

Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL





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Because God is the living God, He can hear; because He is a loving God, He will hear; because He is our covenant God, He has bound Himself to hear.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Fallen man, no matter his inclination, has a tendency to take things too far. If to him God is personable, accessible, then he errs in making Him too human—too much the pal, the good ol' boy, the buddy who tags alongside like a doting puppy. If, on the other hand, to him God is utterly holy, untouchable, then he errs in making Him too distant and unreal, so unlike humans in every way that he remains unimaginable, and utterly unapproachable. Even under the best of conditions, man seems destined to apprehend only a bare subset of who and what God truly is.

For this reason we humans can become confused regarding the qualities of God that we more often associate with creatures of flesh, rather than creatures of spirit. We know from our grade school days that humans have five senses: sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell. We can easily imagine that a supernatural God would have extra senses beyond our imagining—such as omniscience—but seldom think of God possessing the same mundane senses given to man.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."

Genesis 1:26

But with the exception of sin (and that tiny difference that we are flesh-kind and He is spirit-kind), God and man are made of the same stuff. He has given us sight because *He* has sight; He has given us hearing because *He* hears. God, in His wisdom, has given us senses we can use to commune with

Him, because they are the same ones He uses to commune with us.

Hearing Our Prayer

So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.

When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said,

"Do not let me see the boy die." And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept. God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her,

"What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is."

Genesis 21:14-17

Out of all of God's senses, perhaps it is His hearing that is most dear to us. For, since we now speak to Him only through forms of prayer, it is God's hearing that is most critical to our relationship with

Him. When our hearts are heavy with sorrow, we beseech Him. When we are confused, and need vital direction, we plead with Him. When our hearts are filled with a joy that we are compelled to express, we sing to Him. All of this would be for naught, if God could not hear.

The Israelites would still be slaves of the Egyptians. David's songs of praise would have evaporated in the ether.

Nehemiah's habitual entreaties would have been issued in vain, and Jerusalem would not have been rebuilt.

Manasseh would still be chained in Babylon.

Lazarus would still be in his tomb.

God's sense of hearing is essential—from a human perspective—to our communion with Him. Without it our relationship would be utterly one-sided. God could still read our hearts, and observe our actions, but He would not

know those things we choose to say—or not to say—directly to Him.

Hearing it All

"In my distress I called upon the Lord,
Yes, I cried to my God;
And from His temple He heard my voice,
And my cry for help came into His ears."

2 Samuel 22:7

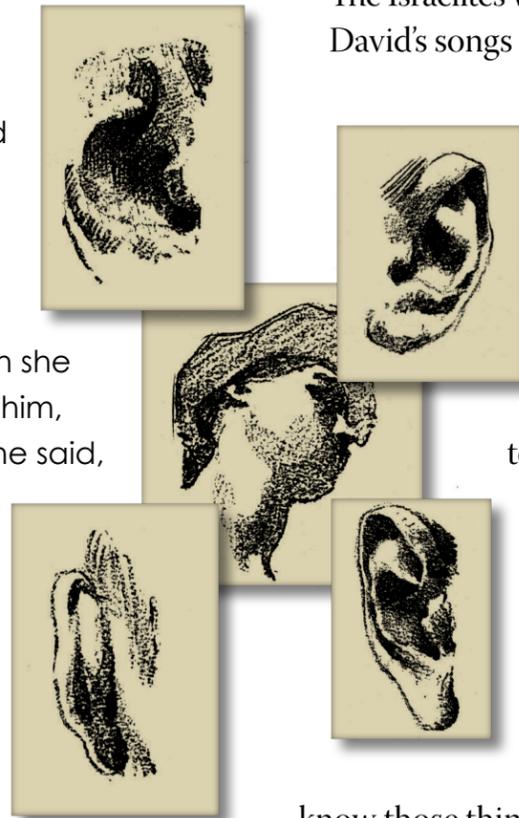
Until the day when we kneel before Him, in person, we may never know why it is important to an omnipotent, omniscient God to hear the spoken words of His people. But His word makes clear that it is. Though He knows the contents of the deepest recesses of our hearts, our minds, our loathings and yearnings, God still asks us to speak directly to Him with our mouth. He has His reasons—as mysterious as they are—to hear expressed by our own lips our supplication, our worship and praise, our confusion, our frustration, even our anger.

Beyond His ability to hear our spoken words, God also can "hear" our prayerful silence. Not only can He hear, but through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, God can interpret our unintelligible groanings.

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Romans 8:26

God listens to all of our life. Like a benevolent version of Orwell's omnipresent Big Brother, God hears what we hear; He hears what we say, and do not say; He hears those things we keep hidden in our heart; He hears those things we wish He didn't, and those things we think He hasn't. God, for our ultimate benefit, doesn't miss a thing. ☿



*They who seek the throne of grace
Find that throne in every place;
If we live a life of prayer,
God is present everywhere.*

*In our sickness and our health,
In our want, or in our wealth,
If we look to God in prayer,
God is present everywhere.*

*When our earthly comforts fail,
When the woes of life prevail,
'Tis the time for earnest prayer;
God is present everywhere.*

*Then, my soul, in every strait,
To thy Father come, and wait;
He will answer every prayer:
God is present everywhere.*

Oliver Holden

We must begin eternal life here below, not only in our conscience, but also with our praise. Our soul ought to be like a flower, not merely receiving the gentle influence of heaven, but, in its turn, and as if in gratitude, exhaling also a sweet and pleasant perfume. It should be our desire, as it once was that of a pious man, that our hearts should melt and dissolve like incense in the fire of love, and yield the sweet fragrance of praise.

Christian Scriver Gotthold

Baked chicken. Mashed potatoes. Roast beef with carrots, potatoes, and onions. Baked ham with raisin sauce.

Every Sunday when I was growing up, around 12:15 in the afternoon, after a full morning at church, I would step through the front door of our house to be greeted by the rich aromas emanating from the kitchen. Every Sunday morning, as the family dressed for Sunday School and worship, Mom would put the finishing touches on that day's dinner, placing it in the oven on a low heat so it would be ready after the final "Amen" of the eleven o'clock worship service. And every Sunday our growling stomachs would be met by a house exuding the savory aromas that would fill our nostrils. Made all the more hungry by the smells, we would have to suffer the wait while Mom fixed the accompanying vegetables and salad, and filled a towel-lined basket with her fresh, homemade crescent rolls.

To this day, the smell of chicken fixed the same way, or of pot roast, carrots and potatoes ready for the dinner table, will immediately transport me back to those more simple days. In those aromas I am reminded of our home on Church Street in Marshalltown. I can see the basic, unsophisticated furnishings of the living room where we would bide our time with the Sunday funnies while we waited to be called to the table. I can see the small

dining room, and the table set with the best dishes we had. I can remember the taste of each dish, the scent of candles burning in the center of the table, the comfortable conversation of a family enjoying the homely custom of breaking bread together.

More than anything else, however, those smells remind me of the love Mom had for her family. Even though on Sunday morning she was already busier than the rest of us, it was important to her that she feed her family a hearty, wholesome meal—from her own kitchen. Every dish was prepared with care, with practiced skill, and with her devotion and love.

A Soothing Aroma

But our God is in the heavens;
He does whatever He pleases.
Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of man's hands.
They have mouths, but they cannot speak;

They have eyes, but they cannot see;
They have ears, but they cannot hear;
They have noses, but they cannot smell;
They have hands, but they cannot feel;
They have feet, but they cannot walk;
They cannot make a sound with their throat.
Those who make them will become like them,
Everyone who trusts in them.

Psalm 115:3-8

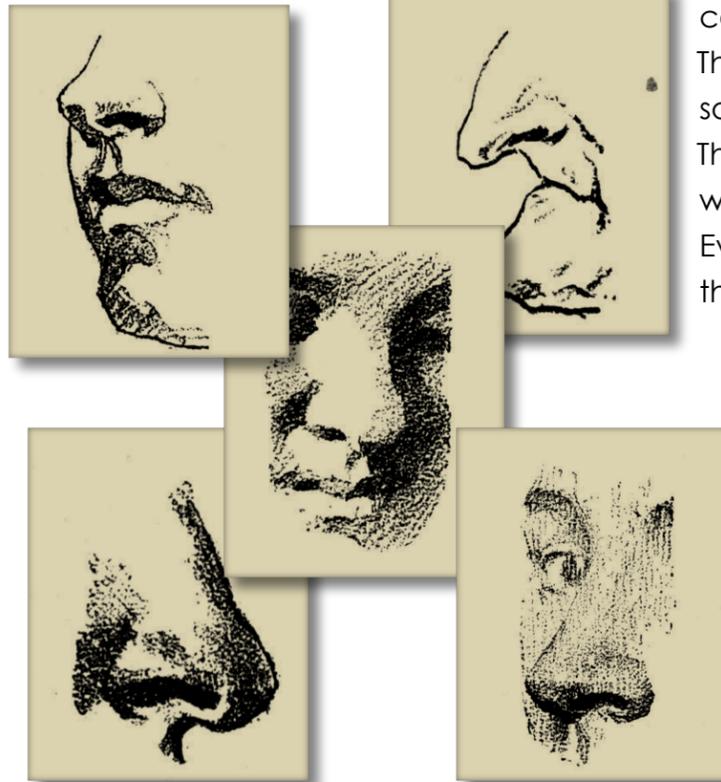
From the very beginning God made it clear that He was singularly unlike any of the man-made deities that some favored—those that had been imagined and fabricated by their own worshipers. His role, indeed, was a reversal of the process: Instead of being a god fashioned by man, He was *the* God who had fashioned man. More than that, He was the God who fashioned man *in His own image*. Remarkable. And thus was established the pathway for authentic worship and communion.

He had a mouth, and *could* speak.
He *could* see.
He *could* hear.
He *could* smell.
He *could* feel.
He *could* walk.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

Genesis 8:20-21

From the outset, God demonstrated that He shared our senses. He showed that He would interact with us in much the same way we interact with each other. When we spoke, He would listen. When we were in need of it, He would touch. Our lives would be open to Him, because He could see. And our devotion and praise would not be for naught, because He could smell their aroma.



The Fragrance of Our Lives

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Like it or not, each of our lives has an aroma about it. We smell. Our actions, our thoughts, our words—all deliver upward a fragrance that is either

pleasant or unpleasant to the Lord. It is easy to marvel at God's mental acuity, how He is able to sort out and respond to simultaneous entreaties from believers all over the world. But think, too, of His *olfactory* acuity—His ability to sort through the confusing melange that drifts heavenward from more than eight billion souls. Were we to sense the same, we would surely pass out from the stench! But God not only does not swoon, He is able to isolate, identify, and evaluate each individual aroma that wafts into His nostrils.

When we worship Him in Spirit and truth, our adoration rises in a cloud of offering, a fragrance that is sweet in the Lord's nostrils. Our songs rise in a vaporous ribbon, a sacrifice of praise that He inhales as a sustaining nectar. Indeed, our very lives—everything between our morning alarm and our evening slumber—can be a pleasing aroma to Him.

The fragrance of our lives tells God how much, how deeply, how authentically we love Him. Just as the hearty aromas that embraced my senses every

Sunday noon bore witness to the love Mom had for her family, the aromas wafting heavenward from our lives bear witness to our level of devotion to an attentive, gracious God. ॥

When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:6-7

A number of years ago this enfeebled writer stepped into a new epoch, a time of epic transition, a period of grand cosmic flux after which the world as he saw it would never again be the same.

I got glasses.

Understand, for almost fifty years I enjoyed vision of almost mythical clarity—always being the first in the car to read the approaching road sign, able to read the tiniest fine print on the back of a medicine bottle, identifying the smallest animal from a great distance. And one grows accustomed to being perfect, you know. Somewhere in the cosmos it is written that what is, will always be; eye-glasses were for people who have worn them for years—not for this one who always enjoyed such Immaculate Perception.

But then words on the television screen began sprouting companions, a brother image slightly skewed to the left and down. Reading anything from the printed page required much squinting and flexing of the elbows to set the book just the correct distance from the eyes. So with great fear and trepidation I made an appointment at a nearby Corrected Vision Emporium, and found myself sitting in an alien environment: a small, dimly lit room peering through a Medusa-like contraption, reading rows of letters projected onto the wall.

Suddenly, that which I had believed all along to be sharp, through the magic of optical glass became *truly* sharp and clear! Over a period of

decades my vision had so slowly deteriorated that what I had perceived to be perfect was, in fact, not. In recent years my eyes had been lying to my brain, telling it that this was as good as it gets, while all along denying the need for extra clarity. Not only had my eyesight deteriorated, but it had done so unevenly. Now my aging eyes required one prescription for things distant, and a different prescription for things nearby.

So I got bifocals. Oy.

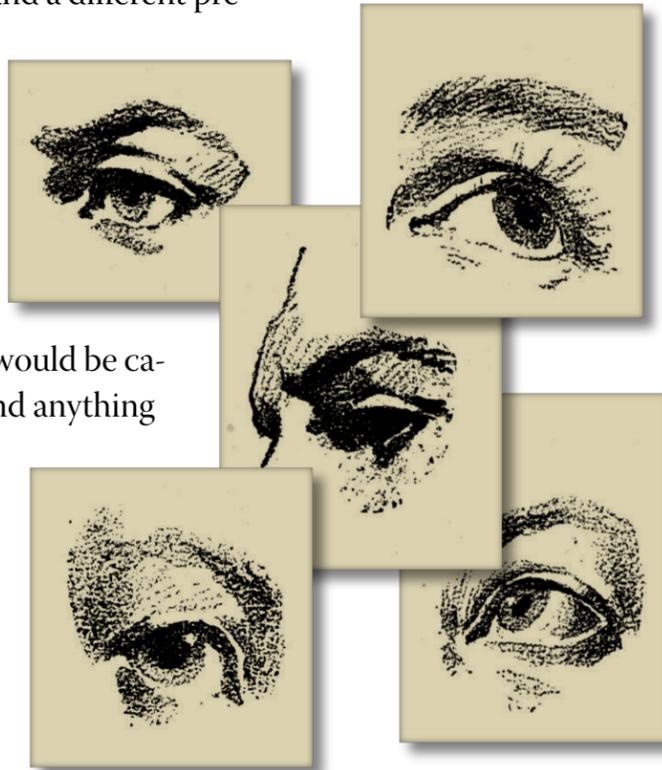
A Timeless Clarity

Even the most callused agnostic will admit that if there really is such a thing as a god, he or she certainly would be capable of seeing everything and anything that transpires on this blue-white ball hanging in space. After all, that is just part and parcel of being a god: all-seeing, all-knowing, etc. It just goes with the territory. Any self-respecting, card-carrying god would have the ability.

But the Christian knows that while there are not gods, there is *a* God—and He most certainly is all-everything.

Not only does God see, but He sees in ways both awe-inspiring and terrible to mere flesh. He sees

everything, no matter how infinitesimally tiny, no matter how craftily hidden, no matter how far away. God does not need bifocals; He sees everything that exists—both nearby and far away—with a sharp clarity that makes High Definition Television seem blurred and distorted.



Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM who I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Exodus 3:13-14

Beyond that acuity, however, God’s eyesight is inexorably linked to time. For, to God, there is no time: no present demarcated from history or future. For God, all of time is so universally *now*, as not to exist at all. God dwells outside of time as we

understand it. Which means that at once He not only sees everything in our present, but He sees with equal clarity everything in what we refer to as the past, and everything in what we refer to as the future.

X-ray Vision

As if this over-arching vision were not sufficient, God’s eyesight has one more quality. Man sees only what is reflected for him—light bounced from one surface to another. But God sees with the hot displacing vision of a laser, slicing down into that which is unseen to natural man.

“...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7

Here God’s vision is inexorably linked to election. He is capable of seeing everything and anything. No caveats. No excuses. No corrective lenses perched atop His nose. But His eyesight is, as it were, selective.

When He looks down upon an unregenerate sinner, someone utterly and eternally detached from His Spirit, God sees every part of that person. He sees the hard outer crust of sin’s putrefaction, the self-centered machinations percolating in the mind, the cold depravity of the heart. His vision, by choice, misses nothing.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

But when He looks down upon a member of His elect—a believer in Christ—God sees not the corruption, but the cleansing blood of His Son. Believe it, in the eyes of flesh the corruption is still

there; from a human standpoint we are covered by the same putrefaction, the same self-centeredness, the same depravity as our unregenerate neighbor. But with a selective focus, God looks at the condition of the believer's heart. Finding there the Spirit in residence, He sees only a justified son or daughter.

...from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood...

Revelation 1:5

By God's sense of sight, the Christian's outer covering is no longer sinful flesh, but the cleansing, regenerating blood of Christ. ☘

And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, we want our eyes to be opened." Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.

Matthew 20:32-34

Thousands of years ago, Aryan-speaking nomadic groups migrated from the north to the subcontinent of India. Later, the priest-lawmakers of this new Aryan power subdivided Indian society into four castes: At the top they placed their own caste, the Brahmans; then, in descending order were the Kshatriyas, or warriors, and the Vaisyas, or farmers and merchants. The bottom caste, the laborers, were called the Sudras. On a social level so low that it wasn't even included in the caste system were the "Untouchables"—alienated people restricted to performing only those tasks so disgusting, so unthinkable, that they wouldn't be performed even by those in the lowest caste, the Sudras.

Today the Indian constitution forbids caste discrimination, and has abolished, by law, Untouchability. But old ways die hard in India. Still today the man who strips down to almost naked and immerses himself in human excrement to manually unclog a public sewer drain, will not receive proper medical care for the infections and diseases that wrack his body as a result. He may not even find a well where he is permitted to wash the filth from his body. Still today, this man's child will be deemed, by societal custom and ancient tradition, to be an Untouchable from its first breath—predestined for a life of sub-human work, ridicule, estrangement from the rest of society, even physical persecution.

A Great Chasm Fixed

Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short
That it cannot save;
Nor is His ear so dull
That it cannot hear.
But your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your
God,
And your sins have
hidden His face from
you so that He does
not hear.

Isaiah 59:1-2

In the cosmic scheme of the universe, there is no "caste" higher than God's. In fact, it is so lofty, so exclusive, that only He alone is worthy of membership. At the other end of His scale is a "caste" so low that even Indian Untouchables would not go near its members: sinners.

Sin is so distasteful, so repugnant to God, that when even His own spotless Son was covered by it upon the cross, the Father, in His unblemished holiness, could not bear to look upon it. In that moment, even the spotless Lamb became Untouchable.

Yet God *did* send that unblemished Lamb to die upon that cross to atone for the very sins of humanity with which He could not associate. This is love indeed, that

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

John 3:16-17

God's Hands

We touch with our hands, and since no man has ever described the physical appearance of God, we can assume that He—who is Spirit—does not have literal, physical hands. References in Scripture to holy appendages are examples of anthropomorphism. Though on this side of heaven we cannot say with certainty, God does not have literal eyes and ears and nose and mouth—at least in any form we

might recognize. Nor does he have feet and hands. These are all used metaphorically in God's word to help humans understand His personality and ways.

If God does not have hands, how then does He touch?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-2,14

God touches man through His Son. Unlike God the Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus became flesh—actual flesh and bones and blood—that He might be, for all to see and touch, the outreaching condescension and compassion of God. Through Him, God would inaugurate a way through which He could reach out and touch untouchable man.

Beyond that, Jesus became the tangible implementation of God's daily, persistent care of those He calls His own. No believer is ever alone; no believer need ever question the nearness of God's hand in his life. Christ's dying on the cross is the proof that God touches us in ways both marvelous and supernatural—and in ways profound in their simplicity. ☘



*O what a wonderful, wonderful day—
Day I will never forget;
After I'd wandered in darkness away,
Jesus my Savior I met.
O what a tender, compassionate friend—
He met the need of my heart;
Shadows dispelling,
With joy I am telling,
He made all the darkness depart!*

*Born of the Spirit with life from above
Into God's family divine,
Justified fully thro' Calvary's love,
O what a standing is mine!
And the transaction so quickly was made
When as a sinner I came,
Took of the offer
Of grace He did proffer—
He saved me, O praise His dear name!*

*Now I've a hope that will surely endure
After the passing of time;
I have a future in heaven for sure,
There in those mansions sublime.
And it's because of that wonderful day
When at the cross I believed;
Riches eternal
And blessings supernal
From His precious hand I received.*

*Jesus came down and glory filled my soul,
When at the cross the Savior made me whole;
My sins were washed away
And my night was turned to day—
Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!*

John W. Peterson

But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:9

Human beings possess an uncanny knack for draining all the substance and meat from the traditional components of life.

For example, furniture for the masses used to be heavy, substantial, long-lasting. Now that substantial quality is reserved for those able to pay for more high-end merchandise. It is the same with clothing. Though we were of the very lowest middle-class when I was growing up, my parents could still afford a durable shirt that would last for my older brother, last for my wearing, and still have plenty of life left in it for the next person. If I were growing up today, under those same fiscal conditions, we could only afford shirts that might not survive even the first washing.

As we have devalued our commodities, we also have devalued our activities. Today our seeing has degenerated into little more than a glance. Our public speaking has become common, and forgettable—just compare a speech by the average politician today to the eloquence of Abraham Lincoln or Winston Churchill. Common everyday people used to listen to symphonies, and read the classics. Now, more often than not, common everyday people listen to garbage—and read nothing at all.

Sampling

Likewise our definitions have changed. Today if I were handed someone's flavorful drink and told to "taste" it, my generous friend would be sorely offended if I downed the entire contents of the glass. By today's definition, he would have ex-

pected me only to take a sip of his drink—not to polish it off. The word "taste" has become synonymous with "sample."

But in Scripture, the word "taste" means not just to sample, but "to eat," "to experience (fully)." As is usually the case, God's timeless definitions are far more substantial than modern man's. So when the writer to the Hebrews says that Christ Jesus "tasted death," he doesn't mean that Christ "sampled" death. It means that Christ suffered through the complete, awful experience of death upon the most tortuous instrument of death at the time. His tasting of death was not at all like the wine-taster, who swishes the fragrant liquid around in his mouth before spitting it out unconsumed. No, Jesus swallowed the entirety of death. He experienced it fully.

The Taste Experience

Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by

his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death. It's obvious, of course, that he didn't go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us,

children of Abraham. That's why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people's sins, he would have already experienced it all himself—all the pain,

all the testing—and would be able to help where help was needed.

Hebrews 2:14-18
from The Message

Just as God *touches* man through Jesus,

He *tastes*—experiences—the things of man through the Son.

When we are lonely, bereft of friends and family, and we cry out to the Lord in our longing, He knows what it is like, because He, too, tasted separation from the Father while on earth.

When we are frustrated or angry, and struggle to

channel those emotions for righteousness, He understands this volatile condition of the flesh. He tasted that most explosive emotion of the flesh.

When we are filled with happiness, even joy, Jesus is able to share it with us, for He, too, has tasted the fragile happiness of man.

When we draw strength from the companionship of a brother, Jesus has experienced that sustaining bond. But He also has tasted the bitter disappointment of being let down by a friend.

When we feel Satan's powerful tug, tempting us away from holiness, Jesus knows our struggle, for He, too, was tempted by the nemesis.

When our flesh cries out from pain or hunger, Jesus understands, because He, too, has tasted that vulnerability of the flesh. He, too, has experienced weakening hunger, and the agonies of pain—even the ultimate agony of death.

God in Christ has not just sampled the things of man—He has *lived* them. ❧



I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul will make its boast in the LORD;
The humble will hear it and rejoice.
O magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.
I sought the LORD, and He answered me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces will never be ashamed.
This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him
And saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear
Him, and rescues them.
O taste and see that the LORD is good;

How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
O fear the LORD, you His saints;
For to those who fear Him there is no want.
The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;
But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any
good thing.
Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
Who is the man who desires life
And loves length of days that he may see good?
Keep your tongue from evil
And your lips from speaking deceit.
Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.

Psalm 34:1-14

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

Genesis 5:1-2

When the Godhead created man in its own image, it went far beyond a similarity of appearance. God experienced His life through His senses, and so He crafted man to experience life by the same means. More than that, He designed man to commune with his Maker through those same senses.

In our creation, God implanted in us both the ability and the yearning to listen for and to His voice.

I will hear what God the Lord will say;
For He will speak peace to His people, to
His godly ones;
But let them not turn back to folly.
Surely His salvation is near to those who
fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.

Psalms 85:8-9

Our sense of smell is not sufficient to detect the aroma of God, but it is sufficient for us to detect the aroma of Christ in each other. When Jesus lives within, we exude His fragrance to everyone around us—to some, the sweet scent of salvation; to others, the rotten stench of the grave.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of

Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

We haven't His penetrating vision, but God has given us the ability to see evidence of Him all around us, and thus to commune with Him through the beauty and creativity of His creation.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Romans 1:20

We cannot touch God, but we can touch others in His name. Whenever we do, there is manifested the mystical, yet palpable presence of God.

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Matthew 18:20

Just as Christ tasted death upon the cross, He invites us to partake of that same death through the saving grace of His shed blood. He calls us to His Communion table to taste the bread and the wine, so that we will never forget His sacrifice on our behalf. And when we are at last in His glorious presence, we will recline, and dine with Him at His table. ☩

"And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

Luke 13:29-30