

THE INTERNATIONAL 30 DAY SPIRITUAL EXPERIMENT

IN WHAT WAY DID YOU THINK LIFE WOULD BE DIFFERENT, IF YOU GAVE YOUR LIFE TO GOD?

What did you think a relationship with God would be like? Do you know what I mean? If you are reading this - and are a Christian, have you ever considered how your life was supposed to change? If you did all Jesus asked? Or at least as much as you are emotionally capable of? ...*Has it lived up to your expectations? Really lived up to all you expected?*

...I'm guessing in some way it hasn't, or you probably wouldn't be reading this now.

So how do you wish your relationship with God would change? Be honest. Do you wish God was more "present" when you need Him? Easier to hear? More comforting when you're hurting? Able to protect you from what seems to be the unending cruelty that life in this world is able to produce?

...What did you expect life with God to be like? For just a moment I want you to think back to the time in your life when you felt God became the most real to you. ...The most present, the most *touchable and tangible*. Have some point of time in mind? If so, then I now want you to try to remember again - in that moment, in that instant of time - what did it *feel* like? Can you still remember? *And how did you think your life would change from that moment on?* ...*What did you dream life with God would be like?*

...Did you expect to never again feel afraid or lonely? Or maybe to feel God's presence so strongly in your life from that point on, that you thought you would never again feel uncared for, unprotected, or ...unloved? ...What did you expect?

If ever there were a cry, which has echoed the sentiments that have been shared with me by the vast majority of *Christians* over the last 30 years, it would be this cry...**"I still haven't found what I'm looking for!"**

Most of these individuals have talked to me of empty voids in their lives that were never filled. They talked of loneliness and of still having a deep sense of loss and unrest. Many talked of being held in bondage to sins so hideous and perverse that they had told absolutely no one. And as a result of these habits and addictions, they also said that

spiritually they felt as if they were clothed in rags of guilt and shame. And most heart breaking of all to me...they talked of feeling unaccepted, unwanted, and unloved!"

Is this all God promised? A distant relationship with - for all practical purposes - an unknowable God? ...What did you personally dream life with God would be like? And has this "God-life" lived up to all you thought it would be? Has it lived up to the expectations you felt at that moment when God became the most real to you? Because...

...Those expectations, those hopes, those dreams, whatever you felt in that moment, were who you were meant to be!—But who you and I have become, is only what we've been willing to settle for!

Doesn't it seem to you that many, many Christians have to come to a place where they have settled for so much less than what they once believed life with God would be like? YES, I agree they have grown in knowledge about God. Many are now theologically brilliant. But still, doesn't it seem that for most, God hasn't become all that...touchable and tangible?

For some of you there has been a moment in time when you gave *all of your life* to God. Can you still remember how that felt? Remember - nothing else mattered to you! Nothing else mattered but the excitement that God was really alive! Do you remember how desperate you were to be as close to Him as possible? ...And can you still feel what you thought life with God was going to be like?

Sometimes as Christians doesn't it seem as if we are willing to settle for just a morsel of what God desires for us, rather than His best! Content to experience so little of whom He is? ...Maybe because that's all we have ever known?

So we exist with just enough peace to struggle through the depression of each day! Just enough joy to settle for apathy and boredom! Just enough righteousness to camouflage the guilt of our hidden sins! Just enough love to cover up the wounds and scars that cause us to shut others out of the areas of our deepest need.

... Why does it seem that sometimes our lives are lived in such a more tarnished spiritual world than what Jesus promised you and I?

Personally, I can understand why someone might not believe in God. It really is difficult to believe in Him. Don't you think so? In fact, for someone to come to a conclusion that God *does not exist*, really doesn't take that great of a stretch of their imagination. All they would have to do is just look at all of the suffering in the world - the hunger, the cruelty, the greed, the lack of compassion and love. And the logical conclusion would be, "If there is a God, how could He ever allow such endless torment and misery?" Have you ever thought such thoughts?

And besides, if God is real - then *why in all the world* would he also choose to play what seems to be like a heavenly game of "hide and seek" with mankind? Why would He be so untouchable, elusive, and unseen? I can understand why anyone with courage to step out of what is often a fear imposed conformity demanded by much of the religious world could easily come to the conclusion - ***THERE IS NO GOD!***

But what if I told you I believe I can prove God's existence to you? That I can actually provide **tangible proof** that God exists. And - *that I believe He will reveal Himself to you in a "touchable and tangible" way?*

If this is *really* possible...***are you interested?***

And, I promise - there will be no mind games or deceptive presentation. I promise. In fact if you ever emotionally feel pressured to do something you don't want to do - *because of what is written in this website* - would you please take the time to write to me at *Through the Storm*, PO Box 701607, San Antonio, Texas, 78270 and let me know so I can reevaluate the possibility that some part of the site needs to be rewritten.

WHY I PERSONALLY CAME TO BELIEVE GOD DIDN'T EXIST...

I don't know exactly why you believe what you believe. But honestly I can understand why someone might not believe in God. Even though I was raised in a religious home, by the time I was sixteen years old I had become agnostic in my beliefs. Yet I wasn't bitter toward those who felt a need to be religious. (I thought if someone needed to become a member of some "religious club" to help them handle the difficulties in their life - *then that was okay.*) But for me? ...There just wasn't enough "tangible" proof to convince me that God existed.

WHICH GOD?

But still I would not have considered myself atheistic in my beliefs. It was the early 1970's. And although I didn't believe there was any proof for the existence of God, I was still searching for meaning and purpose in my own life. As a consequence, and desiring to systematically eliminate any possibilities in my search, I decided to take one last "open" look at *other religious beliefs*.

So I began an objective study of a small grouping of world religions - Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Judaism. And although I confess my study was not extensive, nor pervasive, in the end I made a decision to limit my exploration just to Christianity (*More specifically to the actual teachings of Jesus*). Why Christianity - why Jesus? For one reason and one reason only - In my examination of world religions, none of them, *nor*

any of their founders ever promised an intimate relationship with God (*one where you could really experience God's presence*). **That is except...Jesus.**

In fact, after a careful study of what Jesus ***actually promised***, and how he proposed an intimate relationship with God could become reality in a person's life, I shockingly discovered for myself that if a person approached God *in the way Jesus taught...God would become what I now describe as "touchable and tangible"!*

TOUCHABLE AND TANGIBLE?

What do I mean by the phrase "touchable and tangible"? How is this relationship with God possible? And can *anyone* really experience this sort of intimacy with him?

Now, if I am right, and it is possible for you to actually experience a touchable and tangible relationship with God...***are you interested?*** It's your decision. If you're not, then don't waste any more time - just simply go off of the website now.

...But if you are, and want to know what will be required of you in order to begin experiencing this relationship, then read on.

SO WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED OF ME?

First - *please understand*, I am not asking you to immediately change your belief system or what you believe to be true about God. Not at all. Only that you be willing to become whole heartedly involved in what will be your own personal research about the possibility of God actually becoming touchable and tangible in your life.

What will be required of you? After sharing how Jesus explained this relationship could take place in a person's life (remember this is a study of Jesus' teachings on this matter) ...I'm going to ask you to agree to objectively *talk* to God about four different areas of human attitudes - *DAILY*...for one month.

Why daily? Why one month? That's a large commitment! Why? - Because what Jesus actually taught and revealed was that God *does not respond* to our actions...*but to the motives behind those actions*. Did you catch that? In other words, *why you do what you do, is the part of who you are, that God responds to*. What does that mean *and why is it important?*

Very simply, ***this is a relationship with God!*** As a result, that means someone can't just share some "spiritual formula" with you, and if you do it, God will then somehow have to do what you want him to do - to perform. Because we don't control him. *We come to him on his terms*. ...I'm sure you can understand that.

But again - *why every day for one month?* Because for some individuals it may take a month for their conversations with God about these heart attitudes to finally become a part of "who they are", rather than them just repeating some "prescription" I have shared. And as I said before - this is not some learned program of formulas...*it is a study in relationship!*

STILL INTERESTED?

But you want to know what's in this experiment for you? Then read on.

SO WHAT'S IN THIS FOR ME? ...

So what's in this for you - if God really does become touchable and tangible in your life? Nothing wrong with asking this question. Besides your time is valuable. Here are *just a few* of the promises of what you can expect from this "God encounter" as documented by the followers of Jesus and recorded in what is now called the New Testament, or "New Covenant" portion of the Bible. (Again remember because he was the founder of Christianity, we are basing this exploration on Jesus' teachings.)

FIRST PROMISE - PEACE!

Jesus made a promise that any person who would develop this relationship with God, that they would also experience the same peace he felt in his own life. (John 14) And in the book of Philippians, chapter 4, verse 7 this "peace" is explained as "A peace that passes all understanding"! Now what does that mean? It means that *when* this spiritual "God peace" is present within you, not only will you have an inner calmness in your *everyday life*, but *IF* you should have to face the most awful, terrible situation you could ever imagine, God has promised that during those times this "*peace in you*", in its very nature will seem to almost envelop you. ...Covering and protecting you from all of the "emotional hurt" that *ANY* harmful situation could possibly produce! And it is implied that this "peace" will be there for no rhyme or reason. In other words, *not because of anything you have done*. But just because...*God loves you!*

SECOND - UNEXPLAINABLE JOY, LOSS OF EMPTINESS!

A second promise of Jesus' is found in the book of John, chapter 15, verse 11 where Jesus literally promised a "joy that is full". So full *in fact*, that its very description implies that any joy experienced before would pale in comparison to this "God elation". This joy, also like God's peace, has the power to cover and protect your heart from emotional injury - as

well as an ability to take away any sense of "emptiness" that you may now feel within your life.

THIRD - THE TOTAL LOSS OF FEAR AND INSECURITY IN YOUR LIFE!

In the book of 1st John, chapter 4, verse 18 we are told of another promise from God that is almost impossible to imagine! He promises to place *within* you (in this life) a "perfect love" that will "cast out all fear!" Now did you hear what God promised? Let me try to explain it this way. Imagine walking into a room full of strangers and never again feeling afraid, insecure or ill-at-ease! Nor ever again worrying about your future! Or of what others think about you! Or ever again feeling overcome with fear and discouragement about your goals or finances! This is exactly what God is promising to give to you - *the ability to live without even the smallest amount of fear or insecurity! That is...if God becomes touchable and tangible in your life.*

FOURTH - NEVER LONELY AGAIN!

A fourth promise is found in Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 5 which tells us that once this relationship is established - that God will "never leave you, nor forsake you"! Which - if true - also means that as you **DAILY** begin to experience God's tangible presence, you will wonderfully find yourself losing any lasting sense of *loneliness*.

FIFTH - LOSS OF EVERY DESTRUCTIVE HABIT IN YOUR LIFE!

Jesus said in Luke, chapter 4, and verse 18 that one of the reasons he came was to bring "deliverance to the captives"! What did he mean by that? In brief, when God becomes touchable and tangible, Jesus is promising that *you will no longer daily struggle with destructive habits*. Destructive habits and even addictions that for some of you may now have become an almost accepted part of your everyday life! If you struggle with some destructive habit or addiction, can you even imagine no longer daily feeling tormented by the unquenchable pull, desire or need for that diversion and escape? That is just what Jesus is promising!

SIXTH - EXPERIENCE THE SAME RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT JESUS EXPERIENCED!

And the final promise I want to share, (although there are many more) and probably the most unbelievable of all is the fact that Jesus promised you can "be one with God", in just the same way that he was "one" with God (John 17:21-23). ***In other words, you can know God in just the same way that Jesus knew God!*** ...No different, no changes, no disadvantages! And if you take the time to study the life of Jesus and this relationship - **this is quite a guarantee!**

Now these are *just a few of the promises*. But if true, if God does become "touchable and tangible" in just the same way He was to Jesus - then do you realize how your life will change from this point on? Jesus has actually promised that you can live in what he called a sort of a spiritual "kingdom". A kingdom that he says will be established *within your heart and emotions*, where there will be no more feelings of being unloved, or unwanted anymore! A kingdom where there will no longer be lasting emotions of sadness or depression in your life. No more feelings of worry or fear. ...Living without guilt, or shame. And even - living free from any destructive habit now in your life! Again - *can you imagine a life like this?*

...But listen to me, really listen to me. *All of these promises, according to Jesus - the founder of Christianity - hinge on whether or not **God becomes touchable and tangible in your life!*** Now if I really can share and show you how to experience God in this way, and if what I have just described can become reality in your life - ***is it worth this experiment to you?***

OKAY, NOW EXPLAIN - IN WHAT WAY WILL GOD BECOME TOUCHABLE AND TANGIBLE TO ME?

In what way is God going to become "touchable and tangible" to you? This is important. The Bible in the book of John in the fourth chapter, verse 24 tells us that "God is a Spirit". Why is that important?

Because if God is "Spirit", rather than flesh and blood as you and I are, *then our definition for "touchable and tangible" will have to be modified for us to begin to understand how God reveals himself to others. ...And, how He will reveal Himself to you.*

SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATION

First let me say, if you live in America and have watched too many Hollywood films about the "supernatural", then in considering the possibility that God is "spirit", your "belief system" is probably full of very bad and erroneous information of how someone might sense they "felt" God's presence. And as a result, there is a great possibility that you now perceive "spiritual things" as either being extremely frightening or immaturely childish and ridiculous (something only the gullible would admit to believing and experiencing).

SO HOW DO I EXPERIENCE THIS "SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATION"?

In his last conversation with his disciples (The book of John, chapter 14) Jesus told them not to be afraid of the fact that he was about to leave them - because he promised *after* he was gone he would then send the "Holy Spirit" to them. Now just for your explanation, ***according to Jesus' teachings*** - the Holy Spirit is the *spiritual presence of God* now upon the face of the earth. And, the part of God - according to Jesus - ***who is actually responsible in this experiment to make God "touchable and tangible" to you.***

SPIRITUAL PRESENCE? - SOMETHING WE EXPERIENCE EVERYDAY ...NOT ALL THAT "SPOOKY"

I believe you and I *perceive* things somewhat in a spiritual way all of the time. And even though I consider this a *very weak* explanation, let me try to explain. Have you *ever been having a really good day*, but just as you entered a hospital to go visit someone you cared about - *all of a sudden you began to feel uneasy, anxious, or maybe even a little afraid?* ...Or did you ever walk into a home for the care of elderly people and again suddenly for no reason at all - *find yourself feeling depressed?* What caused that to happen? **(Remember you felt okay before going into these places).** So what happened? What you may have felt in one or both of these situations, for lack of a better term, I call "emotional feedback". Simply explained: I believe you and I tend to *involuntarily emotionally respond* to what we sense or "pick up" others are feeling. (Not really all that "spooky")

Need more proof? Have you ever been listening to someone trying to sing who was really afraid? How did you feel emotionally as you listened to them? Did you "sense" their fear? And did the fear they were feeling cause you to begin to somehow sympathetically also "feel" afraid? Do you see what I mean?

Still not convinced? Watch someone who is not comfortable holding a baby and see what happens. The baby will cry! Why? Because somehow the baby *senses* that the person holding them is afraid - and as a result, the child begins to feel insecure and then cries. If you don't believe this, go hold a baby while you are feeling uptight and anxious about something - the baby will probably start crying. If so, simply hand the child to someone else, calm down and then see what happens when you hold the child again.

You and I can even find this sort of "perception" in the animal realm. Just watch how a dog responds when someone who is afraid of it comes into the room. Personally I have

seen extremely friendly pets, (even to strangers) suddenly become vicious, bark and show their teeth when a person who is afraid of dogs enters the room.

SO HOW WILL GOD'S TOUCHABLE AND TANGIBLE PRESENCE FEEL?

Just as you emotionally at one time or another responded to probably at least one of the above examples...*when God's presence comes into your life - at the precise moment when He becomes touchable and tangible to you - you will in that instant begin to experience for no reason at all, emotions that can only be created by His Spiritual Presence. A "God presence" now made real to you by the "Holy Spirit".* **And because these emotions are totally different in their extreme high level of intensity than any other human emotions you have ever felt...** their will be no doubt in your mind that what you are experiencing and feeling is the presence of God - *touchable and tangible*. A description of this creation of God's presence that will be produced within you is given in the book of Galatians, chapter 5, verses 22-23. There it tells us that the by-product or "fruit" of this relationship with the Spirit (Holy Spirit) *when He is present within your life* will be "love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance or a God-produced righteousness.

NOT A BY-PRODUCT OF YOUR THOUGHTS!

But in the same way that the emotions created by "emotional feedback" are felt, (the examples I shared above) *but NOT CREATED by the person experiencing them...* I want you to understand that this experiencing of God's presence *will not be a by-product of you developing some correct or disciplined way to think*. Enjoyable emotions felt in our lives that are created by us thinking on positive thoughts are a totally different experience. Not a "bad" disciplined experience to develop...*but one that no one should ever compare or confuse with God's presence*.

SO WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE EXPERIENCE GOD'S PRESENCE?

In the first book (Matthew) within the New Testament, Jesus gave us insight into how to experience this possible relationship with God in one short comment he made in a public speech given to a large crowd gathered in the open on a mountain in Israel. This was the statement, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8) Now a more accurate translation of the Greek record of what Jesus said here would be, "*Fortunate are those who are clear and clean in their thoughts and feelings, for they shall gaze with wide-open eyes at something remarkable - at God!*"

...So what does that mean for the person who wants to experience a touchable and tangible God? **It means that their motives (yours, mine, and everyone's) for wanting to experience God's presence *have to be pure.*** No alternative reasons - not for power, fame, money, position, etc - *but from a sincere desire just to know God intimately.*

SO WHAT'S THE BIG PROBLEM?

In the Old Testament or the Old Covenant portion of the Bible, in the book of Jeremiah we are told something about our "hearts" (or why we come to the conclusions and values about life that we do) that is extremely eye-opening. At least *if we are going to accept scripture as a guide for truth within this experiment.* For in chapter 17, verse 9 the writer of this book tells us that our hearts (our thoughts and feelings) - *on their own* - are very deceptive (self-serving, and most often blinded by whatever is our most pressing and current need).

And to make matters worse, we are then told that no one really "knows their own heart". Or in other words we usually *don't even know* or understand *why we do what we do.* Now if true, why is that? This is my own theory. I believe it's because you and I *usually* are motivated *to believe what we believe...by whatever outcome we inwardly think and feel will best meet our needs.* Think about that? Isn't that true for most of us? Most of the time? And as a result, *if true,* then wouldn't that also mean **our motives** for what we believe - *would tend to be blindly formed by our own emotionally desperate needs?*

NOW DO YOU SEE THE PROBLEM?

Now understanding what Jesus has just said about our hearts, that for us to "see God clearly" *our thoughts and emotions must be clear and clean (pure motives)* and also knowing the trouble that we have in actually knowing "why we do what we do"...do you see how difficult it might be for any of us to ever experience God's touchable and tangible presence? *...If not impossible?* In fact this is probably the main reason that many religious people do not experience God's presence on any consistence basis.

Now after reading all of this, if you're still ready to read the first area I'm asking you to talk to God about each day for thirty days - then simply read the first "First Heart Motive".

1st HEART MOTIVE

YOU MUST BE HOPELESSLY AND DESPERATELY DEPENDENT!

Now before I share with you the first of four motives found present within a person's thoughts and feelings whenever God becomes touchable and tangible to them, I need to let you know that this initial "**heart motive**"...will *usually* be the first thing you will find yourself needing to talk to God about *each day during this thirty day* spiritual experiment. And that's because this first "motive" is usually the most difficult for all of us!

One of the most amazing things you will find about God is that He can change the heart of anyone *who recognizes and admits that they desperately need His help*. **But first they must admit their need for His help**. And why is that? Because amazingly God will not force Himself on anyone! *Yes, He could - but He has chosen not to*. Why? Because He respects the *free will* of people - **YOUR FREE WILL!** In fact, even if you make a choice to reject a relationship with Him - *He will honor that decision*.

But on the other hand, God will do amazing things in the life of someone who **does choose** a relationship with Him - **and (at the same time) understands the depth of their need for Him**. For this person, God will day after day create within them what biblical scriptures call a "clean heart". At least...*as long as they understand and continue to admit they are hopelessly and desperately dependent upon Him for this creation*.

HOW NECESSARY IS THIS?

It was written and recorded that King David, who some believe to be the greatest King of Israel in history, when at the lowest point in his life and *clearly saw the kind of person he really was*, wrote in what is now called the book of Psalms "Create in me a *clean heart*, O God; and renew a *right spirit* within me." Ps 51:10.

Now, for just a moment think about what David wrote. What would cause someone to talk to God in such a way? Do you know what I mean? At this point in time **YES** David had done terrible things - but why didn't he just admit the truth, say he was sorry, genuinely repent and then change his destructive way of thinking through commitment to counseling, development of self-discipline, strong will, and determination? ...The same way most of us have been taught to do? (And **NO** I am not against counseling).

So why did King David say what he said? I believe it was because *if and when* a person *really* begins to understand and clearly "see their own heart" (the real reasons why they do what they do), *they will also begin to realize how absolutely desperate and dependent they are upon God to change their heart (or the way they think)*.

Do you understand what I mean? If this is a difficult concept for you to accept - then just try this mental exercise.

Pick any day you want, choose some area of your "thought life" that you often struggle with, and then simply *determine* that you are going to (that day) change your habits and way of thinking - **by your own self-will and determination!**

By the end of the day, *most likely emotionally and mentally exhausted*, you will probably have a better understanding of why I believe all of us - need - God's - help to ever hope to have a "clean heart".

SO WHAT HAS TO CHANGE?

Now this is very important! Remember that according to Jesus, it is necessary for you to have a "pure" heart for God to become touchable and tangible - then for this experiment to work - for you to experience God's presence - *you will need to accept that you are **hopelessly and desperately dependent** upon God for this change of heart (including these four heart attitudes) to happen inside of you.*

AND HOW WILL THIS CHANGE HAPPEN?

For God to become touchable and tangible to you, as you talk to God (accepting your dependency and need to have a clean heart) you will also need to give him permission to actually cause this "cleaning" of your heart to happen.

But this is extremely important! ***...I don't want you to "work" at having a clean heart.*** Do you know what I mean? Struggling to think and feel whatever you think is a right way to think and feel during this experiment. Can you accept that? Besides if this, and the other heart changes I will share, and God then becoming touchable and tangible to you - is dependent upon your will, efforts, something you did, or some sort of mental discipline you developed...*then won't you always wonder if the emotions you experienced were just some sort of mental ability you developed rather than actually God's presence?* See what I mean? Isn't that true?

So what is this "dependency" that has to happen within the next thirty days? It is this. You will have to come to a point where you really *begin to believe* that no matter how much you strive, how much you do, or for as long you want...unless God causes this miracle to happen - ***you will never experience God in a touchable and tangible way.*** In reality, *for any "real" change to happen in your life - unless **He causes the heart attitudes and "changes" to happen within you** - they just won't occur.* (In fact, common belief by most psychiatrists today is that we never get rid of "habits" within our lives - *we only exchange them for **less destructive ones.***)

(Go back and re-read how I described the life God wants to give you, and I believe you will agree. It's just not going to happen! And that's because this sort of life is not possible for any of us on our own.)

SO HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Just talk to God! Tell him how you feel. Because - **THIS IS A RELATIONSHIP!** He can handle your honesty. And don't forget, I'm not asking *YOU to change* your present way of thinking, or your beliefs about God, *or even your motives...* just that in your conversations with God *you give HIM permission to CHANGE you!* - The way you think, and why you do what you do (your motives). Very simply, I'm asking you to allow God, *to create a heart within you that is emotionally dependent upon Him.*

BUT LET ME CAUTION YOU...

Now listen closely. When you start this exercise and experiment, and begin talking to God and telling him that you are hopelessly dependent upon him to create this "clean" heart in you - *stop ever so often and check your emotions to see if you are feeling tense, worried, fearful, (or just striving).*

Why? Because *if you are...* understand those feelings indicate that in some way - maybe even subconsciously - you believe it is *somehow your responsibility* in this experiment to make God become touchable and tangible in your life.

Remember this is His responsibility - God's part. All you have to do is ask him to change your heart, give him permission to help you become dependent upon him during this spiritual experiment. And then - just emotionally rest and allow him to change your heart. One scripture defines this process by saying "...there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who enter into God's rest will find rest from their labors... (Now) ...let us do our best to enter that place of rest. NLT Heb 4:9-11

How will you know if you are depending upon God, (resting) and not on your own efforts? Easy - *you won't feel tense, worried, anxious, fearful, or striving to accomplish anything during this experiment.*

For me personally, whenever I am talking to God, if I find myself feeling intensely fearful over a matter, or overly worried about someone I love,...I've come to believe that the fear, tension, anxiety, or simple worry is an *indication* that in some way at that moment in time I haven't fully turned the matter or person over into God's care. Did you hear what I said? Now why do I believe this?

Because the lasting and painful emotions of tension and worry *are signs of a struggle within my heart to somehow still be in control of the situation - to be independent.* Can you see and understand that? After all, if I really, really trust God with everything in my life, (REALLY TRUST HIM!) ...*then why would I be afraid? Or worried?* Do you see what I mean? And if I have truly left all of these matters in his care, then aren't the situations that have caused me fear, or worry...now God's responsibility?

OK, SO HOW DO I TALK TO GOD?

You might start by saying something like "God, I accept that I am hopelessly and desperately dependent upon you to make yourself real to me. I acknowledge that there is nothing I can do, nor any way can I earn the right for you to become touchable and tangible in my life. But if you can do this - *then God I want to know you. I want to experience you in a tangible way.*"

Because as humans we are prone to emotionally "strive", I am suggesting that you start with this "heart attitude" first - *each time you talk to God.* And after I explain the other three "heart motives", if at any time you sense yourself beginning to emotionally strive to "make something happen" in any of those other areas as you are talking to God - *that you immediately stop and once again acknowledge and ask God to help you be "hopelessly and desperately dependent" upon him.*

This doesn't seem too hard does it? *It shouldn't.*

Now, if you are really serious about this experiment, before reading on...you might want to stop here and already begin talking to God about him helping you become "desperately dependent".

Now if you *did stop here* to talk to God, after you have been as honest as you can about needing his help, and when you feel ready, go on to the "Next Heart Motive".

(For the part of your conversation that deals with being "hopelessly and desperately dependent" you should ever so often check to see if you are feeling anxious, worried, fearful, etc. And if so, then just stop again and ask God to do all of the work inside of your heart. Like King David, you should be asking and *expecting* God to create in you a *clean heart*...and renew a *right spirit* within you.)

REMEMBER: For this experiment to "work" *it is imperative that you be faithful to talk to God about these four "heart motives" every day for thirty days in a row!*

2nd HEART MOTIVE

A FORGIVEN HEART FULL OF EXPECTANCY!

In the book of Hebrews found in the New Testament, in chapter 11, verse 6 we are told an amazing fact about relationship with God. This one verse tells us that "Without faith it is impossible to please (God), *for he (the person) who comes to God (comes into His presence) must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder to those who seek him.*"

Now, did you understand what you just read? If correct, we are told that in order to come into God's presence, to experience His *touchable and tangible* presence, that there are two undisputable facts that a person must believe. One *that God exists*. And two, that He **WILL reward** the person who seeks him - *with the experience of His tangible presence*.

...In other words, a person has to have come to the unwavering conviction within their mind and emotions that they now believe without any question that God is going to reveal Himself to them. *So much so*, that they have come to where they now refuse to believe anything other than this truth!

BUT FOR THIS TO HAPPEN...THERE IS A PROBLEM!

Reread the second paragraph in this section. Do you see it? Actually there are two problems, but I am assuming that you already believe in God (the first condition). So I now want to address the difficulties that are caused by the second condition described in this verse.

The verse tells us that a person *must believe* that God will "**reward**" them with His presence when they seek Him. Can I be honest, quite frankly most people I know struggle with this area. In fact, even those who believe in God! ...*Why?* The answer is easy...

No one knows you better than you do! *You know who you really are!* Isn't that true? And for some of you the memory of every terrible thing that you have ever done...daily seems to come back to whisper in your ear what a horrible person you are.

In fact, even as you are reading this section, your thoughts may be saying, "*...if God is who others have told you He is - holy and right in all of His actions - then why would He ever associate with you? Knowing all you have done, all of your thoughts, all of your attitudes? What makes you think He would have anything to do with you? He might reveal Himself to someone else, but not you?*" ...Have you ever had thoughts like these? I have. These very sentences could have come out of the diary of my own mind at one time.

But if the things you have done or are doing each day, or the awful thoughts you daily struggle with are causing you to have trouble believing God would do something so wonderful as reveal Himself to you - touchable and tangible, then just READ THESE VERSES!

"By this (you) shall know that (you) are of the truth, *and reassure (your) heart before him whenever (your) heart condemn (you); for God is greater than (your) heart, and He knows everything.* (But) Beloved, **if (your) heart does not condemn (you), (then you will) have confidence before God;** and (you will) receive from Him whatever (you) ask... I John 3:19-22 RSV

Do you understand what you just read? The first verse is acknowledging the fact that you probably often have trouble believing any good thought or possible action that God promises you...because of how well you know yourself.

In fact, probably the more wonderful the idea or belief, the greater difficulty you probably believing it could ever happen for you! Isn't that true about you most often? Think about it, *do you really believe He will heal you or those you love when you are sick? Provide for you financially? Reveal Himself - touchable and tangible?* ...See what I mean.

...But wonderfully the writer continues by telling us that "God is greater than (your) heart"! Yes, God know everything - your thoughts and feelings, every bad thing you have ever done. That's true. But the writer goes on to imply that somehow, some way God is going to change your heart! And that in this changing, (again) somehow He is going to take away all of the guilt and shame you feel!

...And that after He does this wonderful work inside your heart, *then* FINALLY, YOU WILL NOW HAVE A HEART OF CONFIDENCE! ...**A HEART OF FAITH. A HEART FULL OF EXPECTANCY!**

Now pause for just a moment and ask yourself this question. Didn't God know that this "required condition" - (*for you to have to believe when you seek Him that He will reward you with his tangible presence*) didn't He know that this condition would probably be almost, if not completely impossible for you to believe? ...Sure God did.

But remember, the foundation of this relationship is not built upon your abilities or efforts, but upon the fact that you are what? Hopelessly and desperately dependent! ...Even for dealing with your memories? Even for forgiving yourself? ...YES!

In fact, what *if* I told you that God in His own forgiveness of all you have ever done or been, was willing to *actually* "wash away" or take away all of the guilt and shame you feel from the memories of those past failures.

...Even from the awful thoughts you had today? Can God really do that? And if so, would He do it for you? YES! And why would He? ...*Because He loves you and knows how much trouble you have forgiving yourself!*

I have always found it interesting that God set up standards for mankind that were necessary because of the fact that He must be faithful to His own character of being righteous and holy. Do you know what I mean? But then, at the same time knowing that mankind would be unable to "keep these standards", God also created a way so that the "measure" could be met. And what was that way? By becoming "touchable and tangible" to us! Or what verses in the Christian Bible describe as "God in us".

Remarkably later you will discover that a consequence of this "touchable and tangible" relationship with God is that during the time that He is this real to you...you will also find an ability to miraculously live the way God is asking you to live.

SO HOW DO I DEAL WITH THE SHAME AND GUILT FROM MY FAILURES?

So how do you deal with the areas of failure in your life and past memories where you feel shame and guilt - whether in the area of your morals, thoughts, or actions?

During this spiritual experiment as you have these talks with God, I am asking you to talk to Him about each of these areas. Be honest. Admit the wrong that you feel you are responsible for. And then ask Him to forgive you. And finally...simply ask God to "wash away" all of the guilt and shame that you feel. (Oddly I find that this last "God request" is something even most Christians fail to *daily* ask for)

What do you say? You might start by saying something like, "God, I admit I failed in (name the area or incident). And it seems I am continuing to fail. Please I need your help. I want to stop failing. Help me, be my strength. And please, please forgive me. And also, please help me forgive myself. And now, God - wash me clean. Wash away all of the shame and guilt I feel. Cleanse my heart and make it new."

Now after asking for all of this - I then want you to just be still and allow a few moments for the Holy Spirit to do what you have asked God for. And remember, because this is a work of God, it is important that you not mentally or emotionally strive or try to make something happen or to make yourself feel something. These thirty days are not an exercise for you to develop some level of mental discipline. That's not what this spiritual experiment is about. It is about a relationship. *If God is who He said He is - it is about you forming a relationship with Him.*

NOW WHAT IS THIS EXPECTANCY, THIS FAITH?

Webster's Dictionary defines "faith" as a "confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing". Though it is difficult, for the length of time of this spiritual experiment, I am asking you to believe in an "idea". What idea is that? That for the time of this "spiritual experiment" you **agree to *trust and expect* God to become touchable and tangible to you!** **DID YOU HEAR ME? You agree to expect without any hesitation that God is going to become touchable and tangible to you!** **In fact, you refuse to believe anything other than this truth!**

Yes, I know this is difficult. But remember...all I am asking is for you *to try* what I am sharing - **JUST FOR THIRTY DAYS!**

SO HOW DO I BELIEVE FOR GOD TO BECOME TOUCHABLE AND TANGIBLE?

Think about this. Suppose for just one moment that God is exactly who I and many others have said He is - loving and kind! ...So much so that He unconditionally loves you - no matter what you have done, or how you have felt about Him in the past.

Now if this is who God is...**THEN WHY WOULD HE NOT WANT TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO YOU? WHY WOULD HE NOT WANT AS INTIMATE OF A LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU AS POSSIBLE?**

Now really listen to me. No matter how others have misrepresented God, I personally can not, and also refuse to imagine Him any other way! So I am asking you - just for these thirty days - to believe that God is going to become *touchable and tangible* to you...on *these* two conditions.

One -That you accept He is real! ...And Second - That you also accept that He loves you...UNCONDITIONALLY!

And, *that if these two conditions are really true*, then you also now agree to give God this chance by **EXPECTING Him to reveal Himself to you!** **In fact, I am asking you to REFUSE to see it any other way!**

So again what do you say to God? When you talk to Him you might say something like, "God, if You are really who You say You are, then with everything in me I believe You are going to reveal Yourself to me - *touchable and tangible!* In fact, **I refuse to believe it any other way!"**

And now be still and allow the Holy Spirit to change your heart. Ask for that change. Expect it. But just be still and allow the Holy Spirit to bring about this change of heart.

3rd HEART MOTIVE YOUR FIRST LOVE!

GOD BECOMES THE FIRST SOURCE YOU LOOK TO FOR THE FULFILLMENT FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL EXPECTATIONS!

What do I mean by this? Suppose for just a moment that what Jesus taught was right about you, me and others being able to experience God in a touchable and tangible way... And that he was also right when he described what sort of life this experience would produce - peace that is beyond description and at a level never before experienced, joy that is full, love that does away with your fears... If this is a description of God's presence within a person, (as Jesus said in John 15) then just from observation, wouldn't it be safe to surmise that every person who comes into this world comes into it separated from God? Can you see that? If what we are talking about is really possible? And if this description of the life God promised is accurate?

If true, then wouldn't that also mean every person who enters this world probably exists in some level of deep emotional pain? ...Struggling to not feel isolated, alone, insecure, uncared for, unwanted, and unloved? In comparing the life most of us live with what Jesus promised, *doesn't this seem to be true* - if Jesus was right?

SO HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THIS MUCH EMOTIONAL PAIN!

So how do most of us deal with this deep level of emotional pain? I believe we start by first subconsciously looking for some form of what I call a "God substitute". Some source that *we sincerely and honestly believe* will make us feel wanted, special, important, cared for, secure, loved and no longer lonely. And after choosing this "God substitute" - sadly we then begin to place an exorbitant amount of our emotional needs and expectations on that source.

...What are some of our usual choices for "God substitutes"? As children we emotionally look to our parents to fill this "God-void", as teenagers to our friends, as young adults to a husband or wife, and finally as grown adults to accomplishments, careers, money and possessions.

But sadly, because no "God substitute" is ever able to fill this void...*there will always be a "residual level of emotional pain" left over for us to cope with.* And in an effort to deal

with this *unending* pain, we then begin to look for some form of escape, a diversion - anything that we believe will provide us with momentary relief...*even if it is only temporary!* And when we find that escape (and all of us do), we will also have found an addiction.

Now, reread the three paragraphs above. If I am right, can you see this as a pattern in the lives of some of the people you know?

If so, then can you also see that the only way to end this "cycle" is *for God to become the first source that each of us look to fill our emotional needs.*

SO HOW DO I BEGIN TO EXPERIENCE GOD AS THE FIRST SOURCE I LOOK TO MEET MY EMOTIONAL NEEDS?

First, you must recognize and accept that the present sources where you are placing your expectations for the fulfillment of your emotional needs are just not working. Just not "filling the void". Be really honest - isn't that true?

...Now I'm not saying any of those sources bring you no comfort or love at all, only that despite all they provide for you...still you often find yourself struggling with emotional pain and a sense of emptiness in your life.

And if you are married, the acceptance of this truth doesn't necessarily mean that you are dissatisfied or no longer in love with the person you married. But only that you can now understand that no matter how much another person loves you, nor how hard they try to "be what you need" ... "**it**" will probably never be enough.

Now if you are an introspective person, you probably also are able to see that children, parents, possessions, jobs or careers - *nothing* - has ever been able *up to this point* to fill this "empty void" in your life. As a result, you may now be suspecting that there is a great possibility that *NOTHING - EVER - WILL FILL - THIS EMOTIONAL VOID!*

NOTHING WILL EVER FILL THE EMOTIONAL EMPTINESS I FEEL?

Can you see this might be true? Sometimes I find people have difficulty seeing this reality, because they have become "masters" at using different forms of "escape" to camouflage the emptiness in their lives. Do you know what I mean by "escapes"?

Our escapes are the things that give us the ability to temporarily "zone out" from the emotional pain in our lives. Some people use alcohol, drugs (legal and prescription), or immoral addictions. While others use more accepted forms of escape like hours of television or internet use, music, sports, excessive reading. ...Or just over eating. In fact, some people even use religious activity to self-righteously escape. For these individuals "church" has become their "drug of choice".

Now if I am right about this "God separation" and the endless emotional pain it produces in our lives... And am also right about how we look for "substitutes" to fill this void. And that because no substitute can ever accomplish this task - *how we then finally begin to seek to escape the emotional pain in our lives through "escapes and diversions"...*

...And lastly, if *I am right about the presence of God being able to once and for all "fill this void"* and as a result, stop the endless emotional pain (pain that you may now struggle with moment by moment, day after day)...

...Would you now be willing to tell God, if He can really fill this "void" in you, that from this point on that you are willing to make Him the first source to meet your emotional needs?

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?

...How have your other sources been doing at meeting your emotional needs? Be honest! And isn't the more important question...**What have you got to gain?** *Remember: it is your choice.*

OKAY, NOW FOR YOUR PART

Don't worry, like before...*it will be easy.* The third thing that I am asking you to begin talking to God about each day for the next thirty days in this spiritual experience is this: *as sincerely as you can, tell God that you now want him to be the first source that you look and expect to meet your emotional needs.* ...That you are asking Him to help you release each of your "God substitutes". And that you are now going to stop when you feel some emotional need, *and ask Him to immediately meet your need by His touchable and tangible presence.*

GOD SUBSTITUTES - HOW DO I KNOW WHAT THEY ARE?

If God is ever going to become the first and primary source in your life that you now look to meet your emotional needs, it will be necessary that you first recognize and then release each of the "sources" that have become your "God substitutes".

But how can you know what they are? First: What or who do you think about most often? Ask yourself what or who do you most often first look or expect to meet your emotional needs? What are those sources or providers of your expected emotional fulfillment? Be really honest! Want a hint of how you might find them? Ask yourself, who are the closest people in your life that you are the most irritated with, or find yourself emotionally hurt by most often? Have someone in mind?

Think about this: **Someone only has the ability to emotionally hurt you to the degree that you are expecting them to meet your emotional needs.** Do you think this is true? If I told you that some person half-way around the world, who you don't know, nor have ever met *doesn't like you...would that emotionally devastate you?* Why not? - Because of the fact that you don't know them, you haven't placed any of your emotional expectations on them, and as a result...you really just don't care that much if they like you or not! Isn't that true? But what if I told you that someone you love has stopped caring about you? See what I mean?

So what is this new thing I am asking you to talk to God about each day for thirty day in a row? I am asking you to place the meeting of your emotional needs into His care. And *if* God's presence in your life can really do all I have said it could, then I am asking you to also release every past source that you have placed great emotional expectations in. And then finally, to make God the first source you look to meet your emotional needs.

HOW DO I DO THAT?

How do you do that? Again, maybe you might start talking to God saying something like, "God, if you can give me peace in my life, and can cause me to feel loved and accepted, and wanted and needed, and can take the shame of my past away, and can even cause me to begin to feel a joy for living...then I want You to be the first source that I now look to meet my emotional needs. I choose You."

"And if You can do this...then please *right now* help me to see what and who are my *God substitutes* - the sources that I have in the past been expecting to fill this *God-void* in my life. And if You can do all of this, then I am also asking You to now help me release these substitutes."

At this point, as people or other sources begin to come to mind (jobs, possessions, positions, etc.), verbally now say to yourself - "I release (the substitute) from any responsibility to be the first source that I expect to make me feel happy, wanted, important, needed, special, approved of, accepted or loved. And if God can meet my emotional needs

with His presence, then I now choose Him in this moment of time to be the first source of fulfillment for my emotional expectations."

Now if this is difficult, and if there is any source or "God substitute" that you are struggling to really release, ask God to help you. Remember, the first "heart motive" is you becoming *hopelessly and desperately dependent* upon God's help and his ability to change your heart (or the way you think). So if you need his help to do this - just go back and ask Him to help you be dependent upon Him again. Tell God that you are incapable of releasing your God substitute, and that you admit you are *hopelessly and desperately dependent* upon Him for this to happen. Then relax. Don't strive - just allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in you. Then once you feel "peace", go on to the next "substitute".

4th HEART MOTIVE TOTALLY SURRENDERED!

Now for the final "heart motive". Already I have shared the necessity of you talking to God each day for thirty days in a row and asking Him to give you a heart that is *hopelessly and desperately dependent, full of expectancy, and that has made God the first source you now look to fill your emotional needs and expectations*. ...So what is this final "motive"? ...For God to become *touchable and tangible*?

...You must have a heart that is *totally surrendered*.

What do I mean by that?

Sounds a little frightening, or intimidating, doesn't it? Don't give up here. Just trust me. Because if what I say is possible - a life free from fear and insecurity, you feeling unconditionally loved, peace like you have never felt before - ***wouldn't thirty day of this experiment be worth all of that?*** And besides, if this doesn't work - God becoming *touchable and tangible* as I described ...well, in thirty days, you can just walk away from all of this - no lasting commitment, nothing lost! But *if* what I am saying is right...**YOU HAVE A LOT TO GAIN!** Don't you think so?

FIRST - WHO IS JESUS TO YOU?

Before we go on, it is imperative that I talk with you about what I believe to be the most difficult thing to accept about what Jesus taught. *It was what he said about himself*. If you have heard or read anything about Jesus, then you must already know that Jesus claimed to be the "Son of God". And as if that were not enough to cause someone to question his intentions (as well as his own sanity) Jesus also stated that he would in some way stand "in our place" and *with the giving of his own life*, finally remove everything that was causing us to be separated from God's "touchable and tangible" presence.

To some this must sound ludicrous - like the claims of some mad man. Even as a Christian, I can see how Jesus' claims about himself could be perceived this way. Especially if he were not who he said he was. So the truth is - either Jesus is who he said he was, or he is un-debatably the greatest liar and con-man in the history of the world.

But (for this study and experiment) the fact is unquestionable *that Jesus claimed it was imperative that a person must (in someway) go through him to experience this "touchable and tangible" relationship with God*. (Just listen to what Jesus said of himself in the book of John, chapter 14, verse 6, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: ***no man comes unto the Father, but by me.***")

Now *if* Jesus is who he said he was, *then for this experiment, if this is going to work* - it will be important that you approach God the way Jesus implied necessary. ...Even if that means accepting that Jesus was the "Son of God".

If this is difficult for you, then remember: if you accept this belief for truth during this experiment, and also do all I am asking you to do in this spiritual experiment, and it then doesn't "work"...then at the end of thirty days, simply walk away forgetting all you have learned here.

OKAY, SO WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "TOTAL SURRENDER"?

Now this is important: Remembering that this spiritual experiment is based on what Jesus taught, **you need to be careful not to equate the phrase "total surrender" with your actions.** Why? **Because remember, when Jesus talked of how a person might experience a *touchable and tangible* God, he focused upon the *heart attitudes*, a specific way of thinking within a person's life - *and not primarily upon their actions.***

So what do I mean by the phrase, "total surrender"? When a person desires to have an intimate relationship with God - touchable and tangible - I have found it comes about ***not because*** of the fact that they embraced some ideology, or theological way of thinking, ***but because of the radical exchange of the ownership of their life for what Jesus actually called the "abiding" presence of God!***

And one of the main reasons that this "exchange" takes place is the presence in a person of a "heart motive" or attitude of "total surrender". Total surrender? It is an attitude in your heart where you *willingly* surrender your right to live independent, to call the shots, to do what you want to do, when you want to do it - ***ALL OF IT to God!*** (Remember, if we are directing this experiment according to Jesus' teachings, then we must accept that it is only with this exchange between you and God, *that God will ever become present and interactive within your life!*) Why is that? ...

DOES GOD HAVE AN EGO PROBLEM?

Now why does God do it this way? Do you know what I mean - *surrender to Him*? Does God in some way have some sort of ego problem, or is He so insecure that He needs the submission of all of us just to make Him feel important?

Not at all. That's not His reason for asking this of you. Come on, think about it. Couldn't God just force all of us to do whatever He wants us to do? So why then does He ask for this "surrender"? *Why did God set it up this way?*

. . . He did it – because – He loves you!

Let me explain. God knew that there would never be anyone you could always count on to be faithful, to always be there when you needed them, and who would always know how to meet your needs. Isn't that true? We talked about this before. Have you ever known anyone who never at some point in time didn't disappoint you? Didn't live up to what you expected of them? I'm not saying that they stopped loving you, or that you stopped loving them - but that they somehow were just never quite able to fill the emptiness inside of you. No matter how much they tried.

God knew human relationships would be this way. And consequently, He also knew that if you lived with anything, or anyone expecting them to be the "first source" to meet your emotional needs, that you would live your life in emptiness and loneliness searching and running from one hope to the next, from person to person . . . always hoping, always believing, always dreaming that somehow, some way, you would finally find the right "one". . . .And, as a result of this thinking, these expectations, you would always be seeking that "impossible dream"!

But because God knows this about human relationships and your needs, He wanted to make sure that the source of fulfillment in your life would be one that was stable, unchanging, unconditional, and unending. Yet there was no one...but God Himself who could be that in your life.

So He chose, no matter what, *to love you!*

...Why did God set it up this way? So that the only way you were ever going to be happy was to *surrender to seeking this relationship with Him?* And why did Jesus teach this? **Because Jesus knew that if you put your hopes into anything or anyone other than God...that your heart would always eventually end up broken!**

You see you can walk away from God, but He will never walk away from you! You can neglect His presence, abuse His goodness, and disrespect Him...*but He will never stop loving you!*

In fact you can slam the door of your heart in His face and live the rest of your life unfaithful to Him...*and still He will remain faithful to you!* In the book of II Timothy, chapter 2, verse 13 you and I are told that, "If we are faithless (are untrue to Him), He will still be faithful, because He cannot deny who He is!"

The truth is the only stable love in this world is God's himself! In fact, in the 13th chapter of the first book of Corinthians we are told that everything else will pass away, but love will never pass away. Why? Because we are also told – God – is – love!

At this point, are you beginning to realize (***IF I am right*** about this spiritual experiment) that the only way you're probably ever going to be able to feel whole, secure, complete, unwounded, healed, and unconditionally loved is with this surrender of your whole life to God?

*But this is important: you need to understand no matter how much He loves you, God will not force this decision upon you. He won't. **It has to be your choice.***

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Many people, even those who believe in God, often are afraid to surrender their life to God. Why? Many have told me they are afraid to "surrender" because they believe if they did, then God might ask them to "move to some country all the way around the world" just to talk to other people about him.

Personally what I have found true almost 100% of the time, is that when individuals believe God is asking them to do something like this - *usually it is also something they really want to do*. One verse tells us that God longs to give us the "desires of our heart". And if that's true, do you think He would want to ask someone to make something a "life's calling", when inside the inner most depths of their being they have absolutely no desire to do that thing at all? Remember ...**He loves you!**

Now I know that it's hard to turn the control of your life over to someone. Why? Because most of us have had terrible experiences with either abusive parents, "bad bosses" or cruel spouses. ...And some of us have even had frightening interactions with powerful government agencies, lawyers, or corporations.

And to make matters worse, when we look through history at groups of people who have either willingly or under duress been placed under the control of another person...**IT HAS BEEN TRAGIC!** Names like Hitler, Stalin, Caesar, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, Jim Jones, all come to mind. Scenes of torture, cruelty, manipulation, and human genocide just for control and to bring about selfish desires flash through our memory. Isn't that true?

But if God, is who Jesus said He is, then this God is someone who is more on your side, wanting the best imaginable, and loving you more than you could ever comprehend.

...There is a verse found in the second chapter of I Corinthians that says "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And as if that were not enough we are also told in the eighth chapter of Romans, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, *which is (found) in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

Remember this is a God who wants to take away your sadness and depression. A God who even wants to place the peace, joy, and love that is brought by His very own presence into your life. He loves you! And yes, I know that many have misrepresented Him. They have talked of and shown Him to be an unforgiving, cruel, self-righteous God...who will do awful things if you do not obey Him. But if that is really who they thought God is, then sadly, I want you to know...*these people never really knew God's heart.*

Yes, I know it is difficult to trust. But God is as loving as I have said, and *if* He wants to provide the sort of life for you that I have described...**wouldn't it be worth taking this risk?** ...*To "totally surrender" all of yourself to Him?* (Again remember: if this experiment doesn't work at the end you can just walk away - no commitment, no loss.)
SO HOW DO I SURRENDER TO GOD? ...

How does a person surrender to God? (Because we are talking about the motives within a person's heart) to put it simply, the desire to know God must become the strongest passion of your heart (At least for the time of this spiritual experiment).

A person who is surrendered to God is an individual who is abandoned to a passion to know God, to experience his presence, to love him above all other wants, desires, wishes, and relationships. — Without hesitation, without compromise, without competition, without exception! So how will this sort of "surrender" come about within your heart?

In just the same way as you did before - start by telling the truth - *by admitting to God that if* He can give you the life that I have described, (peace, love, joy - all I promised) then you are willing to surrender all that you know of yourself to Him.

...But because you also understand, accept and admit that the living out of this "surrender" is something that you are not capable of - simply admit to God that you need His help for this attitude change. ...*And then ask God to change your heart.*

SO WHAT DO I SAY TO HIM?

First, whatever you say should be from your own heart. Just be honest. But if it helps, you might just start out saying something like..."God, *if* You can give me the life I have just read about, and You will become "touchable and tangible" to me, then I am willing to *give my life to You* and to accept what Jesus taught.

"And *if* You are real in the way You have just been described, and You really love me, then there is nothing more I would rather do than surrender to You."

"...God, with your help, at this moment I give up my rights. I *willingly* surrender the right in my daily life to call the shots, to live independent, to do what I want to, when I want to

do it. And if there is any way this sort of life devoid of the emptiness is real, then I am more than willing to make *the radical exchange of the ownership of my life for what Jesus called the "abiding" presence of God!*"

"And Jesus, if you are really the Son of God, *who you claimed to be*, and love me as much as your Heavenly Father, and if the only way I can know this sort of intimacy with God is through you, then I am willing to accept you for who you said you are. The Son of God, who came to do away with everything that has ever separated me from intimacy with God. Someone to save me even from myself. And, from spending the rest of my life running from one failing source of expectations, after another, after another. I am tired of the struggle of this life. Please, *if you are really God's Son*, help me. ...I need your help. I surrender all of who I am to you."

Now if this is a struggle, then *tell* God that. Remember you are dependent on Him to change your heart. Not to do what I have asked by your own self-will. Remember? So ask God to once again help you live with your heart "hopelessly and desperately dependent". And to now help you *surrender all of yourself to Him*. And then remember...just be still and allow the Holy Spirit to do God's work in you.

Now there you have it! These are the four heart attitudes that I have always found present whenever a person experiences the touchable and tangible presence of God! Again what were they, what did I find? These individuals were always *hopelessly and desperately dependent, they had refused not to expect God to reveal Himself to them - touchable and tangible*, they had God in focus as *the first source that they were now looking to fill their emotional needs and expectations*, and finally *in their heart, they were totally surrendered*.

It is my heart's greatest desire and sincerest prayer that God will become who you always hoped He would be within these next thirty days. But remember - **be faithful! Do not miss a day talking to God about these four heart attitudes.** (If you miss more than one day, then I am asking you to start the experiment over. Why? Because these "heart attitudes or motives" have to become instinctive in your life!)

I promise you are about to begin the greatest journey of your life! A road that will lead to a *touchable and tangible* God! ...May the Holy Spirit now do more than you ever imagined!

REVIEW SHEET

Now before you start your journey on this thirty day spiritual experiment, let me first share with you a few areas, or "ways of thinking" that will in all doubts probably cause you not to be able to experience God in a touchable and tangible way. For your own help in this experiment, you might stop here and print these next few pages to reread each day as a reminder just before you begin your talk with God.

Also, I would suggest you reread all I have written previous to the following pages at least once a week. And if you are struggling with any particular "heart motive" as you are talking to God, just stop and take the time to go back and review that individual "heart motive" or attitude.

As you begin each talk remember...

1. Do not seek after the emotions produced by God's presence! Seek a relationship with Him. (Just talk to God, seek to get to know Him.) So when you talk to God, be careful not to focus on how or what you are feeling. That will just cause you to become "self absorbed". (Besides you wouldn't do that in a conversation with another person, would you? That would be considered rude.)

2. The only time you should be aware of your "feelings" is if you are beginning to feel anxious, worried, fearful, or have begun to strive because of somehow beginning to feel in some way your actions, or mental and emotional efforts are necessary to "produce" this experience of God becoming touchable and tangible. They are not. In fact, they are counter productive and on their own will cause exactly the opposite experience.

3. You should not be seeking *by your own discipline and strong will* to change actions in your life, but only asking, allowing, and staying still for God to personally change your "heart attitudes".

4. REMEMBER: This is a work of the Holy Spirit, not a developed mental or emotional discipline.

Also remember: for this experiment to work you must *make a commitment to be faithful to talk to God for thirty days in a row*. Your faithfulness to do this will help shorten the time before this exercise becomes natural and instinctive, rather than you just following someone's "formula". Again, this experiment is to form a relationship, not a mental discipline. I suggest you talk to God first thing in the morning before you have started your day, or late at night just before you go to sleep (Which ever seems best for you).

"HEART MOTIVE" REVIEW

1st HEART MOTIVE - YOU MUST BE HOPELESSLY AND DESPERATELY DEPENDENT!

In the first part of this spiritual exercise and in your talks with God you must come to a point where you accept and *begin to believe* that no matter how much you strive, how much you do, or for as long you want...unless God causes this miracle to happen in you - ***You will never experience God in a touchable and tangible way.*** It just won't happen. ...Unless ***He causes these heart changes to happen within you!***

So how should you talk to God about this "Heart Motive"? Start the conversation by saying something like "God, I accept that I am dependent upon You to make Yourself real to me. I acknowledge that there is nothing I can do, nor any way can I earn the right for You to become touchable and tangible in my life. *But God I want to know You. I want to experience You in a tangible way.* And please help me not to strive and try to make something happen during these talks. As I talk to You, show me when I am depending upon my own abilities and strengths, rather than just emotionally and mentally being still and allowing You, Holy Spirit to cause this spiritual awakening to happen."

(Again remember: During all of your conversations with God about any of the "heart motives" or attitudes you should ever so often stop and check to see if you are feeling anxious, worried, fearful, etc. And if so, just be still, ask and give permission for the *Holy Spirit* to do all of the work inside of your heart. Then release yourself from any obligation to cause God to become touchable and tangible. And once you feel peaceful again, then continue your conversation with God.)

2nd HEART MOTIVE - YOU MUST HAVE A FORGIVEN HEART FULL OF EXPECTANCY!

Again, we are told in the book of Hebrews chapter 11, verse 6 that in order to come into God's presence, to experience his *touchable and tangible* presence, that there are two things a person must believe. One *that God exists.* And two, that he ***WILL reward*** the person who seeks Him - *with the experience of His tangible presence.*

And remember at this point I'm not asking you to change your intellectual understanding about God. ...*Only that you to put God to the test.* ...To prove to you that He is who Jesus said He is.

Webster's Dictionary defines "faith" as a "confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing". Though it is difficult, for the length of time of this spiritual experiment, (thirty days) I am asking you to believe in an "idea". What idea is that? That for the time of this "spiritual experiment" you **agree to trust and expect God to become touchable and tangible to you**. For God to reveal Himself to you ...*just because He loves you and wants to take care of you*.

And yes, I know this is difficult - but all I am asking is for you *to try* what I am sharing - **JUST FOR THIRTY DAYS!**

Now to deal with the areas of failure in your life where you feel shame and guilt - whether in the area of your morals, thoughts, or actions - areas that can cause a person to doubt that God will reveal himself to them...

...During this spiritual experiment, remember I am asking you to tell God about each area, to admit the wrong that you feel you are responsible for, to ask him to forgive you, and finally to then simply ask God to "wash away" all of the guilt and shame that you feel.

And after asking for this - I then want you to just be still and allow a few moments for the Holy Spirit to do what you have asked God for. Remember, because this is a work of God, it is important that you not mentally or emotionally strive or try to make something happen or to make yourself feel something.

3rd HEART MOTIVE - GOD MUST BECOME YOUR FIRST LOVE. HE MUST BECOME THE FIRST SOURCE YOU LOOK TO FOR THE FULFILLMENT FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL EXPECTATIONS!

First, stop and spend the time to recognize the main areas or people in your life where you emotionally have placed your greatest expectations. Name them. Then acknowledge to yourself that these present sources where you are placing your expectations for the fulfillment of your emotional needs are just not working. Just not "filling the void".

Remember, I'm not saying that these sources bring you no comfort or love at all, only that despite all they provide for you...still you often find yourself struggling with emotional pain and a sense of emptiness in your life.

And if you are married, the acceptance of this truth also doesn't necessarily mean that you are dissatisfied or no longer in love with the person you married. But only that you now

understand that no matter how much these other people love you, or try to "be what you need"... "it" will probably never be enough.

But how will you know what your "God substitutes" are? Ask yourself what or who do you most often first look or expect to meet your emotional needs? What are those sources or providers of your expected emotional fulfillment? Be really honest! (Want a hint of how you can find them? Who are the closest people in your life that you are the most irritated with, or find yourself emotionally hurt by most often?) Have someone in mind?

Remember, for dealing with this heart attitude you might start talking to God saying something like, "God, if You can give me peace in my life, and can cause me to feel loved and accepted, and wanted and needed, and can take the shame of my past away, and can even cause me to begin to feel a joy for living...then I want You to be the first source that I now look to meet my emotional needs. I choose You."

"And if You can do this...then please *right now* help me to see what and who are my *God substitutes* - the sources that I have been expecting to fill this *God-void* in my life. And if You can do all of this, then I am also asking You to now help me release these substitutes."

Now as people or other "sources" begin to come to mind (jobs, possessions, positions, etc.), verbally now say to yourself - "I release you from any responsibility to be the first source that I expect to make me feel happy, wanted, important, needed, special, approved of, accepted or loved. And now I am asking God to be the source to meet this particular emotional need with His presence. I now choose God to be the first source of my emotional expectations."

Now, as sincerely as you can, tell God that you want Him to be the first source that you look and expect to meet your emotional needs.

4th HEART MOTIVE - YOU MUST BE TOTALLY SURRENDERED

Total surrender- what is it? It is an *attitude in your heart* (not your actions) where you *willingly* surrender your right to live independent, to call the shots, to do what you want to do, when you want to do it - *ALL OF IT to God!* (Remember: If we are directing this experiment *according to Jesus' teachings*, then we must accept that it is only with this exchange between you and God, *that God will ever become present and interactive within your life!*)

So how does a person surrender to God? (Because we are talking about the motives within a person's heart) to put it simply, the desire to know God must become the strongest passion of your heart (At least for the time of this spiritual experiment).

Remember: *A person who is surrendered to God is an individual who is abandoned to a passion to know God, to experience his presence, to love him above all other wants, desires, wishes, and relationships. — Without hesitation, without compromise, without competition, without exception!*

So what do you say? First, whatever you say should be from your heart. Just be honest. But if it helps, again you might just start out saying something like... "God, *if* You can give me the life I have just read about, and You will become "touchable and tangible" to me, then I am willing to *give my life to You* and to accept what Jesus taught."

"If You are real in the way You have just been described, and You really love me, then there is nothing more I would rather do than surrender to You."

"...God, with Your help, at this moment I give up my rights. I *willingly* surrender the right in my daily life to call the shots, to live independent, to do what I want to, when I want to do it. And if there is any way this sort of life devoid of the emptiness is real, then I am more than willing to make *the radical exchange of the ownership of my life for what Jesus called the "abiding" presence of God!*"

"And Jesus, if you are really the Son of God, *who you claimed to be*, and love me as much as your Heavenly Father, and if the only way I will ever know this sort of intimacy with God is through you, then I am willing to accept you for who you said you are. The Son of God, who came to do away with everything that has ever separated me from intimacy with God. Someone to save me even from myself. And, from spending the rest of my life running from one failing source of expectations, after another, after another. I am tired of the struggle of this life. Please, Jesus help me. ...I need your help. I surrender to you."

Now if any of this is a struggle, just *tell* God that. Remember you are dependent on Him to change your heart. Not to do what I have asked by your own self-will. Remember? So ask God to help you *surrender all of yourself to Him*. Tell Him you are dependent on him for this attitude change. And then...just be still and allow the Holy Spirit to do God's work in you.

Finally, be faithful to your commitment - thirty days in a row. This is vital for the spiritual experiment to work.

...It is my sincerest desire that you experience more than you ever believed possible - a touchable and tangible God!

*** Whether you experience positive or negative results, if you faithfully follow through with this spiritual experiment for thirty days in a row, then would you please take the time to record what you experienced and send your comments to *Through the Storm*,**

PO Box 701607, San Antonio, Texas, 78270. I promise all of your observations will remain anonymous.