



Maintaining a Healthy Connection with God

What is the most used excuse for not being able to do the things that enable us to maintain this healthy connection? Probably: “I am too busy and don’t have time”.

Let’s look at that and ask, “How much more time would it take in order to have *enough time*?” Another hour in the day? Another day in the week? If we had more time do you think it would make that difference or would we merely fill it with more of the same stuff that we are doing now?

Next let us look at some of the things you are doing with your time. Make a list (mental for the moment) of what you do throughout one day. Is there anything on that list that on a scale of importance—one to ten—that you would give less than a 7? What number would you give the importance of your staying connected to God? More than a 7? If so what does that tell you?

Chances are you have all the time you need at your disposal to maintain that desired healthy connection. *The problem is not likely a lack of time, but a lack of priority.*

The problem with which everyone struggles is that of giving proper priority to maintaining a healthy connection with God.

The next question becomes one of *desire*. How much do you truly desire to be closely connected? Is it a far off pipe dream? Is it something you want to do *sometime*? Is it something you want, but not enough to discipline yourself to do? Is it something that is urgent and compelling?

Until we can rank this desire to be connected with God in a healthy way as something urgent and compelling, there is little chance that we will give it high enough priority to make it happen.

Should we then stop there and give up? Shall we wait until something in life comes along that makes that connection urgent and compelling? That is where most people are—religiously active enough to feel safe, but not enough to make serious commitments.

That poses the next question. What can we do to translate *desire* into *commitment*? This transition is probably where most fallout occurs. The reason for the casualties is that we attempt to make this leap alone and with our own will power. It cannot happen that way.

Commitment is a power that, while it resides within us, can exist within us only when we receive it as a gift. It has to do with our will. Only the Holy Spirit can bestow upon us that powerful spiritual gift. Luther said it well and it is a part of our own experience. *I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength . . . but that the Holy Spirit . . .*

Commitment to this powerful spiritual connection comes to us as a gift of the Holy Spirit. It comes in response to our asking for it—prayer. It continues as we continue to pray. Ironically, even our prayer is a work of God's Spirit within us. The disciples asked: "Lord, teach us to pray". Jesus responded: "When you pray say: Our Father . . . your Kingdom come (into me), your will be done (by me and in me)".

When that process begins to take place in our wills, then commitment is no longer something for which we yearn

and strive, but it begins to become a reality—fait accompli. We become aware that change is taking place within us. We are more aware of our connection to God. It begins to take a more dominant place in our awareness. We sense that our connection to God is more intact and solid than ever before. Our overwhelming response to that awareness is gratitude. There can never be any pride because it is not of our own making, but it is God's Spirit responding to our prayerful desire to be connected.

This is truly a phenomenon and one of the mysteries of God, that we discover ourselves caught up in the experience of being connected to the Holy One in a very special and exciting way.

Often the question arises in our thinking: "How did I get here? What did I do to make this happen?" How can I make this wonderful thing happen again?" All of this races through our minds only to learn that it is all out of our control. If it does happen again or even continue—and it will to some degree—it is due to God's will being done in me and for me.

When I finished high school I worked the next year to earn enough money to go to college. The best paying job around was working in Cannon Mills making towels and sheets. I applied for a job and went every morning at 7:00 in hopes that my name would be called. There were hundreds of people waiting outside for the manager of personnel to come out and call the names of the successful applicants. I was passed over time and again although I remained hopeful.

I finally learned that you had to have an inside connection to get a job. I was fortunate to have such a connection and one morning my name was called.

The Holy Spirit is our inside connection to God. We tap that connection through prayer. We stay connected through continuous prayer. The difference between continuous and continual prayer is that continuous prayer is non-stop, while continual prayer is intermittent. Non-stop prayer is what we are looking for, and it is non-stop when it becomes our life orientation. It doesn't have to be verbal or even mindful. It is attitudinal. It is an awareness

of our constant connection to God because God has come to us and remains our constant companion.

Air Force planes on a long distant mission are refueled in flight by a tanker plane flying ahead of them and extending a hose back to their fuel connection. The plane needing fuel must fly up to that hose and wait for the fuel to be released into its tanks. God's Spirit holds the spiritual fuel our spirits need for the long haul. We can only move prayerfully in position and wait for God's Spirit to connect to our spiritual tanks and fill us with love and grace.



Our connection with God is maintained by our prayerfully committing ourselves to receive that which God brings to us and freely offers to us.