

Seeing God

“Where is God? I don’t see any God. Show me God, and I will believe.”

How many times have you heard this? And maybe you are hearing it more as time goes by. We all have friends or family members who doubt that God exists, and sometimes you may have doubts about God’s presence or sometimes you may feel very distant from God or may simply not be aware of his presence.

Peter says our confidence is not about seeing Him but about loving and believing in Him.

1 Peter 1:7-9 **“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him** and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

The difference between a secular mindset and a sacred mindset is that in the secular life, one engages in daily life disconnected and without awareness of God. In the sacred life, one engages in daily life with a strong awareness of God. In the sacred life, the child of God sees everything and every moment in the context of the spiritual and says , “The God of the universe who holds everything together is fully and personally present right here, right now.”

When you read sacred scripture, you are struck by the writers’ constant awareness of God in every verse. This is in stark contrast with the secular life in which one merely seeks the good life in harmony with one’s neighbour but without any awareness of God. When a child is very young she is aware of God, then from pre-school to university, the secular worldview is taught, and the secular media and the secular workplace prohibit God, or place faith in a negative light. So the faith community is an oasis where we fill up on God. Then we leave the community, the secular chains go back on, and God is left behind. Is that what happens?

To live spiritually and to break off the secular chains, believe God is always present, always caring, always guiding and directing and nurturing, always eager to hear from you, always forgiving, always loving, always reaching out to you, always watching and waiting for you to turn to him, and when you do turn to God, he sings and rejoices over you. Do you believe it? If you believe it, you can know it, then you can see God at work everywhere and hear God’s constant reassurance and encouragement.

Psalms 139:7-10 “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the

wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” God is present and near to you right here, right now. What emotions do you feel? If you believe it you can see and feel God with your heart right now.

God loves you and He is so proud of you.

Zephaniah 3:17 “The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will **take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.**” Listen to God singing and rejoicing over you. What do you feel? Maybe you feel so loved, so accepted, so cared for by the Creator of the universe that you think for a moment it could last forever, and that is exactly what God wants for you.

Psalm 147:11 “The **LORD delights** in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.” Believe the Lord is proud of you. What do you feel? Yes, God is proud of you. Maybe you feel peaceful and happy, a sense of deep contentment.

This picture of delight the Father feels about you is described in the story of the prodigal son.

Luke 15:20-23 “So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was **filled with compassion** for him; he ran to his son, **threw his arms around him and kissed him.** The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. **Let's have a feast and celebrate.** For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.”

If you believe God delights in you, loves you, and rejoices in song over you, then you can see and hear God with the eyes and ears of your heart. Can you begin to see and hear God and sense his constant presence and love for you?

Suppose God told someone to write a note and give it to you and the note said, “You can't see me, but I am very close to you right now and I want you to know that I love and care about you and that I am working in your life to make good things happen.” How would you feel if you received that note? Wouldn't it be wonderful? Wouldn't you feel special and confident and have such peace that would never fade away? God has written such a note. It's called the Bible...the holy scriptures. It's a bit longer than a note.

Psalm 119:64 “The **earth is filled with your love, O LORD**; teach me your decrees.” If you believe, you can know, and then you can see the evidence of God’s love everywhere. Look around the room. See those in whom the Spirit lives. See all the gifts of God around you.

2 Corinthians 5:16 “So from now on we **regard no one from a worldly point of view**. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.”

God works directly in your life

to make everything work for your good and for his purposes.

Psalm 138:8 “The **LORD will fulfill his purpose** for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever...” God is making things happen in your life to serve his purposes. You do believe God will fulfill his purpose for you. You do feel his constant enduring love for you.

Psalm 145:20 “The **LORD watches** over all who love him...” You do believe God watches over you. God is looking at you right now, right here. Do you know it? What emotion comes up inside you right now as you sense God’s attention focused on you? Does it make you want to smile?

Romans 8:28 “And we know that **all things work together** for good to them that love God, to them who are the **called according to his purpose**.” You have the confidence that God is working in your life and will make everything work out even through suffering and tragedy. Look for ways God is working in your life and give thanks in everything, knowing God is working in all things for your good.

Proverbs 16:9 “In his heart a man plans his course, but **the LORD determines his steps**.”

Ephesians 5:20 “always **giving thanks to God the Father for everything**, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Remember the words of Job: “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed is the name of the Lord.” And “Even if the Lord slays me, yet will I serve him.” You can have the faith of Job. You can feel those chains of doubt and unbelief falling away.

God will always love you and nothing will ever change that. You are surrounded by his love and that will never change.

God's own love has been poured into our hearts.

Romans 5:5 "God has **poured out his love** into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." If you believe God's love is in you, then you can love everyone as God loves. Remember that God loves the world so much that he gave Jesus to suffer and die and take away the sins of the world. What a wonderful gift to have inside you! God's own love.

Romans 8:35-39 "**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Faith is how we enter into eternal reality; how we come to God.

Today I want you to be aware of God's presence and nearness. God is Spirit, so you cannot see Him with your physical eyes, but you can see God with the eyes of your heart, the eyes of faith. You can believe and know that God is near you and in you. Then knowing this, you can look at God and see God looking back at you. You can speak to God and hear God speaking to you. God is always speaking and saying more than you can hear. Your mind and heart cannot possibly contain or hear all that God is saying. Can your mind contain all that is written? His word is living and active. Your heart must be selective because if you heard all that God is saying to you, you would be overwhelmed. The more of God's word you know, the more you will be able to hear what God is saying to you personally.

2 Corinthians 4:18 "So we **fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.** For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Things that are seen are temporary but things unseen are eternal. So through every word of God, that Jesus says we live by, we know about God and about his relationship with us. So when we read or hear God's word, we believe it, and by this we know God, see God, and hear God, not with physical eyes and ears but by the eyes and ears of our hearts, the eyes and ears of faith. Jesus made this direct reference when he said, "Having **eyes they see not and ears they hear not**".... he's talking about having the eyes and ears of faith.

Being aware of God requires engaging in certain kinds of activity that encourage faith. Our physical eyes see material things, and so God is often not in our minds. The saying “out of sight out of mind” is true. Because we do not see God with our physical eyes, God is not in our mind. Yet God is always present, and so we must encourage one another to be aware of God’s presence by talking about spiritual things and listening to spiritual teaching, singing praises and spiritual songs, and reading God’s word.

Why doesn’t God just show himself, or work a miracle, or shout with a booming voice from the sky?

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 “**Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom**, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Hebrews 11:6 “And **without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

“The just shall **live by faith**” Romans 1:17, and by this faith we know God, we know his presence, we know his love. If God’s word says it, then we know it is real even if we do not see with our physical eyes.

Faith says: James 4:8 “Come near to God and **he will come near to you.**” Believe and know that God is near you right now. What emotions are you feeling? Maybe a little anxious but also loved and assured.

Faith says: Hebrews 10:22 “let us **draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...**”

Faith says: 1 John 4:12 “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, **God lives in us** and his love is made complete in us.”

Faith says: Acts 17:27-28 “...reach out for him and find him, though **he is not far** from each one of us. 'For **in him we live** and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' “ Your life depends upon God. God gave us the spirit of life in each of us, and he is near you right now. Know and feel the presence of God right now.

Faith says: John 14:23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.**” You follow his

teaching. You are living in the center of his will and trusting his grace. Then you know God is with you right now, and when you sleep, when you go about your daily activities, in every moment God is present and living with you and in you because **“your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God”** 1 Corinthians 6:19.

Faith says: 2 Cor.1:3-7 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles**, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.”

Believe God cares about you so much that he is here right now to comfort you, to reassure you, to let you know that he is working everything out for your good. He is the God of all comfort for every kind of trouble.

Faith says: Psalm 23:4 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, **for you are with me**; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Have you seen Jesus our Lord?

Matthew 25:39-41 ‘When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.**’

I like this fictional version of the 4th wiseman. The story is that there was a 4th wiseman but he became ill and could not go with the other three to see the baby Jesus and to lay their gifts at his feet. So they left without him. Then when he was feeling better the wiseman started out to take his precious jewel as a gift for the new Saviour King of Israel. But on his way, he met a poor dying beggar, so he sold the jewel to buy the beggar some food shelter and clothing, then came a leper, then a man robbed and left for dead, and after many years he had spent all he had on caring for those in need. Many years later, he was in Jerusalem and heard that Jesus was condemned to be crucified. The wiseman hurried to see Jesus carrying his cross. Jesus looked at the wiseman and smiled.

When you see the homeless or anyone in trouble, draw near to them, attend to them, and then you will draw near to Jesus. Don’t walk by on the other side.

Who is this God?

John 1:3 “**Through him all things were made**; without him nothing was made that has been made.” The universe from the smallest atom or single-cell organism to the vastness of space and billions of galaxies...He made it all.

Colossians 1:17 “He is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.**”

When you think about God being present, think about who God is. Then think about his promise to be near you and words of faith that this God is really present in you and with you.

This almighty all powerful creator God who holds everything together is sitting right next to you right now. Look at him with the eyes of your heart.

Then listen with the ears of faith. God is always speaking to you more than you can possibly hear.

What is God saying?

I love you more than you can imagine. I care about you. I know you better than you know yourself, and I will always give you what you need. I love you so much that I suffered and died and took all your sins and punishment upon myself. I forgive you.

Psalms 139:1-4 “O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; **you perceive my thoughts from afar**. You discern my going out and my lying down; **you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely**, O LORD.” God knows you personally and intimately. He knows you far better than you know yourself.

Matthew 10:30 “And even the very **hairs of your head are all numbered.**” Does anyone here know how many hairs are on your head? That’s just a tiny example of how thoroughly God knows you.

Matthew 6:8 “...for your **Father knows what you need** before you ask him.” You don’t have to worry about what you need. God already knows what you need and what is best for you.

God says, I will make good things happen from suffering. I will comfort and guide you when you trust me.

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and **he will direct your paths.**”

Ask me for anything and I will do it when you want to serve my purpose. When we ask God for something, we need to say, “Lord I ask this only if it serves your purpose and gives you glory, because otherwise I don’t want it.”

God says, when you ask for my forgiveness, you know that I will forgive you and will not be angry with you.

God is eager to hear from you.

God is eagerly waiting for your conversation. Talk to him now and often.

“God thank you. I love you Lord, and I give my life to serve and worship you. Thank you for always being here for me. Thank you for my life, and for my health. I depend on you for everything. Help me to always remember to talk to you and to serve you. Give me wisdom to do great things for you my Lord, open doors for me, make things happen and give me opportunities to share your love and forgiveness with the lost and hurting around me.”

Psalms 42:8 “By day **the LORD directs his love**, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life.” Remember God’s love directed toward you today.

1 Peter 3:12 “For the **eyes of the Lord** are on the righteous and **his ears are attentive** to their prayer...” Remember God is watching and waiting for you to speak to him.

James 4:2 “**You do not have, because you do not ask God.**” He is ready to answer your prayer.

1 John 5:14 “This is the **confidence we have in approaching God**: that **if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us**. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.” God says we can go to him with confidence that he will answer when we ask anything to serve his purpose.

James 1:5-7” If any of you **lacks wisdom, he should ask God**, who **gives generously to all** without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.” Are you confused about what to do? Ask the Lord for wisdom, and know that you will receive it.

Psalm 16:7 "I will praise **the LORD, who counsels me**; even at night my heart instructs me."
When you lie awake at night, listen for counsel from the Lord.

Awareness Exercise

Here is an example of what you can say to come near to God in faith.

First, remind yourself:

"God made the universe and holds everything together. Jesus promised to make his home with me. God is always near and present because I live and move in God who is all around me. This God is here now, near me and seeing me, and eager to hear from me. Now in faith believing and knowing God is as close as my breath, I can hear his voice loving and forgiving me. I know that I can tell him what I feel and what I want to do, and he will do it if it will serve his purpose and glorify him because that's all I ever want to do."

Then just say something like:

"Thank you, God. I know you are here right now. God, use me up. Show me things that will encourage others and serve your purpose. Thank you for always being with me to guide me and make good things happen. I will always trust and never doubt you, Lord. But if I do doubt, I know you will still be there patiently and eagerly waiting for me. In Jesus' name. Amen."