

Love Reaches! "Up Toward God!"

Of all the ways that our love reaches... it reaches up to God! And it's because we were created to be very near to Him!

In the Beginning... We see Him holding "us" close and breathing His life into our bodies! **G2.7** We partner w/Him in the botanical and zoological enterprises of Eden! **15-20** We see His shadow cast on Adam's body as He personally oversees the design and creation of Eve! **21-22** We see Him meeting with us daily! **3.8**

The Daily... Like the awaited hour a loved one comes home... so Adam/Eve had the joy of daily conversation with GOD! The events/challenges/victories of "ruling" the day... *TWO WAY CONVO!* The opening of His mind/perspective/life! The instruction/encouragement/ commission for the next! The revelations of His nature/character! Our identity/purpose/future!

The Break... Then one day, we heard His voice, and it frightened us! He came to us but we were hiding! Sin had broken our fellowship! The ground we walked on, resisted us! The animals we named, played with, became foreigners to us! Our park, playground and workplace was shuttered! But the slaying of that first animal to "cover" them was the sign of a way back!

The One who was "The Way" back came and we have had an invitation to draw near ever since!

Hebrews 10.18-22 "Where there is remission of sin by the blood of Jesus *we have the assurance that we can draw near to God!* It's an all new and alive pathway which He opened for us by the offering of His flesh, *so let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,* having our hearts washed from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

James 4.7-10 "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. *Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you...* humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and *He will lift you up!*"

Invitations... "I love them that love me and those that seek Me early will find Me." **Pr8.17** "When you seek me, you will find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart... I will be found of you, says the LORD!" **Jer 29.13,14** "Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face continually." **1Ch16.11 Ps105.4** "When You said, 'Seek My face;' my heart replied, 'Your face, Lord, will I seek.'" **Ps 27.8**

Of all the ways that our love reaches... foremost is toward God!

Three ways! We draw near to God thru His Word! This is our initial introduction... It is His portfolio... His collected works... The revelation of His character/nature... His personality profile... His resume of His actions and accomplishments... It is our encyclopedia/dictionary... And His Word is uniquely our Best Friend!

"The Word of God is my best friend, and when I need Him to, He does all the speaking for me!" –Alvin Butler

We draw near to God thru fasting! Fasting is not a dietary/cleansing plan! That's just a discipline/point of pride! Not the way we move God/weaken His resolve/effect a compromise! Can't move God/Never changes! It's where we break the hold of our flesh/ strengthen our resolve to hear/obey! When the flesh is weak, the spirit is strong!

We draw near to God thru fasting! Fasting less than three days... no real physical preparation necessary. Pray to overcome the rule of flesh! Fasting more than three days: Holy Spirit leading! Experience God's power to sustain! Encourage our faith to stand! Engage the spirit realm!

We draw near to God thru “prayer!” It includes the petition approach... But it is about “near conversation.” The kind intended from the Garden... And restored at the Cross!

Why is it normal for people to “speak” to God and so odd for Him to speak back?

This is the conversation that we cannot live without...

Alex’s Story... I was invited to be part of a funeral of a guy that the Lord healed from blindness and diabetes back in March-April. I hadn’t heard from Jose or his family until this Friday. His kidneys had failed but it was different now because he was saved. The team went with me knowing there would be a traditional wake and rosary. *The Holy Spirit spoke clearly for me to go to join Him in a brand new experience and a revelation, one for me to watch, listen and learn.* There was a large group there so I sat in the back as the deaconess came up to speak. *The Lord whispered “we’re here by invitation and I love them... wait and listen.”* She apologized for showing up late by getting stuck 2 hrs. in traffic and announced she would not be doing the rosary and would only read scriptures. She read most of the Scriptures I had prepared, *then the Lord said, “I have done this, she is paving the way with My Word... wait and listen.”* She sat down leaving the field wide open. Jose’s wife invited me up. We sang a song that brought the presence of the Lord and people began crying and weeping. *Then the Lord said, “NOW, tell them the truth about Me, heaven and Jose...”* I spoke the shortest message ever, just His words, and 120+ people gave their hearts to Jesus including the group from the church and the deacon herself, boldly raising their hands and praying a loud and clear salvation prayer.

Who knows how the story would have ended without the “conversation?”

Kelly’s story... “Please forgive me. The words you shared were kind when I was so harsh. I am such a broken person right now and have been for several years. I am just now trying to find my way back. What you shared really made me think and because of that, I prayed and asked Jesus to be Lord of my life again. Thx.” Me: ‘I will be glad to be your sounding board again if ever you feel I can help...’ “You have no idea what those words mean to me. To be such a broken person is so hard but what you shared brought me to my knees and reminded me of how good God really is. Thank you for your kindness.”

The whole purpose of drawing near to God is “resource,” for one or 120! To be filled, and to overflow! To be blessed and to be a blessing! To hear, “start, stop, turn, speak, reach...”

Who knows how long she would have remained bound if there hadn’t been any conversation?

We were destined and designed to operate in intimate fellowship with God... Because it’s how life works best for everyone!

A message to His church... “I have these things to say to you; I know your works, I know you think you are rich and need nothing, but you are wretched and miserable and poor, blind and naked... *I say to you buy from Me gold tried by fire (new values) so that you may be rich, and clean clothes (new virtues) that your shame is covered, and anoint your eyes (new vision) so you can see... As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: So be zealous therefore and repent. Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears My voice and opens the door I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with Me!* The one who overcomes will sit with Me just like I overcame and now sit with my Father. He that has an ear, *let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church!*” **Revelation 3.14-22**

This “conversation” is the inheritance and the equipping of the church... And without it we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked! With it we are “excellent, happy, rich, visionary and outfitted!”

2Chronicles 7.14 If My people, which are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their world.