



Fanning The Flame

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Chapter 5: I Believe in God

Nugget

*"Have you believed because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe"*

John 20: 29

In the search for the meaning of human existence, one thing remains constant: God. Every person who believes comes to recognize God in his/her own way. Some refuse to see or recognize the presence of God because they limit their exploration to physical evidence or to rational argument limited to physical support. Those who believe recognize God in all things physical and spiritual, both seen and unseen. Those who do not believe cannot recognize the spiritual in the world or in themselves. Sadly, they fail to embrace the better side of themselves that makes them uniquely human, their intimate relationship with their creator.

Quick Reflection

The Holy Spirit provides us with a constant reminder of the existence of God and his love for his wonderful creation, for his people. God again gives himself. He puts himself into his creation; his creation is an expression of himself, "in his own image". (Gen 1:27)

How odd that we don't recognize God even though, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we share in his thought constantly through love. We need only look around. The care we give the ones we care about, the concern we have for those in pain, the sympathy, the empathy, the joy, the love are manifestations of the Holy Spirit alive in our souls infused into each of us. Perhaps our failure to recognize the triune God is a result of trying to mold God into our idea of what he should be, instead of accepting him as he is.

I believe we find God all around us, in his creation, in our relationships, in each other. I believe that God has invited us both individually and together into an everlasting relationship where we will know fully, intimately, his love for us. Yes, I believe in God.

Commentary

I Believe in God. Do You?
Do you really? Why?

People have been struggling to answer these questions for centuries. Libraries have been filled with the struggle to explain the existence of God. Philosophers, artists, musicians, writers, theologians, scripture scholars, and scientists, (yes, even scientists) have tried since ancient times to capture and share the beauty and depth of what they have come to believe is the nature and essence of God. Most of us come up short and for good reasons. It is difficult to explain something that we know in our hearts and minds to be true, but the truth of which we have deduced in reason and faith and have found justified and verified in the person of Jesus Christ and in a life lived in communion. Our thoughts of God inspired by the thirst for love and for truth within the soul that God graciously infused into each of us¹ lead us to deeper and deeper

¹ Pope John Paul II, *Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences: On Evolution* October 22, 1996 Pope John Paul II discusses the position of the Catholic Church on scientific study with respect to the nature of the human person, and the cooperation of the Church with scientific study in open forum where the discipline of theology, philosophy and epistemology are given adequate

questions about him. I do not believe this is accidental; I believe God intends it this way. I believe he wants us to know and to love him as he knows and loves us. We have an intellect that cannot be satisfied until it is face-to-face with the creator of all things; with the creator of our soul, reaching a conclusion to the question of the essence of God. "It is a disposition of the whole person embracing the graceful, purposeful nature of life, of being, of the universe."² The spiritual transcends the material and is not limited by the operations of nature or subject to the realm of empiricism. God is not made of parts.

God is IS. God is Being. God is recognized in his actions, in his thought, in his Word. We recognize him as a Triune being, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; as Lover, Love and Loved. God the Creator is beyond all, yet encompassing all he has created. He sees his creation all at once, the creative thought. Think of your favorite painting. The artist began with a thought, a plan, a statement to be made. In the artist's mind the statement was complete when he started. The painting is an act of love. He so believes in his plan, in what he wants to say, that he must bring it forth. The result is recognizable as the artist. He has created something in his own image. The thought is the artist's own. He loves it enough to express it, to share it. It is important enough to him to put himself into it. If you want to know Van Gogh, study his paintings. If you want to know God, study his creation and recognize the thought. God loved this thought so much he uttered a Word, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn 1:1) The Word is Jesus. Jesus "doesn't merely see himself as a worker of miracles; he sees himself as the one in whom and through whom the promises of God

consideration. Full text can be reviewed at:

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp961022.htm>

² Braxton, Most Reverend Edward K., Ph.D., S.T.D., "Under the World's Splendor and Wonder:" An Affirmation of the Divine" An unpublished reflection used by permission. View the work at:

www.docstoc.com/docs/38577659/%E2%80%9CUnder-the-Worlds-Splendour-and

come to pass."³ We are quite lucky to be living in our time. We have Jesus to look to for answers. How do we know heaven is real? How do we know we can believe in God or an after-life with any kind of conviction? We need only to consider the acts of Jesus and the revelation provided in his teaching, justified and verified by his passion, death and resurrection.

Discussion Questions

1. Where is God to be found?
2. If I can recognize God within and without me, what then are my responsibilities when it comes to the Church? To Others? To my faith?
3. If God is real, how do I know that he cares about me?
4. How can I develop a closer relationship to God?
5. If you (someone other than the reader) were God, you would....

A Prayer

- For those unreceptive to your healing grace, that they may come to know you through the reception they receive from others
- For the reunification of all of your children under the loving care of your shepherds
- That the work of artists, writers, and performers may reflect the wisdom and beauty of God and be conducted for his glory
- That the work of scientists be conducted with respect for the disciplines of philosophy and theology as they seek to unlock the mysteries of nature
- That all humankind may come to respect the creations of God, especially human life, from conception to natural death

We Pray to the LORD

May God bless you this week!

³ Strobel, Lee, *The Case for Christ – A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*" Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1998, pp. 135-136