

5 Ways to Fall Deeper in Love with God

As an author and filmmaker, I spend lots of time asking people questions. Of particular concern (and why I wrote the book *The Jesus Experience*), I've noticed the love of Jesus in older saints growing stale while many in the upcoming generation see Christianity as an outdated philosophy.

So how do we return to loving God as a Person as opposed to being followers of a dry and dusty religion? Here are five steps that have worked for me:

1. Get on the other side of the cross. The cross is not the end of our experience with God but the beginning. Instead of groveling at its foot, get over yourself (and your failures), embrace Christ's full forgiveness, and move forward. God is not mad at you. He got mad at Jesus for you. Now He delights and sings over you. Don't be shy, or snub Him by only accepting part of His gift. Drink His forgiveness to the dregs. And when you fail? Confess it, take another gulp, and get back to your feet. No time-outs and standing in the corner for bad behavior allowed. That only trivializes Christ's sacrifice by indicating you still have to suffer a little because His work wasn't quite enough.

2. Remember that God loves you more than you do. Christ's sacrifice for us is so complete that at least 18 times in the Bible we are referred in one way or another as His bride. Not even His wife, but His bride. He looks upon us with the same passion and ardor as a bridegroom does for his bride on their wedding day. Saint John of the Cross and other great mystics got this. So did the author of Song of Solomon. God is over the moon in love with us. The next time you attend a wedding, pay attention to the bride as she enters, but also sneak a peek back to the groom and remember ... that is exactly what the

Lord feels for you every *second* of your life.

3. Choose whom you listen to. The devil is called the accuser of the brethren. In fact, the very term *devil* means “slanderer.” So who believes the slanderer’s accusations? God? Hardly. After Christ’s great sacrifice, God no longer sees what’s wrong with us. He only sees what’s missing. So who is left to believe the slanderer? Just us. The accuser accuses us to us. Don’t listen to the lies that hate and want to destroy. Listen to God’s love that adores and wants to help.

4. Re-ignite your love. I fell in love with my wife by listening and talking deeply with her. She fell in love with me because she has no taste (but that’s another matter). Falling in love with God, or re-falling in love, is the same principle. I talk to Him through prayer, praise and singing. I listen to Him mostly through His Word, but not quickly or superficially. I didn’t fall in love with my wife that way. Instead of plowing through the Bible in a year, I’ll spend time each morning reading just a few verses, chewing on them, meditating on them, sometimes discussing them with Him. In our hurried culture, this gives my soul time to hear, understand and adore Him.

5. The discipline of praise. As a closet Eeyore, praise does not come naturally for me. But over the years, I’ve developed it as a habit—singing, humming, quietly thanking God throughout the day. Why? Because it focuses me on the real Truth of who He is, and not the false truth of situations. But what if I don’t feel like praising Him? Doesn’t that make me a hypocrite? Not at all. It doesn’t matter what my uninformed mind thinks or my fickle emotions feel; God’s sovereignty and love are the real Truth. I love in the Psalms where David tells his troubled soul to sit down, be quiet and worship. When Christians were tortured and murdered, Paul, who endured more pain and disappointment than most (see 2 Cor. 11:24–33), wrote: “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus

concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:16-18). That's God's will for me: giving thanks in all circumstances (regardless of whether I understand or feel them).

It may take several minutes, but when I live in that obedience, my spirit opens up to experience God's greater love for me. And when I experience that greater love, I can't help but love Him back.

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