

Experiencing the Presence of God .

Chapter 2: Discovered Secrets of Spiritual Maturity

January 29, 1930

I feel simply carried along each hour, doing my part in a plan which is far beyond myself. This sense of cooperation with God in little things is what so astonishes me, for I never have felt it this way before. I need something, and turn round to find it waiting for me. I must work, to be sure, but there is God working along with me. God takes care of all the rest. My part is to live this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to his will to make this hour gloriously rich. This seems to be all I need think about.

March 1, 1930

The sense of being led by an unseen hand, which takes mine while another hand reaches ahead and prepares the way, grows upon me daily. I do not need to strain at all to find opportunity. It plies in upon me as the waves roll over the beach, and yet there is time to do something about each opportunity.

Perhaps a man who has been an ordained minister since 1914 ought to be ashamed to confess that he never before felt the joy of complete, hourly, minute by minute – now what shall I call it? – more than surrender. I had that before. More than listening to God. I tried that before. I cannot find the word that will mean to you or to me what I am now experiencing. It is a will act. I compel my mind to open straight out toward God. I wait and listen with determined sensitiveness. I fix my attention there, and sometimes it requires a long time early in the morning to attain that mental state. I determine not to get out of bed until that mind set, that concentration upon God, is settled. After awhile, perhaps, it will become a habit, and the sense of effort will grow less.

Loneliness to Never Alone - Frank Laubach

March 1, 1930 (continued)

But why do I constantly harp upon this inner experience? Because I feel convinced that for me and for you who read there lies ahead undiscovered continents of spiritual living compared with which we are infants in arms.

And I must witness that people outside are treating me differently. Obstacles which I once would have regarded as insurmountable are melting away like a mirage. People are becoming friendly who suspected or neglected me. I feel, I feel like one who has had his violin out of tune with the orchestra and at last is in harmony with the music of the universe.

As for me, I never lived, I was half dead, I was a rotting tree, until I reached the place where I wholly, with utter honesty, resolved and then re-resolved that I would find God's will, and I would do that will though every fiber in me said no, and I would win the battle in my thoughts. It was as though some deep artesian well had been struck in my soul or souls and strength came forth. I do not claim success even for a day yet, in my mind, not complete success all day but some days are close to success, and every day is tingling with the joy of a glorious discovery. That thing is eternal. That thing is undefeatable. You and I shall soon blow away from our bodies. Money, praise, poverty, opposition, these make no difference, for they will all alike be forgotten in a thousand years, but this spirit which comes to a mind set upon continuous surrender, this spirit is timeless life.

Loneliness to Never Alone - Frank Laubach

March 9, 1930

For the first time in my life I know what I must do off in lonesome Lanao. I know why God left this aching void -- for Himself to fill. Off on this mountain I must pursue this voyage of discovery in quest of God's will.

I must plunge into mighty experiments in intercessory prayer, and I must confront these Moros with a divine love which will speak Christ to them.

Cooperation with God in little things is astonishing.
I need something, and turn round to find it waiting for me.

I must work, but there is God working along with me.

I have continuous inner conversation with God.
Responsiveness to His will makes this hour gloriously rich.

There is a sense of being led by an unseen hand.

I do not need to strain at all to find opportunity.

There is time to do something about each opportunity.
Feel the joy of hourly, minute by minute, God awareness.

I compel my mind to open wide toward God.
I wait and listen with determined sensitivity to hear Him.
I am finding undiscovered continents of spiritual living.

People around me are treating me differently.
Insurmountable obstacles are melting away like a mirage.

People are becoming friendly who had rejected me.
A deep well was struck in my soul; strength came forth.
Every day is tingling with the joy of a glorious discovery.

Loneliness to Never Alone - Frank Laubach

Experiencing the Presence of God

Chapter 3: The Rest of My Life An Experiment

March 15, 1930

This week a new, and to me marvelous, experience has come out of my loneliness. I have been so desperately lonesome that it was unbearable save by talking with God. And so every, waking moment of the week I have been looking toward Him, with perhaps the exception of an hour or two.

Last Thursday night I was listening to a phonograph in Lumbatan and allowing my heart to commune, when something broke within me, and I longed not only to lift my own will up but also to give it completely to God.

How infinitely richer this direct first hand grasping of God himself is, than the old method which I used and recommended for years, the reading of endless devotional books. Almost it seems to me now that the very Bible cannot be read as a substitute for meeting God soul to soul and face to face. And yet, how was this new closeness achieved? Ah, I know now that it was by cutting the very heart of my heart and by suffering.

[comment>that is the suffering of the wounding of my pride which pain is often more excruciating than the physical pain of childbirth or that of the presence of stones in the kidney<comment.]

Somebody was telling me this week that nobody can make a violin speak the last depths of human longing until that soul has been made tender by some great anguish. I do not say it is the only way to the heart of God, but I must witness that it has opened an inner shrine for me which I never entered before.

Loneliness to Never Alone - Frank Laubach

March 23, 1930

One question now to be put to the test is this: Can we have that contact with God all the time? All the time awake, fall asleep in His arms, and awaken in His presence, can we attain that? Can we do His will all the time? Can we think His thoughts all the time?

Or are there periods when business, and pleasures, and crowding companions must necessarily push God out of our thoughts? We cannot keep two things in mind at once. Indeed we cannot keep one thing in mind more than half a second. OUR Mind is a flowing something. It oscillates. Concentration is merely the continuous return to the same problem from a million angles. We do not think of one thing. We always think of the relationship of at least two things, and more often of three or more things simultaneously. So my problem is this: Can I bring God back in my mind-flow every few seconds so that God shall always be in my mind?

I choose to make the rest of my life an experiment in answering this question.

Someone may be saying that this introspection and this struggle to achieve God-consciousness is abnormal and perilous. I am going to take the risks, for somebody ought to do it. If our religious premises are correct at all then this oneness with God is the most normal condition one can have. It is what made Christ, Christ. It is what St. Augustine meant when he said "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

Loneliness to Never Alone - Frank Laubach

March 23, 1930 (continued)

I do not invite anybody else to follow this arduous path. I wish many might. We need to know so much which one man alone cannot answer. For example:

"Can a laboring man successfully attain this continuous surrender to God? Can a man working at a machine pray for people all day long, talk with God all day long, and at the same time do his task efficiently?"

"Can a merchant do business, can an accountant keep books, ceaselessly surrendered to God?"

"Can a mother wash dishes, care for the babies, continuously talking to God?"

Is this obtainable?

Any hour of any day may be made perfect by merely choosing. It is perfect if one looks toward God that entire hour, waiting for his leadership all through the hour and trying hard to do every tiny thing exactly as God wishes it done, as perfectly as possible. No emotions are necessary. Just the doing of God's will perfectly makes the hour a perfect one.

These are the things I am feeling and doing:

Desperately lonesome, but soothed by talking with God

Every waking moment of the day talking with God

No longer reading endless devotional books

Even Bible reading cannot be a substitute for meeting God

This closeness is achieved by cutting my heart in suffering

Anguish has opened an inner shrine in which I worship

I bring God back in my mind-flow every few seconds

Oneness with God is the most normal condition

Any hour is perfect if one is aware of God that entire hour

You might find solace in some of these things yourself!

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