

Our Interactive Relationship with God

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Hebrews 10:19-22

¹⁹ We have, then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. ²⁰ He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the curtain - that is, through his own body. ²¹ We have a great priest in charge of the house of God. ²² So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified from a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water.

Although there are many things in those verses that stand out, there are a couple that predominate. First, we are invited to draw close to God, into that Most Holy Place, the temple of God within, through the living way created by Christ. Second, we are to draw near God with faith, sincerity, and free from a guilty conscience. In short, we are being asked to live faithfully in an interactive relationship with God.

Although we have many excuses for not listening to Gods' call for us to "Be still, and know that I am God," perhaps two of the greatest are the fear of judgment and the fear of disappointment.

The fear of judgment can keep us from pursuing a rich interactive relationship with God, because we are not clear on who God is. God is Love, plain and simple. God loves us unconditionally just the way we are. It is our self-judgment that causes our reluctance to seek the quiet and God's presence. We believe we are unworthy, mistake-ridden, undeserving failures. We think, "How

can God love me, with all that I've done and said wrongly?" So, we avoid God out of our guilt.

We also avoid a relationship with God because we are afraid of disappointing God and being disappointed. We think that we can never live up to what God expects from us; we will never meet God's standards. We also think that we will be disappointed. After all, we've prayed, and God never answers our prayers. Isn't prayer just some belief in hocus-pocus that feeble minds use instead of actually thinking?

We are afraid of a relationship with God because our expectations of God are unrealistic. God is not a magician who meets our needs the way that we think they should be met. Our limited human minds cannot conceive of time, space, the material world in the same way that God understands it. We are not only human beings with physical needs, but we are spiritual beings with spiritual needs. We are acutely aware of our physical needs but are nearly blind to our spiritual necessities. Physical needs are recognized and addressed at the physical level; spiritual requirements at the spiritual level. There may even be other needs that have not been recognized yet: cosmic needs, superconscious needs, who knows?

But all we can see are our physical needs and when we pray for a physical need to be met, we may have a spiritual need met that relates to that want.

To be sure, God knows our needs. As human beings we have a continually long list of needs that we bring to prayer, and God knows every need we have and will ever have. We are told that

God moves ahead and meets our needs, some of which we have no idea that exist. God definitely meets the needs of His children, but not always directly and in the way that would satisfy us right now.

As we overcome our fears of judgment and disappointment, we can begin to have a full, two-way, co-creating, spirit-centered, Christ-filled, faith-based relationship with God. This is what I mean by interactive. We act, God acts, we are intertwined in our activities, thoughts, and consciousness.

The platform for this relationship is prayer, and the key to this relationship is faith. We can live a life of constant prayer and at all times be in touch with Spirit. We can approach every activity and every conversation within the context of prayer. We can hold ourselves, every situation, and everyone we meet within an attitude of prayer. By doing so, we invite God's interaction into our lives and everything that we experience on our life journey. It is our faith in God, in God's power, love, peace, joy, strength, and guidance that attracts God's healing, energy and influence to us.

Yes, God responds to our needs. But more powerfully, immediately, and directly, God responds to our faith. Look at the miracles that Jesus performed. Certainly there were many with needs, but the ones that received healing were those with sufficient faith. Mark 5:25-34 describes a woman who had a disorder for twelve years that caused bleeding. She had gone to doctors, but only got worse. She knew Jesus was in town and went to see him. Along with a crowd of people who were touching Jesus and pressing up against him, she managed to maneuver through the crowd and just touch the hem of his cloak. Immediately she was

healed. Jesus, having felt the power of that healing, turned and asked who had touched him. She came forward and fell to her knees as she confessed. Jesus said, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

He told her that her faith has healed her, not the God-power within him. It was the woman’s faith that created the interactive relationship with Spirit that initiated her healing.

God responds to our faith, and through our faith our needs are met. Philippians 4:19 tells us: *My God will use his wonderful riches in Christ Jesus to give you everything you need.* There is a difference between a desire and a need. A need is something that is essential to fulfilling the Will of God or accomplishing God’s purpose for our life. Desires are not bad or overlooked by God, because we are told in Psalm 37:4 - *“Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* However, in 1 Timothy 6:17 we are instructed to watch our focus: *Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment.*

It is through our faith that we capture God’s attention. When we approach God through need, it is from a position of weakness and victimhood. When we approach God through faith it is from strength and victory. The woman who touched the hem of the Christ’s garment, was she any needier than the hoard who were already pressing against him and touching him? No! It was her faith that caught the attention of Spirit and its power.

In Luke 7:1-10, Jesus is in Capernaum and a Centurion beseeches Jesus to come to his home to heal his beloved servant. At Jesus' arrival the Centurion says, "*Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But, say the word and my servant will be healed.*" The Centurion explained that he had authority over his servants and could tell them to go and come as he wished, and so contended that Jesus could heal his servant with a word. Jesus marveled at the level of understanding the Centurion demonstrated regarding the authority of Jesus, as well as his level of faith, believing that Jesus could and would do what was asked of Him. Jesus turned to the crowd and proclaimed, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" And in that moment, the servant was healed.

It is by faith, not by need, that we invite the power of God into our lives. It is irrelevant as to the amount of faith that we have; whatever amount our faith, we are to use it. We can have tremendous faith, but if we let it remain idle we do not have that interactive connection with God and do not see clearly the activity of God in our lives. We can also have just a spattering of faith, and when used rightly can result in miracles. Jesus tells us in Matthew 17:20 – "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

We are told that Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it is knowing that something is real even if we do not see it. Faith is like a muscle: the more we use it, the bigger and stronger it gets. Now, does this mean that every prayer we send to

God is going to get us what we want? No. Part of the reason is that what we want may not be in keeping with our Highest Purpose or what our spiritual lessons require. We don't always know what we need. But a prayer is a demonstration of faith, and it induces a response from Spirit every time. Sometimes the best prayer is just to say, "Beloved God, I don't know what I need or what is best, but I trust your Will, and have faith that you are guiding me to the best way I can serve you. Let Your will be done."

And regardless of how we argue with ourselves to the contrary, there is always a breath of faith within us. We are told that every person is given a measure of faith; it cannot be lost or taken away. We just have to find it within and use it, and not refuse it.

Our relationship with God is beautiful, loving and interactive. Spirit invites us to be active in this relationship. God wants us to be part of the divine exchange that takes place when He is loving, ministering, teaching, and guiding us. The Christ within desires that we hold ourselves, every situation, and everyone we meet within an attitude of prayer. We don't just sit there and expect God to do everything. We have a role to play. That role is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength - and to exercise our faith, with thanksgiving and gratitude.

Let us pray....