261 **will send rain on your land** in its season, both autumn and spring
 262 rains so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. **I**
 263 **will provide grass in the field** for your cattle and you will eat
 264 and be satisfied" (Deuteronomy 11:13-15, NIV). "**IF** you carefully

265 observe all the commands I am giving you to follow—to love the Lord
266 your God, to walk in all His ways and to hold fast to Him, **THEN** the
267 Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will
268 dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. **Every place where**
269 **you set your foot will be yours.... No man will be able to stand**
270 **against you. The Lord your God... will put the terror and fear of**
271 **you on the whole land, wherever you go”** (Deuteronomy 11:22–25,
272 NIV).

273
274 6. **Ancient Israel had the opportunity to love God by obedience.** “Be
275 careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other
276 gods...” (Deuteronomy 11:16, NIV). “I am setting before you today
277 a blessing and a curse, the blessing if you obey the commands of
278 the Lord your God that I am giving you today, the curse if you
279 disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way
280 that I command you...” (read Deuteronomy 11:26–28, NIV; Deuteronomy
281 30:15–16, 19–20; Joshua 22:5 & 23:11). Ancient Israel demonstrated
282 love to God by honoring God’s covenant, a.k.a. His agreement to be
283 their God and they to be His people (read Leviticus 26:12, Jeremiah
284 7:23 & 11:4). Should we delude ourselves by assuming that God, who
285 is the same yesterday, today and forever more (Hebrews 13:8), who
286 wrote His laws in our minds (Hebrews 8:10) requires any less today?
287 If tempted to be delusional, instruction follows in the next
288 section.

289
290 7. **God sets His love upon modern Israel.** “...The love of God is shed
291 **abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us”**
292 (read Romans 5:5). Moreover, “the Lord makes you to increase and
293 abound in love one toward another and toward all men...” (1
294 Thessalonians 3:12). This abundance of love toward all men is an
295 indication and fulfillment of the love of God that He dispersed in
296 our hearts. **“The Lord directs your hearts into the love of God...”**
297 (2 Thessalonians 3:5). Therefore, Jude says, **“Keep yourselves in**

298 **the love of God...**" (Jude 1:21). Dear reader, if we keep ourselves
 299 in the love of God, our lives will reflect love.

300
 301 8. **Modern Israel also has the opportunity to God love by obedience.**

302 Let us not wait to know the Lord until He lays the land desolate
 303 and the pomp of her strength ceases because of all the abominations
 304 we have committed (Ezekiel 33:28-29). Rather, let us show love to
 305 God by obedience so that God can say of us: "Because [you] have
 306 kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour
 307 of temptation, which comes upon the entire world to try them that
 308 dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:10). If we love the Lord our
 309 God, we will walk humbly with Him. A discussion of walking humbly
 310 with God appears in the next section.

311
 312
 313 **WALK HUMBLY IN ALL THE WAYS OF THE LORD**

314
 315 1. **God is the architect of divine-human interactions.** "The Lord our
 316 God... incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways and to
 317 keep His commandments, statutes and judgments..." (1 Kings 8:57-
 318 58). What does that mean? Read on! "For **I the Lord love**
 319 **judgment**; I hate robbery for burnt offering; **I will direct their**
 320 **work in truth**; I will make an everlasting covenant with them"
 321 (Isaiah 61:8). God directs our work in truth when we "...**purify**
 322 **our souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit**..." (1 Peter
 323 1:22). The Psalmist captured the same theme this way: "...**The**
 324 **judgments of the Lord are true and righteous**..." (Psalms 19:9).
 325 "More to be desired are they than gold..." (Psalms 19:10). "...**By**
 326 **them, your servant is warned and in keeping them there is great**
 327 **reward**" (Psalms 19:11). Dear reader, "Be not deceived, God is not
 328 mocked; whatsoever a man sows that... he... reaps" (Galatians 6:7).
 329 Natural law sets in motion a change of events such that "He that
 330 sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that sows
 331 to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians

332 6:8). “[God] renders to every man according to all his ways...” (2
 333 Chronicles 6:30) “that [the children of God] may fear [Him], to
 334 walk in [His] ways...” (2 Chronicles 6:31). In fact, God puts His
 335 fear in our hearts that we shall not depart from Him (Jeremiah
 336 32:40). Are we ready to walk with God as He designs?

337
 338 2. “Abide in me and I in you...” (John 15:4) is God’s plan. “He that
 339 says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as
 340 [Christ] walked” (1 John 2:6). If the old man, a.k.a., the
 341 lifestyle before baptism, was crucified with Christ, the body of
 342 sin was destroyed (Romans 6:6) and Christ now lives in us;
 343 therefore, the life we now live in the flesh, we do so by the faith
 344 of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). As new creatures (2
 345 Corinthians 5:17), the workmanship of Jesus Christ (Ephesians
 346 2:10), constructed for the “...habitation of God through the [Holy]
 347 Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22), “...renewed in knowledge after the image
 348 of Him that created Him” (Colossians 3:10), we are “...renewed in
 349 the spirit of [our] mind” (Ephesians 4:23). Therefore, our heart
 350 beats with the refrain: “I delight to do God’s will, O my God;
 351 ...thy law is within my heart” (Psalms 40:8). In the next section
 352 titled—Do Justly—we explore more deeply the implications, a.k.a.
 353 wider meaning, of walking humbly in all the ways of the Lord.

354
 355
 356 **DO JUSTLY**

357
 358 1. **Doing justly is purposeful.** We must “...Turn from [our] wicked
 359 ways...” (2 Chronicles 7:14), cease to imagine evil in our hearts
 360 against our neighbors; and NOT love false oaths...” (Zechariah
 361 8:17). Some “...Call evil good and good evil...” (Isaiah 5:20).
 362 On the contrary, “Hate evil [and] love good...” (Amos 5:15). An
 363 example follows! The religion of the Pharisee is a decided evil;
 364 avoid it like a debilitating infectious or chronic disease. Jesus
 365 openly discussed the Pharisees and the Sadducees this way. He

366 said, "...Beware of [their] leaven..." [a.k.a., doctrine: ideas
367 taught as truth, the rules or principles that form the basis of
368 belief, theories or policies that guide decision making] (Matthew
369 16:6, 11-12). It misrepresents God's character by communicating
370 that God is a despot, who must be appeased. To **ALL** forms of false
371 religion, God says, "I hate, I despise your feast days and I will
372 not smell in your solemn assemblies" (Amos 5:21). "Will the Lord
373 be pleased with thousands of rams or with 10, 000 rivers of oil..."
374 (Micah 6:7)? **"In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, [God] had
375 no pleasure"** (Hebrews 10:6, Modern KJV). **"...[Has] the Lord as
376 great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the
377 Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice..."** (1 Samuel 15:22). We
378 must graduate from the theory of religion that abounds in
379 "...foolish and unlearned questions... that [promote] strife" (2
380 Timothy 2:23 to practical faith, which demonstrates: "...Behold, I
381 have come... to do your will, [O] God" (Hebrews 10:7, World English
382 Bible). This practical faith abounds in "...righteousness...,
383 charity and peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure
384 heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).

385
386 2. **Doing justly is practical.** For that reason, God says, "...Add to
387 your faith, virtue..., " a.k.a. goodness or worth (2 Peter 1:5).
388 Consider the example that follows. Whereas, we delight in
389 afflicting our soul by varied forms of abstinence (Isaiah 58:5),
390 which admirably helps with development of self-control, "...The
391 fast that [God chooses encompass loosing] the bands of wickedness,
392 [undoing] heavy burdens..., [letting] the oppressed go free and
393 [breaking] every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6). God in His mercy lays out
394 His requirements in justice, mercy and humility (**READ MICAH 6:8**).
395 Therefore, justice for the hungry, the poor and the naked (Isaiah
396 58:7) is a divine imperative, which includes no exceptions. So
397 "When [our enemies] hunger, [we are to] feed [them]; [when they]
398 thirst, [we are to] give [them] drink..." (Romans 12:20). In fact,

399 God offers the only true solution to broken relationships. He
400 says, "...Love your enemies, and bless them that curse you, do good
401 to them that hate you and despitefully use you and persecute
402 you..." (Matthew 5:44). "[God] defends the cause of the fatherless
403 and the widow and loves the alien, giving [them] food and clothing;
404 [therefore, we] are to love those who are aliens..." (Deuteronomy
405 10:18-19), "defend the poor and fatherless [and] do justice to the
406 afflicted and needy" (Psalms 82:3) to establish judgment in the
407 gate (Amos 5:15).

408
409 3. **Doing justly is contextual.** God promises to "...Give His angels
410 charge over [us] to keep [us] in all [His] ways" (Psalms 91:11).
411 Ancient Israel had the context for angelic protection. God said,
412 "...I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way
413 and to bring you to the place I have prepared. PAY ATTENTION TO
414 HIM AND LISTEN TO WHAT HE SAYS. **Do not rebel against him; he will**
415 **not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him.** If you listen
416 carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy
417 to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you" (Exodus
418 23:20-22, NIV). "...I will contend with him that contends with
419 [you] and I will save [your] children" (Isaiah 49:25). However, we
420 can only do justly if we love mercy, which the next section
421 discusses.

422
423

424 LOVE MERCY, A.K.A., SHOWING COMPASSION, KINDNESS & FORGIVENESS

425
426 1. **Mercy is part of the divine hierarchy.** In the Most Holy place of
427 the Old Testament sanctuary, law and love sandwiched mercy. God
428 showed Moses blueprints for a sanctuary (read Exodus 26:30 &
429 Revelation 11:19) and authorized construction of the building (read
430 Exodus 25:8). Subsequently, God gave Moses two tables of stone
431 with commandments that He inscribed with His own hands (read Exodus
432 24:12 & Exodus 31:18). One room of the sanctuary, designated the

433 Most Holy place became the repository of the ark, a.k.a., a chest
434 (Exodus 25:10; 26:33-34). On the inside of the ark was the
435 testimony which [God] gave to [Moses] (Exodus 25:16; 40:20 & 1
436 Kings 8:9). On the side of the ark was the "Book of the law...,"
437 which Moses wrote (Deuteronomy 31:26, NIV), from which he
438 instructed nomadic Israelites (Exodus 24:7). A mercy seat covered
439 the ark with two cherubs at either end, facing each other, with
440 their wings spread out over the place of the ark (read Exodus
441 25:18-21 & 1 Kings 8:7). God, who is love (1 John 4:8 & 16)
442 descended to the place of the earthly sanctuary, above the mercy
443 seat and between two cherubs and met with Moses, providing
444 instructions for the Israelites (Exodus 25:22, NIV). Dwell upon
445 this structure in the Most Holy place, where love appears above
446 mercy, which appears above law. "Mercy and truth are met
447 together..." (Psalms 85:10).

448
449 2. **God epitomizes mercy.** "O Lord, [You] are full of compassion,
450 gracious, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psalms
451 86:15). "The Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting and His truth
452 endures to all generations" (Psalms 100:5). "...With the Lord
453 there is mercy and... plenteous redemption" (Psalms 130:7). His
454 mercy is tender (James 5:11). "In mercy and truth, Atonement is
455 provided for iniquity... [a.k.a., great injustices or extreme
456 immoralities] (Proverbs 16:6, Modern KJV). Clearly, God is
457 merciful; then, should not the children of God who have His
458 deoxyribonucleic acid, DNA, also abound in mercy? Let it not be
459 said of us as David said of wicked and deceitful men, "May the
460 iniquity of his father be remembered before the Lord; may the sin
461 of his mother never be blotted out. May their sins always remain
462 before the Lord that He may cut off the memory of them from the
463 earth [because they] never thought of doing a kindness, but hounded
464 to death the poor, the needy and the brokenhearted" (Psalms 109:2,
465 14-16). "**All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such**

466 **as keep His covenant and His testimonies"** (Psalms 25:10). We can
 467 extend mercy to others because God has been merciful to us and the
 468 fear of God abides in us. A discussion of the fear of God follows.

469
 470 **FEAR GOD (i.e., BEING BOTH AFRAID & GIVING DUE REVERENCE AND HONOR)**

471
 472 **FEAR AS IN BEING AFRAID:**

473
 474 1. **Fearing God embodies trembling.** He is King of Kings and Lord of
 475 Lords (1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 17:14 & 19:16). He has a mighty
 476 hand that does wondrous works (Deuteronomy 3:24). Luke expressed
 477 the need to tremble this way: "My friends do not be afraid of those
 478 who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do"
 479 (Luke 12:4). "...Fear Him who, after He has killed [the body], has
 480 power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him" (Luke 12:5).

481
 482 2. **Worshippers ought to quake before God.** "Splendor and majesty are
 483 before Him; strength and glory are in His sanctuary" (Psalms 96:6,
 484 NIV). "Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble
 485 before him, all the earth" (Psalms 96:9, NIV). From a greatness
 486 perspective, it is not surprising that we read, "For great is the
 487 Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all gods"
 488 (Psalms 96:4, NIV; 1 Chronicles 16:25). Isaiah makes clear that
 489 God commands trepidation. "In the year that king Uzziah died,
 490 [Isaiah] saw... the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,
 491 and his train filled the temple" (Isaiah 6:1). "Above it stood the
 492 seraphims, each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face,
 493 and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly"
 494 (Isaiah 6:2). "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy,
 495 holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory"
 496 (Isaiah 6:3). **"And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him
 497 that cried** and the house was filled with smoke" (Isaiah 6:4). **"Then
 498 said I, Woe [is] me! I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean
 499 lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:** for mine
 500 eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). Like

501 Isaiah, John the Revelator had a similar discovery. "One of the
502 four beasts gave... the seven angels seven golden vials, full of
503 the wrath of God..." (Revelation 15:7) **"and the temple was filled
504 with smoke from the glory of God and from His power and no man was
505 able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven
506 angels were fulfilled"** (Revelation 15:8). Make no mistake about
507 this fact, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the
508 saints and to... [receive] reverence of all them that is about Him"
509 (Psalms 89:7).

510
511 3. **King David trembled before the Lord with Godly fear.** Temporarily
512 afflicted with the *"Out with the Old and In with the New"* virus,
513 David did not ask for "...The old paths, where [lies] the good way
514 [that he might] walk therein..." (Jeremiah 6:16); therefore, he
515 ignored God's counsel given to Moses for transporting the ark (read
516 Exodus 25:10-15). Hence, David assembled a 30,000 strong
517 contingent, supervised placement of the Ark on a new cart and began
518 to move it from Gibeah to Baale of Judah. All human plans that
519 circumvent God's instructions ultimately fail. During the journey,
520 around the area of Nachon's threshing floor, the cart shook as the
521 oxen walked and "Uzzah put forth his hand to the Ark of God and
522 [held] it.... **The anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and
523 God smote him there for his error and there he died by the ark of
524 God.**" Could you imagine the pandemonium that erupted? Moreover,
525 **"...David was afraid of the Lord that day... so David would not
526 remove the Ark of the Lord...** (2 Samuel 6:1-10), at least not until
527 he acknowledged the error of his way and followed God's counsel
528 (read 1 Chronicles 15:2-15). Admittedly, in our day, we "...come
529 boldly to the throne of grace..." (Hebrews 4:16) but let us
530 remember that Jehovah, Yahweh is NOT our co-equal and merits
531 trembling of all that come before Him. I have paid due respect to
532 the argument that God merits fear and trembling. Therefore,

533 attention now shifts to the alternative perspective that God is
 534 worthy of holy adoration, reverence and honor.

535
 536 **FEAR AS IN ADORATION, REVERENCE AND HONOR**

537
 538 1. **The longsuffering nature of God should lead us to greater**
 539 **reverence.** We should remember that “If [the] Lord should mark
 540 iniquities, a.k.a., great injustices or extreme immoralities...
 541 [none] shall stand. But **there is forgiveness with [God] that [He]**
 542 **may be feared**” (Psalms 130:3-4). “Fear God..., for the hour of His
 543 judgment has come...” (Revelation 14:7). “In every nation, s/he
 544 that **fears [God] and works righteousness** is accepted with Him”
 545 (Acts 10:35). Why is it important to fear the Lord? “...**Fear the**
 546 **Lord, you His saints,** for there is no want to them that fear Him”
 547 (Psalms 34:9). “What man [of Genesis 5:2) is s/he who fears
 548 Yahweh? He shall instruct him/her in the way He chooses” (Psalms
 549 25:12, World English Bible). “The fear of the Lord tends to life
 550 and s/he that has **IT** shall abide satisfied and s/he shall not be
 551 visited with evil” (Proverbs 19:23). “The fear of the Lord
 552 prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened”
 553 (Proverbs 10:27, Modern KJV). “The fear of the Lord is a fountain
 554 of life, to turn one away from the snares of death”(Proverbs 14:27,
 555 Modern KJV). “...By the fear of the Lord one departs from evil
 556 (Proverbs 16:6, Modern KJV). Thank you for the invitation to fear
 557 God and thank you for emphasizing the benefits of the fear of the
 558 Lord! WHAT IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD?

559
 560 2. **The fear of the Lord is faith-based obedience.** “...This people has
 561 a revolting and rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone”
 562 (Jeremiah 5:23). “Neither says they in their heart, ‘Let us now
 563 fear the Lord our God that gives rain, both the former and the
 564 latter, in His season...’” (Jeremiah 5:24). Here, revolting and
 565 rebellion replaces the fear of God. If we unscramble the
 566 revolting-rebellion package, it appears analogous to “...the sin of

567 divination (i.e., witchcraft) and arrogance (i.e., overconfident
 568 and filled with self-importance), [which comprise] idolatry..." (1
 569 Samuel 15:23, NIV). Therefore, by inference, **those who have the**
 570 **fear of the Lord are not revolting, rebellious and arrogant.**

571
 572 3. **"The fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE..."** (Proverbs
 573 **1:7); "...the BEGINNING OF WISDOM ..."** (Proverbs 9:10) **or the**
 574 **INSTRUCTION OF WISDOM"** (Proverbs 15:33, Modern KJV). The Rod that
 575 came from the stem of Jesse... (Isaiah 11:1), **"THE SPIRIT OF THE**
 576 **LORD** rested upon Him, **THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING,** the
 577 Spirit of counsel and might, **THE SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF THE**
 578 **FEAR OF THE LORD"** (Isaiah 11:2). Consequently, He delighted in the
 579 fear of the Lord..." (Isaiah 11:3). We know that the person who
 580 "[walks] **NOT** in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way
 581 of sinners nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalms 1:1) is
 582 blessed because "His delight [and meditation] is in the law of the
 583 Lord..." (Psalms 1:2). The law of God functions as "...our
 584 schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ..." (Galatians 3:24), whom God
 585 made "...unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and
 586 redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). Coupling these themes, the fear
 587 of the Lord emerges as knowledge, instruction and wisdom in God's
 588 commandments, statutes and judgments. The fear of the Lord does
 589 merit serious contemplation (Phillippians 4:8).

590
 591 4. **The fear of the Lord is more than mere cognitive abstraction.** A
 592 practical component also comprises the fear of the Lord. God gives
 593 grace, **"...whereby we may serve [Him] acceptably with reverence and**
 594 **godly fear"** (Hebrews 12:28). "The fear of the Lord is clean..."
 595 (Psalms 19:9). "...They that feared the Lord, [thought upon His
 596 name AND] spoke one to another... [and have their names etched in]
 597 a book of remembrance before [the Lord] (Malachi 3:16). To fear
 598 God, we cannot worship Him according to the dictates of our own
 599 imaginings as the New Testament pagans who worshipped at the altar

600 of the unknown God (read Acts 17:23). We must worship Him in
 601 Spirit and in accordance with revealed truth (read John 4:23-24 and
 602 Deuteronomy 29:29), which, when we obey it through the Holy Spirit
 603 purifies our soul (read 1 Peter 1:22).

604

605 5. **Moses taught Israel to fear God**. His lesson plan read: "Hear O
 606 Israel, the statutes and judgments [that] I speak in your ears this
 607 day, that [you] may learn them, and keep [them] and do them"
 608 (Deuteronomy 5:1; 11:32 & 12:1). "**When you come into the land**
 609 **[that] the Lord thy God gives [you]... [and make plans to] set a**
 610 **king** [to rule] over [you] like the [surrounding] nations..."
 611 (Deuteronomy 17:14), that king "...shall not multiply horses"
 612 (Deuteronomy 17:16), "neither shall he multiply wives... [nor]
 613 greatly multiply silver and gold" (Deuteronomy 17:17). "...When he
 614 sits on the throne..., he shall write a copy of this law in a
 615 book..." (Deuteronomy 17:18) "and it shall be with him and he shall
 616 read [it] all the days of his life **THAT HE MAY LEARN TO FEAR THE**
 617 **LORD HIS GOD, TO KEEP ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW AND THESE STATUTES,**
 618 **TO DO THEM**" (Deuteronomy 17:19). "...He that rules over men must be
 619 just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Samuel 23:3) "And he shall be
 620 as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, even a morning
 621 without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by
 622 clear shining after rain" (2 Samuel 23:4). "**If thou will not**
 623 **observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this**
 624 **book that [you may] fear [the] glorious and fearful name [of] The**
 625 **Lord thy God"** (Deuteronomy 28:58), "**then the Lord will make thy**
 626 **plagues... and the plagues of thy seed... of long continuance, and**
 627 **sore sickness... of long continuance**" (Deuteronomy 28:59-61).
 628 Similarly, If Israel "...walk after the Lord..., fear Him, keep His
 629 commandments, obey His voice, serve Him and cleave unto Him"
 630 (Deuteronomy 13:4); ...the Lord... God will set thee on high above
 631 all nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1). Dear reader, the

632 fear of the Lord leads to faith-inspired obedience to ALL God's
633 requirements.

634
635 6. **Positive results follow God-fearing people.** "The fear of the Lord
636 is the beginning of wisdom; knowledge of the holy is understanding"
637 (Proverbs 9:10). How do we get the understanding that is knowledge
638 of the holy? "...A GOOD UNDERSTANDING HAVE ALL THEY THAT DO HIS
639 COMMANDMENTS..." (Psalms 111:10). Not only a good understanding,
640 but also blessings—"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, that
641 they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through
642 the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). In addition to future
643 gain, we also have present benefits. "Whatsoever we ask, we
644 receive of Him, because WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS AND DO THOSE
645 THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT" (1 John 3:22). "A son honor
646 his father and a servant his master; if then [God is our] father,
647 where is [His] honor? And if [He is our] master, where is [His]
648 fear... (Malachi 1:6)? Let us reverence and honor, a.k.a., fear
649 the Lord by exercising faith in His word, practicing humility,
650 rendering obedience to God's requirements and giving glory to God.
651 The next section expands the idea of giving glory to God.

652

653

654 GIVE GLORY TO GOD

655

656

657 1. **"God..., the Father of glory..., gives... the spirit of wisdom and**
658 **revelation in the knowledge of [himself]"** (Ephesians 1:17). Whereas
659 in antiquity, "God... spoke unto the fathers by the prophets"
660 (Hebrews 11:1), "...in these last days, [He] spoke unto us by his
661 Son..." (Hebrews 11:2). Hence, Paul says, **"God commanded light to**
662 **shine out of darkness... to give the light of the knowledge of the**
663 **glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"** (2 Corinthians 4:6). God
664 revealed himself in the person of his son, Jesus Christ, and when

665 filled with accurate knowledge of God, we can give glory to Him.
 666 The paragraphs that follow reveal how to give glory to God.

667
 668 2. **We give glory to God as our love for Him matures.** "...**Love [must]**
 669 **abound... in knowledge and judgment** (Philippians 1:9) that you may
 670 **approve things that are excellent**, that you may be sincere and
 671 **without offence until the day of Christ** (Philippians 1:10); **being**
 672 **filled with the fruits of righteousness**, **which are by Jesus Christ,**
 673 **unto the glory and praise of God"** (Philippians 1:11). Jesus gives
 674 to those who mourn in Zion "...Beauty for ashes, the oil of **joy for**
 675 **mourning**, the garment of **praise for the spirit of heaviness** that
 676 **they might be called trees of righteousness**, the planting of the
 677 Lord, **that He might be glorified"** (Isaiah 61:3). Planted trees
 678 always need pruning; therefore God chastens His trees of
 679 righteousness that they might bear fruits of righteousness (Hebrews
 680 12:11). Translated: "I [must be] crucified with Christ... [so
 681 that] the life [that] I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith
 682 of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians
 683 2:20). "... [I must] know Him and the power of His resurrection
 684 and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto
 685 His death" (Philippians 3:10). As the power of Christ's
 686 resurrection [and] the fellowship of His suffering works [in me to
 687 give power to] overcome natural inclinations to sin, the new life
 688 in Christ will exemplify faith and works, which leads other to
 689 glorify God (Matthew 5:16). Marvelous are the means God has
 690 ordained for us to give Him glory.

691
 692 3. **We give glory to God through our repentance.** "...God exalted
 693 [Christ to] His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior ...to give
 694 repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). Yet, in
 695 the end of time, "...men were scorched with great heat [and they]
 696 blasphemed the name of God... [because] **they repented not to give**
 697 **Him glory"** (Revelation 16:9). If God receives glory when people

698 repent; then by inference, impenitence robs God of His glory. Not
 699 surprisingly, the call goes out: "Repent... and be converted that
 700 your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall
 701 come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). **"Repent, and be**
 702 **baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the**
 703 **remission of sins, and [you] shall receive the gift of the Holy**
 704 **Ghost"** (Acts 2:38). Let us heed God's call to repentance and
 705 turning away from our wicked ways to avoid Esau's experience of
 706 being rejected because "...He found no place of repentance, though
 707 he sought it carefully with tears" (Hebrews 12:16-17).

708
 709 4. **We give glory to God through our thanksgiving.** "... [God's]
 710 abundant grace... through the thanksgiving of many redound to (i.
 711 e., result in) the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 4:15). This is the
 712 same grace by which "...the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...
 713 [receives glory] in [us]..." (2 Thessalonians 1:12). Hence the
 714 Psalmist says, "...Give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name,
 715 make known His deeds among the people" (Psalms 105:1). "It is God
 716 that avenges, a.k.a., retaliates on behalf of, me..." (2 Samuel
 717 22:48) "and brings me forth from mine enemies..." (2 Samuel 22:49);
 718 "therefore, I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord..." (2 Samuel
 719 22:50).

720
 721 5. **We give glory to God by boasting about what God had done for us.**
 722 "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord [and] the humble shall
 723 hear... and be glad" (Psalms 34:2). "In God we make our boast all
 724 the day long and praise [His] name forever" (Psalms 44:8). Paul
 725 summarizes the reason for our boasting in the Lord this way,
 726 "...We... [who] worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ
 727 Jesus... have no confidences in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3)
 728 because "...the flesh profits nothing..." (John 6:63). Therefore,
 729 let us "...Magnify the Lord... and... exalt His name together"
 730 (Psalms 34:3).

731 6. **We give glory to God by our obedience.** In the Old Testament's
732 sacrificial system, God required a lamb without blemish (Exodus
733 12:5 & Ezekiel 46:13). But ancient Israel offered blind, lame and
734 sick sacrifices upon God's altar (Malachi 1:8). In response, "the
735 burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi" (Malachi 1:1)
736 read: "...I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts and my name is
737 dreadful among the heathen" (Malachi 1:14). "...From the rising
738 of the sun unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great
739 among the Gentiles..." (Malachi 1:11). "But **you have profaned it—**
740 **[my name]**..." (Malachi 1:12). "And now, O you priests, this
741 commandment is for you" (Malachi 2:1). "**If you will not hear and**
742 **if you will not lay it [my name] to heart, to give glory unto my**
743 **name**, says the Lord of hosts, **I will send a curse upon you**, and I
744 will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because
745 you do not lay it [my name] to heart" (Malachi 2:2). "I will
746 corrupt your seed and spread dung upon your faces..." (Malachi
747 2:3). "**For the priest's lips should seek knowledge and they should**
748 **seek the law at [God's] mouth, ...[being] the messenger of the Lord**
749 **of hosts**" (Malachi 2:7). **But you are departed out of the way; you**
750 **have caused many to stumble at the law...**" (Malachi 2:8). Giving
751 glory to God involves doing the right thing, at the right time and
752 in the right way. **Any departure from God's explicit instructions**
753 **robs God of the glory due His name.** It is only as we give glory to
754 God that we can worship Him, which is the focus of the next
755 section.

756
757 7. **We give glory to God by pointing out His greatness.** When God works
758 through us and the result of His operation is praiseworthy, we will
759 with Peter direct the spotlight on God (Acts 3:12). In doing so,
760 we "...Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength" (Psalms 29:1).
761

762 WORSHIP GOD

763
 764 1. **God seeks true worshippers to worship Him in Spirit and in truth**
 765 (John 4:23). "God is a Spirit and **they that worship [God] must**
 766 **worship Him in Spirit and in truth**" (John 4:24). Translated: God
 767 is not interested in false worship and false worshippers. To
 768 worship God in Spirit we must have the Spirit in us (read John
 769 7:39, 14:17 & Galatians 3:14). To worship God in truth, we must
 770 believe on Jesus and have His words in us, [which] are spirit
 771 and... life" (read John 6:63 & 14:6). "The secret things belong
 772 unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong
 773 unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words
 774 of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). To those who heed the words of
 775 Jesus, a.k.a., "'[keep] the word of [His] patience,' [He] will keep
 776 [them] from the hour of temptation [that] shall come upon all the
 777 world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:10).
 778 More importantly, however, He will **"Open [His] gates** that the
 779 righteous **nation [that] keep the truth may enter"** (Isaiah 26:2).
 780 Using this perspective, **WORSHIP IN THE BROADEST SENSE IS OBEDIENCE!**
 781 It is more than church attendance and participation in religious
 782 rituals. A discussion of the characteristics of true worshippers
 783 follows.

784
 785 2. **The true worshipper is reverent.** "Joshua was by Jericho [and as]
 786 he lifted up his eyes..., [he saw] a man... with his sword drawn.
 787 Joshua went to him and said, 'Art thou for us or for our
 788 adversaries'" (Joshua 5:13)? The man responded, "'...As captain of
 789 the host of the Lord am I now come.' And **Joshua fell on his face**
 790 **to the earth and did worship and said unto Him, 'WHAT [SAYS] MY**
 791 **LORD UNTO HIS SERVANT'**" (Joshua 5:14)? "And the captain of the
 792 Lord's host said unto Joshua, 'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot,
 793 for the place whereon thou stand is holy.' **And Joshua did so"**
 794 (Joshua 5:15). For this singular act of obedience, Joshua received
 795 battle plans for the defeat of Jericho (read Joshua 6:1-5). At the

796 core of worship is an intentional decision to present [ourselves]
 797 as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God..." (Romans
 798 12:1). To do so, we must set our affections on things above, not
 799 on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2); "...abstain from fleshly
 800 lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11) and store our
 801 treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20) that we might keep our minds
 802 stayed on God (Isaiah 26:3).

803
 804 3. **The true worshipper follows protocols as the angels do** (read
 805 Revelation 8:3). A discussion of some of these protocols follows.
 806 "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence
 807 before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20). "God is greatly to be feared in the
 808 assembly of the saints and to be had in reverence of all them that
 809 is about Him" (Psalms 89:7). "...Reverence my sanctuary..."
 810 (Leviticus 19:30 & 26:2). "...Worship the Lord in the beauty of
 811 holiness" (Psalms 29:2, 96:9, 1 Chronicles 16:29). "Come before
 812 His presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto Him
 813 with psalms (Psalms 95:2). "Serve the Lord with gladness; come
 814 before his presence with singing" (Psalms 100:2). "If you bring
 815 your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has
 816 something against you" (Matthew 5:23, Modern KJV), "leave your gift
 817 there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to
 818 your brother and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:24,
 819 Modern KJV). **"If you forgive anyone of his sins, they are**
 820 **forgiven, if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven"** (John
 821 20:23, NIV). **"Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in**
 822 **heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"**
 823 (Matthew 18:18). These requirements help us to NOT parallel 1
 824 Kings 18:22-29, which you should pause and read.

825
 826
 827 4. **The true worshipper is humble.** Examples follow. "...Ezra opened
 828 the book in the sight of all the people... and... all the people

829 stood up" (Nehemiah 8:5). "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great
830 God. And all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen,' with lifting up
831 their hands; they bowed their heads and **WORSHIPPED THE LORD WITH**
832 **[THEIR] FACES TO THE GROUND**" (Nehemiah 8:6). "And they stood up in
833 their place and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God $\frac{1}{4}$
834 part of the day; and [another] $\frac{1}{4}$ part they confessed and worshipped
835 the Lord their God" (Nehemiah 9:3). **The posture of 'face to the**
836 **ground' was not accidental.** "The Lord opened the eyes of **Balaam**
837 and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way [with] His
838 sword drawn... and **HE BOWED DOWN HIS HEAD AND FELL FLAT ON HIS**
839 **FACE**" (Numbers 22:31). **Joshua** had the same response when he saw
840 the captain of the Lord of hosts with his sword drawn (Joshua
841 5:13)—he **FELL ON HIS FACE TO THE EARTH AND DID WORSHIP**... (Joshua
842 5:14; read also Joshua 7:1-7). What is our attitude in God's
843 presence? Does our worship embody reverence and deep heart
844 searching that leads to confession and repentance of sin that
845 resides in our heart (**read Proverbs 21:2, 16:25, 14:12; Jeremiah**
846 **10:23 & 17:9; 2 Chronicles 7:14 & Revelation 3:17**)? We have
847 covered much content in our study of what the Lord requires of us
848 so that we can have a daily, living connection with Him. A summary
849 follows that does not regurgitate previous content.

850
851
852 **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:** "The reason why we have so few men [of
853 Genesis 5:2] of good mind, of stability and solid worth, is that **God**
854 **is not feared, God is not loved** [and] **the principles of religion are**
855 **not carried out in the life** as they should be" (Child Guidance, {CG}
856 507.1). "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, **fear God**
857 and **keep His commandments**, for this is the whole duty of man"
858 (Ecclesiastes 12:13). **Fear God, give Him glory** and **worship Him**
859 (Revelation 14:7)!

860

861 **ANSWER SOURCES: SACRED WRITINGS**

862

863 We are pursuing answers to the question: "What does the Lord require
864 of me so that I connect with Him?"

865

866 1. **A living connection with God requires ever-deepening repentance.**

867 **"At every advance step in the Christian experience our repentance**

868 **will deepen**. It is to those whom the Lord has forgiven, to those

869 whom He acknowledges as His people, that He says, "If my people,

870 which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, pray, seek my

871 face and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven,

872 forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). To

873 this same people, the Lord says, "Then shall you remember your own

874 evil ways and your doings that were not good and shall loathe,

875 a.k.a., dislike, abhor, detest, yourselves in your own sight"

876 (Ezekiel 36:31). However, thank God for hope. Again He says, "I

877 will establish My covenant with [you], and [you will] know that I

878 am the Lord; that [you may] remember and be confounded, and never

879 open [your] mouth any more because of [your] shame, when I am

880 pacified toward [you] for all that thou hast done..." (Ezekiel 16:62,

881 63). The title of Donnie McClurkin's song, "I've Got to Know Him

882 in a Better Way," adequately summarizes the theme of the old hymn:

883 "I Am Pressing on the Upward Way."

884

885 2. **A living connection with God requires comprehending our**

886 **insignificance. When we begin to walk with God in repentance, then**

887 **our lips will NOT open in self-glorification.** We shall know that

888 **"NOT that we are sufficient of ourselves..., but our sufficiency is**

889 **of God"** (2 Corinthians 3:5). Recognizing that we are complete in

890 **Christ alone** (Colossians 2:8-10), then we shall make the apostle's

891 confession our own: **"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh)**

892 **dwells no good thing"** (Romans 7:18). **"God forbid that I should**

893 **glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."** (Galatians

894 6:14 in Christ's Object Lessons, {COL} 160.3). Therefore, a

895 living, practical connection with Jesus involves self-emptying and
 896 continual adaption of the present life to the divine standard of
 897 holiness and righteousness.

898

899 3. **A living connection with God requires a holy fear.** “Adam was
 900 commanded to [teach] his descendants the fear of the Lord...”
 901 (Spiritual Gifts, Volume Three, {3SG 52.2). Examine closely the
 902 passage that follows. “Fear lest your will [power be] not held in
 903 subjection to Christ's will, lest your hereditary and cultivated
 904 traits of character... control your life. ...God works in you to
 905 will and to do of His good pleasure; [therefore], **fear lest self**
 906 **shall interpose between your soul and the great Master Worker.**
 907 **Fear lest self-will shall mar the high purpose that through you God**
 908 **desires to accomplish. Fear to trust to your own strength, fear to**
 909 **withdraw your hand from the hand of Christ and attempt to walk**
 910 **life's pathway without His abiding presence”** (COL 161.1). “When
 911 God and Christ abide with us, ‘The spell of a stronger, a perfect
 912 mind will be over us; for we have a living connection with the
 913 source of all-enduring strength. IN OUR DIVINE LIFE, WE SHALL BE
 914 BROUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO JESUS CHRIST. WE SHALL NO LONGER LIVE THE
 915 COMMON LIFE OF SELFISHNESS, BUT CHRIST WILL LIVE IN US. **HIS**
 916 **CHARACTER WILL BE REPRODUCED IN OUR NATURE. THUS SHALL WE BRING**
 917 **FORTH THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...**” (COL 61.3). “THE HUMAN
 918 HEART, GIVEN UP TO HIM, WILL BECOME A SACRED HARP, SENDING FORTH
 919 SACRED MUSIC” (Selected Messages Book 2, {2SM} 253.3). Dwell upon
 920 this theme: The Heart as a Sacred Harp Sending Forth Sacred Music.

921

922 4. **A living connection with God requires obedience.** Examine the
 923 passage that follows to grasp the idea. **“The king and his**
 924 **counselors had hoped to** subdue the Israelites with hard labor, and
 925 thus decrease their numbers and **crush out their independent spirit.**
 926 Failing to accomplish their purpose, they proceeded to more cruel
 927 measures. [They issued] orders... to the women whose employment

928 gave them opportunity for executing the command, to destroy the
929 Hebrew male children at their birth. Satan was the mover in this
930 matter. He knew that a deliverer was to be raised up among the
931 Israelites; and by leading the king to destroy their children he
932 hoped to defeat the divine purpose. But **the women feared God, and**
933 **dared not execute the cruel mandate.** The Lord approved their
934 course, and prospered them. The king, angry at the failure of his
935 design, made the command more urgent and extensive. [He called
936 upon] the whole nation... to hunt out and slaughter [the] helpless
937 victims. "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, 'every son
938 that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you
939 shall save alive" (Exodus 1:15-22 in Patriarchs and Prophets {PP}
940 242.1). As a sidebar, beware of the spirit of Pharaoh in the 21st
941 century. More importantly, however, walk with God by obedience even
942 at the expense of kings' wrath.

943
944 **5. A living connection with God requires entire consecration.** God
945 desires His people to show by their lives the advantage of
946 Christianity over worldliness. We are to live so that God can use
947 us in His work of converting men and women and leading them to wash
948 their garments of character and make them white in the blood of the
949 Lamb. **We are His workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus unto good**
950 **works"** (Ephesians 2:10). Through us, God desires to reveal His
951 manifold wisdom. Therefore He bids us, 'Let our light so shine
952 before men that they may see your good works and glorify your
953 Father... in heaven'" (Matthew 5:16 in 2SM 157.1).

954

955 **DISCUSSION: WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?**

956
957 The signs of a living connection with God are many! "[But] A life in
958 Christ is a life of restfulness. ...[When] Jesus... [comes] into the
959 life, that life will... forget to be self-serving and will live
960 closer and still closer to the dear Savior... and all around you will

961 take knowledge that you have been with Jesus and learned of Him"
962 (Mind, Character and Personality, {2MCP} 642.2).

963

964 **CONCLUSIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

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966 **"God is not dependent on [humanity] for honor.** He could marshal the
967 starry hosts of heaven, the millions of worlds above to raise a song
968 of honor, praise and glory to their Creator. "The heavens shall
969 praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation
970 of the saints (Psalms 89:5 in The Sanctified Life {SL} 76.2). In
971 times past, we walked in darkness of ignorance, but now God has
972 revealed great light of truth (Isaiah 9:2). "[We were] called out of
973 darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Then, let us
974 prepare to "...enter into the presence of God, who dwells in light
975 unapproachable" (Testimonies for the Church, Vol. Two, {2T} 267.2).
976 If we will "...Worship [God, who is excellent in majesty and power],
977 in the beauty of holiness..." (Selected Messages Book 2, {2SM}
978 156.4); then now is the time to fear God, to walk in His ways, to
979 worship, love and glorify Him.

980
981 **Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the**
982 **dominion of Satan (COL 174.3).** Therefore, **He saves... them that come**
983 **unto God by Him;** He makes intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25). By
984 His spotless life, His obedience, His death... [and] intercession for
985 the lost race..., [Christ] **holds before God the censer [of] His**
986 **spotless merits. [In this censer], the prayers, confessions and**
987 **thanksgiving of His people** [mixes with Christ's spotless merits, and
988 thus] **perfumed with... [Christ's] righteousness, [they] ascend to God**
989 **as a sweet savor. The offering is wholly acceptable and pardon**
990 **covers all transgression** (COL 156.2). Thank God for the ministry of
991 Jesus Christ in the Most Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

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CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Make good on Christ’s investment in you. “The word of God, spoken to the heart, has an animating power and those who... neglect to become acquainted with it will neglect the claims of God.... [Consequently, their] character will be deformed, [their] words and acts a reproach to the truth” (Counsels on Sabbath School Work, {CSW} 17.2).

“Repent... and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). Here, Luke, the author of Acts, speaks not of the repentance associated with justification, but with sanctification. For those already justified, deepen your repentance at every advance step in the Christian experience (Reflecting Christ, {RC} 260.7).

Earnestly search and meditate on Scriptures. In contemplating the history of the patriarchs, the prophets, the [people] who loved and feared God and walked with Him, ...the spirit which inspired them will kindle a flame of love and holy fervor in the hearts of those who would be like them in character” (Counsels on Sabbath School Work, {CSW} 17.2). Like Ezra, let us prepare our “heart to **seek the law of the Lord,** to **do it** and to **teach in Israel statutes and judgments**” (Ezra 7:10).

“Set your affections on things above” (Colossians 3:2). “...Take into consideration the cost of character-building and build for time and eternity” (Lift Him Up {LHU} 129.3). Earthly builders like KB Horton gauge the progress of their work by milestones. Heavenly builders, you who are preparing a habitation for the Spirit of the Lord, watch for the milestones of a living connection with God. Let us be among the people that go up to “...the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths” (Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2). Then our lives will reveal the fruit of the Holy Spirit and traits such as obedience, humility, reverence and justice.