

**STILLNESS:**

***THE KEY TO  
FINDING  
LOVE, HEALTH,  
AND HAPPINESS***



# **STILLNESS: THE KEY TO FINDING LOVE, HEALTH, AND HAPPINESS**

by Michael A. Painter

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTERS

Introduction	1
Chapter One: Two Tracks	6
Chapter Two: Getting Started	11
Chapter Three: Physical Stillness	16
Chapter Four: Mental Stillness	19
Chapter Five: Spiritual Stillness	25
Chapter Six: Ladder of Stillness	30
Chapter Seven: Health	38
Chapter Eight: Happiness	47
Chapter Nine: Love	53
Chapter Ten: Faith	59
Conclusion	63
Further Reading and Ordering Information	65

## DRAWINGS

1. Levels of Reality	10
2. Two Tracks on the Path to God	10
3. The Ladder of Stillness	37
4. STILLNESS: The Key to Love, Health, and Happiness	58



## **INTRODUCTION**

If I had one minute to share with you what I believe is the most valuable knowledge I have learned in life, it would be this:

**IF YOU WISH TO FIND LOVE, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN THIS LIFETIME, YOU MUST RECOGNIZE THE SPIRITUAL PART OF YOURSELF. THIS SPIRITUAL PART IS YOUR INNER SPIRIT, A SPIRIT FRAGMENT WHICH COMES FROM GOD, THE CREATOR OF ALL. THIS SPIRIT WITHIN IS THE SOURCE OF ALL TRUE LOVE, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS. TO LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF MEANS TO DEVELOP A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS PART OF GOD WITHIN YOU, AND WHEN YOU DO, YOU WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH THIS PART OF YOURSELF.**

**GOD IS NOT JUST SOME ABSTRACT IDEA OR MERE SOURCE OF ENERGY OR NEBULOUS FORM OF CONSCIOUSNESS. YOU MUST DISCOVER THAT GOD IS MOST IMPORTANTLY A LOVING PARENT, WHO MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, WANTS YOU, HIS BELOVED CHILD, TO HAVE A LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. HOW DO YOU DO THIS? YOU BEGIN THE PRACTICE OF THE MOST SPIRITUALLY ENLIGHTENED HUMANS OF ALL THE WORLD, THE PRACTICE OF DAILY COMMUNION WITH GOD, WHICH I AM GOING TO CALL "STILLNESS." THIS SIMPLE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE WILL LEAD YOU TO A FAITH RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

**IT HAS BEEN SAID, "SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND", "SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD... AND THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU", "THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU". TO FIND GOD'S KINGDOM WITHIN YOU, YOU MUST DEVELOP A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. WHEN YOU HAVE THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, YOU ARE PART OF HIS KINGDOM. WHEN YOU LIVE IN THE KINGDOM, ALL**

## **THESE THINGS, LOVE, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS WILL BE ADDED TO YOU.**

The rest of this book will explain what "Stillness" is and how you can begin to practice it. If you will only give it a chance, it will transform your inner life and awaken you to the loving universe that is your rightful heritage.

Ask yourself these questions. Are you happy? Do you feel loved? Do you feel at peace with God? Do you feel deeply inside that you are a beloved child of God? Can you actually feel God's love surround you? Do you think of God as the one who will always stand by you no matter what you may encounter? If your answer is yes, then continue on your path, for you are surely doing God's will. But, if you feel that you could use some additional help in your life, the practice of Stillness will bring you the love, health and happiness you crave.

Stillness is not an end, it is a means to an end. Stillness is a spiritual practice designed to bring you closer to God and God closer to you. It will help you deepen your personal relationship with God and strengthen your faith -- your living trust relationship with God. As you draw closer to God through building this personal relationship, you will begin to feel more loved and loving, your overall mental and physical health will improve, and your attitude toward life will become much happier. I will explain why Stillness can help you achieve these blessings.

There are two main tracks in the path upon which we approach God. The first is the track of truth. It is the attempt to understand God, to find the truth about who God is and the nature of reality through the intellect/mind. This is the realm of philosophy/theology. We pursue this path by studying the traditional texts of the world's religions and/or the more recent texts of the new spiritual age, by attending discussion and study groups, and by listening to sermons and lectures. This path is important because it helps us to understand the nature of God, the nature of humankind, our relationship to God, who we are, why we are here and what our destiny is. This is the track that most of us have primarily



followed, and we should continue this effort to find the truest understanding of God and reality that we can.

However, there is another track in the path upon which we approach God. This is the path of love -- loving God, ourselves and others. It is a way of sensing/feeling God's presence and love. Just as it is important to know "about" God, it is just as important to know "of" God--to feel God's presence and love. We cannot do this by reading books, listening to sermons and attending lectures. To feel loved and loving, we must experience a personal relationship with God. How do we do this? For the most part, it is the same process as building a relationship with another human.

If you wanted to get to know another person, what would you do? First, you would have to arrange to spend some time alone together. Through sharing life's experiences and communicating, you would get to know this individual. As you build a relationship with him or her, as you begin to understand the motivations, hopes and dreams of another, you would gradually begin to feel love for him or her. You would also begin to feel love being reciprocated.

This is also how you build a personal relationship with God. If humans can love and be loved through this personal aspect of their natures, then surely God, the creator of us all, has this same personal nature. If you perceive God only as light or energy, you will naturally find it difficult to have a personal relationship. You cannot really love and feel loved by an abstract concept of light or energy. Consequently, you need to find a way to think of God in a personal way, such as a loving parent, your closest friend, your wisest mentor.

To build this relationship, it is important to set aside some time each day to spend with God just as you would if you were trying to become acquainted with another human. There are many ways you can talk with and to God. There is no one correct way. You could pray to God. You might want to offer thanks for all the blessings in your life. If you are having a problem, you could ask for guidance and insight. Then, after you have finished talking, just listen...listen in silence to the still voice of God within you. This

process is what Stillness is. It is a spiritual practice whereby you set aside some time each day to spend with God and communicate together. This is how you build a personal relationship with God.

By practicing Stillness, you will feel the presence of God. You will feel love for and feel loved by God. Feeling this love will bring you the deep peace, happiness, joy and love you have been longing for. God is the true source of love. If you only seek love through human associations, through human relationships, a sense of complete love will seem elusive because you have ignored the love of this spiritual reality which is part of you. Moreover, humans cannot always give you the deep love you desire because humans are imperfect. This satisfying feeling of ideal love can only be bestowed by God, who is perfect.

Stillness produces the same effects that are commonly associated with the practice of relaxation/meditation techniques. Typically, these have been identified as increased energy, lower stress levels and overall feelings of well-being. These benefits are very worthwhile and desirable. However, Stillness also takes you beyond the serenity of the stilled body and mind to actually feel God's unconditional love for you. Stillness creates the inner awareness in you that the spirit of God indwells you. Once your body and mind are still, you raise your conscious awareness of God through dialogue, prayer, worship and silent listening to a place where you feel at one with God. This relationship building time with God is your spirit's opportunity to act as your pilot to lead you to Him. When you are with God, you avail yourself of the goodness, compassion, understanding, forgiveness, mercy, tenderness, wisdom, truth and beauty that is God. When you return to normal consciousness, you bring a little more of these gifts with you each time.

I believe it is helpful to approach God along both tracks, truth and love. Continue to study and learn about the nature of God and reality. At the same time, build this personal relationship with God so that you will not just intellectually know that you are a child of God, but you will actually feel the love of God in your life. The more love you feel, the more peaceful and happy you will be. The more love you feel, the easier it will be to be loved by and be loving towards others. Rather than just telling someone God loves them,

you want to be able to show them how to feel God's love and how God's love feels. This practice of Stillness can help you do this. When others see that you feel loved and are loving toward them, they will want to know how to find this love for themselves. When others see God's love shine through you, they will know what you say about God's love is not just mere words.

Do not analyze or pass judgment on what you will read until you finish. Then still your mind and ask the spirit of God within you for guidance.

## CHAPTER ONE: TWO TRACKS

"Be still and know that I am God." (Psalms 46:10) These words have been spoken many times through the ages. They contain the greatest secret to answering life's questions, and yet they have been understood and taught by very few. Our world is filled with many religions, philosophies, books and teachers all claiming to have "the" truth. Most have good intentions, but they miss **the most important truth, which is that each person needs to develop a personal relationship with God.** They teach concepts about God - theology - as if knowledge of their belief system is all that you need. They teach rituals and rules as if performing certain prescribed actions or reciting formalized prayers is sufficient. They teach if you attend a church, synagogue, mosque or temple regularly and follow their prescribed rules, you will be assured of a place in the afterlife or next life. This is one track on the path to God. It is the track of the intellect/mind. Unfortunately, most of us have only experienced this one track because it has been the primary track which most philosophical/ religious traditions have taught.

However, the most spiritually enlightened individuals of our world had an understanding of the importance of another track. It is the track of the heart/soul, the search for the love of God. They knew the value of time spent in communion with God. I am going to redefine this time of communion with God and call it "Stillness." Perhaps these more enlightened spiritual teachers were unable to convey the importance of this daily practice to their brethren. As a result, the teaching of theology, rules and rituals became a substitution for a personal relationship with God. To be fair, one could say the teaching about the inner presence of God, about a personal relationship with God is not easy because it is something each individual experiences uniquely. But, surely, to allow each individual to develop their own personal religious experience and to find God within should have been the highest priority. Why was it not done? Why is it still not done?

There could be many reasons. Some would say those who are religious leaders do not wish people to understand this second track. They wish their followers to come to them for answers. In this way, they retain a certain level of control over them. I do not think it is necessary to be so cynical, though, as with most things, there is probably some grain of

truth in this. I would rather think they have simply forgotten that this track is just as important. Consequently, the beliefs, rituals and rules became the primary track because they are more easily understood, taught and practiced. Moreover, to teach the practice of a relationship, a communion, with God, you must practice this yourself. History has taught us that not all of the world's religious leaders have been very spiritual themselves.

No one can be the source of all truth and always know what is right. Therefore, each individual should be given the freedom and encouraged to follow their own inner guidance. This is not always the easiest path, but it is the only path that will lead to true and enduring faith versus a mere system of belief. So, perhaps it is best to conclude that because the theology, rituals and rules are easier to understand and follow, the leaders of the different religions simply focused upon the path of least resistance, or in this case, the path of least enlightenment.

**Now is the time when this must change!** There is a great need for a personal knowledge and relationship with God among all the people on this planet. Who will help them with this? Will they have to find it on their own, outside the world's religions and New Age philosophies? How will they begin? Who will be their guide? This book is an attempt to help those who wish to begin this path to seek a firsthand experience of God. It does not provide all the answers, no book could possibly do that. My hope is that it will give you the understanding and insight to realize a personal relationship with God is the missing track. The practice of the Stillness will give you the basic steps and conceptual framework you need to begin to experience this track.

You must ask yourself these question. Has your life produced happiness? Has your life produced inner peace? Has your life produced health and well-being? Have all of the things that have been portrayed to you by our culture as producing health and happiness proven to be true? Has the pursuit of money and material goods produced complete happiness for you? If so, and you seem to be content with these things, then this book will not offer anything to you. But if you say yes to those questions now, there will come a time in your life when you will recognize these things are not the complete answer. Then you will be ready to begin this path. This is not to say there is anything wrong with the

enjoyment of physical/material reality, but it is to say this level of reality is only a part of total reality. Until you taste of the experience of the spiritual as well, you will always feel an inner emptiness, a sense of being incomplete, a puzzlement that whispers "is that all there is?"

All life can be understood as existing on three levels of reality, the spiritual, the material/physical, and the mindal. We know much of the material/physical and some of the mindal, but for the most part we know very little of the spiritual. Our attempts to understand the spiritual have mostly been limited to the mental level, and this is what I referred to before as the theologies, rituals and rules the world's religions have offered. They give a simple formula, that is, follow our rules, believe as we say and you will have a spiritual life; you will have spiritual salvation or enlightenment. However, the mere memorization and assent to belief in a set of doctrines, the mere practice of certain rituals or adherence to rules is not a true spiritual life. You must awaken to your spiritual dimension, for in truth, it is a part of you. Each of you has a spiritual component, an element of spiritual reality which is a fragment of God, the creator and source of all reality, which exists within you. This fragment of God is your pilot, your Father, Mother, friend, counselor, guide. This is the spiritual component of you that will bring you eternal destiny. Until you recognize and develop a relationship with this spiritual part of you, you will not find the true love, health and happiness you seek because you are not functioning on all three levels of reality.

To have a firsthand experience with God, to develop a true and guiding faith which will be a real part of yourself, you must begin to develop a personal relationship with this spiritual component that exists within you. There is nothing to fear, for this God within holds all of the wisdom, love, goodness, truth and beauty you can ever imagine. It is all waiting there for you. You must simply say to yourself that you are ready to begin the search. Life is filled with difficulties. To begin such a search will not make difficulties in life go away. In fact, it is often through these difficulties we actually learn and come to understand life. It is even through these difficulties we are sometimes initially motivated to turn to spiritual reality, to seek God's comfort and guidance. But if you begin this journey, if you develop this relationship with God, you will find your journey through life will become much

easier. You will find you are not delivered from the waters of adversity, but there is a great loving being who will go with you through them. Life's difficulties will now seem more like a new lesson to be learned than an overwhelming obstacle.

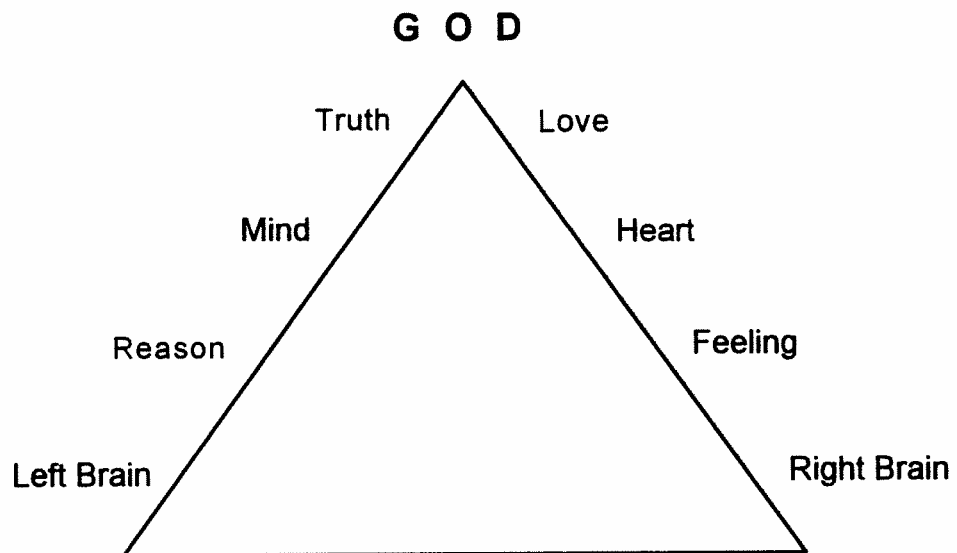
God will become more than just a concept. You will feel His presence, you will feel His love, you will gradually develop more insight and understanding into your life, into your self. This inner spirit, this inner fragment of God will gradually and lovingly guide you through this life and through your eternal destiny. You must be willing to trust in this inner guidance. If you are afraid because your religion does not teach this path, then your fear may prevent you from beginning this journey. But, there is really nothing to fear. After all, could any religion teach that you should not pursue a more fulfilling relationship with God? Is this not what their highest teaching should be? So if they do not teach this, then how is it they are fulfilling their true purpose?

I am not suggesting you abandon your beliefs or religion, but that you add this other track of building a personal relationship with God to your religious experience. Whatever belief system you choose is your decision, but learning to trust God's inner guidance through His spirit fragment that indwells you will make your search for love, health and happiness more successful. If you are unsure, take some time, find a quiet place with no interruptions. Relax your body and your mind, let the thoughts of the day pass away until your mind becomes stilled. In this still moment ask God, the God fragment within you, if this is true, if He is there, if He will guide you through life, if He will help you experience more of the love, truth, beauty and goodness existing in this universe and which is your rightful heritage. Do this and you will have your answer as to whether or not you should pursue this track as well.

## LEVELS OF REALITY

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	SPIRITUAL
Body	Mind	Spirit
Science	Philosophy	Religion
Things	Meanings	Values
Beauty	Truth	Goodness
Health	Happiness	Love

### TWO TRACKS ON THE PATH TO GOD





## CHAPTER TWO: GETTING STARTED

What is the Stillness? Is it a state of being? Is it a practice? Is it a process? Is it prayer, worship, contemplation or meditation? Is it love of God? Is it faith in God? Is it a relationship with God? The answer is yes, it is all these things and more. As we proceed, I will attempt to explain all aspects of the Stillness. You will learn what it is, how you can find it on the physical, mental and spiritual levels of reality, how you can learn to practice it, what you can expect from it, and how it will help you live life in a more happy, loving and healthy way. Why am I calling it "Stillness"? I am using the term Stillness rather than meditation, contemplation or similar practices because Stillness includes the recognition and development of a personal relationship with God. This concept and focus is not necessarily included in these other practices. Also, a new term opens your mind to expanding upon a concept rather than narrowing it based on preconceived definitions and connotations.

Let us begin with some basic understandings you should have as you begin to develop your personal relationship with God through your practice of the Stillness. First and foremost, you should understand there is a divine being, a first source and center of all things, a loving universal God who is the creator and upholder of all existence. Second, you should understand God has created us to share in His loving universe. He has created us as His children. He wishes us to love Him as a child loves his parent just as He as a parent loves each of us as His child. Third, God has created a vast universe. There are many spiritual beings other than humans who exist in this universe. You can call them angels, guides or whatever names you wish, but they are created by God to watch over us and to help us in our spiritual journey. Fourth, God has given a part of Himself, a spirit fragment, to indwell each human being.

This spirit fragment within each of us has been talked about by almost all of the known religions of our world. It has been given different names by these religions, but it is most commonly referred to as the indwelling spirit, the light within, the divine spark, the enlightened self, and the higher self. This spirit fragment is a distinct spiritual reality whose existence is currently separate from your being but whose destiny is to become one with

you. It is more than just a thought, an energy manifestation or state of consciousness. It is a real, spiritual entity. This spirit fragment is how God stays in touch with us and knows each of our lives, each of the lives of all the beings He has created. He has given a fragment of Himself to indwell each human being. In this way, He is always there with each of us. He knows all of our thoughts, all of our struggles, all of our joys, all of our sorrows, all of our yearnings. No one could possibly understand us more than God. No one knows how to guide us better and to help us solve our problems better than God.

Why then, do we usually turn to other humans who are, for the most part, just as troubled and confused as we are, to solve our problems? Why do we only use the limited human understanding we have developed in our short earth life span to try to solve our problems? No wonder we do not get good answers! We are the blind leading the blind. We are little children trying to help other little children. This is not to say we should not seek help from others, or that we should not try to understand and use the intellect we have been given. Rather, it is to suggest we have access to a true, divine, loving and wise spirit within us. But, because we fail to recognize this spiritual dimension, because we fail to turn to this loving God within for guidance, we deprive ourselves of the greatest source of love and understanding that is imaginable.

Why do we do this? Primarily it is because we are not taught that such a spirit of God exists within us. We are not taught how to develop a relationship with this inner guide, this inner fragment of God. As a result, God must often wait until we experience physical death and move on in our eternal ascension career to begin a more personal relationship with us. But this need not be so. Why should we deprive ourselves of this loving guidance when He is there within us, longing for us to make contact with Him, to develop a relationship with Him? And this is what we are really talking about, a personal relationship. God is not some abstract light. Nor is He merely an energy manifestation or state of consciousness. "He who created the ear, can He not hear?" He who gave us our personhood, our personality, our ability to relate to one another in a loving and personal way, does He then not have this same personhood and this ability to lovingly relate? Of course He does! You must begin to see God in this personal way because you cannot love and feel loved by a light, energy or state of consciousness.

In this book God is called the Universal Father. This is not because He is a father in the human sense, or because father is in any sense better than mother. God is much more than just a parent, father or mother. But, for us to have a relationship with God, we need to understand that God also has personality because we cannot have personal relationships with things that are not personal. So, you must begin to see God as a loving parent who has created a loving universe because the parent/child relationship is the closest personal relationship we have to understand our relationship to God. Despite all the problems we see on this world, despite the imperfections of our human parents, God's universe is dominated by love, truth, beauty and goodness. The problems we see on our world are created by our own free will, our own lack of understanding of the true nature of God, the universe and ourselves. If it were not for the gift of free will, we would not truly be self-conscious beings who can choose to love God. As a parent, don't you want your children to love you because of who you are and the love and nurturing you have given them? Similarly, God wants us to freely choose to love Him not because we fear Him, but because He is so loving and good.

As you begin to develop your personal relationship with God, you will begin to feel more loved and loving. You will notice you feel more compassion for others and have a greater desire to help them. You will begin to choose what is right over what is wrong because it feels good and gives you happiness rather than because you are afraid of being punished by an angry God. You will feel you are happier and more in harmony with life. While some physical ailments may still be present due to genetics, accidents, prior poor health habits and the natural aging process, you will begin to notice an overall healthfulness and different attitude toward your physical problems. However, most humans do not have these feelings of love, happiness and well-being because they do not have this personal relationship with God. And so, how is it that you go about developing a relationship with God? If you met someone you seemed to like and you decided you wanted to get to know them better, what would you do? Well, the first thing you would have to do is to begin to spend some time with them. Whether you talked with them on the phone or met with them personally, you would have to begin a process of getting to know them. You would have to make a commitment to devote time and energy to this process of getting to know this other

person. It is the same if you wish to begin this journey of knowing God. The practice of the Stillness is your key to open this door. It will become your method of developing a relationship with God because what you are doing is setting aside a certain amount of time each day to get to know Him better.

If you truly wish to have greater love, health and happiness in your life, the development of a personal relationship with God is the surest way to find these things. There really is no other way. There is no shortcut because developing a relationship with God takes time just as developing a relationship with another person takes time. But if you are willing to begin this partnership, the rewards are continuing and limitless. Day by day you will find your love for yourself and others, your hunger for truth, your appreciation of beauty and goodness, and your desire to help others will increase. You will begin to understand not only yourself but also life itself better. Sometimes, in a moment of inspiration, an answer to a problem will suddenly emerge into your mind. Or, you may be talking to someone and they will suddenly say something which is the answer you have been searching for. You may find a book, a teacher or a religious/ philosophical group you feel can bring you greater enlightenment. God does not speak loud words into our ears; you must understand this.

The relationship you will begin to develop is subtle, but that does not mean it is not real. You will not hear a loud voice, but you will begin to feel God's presence and guidance. You will "hear" God's words, but they will come from the experiences and the people around you, from an inspiration within your own mind, and mostly from a subtle spiritual intuition/insight gradually emerging and growing within. This is the God fragment within expanding your understanding and awareness of what is true and what is real. As you grow in this relationship with God, the possibility for more direct communication does exist, but we will leave this for later chapters in this book. In addition to opening your mind to the conceptual framework you have just been given, **you must now take the most important step. This step is a commitment to spend some time alone with God each day in order to develop this relationship.** Again, I would emphasize you cannot develop a relationship with someone if you are not willing to spend time to get to know them. Twenty to thirty minutes a day is a minimum. Thirty minutes to an hour is best. One

session is adequate, two session a day is ideal. Life can be very hectic and complex, but you know if there is something you really want to do, you find a way to make time for it. And so it is your choice. No one will force you, even God does not force you. But, if you truly want the love, happiness and health you say you do, then committing twenty minutes to an hour a day seems like a small price, doesn't it? Good things in life come with effort and you must spend some spiritual energy just as you spend physical and mental energy.

There is only one way for you to know if what I am saying is true, and that is to try it. You can theorize and theologize endlessly, but feeling the presence of God, love, happiness and improved health will only come with the experience of having a personal relationship with God. You can achieve this by practicing the Stillness.

### CHAPTER THREE: PHYSICAL STILLNESS

If you were trying to develop a relationship with someone special, would you invite them over when you were in the middle of doing something else, with the TV on, the radio blaring, and the children clamoring for attention? Of course not! You would find a baby-sitter, you would turn off the TV and radio, and you would find some time to talk with this person without interruption. Similarly, this is what you must do to begin to develop your relationship with God. You must find a place and time to be physically still. Still means you are removed from all interruptions such as telephones, noise, other family members or whatever other distractions there can be in life. You may have to work at scheduling this!

When can you do it? Will it be the first thing in the morning, when you come home from work, after dinner, or the last thing before you go to bed at night? You know yourself, you know your daily schedule. You must decide when you can do this. A minimum of twenty to thirty minutes a day is necessary. If you can spend more than thirty minutes or as much as one hour, and especially if you can practice twice a day, the results will be even better. The most important thing, however, even if it is only for twenty or thirty minutes, is to begin. Find a place and time where you can be quiet, when you can be still without interruption in order to begin to develop your relationship with God. You should have learned to set aside some time each day for your own personal development. The Stillness is the most worthwhile practice to help you grow and stay healthy that you will ever find.

When you have found this place and time, the next thing you must learn to do is to relax yourself physically. There are many schools of thought about meditative and relaxation techniques. They may teach you to sit in certain positions, breathe in prescribed ways, ask you to attach some scientific equipment to yourself that will help measure brain waves, or suggest other practices to aid you. If you have experience or wish to seek experience with one of these, that is fine, but it is not necessary. All you really need to know is quite simple. First, you need to find a relaxing place to sit. I do suggest sitting rather than lying down because the tendency when you lie down, especially if you are tired, is to drift off

into sleep or an unconscious state of mind. While you want to become very relaxed, you also want to maintain your mental alertness. So, it is probably better if you find a place, a very comfortable place, to sit. However, if you prefer lying down, then by all means do so. You must experiment with what works best for you.

Do not cross your legs, do not do anything that will put your body or any parts of your body in a tense position. It is best if you do not slouch and keep your spine straight. You do not want to experience discomfort; you do not want to experience any pain. You want to be totally relaxed. You want all the muscles of your body to be tension free, and you should take time to see that this is the case. Begin by taking deep breaths and releasing them very slowly. Check for any tension by focusing on your feet, then move up through your ankles, your legs, your hips, your arms, your upper body and your neck. Move or stretch any of these if you need to, but be sure that you are not in a tense position, because if you are, this tension will gradually cause you pain or discomfort which can be distracting to your time with the Father.

This is really all there is to it. There are no special techniques required, but if you find something is helpful for you, then use it. It is not necessary to be uncomfortable. In fact, it is more necessary to be quite comfortable. Start by thinking about when you can find time to begin this relationship with God. Where will be the best place? When will be the best time? You may need to talk with spouses, children or roommates to let them know you expect them to put their needs on hold for this brief time each day. Encourage your family members or companions to try it and be open about what you are doing. When others see you take time from a busy schedule to do this, they realize it must be important to you. You are setting a good example for them. In time, you will come to realize there is nothing more valuable you could give them than the encouragement and guidance to begin this practice themselves.

There are many books about meditation and relaxation that extol the benefits of taking time for this physical relaxation of the body. There is a great deal of medical/psychological literature that shows how much taking this quiet time can contribute to your health. It relieves stress, lowers blood pressure, allows the body to restore its

energy. Overall, it is a very revitalizing and healthful practice. So, one of the first benefits of this practice of Stillness, this attempt to develop a personal relationship with God, to spend time with God each day, is a physical one. You will improve your health greatly by taking this time to be relaxed, to let yourself become less stressed, to be revitalized. If you do it for no other reason than to improve your health, you will not be disappointed. In a later chapter on health, I will explain this more fully.



## CHAPTER FOUR: MENTAL STILLNESS

For those who have made any attempt at contemplation, meditation, or have gone on retreats, the biggest problem that most people encounter is to try to still their mind. Our minds are naturally active. Various thoughts are constantly occurring reacting either to the immediate stimuli we are surrounded by or reflecting upon prior experiences, thoughts, and emotions which are being held in our conscious and unconscious mind. Sometimes we just drift into what we call daydreaming and other times we may be actively trying to solve problems. Whatever it might be, each of us finds that our mind is almost always in an active state. So, how do we still this mental activity?

Learning to develop this relationship with God is in many ways no different than developing a relationship with another human. For example, when you want to get to know someone, what is it that you do? You talk to them, you ask them questions and you listen for their answers. When you listen for their answer, you have quieted or stilled your mind so that you can hear and focus upon what they are saying. If someone is talking and your mind is preparing an answer to something they have said or developing a new question, then you are not really listening because your mind is active. You are, for the most part, blocking out what the other person is saying. Learn to just listen. When you attempt to begin to still your mind, think of all these random thoughts as if other people are trying to talk to you and distract you, but you don't want them to. You want them to be still, to be quiet, so that you can listen, spend time, focus and concentrate upon God with whom you are now trying to develop a relationship. The thoughts will come, simply do not stop and focus upon them. Let them come and go. If you stop and focus upon them, then you are breaking your concentration with God. You are spending time, in effect, with yourself, with your own thoughts. Do not fight them, learn to let them go, simply do not focus on them. Tell them you will get back to them later and discuss (or actually think about) whatever they want, but for now they need to leave you alone because you are with someone and you do not wish to be disturbed.

There are different techniques that may be helpful in this process. Some have taught people to associate breathing with a still mind. As random thoughts enter the mind, by

refocusing on the breathing, you bring yourself back to the original focus of a stilled mind. In this refocusing, these other thoughts are released. Another technique is to repeat a special word or phrase. Through the repetition of this word or phrase, you are able to block out these other thoughts that are rushing into your mind because you are focused on the word/phrase. If you begin the Stillness and these thoughts come back, you can repeat the word/phrase or focus on your breathing, and you will again return your attention to the Father.

Another helpful technique is to listen to music. You do not want to listen to music that has lyrics because you will find your mind focusing on the words. You want to choose music that is very relaxing, very melodious and uplifting to you. The music that works best for one person may not be the same for another. You must find music which relaxes you, seems to be pleasing to your inner self, and is in harmony with your own inner vibrational level. The purpose is to uplift you, to make you feel more serene, lighter and joyful. I know this statement will seem puzzling, but in time you will realize that you are not focusing upon the music, but the music is focusing you.

If you are a visual person, picture in your mind where you would most like to be. Imagine the most beautiful, serene and loving situation possible. In this picture you are happy, full of love, free from worry and anxiety, and God is there with you. There is no one else around to disturb you. Where are you? On the ocean, a lake or a river? On a mountain top, in a beautiful meadow or valley, strolling through the woods? Again, this is your "fantasy island." It will not be the same image as others might have. What is important is that it works for you.

None of these techniques are necessary, but they can be helpful. You are embarking on a new experience. You will want to try different techniques to see what works best for you. I have found all these techniques to be helpful, but my primary method for refocusing is to repeat the phrase, "Be still and know that I am God." I interpret this phrase as a statement from the Father when He is trying to regain my attention because I have drifted off into my own thoughts and lost my focus on His presence within me.

Do not feel bad, do not feel guilty when you struggle with the stillness of the mind. It takes practice to develop to the point where you can more easily still your mind and not be distracted by all of these thoughts that rush into it. If you were beginning to learn a musical instrument, you would find that the progress was quite slow. Each day you devote a certain amount of time to practicing. After a while you would easily find the temptation to do something else, to cut your practice short, to rationalize that what you are trying to learn will take too long or is too difficult, will enter your mind. If you want to master an instrument or anything else, it will take time, many hours of practice. This is also true of mastering the Stillness. Developing a relationship with God takes time just as developing a relationship with a human takes time. You will not fully understand a person the first time you meet them. You will need to experience many things together. Sometimes you will feel as though you have made great strides in your understanding. Other times you will feel that your time spent together has not accomplished much. This is simply part of the learning process, part of the development of the relationship. What is most important is that you do not lose sight of your goal, and that you do not give up because you think you are not making progress or that progress is too slow.

I will say again in your Stillness you are not normally going to hear a loud and distinct voice of God telling you exactly what to do and how to handle every situation. We all wish it were that easy, but it is not. If you wish God's love, if you wish a greater feeling of love for yourself and others, and a greater feeling of inner happiness and peace, this is the practice you must continue. Just as with learning the musical instrument, many people want to do it, but when they meet with the least bit of difficulty, they tend to give it up. Do not give up, my friend, do not turn away from this opportunity so easily. You will find this relationship to be the most rewarding relationship you can ever have. You simply must give it time to develop.

Do not be afraid of this time spent with God, do not be afraid of any thoughts rushing through your mind. Sometimes our own apprehensions, our own fears can well up into our minds. We think we see or hear everything from monsters to demons to our own most troubling experiences. Do not be concerned with these. Do not give them energy. Again, simply let them pass from your mind. By raising your consciousness toward the

Father rather than letting your mind aimlessly wander into the unconscious, you will prevent such imaginary fears. If they come in to your mind, you know it is time to refocus on the Father's presence.

You will find in time one of the many benefits of this relationship with God is you will begin to see yourself more clearly. Your immaturities, your faults, your troubling past experiences will sometimes come to mind, not only in the time of the Stillness, but at other reflective moments. Instead of being afraid of these, allow them to surface and see them in the light and protection of God's presence and love. They will lose their power and control over you. You will begin to understand that there is no reason to fear them. This growing self-awareness, growing self-mastery is very psychologically and emotionally therapeutic. This inner healing will be one of the many blessings you will receive from God as a result of your desire to get to know Him better.

Now that you have quieted your mind, what is next? Well, if you were with some other human and you wanted to develop this relationship, wouldn't you talk to them? Of course, and now this is a time when you can begin to talk with God. It is not easy at first because God is not directly answering you back. But for now this is not important. What is important is that you are telling God you want to include Him in your life. Share your innermost thoughts, dreams and feelings with God. He is the best listener you will ever find. While you are having this dialogue, you should picture yourself in the presence of God.

You can picture yourself with God in many different ways. One of the most helpful ways is to see yourself as a very young child, (for in truth it is what each of us really is) coming before this all-wise, all-loving, most gentle, most kind father or mother. Tell Him your troubles, fears, hopes, and dreams. God already knows these things. It is not as if you are telling Him something new. What you are doing is actually making yourself more aware of your own thoughts and feelings. Wise therapists know the best therapy is mostly involved with listening to someone in an atmosphere of acceptance and trust and allowing them with some guidance to find their own answers. We have the insights and answers within us, but we need someone to listen, understand and help us recognize the right

solutions. Why not let the Father become your personal therapist? Not only is He the best, but also He is the least expensive!

You can ask God for things for yourself and others during your dialogue with Him. This is what is commonly known as prayer. But, you must learn that God is not so concerned with your material circumstances as He is with your spiritual well-being. Praying for physical or material things is a typical reaction as we try to learn, grow and expand ourselves spiritually. Our first tendency is to interpret the spiritual level by reducing it to the material level where we have more understanding and experience. Consequently, we ask for better jobs, to win the Lotto, to meet a handsome prince or beautiful princess.

Try to see beyond this level. Rather than asking God to materialize these things in your life, ask God why is it you seem to feel a need for these. Ask God to help you adjust your thinking to understand how you can make your life better even though you do not have these things. Ask Him if these material things are really so important, or if there are other realizations that are of greater value. If you are having a particular problem or if there is something you do not understand about your life, ask God to give you some insight, to help you understand. When you ask God for guidance, understanding, wisdom, love, or peace; you know in time your prayer will be answered. Ask God who He is and how you can feel His love more. Ask how you can learn to benefit from His presence and guidance. Ask Him how you can learn to see Him in your brothers and sisters. By brothers and sisters, I mean all humans, for if God is our Heavenly Father, then truly we are all spiritual brothers and sisters. If there is someone you know who is having a problem, this is also a time you can pray for them by asking God to help them find the answer they need.

When you have finished talking with God, stop and listen. Quiet your mind, ask God to feel His presence so you can feel His love. Ask Him to give you guidance and listen in your mind for His answer. Next, begin to reflect on what is good in your life, the goodness of life itself, the love you have felt from or for others, the truth you have found, the beauty you have seen. As you reflect on these things, realize God is your creator. Despite the difficulties in your life now, you are destined to live eternally in a universe

filled with all of these good things. Realize the material struggles of your earthly existence will not last forever. Let yourself see a larger, more panoramic view beyond this troubled world where people truly do love and help each other, where there is great beauty, truth and goodness. These divine values exist here on this world, but you must learn to focus on them more. You will learn to see them in people and in situations where you did not see them before. Thank God for this. Do not ask Him for anything more now, but simply thank Him, love Him and praise Him for all the good in life.

You know a good parent does much for his or her children. Do you not greatly enjoy those few moments when your children will run up to you and give you a hug or say thank you for the things you have done for them? The same is true of our Heavenly Father. Rather than ignore Him and go on about your life living in the material, physical level of consciousness all of the time, give our Father great joy by saying you want to develop this relationship with Him, by thanking Him for the love and joy which has been part of your life. How would you feel as a parent if your child was too busy doing other things and seemed to always ignore you? While God knows that in time this will change, the sooner you change it the happier you will be and the more you will please our Father.

Now that you have stilled your body and mind, spent some time talking and praying to the Father, elevate your consciousness to a state of thankfulness. Allow this thankfulness to elevate to praise. This state of thankfulness and praise is worship. As you begin to worship, you have now moved to the next level of the Stillness, the spiritual level.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SPIRITUAL STILLNESS

Many religions and philosophical schools of thought have taught the benefits of the practices of meditation, contemplation and solitude. Many medical/psychological practitioners have taught and even to some degree scientifically have shown the benefits of physical and mental relaxation such as decreased levels of stress and higher levels of energy. While these practices are certainly helpful and healthful as we have already discussed in the previous two chapters, you need to grow beyond the physical and mental levels to the spiritual level of reality. You need to feel God's love as well as know about it. You need living faith as well as intellectual belief.

The reason these practices are not complete is they do not usually have this understanding of a personal relationship with God. God is a personal being as well as the creator and upholder of all reality. He is someone who can love and be loved, someone who can listen and give counsel, someone who can share our joys and sorrows. Instead, God is often portrayed as a heightened state of cosmic consciousness, a state of blissful serenity, or a wrathful judge who lives in some far away place, is unapproachable and should be feared. None of these portrayals is adequate. Until God is understood as the loving parent He truly is, religious/philosophical institutions and movements will continue to be unable to help you develop the personal relationship with God that will bring you the love, happiness and health you seek and deserve. You may feel peaceful or serene in a state of consciousness at the physical or mental level, but you will only feel true love from another being, human or divine. Divine love is only found at the spiritual level of reality.

As you move from the mental level of dialogue/prayer with God to the spiritual level of thankfulness and praise, what you are doing is worshipping. Worship signals your arrival at the spiritual level of Stillness. Worship is different than prayer, for it asks nothing in return. It simply is a state of thankfulness and praise for life and for all of the love, truth, goodness, and beauty that life has brought. In this state of thankfulness, of worship, you will feel loving towards the Father, and in turn you will feel more of the Father's love for you. This, my friends, is what will begin to change your life! You have heard the words that the greatest love of all is to learn to love yourself. If you understand this to mean to

learn to love the beauty and goodness of the God within you, to love your indwelling spirit, your eternal self, then you have discerned the highest meaning of these words. You and the fragment of God within are forming an eternal partnership. This spirit within you gives you communication with God and the potential for eternal life. You give this spirit fragment of God a personality expression unique in all the far-flung universe who can be loved by God and who can love God in return. You are truly a beloved child of a loving parent. To help you feel more loved and loving while you are in the spiritual stillness, you may need to adjust some of your perceptions about what it means to love yourself and others.

The one who will truly love and guide us the most is our Heavenly Father. This should be the primary relationship in your life. This is where you will feel the most love in your life. As you begin to grow in this feeling of being loved, you will find it much easier to love others. You will begin to see them in new ways. You will see them and yourself just as you see little children on a playground. They play, they share, they fight over toys, they get their feelings hurt. We like to think because we are now in older bodies and have supposedly "grown up" we are beyond this. In reality, from a universal or cosmic point of view, we are not so much different from these young children. Most people still live much of their lives filled with many unsettling emotions, fears, apprehensions, petty jealousies, resentments, and many other negative emotions and attitudes. None of us were raised by perfect parents, none of us were raised to see each other in a light of love, kindness, and goodness from our earliest years. Therefore, do not be too hard on yourself or on other people. Simply realize there are areas of behavior in their lives in which they are still immature. Perhaps they did not learn to be more responsible. Perhaps they did not learn to look at themselves instead of always blaming others for all of their problems. Perhaps they did not learn better ways to show their feelings. Perhaps they did not learn more constructive ways to deal with their anger or frustrations.

Begin to realize within every other person there is a fragment of God, just as there is in you. Picture them when they were first born or as very young children. You see their bright and beautiful eyes full of hope for the future. They still have this potential within them. It is just that years of struggle and living in darkness, not knowing how to break



out of it and perhaps, to some extent, not willing to break out of it, have masked the divine goodness still lying within them. If they truly knew of God's love for them, if they truly felt God's love within them, if they truly felt love for others, and sought truth and goodness in their lives, they would not act in such ways. Just as you are not harsh on a young child when he or she acts in negative ways, do not be so harsh on yourself and your brothers and sisters. We are all still young universe children, but now we live in older bodies.

Learn to love the sinner, but hate the sin. This means to separate the person from their actions. In this way, you can still know their negative actions are not correct and must be dealt with. But, you will not see them as corrupt and evil. Instead, you will see them as someone who has not found love in their life, been guided properly and has not learned better ways of reacting to the world and to you. Feel righteous indignation toward their actions, but feel compassion for their souls. This is the type of inner adjustment God will help you make as a result of your relationship with Him. Eventually, you will see your "enemies" as struggling little children like yourself. When you begin to understand this, you will turn hate into compassion and compassion will turn to love. This is the process and meaning of learning to love your enemies as yourself. This is the change in perception you need to begin to allow the feelings of love to flow through you more easily.

As you spend time in this spiritual stillness you can use visualizations, you can use words of praise, or you can simply rest in the total and loving embrace of the Father's love. Picture yourself being hugged by the Father. Picture yourself in a meadow where there are people who are happy and singing, the sun is warm and there are beautiful mountains and flowers surrounding you. Whatever image brings you great peace and joy and allows you to see the love and beauty of this world, utilize that image. As you do this and as you associate the feelings of the Father's love with these images, you will find that they can be very helpful as you go through each day. When you are at work and having difficulty with a co-worker, or if you are in another stressful situation, you can recall these images to your mind. They will naturally bring back to you the feeling of peace, restfulness, and love which you experience in the Stillness. They will help you refocus on what is real and what is your destiny. Even though the problems you face each day are difficult, they will

take on less importance as you recognize their transitory nature. Forgiving becomes easier because you understand those who act and respond in negative ways do so because they do not know the love you are now learning to see and feel.

As you stay in this state of thanksgiving and praise, you may find you will experience a variety of blissful, even some ecstatic moments. I do not wish to focus on this at this time because it is unique to each individual. If it is described then you may let your mind imagine it instead of it being real. Secondly, if you do not experience this ecstasy in your first week of Stillness, you may say "oh, this isn't real." It may take a long time, it may even take years to develop an experience like this. On the other hand, it may happen quickly. I cannot say. It is between you and the fragment of the Father which indwells you. Only the Father knows what is best for you, what experiences you can handle and what you cannot. The Father does not want to frighten you for He loves you and wants to watch over and guide you. He will take your hand and lead you inch by inch, step by step, and allow you to gradually feel more love and grow in self-awareness. Steadily you will begin to see the presence of God in your brothers and sisters and experience more health and happiness with His love.

It is important you do not spend all your time in the mental stillness just praying and asking God to help you. It is important, at some point, to stop your dialogue with the Father and to thank Him for who He really is. See the beauty, goodness and love. Begin to feel it. Thank God, praise God for your opportunity for life, for eternal life. If you do this, you will find new depths of feelings, new insights and new inner religious experiences which will strengthen you and your faith in their reality. There will come a time when others will look at you as you talk of your faith and your inner knowing and ask "how do you know?" You will humbly and lovingly look back at them and say "I know." In time you will know "the peace that passes all understanding" and the meaning of the words "seek the truth and the truth shall set you free."

After worship, remain in a state of silent listening. Now that you have drawn closer to the Father and cleared much of the static from your mind, listen for His guidance. You may sense a message of inspiration and comfort emerging within your consciousness. You may

have beautiful visualizations of color and light. You may even feel as though you have been lifted up and embraced by the Father Himself. On the other hand, and most of the time, you will simply come to the realization of your time with the Father being over for now. But remember every time you make the effort to grow closer to God and allow God to grow closer to you, your life will forever be changed for the better. Our Father is generous; much will be added unto you.

## **CHAPTER SIX: THE LADDER OF STILLNESS**

Practicing the Stillness is in some ways like climbing the steps of a ladder of consciousness. You begin at a certain level of consciousness and you try to move yourself up the ladder until you reach the top. While there can be varying views and opinions on what the steps of the Stillness are, and because it is a unique experience for each individual, I am reluctant to list these steps. On the other hand, it seems as though some type of a roadmap is necessary. At least you will have an idea of how to begin and move from level to level in ascending this ladder. The following summarizes what you have learned in the previous chapters on the physical/mindal/spiritual levels of Stillness and breaks them down into a simpler step-by-step process.

### **Step 1: Physical Relaxation**

The first step of the Stillness is physical relaxation. We have already spent a chapter describing physical relaxation and how to begin, so it does not seem necessary to elaborate much further. I would only add one point. The biggest stumbling block in physical relaxation is fatigue. When you are very tired and try to do your Stillness, you may find you will drift into sleep. If the Stillness is something you wish to do, try to find a time when you will be awake and your mind alert. But do not be concerned. Some sessions will be better than others. If you are tired but you still want to do it and drift off into sleep, don't worry about it. You can try again the next day. What is most important is making the practice of Stillness a daily habit. You know the saying, "Just do it!"

### **Step 2: Mental Stillness**

Just as with physical stillness, we have already spent a chapter covering this step, so it does not require much further elaboration either. The goal is to quiet your mind. Stop all of the uprushings and various thought coming into your mind. Many of them are the worries of today, making plans for tomorrow, and thinking about all of the things you have to accomplish. Sometimes even our fears and anxieties come rushing from the

unconscious portion of our mind. But, as you still your mind, you will find a feeling of peace and tranquillity begins to come over you. You will also sense a rush of energy into your body. This is the process of rejuvenation and restoration of energy. This is why after the Stillness you will feel very relaxed and renewed as if you had slept for a while. This is also a turning point in our understanding of this process.

Many schools of thought on meditation teach the physical and mental relaxation. At this point they describe going into a silence and simply diffusing your consciousness into the consciousness of the universe. Here you remain awaiting whatever experience might arise. It may be peace and tranquillity. Sometimes it can be elevated to a state of bliss, even ecstasy. But the reason I have used the term "Stillness" rather than meditation is that there is a distinct difference. In the Stillness our goal is to achieve more than just this tranquillity. Our goal is to attempt to communicate with God. Just as you have a subconscious mind, think of your spirit fragment dwelling in a realm called the "superconscious" mind. After we have stilled our mind and are feeling peaceful, the next step is to focus our consciousness towards the superconscious realm of the mind. This superconscious realm is where the fragment of God dwells. This leads us to our next step.

### **Step 3: Dialogue with God**

This is a time to begin your dialogue with God. He is your friend, counselor, and loving parent. You can tell Him whatever is on your mind. Talk about some of your experiences, talk about what is troubling you. Talk about some of the joys or sorrows you had during the day. As said earlier, God already knows these things, but as we talk we build our relationship with Him. We are developing our familiarity and ease with talking to God regularly. Doing this helps us to see God as a person whom we can love and trust. You do not want to spend an excessive amount of time in dialogue; focus only on the most important things on your mind. As you talk to God within your mind and finish a statement or question, take a moment to pause and listen. Sometimes you will sense you are being given some inner guidance to your questions or comments. If not, proceed with your dialogue. It may be helpful for you to use visualizations at this point. Picture

yourself as a young child sitting on the Father's lap or sitting beside Him. Whatever imagery helps you feel you are actually with God is helpful. If you do not need this imagery, this is also fine. When you have finished your dialogue, talking and listening, you are ready for the next step.

#### **Step 4: Prayer**

Now that you have talked with God about your problems, it is time to focus on prayer. Prayer is simply asking God for what you need or what someone else whom you wish to pray for may need. We have already said prayer should be to help someone at a spiritual level, not at the material level. You cannot expect God to magically change your or another's circumstances. But, you can ask God to help you understand your circumstances and to develop insight into the lessons which can be learned. You can ask to have your attitude adjusted to a more positive acceptance of your circumstances. This is also true for anyone else for whom you may wish to pray. After you have talked with someone and can see their problem, ask yourself what would be most helpful for them. Then, pray for that. Pray they receive the understanding from the God that indwells them. You see, praying for someone in this way takes on a slightly different meaning. You are really praying on their behalf because they do not yet understand what to pray for. It is as if they said to you, "I don't know what I should be praying for, so you say the prayer for me."

#### **Step 5: Worship**

Now we move beyond prayer to worship. Worship is different than prayer in that worship is not asking God for anything. Worship is simply giving thanks and praise to God for all of the good that He is. At this point, focus upon what is positive in your life, rather than the physical/material problems of daily existence. You can imagine yourself in the warmth of the Father's love. Thank Him for the loved ones in your life. Thank Him for the peace and tranquillity He is helping you find. Thank Him for the understanding and insight you are now developing. Thank Him for being so good and loving. Here you can visualize yourself surrounded in a beautiful place by loving and happy people who are

really at peace. Realize this is your destiny. This is the way your eternal life will be! You can thank the Father for the potential He has given you and for the opportunity to begin to experience some of His love and happiness now. Sometimes your thanksgiving will elevate into a sense of awe, a feeling of adoration. This is true worship. You can sing silently within your heart. You can reach out to embrace the Father. Whatever means of giving love back to the Father you can imagine, do this at this time.

### **Step 6: Silent Listening**

Now comes the time when you wait silently for the Father's guidance. You did this during the dialogue step, but if you did not immediately hear a response in your mind, you continued the dialogue. Again, do not expect initially to hear a loud voice in your head. The Father would not want to scare you. He knows what you can handle, He knows how to guide you gently at this time. Just enjoy silently listening, being in the still company of the Father. Do not dialogue or pray, just listen. Sometimes you will find very inspirational thoughts may come into your mind. Are they from the Father, are they from your angels or from your own mind? Any of these may be possibilities. Do not concern yourself with the source. Only concern yourself with the truth and guidance you are being given.

After you finish your Stillness session, you may want to write some of these thoughts down while they are still fresh in your mind. They may be some of your clearest insights, some of your most inspirational and creative thoughts. If you do not receive anything, that is fine, just enjoy this time. Bask in the Father's presence, bask in the feeling of His love. Just enjoy being with Him knowing He is there for you, knowing He loves you. You have already talked to Him, prayed, and worshipped. Now is the time for you to just be together. Now is the time to just listen in case He wishes to communicate to your conscious state of mind. Normally, the end of your silent listening will bring you to the end of your Stillness session. You will have an inner sense of when to emerge from Stillness. However, there is one more possible step.

## **Step 7: The Embrace**

It is rare, but possible, that if your mind is at peace and your heart is filled with love for the Father, He may be so moved by you that you will feel as if He has reached down and lifted you up to embrace you. This is the experience of ecstasy the most spiritually enlightened of this world have tried to describe and encouraged us to pursue. It is called various names by different religious traditions, but the experience is the same. If this occurs, you will unquestionably know it for it is an experience unlike any other. The feeling of love and peace is beyond words. In this embrace there is no sense of place or time. It is as if you have been transported to a totally different dimension. There is no reason for fear; there is no anxiety. It is an utter state of ecstasy. Words fail, but if you are ever blessed to receive this, you will know it.

It may take time for you to have an experience like this, or you may not have this experience. On the other hand, you may receive a partial embrace, you may receive partial glimpses of spiritual reality. I cannot say more, it is up to your own indwelling spirit to decide what is appropriate for your stage of growth. But I mention this because it is real. It is the most wonderful experience a human could ever imagine.

Having presented the seven steps of Stillness, let me offer some additional points to consider as you begin to practice. It is important to remember the Stillness is not a losing or diffusing of consciousness after the first two steps. From Step 3 on, it is a focusing of consciousness upon our indwelling spirit in an effort to commune with God. No matter how far you go up the ladder each time you practice the Stillness, you should understand that your consciousness will be positively altered. Each time you make this attempt to expand your awareness of spiritual reality and to find God, you will never retreat back to exactly the same state of consciousness. It will always be expanded somewhat. You cannot measure this exactly, and you will not necessarily feel the difference at each session. But, over time, you will know you are growing. You will see and feel this inner growth in your understanding of yourself, of others and of life. It will come in the form of your feeling loved and being more loving towards others, and in your growing patience



and tolerance with your brothers and sisters. All these and more will show you are growing spiritually.

Do not be concerned with how much you are growing. Simply do what you need to do each day and allow your spiritual growth to take its natural progressive course. Never be concerned about comparing your growth to someone else. Each individual is different. Share your experiences, but never attempt to make judgments on another's spiritual status. You never know whether another person, although you may not understand them, is further along the path than you are. But, on the other hand, you will always have a simple way to know if they are growing. You will know not by what they say, but by how well they are living the fruits of the spirit. If you see or feel the love of the Father come through them, if you see or feel their compassion and desire to serve, then you know they are on the path.

When you ascend this ladder of consciousness, you will find it becomes much easier to understand life. When you are on the ground level of consciousness, which means you are wrapped up in the physical/material level of existence and functioning, you feel like you are in a maze looking for the right door to get through. But when you ascend this ladder of consciousness, you are above the material level of perception. Now you can look down on your life and see the right direction more clearly. You see where you have turned this way or that. You see why you could not find the right door to go through. While all this spiritual progress takes time, you may actually be amazed at how quickly you notice changes in your life and in your understanding.

As I said earlier, you will be greatly rewarded for your efforts. Do not overly analyze and do not criticize your time in the Stillness. Simply make your best effort and whatever happens at a session is all right. Just allow it to be what it is. You may not ascend all the steps of the Stillness each time. That is also all right. Do the best you can. What is most important is you are willing to make the effort to turn to God and share you life with Him. All the rest will simply work itself out in time. You have the perfect guide along to help

show you the way. Doing the will of God is nothing more or nothing less than your willingness to share your inner life with God, to have a relationship with Him.

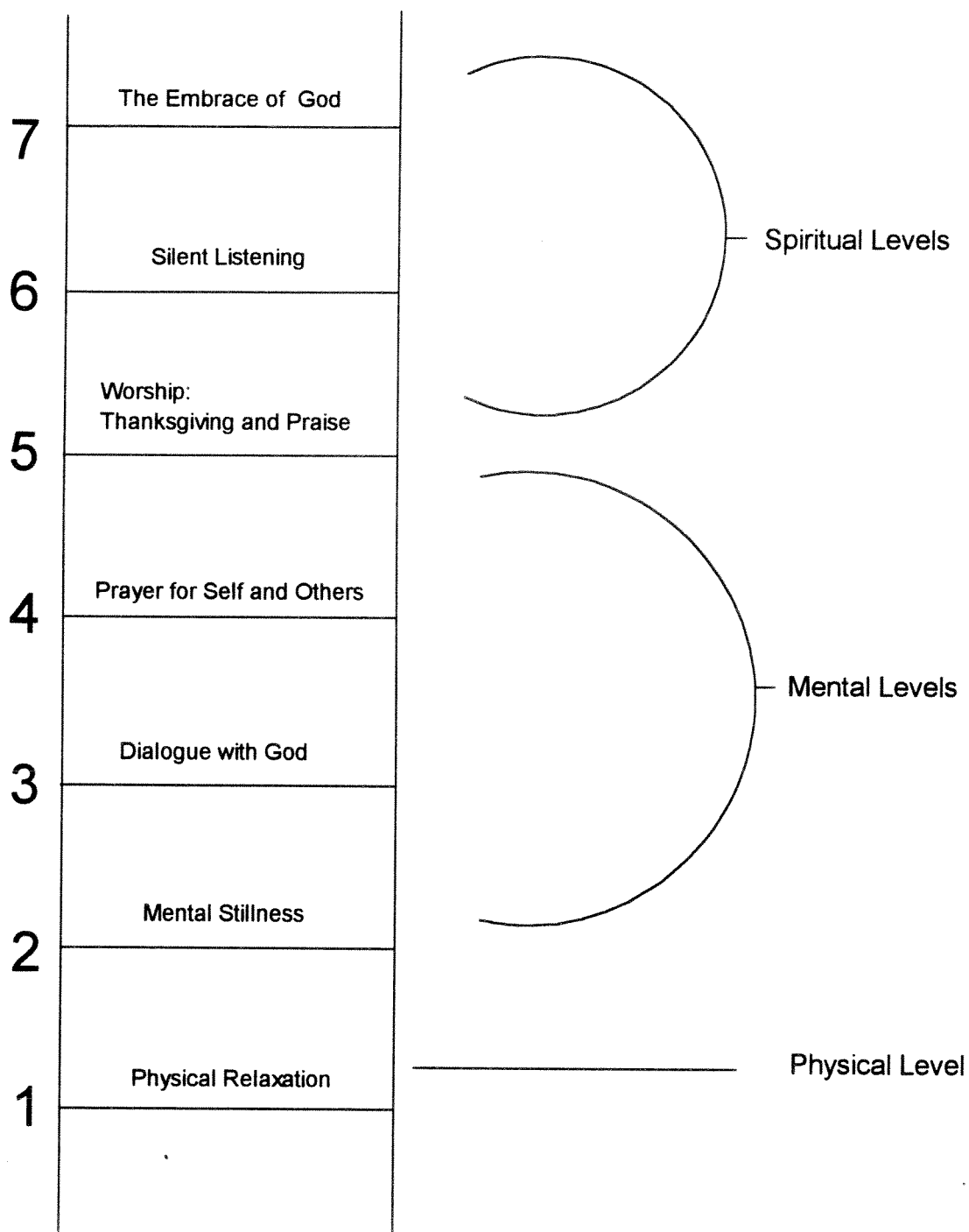
As you grow more experienced in your Stillness practice, you will eventually find that Steps 1 and 2, physical and mental stillness, can be achieved quite quickly. You may also find because your awareness of God throughout the day is growing, you have already had an ongoing dialogue and even been praying at different times for yourself or others. If this is the case, you may want to skip these steps and move right to worship and the silent listening. It is not necessary to go through each step. These have been given to you to help you get started. As with anything, experience, insight and wisdom will help you understand the process better. When you finish your session in the Stillness, you will feel very physically relaxed, mentally clear and sense an aura, a shell of love surrounding you. In time, it is even possible to live in this state of consciousness throughout the day. Life is not easy on this world. It is not easy to have to spend most of the day working a job just to earn a living. But, when times are stressful during the day, you will be able to recall this feeling of love, this state of serenity, and use these feelings to relieve the stress and difficulties of the day.

The apostles called Jesus "Master" because this is exactly what He did. He mastered the challenges and difficulties of earthly existence. Through frequent communion with the Father, He was able to overcome all the difficulties of His life. None of us will face anything even remotely equivalent to the difficult life Jesus had; none of us will end up being crucified. But He lived His life and mastered all the difficulties so that He might show us the way to live. His life should not be viewed as an exact example to follow because we do not have to become public preachers or end up being crucified. Rather, His life is our inspiration. He showed us by turning to the Father we can gain insight, understanding, courage and love. Armed with these we can face all of life's difficulties. With the Father at our side we can master whatever is put in our path. It is not likely we can achieve such a high degree of mastery in this short lifetime on this world, but the Master showed us how it is possible. Just do the best you can and remember to call upon the Father anytime, not just in the Stillness, to comfort and guide you. Also realize you

can call upon the Master for comfort and guidance. He is sympathetic because He lived as a human on this world.

Now you understand the steps of the Stillness. Climb these steps each day and you will find yourself growing closer to God and God becoming closer to you. The Father loves you more than you can imagine. If you begin this relationship with Him, He will reward you with more love, health and happiness than you have ever known.

# THE LADDER OF STILLNESS



## CHAPTER SEVEN: HEALTH

At the beginning of this book, I said the practice of the Stillness would lead to more love, health and happiness. Let us explore these more in depth. We will begin with health.

When most people think of their health, they primarily think of their physical health. But, there is also mental health and spiritual health. You must realize the physical, mental and spiritual are all parts of reality. If you ignore any of these three parts, you will remain out of balance. You will not feel fully harmonized because you are missing a note in your life's chord. Much has been written on the state of physical health, but we know much less of mental health and even far less about spiritual health.

As mentioned earlier, it is well documented the practice of meditative/relaxation techniques are very helpful in reducing stress and revitalizing energy. I cannot emphasize this enough. While you already know exercise and diet are important to your health, you are missing the most health-giving practice of all, Stillness. In this practice you are relieving the stresses in your physical body and the mental tensions in your mind. In addition, you are partaking of the spiritual energies flowing throughout the universe from God. Spiritual reality impinges upon mental reality. Mental reality impinges upon the physical. This is another way to understand "seek first the kingdom ... and all these things will be added...." There is great truth in this statement. It means to focus on the spiritual level of reality by taking time each day to commune with the Father to develop a relationship with Him. This is done in the practice of the Stillness. Awaken yourself and become more attuned to the spiritual reality existing within and around you. When you do this, you will find this spiritual growth has a positive effect upon you. As your spiritual awareness improves, it will in turn have a positive effect upon your mental and physical health.

As you go into the Stillness and focus upon relaxing your physical body and stilling the conflicts and thoughts in your mind, you are opening yourself up to many unknown or unexplored energies of life. There is more attention being paid to these healing energies now. There is increasing attention being given to alternative methods of healing

including energy manipulation and healing by touch. At this point, no one really understands exactly how these methods work. However, there is a growing accumulation of experience which suggests that as we are able to tap into these spiritual energies, they have a very health producing effect upon the body.

The more positive your spiritual and mental state, the less disharmony, the less dis-ease there will be in your body. All of your body consists of energy. All of this energy vibrates at certain harmonic levels. When you have negative thoughts, when you carry great conflict within you, it manifests itself in various parts of your mental and physical bodies and causes parts of your body to become out of harmony. When you seek the Stillness and you begin to feel the Father's love and peace which comes over you, it reharmonizes the energy of your body, mind and spirit. It relieves the dis-ease and the distressed parts of your physical and mental system. This is not something which normally happens in one day although there are accounts of miraculous (immediate) healing. Rather, it is a gradual result of a lifelong practice.

As you spiritually grow and thereby improve your spiritual health, the effects upon your mental and physical health will definitely be seen. Even some medical/psychological studies of people who tend to live longer and have less health problems suggest good health is strongly related to a more positive mental state. Naturally, in most of the medical/psychological literature, they never talk about more than a positive mental state because there seems to be such an unawareness or unwillingness to more publicly talk about our spiritual state, our spiritual reality. This spiritual reality cannot be proven so those trying to utilize a purely scientific approach will always fail to portray a complete picture of our total reality. They limit themselves to the physical (medical) and mental (psychological) levels thus ignoring the most real and permanent part of ourselves, the spiritual. All life is a question of balance. You need to have balance in your life. You need some type of physical exercise, mental exercise and spiritual exercise.

What does it mean to be mentally healthy? Usually you are considered mentally healthy as long as you are not suffering from a mental disease. But, just as you can be malnourished even though you are not totally lacking food, you may not be as mentally

healthy as you should be just because you are not experiencing a debilitating mental illness. Mentally, you need to feed and exercise your mind. By this I mean not focusing all of your mental energy just on work-related activities. To feed and exercise your mind means to actually think about life. What is it? Who are we? Why are we here? Read a religious or philosophical book, get involved in a discussion group. Whatever it is, utilize that philosophic, spiritualized thinking part of your mind. This will stretch and flex your mental muscles. Your mind will grow from the food of new thoughts, insights and experiences. By opening and stretching your mind, you will find your spirit fragment will more easily be able to help you understand things. When your mind is narrow or closed, it becomes difficult for the spirit fragment to offer new insights to you because you have built barriers. To help you understand how your mind expands and increasing levels of insight are achieved, let us explore the nature of truth because it is the healthiest food for your mind.

Truth is not a fixed thing. It is a life-long, eternity-long pursuit. No one knows all the answers. Your goal should not be to think you have found a fixed set of beliefs, "The Truth", and therefore there is no more truth to be found. If you do this, you spend all of your time laying the bricks of the mental wall that becomes a barrier to finding new meanings and new truths. You think you have to stay behind this wall and defend your truth from perishing. Real truth needs no defense because it cannot be destroyed. It is imperishable and there is plenty for everyone. It should be freely given. If others do not want to pursue it, then let them go their own way in peace until they awaken to the call of their own inner spirit. Think about the concept of truth for a moment. What is true? Is God your creator and upholder? Has He sent a fragment, a part of Himself, to indwell you and be your guide to lead you back to Him? Is there a great universe filled with many spiritual beings who are here to help you? How do you know if these statements are true? Go into the Stillness and ask the spirit of God indwelling you and you will have your answer.

Most of what people call "truth" is really just belief. Beliefs are doctrines and theologies mostly of man-made origin though some are partially inspired by God or other celestial beings. They are theories trying to explain what the universe is, who we are and what our

destiny is. There is much you can learn from these and all contain some elements of truth, but there are thousands of books, religions, movements, philosophies and theologies which all claim to have "the truth." How will you sort through this philosophic/religious maze to find what is true? What makes you think this one book, teacher or religious group you have found has all the truth?

There are grains of truth within everything, but truth is much greater than any one book, religion or system of thought. You must look beyond these. You must be open to all people, books, religions, and systems of thought. You must learn to use your inner guidance to help you determine what is really true. You have the source of truth within you. Your spirit fragment has been given to you by God Himself to help you recognize truth. Learn to utilize this inner guide to pilot you through the maze of life. When you are uncertain, turn to this inner guidance during your Stillness. Ask your spirit fragment to help you discern what is really true. Ask questions and in time, through a flash of insight, the words of another person or the words in a book, you will find your answer. It is literally true, "seek and you will find." But to honestly seek, you must seek with an open mind. Do not assume you have already found all of the truth. If you really think this, then you have cut yourself off from your potential for continuing growth. The point of all this discussion about truth is that to be mentally healthy, you must keep alive your search for truth.

How do you know if you are finding the truth? Ask yourself these questions. Does it feel right? Does it have a ring of truth within you? Do you sense that your inner guide is telling you that it is true? Does it seem to be reasonable to your mind even though you cannot scientifically prove it? Faith and reason are not the same, but your faith, the growing awareness of what you inwardly trust to be true, should always be reasonable. Finally, does following your path toward greater truth bring about the fruits of the spirit within you?

This last question leads us to the issue of what it means to be spiritually healthy. First, you will find you are growing in faith (not belief). Second, you will increasingly be manifesting the fruits of the spirit. Faith is your willingness to trust in the guidance of



your inner spirit. Doubt is the unwillingness to trust in the reality of your spiritual nature. Let's ask some more questions. Are you becoming more tolerant, patient, loving and open-minded? Are you learning to live more by inner guidance each day? Are you becoming more loving towards yourself and your brothers and sisters? Do you feel better about yourself? Do others seem to notice you are becoming a better person? We have no way to objectively measure our spiritual growth, but the true meaning of "by their fruits you shall know them" reveals the evidence of spiritual growth. If you want to be spiritually healthy, the fruits of the spirit are your food and the Stillness is your exercise.

Now that we know what it means to be healthy at the physical, mental and spiritual levels; what causes us to be unhealthy? First, we have to face the realities of living on a material world in a material body such as genetic diseases, accidents, poor food quality, and our polluted environment. We can have only varying degrees of control over these factors. But beyond these, it is our failure to properly feed and exercise our whole selves - physically, mentally and spiritually. Neglect of any of these three parts of ourselves will create imbalance and disharmony which can result in an inadequate level of love, health and happiness. Why do so many people fail to recognize this spiritual part of themselves and settle for less love, health and happiness? Fear, ignorance, complacency and laziness are the basic reasons. Let me explain.

When we talk about spiritual growth and learning to develop a relationship with God through the practice of Stillness, some people seem turned off by this. They have an image in their mind of what a spiritual or religious person is. They see someone who is very pious, timid and who has forsaken most of life's earthly pleasures. True spirituality has little to do with these characteristics. True spirituality is not a matter of how many prayers you recite each day, how many earthly pleasures you deny yourself, or even how well you know the text of a "sacred" or "revealed" book. True spirituality is the degree to which you manifest the fruits of the spirit. You can be a truly spiritual person, a religious person, and still enjoy the physical pleasures of life. There is nothing bad about physical pleasures or the enjoyment of the physical world as long as they are enjoyed in moderation. It is only when they are taken to excess and made the dominant pursuit in

life that they become stumbling blocks. You can be a very spiritual person and never step foot in a church, synagogue, temple or mosque. Conversely, some people who frequently attend these places are not necessarily very spiritual people. You know that by their actions, by the lack of the fruits of the spirit. They are not loving, tolerant, compassionate, and open-minded. The light and love of their inner spirit is not shining through them.

Another measure of your spirituality is the degree of development of your relationship with the God indwelling you. You are not God, and you will never become God as the First Source and Creator of all life. But God has given a fragment of Himself to indwell each person. This is the way He keeps in touch with us; this is how He knows all of our thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams. As your relationship with God grows, He is gradually showing you the divine qualities dominating His universe. These qualities are the fruits of the spirit. The more you manifest these fruits, the more God-like you become. Gradually, your will is to want to do His will.

So our image of what it means to be a spiritual person should be adjusted to reflect these concepts. You can be a beloved child of God and still enjoy the physical reality He has given us. Whether you use cosmetics, dance, play cards or even go to church every week has nothing to do with being a religious/spiritually alive person. These are merely childish, man-made substitutions that show a lack of understanding of what real spirituality is all about. You can be loving, kind, tolerant, patient, open-minded and full of grace (a spiritual person) and still laugh, have fun and enjoy this physical life.

Now that you have adjusted your idea of what it means to have a spiritual life and a relationship with God, you have some decisions to make. If you are afraid of what your friends will think, have grown too complacent to want to change or are too lazy to make the effort, then you must accept your condition because you are not willing to do anything to improve it. Take a chance; try something new! Instead of being pulled down to the level of others by fear of not conforming, let your spiritual light show others a higher meaning of spirituality. There is nothing to fear and so much to gain. How will you know what you are missing unless you try something? As you grow in your

relationship with God and become more attuned to spiritual reality, your fear of what others think and the need for their approval will diminish. Why? Because you have God's approval! Seek out new friends who understand what you are trying to do, who are interested in walking this path with you. Their numbers are growing rapidly.

By far the biggest barrier to developing better health lies in our negative and unforgiving attitude towards ourselves and others. First, you must realize God loves you. You are His beloved child and His love for you as well as His mercy are beyond your imagination. There is justice in the universe, and yes, if someone continually spurned God's love and mercy, eventually they must account for their actions. But let God be their judge and not you. You must realize God's love and mercy are so great that most of the things you or others have done which you may think are so terrible, are easily forgiven by God. It is a matter of simply being sincere of heart and asking forgiveness. Actually, He has already forgiven you if you are in earnest. How could a loving parent not forgive their precious child if the child is sincere? The things others have done to you can easily be forgiven when you realize if they were awakened to the God within them, they would never have done anything to hurt you.

Some say, "I cannot seek the Stillness. I cannot develop this relationship with God because I am not worthy. God could not possibly love me because of what I have done. No one could love me." This, my friends, is an attitude you must simply dismiss. The truth is God does love you. He loves you more than any other human could ever possibly love you. He is the love of your life. All you need do is turn to Him and you will be forgiven. Yes, you will make more mistakes in your life because you learn by choosing and making decisions. You won't always make the right one until you learn to trust and follow the guidance of your inner spirit. You see young children doing things you wish they would not do. Does that mean you stop loving them? No! You still love the children, you simply try to correct their behavior. It is the same with us. God still loves us. He knows we will make mistakes because we are young children. From an eternal universe perspective, even seventy or eighty year of age is still considered a toddler. God understands that. You must begin to understand it. There is nothing you can do that God cannot forgive you for. God loves you. His love for you never stops.

We are the ones who block out God's love by our negative attitudes towards ourselves and others. You must forgive yourself, because God has forgiven you. In turn, you cannot go to God in Stillness and ask Him for understanding and to feel His love while you carry unforgiving attitudes of revenge, vindictiveness and resentment toward yourself or others. Remember the earlier discussion. Other people you meet in life are little children just like you. If they knew of God's love, if they were seeking this path and had found God's love; they would not act as they do. They were not raised perfectly. They make mistakes. They treat others in ways that are not kind because they do not know a better way. Do not confuse them as a child of God with their childish actions. Love them, dislike the actions. In time, whether in this life or when they pass on to the next level, they will learn to act better. Do not expect so much from them. If they do not know a better way, then how can they act better?

Seek out those who are growing and who share your desire to grow in a more positive way. Tell them about your relationship with God. Let others see you are changing; let them see the fruits of the spirit in you. Perhaps this will help them see a better way. If not, relate to them the best you can, but do not feel that you must befriend every individual. You should love them in the sense you want what is best for them. Love them in the sense you know God indwells them and in time they will learn a better way. But, you do not have to like them; you do not have to like their actions. You should not feel guilty because you do not wish to spend time with them. Seek out those with whom you feel a spiritual kinship and let them become your closest friends and associates.

If you harbor these unforgiving attitudes towards yourself and others, it will cause great distress, great disease within you. Such negativity must manifest itself in some way, and it will disrupt your physical, mental and spiritual health. It is the most debilitating thing there is. So, if you want to be healthy, let go of these negative attitudes. Forgive. Remember the words of Jesus, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." This is literally true. You must assess people's actions because you must decide whether you wish to have a relationship with them, but never judge their soul. Only God truly knows their motivations. And, believe it or not, there is this spirit of God within them

also. Their spirit is waiting for someone like you to show them some kindness and love. Your actions can then be used by their inner spirit in adjusting their thoughts to those of love and kindness. This is how you can help them become a more positive and loving person.

During the Stillness, picture the negative thing you have done or what someone else has done to you. Bring it up into your consciousness while you feel God by your side. Take another look at it. What you will find is that it is not so terrible as you once thought. You make it powerful because you will not let it go. You presume to know what God's limits are because you determined He could not possibly forgive you. It is you who has put the limits on forgiveness by your own unwillingness to forgive. It is you who puts up the barriers to accepting forgiveness. God can forgive anything He wants, and so can you. Looking through the eyes of God, see it as simply your or another's mistake. See that sometimes little children make mistakes. Simply let it go, let it lose its power over you. Only you can let it keep power over you by constantly feeding it with unforgiving emotions and thoughts.

Why go through the rest of your life feeling negatively toward yourself or someone else? Sooner or later you will forgive yourself and others. Why not do it now!? Why let this negativity prohibit you from developing a stronger relationship with God? Why let it prevent you from feeling the love of God? Why let it prevent you from feeling love for yourself and others?

Do not let these negative thoughts ruin your life and your health. Everyone has a fragment of the loving Father within them. Whatever you or another person did cannot destroy this fragment. Everything else is transitory. Let it pass; life goes on. Anger and an unforgiving attitude are too great a burden to bear. Say these healing words to yourself, "Forgive me, Father, for I know not what I do." "I forgive my brothers and sisters, Father, for they know not what they do."

## CHAPTER EIGHT: HAPPINESS

Think about the times you are happy. What do you notice? You notice you are content, you feel at peace. You may be with others whom you love and who love you. You do not feel pressure or stress. You feel positive toward others and life, and you feel good about yourself. Believe it or not, this is the state in which we were meant to live! If these are the ingredients that make us happy; then how do we bring more love and peace, and less stress and pressure into our lives? The most significant way to achieve this is through the practice of Stillness. Why? Because Stillness will bring you closer to God and God closer to you. This relationship you share with God is the greatest source of inner happiness. Just as God has given this happiness to you, you will want to serve others by giving happiness to them. As you grow, you will realize what brings the greatest happiness in life is the opportunity to give to others.

Sometimes we think service to others can only be some great deed. We have this idea that moving to a third world country and spending the rest of our lives devoted to the needy and poor is the greatest service. There is no doubt this would be a great service to humanity; however, our idea of service does not have to be so grandiose. Every day of your life opportunities to serve your brothers and sisters are in front of you. You must learn to recognize them more easily and frequently. You must realize no matter how insignificant you think a small act of kindness might be, it is important to the person you are helping. Realize when you help others, you are serving our Father.

The more loving service you give to others, the more you will feel the Father's love for you. The more loved you feel, the happier you will be. Instead of being a vicious cycle, this is a luscious cycle. Giving love begets love. Giving happiness to others through serving them begets happiness. No matter how much love and happiness you give, your cup will always be automatically replenished. In the universe there is never a shortage of love and happiness. You can have all and give all you want. Knowing you are a beloved child of the Father will make you feel worthy and increase your self-esteem. No matter what your status in life is, no matter what you have done, the Father loves you just as much as He loves anyone else. The Father loves all of His children equally. You have

the same potential for an eternal life of love and happiness as everyone else. While life may seem unfair at times on this world, it will not be so when you move on. The reason you see so much unfairness on this world is because you are only looking at the physical/material level of reality. When you look through spiritual eyes, there is fairness because we are all loved equally by God and have the same potential for eternal destiny.

As the feeling of love for yourself grows, it is only natural you will want to share this inner happiness with others. How do you share this love and inner happiness you feel? You share it by learning to give, to serve your brothers and sisters. There are simple ways to serve every day. You don't have to change your outer life to do them. For example, one of the greatest services of all is to just look at your brothers and sisters and project love to them while talking with them. They will not necessarily understand exactly what is happening, but when you let the love of the Father flow through you to them, they will feel it and it will help them.

Another valuable service we can give to our brothers and sisters is simply to listen to them. Most of the time we really do not listen. We are so wrapped up in ourselves we can hardly wait to gush out all of our thoughts and beliefs about life and about whatever the topic of discussion is. Try to learn to talk less and listen more. Let the other person talk. This is something most people who are troubled truly need. They have not found God within them, they have not yet begun to develop a relationship with Him. They are still looking for other human beings to solve their problems. Let them talk about their problems. You become their sounding board. By talking, they can actually hear themselves think, they can hear the echo of their own thoughts. Through this process they will often begin to see some solutions to their problems. They might find their problems are not as great or complicated as they thought.

As they eventually begin to wind down from gushing forth all of their problems, they might even notice how calm you are, that you seem to have an inner peace and love about you. They might even ask how you achieved such a state! At that point, you can tell them they are a child of God and a part of God lives within them which loves them deeply. Through a practice called Stillness, they can begin to develop a relationship with

God. They can find some love and happiness in their life and find the answers to their problems. You can light the way, you can show them how a relationship with God has helped you. It will not always happen this way. But little by little, step by step, you can help others to come to this realization.

Humor is another great method of service. I do not mean the cutting, sarcastic, demeaning humor so common in our culture. Rather, I mean a genuine lightheartedness brought about by learning to laugh at life's problems and at ourselves. Use of this gentle humor can be very helpful to others. It lightens their load. Laughter relieves much stress. Those who can laugh at life and at themselves will be much happier and healthier. We truly take ourselves too seriously. See life as a learning process. From an eternity viewpoint, this life is but a day's work, so do it well! We are loved; we are given guidance. What are we so worried about? It is simply up to us to make the effort to become more loving, to do the best we can. When you make a mistake, pick yourself up, dust yourself off and have a good laugh. Get on with life. No one gets through life without making mistakes. But while you are living it, why not be of good cheer yourself and spread it around?

Your level of maturity is not gauged so much by the quantity or quality of the mistakes you make, but by how you react to these mistakes. Do you let them defeat you? Or, do you turn to God in the Stillness and ask Him for renewed strength and courage to get back on the track, ready to face more of life's experiences? Life is not easy. But through the Stillness, through learning God is by your side at all times, you can view your life as full of challenges instead of difficulties. You have the opportunity for eternal life. Broaden your perspective to see this life as just the beginning of your destiny. Nothing can happen in this life that cannot be corrected eventually. Lighten your burden and the burden of others. God has all the patience necessary, and you have all the time in the world.

Giving advice or counsel is another way to serve others, but advice is best given when it is asked for. Rather than endlessly talking about how you would handle a situation, help others explore the best solution by asking them questions about what they are saying.



Remember, the best advice is already within them. Your service is to help draw it out. How do you do that? Mostly by listening which was discussed previously. But if you do give advice, counsel someone about how to solve problems for themselves rather than you solving it for them. You have heard the saying, "Give a man a fish, and he has food for a day. But teach a man how to fish, and then he has food for the rest of his life." There is great wisdom in this saying. It is a wonderful analogy to seeking inner guidance from God through Stillness. Let's create a new saying to apply to giving advice. "If I give you an answer, you will solve your problem today. But if I teach you how to find your own answers within, you will be able to solve your problems for the rest of your life." The best advice is always to help a person find their own answers within.

Learn to help people in ways they perceive will be helpful to them. However, do not do something which would be harmful to them, even if they think it would be good for them. Otherwise try to help with whatever they think they need rather than what you would prefer to do for them. If they need help in going to the grocery store, fixing the sink, then help them with that. When you spend time with them in these types of activities, opportunities to help them at a deeper, more spiritual level may occur. And in these moments you can let the Father speak through you and give this other person the words to comfort them. As discussed earlier, the answers to life's problems can come in many ways because the Father speaks to us in many ways. Answers may come from books, through the words of another person, through our own moments of inspiration, through our own inner religious experience. Be alert to these opportunities for service. Learn to help in the little ways. In time greater opportunities may come.

I will mention one more way to serve, which is probably the greatest service of all. You don't even have to step outside your house to do it. In fact, you can do it at anytime and at any place. You guessed it! Prayer. Prayer is discussed so much that sometimes I think we forget how effective it can be. It can be so effective because we are enlisting the help of unseen forces and spiritual beings who love and watch over us. More than anything, these beings want to show their love by serving us. However, keep in mind what was mentioned in an earlier chapter. If you pray for material/physical level solutions, you may not see results. If it were that easy, we would all pray to win the lottery and all be

instant millionaires. Another way to think about it is if you think God cares about money, just look at those who have it! Are they the most spiritual or deserving?!

For what then should you pray? Pray for others to be given a specific insight into their problem or behavior. Pray they be given courage, wisdom, patience, tolerance or whatever other spiritual fruit they need. If the best you can do is to recite some formalized prayer you have memorized, then that is better than nothing because your intent is sincere and loving. But let me try to expand upon an idea to make your prayer not only sincere but more effective.

Suppose your child or a friend came to you and said, "I need your help." What thoughts would go through your mind? Wouldn't you wonder what the nature of the problem was and what specific kind of help they needed? They say, "I'm in trouble." You still don't know what the problem is or what kind of help is needed. Then they say, "Things aren't going well." By now you are ready to shout, "Just tell me what the problem is and what kind of help you need!" Their response is, "OK, my husband is leaving me and I feel like my life has fallen apart and I don't know what to do."

Now you know the problem. There are many things you can do to serve such as watching her children for her occasionally, being a good listener, and praying for her. To pray for her, you need to assess what she needs at the spiritual level. She appears lost, alone, insecure, and frightened. She could use insight into a broader perspective which shows her she will survive. Also, an awareness of the presence of God and her angels to let her know she is not alone is helpful. She could use an understanding that, with the help of God and her friends, she has the inner strength to cope with the situation and the courage to walk through this dark valley and overcome her fear.

These are the things she needs most. These are what you could pray for. Also, pray she will be given the awareness to turn to her God within for guidance. Whenever you encounter another person, ask yourself what they need immediately after you have left them. Then envisage them surrounded by an aura of love you have projected toward them. Then say the prayer which asks specifically for what you think they need. You say

the prayer they would say if they were more enlightened. Also, let them know you will pray for them.

Now the angels, guides and other spiritual forces can go to work. You've given them a job they are able and willing to do. There are so many people in need you can be of service much of the time by praying. You didn't even have to leave your job and move to another country!

The opportunities for service to others are abundant. I have mentioned only a few, but all of these can be done in your everyday life. Service is the key to happiness. As you are increasingly filled with the Father's love and learn to help others, you will become much happier. You will feel loved and loving, peaceful, less stressful and have a more positive attitude toward yourself, others and life. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, these are the ingredients for happiness.

## CHAPTER NINE: LOVE

How do we learn to love and be loved? We know we are imperfect. We know we make mistakes. We know we have done hurtful things to people and other people have done hurtful things to us. Where is this love that is supposed to fill our life? The greatest love you will find in life is the love of our Father. The Father loves you more than any human could possibly love you. Why do you not feel this love of the Father? Because you have not sought it. Because you have not spent time to develop a relationship with the Father. How can you feel love from someone whom you do not personally know? Can you feel love from another human that you have never met? Of course not. Therefore, to feel the Father's love and love Him in return, you need to get to know Him. How do you do that? Through the practice of Stillness. As you spend time in the Stillness, ask the Father to feel His love. Give Him thanks and praise Him for the beauty and the goodness that He has created. Over time you will gradually sense His presence, a growing feeling of His love surrounding you. It is as if a protective shield is being placed around you. It feels warm, it feels wonderful. It is there for the asking. You must simply make the effort.

The Father's love has always been there for us, but we have been too busy, too blind or too unwilling to seek it. We have put up the barriers to the Father's love by not recognizing Him, by not making the effort to know Him. Once we begin to make this effort, the barrier comes down and the love comes in. We begin to feel it more strongly each day. It will not overwhelm you, it is subtle. It is something that gradually grows. There will be times in the Stillness when you will feel it more intensely and other times more subtly. But if you continue your practice, over time you will gradually become more aware of this love that is within you. You will sense the presence of the Father within you. Now you have the love of your life. Now you have the wisest, kindest, and most loving person by your side at all times. Do you know the words, "What does it matter if all things earthly crumble?" Those who build this relationship with the Father and feel the love of the Father in their soul can begin to truly understand what this statement means. The Father is with you. He loves you. He will help you get through all of life's problems. And when you finally pass on after experiencing physical death,

you will move to the next level of life in the universe. There the Father will continue to guide you.

It is good to fall in love with someone to share companionship or to have a family. But always keep in mind that these are other human beings, these are other imperfect humans just like you. Do not expect they will be perfect or that you will have a perfect loving relationship with these other humans. The problem is most people seek only this human love relationship rather than also seeking a relationship with God. Then they wonder why they are disappointed, why love has passed them by. Love has not passed any of us by, it is waiting for us to simply seek it out. But we tend not to look in the right places. We are not told much about the love of God or that spiritual reality is the enduring reality. We do not come to value its existence as being as real as physical/material reality. But if you give it a chance, if you seek this spiritual reality of the God within, you will come to know it is just as real. In fact, in time it will seem even more real to you than much of what goes on around you in the physical/material world.

In time, the petty jealousy, biting comments, greed, materialism, and self-aggrandizement of humans that you encounter at some level every day will actually begin to seem less real. What you will begin to see is people acting in these ways because they do not know a better way. They are not yet aware that spirit reality is the reality of beauty, truth and goodness. This is the permanent reality. This is the eternal reality. The negative attitudes, thoughts and actions you see around you are only temporary. They are there because people do not seek or know a better way. But these negative and immature reactions are all fleeting; they all pass quickly. The love, truth and beauty that is true reality are enduring. You simply have to seek it and learn to recognize it more. Let the Father be your guide.

Not only will you begin to feel more love for yourself as you begin to see yourself as a cherished child of God, but also you will begin to see the presence of the Father in your brothers and sisters. This can be a difficult change in perception to accomplish because others can act in some very unloving ways. Remember in an earlier chapter we talked about one technique in which you look at your brothers and sisters and picture them

when they were little children standing in their cribs. Their eyes were big and bright and beautiful. You could see their wonderful potential to be a loving, kind, truth-seeking human being within them. That potential is still there no matter how distorted or disguised. Or, think of them as an acorn seed trying to grow in a difficult environment, a difficult climate. Their leaves are withered, their limbs are heavy from life's storms, but the potential to become a beautiful oak tree gently swaying in the breeze in the warmth of the sunlight is there.

To feel love for and to see the presence of God in others, remember to separate their actions from their true selves. If they commit crimes, it may be necessary to put them in institutions where they cannot hurt others. But, never forget whether in this lifetime or as they move on to the next level, their potential is still there. God is still within them. If they have become so evil or corrupt there is no goodness left within them that can be salvaged, then their fate may be sealed. But, we cannot know this. Only God knows them well enough to be their judge. Meanwhile, look at them with compassion, not hatred. Hate the actions, but look at the individual with compassion. Love the sinner, hate the sin. Do you really believe if people knew God, His love for them, and of the goodness and beauty of a loving and kind universe that awaits them, they would act in the ways they do? I really think they would not. I think they would want to be part of such a loving and beautiful universe. Most people are starving for love while the greatest love of all is waiting within. Let them see the Father's love within you.

There is another approach you might take to learn to love others. Look at another person and realize the God indwells them just as God indwells you. Imagine yourself talking to the God fragment within them. Would you say negative things? Would you say hurtful things? If you try this, you will find the level at which you relate to this person will be very uplifted. You will try to communicate clearly and in a kind and loving manner. After all, if you imagine you are talking to God, don't you think you will be on your best behavior?! To do this, you must raise your level of consciousness to feel God's presence with you. Then, in a sense you allow the God within you to communicate with the God within them.

If others do not respond in a loving way, it is not your problem. It is their problem. Your responsibility is to do the best you can. You cannot make choices for others. They must follow their own path, they must find God in their own way and time. You should not expect that just because you attempt to act in a more loving and kind way you will always receive this in return. In fact, while on this world, you will not receive this in many instances because most people have not yet awakened to their true nature. The point is for you to do the best you can. You only have control over your own decisions and actions, not anyone else's. If they are open and searching, you can help them. You will know it and it will fill you with happiness to be of service to them. But if they are not, if they are closed and still very negative, let your light shine. Treat them in a kind way. Say a prayer for them to be awakened to the Father's love within them. Remember the action is your responsibility and the reaction is theirs.

As you become aware of the presence of God within and feel how much God loves you, your love for God and your love for yourself will grow immensely. As this occurs, it is only natural you will want to let this love flow through you to others. It is only natural you will want to serve others. It is only natural you will begin to see the presence of God in all your brothers and sisters. While we may differ as human beings physically or mentally, from a spiritual point of view, we are all equal. Equal because God loves each of us the same. Equal because we all have a fragment of God within us. No matter how poor or rich, no matter what occupation or status in life, every normal human has this spirit of God within them. Therefore, you should always be respectful of another person because of the spirit within them. Judge their actions if you have to, but do not ever judge their soul, their spiritual status.

As your practice of the Stillness continues, more and more you will be able to see the love of God all around you. Eventually, you will understand the highest meaning of the statement that learning to love yourself, the spirit fragment of God within you and the personality making you a unique child of God, is the greatest love of all. When you truly have learned to love yourself, all of your human relationships will become more loving. When you feel loved and loving, you do not respond to unkindness with more unkindness. Rather, you let the unkind remarks or actions bounce off the shield of love

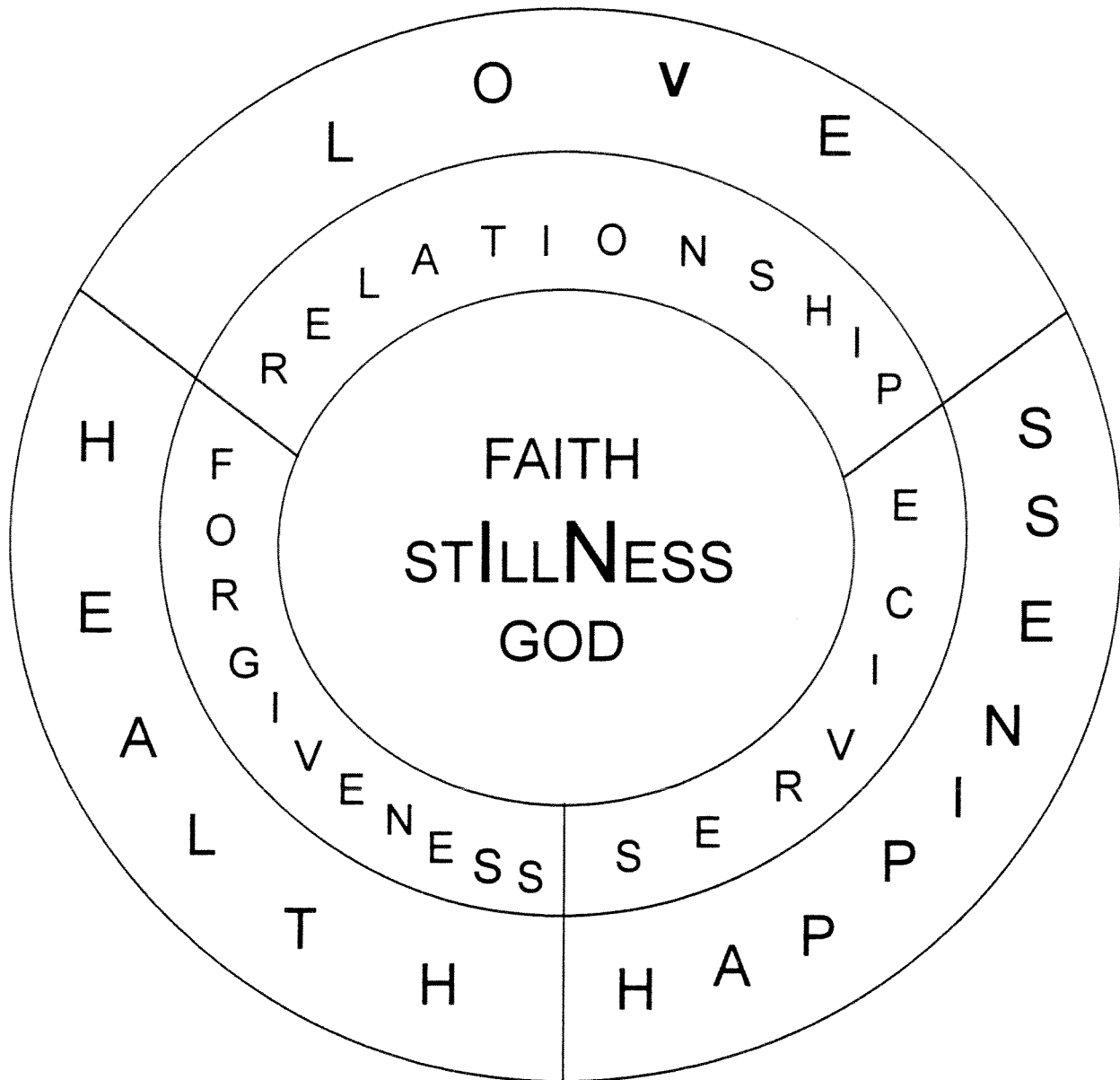
surrounding you. When the remark or action just bounces off instead of letting it wound you and make you want to retaliate, it is reflected immediately and undistortedly back to the other person. They can now see more clearly what they have said or done. In most instances they will regret it. This is the meaning of learning to "turn the other cheek." Your impenetrable barrier of love can withstand even a second attack. Eventually, the other person will realize their negative remarks or actions are only hurting themselves.

Can love be defined? The best definition of love I have ever heard is love is the desire to do good to others. Think about it. When you love someone, don't you want to do good things for them? This could be parents, children, spouses, companions and others. When you "fall in love", don't you try to think of ways to please the other person with flowers, little notes and special gifts? This is what you should feel for yourself and everyone else you meet when you have become saturated with the Father's love. Can you even imagine what the world would be like if everyone felt such love within them? It is hard to imagine, but yet this is your destiny. This is how spiritual beings live in the universe. One day you will live this way, but why wait!? You can begin to feel the love of God today by beginning this practice of Stillness. Make this world a better place now by letting this love flow through you to your brothers and sisters. Let your inner light shine as a beacon to all the lost and storm-ravaged souls who sail upon this sea of life.



# STILLNESS

## The Key to Love, Health, and Happiness



## CHAPTER TEN: FAITH

In addition to more love, health and happiness in your life, the continuing practice of the Stillness, the continuing development of your relationship with God, will lead you to a greater realization of what faith is. Faith and belief are different. Belief is ascribing to some set of doctrines or statements about what life and God are supposed to be. Faith, on the other hand, is a living, dynamic process in which you are gradually learning to trust more in the God who dwells within you. As your relationship with God is growing, your faith in God is growing. You are learning to trust more, to seek inner guidance to solve the problems in your life, to discern what is true and what is not, and to feel more love for yourself and others.

There is a great difference between this living faith and mere belief. Many people attend churches, synagogues, mosques or temples and they have belief in the tenets of their particular religions. But what happens when life brings them a difficult situation? Will belief in these precepts help them? They are usually told if they simply pray more, everything will be all right. And so they recite the formalized prayers of their religions. Yet things do not usually change and they become disillusioned. Perhaps it would be nice if it were so simple that we need not take any responsibility for our spiritual development. We would simply have to attend meetings of some religious organization, say we believe the things they believe and everything would be taken care of. We would not have to think about the issues of life; we would not have to attempt to develop a relationship with God. All we need do is follow a few rules and ascribe to a few beliefs. But, such a secondhand relationship with God will not serve you well. It will not give you the living faith/trust in God you need to feel Him at your side in times of difficulty. It will not provide you the level of love, health and happiness you deserve and desire.

Within you is the most knowledgeable, wise, loving person you can ever imagine. Why not let this person, this fragment of God, be your guide and your friend? Why not learn to turn your troubles over to this person and let Him help you? Then, no matter what situation you face in life, you have this all-wise and all loving comforter right by your side. And,

because you have developed a relationship, you can call on Him any time and He will always be there for you. This firsthand religion, this firsthand experience of God within you, is what true faith is all about. As you grow, your understanding of truth and God can change because your faith is what grounds you. All this change and growth is allowed because you have this perfect guide within you to help you make these adjustments in your way of thinking and acting. You are not limited to an unchanging, fixed, or circumscribed set of precepts developed mostly by the thoughts of men. Rather, you are open to the inner guidance from a divine source.

Many people may not want to pursue this path because they might think it is too difficult or they simply do not want to make the effort. As you well know, nothing of value comes without effort. To be successful in the material world requires effort. To be successful in mental endeavors requires effort. To be successful at the spiritual level on this world also requires effort. There can be some anxiety and confusion along the way, but this is present in your life already. However, as you begin to grow in your relationship with God, your anxiety and confusion will lessen because now you have an inner comforter and teacher who is showing you a better way.

Learn to trust this wonderful spiritual Father just as a little child trusts his earthly parents. Go to the Father with all of your troubles and anxieties and allow Him to guide, comfort, and show you how much He loves you. It is an easy process when you think about it. You are simply developing this relationship. You already know how to do it - remember, spend time each day with Him! What could be easier? What could be simpler? Is the price of thirty minutes to an hour a day for the wealth of love, health and happiness too much? It seems as though it's quite a bargain! All the love and faith you need is yours just by your willingness to share your life with God.

One of the most helpful suggestions in this process is to find people who are on a similar path. Try to find others who would like to begin this practice of Stillness. Then, get together with them each week or every two weeks. You can spend some time in Stillness together, but then use some time to talk about your experience. Share the experience of

your inner religious life with each other. What difficulties, what experiences, what joys are you having in your practice of Stillness? You will find this will be very helpful and very comforting. It is very difficult to experience something by ourselves and not have others with whom to share. You need this opportunity to share what you are learning with other people, they need the opportunity to share with you.

No one sees the total picture of life. We each see different parts. But if we pool the vision of each of our parts, we can see a larger picture of the whole. This is the advantage of sharing your understanding about life, the Stillness, and your relationship with God. There are many others who would like to begin this search just as you would. Seek them out. Set up an opportunity to share with them even if you only find one person. If there are more, even better. If you have many, split into small groups so everyone has ample opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings in discussion.

This faith, this growing relationship that you are developing with God, is the living water Jesus talked about. If you look at Jesus' life you will see whenever He had difficulties or was unsure, He went to commune with the Father. This is the secret of life; it is the key to the spiritual kingdom. All those who wish to enter must be born again. What does that really mean? It simply means you have decided to develop this relationship with God. You are going to make God a part of your life. You have been born into the spiritual level of reality. Doing the will of God has nothing to do with what you do to earn a living or other physical/material world issues. It simply means you are willing to share your inner life with God by developing a relationship with Him. It means you are willing to trust His guidance through life. As you come to know God, you will come to know His will, His way for you. You will freely choose to do His will and follow His way because He is the way of truth, beauty and goodness. Truth is really very simple once you understand it, but you cannot find it without the help of the spirit of God within.

When you became an adult, you left the safe harbor of your childhood and set sail upon the uncharted sea of life. On your voyage, you have visited many islands of experience such as jobs, relationships, religions, social causes, etc. You may even have temporarily

wrecked your ship upon the rocks of drugs, alcohol or other abuses and obsessions. As the captain of your ship, you have chosen which islands to visit and when it was time to leave and set sail again. You have steered your ship through life's fog, rough waters and even storms. The days of blue skies and warm breezes have given you hope of finding your destination. What is most remarkable is most of us continue to sail without the aid of a pilot. We let the winds of fate and our own limited knowledge fill our sails and determine our course.

What is a pilot? He is the one who knows your destination and has the charts to plot the course to take you there. Who is your pilot? He is the fragment of God, the spirit of God who lives within you. He is always there to guide you, but He can only suggest a course or direction because you are the captain. Only the captain makes decisions. Are you tired of losing your way, not knowing where you are going and how to get there? Then turn to the pilot within for guidance. You will still encounter islands to experience and rough waters. But now you have a pilot who can also be your tour guide to help you choose the best islands. Now you have someone to help you find the shortest and most direct course to sail through those stormy times. Most importantly, now you have someone who cares about you to sail with.

Why do you insist on making the voyage alone and without guidance? Let the winds of faith, not fate, fill your sails as you continue your voyage to Paradise. Your pilot hails from Paradise, so he knows how to guide you there.

## CONCLUSION

While I may have seemed critical of our world's religious/philosophical systems of thought and organized religions because they have not made this personal relationship with God their primary teaching, I am not suggesting you should abandon them. You can find comfort and fellowship in these philosophical/religious organizations. Your practice of the Stillness, your development of a relationship with God can be done with or without them. You need not give up your beliefs in the particular religious/philosophical system of thought in which you are participating. It is not necessary because the Stillness practice could easily be taught within the structure of all religious/philosophical organizations. Should not their main purpose be to help you develop your relationship with God and to grow spiritually? Hopefully, at some future time they will begin to recognize this as their true purpose. Then they will develop courses, workshops and seminars geared toward the practice of the Stillness. Until then this is a practice you should develop on your own because it will bring you closer to God. Think of it as your personal religion which will self-empower you to find the love, health and happiness you desire and deserve.

Yes, having a personal relationship, a living faith/trust in God will change your life, but not in a strange or negative way. It does not mean you have to become an ascetic or give up material goods or pleasures. It only means you will have a close friendship and loving relationship with God. This loving Father will help you be more loving toward yourself and toward other people while you continue your existence on this world in your material body. It is really all quite simple. You now have the key. It is up to you to unlock the door. How do you unlock it? You set aside some time each day to spend with God. What do you do? Talk with God, give thanks and praise to Him. Still your mind and listen to God. Feel His love. Feel His presence. Know this is what every enlightened religious teacher has tried to convey to humanity.

True spirituality is not about belief systems, rituals or practices. It is about developing a faith relationship with God. What could be more devastating to a parent than for a child to ignore him? God, our Father, loves us and seeks our love in return. God shares His love with you, share your love with God. You will be rewarded beyond your wildest

imagination by your efforts. You will be rewarded by greater love, truth, goodness, compassion, tolerance, faith, courage, patience, inner peace, wisdom, health and happiness. These are the true treasure of life, and yes, you will take them with you when you journey onward.

You must decide after reading these words if what I have said is true. How do you know? How can you possibly assess what I have said unless you begin the practice of the Stillness to see for yourself if it brings the results I have said it will. You can discuss and theorize endlessly, but we are creatures who learn by experience. Firsthand experience of the practice of the Stillness is what will tell you if these words are true. All the discussion about it, who has practiced it and why it hasn't been taught are all, for the most part, academic. Only experience will convince you. Only a firsthand experience of the God within will assure you of His reality.

Just do it! Just give it a try. You will not be disappointed. But you must be patient. In time it will become a spiritual habit. Just as you would become hungry if you went for a few days without eating, you will find after a while you feel spiritually hungry if you do not seek the Stillness. Seek the comfort and love of God because you will find great strength, great spiritual nourishment in this relationship. Before long you will not want to miss your time with God. If you have to for some reason, you will feel a little disappointed because it becomes one of the true highlights, if not "the" highlight, of your day. And why not? Why would time spent in a loving relationship with someone as loving and caring as God not be something that is desirable? But now it is all words to you and so there is only one way that you will know - you must experience this yourself.

And so we conclude with the words with which we began. The Stillness is the practice to help you develop a personal relationship with God. This relationship will bring you the love, health and happiness you desire. These are the words that are the key to unlocking the door to a true knowledge of God, a true living faith: "Be still, and know that I am God". I thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts and experience with you. I bow to the spirit of God within you.

## FURTHER READING AND ORDERING

The following topics are available for further study or as presentations for discussion groups. Topics are three to five pages in length and include discussion questions:

Courage  
Faith  
Forgiveness  
Healing  
Hope  
Patience  
Service  
Spiritual Growth  
Tolerance  
Truth

Send \$3.00 per topic; \$10.00 for four topics, or \$25.00 for the entire set. (Postage included in all prices.) If you have a different topic(s) for which you would like a presentation, send \$5.00 per topic.

For further information on ordering manuscripts or topics and on other products and services, write or call:

### STILLNESS FOUNDATION

7840 Harcourt Springs Place  
Indianapolis, IN 46260  
Phone 317/334-1733

**ORDERING: Stillness: The Key to Finding Love, Health, and Happiness**

Manuscripts are \$10.00 per copy plus \$3.00 S&H	(Total = \$13.00)
Five copies are \$45.00 plus \$5.00 S&H	(Total = \$50.00)
Ten copies are \$90.00 and S&H is paid	(Total = \$90.00)

Send check or money order to Stillness Foundation at the above address.  
Allow one to two weeks for delivery.

Also available from Stillness Foundation is Teach Us To Love, an insightful presentation on developing your inner feelings of love and the nature of spiritual growth. Also presented are insights on the life and teachings of Jesus, the healing process and a charting of life after the physical experience.

Book price is \$15.00 per copy plus \$3.00 S&H	(Total = \$18.00)
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Send check or money order to Stillness Foundation at the above address.  
Allow one to two weeks for delivery.





This is a beginners guide to the practice of "Stillness." It is written to help you develop a personal relationship with God in order to more fully feel His love and presence in your life. Feeling God's presence in your life is what will bring you the love, health and happiness you desire. Stillness is described as it functions at the physical, mental and spiritual levels of reality. In addition, a seven step ladder to practice the Stillness is outlined to help make it easier to seek communion with God on a daily basis. Benefits and results of regular practice are explained with chapters on love, health, happiness and faith.

This easy to read book is intended as a guide to get you started and keep you going. If you have ever thought about incorporating a spiritual practice into your daily routine, this combination of a meditative technique coupled with daily communication with God is a great way to start.