

GLEANINGS — July 31, A.D. 2016
A Personal Relationship with God, Part Two

In Part One we dismantled the philosophical speculations of deists, who cannot have a personal relationship with their god because it does not exist. And we discussed the false religionist, who seeks to relate to God only by a kind of mechanical externalism...having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

We went on to affirm that in the face of both these errors, the Bible believing Christian gladly lays claim to having a very personal relationship with the one true and living God! We rejoice in what Jesus said in His high priestly prayer recorded in John 17: "this is eternal life, that they may **know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

Still, we want to continue to be Biblical as we grow in our understanding of a believer's relationship with His heavenly Father, His dear and only Savior, and the blessed Spirit: the three divine Persons with Whom we finite persons are involved. And we want our aspirations for more and more communion with God to be like the apostle Paul's: "...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..." (Philippians 3:10)

May God use these three precepts derived from His word to guide us thereto:

1. The basis of our finite, creaturely relationships with God is the eternal covenant of redemption which inheres in the eternal relationships of the three Members of the Trinity. Their loving plan stood from all eternity: The Father would send the Son to accomplish redemption and the Holy Spirit would apply it.

Likewise our relationship to God is primarily covenantal. The place of the mind and affections in one's relationship with God is subordinate to this. Human marriage, primarily a covenant, is much like God's covenant relationship with His people. In fact, human attempts to redefine marriage are despicable because marriage represents the eternal union of Christ and the church according to the covenant of redemption. Just as we argue for the sanctity of human life because of the image of God in us, so we argue for the sanctity of marriage because it represents the divine Groom and His elect bride.

2. Communication in our relationship with God is not characterized by the verbal dissonance, misunderstanding, and interruptions which corrupt relationships between human persons. Former ways having ceased (Hebrews 1:1), the personal God speaks to us now only by His holy word the Bible. Surely, by His Spirit we gain insights and make discoveries from Scripture, but Scripture itself teaches that no other words of private, verbal revelation are needed for the present time. (2 Timothy 3:17)

We communicate with God by prayer, ever seeking to conform to Scripture our adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and intercession (A.C.T.S.) along with any other kinds of prayer, trusting in the "coming-along-side" help of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, Romans 8:26.

3. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." (James 1:17) In our relationships with God, we ever remember that one Party (the Lord) is unchangeable and the other party (us) is not; we are all too often fickle and unfaithful. Let us ever keep that in mind when there is an estrangement in our relationship with God. If we feel distant from Him, it is not He Who has moved!