

This Blog is in chronological order and covers 2010:

Looking At Things Differently:

Since I focused so much on the wrongs that others have done to me so that I could forgive them... my thinking became jaded; thinking that those same persons aren't that nice to begin with. But after I forgave them and the Holy Spirit brought nothing more to mind, I was led to re-focus on those same people and look at the good in them to balance out the bad they may have done. As a result my distorted views melted away. There is always good somewhere within each person because we are all created in the image of God. People change, people have histories, people have stories, and most people are both agents and victims of hurts. Anger properly directed and dealt with turns into compassion. When I realized all of this on Friday, January 15, 2010, I began to see people for the better. I began to feel more loving towards people instead of wondering whom next to forgive so that I could eventually get free. When we forgive the resulting attitude is love.

Insights About God Abiding In Me:

After one has gotten beaten up because of life's tragedies, storms, random acts of violence, denied justice (not necessarily retributive), and seeing that life is not fair a lot of the time... we can become pretty cynical, critical, and judgmental towards life, people in general, institutions, and God Himself. If we want God to abide in us (fully) then we are going to have to rid ourselves of the attitudes (walls) that see God as uncaring, fickle, capricious, or in a bad light with lesser glory than what He really has. God is LOVE... and He comforts those who mourn as one of the beatitudes promises.¹ If we want Jesus to fully abide in us then we have to jettison our scoffing and critical attitudes and see with the eyes of faith. We will also have to work on dealing with whatever anger or feelings of unfairness that we have directed against God. God is full of love, comfort, patience and goodness. When we deal with our cynicism and invite God more into our lives, hearts, and being, He will come making His PRESENCE felt by bringing PEACE, PERSPECTIVE, and supernatural GRACE and LOVE. God loves us but we can put up walls or unbelief and hatred that prevent His love from getting through to each of us. Those walls also keep us from loving others genuinely. Give it a try... slowly lower your walls and let the King of Glory in... you won't be disappointed.² This does not mean that we won't ever be angry with God again. When we are, we will accept it and deal with it based on our faith, our past up to our present relationships with Him and move on in strength and assurance. This whole insight was a process in learning.

Faith, Doubt, & Love:

For such a long time I believed a lie when it came to how I navigated some of my relationships. In particular I felt that God had very high and strict standards for me and everyone else when it came to us hearing His voice. My motto was: "Doubt not" in the

¹ Cf. Matthew 5:4

² I am indebted to Tom & Donna Cole for the genesis of the ideas in this paragraph from their book: Pure Heart: Restoration of the Heart Through the Beatitudes, Xulon Press © 2008.

most rigid sense. And if I did doubt then I pictured God distancing Himself from me. I remember in one of my early jobs as a young adult where I had one pretty difficult supervisor. He expected me to have a sense or understanding on how things worked, and if I showed any incompetence he harshly rebuked me over and over again. And through the years I painted that attitude (the one of my supervisor) on to the face of God, and those people important to me. I have now learned that God is patient with us and treats us according to where we are at; not where we think He expects us to be. If we are spiritually a 2-year-old babe He will treat us as such; if a teenager he will treat us as such; if an adult as such, and so forth. Faith doesn't mean we have no doubt, it means we believe but not perfectly. God knows that doubt is part of the package when it comes to our relationships with Him. He doesn't grow silent and cold when we get confused and our minds fill with doubts. He is one-hundred-percent there for us all the time.

I now know that I need to treat people where they are at instead of focusing on their faults and where I want them to be at. I am not a judge, and I have problems changing myself... so how can I force or demand from others to do what would make me happy? Demanding people to behave the way we want them to be is a difficult road to take that leads away from love, away from reality, and away from God. The only way to accept where people are at is to pray for it and to abide in Jesus as much as is possible.

Changing Strategies:

For the longest time I would attempt to use all my reasoning power, intuition, and brute force to figure out what to do in so far as my spiritual maladies were concerned. But at the end of each hunt it would be God who stepped in and gave me the much-needed light to conquer the darkness. Gradually I would become dependant on God through Listening Prayer as talked about by Brad Jersak in his book called, "Can you hear me?" Every time I read the book the easier it gets for me to hear God's voice. At first because I was so whacked out in my mind because of my schizophrenia I heard God's voice mainly through other people (Christian or non-Christian alike). I still hear it that way at times... but being an analytical person... I needed to understand in clarity the foundations for Listening Prayer that Brad does such a good job laying out in his book. But it took me a long time to understand it because my mind was over run by forces that are evil, dark and deceptive and intent on blinding me. Thankfully I persevered, and now I am enjoying the good fruits that God promises those who don't give up on Him. Thank you Brad... I am grateful for your commitment to searching for the truth. Thank you Holy Trinity for showing me the way to freedom! Amen!

What Real Anger feels like:

On Tuesday, February 23, 2010 I realized at one point in the day that I was angry about an incident but that things were different: The anger felt right and was devoid of debate and did not make me feel weak anymore. I realized that God was redirecting my imploded anger out into the open into its proper place. Thank you Jesus!

Trading In A Slave Mentality For Being A Beloved:

People who have a slave mentality when it comes to God don't focus on or realize the love God has for them. I thought that if God ever became distant, bored and un-interested in me I'd pursue Him as much as I could to not lose Him because I love Him...

but now I realize that such thoughts know nothing about the love God has for me. It is true however that God does want me to pursue Him and He hides Himself occasionally just like a lover will do to arouse a beloved.

Dealing With The Stronghold Of Hatred (A BIG Missing Piece Of The Puzzle):

On Wednesday, February 24, 2010 I found myself challenged by guilt early in the morning only to maintain the ground I had won in my heart through faith in God earlier in the week. After this battle I began to love others in my path more genuinely (remembering that I need to treat people where they are at; not where I wanted them to be) only to lose that simple affection and gentleness in my heart and actions through making judgments later on in the day. Then I became very hard on myself because I felt defeated by regressing in love only to later realize that being hard on myself was self-defeating. So I gave up being hard on myself and eventually gained (through patience, prayer and repentance) a more humble attitude along with the affection and gentleness I had earlier in the day. But I still felt there was more that God wanted to give me. When I got home I worked through the steps of Inner Healing found in Brad Jersak's book called, "Can You Hear Me?". I initially had trouble visualizing my place of refuge within my heart but eventually I did. Then I realized (by asking Jesus) that the bad fruit I still bore often was insensitivity/ judging/and being critical towards others. I confessed these sins to Jesus as I looked at the bad fruit spanning over many years of my life. I then asked Jesus where He was in my heart and I immediately saw a HUGE STONE BOX that stood silently and HEAVY in the darkness. All of a sudden the BOX flew a part HEAVILY with light piercing and evaporating the darkness. All of a sudden hundreds of young children aged eight to twelve (or so) started to run all over the place wrestling with each other creating a commotion and scene where the BOX had stood. It did not make sense to me but eventually I realized that the devil was responsible for the chaos. I commanded the demons to leave and the children disappeared with the light shining brighter and very intensely in my heart. I asked the Lord what the stone tablets were and He said they were hatred. They were hatred of self, others, and God. This hatred was the root that bore the fruit of insensitivity in my life. I told God I was sorry for hating Him, others, and myself and that I wanted to change. I also asked Him to forgive me. That He did. I felt at PEACE! As time passed I found that my attitude was becoming gentler, more affectionate, more human, and less robot like. Unfortunately at first I thought the hatred came from a traumatic event earlier in my life like the demons wanted me to think. Through this deception I wrongly hurt some people through accusations in a way that should never have happened. I would then realize that I am not allowed to assume which events or memories I reacted to with hatred out of anger. Instead I needed to ask God where it came from; and that way I wouldn't have hurt anyone. It was too late in this instance... I had hurt two people who did not deserve the wrongful judgments I made against them. I would later realize that my hatred grew out of my intense anger from being rejected as a child by my peers in South Africa. Hatred was a root that bore my insensitivity, dried up my compassion, made me maliciously judgmental, a stone thrower, and prevented me from loving others supernaturally. Love and hatred can't abide together in the same place. Light destroys the darkness: darkness can't live along side the light.

“Anger is an emotion; it is neither good nor bad, its what we do with it that determines whether it becomes acceptable or unacceptable.”³ Anger if not dealt with properly can lead to resentments that lead to addictions; or anger can lead to hatred if not dealt with properly that leads to insensitivity (along with addictions). Insensitivity takes many forms like

- (A) Not being unable to feel compassion for or treating people with gentleness;
- (B) Being judgmental, and critical in evil ways;
- (C) It can lead to being verbally abusive;
- (D) It can lead to physical violence;
- (E) It can lead to sexual violence such as rape; and finally
- (F) It can lead to murder.

For me my anger led to hatred that showed itself in me doing (A), (B), and sometimes (C). Surprisingly insensitivity is not just the result of hatred, pride and judgment. Later on I’d find out that it can also result from wanting to help someone in such a way that a burden forms. When the burden is not relieved it causes dread and blocks empathy and sympathy in the moment and this is what insensitivity is.

Regarding Work And Hatred:

It is so easy for me to walk ahead of Jesus and choose what I think I need to repent from so that freedom will come. Freedom comes only when Jesus puts His finger on sin that He wants us to repent from and as a result we repent with His help. Any repentance done without God calling for it is done in self-righteousness. Learning this lesson has been a very difficult one for me. Today on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 as I practiced some more Listening Prayer I was led by Jesus into my heart to see one of the STONE slabs (mentioned above) still standing that represented HATRED in my heart. I asked Jesus what the Hatred was directed at? Only to be told by Him that it represented my attitude towards work. I know that I have motivated myself at one point in time or another in most areas of my life by hatred, and work was one of them. In fact I was so dependent on motivating myself with Hatred when it came to work that it prevented me from loving my work. I always did the best I could but I could not get to the next level because that hatred always called for relief. And I only got relief when I did the bulk of each day’s workload. Any extra stuff would only be done occasionally. When I repented in faith with God’s help and leading from that hatred that one LARGE BLACK slab fell into dust. I felt more stable, more at PEACE, and more in my center. Thank you Holy Trinity!

My Shame & Your Shame?

On Friday, March 12, 2010 as I watched the Paralympics on TV held in BC, Canada, I found myself spitting out pride and scoffing at the fan fair during the opening ceremony celebrations. I realized it was a block to love and promptly asked God what that block was. He said it was SHAME – the shame I carried around with me, and that I assumed everyone else should also carry. God then removed my feelings of shame only for me to enjoy such a show for the first time.

About a month later on Tuesday, April 6, 2010 I realized that I needed to ask God what was behind the block known as shame. He named it: “Moroni!” I realized that Moroni is

³ Peter Herbeck on “Crossing the Goal” streamed on my computer from the Web.

a demon that deceives people into thinking that they are going to become gods. So why “Moroni” since I’m not a Mormon and don’t believe that I will ever be deity? Growing up I wanted to belong and would say anything to belong, to the point of giving glory to my peers that was not properly theirs. When I did not find receptivity I felt shame, and out of my shame I plastered compliments on others so they’d like me.

I commanded the demonic influence to leave... it left and the issue was completely resolved. Thank you ever so much Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!

Smart & Dumb Revisited:

Many people have told me that I am intelligent, yet I felt dumb for such a long time period in my life. A little while ago I wrote a pen-pal-letter to our sponsor child with World Vision and I gave it to my wife Sophie to read. She had to rewrite it because the language I used was too grownup or too intellectual. Sophie put what I said into words that would be understood by any child. But I felt what I had written was fine because I used BIG words and that made me feel intelligent; it made me feel good in a bad way. During my university days I felt very stupid at times when comparing myself to others. I therefore wanted to be seen and told I was intelligent. I wanted to look intelligent. I wanted whatever I did to have that “mark” on it that said I was “intelligent”. The down side of this is that I prized intelligence more than simplicity, and it made me insensitive towards people who did things that I felt intelligent people would not do. I felt it was more important to sound intelligent than to communicate love to people. I finally saw this in myself on Saturday, March 13, 2010 and I asked God to remove this block in my heart and mind that prevented me from loving others more fully. The block stemmed from my pride.

A real fruit from this healing was that I became that much more open to hearing what others have to say: I became a much better listener. Thank you Jesus!

Realizing That Plenty Of Renovations Are In Order For My Heart:

As I looked into my heart I saw rock hard blackness on the floor with little bits of broken stones sticking up everywhere the large stone slabs had stood. I really disliked this... and I wanted to see my heart as soft as flesh like God had promised me (either that or one with flowers, trees bearing good fruit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, compassion, and genuine affection), springs of water (the Holy Spirit), bushes with berries full of life). Later on I would realize that I needed to patiently work the Step Method from Brad Jersak’s book: “Can You Hear Me?” to rid myself from all that cold hatred and resentment that visually looks like black stone in my heart so that God could replace it with His goodness, life, peace, warmth, beauty and love. I also want the gloomy darkness to be removed and instead lit with Jesus (the real Light of the world). I realize that this would be done in God’s time.

An Easter Gift From God:

God had dealt with the root of hatred in my heart, but a structure still stood where the foundation of hatred had stood beneath it. That structure represents the machinery that bore the fruit of insensitivity in my life supported by my hatred. Because of the hatred I had established in my heart before my teens; I lived out of it even when I was not conscious of it. It poisoned the way I saw things, the way I judged others, the way I criticized others, and the way I gossiped about or slandered others. I had been wounded

by my peers, so I wounded others... unaware of Jesus' love. My malice put distance between others and myself as a result. Even when I began to follow Jesus this blackness was in my heart waiting to be dealt with through repentance with God's help. Then on Saturday, April 3, 2010 God made me aware of this construct within my heart (i.e. the way I judged others, the way I criticized others, and the way I gossiped about or slandered others), I then saw what I had "done" in this way in the past, and "thought and in some case spoken to others" in the present as morally wrong for the first time. When I saw it for what it was: evil; God kindly removed the bulk of it from my heart. I then realized this sin was easy for me fall into. I realized that my anger, which I often did not acknowledge or was not aware of, led immediately to either resentment or hatred. I also realized that I have a learning curve to go through: I need to learn how to better deal with my anger.

Thankfully I got a book for Christmas from Sophie by Dr. Gary Chapman called, "Anger: Handling A Powerful Emotion In A Healthy Way." It is helping me get in touch with my anger and also helping me channel it in constructive ways. There are five Steps mentioned in the book meant to practice anger in healthy ways. Here they are:

1. Consciously acknowledge to yourself that you are angry,
2. Restrain your immediate response,
3. Locate the focus of your anger,
4. Analyze your options,
5. Take constructive action.⁴

The more I practice these Steps the more centered I am becoming. I am starting to recognize when I am angry, and even to feel my anger. I am starting to feel like I am getting some control over my anger. I feel stronger, and I am getting a real sense for what are trivial matters that need not be pursued (i.e. where I either forgive the persons who cross my boundaries, or see my reaction as not fitting the facts and therefore realizing my anger wasn't warranted and needs to be dismissed). I am also getting a real sense for what I need to pursue or confront in loving and diplomatic ways. As for taking constructive action when people really annoy me; I find myself initially before a fork in the road. Do I continue to nurse my anger, or do I choose to love with God's help? Love is a choice; and a short prayer to Jesus asking Him to help me love the person I am angry with is always answered in dynamic ways.

In short, I am looking at High Definition TV (a more nuanced view of anger) instead of an outdated Black and White TV as far as my anger is concerned. Thankfully God has provided a way where I can examine my reactions to events that happen in my life and therefore steer my responses in loving ways away from resentment and away from hatred. This is a learning curve that I am now beginning to achieve. PTL!

Later on I'd realize that sometimes I get angry and heated in attempts to control, direct, move, motivate, or try to change what I disliked in the behaviors belonging to other people. To realize that it is God's kindness, patience, and mercy that leads me to repentance means that I ought to follow God's example and do what He would do: be

⁴ Gary Chapman, "Anger: Handling A Powerful Emotion In A Healthy Way", Northfield Publishing Chicago © 1999, 2007, p. 51.

kind, gentle, meek, and merciful to those who annoy or morally fail me. My anger/harshness does not achieve the righteousness purposes of God in my own life or in the lives of those people I wrongly think I can control with my anger.

Life Is A Journey:

During Easter, Sophie, the kids and I went to a party put on by Mickey and Mini (not their real names) a kind and generous couple from our church. Mickey has often said that he views life as a journey. But I never understood what he meant by that. He said it again on Easter Sunday and that started me thinking. I finally understood what he was getting at. For me up until Tuesday, April 6, 2010 I went through life anticipating the good times and dreading the unpleasant times in between the good times. But now I see life as a journey and accept the good along with the bad, I have perspective, I see that I am going somewhere, and I am not worried that each good time will eventually come to an end. I now know the good times live on in my memories. Also the bad times don't shake my faith in God, because they are a reminder that I am not in Heaven yet, and more I enter the bad times in solidarity with those who suffer in this life. Therefore I feel confident, joyful, and strong. I am at PEACE. I am FREE. Thank you YAHWEH! Thank you Mickey!

Pursuing God:

Being aware of when to use the right principle in any situation is a good place to be at when that awareness comes from God. God is foremost each Christian's Father through Christ Jesus. Fruit flows from relationship with God. Trusting God as Shepherd to lead me and feed me from the tree of life, and refusing to focus on the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the path I want to pursue. This requires faith and living in the unknown. Focusing on only what you know keeps one from learning new things; puts things into boxes, makes the joy evaporate, and makes the love dry up.

People who only pursue principles rarely find God; people who pursue God will find Him and will eventually learn how to love others deeply because Jesus teaches them how to be free.

The Gift Of No Longer Having To Wrestling So Fiercely With Demons As Before:

On Tuesday, April 21, 2010 I attempted to meet with the Lord in my heart visually, but instead of seeing Jesus I saw two images: (1) a large threatening snake ready to strike, and (2) a scorpion seeking to inflict pain with its sting. This puzzled me for some time. So I asked Jesus what the meaning of these images were... and He eventually answered me by turning the snake and scorpion into flimsy cheap and easily breakable plastic replicas that fell apart in handling them. I would later realize that this is Jesus way of telling me that the sort of intense fights I had with those evil spirits within my mind and heart because of my schizophrenia is over with.

Yes I still have schizophrenia and that means my perceptions are still tinkered with often; I still have distorted, confused, paranoid, and delusional ideas and beliefs entering my mind (authored by either me or demons) and I struggle to find reality as a result. Thankfully my wife Sophie sets me straight when I am in really bad places. I still suffer often: sometimes intensely. But I do have those times when I have real pleasure, joy, and peace.

Life this side of heaven means that I will struggle with my sinfulness or my selfishness, struggle to love, struggle to achieve, and struggle to follow Jesus day in and day out; because this is what I am experiencing at this juncture. Aiming for love means pain needs to be embraced. There is no escaping pain in this life if one is not going to take short cuts. That is the message from Jesus Christ's cross: I need to carry my own cross, and that means I need to embrace the pain and disappointments that come my way. But there are real joys to be realized in this life too. Thankfully Jesus is with me, and that gives me hope, confidence, faith, and courage to deal with each block against authentic love that comes my way regularly as I journey a long with Jesus the Block-Buster. Many have gone before me and I am grateful for their prayers, wisdom, and encouragement. I guess life is lived best one step at a time following Jesus the real Light of the world.

Approaching Inner Healing:

I now know that I need to chill out when it comes to relationship and me pursuing inner healing with God. I can't force things if I want God to partake in the healing process. There is no healing if God does not partake. With Jesus' help I am dealing with baggage and blocks to love very often at this time. Thanks to Brad Jersak's book: "Can You Hear Me?" I am making great strides in claiming the freedom; peace, hope, and sanity promised me by God so many years ago. Praise God!

Today, on Thursday May 6, 2010 as I was taking in Brad Jersak's teaching online on Listening Prayer I became aware of an attitude within me that was hard and that wanted to MASTER Brad's teaching on Listening Prayer right then instantly. I wanted to nail it down; fit my box around it; QED it like one does with proofs in Mathematics. I realized that this approach was incompatible with pursuing relationship with God; this attitude that was nurtured in university and lasted until now. When I studied math, and later read books on spirituality to master them I made the principles I studied more my focus than God. The principles became more and more my rigid formulas to get a hold of God. Surprisingly the more I became focused on mastering the principles in the way I describe here (putting pressure on myself, being hard on myself, being too analytical, attempting to milk all phrases for what they are worth, being overbearing, wanting absolute knowledge or certainty, wanting to take it all in at once, impatient, not giving myself a chance, not letting the process rely on simple childlike faith, relying on my own intellect and energy, and being robotic) the less they worked, and the more restless I got. When I approach God with child like faith I am at peace and things happen. Brad's principles, insights, and approaches are very good... I was just attempting to use them in unproductive ways every now and then because I was so desperate for revelations, insights, healing, and intimacy with God.

Another Lesson On Humility:

When we have an ideal that we aim for like being a certain type of woman or man, we have to be careful, that our focus is not fitting a certain mold, instead of caring for or being concerned for those people we meet on our path each day. It is so easy to love humanity, and hate our neighbor. Humble people care for those that cross their paths, whereas proud people are more concerned about fitting a certain mold they deem as perfection and are less concerned about others than the way they themselves look.

Jealousy:

Growing up I was a very jealous little boy and eventually jealous teenager. When I saw that somebody (usually my brother) **seemingly (not actually)** got more or better things than I did... I would question the love of the bearer of those gifts and my jealousy would turn to judgment that turned to anger that made me think the world was jaded and unfair.

As with most of my spiritual maladies (judgments, resentments, insensitivity, anger, hatred...), I have often had a physical sense, a place in my body where I carried the spiritual burden in the form of pain. The same is true with my jealousy. These physical senses would come and go depending on whether I judged or repented from my judgments. Today, on Sunday May 9, 2010 I could feel these feelings of jealousy from years back for the first time in years and see them for what they are. It seems like most spiritual malady stems from poorly directed anger that comes from a sense of rightly or wrongly seen injustices perpetrated against one. But that is not the whole story. Jealous is much like envy. "Envy follows pride. Envy hates those above us because they are above us; those who are our equals because they are our equals, and those below us because they might some day over take us."⁵ Jealousy is rooted in pride. I confessed my pride to God, told Him I was sorry for it and realized that perhaps that was my parents' biggest battle in disciplining me as I grew up under their authority. Especially considering that for a long time as an adult I could not remember what 99.9% of the disputes were that I had with my parents growing up. Are you surprised? I'm not; not now at least.

Following & Obedience Instead Of Guilt:

Some people shy away from inquiring in prayer from God what He desires for our lives. The reason they give is that they are afraid that God will ask them to do something they really don't want to do and that would bring plenty of guilt...so not wanting to live with guilt they ignore finding out what God wants in their lives. This mentality is misguided. First of all God asks us to do plenty of good things outside of prayer that we don't always do. But that does not stop us from attempting to follow and praise Him. Why? Because we know we make mistakes, do wrong and sin. But we also know there is forgiveness for our sins if we seek it.

Thinking that God's ideas or plans are burdensome is not a good place to be at. Remember the parable of the Master who entrusted his wealth to three servants, one of which hid His wealth in the ground in an attempt to forget about it because He thought His master was a hard man. Every time we refuse to set our plans before God to hear His opinion on the matters we act like that lazy servant. I don't want to be like that lazy servant.

Next we are commanded to love God with all our minds, hearts and strengths. God's grace is not the result of our good deeds.⁶ Even if we seek God to follow Him to where He leads we aren't guaranteed joy.... Real joy is a result of the HOLY SPIRIT within us. We can find pleasure in keeping Jesus' commandments like when leading somebody to faith in Jesus but that joy is a result of God's grace. If we ignore God's commandments and

⁵ Not sure of which Saint said it.

⁶ Neil T. Anderson, "Breaking The Bondage Of Legalism" ebook.

sin we will feel guilty and I know that is not a very good place to be. All of this to say that yes God will at times ask us to do things that are difficult and grate against our image, pride, and boundaries. God knows that we aren't perfect... and knows what we are made from. He will give us things to do that fall within our faith's ability to accomplish them. I choose to believe that God is a good taskmaster, is trustworthy, and has more for us than we can conceive or imagine. This takes faith and is the best and safest place to be in. Remember Jonah.

One Day At A Time:

Today on Tuesday May 18, 2010 I got very angry with somebody because for the past while he never gave a hoot about anyone beside himself. I hated what the person did. And that took all the charity (for the person) within me away because my anger turned into hating the person. God showed me that I needed to forgive and accept what the person did. But I struggled to forgive and accept what the person did today because I realized that he may very likely be a pain in the butt for a long time to come. This angered me more... to the point that it became too difficult to forgive this person because of the hassle I was anticipating from this person in the future. Then it dawned on me that I need to live one day at a time because, "today" is all I have. God only provides grace one day at a time. I was then able to forgive and accept the person today, and let God carry the weight of all the tomorrows for me in the now.

Asking For Mercy & Not Demanding It:

Today on Thursday May 20, 2010 I did something to offend a fellow employee at work. I apologized but there was no reconciliation. I then became angry and began to tell myself why it shouldn't be so difficult for the other employee to forgive me. I felt so justified in my reasoning until the Holy Spirit (my Counselor) pointed out to me that I can't demand mercy or forgiveness from those whom I have hurt, offended, or did a wrong against in some way. Anyone who demands mercy is not in touch with the reality that they did something wrong. They don't want mercy; they want people to forget their wrongs because in their eyes their wrongs aren't that serious (after all they are a good person). Those who demand mercy think they have earned that reconciliation. Only those who dispense mercy can receive it in a humble fashion.⁷

Beliefs Based On Good Times & Bad Times:

If one has gone through much suffering eventually one's notions or beliefs regarding how one views God will be challenged, and one might not be conscious about the process all the time either. Bad times most often are used by demons to try to convince us that God is not as good as He claims to be. Where as good times are most often used by demons to try to convince us that we are good enough and don't need God. In my case I went through nearly 19 years of trouble, pain, poverty, suffering, confusion, and stretching. This has led often to me seeing God as one who has been hard on me, and here is where the demons jump in trying to lie and move me away from God. Yes God does let things happen to us that our own parents wouldn't ever dream of letting happen to us. All falsehoods begin with fractions of particular truths. The demons want us to believe that God enjoys seeing us suffer; that He is hard to please, uncaring, high

⁷ Cf. the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 5 (The Beatitudes from Jesus).

maintenance and anal. If we are not alerted to the lies they will jade our thinking of God, our testimony, our joy and stagnate our relationship with God if not kill it given enough time and allow more deceptions.

Dealing With A Mocking, And Sneering Attitude:

As I read my Bible during the evening on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 I tried to imagine Jesus walking along the shores of the lake of Galilee and I realized (with the Holy Spirit's help) that there was within me a resenting, mocking and sneering attitude (where I saw planet earth as boring, and a drudgery with too much energy needing to be expended to enjoy it for what it was worth) that had grown over the years but which I had never repented from (Can you imagine how I saw God in this dark corner of my heart because of the dark way I saw His creation? No wonder I resented Him for putting me on Planet earth). On the other hand I have really enjoyed taking pictures of nature, but that was about the extent of my appreciation for God's creation. The attitude I had was one where I did not see nature and planet earth as worth enjoying, exploring with wonder and excitement to the *fullest* like any normal child would. Jesus said that unless we become like little children we could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. To some degree I was grateful for the beauty found in nature, but I was also very ungrateful to God for the rest of it. I realized with my attitude that I wasn't even enjoying planet earth the way God wanted me to, so how could I enjoy Heaven if I ever got there. My attitude had to change. So I prayed to God repenting in faith about my bad attitude towards His creation and His part in creating it. Thank you Lord God for showing me this. I am grateful for your generosity.

God Is Enough!

Because I went through so much inner healing, I thought that I might become a Drug and Alcohol counselor some day... and with that hope I felt that I needed as many answers, insights, and principles to be able to help those I'd some day counsel. Each heart is very mysterious; it doesn't matter how many principles one has because there will always be something in each heart that the principles we have don't cover. Even though I knew this... I had compartmentalized it and promptly put pressure on myself to know as much as possible. Thankfully on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 I listened to a sermon by Greg Laing from PGCC where he pointed out that we don't need to have it all figured out. Believing this truth takes off the pressure to do it all by oneself.... All I need is to know the One that knows it all: Jesus or God. What I do want is more dependence and better communication with God, and to be able to help others develop a relationship with God where they can enjoy and communicate with God in ways that will foster growth, freedom, hope, and joy through the storms of life. Coming to these conclusions my weak legs immediately became strong instead of feeling like flimsy rubber. I had thought that my weak legs were a result of sitting in my bedroom year after year waiting for my medication to heal my mind. Thank you Greg for your wonderful sermon! And thank you Jesus for making this miracle possible!

Focusing On The Unknown In A Teachable Fashion:

So many people focus only on what they know. These rarely discover anything new. Those who open their minds to the unknown, and who ask the right questions grow in knowledge, don't become stagnant, and journey into the future with a rewarded

curiosity. No one gets to an unknown destination by a familiar pathway to paraphrase Saint John of The Cross.

With this said I am finding my mind being transformed by the Holy Spirit, I am seeing things in new ways, asking new questions, jettisoning old attitudes and beliefs that are useless or incompatible with the way of Jesus. My worries and concerns are changing. The Holy Spirit is mightily altering my approach to relationships with others. I am now teachable, growing, non-judgmental, no longer mean-spirited and no longer weighed down like I was before with so many burdens.

I now also have a new approach to starting each new day because of these insights. I no longer go by with only what I know... I try to remain humble, open to new ideas or the unknown instead of falling into the ruts of my lost, forgotten, empty, and useless way of seeing things in the past. The Holy Spirit is renewing my mind in the way I see things because I am now teachable more so than ever before. What a pleasant place I find myself in: Oh the PEACE I am now experiencing. Thank you Ever-Living-God!

Changing My Strategy:

During my university days I derived ideas and theorems from first principles instead of memorizing the actual results. I put a lot of pressure on myself to get good at it... but I did it because I felt I had a bad memory. I attempted to do something similar when encountering new ideas later on in life that I wanted to memorize. I was always looking for something beneath the actual ideas in order to remember them. This did not work like I had hoped it would because often there would be nothing beneath the ideas to latch onto so I immediately forgot what I wanted to remember. On Friday June 4, 2010 God made me aware of this bad strategy and I saw it for what it was and gladly jettisoned the baggage with His help. Yet again, I am able to focus on things like other people do and remember more easily the ideas/terms/names/and places that interest me instead of using pressure and my misguided strategy. Praise God who does not over look any detail!

Dealing With False Acceptance:

Have you ever read something thing and not realized an important consequence of what was written? With me this happens quite often. In the Gospel of Matthew we read:

And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'⁸

What always went through my mind when I read this was, "Yeah but Jesus hadn't done anything yet" not realizing what I was thinking. It took a sermon from Greg Laing for me to see my folly.

Father God's love for his only begotten Son was not based on what the Son did. And the same is true for us. God is love. If we aren't receiving God's love then it is because we have turned away from Him, or have set up walls around us so His love can't get through to us. God loves us no matter what we do. But He does desire for us to love Him, our

⁸ 3:17 NRSV

neighbors, and ourselves. God hates no one in the emotional sense of the word. The fact that Father God loves Jesus even before He began his ministry... showed me that God's love for me was not conditional and that He won't love me more when I do His will. What a relief.

Repenting From More Arrogance:

Being a man who has some pride in my work I like it when things are done right. I love to see a competent job done most of the time. When I see somebody who gives the impression that they might not do a competent job I don't like it. There is nothing wrong with taking pride in our jobs. But if we are arrogant we may seem humble when in fact we are pompous or proud in a bad sense. In, "Kissing The Leper" by Brad Jersak as I began to read chapter 13: "Keepers Of The Books" I realized that I had a hard heart towards people with developmental disabilities... as if they were nuisances that needed to be tolerated and kept in their places... even though I have a MAJOR mental illness myself. I asked the Lord what was beneath my insensitivity. He promptly replied, "ARROGANCE." I then repented from my pompous and proud attitude with God's help and proceeded to enjoy the chapter very much having jettisoned more of my pride. Oh the freedom we find from the things we leave behind.

Listening Prayer:

Having devoured Brad Jersak's book called, "Can You Hear Me?" I felt for some time that I needed to remember all the wholesome anointed thinking/theology/and arguments used by Brad to establish what he calls, "Listening Prayer" as a valid Christian practice. But this attempt at remembering actually drained my confidence in meeting Jesus. I realized that I did not have to remember all the details on how I adopted, "Listening Prayer" in my life. This insight took more pressure off me. How difficult can it be to have a relationship with God, now that I know how to discern His voice from others with valid tests? Taking my focus off the theology, and putting it on God makes a BIG difference in how my relationship with God is developing. Thank you Brad! Amen!

Praying For Freedom From Insecurity:

Yesterday, Thursday, June 23, 2010 as I went to spend time with God, the Lord told me to deal with my insecurities. For so many years I went through experiences that reinforced and weighed me down with insecurities. Following the advice from Brad Jersak's book, "Can You Hear Me?" I went through memory after memory where I experience insecurity and invited Jesus into each situation as I re-lived each memory. I can't believe how many memories there were. Needless to say I don't feel as insecure as I was before. Thank you Jesus!

Removing Some Of My Doubt:

In the past when anyone would say, "All you need to overcome an annoying bad habit or stronghold is to ask God" I'd respond with unbelief, this despite having such prayers of my own answered by God on many occasions. Why? The answer is because I had compartmentalized my thinking. My unbelief made me judge those who had simple faith in God to do great things in our lives. I thought that one needed to learn deep theological mysteries about God and humans to build understanding in order to overcome annoying habits, or strongholds. And that was my aim or goal. But with this attitude came pride. It is important to note that even if we understand why we are the

way we are, only God has the power to transform our behaviors without us becoming self-righteous. God rewards faith, and faith brings understanding and wisdom. Faith does not come from human wisdom. Faith is a gift from God. That is why God reveals Himself to children not those who consider themselves wise.

It is true: “We have not because we ask not”. When we have child like faith (not simplistic, childish, or naïve faith) a faith that is pure and holy; not jaded or cynical; a faith that is not more doubt than confidence in God; that faith in the goodness of God does more than what we could ever hope for or imagine, because God is worthy of that faith. We aren’t “special” or “better than others” because of our faith. Faith isn’t something that we muster and build up by our own strength or understanding. Faith doesn’t demand, or obligate God to do things for us.

God does not always answer our requests immediately (hence the need for patience and perseverance)... but if we don’t give up (work on getting to know and be friends with God, i.e. spend time with Him) He will eventually set in place what is necessary for victory and lasting PEACE! Thank you Lord God for setting me straight.

Embracing Jesus’ Offer For Rest:

On Wednesday, June 30, 2010 I asked the Lord what if any burdens I still carried that I was unaware of but that He could see I was still carrying. I immediately saw this bright shiny silver tin can, and the word: “Beggar” came into my mind. I realized that I was still holding onto my plan “B” that stood for “Begging” if plan “W” that stood for “working” brought long term unemployment, debt, or even homelessness. I realized that God was calling me to jettison my Beggar mentality. The plan “B” was obsolete unless many BIG changes occurred that would make it viable again. Yet I still fingered it and toyed with it at times. For a long time part of me did not want to become healthy, because I saw my disability as a security blanket if ever financial chaos was to re-enter my life. I did not want to collect benefits that I was not entitled to. For a long time I did not want to give up my disability because I was not self-sufficient as far as finances were concerned (Hence the desire to not want to be healthy).

True, I will always need my medications, and that will always be provided through the BC Ministry for Persons With Disabilities. I am now married, and people depend on me. I am carrying my own weight through the grace of God. I do have faith that God will look after my family and me. Yes I do have some fears, but they are reasonable and don’t loom as large and menacing as they did in the past. Jesus wants me to put more trust in Him to lead me and care for me as time goes by. Yes I exchange plan “B” for the security of the Great Shepherd. I am no longer a beggar. I want to be healthy (even while being dependent on medications) and stand like a man tackling my challenges with God directing the way. Thank you Jesus! Amen, and Amen!

Open & Closed Strategies:

Accepting or seeing things the way they are is very important when it comes to learning and being open to new ideas. It is also an important ingredient to becoming humble or teachable.

A closed-minded person can’t accept or access things for what they are without great effort (whether the ideas are controversial or not). A closed-minded person has a fixed way of looking at things. A closed-minded person has difficulty embracing new ideas. A

closed-minded person is closed minded because of fear, pride (thinking they know something) and judging (others as not knowing as well as they do). Closed-minded people are loyal to what they think they know. Closed-minded people think they know things... when in fact their intuition is more warped in general than others because of pride and judging. Closed-minded people go by what they think they know... whatever doesn't relate or tie into with what they think they know they can't absorb or build upon except with great effort. Closed-minded people are out to impress or out do others when it comes to opinions on contested or controversial topics. Closed-minded people have difficulty listening to others and absorbing what others say, because they are more interested in their own opinions or impressing others.

Open-minded people are able to take in a lot more information generally speaking than closed-minded people. Open-minded people are more able to see and acknowledge the truth if any in what others have to say than closed-minded people do. Open-minded people aren't into conspiracy theories or sniffing out the dirty laundry in the lives of people who don't fit in the "right" or "acceptable" boxes closed-minded people construct. Open-minded people don't look down on others nearly as often as closed-minded people do.

Open-minded people are generally more humble than closed-minded people are. I have been a very stubborn, closed-minded, and proud individual most of my life. Thankfully God is making me teachable again. I needed pain and brokenness to question what I thought I knew... in order to grow again. I am still loyal to Jesus, but I don't only go by what I think I know anymore. "There is more in Heaven and earth than is dreamt of in my philosophy" to quote Shakespeare.

Dealing With Some Paranoia:

For a while my connectivity to God seemed frustrated and dry. But I persevered and continued to work through blocks that came my way. Then on July 23, 2010 I attempted to visualize Jesus again... and when I saw Him with the eyes from my heart immediately blackness and sinister darkness got laminated to the image of Jesus. I ask Jesus what was behind it at its source. The word: "Paranoia" came to mind. Could it be my paranoid schizophrenia, or the fear of committing a mortal sin? I thought about it but neither seemed right. While at work the next day it dawn on me what the unreasonable fear or paranoia was: the fear of me becoming homeless, destitute, unemployed, without hope, and abandoned by all. As I got in touch with the fear I realized that it was based in the lie: "God won't look after me and my needs." As I felt the fear God removed it and my GIGANTIC insecurity shrunk to manageable proportions. Thank you Lord God for this break-through, and peace!

Insights On Growing In Grace & Love:

(A):

Unmerited favor as a definition for grace is best used to describe God's grace towards all humanity not the grace I want to give to others. The more I think grace is "unmerited" the less I am able to dispense grace to others. For me... Grace when I dispense it is defined as: "*caring* for anyone no matter what they have done or where they have been, or where they appear to be going". I know more than ever that I need to accept people where they are at like God does with me. I can't give what I have never received.

I am learning from experience that the more my relationship with Jesus grows the more of a lover and dispenser of grace I will become. Anger is a normal emotion that everyone feels. I don't sin when I feel my anger even when I am in Church participating in a Mass. Sin only enters into the picture when I deal with my anger in unhealthy ways. The more I *care* for people the more I will forgive them if they do a wrong against me. The more I *care* for others the more I'll stomach it when they annoy me. So how do I *care* more and more for people? I do so by getting to know Jesus.

By "knowing Jesus" I mean to be in and grow in relationship with Jesus. Speaking to Him is not enough... I need to hear His voice... See His face with the eyes of my heart (which here on earth will generally be imperfect)... And absorb His love, truth, and affection in a way that changes my mind, heart, attitudes, sight, understanding, and conscience. Jesus wants to complete our natural loves with His supernatural loves. This is a process that is best begun by following Jesus to where He leads me (step after step) day after day not knowing where I am going in my spiritual journey. In following His word (not necessarily just what is written in the pages from the Bible) but to repent from roots that block and prevent love... And to renew one's mind by seeing the proper truth that uproots the lies I have believed⁹.... The lies that blind us and put us in bondage to fears or pride that cause us to hate people out of anger (who are made in the image of God) and to be insensitive to them along with becoming addicted to feel-good "escapes" and to live out shallow and weak relationships with those we meet or hang out with.

(B):

I still jealously guarded against anyone else as being a vehicle of truth when it came to interpreting (mostly when it came to who will be saved) the Holy Bible. I was a faith and moral policeman wanting to correct those I felt were in error or those I judged to be miss-leading the simple or unaware. I did this in an ugly, guarded, fundamentalist, unkind (hard hearted), judgmental, abrasive, in-flexible, proud, and closed-minded manner. I had problems communicating with and listening to others when it came to opinions on interpreting the Bible. I did not see this ugliness in myself until Thursday August 5, 2010 when I was listening to a portion of a tape series from Fr. John Nisbet thanks to my wife Sophie. I told the Lord I was sorry and repented in faith and as a result the filth was washed out of me. "More is in earth and heaven than is dreamt of in my philosophy" to quote Shakespeare. Thank you Lord God for being gracious to me by forgiving, tolerating and loving me.

(C):

Jesus said: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." To sacrifice means to give something up... the Ten Commandments are sacrificial... and a stone can keep them... but having kept them does not mean we have loved... or embraced the spirit of the commandments... the prophets that came after Moses pointed to the wishes of God to do more than sacrifice... and to go further in showing compassion... to be kind... to be loving... to be merciful... to *care* for our fellow humans... to be gracious... to not harden our hearts... to keep our hearts soft... to bless... to give... to smile... to go the extra mile... to draw good

⁹ A good indication that we have come to believe a lie is when we disagree with what is written in the New Testament when it comes to faith and morals.

from our hearts... to be good to people so that we all will eventually know our need for God, and our hunger for God.

(D):

The next thing the Holy Spirit made me aware of was that I needed to repent from my judgmental attitude towards many Protestant pastors... and I was made aware of it on Wednesday August 11, 2010 while reading the New Testament book of Hebrews chapters one and two from a Protestant Bible. The fact that it was a Protestant Bible made it possible for this insight to come to me and for me to repent from it and therefore to bear good fruit in this area.

(E):

Thanks to Roy and Maria (not their real names) a couple from our Church and discussions with Sophie... I have realized that I need to use a word with its true meaning and not throw some other meaning into it that will only confuse others! The new approach I am developing (with the help from others) will build new bridges in my thinking and make me gentler towards others and for that I am grateful. The definitions found in most lexicons for "goodness" use words like: "decency, integrity, honesty, righteous, and kindness". I said in the past that if the motives were wrong in the attempt to do a good deed then the good deed isn't love even if it is good. This does contain a grain of truth in it... but is not the complete truth. Now I will re-word it into something better.

Here goes: When a good act is done with wrong motives it is outwardly good, but inwardly sour or defective. A good act is love when it is inwardly and outwardly good. Inwardly good acts are decent, show integrity, are honest, and have righteousness within them. The acts are fully righteous when God comes into the picture and lifts up the natural loves or natural goodness to a supernatural stature¹⁰ ... to make the acts fully good, fully decent, full of integrity, fully honest, fully righteous, and truly kind. If the person is knowingly not dependent on God through faith in doing a good act then... the act is inwardly sour and defective. People who reject God for being responsible for their ability to do good acts are self-righteous. Un-righteous people can do outwardly good acts. Righteous people often do many inwardly sour and defective good acts.

(F):

On August 11, 2010 I realized that I was still unkind or resentful to the Moslem people for 9/11 and my heart was hardened desiring retributive justice along with a desire for complete conversion of Moslems from Islam to Jesus (I remember seeing people jumping up and down in the Middle East for joy when 9/11 happened). I felt no love for those people yet Jesus commands me to love my enemy. Then God expanded my heart with his grace... and I realized that deep inside of me I *cared* for the Moslem people and that softened my heart enough to care for them despite their aim, message and their history. I always wanted to love my enemy and now I do with Jesus Christ's movement in my journey. Truth sets us free to love, forgive, and to be gracious. The following

¹⁰ This points to the need for each of us to eventually undergo the born from above process after the invitation is given us. Cf. John 3:5-8

quote: "Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?",¹¹ solidified a gracious attitude in me towards those I knew I wanted to love (Moslem people) but was blocked from doing somehow for so long. That is one lesson!

The other lesson is that I realize I need to be open to Jesus out side of my Quite Times. If not then such a strategy only invites demons to cunningly suggest devious life choices so as to tempt me to walk away from Jesus. Just as the devil is regularly bombarding me with evil ideas God is attempting to direct me through communication (in many forms) to take the right path. If I ignore God I am blocking His voice and that leaves a vacuum. Nature hates vacuums hence my emptiness along with the world and the devil will fill the voids left by God if I ignore or block God's voice. So how do I fix this? I fix it by making it my goal to follow Jesus, abide in Jesus, rest in Jesus, and be open to His voice all the time so I can remain obedient and led by His voice into His will and so bear much good fruit like: love, respect, caring, forgiving, blessing, praying, and tolerating all people who pass my way. Love *cares* for all people no matter where they have been or what they have done, or where they are going: such is grace.

(G):

I have an imperfect imagination so when I imagine Jesus in my mind the image in my mind is going to be imperfect generally speaking.¹² God can and does communicate through imperfect images, and I don't have to get discouraged because I use my imagination in weak, imperfect, and blind ways at times. I don't have to be absolutely certain that what I hear is the truth. I am on a faith walk, I make mistakes and God is aware of this. If I risk stepping out in faith, God will honor it each time. Faith requires courage to step out and achieve.

Dealing With A Real Lie That Inspired Fear & Stole My Joy:

One lie that put much fear within me for a considerable time was the belief that the only way a Catholic can be forgiven a grave or mortal sin is to have his or her sin absolved by a Catholic Priest in the sacrament of reconciliation. Is a Priest greater than God? My fear was that if I died without having had a reasonable chance to go to confession after I committed a mortal sin, then I would most likely land up in Hell. This fear was based in a legalism that I have heard some Conservative Catholics embrace publically on Radio and a murky memory on what the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) teaches on this topic. From my recent reading of the CCC this fear is unfounded.

"Showing perfect contrition [or remorse], including a resolution to go to confession when possible, is sufficient [for having peace with God and not having to worry if one is on shaky ground]. Moreover, we have a loving God who reaches out to us."¹³ Contrition and remorse is an emotional expression of personal regret felt by a person after he or she has committed an act that they deem to be sinful, hurtful, or violent.

"Forgiveness needs to be offered and received in order for it to be complete [God offers forgiveness to all: Not all are willing to receive it, because they are holding onto treasures that they prefer to forgiveness]. The man who admits no wrong can't be

¹¹ Found in Philip Yancey's book called: "What's So Amazing About Grace?" on p. 130

¹² Cf. First Corinthians 13:12

¹³ I am indebt to my friend Alex Pruss for this reassurance!

forgiven. 'Grace abuse' stems from a confusion over condoning and forgiving. Condoning an evil is to simply ignore it, to treat it as good."¹⁴ I am allowed to make mistakes in the learning process. I am on a journey taking one step at a time not seeing too far a head... trusting that Jesus will lead the way into the unknown. What is easy for one person is not necessarily so for others. We are all at different levels of maturity and immaturity. We are all at different faith, love, and hope levels. God sees that... and is willing to meet us where we are, and loves us so much that He is unwilling to leave us as we are.

What does it mean to be faithful in the Christian life? Peter Herbeck a Catholic Evangelist once said, "Faithfulness does not mean that God is keeping score". Faithfulness in Christianity is not faithfulness to a code... but to a person. If we break one aspect of a code we are not faithful to it. If we fail a person in a number of aspects, that person can be more forgiving than any code and still consider us as faithful friends (such as God does with multitudes of people). A common lexicon defines faithfulness as: "authenticity, realism, closeness, accuracy, and truthfulness." To me realism means that my attitude is humble before God, people, and myself (not perfectly, but at least somewhat). Realism when it comes to faithfulness means that I admit I am wrong when I am wrong and am willing to seek forgiveness when I have failed anyone.

Don't Ignore The Holy Spirit If You want To Love Supernaturally:

Principles and theories and rules are all fine and well... but they are not enough all by themselves. Truths that remove lies that block love are needed, but so is the Holy Spirit. Saint Augustine taught that the love between God the Father and God the Son was so rich, powerful, pure and righteous that it was the third person of the Holy Trinity: God the Holy Spirit. So if the love between the trinity is the Holy Spirit... ought it not be the same between and for us mere human beings?

Anyone who wants to supernaturally love must not neglect the Holy Spirit: the third person of the Holy Trinity. He who welcomes the Holy Spirit welcomes supernatural love. Jesus is the True Vine, and what flows through His branches to those persons who abide in Him is not just only life giving power. Rather it is a person, namely the Holy Spirit; that inexhaustible source of power and insight to love, ever gentle, at peace, full of good counsel, and generous in grace; who is also an approachable person, ever near and present, and joyfully alive; a loving person who guides us into bearing the good fruit promised to those who follow Jesus. The good fruit being love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.

There is no formula or recipe that we can use to entice the Holy Spirit to make us supernatural lovers. He comes and goes where He pleases. He wants into our lives though and the following prayer is a beginning each and every day:

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore You.
Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me.
Tell me what I should do; give me Your orders.

¹⁴ Cf. "What's So Amazing About Grace?" as these ideas are from C.S. Lewis and Philip Yancey.

I promise to submit myself to all that You desire of me
and to accept all that You permit to happen to me.
Let me only know Your Will.

That when prayed in faith each day will be answered as we follow Jesus.
After I began to invite the Holy Spirit into my life each morning and repeatedly during
each day (i.e. no longer ignoring Him) I found strength to love more deeply and be less
selfish; the Holy Spirit also drove out a lot of the fear I felt in driving my car (after not
driving for more than 17-years); the holy Spirit also started to bring counsels that when
followed calms me down and brings the peace that transcends human understanding.
Thank you Father God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and also for the gift of your beloved
Son: Jesus Christ! I am truly grateful. Amen, and Amen!

Satan Comes To Steal, Kill & Destroy:

The devil loves to create in us distrust, distance and fear in our approach towards God
through lies many of which we can't even put our finger on, or realize we are struggling
with until it is pin-point-ed by someone else usually friends/family/counselors/Pastors/
Priests/ or Holy Spirit.

I have done so many things wrong in my life, all of which I have gone to confession for
either quickly or eventually. Most of which I have recorded in this book. In the back of
my mind I was afraid that God might reveal to others some of the more embarrassing
evils I committed. My fear was that I'd be ridiculed, laughed at, and mocked by others
because of what I did if others really knew my secrets. This fear seemed believable and
so it slowly pushed me away from being able to trust God with who I am and what I did
in the past.

In the Catholic Tradition I know that each Priest is sworn to secrecy as to what he hears
in the confessional and that comforts me. If Priests weren't sworn to secrecy they would
ignite real fears that others might hear about our shortcomings. That would mean
gossip and ridicule directed at us who confess to a Priest who has a blabber-mouth-
mentality because he would make known our worse moments. Now if a Priest is not
allowed to spark gossip/ridicule in a community: would God? No! My fear is dealt with.
Thank you God for being trust worthy!

Moving To Healthy And Humble Attitudes In Every Day Business:

When one does something wrong against another person there are at least five
different attitudes one can have. They are:

1. Don't give a shit.
2. **Pride**: When one cares more about what others think about one-self and doesn't
have any concern for the one, one has hurt.
3. **Pride and guilt**: When one cares more about what others think about oneself.
Yet at the same time feeling guilty because one does not feel genuine concern.
4. **Fear** of being rejected or ridiculed or losing out on something; or
5. **Genuine concern** and sadness for having hurt another person.

The healthiest reaction or attitude is (5). Up until Thursday September 16, 2010 I mostly felt (3) and (4). But now thankfully I feel (5). Thank you Lord Jesus!

Loving Others With Different Moral Views:

Standing up for one's beliefs can be very difficult if one is a conformer. I am a conformer. I have been one most of my life. When somebody close to a conformer starts to disagree with the conformer on a moral issue, the conformer might feel threatened and look to find common ground and even agreement just to avoid possible rejection or losses. I know that I have held onto my views tenaciously but begin to compromise (be without back bone) especially on controversial topics (and to a lesser degree on those things that are more common-sense-related). I know this is one reason why I am not cut out to be a Catholic Priest (besides the fact that I can't preach). Another issue is: can one love a person (close by or far away) even though they think differently on important moral issues? If I am to be a follower of Jesus Christ I need to be willing and able to love all those in my life and those who cross my path, and not compromise what I believe to be the truth when threatened by possible rejection or challenged to conform to a different standard.

Dealing With Pettiness:

For some time I have been growing in the awareness that God is not petty. By this I mean I used think that if I did this or that small wrong thing, then God would do whatever it takes to teach me a lesson in the matter or put me in my place with the mentality of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. In other words I thought that God had it in for me whenever I did a small thing wrong, and really had it in for me if I did a BIG thing wrong. Such thinking does not realize God's mercy, grace, compassion, and gentleness towards us. Now having this revelation through the Holy Spirit I was able to see God in a better light. Later on though, the Holy Spirit began to reveal to me that I was petty in my own way. He showed me that I was in the habit of taking great offense at people who did me small wrongs, or annoyed me in small matters, or intruded in my life in unwanted ways. By revealing this attitude to me the Holy Spirit was saying that I needed to repent from this attitude with His help. Real change comes gradually not immediately. I can't be a one man wrecking crew. I need the Holy Spirit's counsels, guidance, understanding, leadership, and power to uproot the blocks to love in my life in this area (my pettiness) along with whatever else will come up.

Renewing The Mind (Culminating on Thursday, September 30, 2010):

Feeling a certain way when the Bible says things are not that way shouldn't always nullify our feelings completely. God (who is love) can or may allow things to happen to us that our parents would never dream of. Does that mean He doesn't care? No! But we may feel like He doesn't care (because of what we experience) and those feelings are valid, and shouldn't diminish what our faith in Him says. We are allowed to tell Him how we feel as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

To deny how we feel is to deny part of our reality. God gave us feelings after all. Having said this we have to realize that our feelings ought not negate our faiths or eradicate them if our faiths are true.

Recently I felt very broken as I went through some intense suffering. I felt that God was not doing enough to help me navigate through it... so I told Him so... I reluctantly got

angry with God (i.e. I discovered my anger towards Him)... and verbalized what I felt was so un-fair on His part... yet in doing this I immediately found the strength to stand up for what I believed in, and became able and willing to dialogue with a very close person on two topics that were controversial and needing discussion. I felt reluctant to engage in the dialogue with this person because I did not want to come across as judgmental, uncaring, religious, or too moralistic. When we had the conversation and I learned the true views of the person I needed to talk with... God was allowed to put His finger on stuff (bad attitudes) within my heart that needed to go. Like left over hatred, anger, intolerance, hard-heartedness, fear, and needing those close to me to agree with me because of my insecurities. So with God allowing me (1) to be broken to the point of anger (on my part) led to (2) me finding courage to speak what I truly believed which led to (3) me discovering sinful attitudes in my heart that I eventually was led to (4) repent from with the Holy Spirit's help. Point is: God does use all things for our good if we let Him. I thought I was going backwards yet I was moving forwards. Thank you Lord God for pushing me to the point where I became courageous to the point that it ignited life and fire within me again.

On Dealing With Anger:

When dealing with anger in healthy ways I now realize that there are more options than I had first guessed. First of all it is okay to be angry, and we won't always be able to deal with it as quickly as it comes up. To forget about it without dealing with it eventually means we have let the sun go down on our anger. We might be angry for days, weeks, or even months... but even though the sun has set each day... it has not set on our anger if we still feel it because the anger is still visible to us. One thing we can do is visually package our anger and put it in Jesus' hands until there is a better time to deal with it. Some people are quicker at dealing with their anger than others, but I know for myself that I am either too slow to recognize my anger or are overwhelmed with too intense anger and so often the first things I do with it are foolish. For me dealing with my anger is a process based on what I have learned from the Body of Christ and being open to the Holy Spirit's guidance in the past and in the present.

Loving Those Whom We Disagree With:

Agreeing on truth is often seen as necessary for unity, security, sister or brotherhood, warmth, friendship, closeness, commitment or intimacy. Looking back at Church history the call to agreeing on truth has brought more division, animosity, hostility, judging, slander, and hatred than anyone could have wanted. Truth is important, but winning arguments, and being right can hurt, and make us aggressive and abrasive towards each other. Things can get ugly. When we encounter disagreements on important issues the most important question we are confronted with is: "Are we going to accept, love, bless, and be at peace with those we disagree with?". This is an important question that will arise often if one is open to listening to others. Saying yes to love each time is the key to sanity, peace, hope, and compassion. It is saying yes to friendship, closeness, commitment and intimacy. This is a truth that I needed to learn and has brought clarity of mind, hope, and joy to my life. Why? Because it was far too easy in the past for me to vilify, demonize, judge, and hate those who had different opinions than I had. Why? Because as a small child I wanted acceptance so much that I'd hurt others to get it; and I

would justify my actions and judging with lies, pretending to be better than others all motivated through my pride. This judging grew more and more as it took root in my life. As God slowly makes me aware of it comments made by others about me in the past actually begin to make sense. The way I see things is still slowly changing for the better thanks to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen!

A Memory Healed & Burden Removed:

I know that for a very long time I did not want to live. I wasn't suicidal, but I longed to die and go to Heaven because life seemed so burdensome to me. I know that in my teens (I don't know the exact date) I was watching a boxing match on TV with my Dad and I did not like the fact that the weaker boxer was losing badly. I at some time during the match decided to give some of my strength to the weaker boxer hoping that would stem the tide and give him a chance to win or make a fight of the match. I also think I tried to carry his weakness... and so a burden formed within me that I carried with me until now. In prayer on Sunday, October 24, 2010 I gave that burden to the Lord. Now that memory doesn't bother me anymore, and I feel free from it, feeling lighter and younger. I think that this is the reason why I have avoided, fled, and distanced myself from encountering situations, films, shows, books, and people's hurt or trauma because I didn't want to carry anymore burdens than I already had, having carried the above burden most of my life. When one sees good fruit then one knows that God has done a miracle. Thank you Lord Jesus for this miracle! Amen and Amen!

Looking For Dirty Laundry?

For so much of my life I have been cynical and judgmental (because of my pride) even though I now see it and have repented from much of its wreckage and roots in my mind and heart. However, the attitudes I wake up with still for me is to seek the dirty laundry in other people's lives and for me to be selfish. How long will these be my cross or my burdens to carry? I don't know. I know God has promised me freedom to love... and I have walked with Him now for nearly 19 years carrying the promise of freedom... and freedom to love has not come immediately but gradually. I still have not arrived. Sometimes I have taken one step forward and then ten backwards. At this time, November 8, 2010 my mornings are still the most difficult parts of each day because of the burdens I carry. But as each day progresses I begin to find victory later in each day with the help of the Trinity through relationship, prayer, faith, and perseverance. I just wish I did not have fight the battles over each and every morning. Yet Jesus instructed His disciples that they could not have any part of Him without picking up their crosses and following Him. This consoles me.

More Progress:

Today on Tuesday November 9, 2010 in the morning I did not start out having any struggles with selfishness or embracing spiritual racism. I was able to see the humanity of those with different faith traditions, not judge them, and not get wacked (psychotic) in the head unable to love them. The key for me is to see that we all have dirty laundry, them no different than I. I am not more Righteous than anyone else: we are all sinners. This is pivotal for somebody who is called to care for, love, and introduce others to Jesus. Without this I have no message. Thank you Holy Trinity for giving me a meaningful message!

However, I did fall into judging one person today but God pointed it out to me not long afterwards and I repented with His help. Boy is it easy for me to fall into and judge and not see what I am doing. This points to the fact that I need spiritual Light. Who is this light? Jesus! I need Jesus to expose things for me so that He can guide me into His paths of Righteousness. Without Him I am lost and in darkness. Thankfully He cares for us: me not the least.

Another Insight:

I have often wrongly ruled out other people's ideas of love thinking that they are too superficial. We Christians don't have a monopoly on love. It is true that often what the world calls love is just using each other. But certain sects within Christianity have often directed hatred and judgment against certain people groups in the name of defending the truth and the family but have done so with hatred not love or grace. I know I have done so often.

As I continue to walk out of the darkness I am learning new things with God's help. I am dealing with situations more in the present than in the past, but be it ever gradual, gradual, and still gradually. Thank you Lord God for your patience with me. I'm your child eager to learn and grow in your instruction. Amen, and Amen!

Feelings & anger

Admitting I am angry and feeling that anger and expressing that anger in prayer to God has not been easy for me. In fact I have attempted to ignore or suppress my anger most of my life. I have wanted to or been inclined to mistakenly label my anger as judgment. I am inclined to think I need to repent from my supposed judgments before they are judgments... when they are still non-existent with there only being anger to deal with. Surprisingly when I do judge I am unaware of it at the time and unaware that the sun has gone down on my judgments a few moments later. I guess that this situation will take time to correct and so I need to practice patience and trust God with the process of restoration.

When I feel my red-hot anger all sorts of uncharitable ideas enter into my mind... some of the Psalmist's prayers are like that too.¹⁵ Confessing to God in prayer my feelings of rage and anger towards people is important. I need to aim for honesty in my prayer life. This doesn't mean I have become an accuser of the brethren (because motives count). If I have rage and hatred, and feel like taking revenge then I need to tell God about it. Not to get God to agree with me and help me to take revenge, but to wash the darkness out of me. But if I go to God in rage in an attempt to use Him to get even with an agent who hurt me then I have become an accuser of the brethren. This is unacceptable. Making my feelings known to God also makes them known to me. Not that I'll act out those desires to hurt others. But God can't clean me up without me being honest about my feelings (or attitudes) and the shit in my life. When I confess to God honestly all the ugly stuff then I am inviting God into those parts of my life. He then invites me to process my anger in healthy ways and only good things can happen as a result. When I confess my feelings to God, Jesus exposes them to me for what they are and if I am willing He will lead me to deal with that anger in healthy ways through prayer. But if I

¹⁵ Cf. Psalm 31(v.6), 119(v.113), 137(v.9)

suppress my anger then I can't deal with it, and it turns to bitterness, cynicism, scoffing, hardened-heart, insensitivity and addictions (and possibly also falling into compulsively judging everyone who crosses my path).

After I have dealt with my judgments against an agent who hurt me... there is one more person I may need to deal with: myself. Sometimes I am partly responsible for the injustices visited on me. When I deal rightly with my anger in prayer to God against all agents of injustice in my life, and I deal rightly with my anger against myself in prayer then the storms will have blown themselves out. The process is a learning curve!

Conversing With God In The Mind And Heart Again:

On the way to Harrison Hot Springs (On Friday November 19, 2010) to a marriage retreat with Sophie, I attempted to speak with God about my insensitivity, but I experienced a wall so I gave up trying at that time. Later when we got to the Hotel and got comfortable I attempted to converse with Jesus again but this time I was shown my approach in Listening Prayer. I saw it for what it was: it was weak, pressurized, rigid, stretched, and desperately attempting to make something happen by posturing myself before God in a way that was not natural not trusting and not at peace. It focused more on worrying about which principles to use. It also focused on my inadequacy, and my intellectual doubts instead of on the goodness of God. It focused on techniques and was based on the fear of error. It attempted to put God into a box, not giving Him room to express Himself to me, as He desired in the fullest possible ways. I also was too rushed and anxious. I expected God to answer me immediately. Being at peace is the best way to hear God's voice. Words that produce anxiety are a sure sign that those words are not from God. If we don't calm ourselves down as best we can the harder it will be to perceive reality and to be certain about what God is saying to us in Listening Prayer. Now God did speak with me in my mind and heart for sometime despite my weak manner of going about it because I was so desperate and so in need, but ultimately He had something better for me. He wanted me to slow down, enjoy life, and savor all the good things life has to offer.

I now know that my weak approach needed to be discarded and that God was waiting for me to get the revelation that such was needed. God wants for me to approach Him in simplicity with childlike faith where He, His care for me, His nearness, and His goodness are the focus. What a difference it makes.

I did miss the words of knowledge, the images, and the direction I got in the past from the Holy Trinity wondering for sometime why I was experiencing the block to such communication and not knowing what to do about it. But now the above blocks have been exposed to my mind and heart and I have a new start.

Even though I could not contact God in my head for sometime because of my blocks, God did speak with me in other ways like He used to do before I got Brad Jersak's book: "Can You Hear Me?". Jesus' sheep know His voice. I am one of His many sheep. So I too can hear His voice. Those who come to God must believe that He is good and that He rewards those who approach Him.

I am sure that blocks will come every now and then but will also be dealt with as God and I continue to walk together. Thank you Lord God for not giving up on me. For you all things are possible. Thank you for loving all of us! Amen, and Amen!

God's Word Lights The Way To God:

Going by our selves to God just because it seems good can be tricky. I know that I have approached God without His promises in mind and I know from experience that it makes it nearly impossible to have confident expectations, joy, and peace in His presence. I am learning that when Jesus says:

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'¹⁶

I can take Him at His words. Taking this promise with me in prayer helps me to confidently be heard and expect that He will grant me insight, wisdom, and peace when I speak and listen to Him.

I am not always aware of the wrong-ness behind my judgments while making them because of my schizophrenia. I can and do (at this time) make such judgments often that I quickly forget about and do not realize that the sun goes down on them. When this happens I usually realize that my attitudes towards others have also been affected in very negative ways. Such judgments (against myself or others) are like spiritual weeds. They need to be plucked out by the roots, but how do we do this? We do so by asking God to reveal them to us when He is ready to do so. Sometimes He does so immediately, other times He does so later on. I ought not put God into a box expecting Him to immediately answer me through interior images, dreams, or visions. I ought not put God in a box expecting Him to not answer immediately. I want to give God the freedom to act when He knows it is best. And He always knows best, even when I am angry with Him. If it is urgent in God's eyes then He will communicate with me soon. If it fits into His timetable some time later on, then He will expect me to wait as patiently as possible for his answer. But know this: God loves to speak and to be heard. With me... using words or thoughts back and forth with God is the best way I communicate with Him. And when it suits God He uses interior images, dreams or visions with me. He decides when where and what to use in communication with me. Thoughts or words work best for me. This takes off the pressure, lack of focus, and removes the distractions I felt in the past when I expected immediate interior pictures, images, or visions from God in prayer.

God has given each of us a conscience where His light shines revealing to us the path He intends us to take. Consciences either warn before we do something wrong, or they tell us we did something right or wrong. God does not want to replace this setup through Listening Prayer completely. If our minds or consciences are so blocked or warped then Listening Prayer is the obvious path to take: I have been there and needed it for some time because of my schizophrenia. If the mind is clear, and the conscience is functioning well then God will use it over Listening Prayer. That doesn't mean that we ought to discard Listening Prayer altogether. Prayer and Listening are important aids to getting clean hearts and minds not to mention they enable us to have a real relationship with

¹⁶ Matthew 11:28-30 NRSV

God. Always God uses our consciences together with Listening Prayer when we are open to it.

Dealing With Difficult Memories:

Today on Sunday, November 28, 2010 Sophie and I had decided to put unnecessary belongs into a storage facility nearby. As a result I decided to go through all the paper work (letters, receipts, warranties, financially depressing documents...etc.) I had accumulated since my early university years. As I worked through the stuff I began to remember and experience the pain, worries, sadness, doubts, anger, covetousness, insecurities, and resentments associated with those years. I knew I needed to take this baggage to Jesus. But at the same time I realized that much of the negativity I still carried within me was directed against God. How do you forgive a Perfect God? Well God may be perfect but I often don't see or experience Him that way (hence the need for faith). My faith says He is good even though I don't always see it (in the past especially in those years of devastating darkness and pain). The darkness I experienced I believe God meant for good. So today I decided to take my pain from those years that I still carried within me to God in prayer. To my surprise and delight He removed all those painful burdens from me. I feel lighter and more joyful as a result. Thank you ever so much living God.

I also needed to deal with my image of God the Father in my mind. If anyone gets bad press it is Him. We know all about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus suffered for us and the Holy Spirit is intimately involved in our lives; the Father seems distant, hard to please, and invisible. But here is the kicker: God the Father sent Jesus to reconcile us to Himself, and He send the Holy Spirit to be with us to comfort and direct us. Only a good Father would do such a thing. Even more Jesus is the image of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the supernatural love of Jesus and the Father personified. Both Jesus and the Holy Spirit come from the Father and reflect His beauty. So if they are beautiful so must the Father be beautiful. I am at peace.

Whose Conscience Is It?

I don't know how God judges people's consciences, actions, aims, directions, inactions, beliefs, knowledge, and baggage. I am learning that what is obvious to me is not always obvious to others. All people have different histories, injuries, hurts, blind-nesses, and lies deposited in their minds and hearts and how they use what they have to navigate through life I have no idea. The only person I know anything real about is myself. I know that I have been a very judgmental person for a very long time... and the words Jesus spoke about not judging and condemning others apply to me. Recognizing these insights restore sanity to me.

More Chaos???

Today on Tuesday, November 30, 2010 as I began my day at work I had some turmoil in my mind and instead of attempting to tackle it with the tools I have acquired over the years of dealing with my schizophrenia, psychosis, and shit in my head and heart. I decided to wait on the Lord because the verse: "Blessed are those who wait on the Lord" came to mind. I decided to wait and I was granted some peace regarding the shit in my head.

But then as coworkers made their ways into work things began to escalate again. I became more and more irritated and intolerant of little things as the morning progressed. I felt so out of control as I got angrier for every little thing that was not in its place, and with everyone who got in my way. I felt so absolutely selfish. I felt devoid of love, devoid of sanity and my peace was all gone. It got so bad that my annoyance began to turn into anger and the anger became more and more directed at God. The anger built, and grew along with the psychosis and I felt like it was open season on me. I felt worthless, sinful, selfish, ugly, and hateful. Who would save me from this mess? I began to question how much longer I'd have to suffer with schizophrenia and all the rubbish that comes along with it: "20 more years?" I asked myself. I answered: "No..." that was unacceptable in my opinion [But I know that I want God's will done in my life... and if He wants it then that is something I will accept one day at a time]. I felt abandoned by God and began to question His motives for letting this happen to me. I began to question God's wisdom for letting me go through what I saw as totally outrageous, and unfair treatment. I felt like I didn't know myself any longer. I asked if all the victories I had experienced were worthless.

Why was this happening to me? I pouted and felt sorry for myself. Was it because I was wrongly aiming at perfection? I thought this was a real possibility. Were my beliefs really that outrageous? Did they need to change? As this turmoil raged through me I worked at my job and got one thing after another accomplished. Hour after hour went by with no end or rest in sight as far as the inner suffering and turmoil was concerned.

But then I finally asked myself: Are the demons responsible for this? When I asked this question the psychosis immediately ended. The demon was sniffed out. I still felt rattled and it would take a week or two to get back to normal. I still felt confused. But mostly I felt relieved that the chaos seemed to be over with.

I asked myself: What lessons could I garnish from this experience? I realized that the demons want my soul, and this major attack I experienced was an attempt to destroy my faith in the God who has promised me great things. I also realized that the words: "Blessed are those who wait on the Lord" were from God to me to endure what I had just gone through. I also realized that what I intensely experienced for six to seven hours others experienced to a lesser intensity but over many more years (which is no less easier than what I experienced today). All are targets for destruction by demons who wish to lead us away from the living God, away from healing, rest, peace, hope, and great expectations.

I have been told that when a giraffe is born it falls to the ground from its mother's womb, and after it finally learns to get to its feet, its mother knocks it to the ground to make sure that the baby giraffe doesn't forget how to get up. Is this a lesson that God wants me to learn? Maybe!

The last part of my recovery from this attack is this: I have learned the hard way that I can't get a clean heart from God by abrasively demanding it in anger from Him while doubting and questioning His goodness. Imagine the gall I had to demand holiness in an unholy manner. Who would be so deluded? It was in part because of my schizophrenia... but also because a part of me thought it was okay! Lord God please continue to show me mercy in Jesus' name. Getting out of the webs we get caught in takes time, patience,

perseverance, and repenting with God's help. Be sure... Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy. So I know that I need to be on my guard. Amen, and Amen!

Coming Full Circle:

On May 1, 2001 I was given the gift of chastity. From that time forward I was able to confront others on any matter between them and me without the fear I felt in the past. I now realize that this state was not normal (and probably psychotic) although I thought it was acceptable for some time.

Part of coming full circle has to do with the reasons and answers to the question: Do we confront all those who are still alive and who have hurt us at some point during our lives? I initially thought that the answer to this question was always yes but I now know it to be otherwise. If one knows that the person who hurt oneself feels contrition, remorse, and sadness for what he or she did to us then the answer is yes, and one may contact them and tell them they are forgiven. They will feel relieved.

I don't recommend contacting all the persons who have wronged one to let them know one has forgiven them. Many times when other hurt us they may never have intended to hurt us. We can hurt their feelings in such cases, and they may see our desire for an apology as us judging them. When they feel judged they will feel hurt and violated, and may start to nurse their anger into a full-blown resentment. With us pointing out possible dirty laundry belonging to them, they might start looking for dirty laundry in our lives. We may start a war with them and that would go on and on against love, blessing, and peace. And if they don't think they did anything wrong we might have a real difficulty to forgive them from our hearts knowing they are un-repentant.¹⁷ When we forgive somebody we ought not go about saying that we have done so revealing their identity and all the details of their transgression(s). Love covers a multitude of sins! If we need to encourage somebody else to forgive by sharing how we forgave then we need to keep the names anonymous and places unknowable. God says that when He forgives us our wrongs they are as far as the east is from the west. If we want God to not use our sins against us then we have to be willing to do the same with those who sinned against us.¹⁸

In this new phase of recovery I am much more in touch with reality. Thank you Lord God for the newly found sensitivity I now have towards others – and the freedom that belongs to it! Thank you Sophie for your part in the whole matter! I seem to have come full circle since 2001. I am so grateful for the restoration of this truth to my conscience and practice. Peace! Come Lord Jesus, come!

An Insight Into My Insensitive People Pleasing Side:

Having to be liked was a major flaw in my makeup for a long time... I did not know how much it was still at work within me until Tuesday, December 14, 2010 when the Holy Spirit put it's finger on it within me. When He did I was able to repent from it with Jesus' help! It was one hell of a learning curve.

To accept a person means you are willing to live or work or play with them despite their

¹⁷ I am indebt to my wife Sophie and R.T. Kendall for making these ideas known to me and showing me that they are worth practicing.

¹⁸ Indebt to R.T. Kendall for this reasoning

messages or attitudes or actions. You might hate their messages, you might not like their attitudes or behaviors but you refuse to judge the person (judging the message or attitude or action is not the same as judging the person). When we accept a person we remain committed to loving them and meeting them where they are at, and not demanding that they conform to what we want.

Needing each person we meet to like us is un-natural. When one is liked not out of manipulation, but as result of people getting to know one then it is welcome. Needing to be liked will warp our thoughts/words and actions towards others because we put being liked before the good of the other person and even ourselves. Sometimes we will have to do something another person won't like but it may be the very medicine that they need. If we need to be liked then chances are pretty good that we won't do what is right in those situations.

When we set our hearts on being accepted by others, then there are some possible consequences or fruits. Usually when one sets one's heart too much on being accepted rejection will eventually occur. From then on the spirit of perfection-ism will grow within the rejected person. Because he or she might think that if only one will become perfect then others will accept one. Because of the effort and aim in becoming perfect... a judgmental attitude will grow out of the perfectionism. Because if one has to be perfect then one will expect it from others too: hence the judgmental-ism. On one hand one will desire acceptance, but the judgmental-ism will make it more and more difficult to make and maintain warm, loving and intimate relationships. A proud reaction to being rejected will fuel more rejection. Some things are counter-intuitive. It is amazing how one can know a truth but drift away from it because of the passion or heated anger in the moment. The desire to make judgments is overwhelming in the proud. Often the very things we set out to get are never attained because of the methods we choose to get those things. People who are rejected also attempt to please others so they may get acceptance. But because they are judgmental they become insensitive people pleasers. The communities they belong to for their part are often jaded as far as their part is concerned. I have been there and done that most of my life... but no more thanks to God!

The gravest possible sins for someone who wants to belong too much that others can do to them are either "they rejected me"... or when others aren't "nice" to me in the way I want to be treated. And they often demand that others greet them first... otherwise they may get resentful and pout... or they feel un-liked or rejected.

They will take every action that challenges their charity or good will... as a great weight or an inconvenience. They will feel guilty if they don't please the person challenging their charity; otherwise if they please the person who challenges their charity they probably land up feeling used (as if their rights are trampled on). If they are conscientious they will be caught between their selfishness and the desire to please. They are the insensitive people pleasers. They want to do the right thing but they want acceptance and belonging more than anything else subconsciously if not fully consciously. This has been at work within me subconsciously for so many years and happens to be finally dead thanks to God. It grew in my consciousness as it was brought

back from out of my subconscious threatening all the good I believed in until God struck it down and I had more freedom.

Somehow because I wanted so badly to be liked (even though I became judgmental out of the rejection I experienced) I thought I had to always like and be nice to those whom I wanted relationships with. I also thought I needed to like those closest to me no matter what. Those who are closest to us often annoy us, anger us, and frustrate us the most. I now realize that I do accept and love those closest to me but I don't have to always like them or what they do. This has brought more peace to me. It amazes me how one small decision can lead to a string of consequences that a person never dreamt would come about. Such is the case in my life. The young make mistakes whereas the old learn from them. Thank you Lord Jesus for your patience, love, discipline, and peace! I am most grateful.

Flotsam & Jetsam:

I know that while I grew up as a child and on into my teenage years, my twenties... and later years I was to the best of my memory unaware of the consequences that came about because of my morally evil decisions. Looking back I wish now that the consequences that came about had been felt more deeply by me so as to make me realize what I was doing and therefore to spur me on sooner to repentance and away from the path to the dark side. But now, since about mid 2004 every little evil judgment has had consequences that have made me immediately want to go back and repent from them because they lead away from love. By judgments I mean those made out of pride that harden one's heart towards the people one hears about or meets. What is this teaching me?

God is love not hatred. God hates no one. The further I walk with God/Jesus the more I realize that He doesn't harden His heart against anyone: the wicked who generally do evil; and the good who generally do good; and those in between. I am learning that I am not allowed to turn my anger into hatred so as to harden my heart or attitudes against those who do differ to me in thoughts and deeds when it comes to moral matters. I tend to believe that God gives all people their hearts' desires. So I need to be aware of what I am aiming for. If the desires we have are evil then unwanted suffering will result because we were made for peace, joy, and clean consciences; deviating from seeking good makes us sick; and when we are sick we don't feel good. If the desires we have are good, then suffering occurs too, but it is a good kind of suffering. Why? Because to achieve acts of love, we humans require the ability to suffer, and because we do love that ability is used - hence the pain or suffering we experience.

Even though God visits on those in Hell the consequences of their actions, the consequences are in line with their desires. God is not some despotic power monger who delights in the suffering of those He has made because they reject Him. When someone rejects God that rejection hurts one so much that they see it as God's retribution.

Connecting & Trusting God In A New Way:

Almost universally in my past when I was navigating through turmoil, challenges, confusion, un-rest, trials, stressful temptations, moral failures, or negotiating and compromising on meeting needs, desires, goals, methods, and outcomes in my

relationships I'd pray, but feel distant and un-comsoled by God unable to connect with Him in a strong way. I'd therefore not feel any real peace through those tests. I'd trust Him as much as I could... but not fully. The only time I felt consolation when I felt it was in between my trials. In my past I'd universally not be able to rest, or even communicate with, or wholly trust God with the burdens that really challenged me or storms that loomed so large ahead... because my apprehensions, fear and dread were overwhelming. Sadly the storms I went through looked larger than my God in practice. My faith was weak; even though I did trust God with my Salvation... and even though I trusted Him with ordinary day-to-day stuff, unfortunately with the more difficult challenges I had trouble trusting in God that much at all. I'd ask others to pray for my causes and also for me... but me wholly turning to God in trust and rest for BIG things was not possible for the longest time.

Yes I did go through plenty of storms for many years (because of my schizophrenia or Dark Night) with great temptations, moral failures, doubts, and trials... and I made it through them in faith (weak as it was) with God's help, mercy, forgiveness and grace. But I never did so in much peace or confidence or consolation. I never really felt connected with God while going through them. I never really felt I could trust God completely with the heavy issues.

Those with little faith can only trust God with small stuff; those with more faith can trust God with weightier stuff; and God loves them both the same. Those with faith in the true Jesus are sisters and brothers with one Father. God loves those with little faith just as much as those with great faith. God will do all in His power to save each of us. Getting from little faith to greater faith requires relationship based on some faith and trials that exercise the faith that we do have. Like Saint John of the Cross said:

To come to enjoy what you have not
you must go by a way in which you enjoy not.
To come to the knowledge you have not
you must go by a way in which you know not.
To come to the possession you have not
you must go by a way in which you possess not.
To come to what you are not
you must go by a way in which you are not.¹⁹

But finally because of recent challenges... for the first time I was able to connect with and trust God with BIG stuff despite the confusion, anxiety, doubt, and uncertainty I was feeling inside of me. The storm I was going through became small and my God became BIG in my eyes. I had no way of knowing that this was possible in my relationship with God until Thursday, December 30, 2010. But now I know it is. Thank you Lord Jesus, Father God, and beloved Holy Spirit for this new development in my relationship with you. I am in your debt (and always will be). Thank you for the challenges you have

¹⁹ K Kavanaugh, O.C.D, O Rodriguez, O.C.D, The Collected Works Of St. John Of The Cross, ICS Publications (1991), p. 111, or from the Sketch of Mount Carmel

brought my way that have with your help brought me to where I am now walking
deeper in faith, consolation, and peace.