



Bicycles,
Roller Skates,
& Peanut Butter

Contemplative
Verse #5

Seeking understanding

Exploring one's relationship with their Creator is a profound journey. It often involves reflection, meditation, and seeking understanding through various spiritual or philosophical practices. It requires an openness to experiencing the divine in everyday moments and a willingness to seek deeper connections through prayer, worship, and acts of compassion. This journey can be enriched by engaging with sacred texts, participating in community worship, and immersing oneself in nature, where the presence of the Creator can be felt more vividly. It's a path of continual growth, where each step brings new insights and a deeper sense of peace and purpose. Ultimately, it's about finding a meaningful and personal connection with the divine that resonates with the very essence of your being.

1. **Mindfulness and Meditation:** These practices can help you connect with the present moment and your inner self, fostering a deeper spiritual connection.
2. **Service to Others:** Acts of kindness and service can be a powerful expression of your spiritual beliefs.
3. **Personal Rituals:** Creating personal rituals or practices can help you stay connected to your spiritual beliefs in daily life.
4. **Creative Expression:** Channeling your spirituality into art, music, writing, or other creative outlets can be a powerful way to explore and share your beliefs.

5. **Prayer and Devotion:** Regular prayer or devotion rituals can keep you grounded in your spiritual path and maintain a close relationship with your creator.
6. **Gratitude Practice:** Cultivating gratitude can enhance your sense of fulfillment and connection with the world around you.

Love is often seen as a divine force or essence that connects humanity with God. Many spiritual traditions teach that love is a reflection of God's nature and that by loving others, we are expressing and experiencing a piece of the divine. Love, in this sense, becomes a way to manifest God's presence in our lives and the world. It binds us, nurtures us, and brings us closer to a state of spiritual fulfillment.



Seeking understanding (poem)

In love's embrace, we find God's grace, A light that shines through time and space. Each gentle touch, a sacred sign, that we are part of the divine.

With hearts entwined, we feel the glow, Of God's own love, in us, it grows. Through every act of kindness shared, we see God's presence, felt and aired.

As love unites us, hand in hand, We understand our Creator's plan. In every heart, a holy fire, Burns with the love that lifts us higher.

So let love guide us, pure and true, In every thought, in all we do. For in this love, we come to see, God's endless love, our destiny.

Standstill from the thinking of Self

“When you stand still from the thinking of Self, and the willing of Self; when both your intellect and will are quiet, and passive to the Expressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit”

This passage speaks to a deep contemplative practice of surrender and stillness.

Here’s a breakdown of its meaning:

- Standing still from the thinking of Self: This means quieting the constant chatter of your mind, letting go of self-centered thoughts and concerns.
- Willing of Self: This refers to releasing your personal desires and ambitions, allowing your will to be aligned with a higher purpose.
- Intellect and will are quiet: In this state, both your rational mind and your personal will are at rest, not striving or seeking control.
- Passive to the Expressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit: This suggests being open and receptive to divine guidance and inspiration, allowing the presence of God to move and speak within you.

In essence, it describes a state of profound inner stillness and surrender, where you become a vessel for divine expression, free from the distractions of ego and personal will. This practice can lead to a deeper connection with the divine and a greater sense of peace and clarity.

Contentment

Contentment is about feeling satisfied and at peace with what you have and where you are in life. It creates a solid foundation for joy because when you're not constantly longing for more or different things you can truly appreciate the present moment. This appreciation turns into joy because you're fully embracing and enjoying life as it is. It's like finding happiness in the simple, everyday moments rather than waiting for something extraordinary to happen.

God is at the core of contentment and joy. He's in the small moments of peace and gratitude, in the blessings we often take for granted. God's presence is felt deeply in the heart, guiding us towards appreciating and embracing life as it is. In contentment, we find His grace, and in joy, we find His love. He's the source and sustainer of our inner peace.

The heart is often seen as the core of our being. It's where emotions, feelings, and deep connections reside. It's more than just a physical organ; it's a symbol of love, compassion, and inner truth. In many cultures and philosophies, the heart represents the spiritual center, where our true self and deeper wisdom are found. When we speak of heartfelt actions or feelings, we're referring to something genuine and profound.



Contentment (poem)

*In the heart where joy and peace align,
Contentment's glow begins to shine,
A gentle calm, a quiet grace,*

In life's small moments, we embrace.

*No longer seeking distant gleams, but finding joy in
present dreams, A soul at rest, with grateful eyes, Sees
the beauty in the skies.*

Teach Us to Number Our Days

*In the quiet moments of our fleeting days,
We lift our hearts in humble praise.
"Lord, Jesus, receive my spirit," I pray,
As I walk the narrow, righteous way.*

*Teach us, O Lord, to number our days,
To seek Your wisdom in all our ways.
With hearts attuned to Your divine call,
We find our strength, though we are small.*

*In the shadow of death, we find no fear,
For Your presence, Lord, is ever near.
With each breath, we draw closer still,
To the peace found in Your holy will.*

*Moses prayed, "Teach us to be wise,"
To see life through eternal eyes.
So, we count our days, not in despair,
But in the hope of Your loving care.*

*Guide us, Savior, through life's fleeting hour,
With Your grace and mighty power.
Till we stand before Your throne above,
Embraced forever in Your boundless love*

Meaning of the poem:

1. **Contemplation of Mortality:**

- The poem begins with a reflection on the fleeting nature of life, echoing the sentiment in Acts 7:59 where Stephen, the first Christian martyr, entrusts his spirit to Jesus. This act of surrender highlights the importance of being mindful of our mortality and the transient nature of our earthly existence.

2. Seeking Divine Wisdom:

- Psalm 90:12, attributed to Moses, emphasizes the need to “number our days” to gain wisdom. This wisdom is not merely intellectual but deeply spiritual, guiding us to live lives that are aligned with God’s will. The poem reflects this by asking the Lord to teach us to seek His wisdom in all our ways.

3. Presence of God in Life and Death:

- The poem reassures us that even in the face of death, we need not fear because God’s presence is always near. This aligns with the Christian belief that Jesus is with us in every moment, offering comfort and peace.

4. Hope and Eternal Perspective:

- By counting our days and living with an eternal perspective, we find hope and purpose. The poem encourages us to see life through “eternal eyes,” understanding that our time on earth is a preparation for the eternal life promised by God.

5. Divine Guidance and Love:

- The closing lines of the poem ask for God’s guidance through life’s journey, emphasizing His grace and power. The ultimate goal is to be embraced by God’s boundless love in eternity, a central hope in Christian faith.

Heavenly joy

Contented joy is like a peaceful sunrise, filling the heart with warmth and light. It's the deep satisfaction that comes from knowing and trusting in the journey you're on. It's that serene happiness, unshaken by circumstances, rooted in the profound acceptance of life's blessings.

This joy is both gentle and resilient, a quiet strength that carries you through life's ebbs and flows. It's the comfort found in simple moments shared smile, a moment of stillness, the beauty of nature. Contented joy is the soul's affirmation that despite challenges, there is always something beautiful and worth cherishing in every day.

Heavenly joy transcends earthly happiness, rooted in the divine presence and eternal love of God. It's a profound and serene bliss that comes from knowing you are deeply loved and cherished by the Creator. This joy is unwavering, untouched by life's trials, and fills the soul with an everlasting peace. It's the kind of joy that radiates from within, illuminating your path with divine light and grace.

This divine joy is a sanctuary for the weary, a beacon in the darkest times. It nurtures the spirit, bringing renewal and hope. Such joy isn't fleeting or dependent on external circumstances but is an anchor, grounding you in God's eternal promise. It flows through every aspect of life, transforming mundane moments into holy experiences, and offering a foretaste of the eternal bliss that awaits.

Anchor-like joy

This kind of joy is profound and steadfast. It's rooted in the assurance that no matter what happens in life, you are held in God's love. This joy acts as a stabilizer in turbulent times, reminding you of the greater plan and divine purpose that underpins your existence.

It's the spiritual strength that lifts you up when you're down and calms you in moments of chaos.

This anchorlike joy connects you deeply to God's eternal promise of peace, love, and salvation. It transcends temporal highs and lows, offering a consistent source of happiness and fulfillment.

This joy is a living testament to the enduring presence of God's grace in your life, encouraging a heart filled with gratitude and a spirit resilient to life's challenges. It's a reflection of divine faithfulness, always present, always enough.

Such joy finds its origins in the divine essence of God.

It's born from the eternal love and grace that God extends to us. This joy is not a human construct or fleeting emotion but a gift that flows directly from the Creator, deeply rooted in His unchanging promise and presence.

It's cultivated through a close, intimate relationship with God, nurtured by faith, prayer, and the continual presence of the Holy Spirit within us. This divine joy anchors us, grounding us in the assurance of God's unwavering love and eternal promise.

Contemplative Practices

1. What brings you joy? Think about activities, people, or moments that make you feel truly happy and fulfilled.
2. What are your core values? Consider what principles are most important to you in life.
3. What are your strengths and passions? Reflect on what you excel at and what you love doing.
4. What do you want to contribute to the world? Contemplate how you wish to make a difference or leave a legacy.

Contemplative Practices

- Meditation and Stillness: Spend time in quiet meditation, allowing your mind to settle and your inner voice to emerge.
- Journaling: Write down your thoughts, feelings, and insights. This can help you uncover patterns and deeper truths.
- Nature Walks: Spend time in nature, observing its beauty and tranquility. This can provide clarity and inspiration.
- Prayer or Spiritual Reading: Engage in prayer or read spiritual texts that resonate with you. This can offer guidance and insight.

Poetry and Inspiration

Sometimes, poetry can touch the soul and provide profound insights. Here's a short poem to inspire your journey:

The Journey

One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice— though the whole house began to tremble and you felt the old tug at your ankles.

"Mend my life!" each voice cried. But you didn't stop. You knew what you had to do, though the wind pried with its stiff fingers at the very foundations— though their melancholy was terrible. It was already late enough, and a wild night, and the road full of fallen branches and stones.

*But little by little, as you left their voices behind, the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds, and there was a new voice which you slowly recognized as your own, that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world, determined to do the only thing you could do— **determined to save the only life you could save.***

Again, absolute surrender

In your heart, release all cares and desires of this life. Let go of every imagination and attraction. Entrust your entire being to God, who tenderly cares for you. Surrender to God's Good Will and Pleasure, as if your own will were but a whisper in the vastness of divine love.

Rest in the assurance that His grace is sufficient, embracing the peace that comes from total trust. Allow His presence to fill every part of you, transforming anxieties into serenity. As you let go, you open yourself to the fullness of His love, experiencing a joy that transcends all understanding. In this sacred surrender, you find yourself, deeply connected and unwaveringly supported by the divine. Live in this truth, letting His light guide your every step.

As you journey forward, let every breath be a testament to this divine connection. Embrace each moment with an open heart, knowing that you are enveloped in God's infinite love. Find comfort in the quiet, strength in your faith, and joy in the knowledge that you are never alone. His presence is with you always, a constant source of grace and guidance.



Absolute surrender (poem)

*In the quiet of the soul, let burdens fall away,
Desires and dreams, like whispers, gently sway.
Entrust your heart to the One who cares,
In divine embrace, release all worldly snares.*

*No need to strive, no need to seek,
In God's good will, find the peace you seek. Surrender your will, let it
softly fade. In the light of love, be serenely remade.*

A new voice

“And there was a new voice which you slowly recognized as your own, that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world”

That's a powerful sentiment. It speaks to the journey of self-discovery and the strength found within oneself.

As you move through life, it's important to recognize your own inner voice and the wisdom it carries.

This journey of saving yourself, finding purpose, and embracing your own path is both profound and transformative.

The overarching promise is that by knowing God intimately, we will experience God's faithfulness, His power to transform us, and God's unbreakable love - even during life's difficulties.

The more we seek to truly know God, the more we will see these promises fulfilled in our lives. Meeting God in silence is not about hearing a specific message, but about simply being present with Him.

It's about acknowledging God's control and finding intimacy and peace through His presence.

And could you want anything less? “For God knows what is best; and if you can but trust God will most certainly do better for you, than if you were left to your own Choice”.

When you stand still from the thinking of Self, and the willing of Self;

when both your intellect and will are quiet, and passive to the Expressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit; and when your Soul is winged up, and above that which is temporal, the outward Senses, and the Imagination being locked up by holy abstraction, then the Eternal Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking will be revealed in you;

and so, God hears and sees through you, being now the Organ of God's Spirit; and so, God speaks in you, and whispers to your Spirit, and your Spirit hears God's Voice.

Becoming selfless, inspire others

Modeling this involves a daily commitment to letting go and trusting in God. Start with small, intentional practices: daily prayer or meditation, moments of stillness where you consciously release your worries to God. Reflect on His presence in your life and align your actions with His will.

Embrace gratitude, recognizing the divine grace in every moment. Surround yourself with reminders of His love—scriptures, inspirational quotes, or even a journal where you record your spiritual journey. Engage in acts of kindness, seeing them as extensions of your surrender to God's will.

Lastly, find a community that supports and shares your spiritual goals. Discussing and practicing this with others can enhance your understanding and strengthen your resolve.

Continuously seek personal growth by exploring deeper aspects of your faith through reading, reflection, and discussion. Celebrate progress, however small, and remain open to the lessons each day brings. By consistently modeling this way of living, you'll inspire others and strengthen your own spiritual journey.

Remember to be patient with yourself. Transformation takes time, and each step forward, no matter how small, is significant. Surround yourself with people and practices that nurture your spirit and keep your heart open to God's guidance. Lean into His love, and let it shape your actions and thoughts every day.

"What is there required of you, but to stand still, and see the Salvation of your God? And could you want anything less?"

For God knows what is best; and if you can but trust God will most certainly do better for you, than if you were left to your own Choice".

Lastly, Living life to the fullest

I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness. ... I have come so that they may have life, and have it more *abundantly*. John 10:10:

Abundant life is a rich tapestry of peace, joy, and fulfillment, woven through every moment by deep faith and connection with God. It's a life where your spirit thrives, filled with divine grace and love.

Every day is a blessing, every challenge a chance to grow, and every interaction a reflection of God's presence. Abundance isn't measured by material wealth but by the depth of your spiritual wellbeing and the richness of your relationships. It's living in the fullness of God's promise and savoring the beauty of each day.

Abundant life is full of those things money can't buy and all come from God, who is the giver of all good things. Abundant life is living life to the fullest, not merely existing or simply trying to make a living.



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