

Volume 3 - Day 1: How You Do Everything

It is likely that as you read the articles in this daily devotional book that you are judging both the content and the author. And if this is true for you, it is also very likely that you do this with everything else you read. It is quite simply the nature of human nature. How you do anything is how you do everything.

How you judge me is how you judge others. How you judge me is how you judge your parents, children, significant others and all others. How you do it is how you do it. There is no escape. And there is no need for escape. Unless, of course, you are not satisfied with how your judgmental nature makes you or others feel.

The good news is this. How you do anything and everything is determined by choice. It is your choices about each encounter you have with any other human beings. And since you chose the manner in which you operate now, you can change your choices as to how you will operate in the future.

Judgment comes in two varieties. One is criticism. The other is discernment. While I am obsessed with criticism, I am essentially rejecting the other person or their point of view. When I am discerning I leave myself open to the possibilities that I might learn something new and valuable from them.

Wisdom would dictate that the latter form of judgment will give me the best possible outcomes in every encounter in life. Therefore, if I would be my best self, it behooves me to change my choices to be discerning rather than critical. The more I can accept anyone else, the more I myself will be accepted. And acceptance is the key to life, love and the pursuit of happiness.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:.

Vol 3, Day 2: Contemplation as Opposed to Judgment

It seems somewhat ludicrous to have to build a case for contemplation. We are made in an image that is the very essence of love (the highest emotion). Everything we do in life is for the purpose of developing relationships. Yet, we live in such shallow ones that we are often horribly disappointed in others whose actions do not meet our expectations. Yet, our expectations are fundamentally unsound as they are based on incomplete information. This is largely true in that we come to conclusions about the trustworthiness of others based solely upon intellectual analysis or referrals of others.

Contemplation is a key element required in knowing the heart (motives) of others. And it is the motives of others that determine their trustworthiness. Contemplation by its definition and practice actually enables one to feel the heart and soul of another. Without this practice, we leave ourselves open to making decisions (choices) which are based on insufficient information. This leads to all sorts of undesirable or possibly even awful ends.

When we approach the moment (encounter) with a preconceived disposition of rejection, we limit the possibilities. However, discernment is essential and only attainable through contemplation with an open mind. When Jesus said in Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge." He was encouraging mutual acceptance as the leading strategy for relationship building and intimate knowledge of one another in order to determine the level of mutual trust which might be possible.

Just because you are right does not imply that the other person is wrong and vice versa. Leave room for other points of view while seeking a common motive of love and acceptance.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

Volume 3 - Day 3: 'Yes' as Opposed to 'No'

"I think, therefore I am." or "We are what we think." statements leave us with less than optimal experiences of life. To some degree, however, this is actually true because we have made it so. Yet, God refuses to be known by the intellect. God can only be known by the heart. He only allows Himself to be known in relationship.

This is also true of every human being. Relationship is not an intellectual pursuit. Relationship is a matter of the heart alone. The connection which makes mankind stand out as uniquely different from all other living beings is the ability to establish and maintain relationship with each other. And one solid proof of it is this. I can be as aware of and connected with a relative who is far away as I can with one who is standing in front of me.

Uses and abuses of one another come by way of thinking while not emoting. True relationship occurs when and only when genuine affection for another stimulates an other-preferring desire for them. The more I allow myself to embrace another (any other) or to say 'Yes' to them in relationship, the more relationships I will have.

When you start with the 'No' of judgment and personal rejection it is very hard to get back to 'Yes.' And, frankly, you will never be a loving person. When you stop judging and start approaching the moments of encounter with acceptance of the other person, you have a chance of experiencing love for them. The mind is a judgment machine. The heart is the only organ with which we can love.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 4: Praying Without Words

(Contemplative Prayer)

God's therapy for the emotional stress of the human soul is contemplation. Most of the things which trouble us are things that turn out to be unimportant in the final round. When we offer word prayers pleading for release from the turmoil, we often miss the point of praying altogether. Prayer is a time to face the truth about ourselves, the wild beasts of our lives as it were. Prayer is a time to face the humiliation of who we truly are as opposed to who we fantasize ourselves to be.

When we come to the Lord in a speechless manner and humble posture, He can then reveal both the problems with the distemper of our soul and the solution to those problems. Most of them are simply solved by submitting ourselves to the purpose of God in them. In contemplation, we silently ponder the wonder and purpose of God in our current situation. We begin to feel His presence and know why He has put us through what is happening to us in the present moment. And our lack of silence is the only thing that has prevented us from experiencing His healing therapy before.

It is no wonder that we have resisted the silence and the humiliation. Whenever we have gotten close to honesty in the past, we have been shocked at the negative, rebelliousness within us. And we shut down so as to stop the clamor of the voices within us. Yet, if we will persist in silence, enduring the shame, we will find the revelation necessary to set us free from all guilt, shame and fear. We will experience the peace which comes from total surrender and absolute trust of our Father's love. Then we can embrace with anticipation every experience and circumstance in our lives. God uses all of them to bring us to maturity in relationship.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 5: Negative Emotion Triples

“For some reason we get a lot of emotional energy from negative emotions. When we can create a story line from someone’s offense toward us and weave it into a condemnation of them, the negative emotion **triples**. Mostly we see each other with clouded vision and colored glasses. Unless and until we develop different eyes to see each other, we will continue to trash each other emotionally.” — Richard Rohr

Cain murdered his brother because he was jealous of God’s approval of Abel’s sacrifice and rejection of his own. Confronted by God for his crime, Cain begged God to protect him from retribution of others who would take his life in return. Amazingly God placed a mark on Cain which was discernible in a completely illiterate society. The Mark of Cain revealed that anyone who hurt Cain would receive **seven times that hurt** from God Himself. Genesis 4:15. So, in essence, the **emotion actually is multiplied seven fold!**

You have likely experienced road rage or line rage (*anger when someone cuts in line ahead of you*). Your anger is definitely harmful to you, both emotionally or physically. Emotional distress causes all sorts of medical maladies. So, to be honest, even if you don’t express your anger, it is still harmful to you!

There is a terrific alternative. Instead of seething in anger, try to imagine a good reason for their behavior. Remember that you have committed similar crimes. Instead of attacking them, pray for their safety, healing or blessing. This will eliminate your anger and replace it with affection for them. Make every offense against you an opportunity to bring love, blessing and peace to those who offend you.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 6: Consider Your Valuables

There are many things in life that are valuable to you. **Make a list** of everything you consider valuable. Then **create a second list of eternal things** (those which can go with you when you die). **STOP!** Make the list **now!**

You will likely notice that the primary difference between the lists is that the eternal valuables are relationships, things of the spirit. Everything else, health, wealth and physical pleasures will cease upon one's death. Notice also that only relationships cannot be stolen or corrupted by thieves and villains.

Think of it like your relatives and the affections you have for them even while they are hundreds or thousands of miles away. We may actually include people in our temporary list, but when they pass into eternity they then move to the eternal list. Notice also that most of the items in your temporal list are things we can physically handle. Notice that the eternal valuables can be on both lists!

The message of Jesus was all about including as many as possible in our list of valuable persons. The whole story of the Bible is relationship and how to attain it. Jesus said, "Store up treasures in heaven where they cannot be corrupted or stolen." Wholesome relationships are the only thing that can be stored for eternity. Yet, we often destroy the very thing we want most by being critical and negative toward those we hold dear.

The quest before us is to develop an even greater affection for God than for our most significant other on earth. It is only, ever the love of God in us that can be other-caring enough to create and maintain loving attitudes toward others. The best news is that God can be our greatest treasure in life and after death! If you will simply move God into the Top 10 of your Passion Hits List, He will do the rest!

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 7: God Is Not Like Santa Claus

Our minds are often informed by well-meaning but misguided people. Among these are our parents. Other things may be as subtle as the fairy tales we tell our children. A predominant one is told in various forms all over the globe. It is the tale of Santa Claus (St. Nicolas) who brings 'good' children presents every year.

On the surface and with only a casual glance we might conclude that the tale is harmless but also useful. Reinforced by the song, "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," many children learn to fear that misbehaving will cause them to lose some or all of the presents that Santa might bring them at Christmas.

"Oh, you better watch out. You better not cry. You better not shout, I'm telling you why. Santa Claus is coming to town!" He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good. So be good for goodness sake." These words teach us that we must behave well or we will suffer. And often we treat each other and our children in this manner. We may even subconsciously hope to manage our children's behaviors by such tales and songs.

The great tragedy of this is that it also affects how most of us perceive God. We begin to believe that God, not unlike Santa, will give us only dirty rocks if we behave badly. We also tend to believe that He is watching constantly to catch us in wrong doing. And we begin to fear Him. And, although it may be subconscious, this causes us to stay at a 'safe' distance from God.

So what is widely believed to be a harmless tradition, could actually drive a wedge between God and the very children He wants to heap goodness and love upon. To be sure, God does see all and know all. But God is the opposite of Santa. He not only **does not** stand over us waiting to strike us, but rather **struck His very own Son** in His crucifixion so He did not have to strike us. God wants us not to fear Him. He wants always to embrace us with His love!

Stop casting God in the image of Santa! See God for the most loving, tender, caring Father He is! Get up close and personal.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 8: Behavior-Based Value

We often assess or determine a person's value based on their performance. Many would say that your measure of worth is the sum of your good behaviors minus your bad behaviors. Worse yet, you may live a life full of incredibly good things and commit one very bad deed and your value is associated only with the one bad thing you have done! How narrow minded! How mean! How negative! How ludicrous! How preposterous!

Whether you associate value with good behaviors or the absence of bad behaviors, this measure is faulty for still another very significant reason. Since every human being not only has the potential to behave badly, all human beings commit bad deeds from time to time. (Bad is when it is selfish to the harm of another.) So, if the measure of value of a person is behavior, no one has value. And if one big, bad deed negates all of the good, the quest for good behavior is futile at best and more likely bordering on insanity.

While we are busy condemning people for wrongful behavior, we ourselves are guilty of the same things. While we are busy trying to manage others' behaviors, our own judgment, condemns us if we will but look in the mirror. We are very quick to ask the courts for the maximum penalty for a crime committed against our children. Yet we beg for mercy if the villain is our own relative.

Think about this. If you truly love someone, you want to overlook their faults. If you truly love someone, you want to protect them from physical and emotional harm. If you truly love someone, you place high value on them. So, regardless of what we say about behavior-based value, the truth is that we actually determine another's value to us by how we treat them, not by how they treat us!

This is the essence of God's love. He places high value on every one of His children! That includes you! Believe it! Let God's love overwhelm you. This, and only this, will improve your behaviors toward others.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 9: Genuine Affection

As Christians we are very different from those who are not. We are to be so completely different that everyone notices that we are. And as Jesus put it, "By this will everyone know that you are My disciples, that you have love for one another." So the distinction of Christianity is unconditional love for each other. That means that people know that we actually have affection for them and are not just going through the motions trying to look like we care. We have **e**-motions not just motions toward them.

Every man, woman and child alive today wants to be loved by someone. Christians should be the most loving people on earth. As a matter of fact, if we were, our churches would be bursting at the seams. The one earthly treasure which hinders us the most is the strong desire for a good reputation among men (applause). Another lesser treasure here is comfort and pleasure (indulgence). The third significant thing that is valuable to us here is to be worshipped (in control of our own personal kingdom and respected by others) and to tell others how they should behave. It is ever, only and always deep affection for God that causes one to delight in Him and those who are in Him, regardless of their behaviors.

I believe that my **treasures in heaven** are relationships with those whom I loved enough to introduce to a personal relationship with God for themselves. Seeing them again will be my greatest joy. (And, just so you know, no one lives in a mansion in heaven. The correct term is efficiency apartment.) Simply follow God's revelation. Live for the soul, developing relationships that last into eternity, and let the love of God flow so strongly through you that you are asked why you are so full of grace and peace in all circumstances.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 10: Superimposing Christianity on our Culture

Christians, although we should know better, consistently try to superimpose our standards onto those who do not share our beliefs. The church often tries to get non-believers to do what we fail to do ourselves. Actually the demands of the church are impossible to achieve. Moral purity is beyond the grasp of the natural man or even the Christian who is not deeply intimate with God. We are often preaching sermons, writing articles, and singing hymns, trying to equate our country and our culture with Christianity. It cannot be done.

The Christian Church is something that is supposed to be set apart. It is not the color of our skin, our ethnicity or our social standing that matters. The Christian Church is a new creation born of the Holy Spirit, out of the suffering of Christ. It is another culture altogether. It is a culture where loving others more than ourselves is the norm. We are to be different from the natural man.

We are to be other-caring rather than self-indulging, because we are risen with Christ. That is, we are to have the other-preferring nature of God as opposed to the self-preferring nature with which we were born. In order to achieve this you must “Seek those things that are above and set your will (heart), emotions (soul) and thoughts (mind) on the things that are above where Christ sits on the right hand of God.”

Consider every altercation in your experience with others and look for the self-preferring nature in them. You will find that all of them occur because of this self preference in those matters. Further, most altercations are based only on differences of opinion.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 11: Christian Tradition

A major problem with our churches is that we get so engrossed in the mundane, routine, traditional ways, that God and the people get very little personal time together. We meet and greet on the way in and the way out of the building. Wouldn't it be refreshing if church were more like a family gathering at home on a holiday, where we were spontaneously engaged with one another, and God had a chair at the table and was enjoying the meal and conversation with us as though He were there in person?

Certain imperatives are set before us because Christ is risen. The scriptures say, "seek and set your affections on things above and cease to engage in selfish pursuits." Forgive everybody who has offended you as Jesus forgave those who nailed Him on the cross. Abandon yourself to Him by dedicating your time to Him. Time is, after all is said and done, the only currency of genuine affection. Most of us give God only the *left-overs* of our time. If Jesus Christ had given us only His spare time, we would all be forever lost.

We can, if we desire to see things as God sees them, give Him our attentions and affections at all times. We can include Him in our thoughts no matter what we are doing. But it takes practice to break our old habits of ignoring Him in order to develop new ones that keep Him constantly in our thoughts. Imagine as well if our relationships with those who meet us in church were as deeply affectionate as our family gatherings on holidays. Imagine inviting different ones over for after church dinner frequently.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Vol 3 - Day 12: The Exchanged Life {mind, spirit, emotion}

For conscience' sake we tend to separate our experiences into two separate categories. Some things to us are spiritual and others are secular. Things that relate to church, God, religion, and so forth are considered our spiritual lives. All other necessary pursuits are treated as unspiritual or secular. This enables us to disconnect our spiritual principles from most of our life experiences. It also helps us justify emotional destructiveness. Unfortunately this also tends to support hypocrisy in all of us. It also enables us, somehow in good conscience, to operate selfishly while perceiving ourselves as selfless and maybe even generous people. It is mostly our rationale that resists God's purposes for our lives.

Living abandoned to intimacy with God, or anyone else, precludes a divided life. To God everything is spiritual. And in reality, that is true for every man. Craving to be loved, respected, indulged and served are deeply spiritual stimuli. "God is a Spirit and those who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Therefore it is only what is spiritual that can be an offering to God. And our spirit is always actively involved in everything we do. It is our spirit that makes every decision we face.

As Christians, we can turn some of the most mundane jobs into wonderful spiritual events. By including God in our awareness while making every choice in our day, we can make every moment a spiritual encounter. And our emotions follow these new choices.

Brother Lawrence, was just a kitchen worker in the monastery where he lived. He washed the dishes for the glory of God. When he was through with his humble work, he would fall down, flat on the floor and worship God. Whatever he was told to do, he did it for the glory of God. He testified, "I am so resigned that I would not take up a straw from the ground against His order or from any motive but that of pure love for Him." He was always happy in the presence of God!

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 13: Knowing What to Expect

Every morning as I get up from my bed, I move about expecting God to bless my day and guide me through it. Every time I'm traveling, I expect Him to keep me safe. If He wants to take me to heaven more than He wants me on earth, I will not get home. There is no need to pray for God's protection. I already have it. When God is finished with me here, He will take me to Himself. In the meantime, I will thank Him day in and day out for everything.

Don't be distracted from your love of God by anything that promotes your prosperity, popularity or power. Remain constantly aware of the Presence of God within you. By faith God sanctifies us, that is, He declares us to be holy and sets us apart for Himself. We must obviously do our jobs, but if we do them *with* God, they are no longer mundane. They become opportunities to build relationships with each other and spread the love of God all around us!

Your faith is strengthened by assurance. And here is the cure of all cures. **Your life is hid with Christ in God.** Nothing can harm you unless it is God's will. No one can kill you, unless it is God's appointed time for your departure from this life. No malady or adversity should cause you to complain. When you see every difficult person or trying circumstance as a learning lab or endurance training, you will rejoice instead of grouse. The more you love God the more you will trust Him and want to be with Him and do things that please Him. The only way to attract any one to the Kingdom of God is to compel them with the unconditional love of God. And His love is delivered by the presence of His Holy Spirit within you. Let His love radiate!

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 - Day 14: Intimacy Endures All Adversity

David was known as a man after God's own heart. He seemed to have few lapses in his focus on God. Yet his life was filled with trouble, heartache and relational carnage.

It is recorded in the story of Job that **Job** prayed daily for himself and his family. He was as true as true can be with respect to his allegiance to God. Yet, in one fell swoop, Job lost all of his children and grand children. Everything they had was reduced to rubble. Job was even inflicted with extreme medical maladies.

Another faithful man, **Joseph**, had tremendous faith and intimacy with God, but suffered incredible injustice at the hands of his own brothers. So just because one finds God to be very dear to himself, does not mean that life will be any easier than it is for an irreligious man. In fact, there is significant evidence that life is often more difficult for God's best servants than for most others.

Many believers through the ages from Jesus until now had a similar yet uncommonly deep affection for God. To be sure, their source of love and ours is the same rushing river of God. Anything positive in relationship flowing from us is simply the overflowing of our banks by the rising river of God's love. Left to ourselves our human nature will selfishly extract love from others rather than to lavish it upon them. To become channels of God's love to others is the very purpose for which we were apprehended (stopped in our tracks) by God. Paul stated in Philippians 2:13, "... but I follow after so that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Jesus Christ."

Tragically, many churches teach faith in Jesus, but little more. Relationships will ultimately fail unless the parties continue in hot pursuit of their mutual desire for each other. The primary objective for us and the purpose of God in creation is to develop an up close and personal relationship with Him.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Vol. 3 – Day 15: My Obedience to God Will Upset Others

Our most significant other often calls on us to do things that will inconvenience or distress others we love. Yet because we hold them **most** dear to us, we will let others be aggravated rather than disappointing our dearest. It is indeed our actions that demonstrate our true affections. We tend to stand up for, defend and otherwise support those we love. Yet, many times we cannot please everyone at the same time.

When we say we love God the most but our actions betray us in that regard, it is time to either draw closer to God or at least stop saying that He is our dearest love. Obviously, we must sometimes disappoint some in order to accommodate others. The important thing to recognize in all this is that every decision is a testimony as to who or what is of greatest value to us.

God never forces us to do His bidding over others'. He simply offers us the opportunity to be up close and personal enough with Him to be and receive enormous blessing. God's will is not a matter of His plan A and B or His perfect and permissive will. God's purposes will not be thwarted by either you or me. If I am not willing to be used in the moment to accomplish His purposes, He will simply dispatch another to get it done.

You are likely aware of this as well. In every situation when God offers you an opportunity to be of service to Him, there will be those who will be unhappy if you change your plans on the spot in order to do what He has asked. We always have the option to diffuse the anger of those in our presence but in so doing we will create sorrow for our Lord. His sorrow is that we love others more than Him.

The first of the 10 Commandments is "You shall have no other gods before Me!" God knows we have many others whom we worship (place great value on). Our quest is to make Him first in all things. When we inconvenience others, rest assured, "God will use their aggravation in order to mature their relationship with Him as well!" Simply obey and leave all the consequences to Him.

Volume 3 – Day 16: Love Is Pleasing

We have all been in love at some time in our lives. And

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

those of us who have been madly in love with another person, know what it means to be madly in love. We cannot adequately describe the feeling with words. Nonetheless, we know it when we feel it. When you are overwhelmed with that kind of love, you will do anything your lover desires. And usually, when you know what they desire, you are already trying to fulfill their desire before they even ask.

Ultimately, we come to be able to finish one another's sentences. Many times we are already thinking a thought which they express, before they say it. And, so it goes. When you love someone deeply, you always want to please them. And the love story of the Bible is to show us how intimacy with God is the primary objective and romancing Him is essential.

One of the most appealing aspects of love, is that it comes without warning and without the baggage of manipulation or coercion. It is purely and simply an unadulterated, deep affection for another that creates an other-preferring desire for them. True love then is opposite of our natural inclinations to put ourselves before others.

One demonstration of this is the parent saving their child's life while sacrificing their own life in the process. The greatest demonstration of this on the landscape of God's creation of the universe in general and mankind specifically is sacrificing Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ. He did not sacrifice Himself to be a hero. He gave Himself for us because of His genuine and enormous love for us.

As opposed to the glory bestowed on the heroic individual, there was nothing but shame and disgrace heaped upon the Son of God. Yet God loves us so much, He allowed His only Begotten Son, to become a part of mankind and then be murdered by us in the most inhumane of all human punishments. When this love becomes posited within us, in the person of the Holy Spirit, we too can endure atrocities with joy at the hands of others who reject His love flowing through us.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 – Day 17: Emotion, Not Thought

Christianity differs from all other religions in that its central theme is **personal relationship with God** rather than adherence to religious creeds and confessions. Religion can be simply a process of thinking and doing. Religion does not require, nor encourage, relationship with one's god. It simply requires obedience to creeds of God. Actually the definition of religion is "bondage to a creed."

Christianity stands alone on several particulars. One of these is the relationship of individuals with their Creator, God. Relationship is not a thinking proposition. It is an emotional proposition. We cannot love with our heads. We can only love with our hearts. The inclusion of human philosophy and science in our religious practice and teaching has caused us to drift as a Christian culture far from the *Christ-In* culture which existed in the wake of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. *Christ-Ins* were overwhelmed by the love of God. That love was the distinguishing factor of their faith in Jesus Christ.

When we fall in love, our spirit connects intimately with another. No amount of intellectual study of my lover will endear me to them. Only a mutual attraction to each other's collective emotional gallery will draw us into a deep desire for each other. And nurturing relationship is only facilitated by consistent pursuit of greater caring for the one we love. As the emotion (love) deepens, the connection strengthens. As the connection strengthens we feel more secure. And as we nurture the love affair, it develops into greater passion for each other and greater selflessness.

One simple test may help you know where your affections lie. If what you are doing has no thought about what benefit there might be in it for you, then your affection is genuine and the action is a loving thing.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 – Day 18: Love IS Emotion

Love **is**, after all, an **emotion**. We know the distinct difference between emotion and logic as it is common knowledge that emotional decisions are generally more risky than logical ones. Just as we thrive on emotions, so does God. So He used His rational mind to engineer the universe and us. He did this to facilitate His ultimate purpose, that is to establish a love affair with any who would respond to His overtures toward them. But we cannot have affection for God with our mind. We can only know God in relationship through our emotional connection with Him, and a deeply affectionate one at that.

Many these days say that love is action. However, this statement fails to take into account the myriad random acts of kindness which are done by benefactors who actually hate those toward whom they have acted kindly. You cannot judge any act or word apart from the motive for which it is expressed. The word hypocrisy might come to mind. Kindness can be appreciated even if it is done with an ignoble motive. But kindness cannot be love, if it is not accompanied by the emotion of affection. Many criminals donate large sums of money or valuable resources to charity to cover their crimes or to avoid prosecution. When such donations are done blatantly, we might even call it bribery.

I have observed that most recipients of kindnesses can usually sense the difference between being used as an object of someone's project as opposed to being an object of another's genuine affection. Good deeds do not generate affection in the doer. But genuine affection will automatically produce good deeds toward others.

If you are a generous or kind person, ask yourself if you are this way in order to gain the approval, respect and admiration of those observing you. If not, it is likely that you have genuine affection for those upon whom your generosity rests.

Vol. 3 – Day 19: Is Your Love for God a Passionate Love?

It seems that generation after generation drifts farther and farther from God. Some of this is purely the tendency of the natural man to cater to his own whims. But tragically, much of the drift is caused by the incorrect doctrines and practices of the *Christian* way. As we make idols out of the scriptures and altars out of Biblical artifacts, we replace the love of God with various forms of self-righteous behaviors which undermine His love.

Beware of your own propensity to *stand on the Bible* making it an idol to be worshipped above all else. This relegates the God of the Bible to a lesser place. And, if in reflection on your life, you discover that the Bible has not produced a lifestyle which closely resembles the unconditional love that Jesus lived, consider the most viable explanation. You have placed more value (worth; worship) on the commands and dictates of the **word** of God than on the enormous **love** of God. The Bible is myriad stories of deeply personal relationships with God.

If you do not believe that God wants your obedience to be born out of love rather than duty, you will not find yourself in love with God. Many have a love for God, but it is diminished for them by feelings of guilt, shame, or fear. God's plan of Salvation for you, was not only to cover the penalty of evil you commit, but also to remove all feelings of guilt or shame associated with that evil. Because, quite frankly, you cannot be intimate with anyone before whom you cower in either guilt or shame. God not only wants to be up close and personal with you. He also wants to be intimate with you, more so than you are with your most significant other on earth.

If you will abandon yourself to intimacy with God, you will eventually find yourself transformed into a most amazingly loving person. In order to **love like Jesus loves** you must unleash His Presence within you. It is actually **His love, not yours, that compels** others into a love affair with God for themselves.

Volume 3 – Day 20: Experience: Irrefutable Testimony

There is a radical difference between reading about someone or something and experiencing them. We all know facts about many people, but only those with whom we share a close relationship can we thoroughly enjoy! Experience always trumps logical conclusions.

Love itself is extremely illogical, but once smitten by love, one cannot dismiss or forget the euphoric feeling of that love! The deep affection of God can only be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit at the moment we are smitten. Thus a personal deeply intimate relationship with God is infinitely more valuable and satisfying than simply reading the Bible could ever be.

The Bible was written to convey the story of God's love and grace from beginning to end. It was also intended to be a proof text by which we can test our motives and complicity with the love of God. Vast numbers of people, including the very religious, are missing the best evidence for the existence of God and the person of Jesus Christ. Christianity has at its core a piece of irrefutable evidence. **Feeling is believing.**

When a person embraces Jesus Christ, according to the Biblical, historical record, he will feel the love of God as surely as he feels the love of another human being. Although the feeling cannot be described adequately with words, the feeling is unmistakably one of overwhelming affection. The purpose of God's introduction of His Son, Jesus, into humanity was to walk among us and communicate to us in human terms which we understand.

Once a person experiences the love of God, no amount of external coercion or manipulation can negate that experience or cause them to disbelieve. So if you want to experience the love of God, simply respond to Jesus' expression of love for you. It will produce in you a feeling of overwhelming affection that will never subside.

Volume 3 – Day 21: Standing on the Word of God

"God said it. I believe it. And that settles it." This trite and useless phrase is often spoken in 'so-called' Christian circles. Those who say it are extremely sincere in what they believe the Bible says on most issues. Yet much of what they believe the Bible says, comes from hearsay of others, whom they have trusted. Many of us have been misinformed on many issues.

It is senseless to say, "what I believe the Bible says settles it," for two reasons. 1) What you *believe it says* may be very inaccurate. Consider the opposing views of brilliant theologians who agree on very few interpretations. 2) *That settles it* presumes that you have all the right answers already which precludes any further pursuit of revelation (stagnation)! *Whenever the use of scripture denigrates relationship, its purpose is no longer being served and its message is abused by way of misinterpretation. Devoid of Jesus' love, the Bible is not God's Word.* — J. H. Alan

Many have talked about the Bible, studied it avidly and striven to comply with its very literal interpretation, but have missed the point altogether. If the scripture has only made points in your life, but no appreciable difference, it has surely become an idol before which you may bow, but through which you have not become as loving as Jesus was and still is.

The evidence of Biblical truth is human lives transformed into the image of Jesus as originally intended. God did not convey His word to us in order to spark verbal battles or to divide us from each other. The central theme of the Bible is redemption from evil (the selfish nature of mankind and its related carnage).

When you are up-close-and-personal with God; when you love others more than yourself and even show kindness to those who would hurt you, only then are you like Jesus! God **is** love.

Volume 3 – Day 22: Do It Yourself

There are countless self-help resources (books, videos, audio tracks and so forth) to which we can turn which claim to show us **how to** be better Christians. We think it is our duty to become more like God. It is evident that most Christians bury themselves under piles of these resources or myriad religious activities in an attempt to do it themselves. That is, to **get right with God**, by their own efforts.

Yet, the more helps we explore, the farther from intimacy we get. And the quest for **righteousness** can only end in a personal and **deeply affectionate relationship with God**, in Jesus. The ways and means to human intimacy are identical to those needed to develop intimacy with God. It is one thing to be educated by the history of the Biblical records. It is altogether different to establish and nurture a deeply personal relationship with Him. Unfortunately we fail to realize that we are doing the exact same thing as the original couple in the Garden of Eden.

Partaking of the fruit of self-effort in an attempt to be more like God **is evil!** Instead of mutual affection between ourselves and God, we try to become God. The objective is not to become any other person than the one God created us to be. The objective is to deeply love one another by becoming intimate. Intimacy is that state of being where I know fully who you are and accept you “as-is.” To love you is to desire your satisfaction over my own.

Although education is useful and knowledge is power, there is no greater power in the universe than true love for another. To be properly educated in the Holy Bible, the context of loving others more than self must be applied to every story, parable, metaphor, analogy and other language device. Seek transformation, not just information. Love Like Jesus Loves! That’s how God loves! You can’t do it yourself. Simply surrender yourself to Him in every decision you make.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 – Day 23: It's Your Fault

To a large degree, nearly everything is your fault. By this I am saying that **your current circumstance** is likely the result of one or more **choices you made**. Obviously, this is not completely true, as children have little or no say in what their parents do or say to them. Yet, when we become adults, we are responsible for our choices from then on, regardless of whoever did or said whatever they did or said to us. To continue blaming others for what you choose to do is certainly of no value to you. And, quite frankly, no one else gives a rip. They are consumed by their own sorrows and pleasures.

When we blame others for the way we are, we somehow think that justifies our actions. But, that is not the case. When we blame others, somehow we think that if they would simply shape up, our problem would go away. This is not the case either. As soon as someone else whose similar idiosyncrasies come into our presence, so does our wrongful attitude and expression. If you are offended by anyone, consider this. They have likely bumped into a tender bruise in your ego. They did not create the bruise. They simply and unwittingly bumped it. And you lashed out at them.

If you are stuck in a shallow relationship with God, or anyone else for that matter, it is completely your own fault. God's Word is clear. He desires that we develop unconditional love for those around us, especially those who aggravate us. To this end, God has placed His Holy Spirit within a Christian (Christ-In) in order to teach you God's ways and affections. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate teacher of time and eternity. But, unless and until you desire to learn from Him, you will remain ignorant and dissatisfied emotionally and spiritually. It is **your choice**. No one else is responsible for your decisions.

Vol. 3 – Day 24: Be the Wind Beneath Their Wings

“It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.” And ’tis an ill person who has nothing good to say about another. You and I know that some people just get on our nerves. Often we can’t explain why. But we express our displeasure to them or to others behind their back. The nature of human nature is to promote one’s self, often at the expense of someone else. Many of us have been told, “You have to look out for yourself. No one else will.” To always look out for the good of another is reserved for the ‘mothering’ instinct.

The good news is that we were created to be lovers not fighters. Yet, we lapse into a selfish pursuit of our own life, liberty and happiness. At the same time we desperately grope about for someone, anyone, to love us. We are also engineered to want to be desired by another. Many times we clutch one with whom we are infatuated. Yet when they do not return the love we seek, our feelings are hurt. (our feeling of **love** is hurt.)

Worship is best defined as any expression which demonstrates the high value we place on the object of our worship. The human heart is engineered to worship and to be worshipped. We actually worship many others who never worship us in return. But when we worship another and that person worships us, we have an opportunity to develop an intimate relationship.

The secret of deeply affectionate relationships is contained in this pursuit: “desiring the pleasure of the object of my worship over my own pleasure.” Instead of being the ‘ill wind that blows no one any good’ become the wind of encouragement and good will as you become the wind beneath the wings of everyone in your path. God is more than willing to help you be this!

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

Volume 3 – Day 25: Know God, Not Just About Him

Most religious people, even Christians, accept the doctrines of others rather than making up their own minds about God. We tend to become faithful to the religion of our parents. If we were treated badly by our parents, we might adopt anything other than their particular brand of religion. We seem to choose the *safety in numbers* over the narrow lonely road to life. The Bible is clear that the road to destruction is wide and heavily travelled. I suggest you abandon the *safety in numbers* theory in favor of the safety of God and His truth.

There is only safety and security in the love of God. So, until you seek God alone as your trustworthy life partner, you will be in danger for most of your life's journey! The great news is that when you become intimate with God, not only *will you know* it, but also *others will testify* that they see the love of God in you.

There is no limit to intimacy. Keep on seeking deeper and richer affection for God. Let me qualify the limitless nature of God's intimacy. His offer and supply is unlimited. However, **we can and do** limit the measure of His intimacy with us when we fail to return it. And we fail to receive it by crowding it out with selfish indulgences, applause and self worship!

The ultimate intimacy is mutually desiring to please our lover more than ourselves, while our lover possesses the same "other-preferring" motives toward us. Instead of asking God in prayer to satisfy your needs and wants, ask Him how you might bring Him pleasure in the situation in which you are praying. Listen! He will respond. Remember, prayer is a dialog with God, not talking at Him or begging Him to indulge you (or do *what you think is good*).

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 – Day 26: Control Freak or Stress Free

Having been born to be control freaks, we have great difficulty letting God be in control, or anyone else, for that matter. Yet, control issues are the predominant ones leading to stress and unbecoming behaviors. One of my own pastors once said, “The comfort of God is wrapped in my release of my control over my life.” Later God added to this, “*and the lives of others.*” So a major element of a life abandoned to intimacy with God is the release of all control to God.

The comfort
of God
is wrapped
in my release
of my control
over my life
& the lives
of others!

As long as I tried to maintain control over this or that, I lived with a pretty great measure of stress. This stress turned my concern for matters into worry, anxiety, guilt, shame and sometimes even fear. So I began to equate *comfort* with *peace* and reworded my pastor’s statement. “The **peace** of God is wrapped in my **release** of my control over my life and the lives of others.” This one phrase has been a daily practice for me ever since.

Many pray for peace. We pray for peace among family and friends. We desire peace with those in our communities. We strive to bring peace to the whole world. Yet, peace eludes us, both locally and globally. The reason for this is most of us want others to be at peace with us, while we refuse to be at peace with them. The starting point for all negotiations for peace is to disclose our unique points of view in a respectful manner. But peace only, ever comes when both parties are willing to accept the other without any conditions for change, when compromise is not an option.

When I can accept you without expecting you to change anything, I have peace. Even if you choose not to accept me in return! **My peace is not dependent upon anyone else. It is my choice!**

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Vol. 3 – Day 27: Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired

When you get sick and tired of being sick and tired, of a less than satisfactory experience of God, is the very moment when God is most likely to begin revealing Himself in the most intimate ways! God is always passionately in love with us. He is simply waiting for any who will join with Him in a passionate love affair. Intimacy cannot be achieved by thought or imagination. Intimacy only ever occurs by way of desperate desire to be intimate in any relationship. If you are serious about becoming abandoned to intimacy with God, you *will*, at times, experience a desire to be with other people who want to pursue the same for themselves. But when complete intimacy with God becomes a reality for you, there will never be a lonely moment for you! God's presence is enough. I speak from personal experience. I have not experienced a single moment of loneliness in over 15 years!

The point is not to **fully comprehend** God, but to **fully enjoy** what I do comprehend about Him. — J H Alan

Every experience in your life has the potential to teach you or others some valuable lesson. If you will search for the revelation each trial or difficulty may bring, you will be amazed at how much more God can teach you. Seize each moment (decision point), ponder its meaning with God, discover His purpose in it, and do what His Spirit directs you to do about it. "Seek and you will find." applies to every event in your life. Look for God in each one and you will see Him right there with you in it.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Vol. 3 – Day 28: Forgiveness Is A Choice You Make

written by one of my favorite song writers

Holding on to a grudge forever
You hold it in, and you think you'll never
Find a way to ever let it go

The mask you wear is an illusion
It only leads to more confusion
And causes pain and heartache in your soul

The pain you've carried for so long
Is a heavy load, and you're not that strong
So lay it down and give it to the Lord

Forgiveness – is an act of faith that God is in control
Forgiveness – is a choice we make of truly letting go
Forgiveness – is obedience to what we're called to do
Forgiveness – the choice is up to you!

Forgiveness – release your guilt if you're the one who
sinned
Forgiveness – release the hurt if you've been sinned
against
Forgiveness – is a miracle that only God can do
Forgiveness – the choice is up to you!

Forgiveness – is a miracle that only God can do
Forgiveness – the choice is up to you!

song entitled: 'Forgiveness' - © Doug Meeker 2021

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 – Day 29: God Cannot Forgive Sin

The only pathway to intimacy with God is forgiveness of our relationship crimes (sins). Now to be sure, God does not forgive in the manner which most think. God cannot just let the perpetrator go free and still provide justice to the victim.

God's forgiveness is like the motor cyclists' saying, *Pay it forward*. God *pays forward* the sins to Jesus, so that the due penalty of our crimes is ***paid in full*** by Him. No sin goes unpunished by God. God declared emphatically, "Vengeance is mine, I ***will*** repay." God will either let you pay your punishment forward to Jesus, or He will allow you to serve your own sentence (separation from relationship with God). That is the singular message of the Gospel.

Many respected 'Christian' teachers, proclaim from their pulpits and lecterns, the false teaching of moralism. The proper response to acknowledged sin is, "Thank You, Lord, that Jesus has paid for this sin already!" Then go about your Father's work again immediately. One sacrifice and one repentance is all that God required for all of the sins of anyone who in faith lets God ***pay their sins forward*** to Christ. But to give thanks in everything is the ultimate in freedom from guilt and shame.

When a Christian joyfully thanks God for the forgiveness already applied to their entire life, and instantly restores their communion with God through the Holy Spirit, they can immediately hear His guidance and walk in it. This is truly what the Bible calls walking in the Spirit. You cannot walk in the Spirit by simply not walking in the flesh. Walking in the Spirit is living in constant awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit within and letting Him make your choices! His choices will always be laced with the unconditional love of God for you and for those in your present moment of influence.

Volume 3 – Day 30: What Is The Cross I Must Bear

So, what the cross is for Jesus, it cannot be for you. The cross was death for Him and it is life for you. The cross was punishment for Him and forgiveness for you. The cross was judgment on Him and it is freedom for you. So when we come to love the cross and to stand before the cross, the cross is not a symbol of our pain, it's a symbol of His.

When Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me," He wasn't talking about pain or suffering. That was His deal with the cross. It's not ours. He was punished so that I could go free. He suffered so that I didn't have to. The cross is a symbol of your freedom, your forgiveness, your acceptance, the love of God, the generosity of God, the kindness of God, the mercy of God, the beauty of God. When He said "Take up your cross," He said, "Take up everything that's beautiful about me and follow me." "Take up everything that's marvelous about my love for you and come and walk with me. Come follow after me." — Graham Cooke, 'Abiding - John chapter 15'

Don't we want to follow someone who loves us and cares about our future? Don't we want guidance from a competent leader? Don't we want to feel secure in someone stronger and more capable than we are? Well that's who God is! And to think, "He loves us on our worst day as much as on our best day."

Granted, when the enemy is shooting at our leader, God, the enemy's bullets are also coming at us. When people curse God, they are also cursing those who have faith and trust in Him. But, our Commander-in-Chief can never be defeated. So we can walk with our heads held high. We actually know that we have already won!

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 3 – Day 31: The Bars of My Own Prison

The ultimate in frustration is to create unattainable goals or unrealistic expectations. It is our expectations which are not met that send us into fits of anger and animosity. Imagine your expectations of others as the bars of a prison which separate you from them. Also consider how awful your expectations of yourself, which cannot be realized, make you feel. You may place greater expectations on yourself than God does. Only you can take them down. You made them!



The image shows a dog, possibly a husky, looking out from behind vertical bars. The bars are dark and run vertically across the frame. The dog is wearing a blue jacket and a hat. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage. To the right of the bars, the text 'EXPECTATIONS / MY RIGHTS' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this text is a list of expectations, each preceded by a right-pointing arrow. The list includes: 'Bars that separate me from you', 'Bars that I created', 'Bars fabricated of my opinions', 'Bars as strong as I choose', 'Bars you cannot remove', 'Bars you may not know exist', 'Bars that are based on culture', 'Bars which keep me from what I want most in life', 'Bars of relationship separation', and 'Bars that GOD HATES'. At the bottom of the list, it says 'see also: 10 Commandments'.

EXPECTATIONS / MY RIGHTS

- Bars that separate me from you
- Bars that I created
- Bars fabricated of my opinions
- Bars as strong as I choose
- Bars you cannot remove
- Bars you may not know exist
- Bars that are based on culture
- Bars which keep me from what I want most in life
- Bars of relationship separation
- Bars that GOD HATES
- see also: 10 Commandments

Freedom from aggravation, animosity and self-loathing is only a few bars away! The saw for bar removal is the choice to accept others “as-is.” Just be yourself and let others be themselves.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan



Vol 3 – Day 32

Three phrases reveal MY
< MOTIVE.

Three words explain
EVIL.

PROSPERITY

POPULARITY

POWER

Evil is the selfishness of the soul that will **indulge** self, and **applaud** self at the expense of others. Evil is attempting to **control others** against their will.

“All of us need a radiant idea of God. It’s the only place to live. To be astonished! To be amazed! To marvel. To be so caught up with the beauty of God’s nature, it becomes who you are. It washes over you day after day after day, and you love every thought that you have about Him. You love every word He says. You hang on it because it’s life.” — Graham Cooke

Unless and until you are breath-taken by your affection for God, you will fail to reach your greatest potential. Affection toward and from another is the greatest desire of the soul. Even the animals get this.

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan