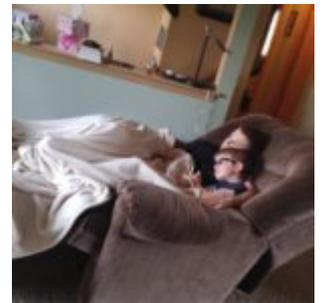


Everyone's Emptiness

At the core of who we are as humans is the desire to be loved.. Not just romantically, but as a brother, sister, mother, uncle, neighbor, or friend. We want to be cared for, thought of, included and connected.

We were made for relationship.

Throughout the Bible, we clearly see how this is true. It starts at creation. God is speaking every bit of the world we know into existence. He wants stars, and they come blazing to light. He wants birds, and they instantly appear, possibly in mid-flight flourishing through the sky. He forms a word in his mouth, and the silent oceans begin humming with the sounds of orca calls and splashing dolphins.



Then, on the 6th day, after speaking the earth full of life, He turns to Another and says, "Let Us make man in Our image" (Gen. 1:26). And as I'm watching, I glance around with a curious look on my face. *Who? Who is Us?*

What we missed, as we watched the brilliance of creation come forth on the page was God in relationship before anything began. God the Father was there with His Son and His Spirit, in perfect relationship, utterly independent of anything else.

And if we are made in His image, then He has created us for relationship as well. God created Eve as an aide and partner in adventure for Adam. God walked with Adam through the garden every day. Their relationship with God was broken when they chose to doubt him.

What an amazing heartache! I cannot begin to imagine having to live life apart from God after knowing nothing else but relationship with him.

Trying to fill a God-sized hole

And since then, humanity has suffered from that distance, because we fail to believe Him and fail to trust Him. Here we are, thousands of years later, souls parched for deep satisfying connection. Just look around, and you can see evidence of our desire for it. We seek to fill this longing for relationship by living vicariously through our books, televisions, movies, social media groups, virtual realities, etc. In a way, these things enable us to understand life more fully and make it easier to connect with others. But as they come between us and others, us and God, they provide a false sense of relationship. We continue to pursue the next book, the next show, the next movie in hopes that it will fill the depths of our longing.

But it doesn't.

It leaves us with the haunting feeling that we are missing out on much more of this life.

The Gift of Perfect Relationship

Hours before Jesus was to be arrested, He sat down with his disciples and told them the most crucial information they would need to survive the backlash that was to come.



“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot

receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” John 14:15-18

Jesus gave the disciples the same opportunity Adam and Eve were given: perfect relationship. They had chosen to follow Jesus and walked alongside God-in-the-flesh here on earth. He knew that leaving would create a gaping hole in their hearts. The Greek word for what He calls them here is “orphanos”, but the KJV chooses to say “comfortless”. Good word.

As we seek other means and other methods to fill this aching in our heart for relationship, we still continue to remain comfortless. But just in case the disciples didn’t hear him the first time, Jesus repeats himself a little further in verse 26.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things...”

Holy Relief

This word, “Helper”, and “Comforter” used in the KJV, seems to fall short. I think of Hamburger Helper and the odd smelling cover you throw over your bed. In digging up the original word (parakletos), I found the definition to be “aide, assistant, and succor”. Not a word that is common in our vocabulary, a succor is one who furnishes relief.

And isn’t that what we have been looking for all along? I’m sure, if you ask anyone, they will tell you they would like some relief. And that is the primary job of the Holy Spirit, to provide relief to those areas in our hearts that are aching.

How does He do that? If you read further down, through the beginning of John 15, Jesus tells his disciples in verse 10 to “abide in My love”. This word “abide” means “to continue to be present”. Jesus is asking his disciples, and through the

printing of His Word, He is asking us to **stay engaged** in relationship with Him.

As the pains and trials of life assault us, and our value is tested in the fiery furnaces of our enemy, we are asked to reach out to Him, keep looking for Him, continue searching for a deeper understanding of Him.

Basically, what we are talking about here is putting our hope in God. Not the flabby stereotypical English version of “I hope I get a pony for Christmas”. The Biblical use for hope has to do with expecting God to do and be what He says He will do and be.

As we expect of God what we learn in the Bible and turn to Him moment by moment in our walk, His Spirit will come and bring relief to the deepest ache of our hearts. Pretty sweet deal, huh?

Emptiness Still Remains

Something I have come to learn recently about this process of abiding in relationship with Jesus is how it is not a cure-all for every ache and pain we have (this side of heaven). Now, hear me out before you label me a heretic. Many Christians sell the lifestyle to non-believers like it's going to fix every problem and every relationship in a person's life.

Sure, being close with the Holy Reliever will enable me to bear anything life, and the enemy, may throw at me. But, when we come into relationship with others around us, we reserve a place for them in our hearts. The amazing book The 5 Love Languages teaches it by explaining that we all have tanks in our hearts reserved for those we are in relationship with. Our husbands, wives, kids, parents, even pets, fill up those tanks with love. We are most satisfied when these tanks are full. And the opposite is true as well. What I have come to realize is that those places in our hearts are reserved for that

person. They get the privilege of a place in my heart, whether they fill that place with love or not. And the ache and desire for connection remain until that person seeks to fill it. God is a gentleman and respects our decisions. He will not fill the tanks we have reserved in our hearts for others.

It's not His job. But, He will provide that Holy Reliever to enable us to bear it.

I also learned something else when I read of God's love in Romans 5.

"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Romans 5:5

When we expect God to do what He says He will do and be Who He says He will be, we won't be disappointed. The definition of the phrase "poured out" means that His love will be "shed abroad". Poured forth over a wide area, distributed largely in a continuous stream as a gift. His tank in our hearts is much greater than all the others, and allows his love to "goosh" in to the deepest parts of our hearts. I found satisfaction and ache at the same time, but that ache is okay. It means that there is a place for them in my heart that some day they may get the chance to fill.

**What are your thoughts? Do you agree or disagree?
Is there something I left out?**

I would love to hear from you. Just leave a comment below.