



"God is nearer to me than I am to myself; my existence depends on the nearness and the presence of God."

—Meister Eckhart

19-Oct-18

## A God Near at Hand (Part Three)

In Parts One and Two, we examined examples of the great [God](#) of heaven and earth interacting with His creation, particularly with human beings like Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Hagar, and Jacob. The [Old Testament](#) contains many other examples. For instance, God intervened in Gideon's life, speaking with him several times over an extended period (see Judges 6 and 7), and He also appeared and spoke to Samson's parents ([Judges 13:2-21](#)). In both accounts, it is apparent that they knew to whom they were conversing, and their responses to their theophanies were similar to those of Hagar and Jacob.

Since it is obvious that God was involved in the activities of people in Old Testament times, if He does not change ([Malachi 3:6](#)), should He not interact with people in the New Testament era? A survey of the New Testament makes clear that He has appeared many times to His elect. Of course, He lived for 33 years in the flesh and interacted with many thousands of people. After His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples and to as many as five hundred at once ([I Corinthians 15:4-7](#)). Later, He spoke personally with Peter ([Acts 10:10-16](#); [11:5-10](#)), John ([Revelation 1:9-19](#)), and several times with Paul ([Acts 9:3-6](#); [18:9-10](#); [23:11](#); [II Corinthians 12:2-9](#); etc.).

Beyond these recorded instances, [Jeremiah 23:23-24](#) should give us great comfort.

"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "and not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

To us, there should be no question about whether God is present with us. He is not only watching what is happening in [the world](#) today as He ushers His plan to a decisive and awesome conclusion, but He is also intimately concerned about each of our lives. Recall [Luke 12:7](#): "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." God is indeed aware, informed, and moving and shaking within His creation—especially with us.

From what is recorded in the Old Testament, in these encounters God was physically present in a human-like form. He was close at hand and worked with His people throughout that time. But what about during the church era? Have any of us in this age been contacted by God through a burning bush? How many of us have physically wrestled with God at some point in our lives? We have never heard of such things happening in our time, since it appears that God has ceased using such wondrous means to communicate with us—at least for now.

How do we know that He is still around and interested in us? Is He still a God that is near? Of course, He is! [Hebrews 13:8](#), in the New Testament, is an echo of [Malachi 3:6](#) on the subject of God's unchanging nature: "[Jesus Christ](#) is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He is still just as involved in His creation as always.

So, how close is He? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all capture in words God becoming flesh and living a sinless life, healing the sick, teaching His disciples, and giving His life so that it would be possible for those the Father would call to be reconciled with God. Why would anyone ever think that God has left us when He has shown throughout history that He is right here, intimately involved, sacrificing Himself to bring about His purpose?

[I Corinthians 3:16-17](#) helps us to dial in on just how near He is:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#) repeats and expands the thought:

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Jesus' sinless life and subsequent sacrifice enabled those whom God would draw to His Son—the elect—to [repent](#) of their sins and [be baptized](#), at which time He would pour out His Holy Spirit on them. This justifying work and the gift of the Holy Spirit allows us to approach His very throne and enter His presence at any time through the covering blood of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Throughout human history, God has preserved His Word in the Bible. We now have access, not only to the written Word of God through which He most definitely speaks to us, but we also have access to His Spirit and to a [merciful](#) and faithful High Priest ([Hebrews 2:17](#)), the Forerunner who paved the way that we might be called into this wonderful relationship with God. Moreover, Jesus tells us in [John 14:19-24](#) that He and the Father are not just with us but *in* us. God cannot be any more involved in our lives than that! The God we worship is not a distant, remote Deity but intimately involved in His creation, especially with those whom He has called and who are faithfully participating in the completion of His spiritual creation in them.

We can take comfort in knowing that God will never leave us nor forsake us ([Hebrews 13:5](#)). He is present and working with His creation, working with and in us, "till we all come to the unity of the [faith](#) and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" ([Ephesians 4:13](#)). By His nature, we know He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. His Holy Spirit resides in us, and He is ready and able to intervene. Truly, our God is near at hand.

## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[The Holy Spirit: The Power of God](#)**

by Kim Myers

We must love God and His doctrines more than anything else in life, including our own lives. If we do not understand God's laws and doctrines, it is like going without armor, making ourselves vulnerable to the pressures of the world. When the Trinity doctrine was introduced to the Worldwide Church of God, few of the church leaders had the necessary spiritual armor to withstand the heresy- or even to recognize it. The Holy Spirit in us enables us to become offspring of God, giving us the ability to produce the fruits of the Spirit, the very character, power, and mind of God. If the Holy Spirit were a self-contained person, we would not have this power to become children of God, and moreover, the power to understand and inculcate God's laws in our hearts and minds. No man can understand the whole counsel of God's truth unless he has been called by God and received God's Holy Spirit, the very mind of God.

---

## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Halloween](#)**

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

In recent years, Halloween has become the second-most popular holiday on the calendar—even to the point that some churches sponsor parties on it! Many nominal Christians shrug off its pagan and occultic features as "just good, clean fun for the kids." Richard Ritenbaugh shows that this night of ghouls not only lacks any biblical foundation, but the Bible warns us against participating in such activities.

---

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).

---