

What Was God Thinking?

Chapter 4: Divine Illumination in Relationship

(by John Henry Alan; edited by Bob Clarkson)

Unimaginable Clarity

Relationship with God opens the human mind to inexplicable mysteries of God. It enables us to **feel** God in the essence of His persona. It lets us understand how **good** as defined by God does not resemble our definitions in the slightest way. His ways become illuminated by a faith that **trusts His perfection** in relationship and every other way. His purposes unfold with amazing clarity before us as we meditate on His Holy Word through the **lens of His love** which is unconditional and unfailing!

Much of the time we are wandering somewhat aimlessly wondering what the will of God is for the current moment. We play spin the Bible hoping that God will have it stop spinning on the answer to our current question or on the solution to our current problem. Yet all of this confusion is nothing other than the **fleshing** out of *incorrect teaching* of the Bible that has come from well *respected servants* of God. We sometimes even teach that God expects us to use our common sense and intellect first and after that pray for wisdom. But we have not reached the depth of relationship which enables us to know His heart and mind even before He speaks.

Those of us who have been married or deeply in love with another can attest, when one knows a significant other intimately, most questions evaporate into the bright light of **intimate** knowledge of the other person. It is as simple as developing a marital knowledge of an earthly spouse to do so with God. But we somehow fail to realize that intimacy is even possible with God! Yet we sing myriad songs in church which declared in no uncertain terms that His love for us is deeper than any earthly love affair. So the problem is not with God. It is with us. And as with medical treatment, we not only need to agree with the doctors' assessment, we also have to sign consent for the indicated treatment. With God it is the same. Recognize what you need from God and give Him permission to provide it.

Establishing a personal relationship with God is only the surface of the sea. Once we are in the water, God assures us that we have all the equipment and skill necessary to explore its depths. But, you say, "I'm not theologically trained to be able to use the equipment. For Pete's sake, isn't that why God put pastors into pulpits for us?" To this I say, "You have a good point. However, much of what we get from 'hearsay' about God, even from pastors and teachers, is not completely correct. And it will, like a road map with missing chunks, leave us stranded in the journey." So here's what happens when we take our own personal relationship with God to the most intimate level possible for us.

We have never been weaned from the breast of our pastors and teachers. We have been warned that we will get lost or undone without their guidance. And, I too, was of this mindset until I agreed to let God do whatever it took to **trust Him completely**. And the lion's share of that trust was in the Holy Spirit who comes to live in our very inner being. It is the Holy Spirit who inspired the 50 or more writers of the 66 books of the Bible! And this same **Spirit's job is to guide each of us into all truth** of the Word of God! I refuse to learn the intimacies of my mate by way of others' explorations of my mate. I actually would resent another person getting too close to my spouse. So we have to let the Holy Spirit within us be **our guide** into **God's truth**, ways and purposes.

Now you may raise a flag of concern as to the potential that you might get it wrong. But here's the catch. If you only operate by 'spin the Bible' or 'hearsay of well meaning and respected others,' you have an even greater potential of getting it wrong. As for me, I can generally predict where my lover would want to dine or how my question would be answered even before it is expressed. And the Holy Spirit communes with us in a similar level of intimacy. He does not usually express Himself audibly. His silent voice sounds remarkably like our own. And it is usually by planting thoughts of inspiration, revelation or admonition that communicate with our souls His pleasure or displeasure.

So now that we have a personal relationship with the God of the Universe, we can trust Him to be straight with us. He has no intention of misleading us. And His Holy Spirit within us will always make us feel uncomfortable when we are headed in the wrong direction. This relationship with God, that is so personal that it challenges the marital one, will enlighten us to even greater knowledge of Him than we can possess about our spouse. The more you love someone the more you desire to know what pleases and displeases them. Quoting from John Henry Alan's book, "Let's Fall in Love with God," "The strongest deterrent to wrongful behavior is a genuine affection for the one I might otherwise do wrong." God IS love! He does not just have love. And the expressed purpose of God in creating the universe and the earth to support human life was to establish a personal love affair with any and all who desire to have that with Him.

Walking in the Spirit as Paul wrote about is in many ways as simple and natural as walking in lock-step with a human mate. It is the mutual 'other-caring' which we commit to at the altar of marriage that sustains a marriage. And in the same manner, a mutual desire for the other, God and me, produces a mutual pleasure for both of us. We often make the mistake in marriage of striving not to offend the other rather than just being spontaneously affectionate for each other. We cannot

walk in the Spirit of God, by working hard not to offend God by our wrongful behavior. But when we resonate in the spirit of mutual love, we are most thoroughly satisfied and so is God!

The good news just gets better as we contemplate these thoughts. Without this personal relationship with God, we are doomed to be selfish and take advantage of others. This is as natural as breathing. However, when we find ourselves in the loving arms of intimacy with another person who cherishes us and wants only the best for us, we can relax and enjoy that affection! I do not have to resort to what I was taught. “Bob, if you don’t look out for yourself, no one else will!” In an up close and **personal relationship with God**, I can **trust** Him to take better care of me than I can of myself. However, I must trust that His purposes for me take into account all of the other family members as well.

Many mysteries occur in the stories in the Bible. Many are confounded by the tragic losses of Job. We might even ask God, “What were you thinking?” But God’s purposes served far more than just one man or his family. And there was Joseph, who incurred the jealousy, hatred and abuses of his siblings. He was sold into slavery, unjustly put in prison and otherwise suffered incredible hardships. However, these two men are icons of incredible faith. In the end, Job brought great **glory to God by his abiding trust** in God. Joseph

rescued his entire family and their descendents as the 2nd in command in the most powerful nation on earth at the time. And even when Joseph was reunited with his brothers, he did not mete out retribution. He simply declared, “What you all intended for harm, God intended for good.”

So in our intimacy with God, we begin to understand **Him** more completely. As we dwell in His presence by maintaining an awareness of His presence all day and all night, we begin to move with Him in unforced rhythms of affection and grace. Jesus repeatedly admonished the crowds to let the children be up front in His meetings. Even though they were distracting, Jesus made it clear that love for God needs to be as natural for us as for children. God wants us to be always child-like, but not childish. And spiritual maturity is relational maturity. “When our relationship with God is as **free-spirited** and **trusting** as a child and as **intimate** as a spouse, it enables us to **love like God Himself**.”^{4jha}

John writes in the 16th chapter of his Gospel record that the role of the Holy Spirit is different for believers than for unbelievers. The Holy Spirit **convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment** before we are born again. But once we have been born again, the Holy Spirit’s presence within us **guides us into all truth**. Unfortunately all too often teachers and preachers say that the Holy Spirit convicts the saint of sin. This is

absolutely not true. Read it for yourself. And, it does not even make sense for the Holy Spirit to convict and condemn saints when **Jesus' sacrifice paid for all sins**, past, present and future. So clarity happens when, and only when, we see the truth as revealed by the Holy Spirit within us. Many things which have been declared as sin by pulpit masters have absolutely nothing to do with sin. If the Holy Spirit convicts the believer of anything it is this. "Believers who live in guilt, shame or fear, do not **trust** the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross."^{4jha}

Jesus died to pay for all of those ugly feelings! So, when your flesh raises its ugly head and you do commit sin, get right back up, say, "Thank you!" to God for the forgiveness already applied, and get right back into God's arms of love. Actually, our testimony as believers in Jesus is what Jesus said it is, not what we are hearing in church by and large. Jesus' words about the testimony of His disciples are recorded in John 13:34-35. Jesus stated this after He had clarified for the Pharisees the abbreviated summation of His Father's Ten Commandments. Jesus said to His disciples at the last Passover supper, "A new command I give to you. **Love** one another **as I have loved you!** By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** for one another." It is only **love** that initiates relationships and only love that restores broken ones!

The Fruit of the Spirit is not the believer's fruit. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And **a believer cannot live** in the stead of the Holy Spirit. However, **the Holy Spirit can live** in the stead of the believer. So the objective is not to manage my own behavior. The objective is to do as John the Baptist proclaimed. He (Jesus) must increase and I must decrease. It is the distinct role of the believer to get small and release all control to the Holy Spirit. Then the perfect love of God, residing in the Holy Spirit, can be felt by those within the Christian's sphere of influence. The Holy Spirit cannot sin. Only my unholy one can. Thus the fruit of the Spirit is only manifest when I get out of His way. **Only He** (the Holy Spirit within me) **can love like Jesus loves!**

I once heard a pastor say these words as he left the pulpit to walk to the exit to speak to those departing from his church, "The comfort of God is wrapped in my release of my control over my life and the lives of others." One of the primary causes of sin is the insatiable need **to be in control**. It is when I refuse to **surrender** my rights to God that I sin. It is like a return to the Garden of Eden when a person surrenders his God-given self sovereignty back to God's sovereignty! Clarity comes shining through when the fog of my own insistence to be in control is dissipated by surrender to God and the Holy Spirit. When **they** make the choices, it is **their** love and compassion that exude from our beings. Just, let go and **let God be Himself** in you! That is our new identity.

Credits: 1awt; 2wj; 3HB; 4jha; 5lg

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What Is God Thinking?

TRUST: God's Truth versus Relative Truth

Several points of God's truth:

God's love is unconditional and unfailing.
Grace is a by-product of unconditional love.
Grace is favor showered upon the undeserving.
Grace cannot be cheapened. Its cost is too high.
Gracious gets vicious when behaviors don't change.
Sin is a matter of motive, not expression.
Forgiveness is most therapeutic for the forgiveR!
The testimony of a 'Christ-In' is unconditional love.
All our sins were put on Christ on the Cross.
Justification is to God: 'just as if I'd never sinned.'
Christ's perfection was imputed to us by God!
Sanctification is being '**set apart**' for God's use.
Sanctification is '**declared righteous**' by God!
Sanctification does **not** require living a sinless life.
A disciple is one who **loves what his master loves**.
Affection always affects one's course of action.
One can pose as a lover while full of hatred.
Lovers always desire to pleasure their mates.
The proper response to sin: thankfulness; Jesus paid
Good behavior does not produce love.
Love always produces good behavior.
Unmet expectations create disappointment -- anger.
Culture + Desire + relative/absolute Truth = Belief.
Relative truth is prevails. It comes from relatives.
Apology is inappropriate when devoid of sorrow.
Jesus never apologized for speaking truth!