

## CHAPTER 12

A summary of the book...

### **“ENJOYING THE PRESENCE OF GOD”**

by Martyn Lloyd-Jones

(1899–1981)

**The “fool” says in his heart “there is no God”** (Ps 14:1) – As you know, this is a very common attitude in the west. The fool listens too much to “his heart” – he is governed by “*his desires*,” what he likes and what he wants. Instead of listening to that “sense” that is within him – a sense of God – which is innate in every human being; he stifles that and tries to argue it down. When you study anthropology and investigate the most primitive people groups in the world, you will find that they all have a “*sense of God*” – this they express in various forms of worship. So, those who say, “there is no God,” go against the voice of their conscience. We all have a conscience within us – when we do something wrong, our conscience tells us so and it condemns us. It makes us feel miserable. The vast majority of people seek to resolve their wrongdoing through a “*religious belief system*” – the atheist resolves his wrongdoing by simply striving to live up to what he believes is “*his own ethical standards*” – which, unbeknownst to him, is a product of the “law of God” written on his heart; incidentally, that is why there is a “*common morality*” among all people groups (we all have the essence of “God’s law” written on our hearts); most people “lower the standards” so that they can meet those standards; as such they are governed by their desires.

**The “fool” arrives at a momentous conclusion that “there is no God” on insufficient evidence;** he doesn’t think things through; instead he jumps to conclusions and is governed by his prejudices and passions. Let me illustrate it – the fool says, “*I don’t believe there is a God, because no God would allow wars, disease, spastic children, earthquakes, pain and suffering.*” We have all heard the arguments. It is with that kind of reasoning, and that alone, that the fool concludes “there is no God.” It is amazing how intelligent people can reason and argue so “*unreasonably.*” They never stop to think there might be a “*bigger purpose*” behind all the calamities of life. The psalmist said, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, because before I was afflicted I went astray” (Ps 119:67, 71). When confronted with such thinking, people generally respond that they had never “reasoned from that perspective” – additionally, if people do not understand themselves or other people, why then do they demand that they “*fully understand the ways of God*”? And rashly conclude that “*God does not exist*” because the things that happen in life are incompatible with how *I think* God should act. (7-23)

**Is “communion with God” the supreme thing in the whole of your life?** Men and women must realize that they are a needy people (they are lost), and the only people who know what it is to enjoy the blessings of salvation are those who have discovered that fact. The tragedy is that so many people never discover that they are needy – hence, they have never seen the need for Christ. *Only the Christian realizes he has “sin within him” – and that his very nature is twisted and perverted.* He sees there is something wrong and foul in his own heart and the power of sin within him. He realizes that in addition to that, the whole world is set against him, that the flesh is militating against him, and that the devil is behind it all. He no longer says, “Let any temptation come and I can stand up to it.” He discovers that one of the most dangerous things in the world is to *think he is strong*; because suddenly he will go down – he went out of the house determined never to fall again, but he fell before he knew where he was. He begins to realize how “*helpless*” he is, and how utterly defenseless. The Christian understands the great “*moral struggle*,” and knows what it is to fight with all his might and yet go down with his enemies attacking him. So, the ultimate secret of every godly Christian, is that he has come at last to realize that the “most priceless thing

in life” is his *SOUL* – that thing within us that goes on for all eternity. It is that thing that God has put within us, which God breathed into us – “man became a living soul” (Gen 2:7). It is that thing that stamps men and women as being made in the “image of God.” Our *SOUL* is the most precious thing we have. Therefore, Paul says, “I have committed my soul to God and Christ for safe-keeping, and I know whatever may happen to me, God will keep that which I have committed unto Him until that great Day of Judgment. It is eternally safe” (2 Tim 1:12). (24-52)

**Jesus said, “Do not waste your time worrying about what you are going to eat, drink or wear. . . rather, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be provided for you”** (Mt 6:25-33). “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mk 8:36). The most priceless possession we have is our *SOUL!* Where can I put it that I may know it is “safe” for all eternity? We are going to live on and on and on and on – there is no end to our existence. The ultimate question is this, “Have you become concerned about the future of your soul?” The Lord Jesus, using another analogy, compares us to sheep and Himself to the Good Shepherd. He says, “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (Jn 10:28). Paul writes, “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor anything in all the universe, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:38-39). Blessed is the man who trusts in Thee. Reflect on the words of a hymn written by **Fanny Crosby** – (52-57)

*All the way, my Savior leads me, What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy, Who through life has been my guide?  
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to dwell,  
For I know whate’r befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.*

**The essence of true religion is to “know God”** – It is not simply knowing things about God, but truly knowing God. Conversely, true religion is not just a matter of morality. David’s secret was that “his strength was in God (not himself), in whose heart are the highways of God!” (Ps 84:5). Blessed therefore is the man who has “*made roads in his heart.*” The heart of the unbeliever is like a “*pathless uncharted wilderness;*” there are no paths or highways mapped out; everything is tangled and mixed up – that is a description of what we all are by nature. So, people who are not Christians really have no view or philosophy of life; there is no order or system in their lives. They have no clear ideas; there is no plan in it and no purpose. . . life is entirely aimless. . . they just exist. . . they are like a great uncharted territory. They do not sit down and ask the big questions: “What is man?” “What is life all about?” “What am I meant to do with my life?” “What are these strange intimations that I feel from time to time that I am meant for something bigger and greater?” The thoughts may come, but they dismiss them. They just become victims of what may happen to them. If a bit of good fortune comes they are happy. . . if it is bad they become miserable and disconsolate. If you read the biographies of unbelievers, you will find that this undoubtedly is the case; other than some temporary view, *the vast majority just wander aimlessly.* There is no goal. There is no road. When they find themselves in a crisis or an emergency, there is nowhere they can go for help and sustenance – there is no path. “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are the *highways of God!*” (Ps 84:5). That is the great message of the Christian faith. (58-63)

**Christianity is truth, and truth in the mind is “intellectual.”** The very first thing that happens to people who become Christians is that they begin to “*think straighter*” – the highway of the mind is laid open and they begin to see life as they have never seen it before. It gives them a new understanding and a whole view of life. All of the New Testament epistles are, in a sense, just a “*map of life*” – in it they see themselves as under God and in relationship to Him. The believer can confidently say, “I understand life;

I understand myself; and I am not one bit surprised that the world is as it is.” *For the unbeliever, the whole world is upside down and in a state of chaos – not so for the believer.* The gospel shows us that life is a pilgrimage, and that we are travelers and sojourners in this world – we simply follow the “light” on the road of holiness we travel. Though there are times of testing and trials and tribulations and a valley of tears, *we are still not victims of our circumstances – we are more than conquerors* (cf. Rom 8:37), because “God is with us, and He comforts us” (Ps 23:4). The fact is, our troubles make us think all the more about God and Christ. This is the secret of the Christian life – the more things go against us the more they drive us to Christ, and the more we are with Christ the happier we are. So our valleys of tears turn into springs of rejoicing, and we realize this life is just a temporary journey. Do you know where you are going? Face it honestly, and if you have to admit it scares you, go and admit it to God. *Plead with Him and ask Him to send His Holy Spirit to bulldoze a “highway” in your soul that will bring you to Himself.* (64-73)

**The psalmist reviews the long history of the children of Israel in Psalm 78** – they were the people of God, yet they were found grumbling, rebelling, complaining, defeated by their enemies, and sometimes even utterly disgraceful. David said they were “guilty of limiting the Holy One of Israel” (v.41) – they failed to believe God’s promises and listen to His voice (Ps 81:11); as such they were living in a state of misery and weakness and sometimes utter dejection; so “*God gave them up to their own heart’s lusts; as such they walked in their own counsels*” (Ps 81:11). As Christians, we are God’s people and we are meant to show forth His praises, His excellencies, His virtues. Are we guilty in some shape or form of “limiting the Holy One of Israel”? God is sovereign, almighty and omnipotent. There is a tremendous responsibility that comes upon the Church as a whole – we have something to offer to a world that is in utter chaos, despair and hopelessness. Are we “limiting God”? Are we uncertain about our “forgiveness”? Christians who merely go on hoping, wondering whether they are forgiven... they are living as the children of Israel were living. We are not meant to live like that. *We are meant to “know” with absolute certainty that God loves us, that we are God’s children and joint heirs with Christ, and that our sins are forgiven* – we have been given the Holy Spirit (“Comforter”) so that we might truly understand and know these things. (74-82)

**Having “assurance” of these things leads to “rejoicing!”** God’s people are meant to be a rejoicing people (Phil 4:4). Even in tribulation. Christians are not meant to be miserable and unhappy – that is limiting the Holy One of Israel. We should be delighting in God and His commandments; not grumbling and complaining. A corollary of rejoicing in the Lord, is that it leads to enjoying the “peace of God” (Phil 4:6-7). Do we know something of the peace of God that passes all understanding? We can have a peace that nothing can disturb – it is our duty to enjoy it; we are sinning (not trusting) if we do not. Conversely, we should be “resting in Him and in His all-sufficiency.” Paul said he had learned in whatever state he was in to be “content” (Phil 4:11); that he can “do all things through Christ who strengthens him” (Phil 4:13). Do you know Christ to be “*all-sufficient*” in times of trouble? Here are five of the most common causes for *limiting God* –

1. Sin and obedience – you will never know the blessings of the Christian life if you are deliberately sinning; to deliberately continue in sin will only bring the chastening hand of God.
2. Self-confidence and self-reliance – the Children of Israel often felt they did not need the power of God; they could gather an army and muster their own forces; as such they challenged their enemies in their own strength, and were defeated. Many churches today believe they can do the work of ministry in their own strength and still be successful; they fail to realize that it is the Spirit who “produces fruit” (not man). This point needs to be expanded upon – when we “do ministry” it is *natural* to routinely do the things we have always done, and simply expect God to bless. To do things in the “power of the

Spirit” means “*consciously relying and depending upon Him;*” most ministry is simply “too routine” – mechanical methodology – thus, it is not done in the power of the Holy Spirit; therefore it is neither effectual or fruitful.

3. Ignorance and blindness – ignorance of what is taught in Scripture; ignorance of history. That was the trouble with the children of Israel; they forgot God’s works and wonders, and were ignorant of the history of their own past (Ps 78:11).
4. Unbelief – not taking the Bible seriously or interpreting it correctly. They would say things like, “that is only meant for special people, not ordinary people;” a kind of fatalism.
5. Fear – fear of the cost of these things; fear of the consequences; fear of persecution; fear of mockery. (82-91)

**A psalm is a song, a kind of poem; therefore it has a message which is complete in and of itself.** So, it is always essential to take a psalm as a whole. Psalm 63 was the favorite hymn of John Chrysostom, the “golden-mouthed” orator and preacher of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It is generally agreed that David wrote this psalm at the time of the insurrection of his son Absalom – he had to flee for his life. He says, “*My soul thirsts for Thee, O God; my flesh longs for Thee in a dry and weary land, where there is no water*” (63:1). This is true of many individuals in the Church today – they are undergoing grievous problems, with everything apparently against them. A time of trouble or difficult is a “*time of testing*” – what it does is test where we really are spiritually, and how much faith we really have. A time of affluence and prosperity never tests our profession. But the moment things go wrong, you will know exactly the value of what you claim to believe. So the real value of what you claim as your profession of the Christian faith, is to know how you react and how you behave in a time of trouble. *Everyone of us will eventually be in a “wilderness”* – so here is the test: what are we like when we find ourselves in the wilderness? This is the supreme test of our whole profession of the Christian faith, so let’s consider the following *three tests* as to how we measure up to being true Christians.

1. Adversity always drives true Christians to God. When something goes wrong many people cry, “Why has God done this to me?” And they turn away from God. But the true believer does the exact opposite – his immediate reaction is to “draw near to God” – “To whom shall we go but Thee?” There is a kind of instinctive reaction to turn to God.
2. True Christians feel that they have a right to turn to God – because they know Him. David fled to his God, “Thou art my God” (Ps 63:1); there is a consciousness of this personal relationship; he knew that God was his God and that he was God’s child. There was no query or doubt about that in David’s mind. David goes on to say, “My soul thirsts for Thee – as the deer pants for water, so my soul pants for You, O God” (Ps 42:1).
3. The greatest desire for true Christians is to feel the presence of God. What David wanted was to experience God in that wilderness. David longs for an assurance that God is still with him, and that He will never leave him or forsake him. He cries out for it. This is the thing that the true child of God wants above everything else – “*Tell me Thou art mine, O Savior; grant me clear assurance.*” This is always a mark of the children of God; the desire for an intimate knowledge of God is the most important thing in their lives. When we are in the wilderness, our biggest concern as Christians is not with the circumstances – though that is a legitimate concern – it is the assuring presence of God. Says the hymn writer, **Bill Williams**, “*The one who loves always wants to know that he or she is loved in return.*” David realizes, “I have known it in the sanctuary, but I know that it is equally possible here” (63:2).

The longing of the Christian in all circumstances is just to know that God is with him and is looking upon him – *“My soul thirsts for Thee, my soul longs for Thee”* (63:1). (92-100)

**David says, “Thy lovingkindness is better than life”** (Ps 63:3). Here is a profound statement. To the true believer, God’s lovingkindness is the most precious thing in life. The children of God want this presence of God, this felt realization of God’s lovingkindness above everything else. That is why the apostle Paul could say, *“To me to live is Christ”* (Phil 1:21). That is life! “That I may know Him; and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil 3:10). The true child of God constantly realizes that this is a “passing world,” a transient life. But the world wants you to concentrate upon it – that is the whole fallacy of man in sin – and everywhere you look, be it the newspaper, books, journals, entertainment, television, you name it, it is screaming that you pay attention to “living life to the full in this world!” But Christians know that life in this world can never really completely satisfy or fulfill them. The child of God is someone who can honestly say, *“I don’t know what it is, but I have never found complete satisfaction in this world as such, never!”* This is partly, of course, because it is a world of trials and troubles, but even aside from problems, life in this world has never truly brought satisfaction or fulfillment; it is mainly vain and empty, even at its best and highest – all is but pomp and show. *It is a world where “moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break-in and steal”* (Mt 5:19); that is the world at its best! So the true child of God, like David, has come to see that mere living, mere existence, merely going on, getting out of this hole or this trouble, is not the first thing. No, they have seen it as it is, no longer deluded by its glamour and pretence. (100-103)

**Thy “lovingkindness” is better than life! Why? Because there is nothing comparable to it!** If you know anything of what it means to “be in love,” you know that you desire to be in the presence of the object of your love more than the whole world. *“Love-sick” people are those who are unhappy because they are separated from the one they love.* They still have their money, their houses, and their friends, but they are love-sick and unhappy because the loved one is not there. You can offer them the whole world, but it is useless, for they only want their loved one. This is of more value to them than the whole of life. When you have seen something of God’s glory, you will also say, “There is nothing of any significant value when contrasted with this – nothing.” Once someone has had any knowledge of God, there is nothing else that one can compare it. Furthermore, David says, he has found a “satisfaction in this intimate knowledge of God” – the world cannot give this kind of satisfaction, but God does give it. He is able to satisfy the soul even in the midst of affliction and suffering – He gives light to the soul of His children even in the darkness. Not only does He satisfy their minds, He also satisfies their hearts. “God’s peace passes all understanding” (Phil 4:6). (103-108)

**We are living in a difficult and “trying world,”** and sooner or later, we all find ourselves in some kind of a wilderness, where nothing matters but Christ. When we are bereft of all the things we normally have and enjoy – health, strength, wealth, friends, entertainment – nothing matters except our knowledge of God’s lovingkindness. We should never lose sight of the fact that God cares so much for us He died for us, that He is ever-present with us, that He wants us to turn to Him for help, that He wants us to trust Him with our situation, and that He wants us to enjoy His presence in the midst of humbling, difficult circumstances. People are not merely interested in something *theoretical* – but they are interested in *reality!* Our faith is not based on wishful thinking, hopeful desires, or pipe dreams – it is based on the reality of God’s character and what He has promised us. In short, it is absolute. The believer must always remember that the dynamic of the flesh is *“feelings”* – if we give more consideration to our feelings than to objective truth, we will struggle tremendously in our *“faith”* (the dynamic of the Spirit) – believing the truth must always trump feelings. Don’t worry about your feelings – it is a question of believing. God never

commands us to “*feel*” anything, but he does command us to “think and believe and do” certain things – and that is where we must place our focus. Conversely, *the Bible never teaches a cold, intellectual believism*, but an experience which involves the whole person – when we place objective truth in the forefront, and “*affirm its reality*,” that truth will settle in our souls and open a floodgate of joy and peace. Feelings are critically important, but they are not the foundation upon which we make decisions and build our lives – you make decisions based upon objective truth.

**Seek God with “great fervor” and God will bless you tremendously** – David writes, “My soul follows hard after Thee” (Ps 63:8). *Isaac Watts* stated it well in his great hymn: “*Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all*” – this is that ultimate reality upon which we must build our lives. Remind yourself of what God has done for you in the past, and remind yourself of God’s love for you – “Count your blessings, name them one by one; and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.” *It makes no sense to try and “work up your heart,” or “work up your feelings” – it cannot be done, but you can reflect upon what God has done for you, and as you do you will find that your heart will begin to melt.* But you have to make the intellectual effort, exercise your will, and affirm the truth... and God will suddenly come and visit you... this is the great art of recollection. Start with what you have, and then go through this process and it will lead you upwards and onwards. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil 4:6). How little do we thank God? How quick we are to grumble and complain? Most of us are always ready to remind Him of things that have gone wrong. So, begin to “*praise Him*” for what you have... praise Him for everything (health, strength, faculties, wealth)...and, as *William Carey* said, “confidently expect great things from God.” *John Newton* wrote this little poem: (109-126)

*Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring.  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can never ask too much.*

**David was a man of “like passions” as ourselves** – he had many troubles; he brought many of them upon himself (as we do); but many came in spite of him... he lived a very tempestuous kind of life, yet through it all, with all his sins and faults and failures, you find this man going steadily forward... a man who was “*well pleasing in God’s sight*.” Obviously, such a man has a great deal to teach us. David gives us the secret to life – “I have set the Lord always before me” (Ps 16:8) – *David determined to live life in the conscious presence of God, and as long as he did that “he would not be moved.*” Paul said something similar – “Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth” (Col 3:2). We must get the right perspective; be constantly looking at those things; “setting” implies a determination, an act of the will, meditation and consideration (Heb 12:2). We too must determine and decide, and exercise our will power. We must not allow ourselves to drift and allow life to manipulate us and carry us along. Life seems to be organized for us, and the most difficult thing in the world is just to isolate ourselves and to insist upon controlling our lives, living them as we believe they should be lived. We cannot become so encumbered with the things of this world, that we forget about our immortal souls – we must determine and “*resolve to keep the Lord always before us!*” That is the first thing! (127-131)

**There are “two sides” to this Christian life in which we find ourselves** – There is the “*divine*” initiative without which nothing happens at all. But, as the result of that divine initiative, we are meant to initiate things “*ourselves*.” We must “set our affections” on things above (Col 3:2). We must compel ourselves and discipline ourselves to do this; it involves a very definite activity on our part – it is not just going to

“*happen all by itself*” because we are believers. Many believers take the view that they just need to go on as they are and pray that God will do something to us. *No!!* We must “always consciously set the Lord before us!” We must deliberately insist upon setting our minds upon Him. We cannot surrender to the “I don’t feel very spiritual today” mood. Passive spirituality will not cut it! You must act! By the way, those individuals who have experienced the most gracious visitations from God have been those who have “*sought Him most diligently.*” Remember, “God is a rewarder of them that *diligently seek Him*” (Heb 11:6). Consciously seek the presence of God... insist upon it... study His Word, and recognize that God is speaking to you! Listen to Him and you will come into His presence. Pour out your heart to Him... talking and listening to God are the ways in which you set Him before you. (132-139)

**In Psalm 27, David teaches us how to face the whole problem and battle of life and living.** The psalmist does not pretend that he is better than he is – he opens his heart and exposes himself exactly as he is. He tells us about his fears and his forebodings and his weaknesses, so we feel that he speaks to our condition. *In our daily lives each of us is involved in struggle – it is a common reality for every believer.* We can expect difficulties and trials simply because we are followers of Christ. Look at His life – though He was the Son of God, He was tried! He was tempted! He was tested! He had to suffer! His life was one of battle and conflict... and if it was true for Him, how much more is it likely to be true for us as His followers? Jesus said, “*In this world you will have tribulations*” – we are not promised an easy life; yet we can be “*more than conquerors.*” It is the politicians and philosophers who are always promising us that our troubles will be abolished – they are the dangerous optimists, the idealists, who are always going to make a perfect world. And it is absolute “*nonsense.*” The Bible tells us that while men and women are in rebellion against God and are sinners, the world will be full of problems and difficulties. Psalm 27 can be divided up into “three sections” –

- 1. The psalmist expresses his “confidence and assurance” in vv. 1-6** – When facing conflicts in life, we must start with a grand strategy of life that *begins in heaven with God*; then having done that, we come down to earth and face the problems of life. Never start with your problems! Never! Never start with earth. Never start with men. Always start in heaven with *GOD!* So, start with your relationship with God. *The whole problem in the world today is that people start with them-selves, with the world, with life, and with their problems – and that inevitably leads to failure.* Therefore, we start with the psalmist’s confidence – “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” He says, in effect, “I am not afraid, nor is there any need to be afraid; even though my enemies conspire together against me, it does not matter; let war rise against me; nothing can defeat me!” This is overwhelming assurance. What is the source of his confidence? Well, he tells us quite plainly that it is nothing in himself – “*I would have fainted, unless I had believed I would see the goodness of God.*” He does not say as the poet **W. E. Henley** once said: “I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul” – which is sheer nonsense. So the first great characteristic of us as Christians, is that we are no longer *self-confident*; we know the truth about ourselves – our source of confidence is “*the Lord.*”
- 2. The psalmist then comes to his “petition and prayer” in the midst of his struggle in vv. 7-12** – After expressing our confidence in the Lord, the psalmist then cries out to the Lord, “Hear, O Lord, when I cry unto Thee; Thy face will I seek.” *The tribulations in life result in darkness* – we do not understand, we do not see what we can do about them – but, “*The Lord is my light!*” We do not believe in something like evolution and hold that the world is getting better and better, because it is painfully evident that is not the case – it is getting worse and worse. We observe the futility and everything else, and we realize it is all due to man’s rebellion against God. Therefore, we do not

expect any different. We have “light” on the situation... we are no longer in the kingdom of darkness... we belong to a different realm, though we are still in this world.

3. **The psalmist arrives at his “conclusion” in vv. 13-14** – “The Lord is the strength of my life.” This again is the theme that runs right through the Bible. David is fully aware of the power of darkness and his own weakness – but he has a power behind him that is illimitable; therefore “of whom shall I be afraid?” *David knew of God’s concern for him, and the fact that God wants us to come to Him when we are in trouble.* God comes to us even when we are overwhelmed by troubles and we are beginning to turn to human expediency and we do not know what to do. When we are utterly bewildered and frustrated, suddenly something says within us, “Why not turn to God?” This is the great word of the whole Bible: “Come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). “Your adversary, the devil, is as a roaring lion, seeking to devour you” (1 Pet 5:8) – therefore “cast all your care upon Christ, because He cares for you” (1 Pet 5:7). He knows all about you. He is supremely interested in all you are going through. Nothing can happen to you apart from Him. He understands all about the travail and the agony and all the weakness of the flesh. He knows it all because He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and so with His great care and concern, He says, “*Seek My face.*” He encourages us to come to Him. He is not only there and ready and willing to help us, He even has to prompt us to come to Him in prayer! God not only listens to our prayers, He inspires them! As one old hymn puts it –

*Can a woman’s tender care, cease towards the child she bare?  
Yes, she may forgetful be, yet will I remember Thee.*

There is a point beyond which human love cannot go, even when it wants to. There are agonies of the soul where a father and a mother cannot help. But God still can! Even in death, God is still with us. With such a God, it matters not what rises against us (Rom 8:31). (140-152)

**David said, “I would have despaired if I had not believed in the Lord”** (Ps 27:13) – that is always the beginning. You cannot have anything without *belief*. “He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6). God says, “*I have nothing to offer you if you do not believe in Me.*” Accept the revelation, humble yourself, become a little child, and believe the truth. *Belief is the starting point – God must become the “supreme reality” in your life.* He must be the one object of your desire and of your ambition. The Apostle Paul said that his supreme desire was to “know God and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil 3:10) – “this one thing I do, forgetting what is behind, I press toward the mark” (Phil 3:13-14); it is the realization that nothing really matters ultimately in life except my relationship to God – “that I may dwell in the presence of the Lord all the days of my life” (Ps 23:6); that I am ever in communion and fellowship with God. “What I want above everything else in this world is always to be in that *‘intimate relationship with God’* so that whatever may happen, I am with Him and He is with me.” The whole secret of life is not obeying a set of moral duties – *it is an intimate, passionate relationship with Jesus Christ!* (153-158)