

Articles and Sermons :: Esteeming the Presence - Art Katz

**Esteeming the Presence - Art Katz - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2005/6/28 17:29**

I just thought I would share this little snippet from the (<http://www.benisrael.org/>) Ben Israel website, I found it thought provoking.

**ESTEEMING THE PRESENCE**

I have for a long time been secretly irked in my inner man with the growing preoccupation of many of God's saints to desire the presence of God. It is implied that this is the summum bonum of the faith, the high water mark of true spirituality. In this supposedly exalted realm lies the key to revelation, anointing and all that could be coveted for successful ministry. My own disposition, however, is to receive His presence as surprise and not something sought for in itself lest this become the final hiding place of self now safely ensconced in ultimate spirituality itself!

How much then, do I appreciate Oswald Chamber's remark that "The abiding consciousness of the life is to be God, not thinking about Him." In this state, one looks at everything in relation to God, because the abiding consciousness of God pushes itself to the front all the time; whether felt or not! This characterized the apostle Paul and Jesus Himself even when ultimately tested at the Cross. The cry, "My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" is not the statement of the momentary lapse of the Father, but the supreme moment of the Son's sonship in an obedience that did not falter whether present or absent. It might well prove to be our own.

The kind of abiding consciousness of God is the province, I suspect, only of those whose whole life, purpose and reason for being is the Lord's. Those who are yet independent entities with their own designs, however spiritual and consecrated will prefer a presence to augment that spirituality and confirm them in their dedication. Can it be that many of the spurious revivals of our time have given opportunity to the enemy to duplicate in the soul realm of the naïve and unsuspecting coveted experiences the result of which have neither fostered maturity nor been enduring? Better, I think, to have one's secret life hid with God in Christ with that pious mind that views all things in God and God in all things. The one who is anxious to obtain the presence risks haunting doubts about himself should he fail and forfeits the very peace where the abiding companionship of God waits to be enjoyed.

All quotes are from My Utmost for His Highest, June 2nd. That of "the pious mind" is from Spurgeon's Treasury of David, vol. 1 p. 381.

**Re: Esteeming the Presence - Art Katz - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/6/29 22:42**

InTheLight --- thank you for sharing that.

In fact, that book of daily devotionals --- Oswald Chambers --- MY UPMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST, I begin with daily leading into my morning prayer times. It's an excellent read and worthy of much meditation. Many have said that other than the Bible itself, it is the most inspiring and inspirational book they have ever read. About that I would agree.

Moreover, since I have began hearing Art Katz's preaching here on the Psalms it has improved the quality of daily devotional times, leading into my morning prayer times. Especially, I like the message he preached "Gleanings from Psalms 27."

I have since placed an order for that tape and received it. I can't tell you how many times I have since listened it again and again. It's very encouraging and strengthening.

**Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2005/6/30 0:04**

Quote:  
-----In fact, that book of daily devotionals --- Oswald Chambers --- MY UPMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST, I begin with daily leading into my morning prayer times. It's an excellent read and worthy of much meditation. Many have said that other than the Bible itself, it is the most inspiring and inspirational book they have ever read. About that I would agree.  
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Yes, Art Katz seems to be a big fan of Oswald Chambers and 'My Utmost' in particular, and so am I. There are many good devotionals out there but I haven't found one better than 'My Utmost For His Highest'.

Thanks for sharing about the Psalm 27 message from Art, I don't think I've heard that one yet, will rectify that soon. 8-)

In Christ,

Ron

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/6/30 7:42**

Quote:  
-----The one who is anxious to obtain the 'presence' risks haunting doubts about himself should he fail and forfeits the very peace where "the abiding companionship of God" waits to be enjoyed.  
-----

I think of an infant in a playpen who screams every time Mommy walks out of the room. He thinks that if she is not experientially present, she has abandoned him.

If she continuously bows to his immature demands by running back to him and taking him out of the playpen, she makes herself a slave to him and she enables him to remain in his selfish, immature state. He must learn that when she is not in sight, she is still PRESENT, and still will provide for his needs.

So many people are still like toddlers. They scream for an experience of the presence of God in order to accommodate their weak faith. They walk from experience to experience but never learn to grow up. They never learn to walk by faith in the ever-presence of God.

We must learn to walk by faith and not by sight, or according to what we experience in any of our other natural senses.

Does this make sense?  
Diane

**Re: Presence of God - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/1 3:00**

RoadSign, I would have to say your right.

As I read your post a psalm came to remembrance.

May I share it with you?

Psalm 105:39 (NKJ) says,

"He spread a cloud for covering,  
And a fire to give light in the night."

In this passage the psalmist describes how the Lord guided and protected His people Israel on their forty-year journey through the desert of Sinai.

He spread put out a cloud as a covering in the daytime and in the night gave them fire that provided both light and warmth.

I am have been told by those who know the Sinai desert, that in the daytime it is very hot, but at night it becomes bitterly cold.

In daytime that cloud was a shield that protected them from the heat of the sun's rays.

But at night it became a fire that gave them both light and needed warmth.

This is how God guided His people for forty years through the desert.

For us as Christians, the cloud that guided Israel vividly prefigures the place of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Saint Paul tells us that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:14).

As God guided Israel through the desert by the cloud. He guides us through the world by the Holy Spirit.

What the cloud was to Israel, the Holy Spirit is to us.

In the times of heat, He overshadows us.

In times of darkness, He gives light.

When it becomes cold all around us, He gives us supernatural warmth.

In all circumstances our environment is actually tempered by His presence.

All this is summed up in the title by which Jesus promised the Spirit to His disciples: the Comforter.

Lord, help us, to be continually guided and overshadowed by Your Holy Spirit.

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/7/1 3:10**

Quote:  
-----I think of an infant in a playpen who screams every time Mommy walks out of the room. He thinks that if she is not experientially present, she has abandoned him...He must learn that when she is not in sight, she is still PRESENT, and still will provide for his needs.  
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This is a terrific analogy Roadsign!

MC

**Re: Terrific analogy! - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/2 18:25**

Compton you said "It was a terrific analogy."

I agree with the analogy, but why do you say it is?

I have not asked this question to challenge what you said. But only for reasons I felt that by asking that question it may serve to bring more light on the subject is all.

**Re: show me the light - posted by Roadsign (), on: 2005/7/2 19:51**

Quote:

----- I felt that by asking that question it may serve to bring more light on the subject  
-----

Jacob, I think I missed the light. Can you explain?

Diane

**Re: Esteeming the Presence - Art Katz, on: 2005/7/2 20:39**

'Those who are yet independent entities with their own designs, however 'spiritual' and 'consecrated' will prefer a 'presence' to augment that spirituality and confirm them in their 'dedication.' Can it be that many of the spurious revivals of our time have given opportunity to the enemy to duplicate in the soul realm of the naïve and unsuspecting coveted experiences the result of which have neither fostered maturity nor been enduring? Better, I think, to have one's secret life hid with God in Christ with that "pious mind that views all things in God and God in all things."

Recently I realised that we are all a bit like Jacob when we are in God's hands. No matter who or what we are, our choices and mistakes show us up for what we are, in 'glorious technicolor', as it were. It is possible to stay the way we are, but if we truly desire growth, we have to learn to deal with revelations of our shallowness and be prepared to dig deeper, or be dug deeper, to build our house on the Rock.

I think it's a little harsh of Chambers to suggest an either-or scenario, but maybe that's a device he used to spur his students on to higher aspirations.

Joshua,

Your exposition blessed me, especially this.

Quote:

-----He spread put out a cloud as a covering in the daytime and in the night gave them fire that provided both light and warmth.

I am have been told by those who know the Sinai desert, that in the daytime it is very hot, but at night it becomes bitterly cold.

In daytime that cloud was a shield that protected them from the heat of the sun's rays.

But at night it became a fire that gave them both light and needed warmth.

This is how God guided His people for forty years through the desert.  
-----

I would like to add further, that originally, the fiery-cloudy pillar was leading them, but when they became *aware* of their enemies, the pillar moved behind them, between them and the Egyptian army. Not only did this *hide* them from the enemy, but it turned the enemy's day to night and their night to day. The fire which you were describing as light, was as bright as daylight. That's some fire! The day-night arrangement worked by letting God's people get ahead, while the enemy was sleeping.

**Re: Parent and child - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/7/3 0:09**

Roadsign said

Quote:

-----  
I think of an infant in a playpen who screams every time Mommy walks out of the room. He thinks that if she is not experientially present, she has abandoned him...He must learn that when she is not in sight, she is still PRESENT, and still will provide for his needs.  
-----

I responded...

Quote:

-----This is a terrific analogy Roadsign!  
-----

JakeforJesus wrote:

Quote:

-----Compton you said "It was a terrific analogy."

I agree with the analogy, but why do you say it is? I have not asked this question to challenge what you said. But only for reasons I felt that by asking that question it may serve to bring more light on the subject is all.

JakeforJesus,

In answering this question(Sorry it took so long for me to respond)let me admit that I wish I knew more about the presence of God...

Although Roadsign's analogy could perhaps be used as an illustration of God's "Omnipresence" and the comfort we take in knowing he is everywhere, this is not what impressed me about it.

The heart of the analogy (for me) lies in the parent/ child relationship. A parent's heart is not omnipresent...but everpresent because their hearts are always close to the child. Precisely because the good parent's heart is never far from the child is the reason they will not show up as the baby dictates. The parent is on a more profound mission...namely that the child would mature.

A few years back there was the God Chasers movement that objectified the presence of God into a tangible paranormal entity that would occupy physical space within a church and spark electric life changing power...this was called the "manifest" presence of God. I think this is looking for His presence in the wrong direction...namely that the outerman will come into contact with the presence of God and be changed by the experience. Regardless of the validity of this phenomena, I believe focusing on this is akin to Roadsign's "baby crying in the crib."

So, let me expound on Roadsign's analogy as heard through my ears... God is an ever present parent that is intent on maturity. Even in His "absence", He is present with us as we are on His mind. "Io, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Mature people sense their parents in a way that is different than children...inwardly vs. externally...Adults sense their parents within their own character. (I'm so much like my dad...)

If the kingdom of God is within...then why do so many seek His presence externally as if our senses will convince our hearts...except He first be manifest in and through our hearts. Why would God manifest Himself in a way that by-passes our hearts? "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." On Sunday mornings, if we can't find the presence of God in our hearts...we ain't going to find Him in church. (If we insist on delicious signs and wonders, then perhaps other spirits will eagerly entertain us and distract us from the inward work of the Holy Spirit...)

These words from Jesus:

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

More glimpses of the presence of God...

"There is one body and one Spirit,...one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

How is it manifested?...can we "feel close" to God? Accordingly...

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father...My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

and these words...

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

With this perspective, I apply Roadsign's analogy along these lines: In my youth I hoped to experience the presence of

God, but once I reached maturity I determined to practice the presence of God.

The words of Andrew Lawrence, the final chapter of "The Practice of the Presence of God."

"Let us not amuse ourselves to seek or to love GOD for any sensible favors (how elevated so ever) which He has or may do us. Such favors, though never so great, cannot bring us so near to GOD as faith does in one simple act. Let us seek Him often by faith: He is within us; seek Him not elsewhere. Are we not rude and deserve blame, if we leave Him alone, to busy ourselves about trifles, which do not please Him and perhaps offend Him? 'Tis to be feared these trifles will one day cost us dear."

MC

**Re: Roadsign's question ... - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/3 20:17**

Roadsign said, "I think I missed the light. Can you explain?"

My Response:

I have a curious mind, I like to know what other people think. (smiling)

I like to hear the perspectives of others.

Why?

Because they may say something that I may have never thought of.

We can learn some things by asking questions.

**Re: Chambers being too harsh? - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/3 20:41**

Dorcas wrote: "I think it's a little harsh of Chambers to suggest an either of other scenario, but maybe that's a device he used to spur his students on to higher aspirations."

My Response:

Why do you think he was being too harsh?

**Re: only 'a little harsh', on: 2005/7/3 21:29**

Quote:

-----'Why do you think he was being too harsh?'

'..to spur his students on to higher aspirations'.  
-----

I mentioned it because it is something to beware of in one's thinking.

Sometimes, harshness is justified, but, the 'either-or' way of talking can be justified only if it's a description of the real choice at the time.

Undoubtedly this was the case when he said those words. I'm anxious they are not taken to heart inappropriately. If God speaks them to you though, better not *not* take them to heart! :-P

**Re: Presences of God - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/3 23:03**

To Compton: Thank you for your post.

Because of something you said in your post= "I wish I knew more about the presences of God?"

I have come now to want to ask you a question.

"When do we come closest to God?"

**Re: Like a child... - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/7/4 3:13**

Quote:

-----"When do we come closest to God?"

Jake,

Just some thoughts...I hope they answer your question...

Do you remember that first time you discovered the difference between studying the Bible and hearing the Word of God ?

Have you ever been in a noisy restaurant trying to have a conversation with a good friend? That is what the consciousness of religion is like today...too many people talking on too many frequencies.

How hard is it for the Christian to quiet the soul...so many voices bouncing in our heads.

It seems lately I am having to rediscover what I had known as a younger Christian boy, before I got so busy as an adult...that the Lord likes to abide in me. I'm finding I like to abide in Him! (It seems somehow irreligious to state it so bluntly..)

In considering the presence of God, I invariably consider the state of my heart. (On this matter let me be as honest as I can in a public forum read by countless strangers!) We know that God has called us to holiness. The word "holiness", in my own local circles, has been associated with so much unhappy religious cantankerousness that I find little practical inspiration from it...for the time being I have thought of another word for the kind of heart that could bear God's presence..."innocent."

Brother, that I could be innocent of envy, strife, fear, and other impurities of the heart! Oh precious is the flow that washes white as snow! When I think on innocence, I do indeed thirst after more of God's presence.

Now let me ask you this...can a heart that has known sin, regain its innocence? (Forgiveness is one thing...but purity is another matter altogether) To answer this question let me call attention to perhaps the most important quality of the word "innocence"...it describes the heart of a believing child that knows the Father will supply every need...

I believe this is when we come closest. As a trusting child.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by Joshua99 (), on: 2005/7/4 8:24

Quote:

-----"When do we come closest to God?"  
-----

You are closest to God, after you respond to His Grace, in the form of repentance, thereby we SURRENDER to His will. It amazes me that in the church across America today, many believers think they can choose to obey the Lord. The only choice we have, my friends is to say..YES LORD! Proving we are True believers, Jesus said in the Gospel of John..

John 8:31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If you abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples;

John 8:32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

and also along with this Truth..

John 15:7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so shall you be my disciples.

May I define "fruit" here in these scriptures? The lord is not speaking about the works of ministry, but of the Character of God, the like-ness of Christ, being birthed in the believer, resulting in a heart that is being pure, and Holy before God, Our Father.

When I'm the closest to God is when He sees me living and Abiding in the Living Word, that is "Christ in us"- to the Glory of God. We must surrender ourselves to death in order to become His disciples, and live a life "Approved unto God" acceptable before Him, where He is welcomed to Abide in us andÂ...Be the closest, living out through us.

Blessings

Re: God's Presences - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/4 11:51

Compton, thank you for your post.

You said, "I indeed thirst for God's presence."

Yes, I can see you do.

David said it this way, I came to think you may would appreciate it. Therefore, I have chosen to share it with you.

Psalms 63:1-2,6 (NIV) says,

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night."

How important it is for us to have our own personal revelation of God! Not just to rely on what somebody else has told us, or what we have heard in church. All that may be good, but it is not sufficient. There must come a time when we experience God for ourselves --- when we come to know Him firsthand, when we have such a revelation of God that nothing less than God Himself can ever fully satisfy us.

David had that kind of revelation.

He says to God, "I have seen You in the sanctuary; I have beheld Your power and Your glory. And now I am in a dry and thirsty land, but my soul longs for You more than it does for water. Even when I lie on bed at night, my meditation is of You. You fill my heart and mind, my imagination, my longing. All the day through I am taken up with You, my God. There is



no other source of true satisfaction. My soul does not find rest in any other way. I have seen You and I have known You is a way I can never forget. It has forever determined the course of my life."

One day in 1983, I met God revealed in Jesus Christ. That encounter totally and permanently transformed my life. Today, more than twenty years later, I have the same thirst in my soul that David describes --- a thirst that can be satisfied by nothing less than God Himself.

I believe you do likewise, and it is because of having received your own personal revelation of God that is why you thirst for God's presences.

If anyone were to pray, O God, fill my whole being with the revelation of Yourself. I believe that is a prayer God is very happy to answer, and He will do it.

Compton you wrote: "Can a heart that has known sin, regain it's innocent (forgiveness is one thing ... but purity is another matter altogether) To answer this question let me call attention to perhaps the most important quality of the word "innocence" ... it describes the heart of a believing child that knows the Father will supply every need."

Well, said.

There long since has been much teaching on how God will supply all our needs. However, I can't help but to think that somehow we should come to get past being focused so much on that.

What do you think?

The reason I say that is because only a fraction of the Gospel is really about what God can do for us, and is more about what we can do for God.

What do you think? (smiling)

Compton you wrote: "I believe this is when we come closest (to God), as trusting child."

I know what you saying.

For my part, I have discovered that the closest we come to the Lord --- isn't when we read the Bible or even when we pray. I find the closest we come to the Lord is when we partake of the Lord's Supper. That is, if we fully understand what we are doing when we partake of the Lord's table we do.

However, it was only after I had come to fully understand the Lord's table that I discovered this. In fact, I was a Christian for many years before that had really come to be a revelation to me.

I enjoyed reading your post.

**Re: - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/4 12:09**

Joshua99, I thank you for your post.

You spoke of abiding in Him. I agree.

I have a question.

How do we stay connected? (smiling)

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/7/4 12:27

Quote:  
-----There long since has been much teaching on how God will supply all our needs. However, I can't help but to think that somehow we should come to not be so focused on that. What do you think?

The reason I say that is because only a fraction of the Gospel is really about what God can do for us, and is more about what we can do for God.

-----

Good point to bring out Jake...

I think the kind of teachings you are speaking about are focused on those things we need (or want) for this life...

If you look at the context of my earlier statement, it was in reference to the new heart that God gives. (edit:I feel this is also along the lines of what Josh99 was looking at.) In that area He we do indeed look to him to supply our every need. I'm thinking of Jesus' words, "Apart from me you can do nothing."

Quote:  
-----For my part, I have discovered that the closest we come to the Lord --- isn't when we read the Bible or even when we pray. I find the closest we come to the Lord is when we partake of the Lord's Supper. That is, if we fully understand what we are doing when we partake of the Lord's table we do.

-----

When you say that don't feel closest to the Lord, as a matter of course when you read the bible...well I can understand that. When you say that you aren't closest to the Lord when you pray, I become curious as to what prayer is in that sentence. Is it incorrect for me to believe that I can "pray always"? (If only I would...) I sometimes wonder if there is such a great distance between abiding and prayer.

Regarding the Lord's Supper, there is much renewed interest in this subject these days...Perhaps you could expound on this a bit more from your perspective.

Thanks Jake,

MC

Re: - posted by Joshua99 (), on: 2005/7/4 15:32

Quote:  
-----I have a question.  
-----

How do we stay connected??

We are to simply Abide in His word, because we love Him, its not a duty of the law. This is a relationship, meaning you may at times not spend anytime in the written Word of God, BUT if indeed you have been abiding in Christ, His Word resides in you. Many times I can recall the Lord speaking to me, reminding me what I have read, that which is of His Spirit, deep in my heart. The more we are accustomed to handling the Word of God, The Holy Spirit has substance to speak to us. He will not affirm anything of the Kingdom of God without it being proved from the Bible. A lot of the resources found (written /audio/video) here at this website, are excellent tools to show the consistency of the Word of God and His Spirit speaking to His Church. Such as Oswald Chambers, D.L. Moody and our own Keith Daniels. With that being said, I REST in the assurance of God's Word planted in my spirit..

Col 2:6 As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,  
Col 2:7 rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith,(by the Word of God) even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

and this..

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.

Col 3:17 And whatsoever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Paul is speaking first to come to know Christ -is to know spiritual rest, for we know God loves us and we rest in His provision from the cross!

Second, as we mature whether or not the Lord reveals himself to us, We are not to get disturbed or moved away from that which is the TRUTH!! These are the marks of a True Believer and a maturing Christian. Therefore, we walk by Faith standing firm on His Word, and enjoy His Peace, His Rest and we are able to give an account to the Hope that is being seen within us--We are His witnesses. I hope this will help and bless you.

:-) :-) :-)

**Re: - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/4 19:44**

"Compton" wrote:

"Regarding the Lord's Supper, there is much interest in this subject these days. Perhaps, you could expound on this a bit more from your perspective."

My Response:

Firstly, I want to thank you for your explanation and your post.

As for your mention of the "TABLE OF THE LORD."

It would be difficult for me to unfold from scripture my perspective concerning the Lord's Supper fully on a format like this .

It would require long posts and many posts for me to do so.

However, I will say some things about it. And I would be happy to take any questions you may want to ask me about it.

I believe that much of the Church today, the Church as a whole actually, has only a shallow knowledge of "THE TABLE OF THE LORD."

I believe that through more understanding of it, we can come more into a true intimacy with the Lord Jesus, in a way in which we may not have ever known.

If we fully understand the table of the Lord. I don't believe that we will see it as just merely being a ritual in which we do just sometimes or just occasionally in remembrance of the Lord.

Of course, it is a thing we do in remembrance of the Lord. It is that, but also I see it is much more than only that, if we fully realize what we are doing when we partake of it.

I see it as being a place where we can come into a time of intimacy with the Lord, but also as a table of power where we can be strengthened in spirit, soul and in body, a place where we can be made whole.

I see it as being a festival to the Lord. I believe that if we rightly and fully understand the table of the Lord, it becomes more of a celebration of a love festival to the Lord.

Also I see as being one of the ways, yet not the only way, but a way that we receive the life of God in us.

I believe the time in which we come closest to the Lord, is not when we read the Bible or when we pray, but when we partake of the Lord's table. That is, "IF" we rightly and fully understand the table of the Lord, it is.

I believe that it is necessary that we rightly and fully understand the table of the Lord, if we are to be able to receive the full

ullness of the benefits of the the Lord's Supper.

For some years now, I have practiced that of partaking of the Lord's table daily in my early morning devotional and prayers times. It's vital to me, and I believe it has served to bring me into a much more closer relationship with the Lord.

Of course, I also partake of the Lord's Supper with a congregation as often as they do.

In just passing, I would like to further note that while I do not agree with all the views held by the "Plymouth Brethren." However, as for their practice of the Lord's Supper. I find they are the most biblical today in their practice of it. It's the center of all their fellowship and worship, whenever they come together as a congregation. I believe that's how it should be. I believe that was also the practice of the early Church.

Someone who are critics of the Church today, have said. Jesus said, to do this "as often as you do it, in remembrance of me," but you do it as seldom.

#### **other descriptions of the presence of God - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/7/4 19:45**

I've been meditating on 1 John 1 and 2 and would like to share what I am discovering on the subject of the presence of God:

The word "presence" seems to be expressed in different ways. ex "anointing - ie the Spirit" 1 Jn 2:20 "Knowing" "walk in the light" "live by the truth" , "fellowship with him" "his word.. in our lives", "God's love made complete in him".

All of these various descriptions reveal that the presence of God within us is conditional on our willingness to admit our sin (our sinfulness). See 1 Jn 1:9 To the extent that we are blind to our pride, our self-will, our inability to love our neighbor - we are distanced from God.

From these chapters in 1 John I would conclude that all who claim to experience the presence of God, but do not admit their sin, are deceived. They may indeed be experiencing something that comes from God ex the "pillar of fire", the cloud , an emotion, a nice smell of flowers, nice "worshipful" music, religious experience, ecstatic prayers etc. HOWEVER these are all experiences sensed in the flesh. I do not see anywhere in scripture where these types of experiences are any indication that one is abiding in Christ.

Through my own experience some of the most intense times with God was when the Spirit was convicting me - thus drawing me further into repentance. Typically, the greatest times of joy in him followed the greatest times of pain. Times of deepest grief and weeping for sinners also have brought me into deep sense of his presence.  
Diane

#### **Re: - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/4 19:58**

Hi, Joshua99.

This is just to let you know I read your good post, and I will come back a bit later as I come to have more time to post, and to comment on what you shared with us.

#### **Re: other descriptions of the presence of God - posted by Joshua99 (), on: 2005/7/4 21:27**

Quote:  
-----Through my own experience some of the most intense times with God was when the Spirit was convicting me - thus drawing me further into repentance. Typically, the greatest times of joy in him followed the greatest times of pain.  
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Amen! This is a good path, that leads to walking in the Spirit- resulting a Holy Life, pleasing in His sight!

**Re: How do we stay connected? - posted by JakeforJesus (), on: 2005/7/5 18:52**

Hi, Joshua99.

In an earlier post I had asked "How do we stay connected?"

I liked the answer you gave.

I am going to give my answer.

In John 15:1 (NKJ) the Lord Jesus compares our relationship with Him to a vine and its branches:

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

The vinedresser is the one who does the pruning.

In verses 4 and 5, Jesus goes on to say to His disciples:

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

The branches of the vine do not bear grapes with effort. They do not make resolutions and say: "Now I'm going to bring forth grapes!"

They bear grapes simply by being united to the trunk --- the stock of the vine.

The same life that is in the trunk flows through the branches, and the life in the branches brings forth the appropriate kind of fruit.

Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you will remain related to Me --- joined to Me --- you'll bring forth much fruit."

Jesus goes on to talk about pruning.

When a vinedresser prunes a vine, he is ruthless. He cuts the branches all the way back to the stem. You would think the vine is never going to bear fruit again. But the next year, it is more fruitful than before.

Some of our most painful struggles may be the result of bearing fruit. Right now, the Father may be pruning us. If so we should not give up! And not to say, "How could this happen to me?"

Simply yield! Surrender to the vinedresser.

All three Persons of the Godhead are involved in this process of bringing forth fruit.

The Father is the vinedresser.

Jesus is the vine.

And the Holy Spirit is the life that flows through the vine and into the branches.

The Holy Spirit is the one who actually produces the fruit.

It is not the fruit of our best efforts.

It is not the fruit of religion.

It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

**Re: - posted by Joshua99 (), on: 2005/7/5 19:40**

JakeforJesus,

Everything you said is excellent, especially in what you said from John 15:

The branches of the vine do not bear grapes with effort. They do not make resolutions and say: "Now I'm going to bring forth grapes!"

They bear grapes simply by being united to the trunk --- the stock of the vine.

How True! We can not do produce anything within ourselves, pertaining to Holiness and Godly Character.

you also said...

The Holy Spirit is the one who actually produces the fruit.

It is not the fruit of our best efforts.

It is not the fruit of religion.

It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Which is the Character of Christ, abiding, living in us and through us. His life living through our temples, to His Glory ,Amen!

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