

Volume 1 – Day 1: Relationship Not Religion

The same dynamics of good relationship apply to both the theist and the atheist. The same things that hinder us from developing a deeply affectionate relationship with God come between us and deeply affectionate feelings for others. Although few realize it, we are our own greatest obstacle to good relationships with other people. Since every relationship is a two person choice, I dramatically improve my chances of enlarging my circle of friends by always choosing affection for the other person even if we disagree on many points of fact or opinion. “The greater the measure of affection which I offer to others, the greater the measure of affection I will receive.” -- J H Alan

So whether you are religious or not, I encourage you to look for the nuggets of relationship gold which will improve your sensations in life and experience of life. **Relationship gold** will produce enough improvement in your understanding and acceptance of others to make the time spent worthwhile. And if you have given up on God, hopefully you will give him a second chance, as an intimate relationship with Him could enormously improve your experience of life.

As your emotions reach new heights of pleasure and you experience less anxiety, guilt, shame and fear it will become easier and more intuitive for you to embrace those in your life who are the most difficult to accept. The best news is this. Your measure of personal peace and happiness can improve even if your circumstances and experiences do not. The key to all of this is choice, your choice. And it is less about the choices of your activities than it is the choices about what you believe. Let yourself believe different things and it will change how you feel.

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 2: Living in Your History or Your Future

Have you explored recently the possibilities in your relationship with God? Is there a chance that there is more for you to love about God? For many Christians the world around, there is a far **less intimate relationship** between themselves and God than what God has offered them. Although, any human being can live a life quite successfully without being religious or even a theist, there is a much better way contained within the Holy Bible.

The Bible is the history of God's universe (HIS story). It is an articulation of God's paradigm for relationship with Him that, when fully understood, staggers the imagination. The history of the God who calls Himself "I AM", is rife with opportunity to live happy and fully contented lives within the confines of relationship.

The story is laced with unconditional love for His created beings which is demonstrated by His unfailing Grace toward them. God's grace, which is His *undeserved* favor heaped upon us, is the very proof that His love is perfect toward us. His love never ceases to flow to us. And His love, can and will transform us, if we will simply receive it and love Him in return. If you don't receive His love, you won't experience His grace. Even *you* offer grace to those you love.

If you grace someone with any ulterior motive, such as 'hoping for behavior changes,' it is not grace. It is rather manipulation. If you develop true affection for them, grace is the evidence. Divine Love generates a Divine Grace. You might say that the essence of grace is inexhaustible 'second chances.'

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 3: Love Produces Grace

The God of the Bible is the epitome of relationship in every possible relational experience. That is, God is the best Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, Friend and Mate anyone could ever have. Jesus proclaimed in His preaching, that even though we look out for the best interests of our children, God is far better at parenting than we could ever be. He actually knows the motives of every human expression. And like the “best Dad ever”, His love never falters toward His children. His desire for them is that they become the best adults possible and reach their greatest potential. And His grace (**underserved favor**) toward His children never puts a limit on second chances. He will patiently pour everything He can into them.

The best definition of *grace* includes the fact that *Grace* is a by-product of *love that will never cease to flow toward the object of that love*, that is favor for the **undeserving**. When love is present, it will always offer to help one up who is down. So, like a mother who sits in the courtroom with her erring child, even if her child deserved to be punished, pleads for the shortest possible sentence. So, God as both Father and Mother has every intention of both helping the children become their best possible selves and of minimizing the emotional pain they must endure in life. The introduction of God Himself into the physical realm of man in the person of His Only Begotten Son, is the strongest evidence of God’s desire for an up close and personal relationship with mankind. The height or pinnacle of human experience can only be achieved in a personal relationship with God through His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 4: Forgiveness in Every Story

God's written history, the Holy Bible, includes nearly every kind of good and bad scenario possible in human experience. The whole story has been told, so that we can see that relationship is the most important thing to both God and His highest creation, mankind. When you look closely at each story, the unfailing love of God can be seen and with it the enormity of grace both in size and frequency which God expresses to us, His children. If there is any meaning at all, in the story of Jesus, His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection and His return to the Father, it is this. "Greater love has no one than this: that a man lay down his life for his friend."

The whole object of the Cross being the final event in Jesus' life, when He deserved the best end, was that God even made provision in Himself, to provide an innocent man who offered to take the penalty of another man's criminality, (that is yours and mine), so that justice was served on behalf of the victims of our crimes while we ourselves were released from that punishment. [The ultimate irony of all time was that a violent offender, Barabbas, was set free at the same time and in the same pronouncement of judgment when a completely innocent man, Jesus of Nazareth, was condemned to death.] What enormous love God must have for us in order to watch His Son suffer the most inhumane of all punishments devised by human kind to pay the penalty we deserved.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 -- Day 5: Freedom from Guilt and Shame

If you are a *Christian who lives in constant guilt and shame, you can surrender even those feelings to the God of the Cross.* After all, Jesus died, not only for the crimes themselves, but also for the guilt and shame associated with them. And in God's eyes, Jesus suffered enough of our shame that we did not have to suffer either guilt or shame again. When we succumb to the temptation of Satan to wallow in either our guilt or shame, he silences us and robs us of the very love, joy and peace God offered to us through this most kind of all acts on our behalf.

You can be free from both guilt and shame. You can know what it means to "live fully loved" by God and "enjoy His favor always." Let the Holy Spirit reveal the misrepresentations and misinterpretations of key passages of scripture which have come between you and a joyous laughter, not only at yourself, but also those around you. God is the author of love, joy, peace and all other positive emotions and has created a way for every man, woman, and child to experience them in abundance. When you see God's forgiveness and grace in each Bible story, instead of His wrath, you will find His unconditional love toward you.

There is FREEDOM just around the corner, unless you will not allow yourself to "rethink" truth. You do not need to leave your community of faith. You can experience a much more joyful and peaceful life than before and a much closer relationship to God than nearly everyone around you. Look for the love of God in every verse.

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Volume 1 – Day 6: Find Yourself in Every Story

Ponder how each story in the Bible may have *you* in it. Cast yourself into every part in each story to discover what God might want you to know about yourself. Your life will likely never be changed significantly by seeing others in the parables. But, if you use the stories as mirrors of your own tendencies and motives, you may make huge leaps in the direction of a better experience of life and love.

It is very important to realize how much we order our lives by relative truth rather than God's truth. After a long flight and deep interrogation by a seat-mate, the conversation ended with this question to me, "It seems to me that you believe that there is such a thing as absolute truth and that you have found it." I had very little time to respond, but the Holy Spirit's inspiration led to the following dialog.

"Well, James, I do believe in absolute truth and that I have found it." So, James, if you believe that all truth is relative, answer this question. "If you could embrace a body of *relative* truth that leaves you twisted, frustrated, angry and generally miserable, or you could choose *relative* truth that makes you happy, pleasant, peaceful and generous to everyone, which would you choose?" There was no time for an answer, nor was one needed. James' smile spoke volumes.

A few weeks later, I was awakened by the Spirit to these words from Him, "James was right." "About what?" I asked. To which He replied, "All people have and embrace relative truth because most of what you believe came to you from your relatives and their inner circle of influence." As I have pondered this ever since, I realize time and again that whenever I abandoned a relative truth in favor of God's truth on that particular issue, my heart changed in a very positive way.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 7: Love *IS* a Feeling

Don't be fooled into thinking that love is action itself. Myriad atrocities against man have been committed in strong, but misguided, faith. Also know that Jesus Christ would not have suffered the Cross out of duty or obligation. Jesus died because His love for me, His love for you, was so immense that He "... died for His friends." This love in action presents a quality of life that is far above anything that is natural. To know God or anyone else intimately, our spirits must touch and our hearts must touch. Then we will experience intimacy with them.

Why would we think that God is so awesome, majestic, powerful, intelligent, all-knowing, superlative and pure that He is untouchable? Why would we think that the most creative being in the universe would create human beings, in His image, just to treat them like mere animals and strike them whenever they behaved badly? Why would we think that a *good* Father would abuse us just because we might wander into the wrong places or simply balk at His commands?

Would we have children to treat them in that way? God gave us each a personal example of who He is, how He thinks and how much He loves, by the very act of procreation. As we multiply we establish families to nurture loving relationships with one another. Then we gather into communities to extend those loving relationships to a larger circle.

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

Volume 1 – Day 8: Divine Quest

The quest to know God and to be in a wholesome relationship with Him has been around since the beginning of the human race. Some abandon this quest and become atheists. Others search with many doubts that He exists and call themselves agnostics. Still others decide to follow another supernatural being, Lucifer, and actually sacrifice their own children to this “god” whom they serve in exchange for riches and power. Then there are others who manufacture their own god or idols and are very religious, hoping to reach God by moral integrity or worship of these idols. And there are some who respond to the Gospel of Jesus, commit their lives to Him and become Christians.

The question posed to everyone, especially Christians, is this, “How can we develop a deeply passionate and intimate relationship, like husband and wife, with God?” Or to put it in other terms, *Can we live in commitment to God and His desires in the same manner as true lovers treat their most significant others on earth?* I think that many Christians, possibly even the majority of them, *want* to relate to God more as lovers than slaves to a master or subjects to their sovereign king. So, what is the problem? I suggest that there is something wrong with our system of beliefs. There must be misperceptions about who God is, what He expects of us, and what He wants from us. These misperceptions stand between us and intimacy with God. And He desperately wants these obstacles to be removed.

My Confirming Scripture:

My Aligning Experiences:

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Volume 1 – Day 9: Examination, Courage & Confirmation

Don't put this book down if it happens to make you feel uncomfortable. No one ever broadens their horizons in life if they do not leave their personal comfort zone. Don't be afraid that these insights will lead you astray. You know scripture too well for that to happen. Better yet, if the Holy Spirit Who inspired the writers of scripture lives in you, He will not let you be misled.

Be like the Bereans, mentioned in Acts 17:11, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that *they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*" What Paul was teaching was radically different from everyone's former understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Bereans tried to confirm these *new* truths Paul was expressing to them, not to disprove them.

Make an extensive list of your current beliefs and compare them to the words and heart of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Let His treatment of people be the context of your every understanding.

"Let us examine our current beliefs. Let us discover which of them may be keeping us from this intimate love for God which we strongly desire. And let's have the courage to change what we believe. To do this we must reject some beliefs which we adopted from very trusted sources in our lives. This is not a rejection of those people, it is simply a course correction of faith which God desires for us to pursue. God wants us to be in a passionate love affair with Him.— A. W. Tozer

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 10: Every Belief Is a Matter of Choice

Most of us fail to realize that the majority of what we believe has been fed to us by others. However, we also fail to consider why we have accepted what was spoon fed to us from our infancy and continuing until this very day. We have believed some things in order not to disappoint some person whom we love or respect. Other things have been adopted into our belief system out of a sense that there is safety in numbers. Still other beliefs have arisen from the lack of due diligence regarding particular issues. And our beliefs have become concrete in our souls by way of repetition or natural curing over time. The good news is that since we get to choose what we believe, we can change it at will for any reason. Here's how we derive every belief we hold.



Instead of letting your culture (that which was given to you by your family, friends and other people) and desire (that which satisfies the way you want to live) determine your truth, let God's truth (truth about yourself, others and God) change your desires such that your culture will be transformed by your expressions of love and acceptance of others!

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Volume 1 – Day 11: Destination: Intimate Relationships

A message from the writings of A. W. Tozer:

An old Chinese proverb says "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." If that first step is not taken, nothing else really matters. If you are not on the journey, talking about it does not matter. Many Christians talk about living in intimate relationship with God, but nothing in their lives indicates they have even begun the journey. There's much joy that they have been saved, but no anticipation of continuing on the journey towards spiritual perfection. They are so happy that they are not what they used to be, that they cannot see what God wants them to be. Christianity has a glorious and victorious side, that few Christians experience.

My recommendation to the church of Christ and all others in the world is "*Live abandoned to intimacy with God.*" Our tragic loss is that very few are going on to know Christ in enriched intimacy and familiarity. Worse yet, we're not even talking about it. We rarely hear about it. And it does not find its way into our literature or media ministries. And it is not found in our churches. What I'm talking about is this yearning, this longing to know God in increasing measure.

A loving Personality dominates the Bible, walking among the trees of the garden and breathing fragrance over every scene. Always a living Person is present, speaking, pleading, loving, working, and manifesting Himself whenever and wherever His people have the receptivity necessary to receive the manifestation.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 12: Information OR Transformation

The vast majority of teaching is based on the *informational philosophy*. Jesus' teaching was based on the *transformational philosophy*. Even the methods of delivery of the messages of Jesus were intended to promote *life change*, not information accumulation. Jesus' entire focus was on relationship. And for very good reason. Humans were created for relationships. Relationship can only be established between humans. Relationships are at the core of our engineering *in the image of God*. Everything external to relationship, the human expression of personality, simply provides an environment in which relationship can be expressed.

It is no mystery that the informational philosophy is so predominant. We have all heard the saying, *knowledge is power*. Since one of the three basic desires of humans is to obtain *power*, we are driven to become powerful. Yet, most of the carnage in human history is evidence of this axiom, *power corrupts*. The *power* pursuit of man binds people in relationship to one another. At the same time, this same pursuit can be the greatest hindrance or destroyer of relationship. In other words, relationship's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. Another expression of *power* is *worship*. *Power* seeking people are in effect garnering the *worship* of others.

I have spent incredible amounts of time and energy trying to convince, coerce or manipulate others to *worship* me. I did this mostly unconsciously. And so have you. This actually drives many away from us. But, when I truly fall in love with another, my *worship* of them is evidence that I love them. I *worship* that which I value.

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Volume 1 – Day 13: Wannabe: Self-Inflicted Loneliness

I Wannabe Rich

External things, such as the accumulation of resources (*prosperity*) may provide ways and means to express our feelings toward one another. For example, giving a lover flowers expresses affection for them. At the same time, an obsession with the increase of *prosperity* can be the very thing that destroys relationship. This obsession can distract us from meeting the emotional needs of the ones we love.

I Wannabe Famous

Another pursuit of all people is *popularity*. This can be a hurdle over which two people must leap in order to be in relationship with each other. Since we all want to be applauded or recognized for the good things we do, our pursuit of such shifts our attention from the one we love to ourselves. The extreme of this is narcissism.

I Wannabe Boss

Another significant pursuit of all people is power. We all want to be in control of things and people. We want to be large-and-in-charge. We want to have the last word or the final answer. At the same time we do not want others to control us.

Self Inflicted Loneliness

So, the very things that are the greatest impetus for our every expression (word or deed), can also be the demise of any particular relationship. Those who are the loneliest are those whose focus is most introverted and selfish (wannabe). Obsession with self and a desperate need to be prosperous, popular or powerful leads to depression, despair and possibly even personal termination (suicide) when they are not attained. Therefore, healthy relationships which satisfy our desire to be loved and secure are the solution to addictive behaviors of all kinds. The world would be a much better place if all of us were more other-caring and less self-indulgent.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 14: What Is Worship?

Believe it or not, worship is not a religious activity. Worship is the natural activity of the human soul. It is the basis for all relationships. It is the impetus for individuality, partnership and relational bonding. Every person on earth today is a great worshipper. We all worship many things or people. Unfortunately, worship of objects which cannot return worship in kind, are all too common in every generation. It is equally unfortunate that most objects of worship which have the capacity to return our worship, do not do so. I have worshipped many people who never even knew my name. However, the highest object of worship, and the only one who is guaranteed to return my worship, is the Creator who gave me life and breath in the first place.

The bottom line for all of us is not to become better worshippers. We are all exceptionally good at it. The best option is to improve the objects of our worship. In this case, I suggest that God would be the ultimate object of worship. And who better to be in marital union with than God Himself. Like it or not, we are all in the same boat. And we must all face the fact that the only assured love of our life is the one who created us in the first place. You might liken it to Father and Mother love. Good parents have children in order to have loving relationships with them. And God is the ultimate, good parent!

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 15: Carefulness Hurts Like Infidelity

Jesus words in Matthew 6:25, “Take no thought for your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body what you will wear,” make it clear that faith is absolute trust in God. Jesus’ implication is that a disciple living by common-sense and human intelligence and wisdom hurts the heart of God like infidelity hurts us. {Imagine the pain another’s infidelity creates for you.}

If we have received the Spirit of God, it is essential that we listen for His guidance alone. A heart tuned to the Spirit of God will hear Him asking, “Now where does God come to bear in this relationship, in this vacation, in these new books or movies, in the choice you are about to make?” He continues to reminds us of His Presence, until we learn to make Him our first consideration. Whenever we put other things first, there is confusion of priorities and emotions.

"Take no thought ... “about the possible consequences of obedience to the Spirit of God. Leave them to Him. Don't create your own stress by focusing on your future. **It is not only wrong to worry, it is equivalent to infidelity**, because worrying means that we do not think that God can handle the practical details of our lives, and it is never anything else that worries us. Have you ever noticed what Jesus said would choke out what He teaches us? It is not the devil! It is ever, only and always our own concerns about the issues of everyday life.

When I fail to trust God where I cannot see the end result, that is where infidelity begins. The only cure for infidelity is obedience to the Spirit in absolute trust. The most significant word of Jesus to His disciples is abandon. If we do not abandon ourselves to God, it is because we do not trust Him fully.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 16: Value-Add Teaching

There are two different philosophies of teaching, informational and transformational. When the focus is on accumulation of information, it can be learned by rote and measured by testing. The more information you possess the greater your power and influence. This is the predominant philosophy of public education. It is popular because it helps to build personal wealth and power.

The transformational philosophy focuses on the development of character and emotional harmony. Unfortunately, you can't just purpose to have character. It is developed in and through relationship. It is curious that what we want most (happy relationships) is seldom attained, due to a selfish pursuit of applause, wealth and influence. These things are more readily achieved by amassing personal knowledge.

Jesus' teachings are purely *relational* and thereby *transformational*. His message ran contrary to all religious teaching in His day. He and His message were rejected summarily by any and all who were more interested in themselves (their own prosperity, popularity and power) than in wholesome, mutually other-caring relationships. All religions, including the Christian religion, place more value on the selfish pursuits of the *worshippers*, attempting to appease their gods, than in developing genuine, affectionate relationships with others.

Christianity, when properly practiced, is relationship and not religion. Most relationships, then and now, were (and are) mutual accommodation of self-need. That explains the phenomena of falling **in** love and then falling **out** of love.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 17: Taught or Caught

“Some things are taught and some things are caught!” The significance of this particular parallel is that Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is largely determined by the ability of one to store knowledge and then retrieve it at will in high measure of accuracy. Until recent times the measure of Emotional Intelligence or Emotion Quotient (EQ) was largely unknown or little understood. And it is essentially both IQ and EQ which distinguish the human race from all other species.

While boasting of high IQs and impressive accomplishments, most have failed to reach their emotional potential (EQ). The underlying force, that is, the success engine of personal achievement is one which runs well only on a race track of speed and fanfare. The success engine of human happiness is one which is fueled by affection and runs on any track where it can share its fuel with others in need.

We are careful to teach each other to be more rational than emotional and for seemingly good reasons. Crimes of passion often produce the most gruesome of crime scenes. Yet, the truth be told, we are primarily emotional beings and driven mostly by emotion.

Regardless of how much we pack information into our heads about good character and good behaviors, it is our emotions which cause us to fall short with respect to both. Hopefully this one thought may help you. “The deeper my affection for another person, the greater my kindness will be toward them.” — J H Alan. When I fall in love, I catch a passion which transforms me. Information may help me see what needs to be changed in me, but only a change of feeling will change how I can make others feel.

“It is not what I do or say for which I will be remembered. I will be remembered for how I made them feel.”

My Confirming Scriptures: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 18: Morality or Motive

Jesus did not teach morality. Jesus did not teach justice and equity. Jesus did not teach responsible living. Jesus did not teach behavior management. Jesus did not teach social activism. All expressions of any of these are at best futile attempts to be *self-righteous*, or *a good person*. Even the Old Testament was grossly misunderstood as a behavioral approach to *rightness*. A more accurate understanding is that all of the rules and regulations of the Commandments of God were simply the revelation of the symptoms of the disease of selfishness (the antithesis of love). Anyone can see the natural consequences, that is relational carnage, that violation of the rules would produce. Your true morality quotient is determined by your motives.

Check out the story of the woman brought to Jesus who had been caught in the very act of adultery. Notice what Jesus said to her. “Neither do I condemn you, go and stop pursuing this lifestyle.” At the same time ponder the desire of the most religious men of Jesus’ day with respect to the woman. “Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned to death!” Consider then what these religious leaders did to Jesus shortly after this encounter (crucifixion). Why would Jesus ignore the Law and show mercy to the woman?

Who would you act like, Jesus or the religious leaders? Sometimes we get so caught up in compliance with the rules that we refuse to consider exercising mercy, forgiveness and grace. Yet, we always cry out for these when we are the offender!

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 19: Feeling *IS* Relationship

We must first feel God's love for us in order to respond to it. If we have misperceptions as to the measure of God's love for us or misgivings about it, we cannot respond to it. You cannot respond to a love you do not feel. It is usually the case, that when we do not believe that God actually does love us, just the way we are, we have been misinformed by well-meaning but misguided informants. These informants are parents, pastors, peers, politicians, professors, and professionals of all kinds. However, the good news of the Gospel is this. The Holy Spirit of God Himself will come to us and convince us that God desires to be in close relationship with us.

But, if we do not say "yes" to His overtures of love, we remain apart from Him. The good news is that God will express His affectionate intentions toward every man and woman many times in his or her life. He wants every one to be up close and personal with Him. But that could not be possible if ever God forced anyone in that regard. This is the very essence of faith in God. **Faith is essentially my affectionate response to God's love for me.** It is in the moment when my heart is pierced by His love, that I have the opportunity to establish a personal relationship with Him. It cannot and will not happen at any other time. So when the Spirit of God whispers His invitation into relationship with Him, I strongly suggest that you just say *yes!*

My Confirming Scriptures: John 3:16-17.

My Aligning Experiences:

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Volume 1 – Day 20: Joy *and* Happiness Are Yours

Jesus said, “No one can take away your joy.” You can give it up. But don’t give it up! You need to take hold of it and have the joy of your salvation restored to you. You need to take it up. You need to live in it. You have a right to be happy because Jesus purchased that right. You have a right to live with a smile on your face. You have a right to know that you are incredibly loved and to be amazingly happy about it. You need to abide in the happiness of God. You need to live there; camp there. It’s important to the Father that you’re happy. It’s so important that we are the happiest people on earth.

Even on our worst days we have God with us. He is with us. He is for us. Even when He’s praying to the Father, Jesus prayed this in John 17, “But now I come to you and these things I speak out in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.” So when you are in Christ you are a partaker of *His* righteousness. You’re a partaker of *His* obedience. You’re a partaker of how *He* is wonderfully loved. And you are a partaker of *His* happiness and *His* joy.

Everything that He is belongs to you. That’s why the Father put you into Him, so that everything in Christ belongs to you. Every word that God speaks to you is designed to lead you into an experience where joy is one of the outcomes. What Jesus speaks in prayer to the Father He also speaks to us. John 15:11 “These things I have spoken to you, so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full.” It’s time to get filled with the joy of the Lord.

If you are feeling badly right now, is it because of your vision of God or the vision of your circumstances?

Do you know how to acquire joy in the experience of difficulty?
My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 21: Defined by Love

Once having been overwhelmed by God's love and responding to His invitation of a deeply personal relationship with Him, my expressions about Him will reflect my affection for Him. My identity is not defined by my abilities, talents, intelligence, vocation or my personal successes. My identity is a matter of relationship. I am defined by my heritage, my relationship and my personality. Identity is a matter of *being* not *doing*. Unfortunately the predominant answer to the question, "Who are you?" is a recitation of accomplishments and abilities. Relationship, which is the ultimate in human experience is based rather on pure emotional and spiritual connection with another being. My identity then, is in my identification with another in relationship. Birth and marriage are two primary examples of this.

In Christ, that is in having responded to God's invitation to be joined to Him in a deeply personal way, my identity takes on a much higher value than with any other relationship. As a Christ-In, I am identified with God as a member of His family, by marriage, with all of its inherent benefits and pleasures. Thus the term "Christian" in its purest meaning is in this marital union with God in all three of His manifestations, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Living in relational unity and harmony with God, enables me to demonstrate the selfless, other-caring Spirit of God to all those around me. And in that Spirit, I will have genuine affection for all others around me. From this place of identity **everything I do will be motivated by who I am.**

My Confirming Scriptures:

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Volume 1 – Day 22: Traveling with God

"If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead. And your life is hid with Christ in God," Colossians 3:1-3. You cannot take the journey to intimacy with God unless you have been raised to new life in Jesus. Once committed to this relationship with God, personal resolve to step into the journey to intimacy with Him is essential. It is the first step in the most delightful journey you will ever take. And the good news is that there need not be any particular destination. This journey is about **how** you journey **not where**. The best part is that your travel mate is God!

Travel is more enjoyable when you have someone to share the journey with you. Like any other journey there will be bumps in the road and obstacles to work around. We can complain about them, but that obviously won't fix them. Alternatively, when viewed as a challenge, each obstacle adds interest and uniqueness to the trip. Some of them may even create opportunities to share the love of God with other travelers.

Falling in love is only the first step in the journey to intimacy with any other. The journey is the very bonding which occurs when two persons grow toward unity.

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 23: Engaging God in Love

Learn how to engage with God. Learn to live in love. “Go love others like you have been loved,” Jesus said to His disciples. Our relationship with Jesus is all about loving others. But we have been conditioned to maximize our own pleasure and minimize our own misery, that is, loving ourselves. Jesus calls us into a reality of feeling so fully loved, that it is not only easy to love others, it is also as natural for us as breathing.

“Since Jesus went through everything you have gone through and more, learn to think like Him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you’ll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want.”

— 1 Peter 4:1-2 The Message

Become free to enjoy what God loves. Be loved where you are right now. Know God’s desire to show His passion for you in the circumstances you face right now. Rather than being agitated by the inconvenience of others’ needs, jump in to help them. The more you know you’re loved, the more you will love well in the presence of those around you.

Living in God’s love is not having to do things for other people to gain their love for you. As you learn to “live loved,” you are actually *engaging with God rather than being dutifully obedient* to Him.

Live Loved!!!

My Confirming Scriptures:

Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 24: Cultivating Our Garden of Emotions

Becoming intimate with God for the Christian is far from being automatic. The soul, the seat of our emotions, must be cultivated like a garden. And the will, the seat of our sovereign choices, must be congruent, that is equal in every way, with the Will of God. This would be living as the committed members of God's great family. When our commitment is to family, our desires and motives must be consistent with Father's desires. When we have reached that end, it will be demonstrated by our peace in the middle of carnage and devastation as we rely on Dad to handle the situation with our cooperation.

Joseph and Job are the best examples of trust in the Bible. Their lives were filled with adversity and calamity. Yet, they faced their circumstances with an assurance that God still had a noble purpose in their trouble. We must also look for the purpose of God in everything instead of trying to logically deduce the meaning of things as they apply only to ourselves. Since God sees the whole picture and everyone affected, only He can make fully informed decisions which affect the many.

Far too many are disillusioned with God. They think that He may not always give them the results they desire, and never press on to deeper faith. In order to press on to greater intimacy with God, we must trust Him completely to be doing what is best. What is the secret to pressing on? Where is the strength to be found to endure the race until the very end? Only unwavering trust in the perfection of God in all things can enable us to trust His heart and relax in His security.

My Confirming Scriptures:

Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 25: Incredibly Loved by God

You know what the good news is? The good news is that I am incredibly loved by God. You know what the love of God does for me? It makes me amazingly confident about life. I know that God loves me so completely and powerfully that everything in my life will have a purpose!

I'm a Christian, because it's amazing. It's incredible news. I love God! I love being with God. Wouldn't it give you great pleasure if everyone around you was thinking, "Wow I'd like to know God! Is God interested in me?" Well for vast numbers of people there is consideration about that.

Christ keeps the covenant on our behalf. So the good news just got even better. He is there keeping your covenant for you so that the Father can give you favor. And so let us learn how to live in Christ in that context.

We enter the covenant as participators of His grace. We are the joyful recipients of His favor. And no matter where we go or what we do, God will remain faithful to love us. And He will cultivate the land of our life and the garden of our heart. He will weed out sin. He will plant things in us that will grow. Jesus is the vine and there is no sin in Him.

So walking with God intimately means that sin ceases to have dominion over us. Your habit patterns are formed by your own carnality. Your habit patterns get to be formed by peace and by **holiness (everything being in right relationship)**.

When you are in right relationship (intimacy) with God, you will also be in right relationship with yourself and all others.

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 26: Nurturing the Fruitless Branch

There are only two reasons for a branch of a good vine not to bear fruit. Firstly because it is not actually attached. It's not a part of the vine. It has no spiritual connection. It has no sap connection. This is speaking metaphorically of a religious person who claims to know God, He thinks something like this, "I'm a believer because I go to church." Yet he has never had a salvation experience. If you're not connected to God in life, you're not connected in the after life and there is absolutely no fruit of the Presence of God in you.

The second reason for a branch not bearing fruit is because it's hanging down. Sap naturally rises to the highest point. If a branch is hanging down, its fruit is diminished. So you may have a part of your life that is not fruitful, because actually it needs to be lifted up. So what part of your life right now is not fruitful? It just needs to be lifted up. That's what encouragement is about.

The church should be the best organization on earth for encouragement. When you see someone's life not being fruitful, you've just got to help them lift that piece up. It is not a time for criticism or judgment. Jesus paid for all that and took all guilt, shame and punishment upon Himself. It is time to help the unfruitful plug into more of the love of God. Only that (sap) can restore.

So that branch that is not receiving the life giving sap needs to be lifted up and trained at a higher level. The distinguishing difference between Christianity and all other religions is that its only ingredient is love (the unconditional love of God which by-product is grace, favoring the undeserving). How opposite! But.... How magnificent!

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 27: Be A Dispenser of Grace

Sometimes I think in certain places, church can be the most discouraging of places, because you're okay until you have a problem. Or you're okay until you sin. And then you're not okay.

Well the church (body of Christ) needs to be encouraging at all times. You know! When you've sinned, that's when you need grace. Somebody in the church needs to be supplying the grace that you need so you can change. So if a part of your life is unfruitful right now the Holy Spirit wants to take that part and lift it into a higher place of relationship.

Maybe your current experience of life has gone beyond your present experience of God. You need to be lifted up. Your current situation has gone beyond your present experience of who God is for you. So you need to be lifted up. You need to be encouraged into a higher place of relationship. Maybe you need to be encouraged into a higher place of trust; a higher place of peace; a higher place of grace. This is what we **are** for each other. This is what we do. This is what we should be famous for in the world. No one should be safe from a blessing! No matter where you go, no matter who they are....no one's safe from the blessing of grace.

Grace, by definition means to express favor that is **undeserved**. If one must do anything in order to get your grace, (like changing their behavior) you are talking about a reward, and not grace. "Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds." This was not intended to encourage us to sin more in order to get more grace. It was written so that we can be certain that we cannot commit any sin which is too horrible for God to grant us grace.

The more you love, the more grace you will give.

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Vol 1 – Day 28: Adversity & Calamity Your Dearest Friends

Most of our upgrades in the Spirit come in the context of a crisis or confrontation. That's why we should never be upset by adversity. Adversity and crisis are a short cut into a better way of life. God gives you an amazing opportunity to grow up really quickly. Every crisis I have is a short cut into a better understanding of myself, others and God Himself. This is brilliant! When you see crises for what they are, you can really enjoy them, because God is going to speed something up. He is going to quicken something to you and it's powerful. Yeah, the enemy will contest it. But you get to laugh in his face on the way through. Enjoy the 'scary' ride knowing you are safe all the way.

Every crisis is a potential shortcut into something marvelous for you. Reflect on Romans 8:28. By this you know that every experience you have has a God purpose. Watch for the purpose. Then pursue it. God will change you in amazing ways if you stay with Him in the purpose for the current situation that you're going through. When you keep your eyes on His purpose for you, God always gives you peace and comfort in the situation you are in.

"I know the plans I have for you..." Jeremiah 29:11 ... "for your welfare and not for your calamity; to give you a future and a hope: to give you a future and divine expectation!" That's how *hope* is best translated! You can truly welcome your trials as friends, actually look forward to them coming, when you know that they are the faithful wounds of your Best Friend, God!

Dig the gold out of every difficult situation or personal encounter you experience. This is how we grow in grace!

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 29: Every Experience in Life Is Beneficial

Everything in your life is useful to God! He allows in His wisdom what He could easily prevent by His power. Every single thing in your life is for your development. Everything is about you being morphed into the likeness of Jesus. It's about your faith increasing. It's about the presence of God increasing. It's about your peace increasing. It's about your rest and your joy. It's about your power increasing. It's about your relationship growing deeper. It's about a deeper understanding of God. It's about increasing wisdom coming into your heart and life and making a difference. Every single thing in your life right now is useful to God! He doesn't waste a thing!

So if you want to abide, you have to abide in that revelation, that everything is useful. Everything is **for** you. So when you don't abide, you actually think everything is **against** you. Everything is **for** you. Even the worst of things can be for you! In the difficult things we learn how to fight. We learn how to wait. We learn how to be with God. We learn how to worship. We learn how to increase our thanksgiving in every situation.

Everything is useful. The most devastating things are usually the most useful. Everything is about you becoming more of who you want to be and who God knows you are. God always knows what's coming. God is always Present-Future in how He sees you. You have two relationships with God; one in the present and one in the future that's coming towards you. So God always relates to you in two places. There is always a better version of you coming! That is why you can trust Him

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 30: Abiding in God Improves Our Prayers

The more intimate I am in a relationship the more confident I am in my security. The more I know that I am loved, the foremost object of my lover's affection, the more relaxed I am. Even though life has its struggles and altercations, knowing that love will never be withheld or withdrawn enables me to endure hardship. I am not alone!

All too often, my prayers were asking God to bless me in some way. My prayers were little more than selfish requests that God do something for me or mine. Many times I asked God to rescue us from medical malady, financial distress, and tragedy. These kinds of prayers began to dissipate as I embraced the love of God more by becoming more intimate with Him.

We have experienced moments when we could finish our lover's sentences or thoughts. We have made a suggestion to do something at the exact moment when the other is thinking the same thing. Some of our pleasures have been moments in which we have brought a gift to our lover which delighted them.

So it is with our prayers to God. We do not need to ask Him for protection. He will always do that. We actually don't need to ask Him for anything or to do anything. He always has our best interest at heart. He simply wants us to talk to Him to share what is happening in our life. And we can trust Him to help us through calamity and distress of any sort.

So rather than asking God to take away the very trials that will draw you closer to Him and deepen your peace, simply ask God to reveal His purpose in them for you. Agree with God's plan for you and embrace an improved quality of life!

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 1 – Day 31: Simple, Spontaneous Prayers

"... Spend the remainder of your life only in worshipping God. He requires no great matters of us; a little remembrance of Him from time to time, and a little adoration. Sometimes to pray for His grace, sometimes just offer Him your sufferings and sometimes to return Him thanks for the favors He has given you, and still gives you in the midst of your troubles. Console yourself with Him the oftenest you can. Lift up your heart to Him at your meals. And when you are in company, the least little remembrance will always be pleasing to Him."

"... I consider myself as the most wretched of men. I am full of faults, flaws, and weaknesses, and have committed all sorts of crimes against my King. In deep regret, I confess all my wickedness to Him. I ask His forgiveness. I abandoned myself in His hands that He may do what He pleases with me. My King is full of mercy and goodness. Far from chastising me, He embraces me with love. He makes me eat at His table. He serves me with His own hands and gives me the key to His treasures. He converses and delights Himself with me incessantly in a thousand and a thousand ways. And He treats me in all respects as His favorite. In this way, I consider myself continually in His Holy presence." ... end of Brother Lawrence's prayers ...

Now please join me in this prayer for us!

Father, I ask that You take all of these things which You have gathered together into this volume and use them in the life of each reader as You did in my life. May we all, pursue a constant awareness of Your presence within us. May we become so madly in love with You that all who observe us will be awestruck by our obvious love for each other. May our constant awareness of Your presence, energize our every thought and action, such that those near us feel Your love for them flowing mightily in their direction. And may it become "*on earth as it is in heaven*" in every place we walk, from now until we meet You *face to face!* AMEN

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

The measure of my
loneliness and insecurity
is in reverse proportion
to my awareness of the
presence of God. — J. H. Alan

“To most people God is an inference, not a reality. He is a deduction from the evidence which they consider adequate; but He remains personally unknown to the individual.” — A. W. Tozer

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

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan