

Moving Forward -- Communion with God

Introduction -- the most important thing we are created to do is to enjoy communion with God. That's the first and main thing that God created Adam to do. So, when we consider moving forward, we need to have the goal of communing with God. What would this look like? What does it look like to commune with God on a daily and hourly basis? We might think of communing with God as going to church or reading the Bible. Remember, though, that Adam did not have the Bible as we have it, yet he still communed with God. This was also true of Noah and Abraham. What did communion with God mean for them? What can it tell us about the proper goal of our lives.

Some guidance from a pagan philosopher. Let communion with God relieve our fears. "What, shall kinship with Caesar, or some other man of great power at Rome, be enough to ensure that one will be able to live in safety, and be secure against contempt, and free from all fear, whereas having God as our maker, our father, and our protector, won't be enough to deliver us from fear and suffering?" (*Discourses*, 1.9).

Commune with God by seeing every gift as from God. See every good thing as a gift of God: "Don't be ungrateful, man, nor yet forgetful of better gifts than these, but offer up thanks to God for sight and hearing, and by Zeus, for life itself and all that supports it, for dried fruits, for wine for olive oil . . ." (*ibid.*, 2.23).

Commune with God by accepting our place in life with an attitude of obedience toward God: "How absurd of you to think that if one of your generals had stationed me in a post, I should hold it, and defend it, preferring to die a thousand deaths rather than abandon it, but if God has stationed us in some position and laid down rules of conduct, we should abandon it!" (*Ibid.*, 1.9).

Mike Beagan on communion with God

Part 1 - Knowing God

1. As Loving Creator - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . . God saw all that he had made, and it was very good (Gen. 1:1, 31).
2. As Caring Lord - God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food (Gen. 1:28–29).
3. As Graciously Present - "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day . . ." (Gen. 3:8).
4. And eventually as Merciful Redeemer - "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

Read - Creation Song

He wraps Himself in light
As with a garment,
He spreads out the heavens
And walks on the wings of the wind.

He sends forth the springs
from the valleys
The flow between mountains.
The birds of the air dwell
by the waters,
Lifting their voices in song-

Singing glory, glory!
Glory to the Lamb!
All praises and honor forever.

He made the moon for its season,
The sun knows it setting.
He looks at the Earth and it trembles,
He touches the mountains
and they smoke,

I will sing to the Lord all my life,
I will sing praises to my God -
As long as I live,
Praises to the Lord, oh my soul.

Singing glory, hallelujah!
Glory to our God!
All praises and honor forever.

Part 2 - Our Response

1. Study God's word & works with a view to knowing God - We know God by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: God's eternal power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. All these things are enough to convict humans and to leave them without excuse. Second, God makes himself known to us more clearly by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for God's glory and for our salvation.
2. Meditate -- this means we review it over and over again. "These commandments are to be on your heart (Dt. 6:5)
3. Praise & Prayer - we would respond in praise and prayer.

Epictetus:

“But God has brought the human race into the world to be a spectator of himself and of his works, and not merely to observe them, but also to interpret them” (*Discourses*, 1.6).

“For if we had any sense, what should we do, both in public and in private, than sing hymns and praise the deity, and recount all the favours he has conferred!” (*Ibid.*, 1.16).

Sing - Creation Song

Part 3 - Virtues that Empower Communion with God

Responsive reading of Scripture showing the relationship of creation to the virtues that empower communion with God

Creation: By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done (Gen. 2:2–3).

Response: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness (Psalm 29:2).

Creation: Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Gen. 1:26).

Response: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Prov 3:5–6).

Creation: God blessed them . . . and the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food (Gen. 1:28, 2:8–9).

Response: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts (Deuteronomy 6:4–6).

1. Trust - see Prov. 3:5–6 and Mt 6:28–29
2. Love - see Dt. 6:4–6
3. Obedience - “If you love me, keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15, cf. Gen. 1:26–28, 2:16–17).

Diagnostic Questions

1. Do you tend to view your work, relationships, enjoyments, and everything else in connection with God as your Creator, Lord, and Redeemer?
2. Do you take time to meditate on God’s Word and works?
3. Do you live out of trust in God’s care or in fear and anxiety?
4. Do you let the good things you experience and the good things of God’s Word lead your heart toward love for God? Is praise of God a part of your daily life?

5. As you think about what you need to do, do you think about God's will and what He wants you to do with your life?

O heavenly Father, who hast filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works; that, rejoicing in thy whole creation, we may learn to serve thee with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.