

I spent a lot of time walking over summer...mostly up and used this time to pray...to build myself up in God and to prepare and to pray for you

One day as I was walking up Signal Hill I got the impression that God really wants to impress on us that He desires to speak to us. This year...regularly

WHY? Because this is the normal Christian life - to know God and be known. To walk in fellowship with God like this.

This is how it was in the beginning and it's our spiritual inheritance still.

Then I had this scripture in my head: *Man does not live by bread alone.*

I thought this was a bit random.

I couldn't quite remember all the verse for a while, but then the rest came back to me: *but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*

I had learned this as a young person.

I didn't really know why this had just popped into my head, but I was listening for God's word to me.

At home later I went and looked it up and found it was a reference from Deuteronomy 8. So I began to write in my journal about what I sensed God was saying to me and I had this wonderful interaction where God spoke to me through the Scripture and in relation to my feelings about an incident that I was worried about.

My reason for telling you this is:

I could have missed this interaction!

- By not being on that prayer walk.
- By dismissing what popped into my mind.
- By not knowing the Word of God, so it could be fed back to me by the Holy Spirit.
- By not later going to my journal and looking up the verse and listening to what God was saying. That extra step.

And for us the point is from this particular scripture: We are so into the physical stuff! Food, bread, possessions, the things that are real and concrete around us, but it's a great delusion because on their own the physical is never going to be enough to satisfy us.

What really satisfies us long term is knowing God and having God regularly speak to us.

Did you know that EVERYONE and everything is spiritual?

What I think is that we have to wake up to the fact that we are more spiritual than we are physical beings.

God needs us to learn to be spiritual so we can hear!
We need to raise our awareness, belief and expectation.
We all have the capacity to hear God.
God wants to encounter us. God wants to be intimate.
He really wants to be able to talk to us!!
And if you are not a Christian God wants to speak to you and show you who he is.

This quote captures much of what I want to help us understand and experience this year.

ROYALTY is my identity SERVANTHOOD is my assignment INTIMACY with God is my life source Before God I am an intimate. Before people I am a servant. Before the powers of hell, I am a ruler, with no tolerance for their influence. Bill Johnson, <i>Dreaming with God</i> , (Destiny Image Publishers: Shippensburg, 2006), p 88
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So this is one of my big aims:

- **Help you hear.**
- **Help you find and grow in a relationship to Jesus Christ.**
- **Help you be spiritual.**
- **Raise the bar. Exhort you to faith and expectation.**
- **Love you to bits.**
- **Challenge you.**
- **Help you be healed and whole.**

So when you leave you will be more in love with Jesus and equipped for every good work he calls you to.

This will take time.

John 16:12, I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

Heb 5:11, We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

But maybe you have given up trying.

But maybe you don't know how.

Trust me, trust us as your leaders and keep coming.
BUT we need to know what we mean by spiritual.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SPIRITUAL?

1. First the physical and then the spiritual

If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 1 Corinthians 15:45-46

The spiritual person has got a second wind.

2. Humans are a complex mix of body, soul and spirit.

3. GOD exists as Creator.

Romans 1:20, For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen. Therefore we are without excuse.

BUT verse 21, Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and worshipped idols.

Even as Christians we can be like this. Asleep. Spiritually slumbering. Not making much impact anywhere. Not spiritually minded or discerning.

4. CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Jesus said: I am the way to know the Father, to know life and truth.

Believing in Jesus and receiving His gift of eternal life and forgiveness is the first step to a Christian spirituality.

To receive Jesus is to become a person of light and life.

The presence of God is the central fact of Christianity.

God is among us here and now, wanting to have a spiritual relationship with us, wanting us to encounter Him.

A relationship with God is our birthright and eternity is our inheritance, according to Ephesians 1 and the Holy Spirit is given to us at this point as our assurance of this.

This requires a LEAP OF FAITH

You cannot come to Christianity purely through the intellect. Don't approach it through your mind. You have to be willing to experience it first – to do something you don't understand – and then understanding often follows. Without understanding, without even knowing why – you say "Yes" to Christ. We try to approach Christianity as Nicodemus did through logic... 'Rabbi, we know you are a teacher sent by God – no one could perform these signs otherwise.' But Jesus said: 'I tell you, unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom of God.'

Do you believe Jesus was God? – a profound but basic question upon which hinges our Christianity and experience.

Don't try to answer this with logic.

To be willing to trust God without understanding and with questions and reservations is faith and it is not on our terms. We want to come to God in our own way – strong, healthy, good, ready to commit.

But maybe God wants us now, without a shred of anything to recommend you. The leap of faith is: I believe...help my unbelief. You are God.

This will open up room for the Other, the Mystery, for God in His way to do something new. It is a death - death of my control, my bad ideas, my understanding.

Be ready, for God in Christ and through the Spirit is calling us into a new place, a dimension of Christian existence, being and love that we have given Him little room for in the past. It is not founded in us, in our goodness or our effort. It is to be found in letting go, in dying, in opening up room for God to encounter us. It is not on our own terms. It is for God to decide.

And God is saying to us:

Come to me and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Learn to live in this manner. It's like being in sync. Feel the light touch of my Spirit, gently leading you to the left and to the right. As you obey this you will walk in the light. Fear not obeying the Spirit rather than what others will think of you.

What prevents us from being spiritual? A veil in our hearts.

Our uncrucified nature and thoughts.

This can only be removed by Jesus, spiritually.

It is work of God and grace, not anything we can do.

We must encounter Jesus and be changed by Him. Not by the church, not by good works and nice moral lives, not even by the word of God!