

## Reflections on *A Common Rule for Monastics*: -

# God and Us

(Chapter 1)

### Truly, God abides in us, and we abide in God

Paragraph 4, Lines 4 & 5

1 John 4:13 tells us that “By **this** we know that we **abide in** Him and He **in us**, because He has given **us** of His Spirit.”

What is “**this**” referring to? Verse 12 says that it is **love** – the love we have for one another. The passage suggest that God abides in us, **IF** we have love for one another. I believe that since love is the essence of God, if we have this love in us, we have God abiding in us; just as the Scripture says. Where there is love, there is God. So if we have not love we do not have God abiding in us.

To abide suggests someone has taken up residence, they are not there for a visit, they have moved in. Their being there is a permanent situation, with affinity to the others that are also there. There is a sense of belonging, with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities. There is a oneness; an intermingling.

Knowing that God truly abides in us, we should find comfort in knowing that we do not have to go far to look for Him. We need not make the mistake (as paragraph 3 suggests) of looking in the wrong places, to the wrong people or try to find Him in the wrong things. No. It is in error to do so. He abides within us.

It is my opinion that so many of us are intimidated by the fact that God is so close. We are intimidated by the fact that we are His. We are intimidated by the fact that we hold such a special place in the heart of the Divine. Why? Could it be because we cannot imagine, or worse, are afraid of the transformative power that is ours because of Christ? Some tend to deny these spiritual gifts and realities in their attempt to remain the same. Could it be that if we admit to these realities God will require us to do more than we are doing? Does 2 Timothy 3:5 fit this scenario? That is, we are OK with looking godly, but we do not want to be bothered with all that “spiritual stuff”.

That’s a lot of questions and suppositions. They are from a place of having that encounters with many Christians who support this. Many feel that Christianity is a passive endeavour, and to take it to another level is too much work. Isn’t it enough that I meet my obligation and go to church? I have to pray without ceasing <sup>(1 Thessalonians 5:17)</sup>, study (KJV) to show myself approved <sup>(2 Timothy 2:15)</sup> and serve the least among us <sup>(Matthew 25:45, James 1:27)</sup>, too? Man, you are asking for a lot!

So what does all of that have to do with “truly, God abide in us?” I feel that if we would seriously ingest that the words of scripture, which are statements of truth and not mere suggestions, apply them to life with love, then we would be participate more fully in the work of Christ.

When we truly come to understand that God is in us, we begin to pursue the things that are important to the Divine. We **have** the mind of Christ <sup>(1 Corinthians 2:16)</sup>, so we do the will of Christ. We recognize that Divine Love abides in us, so fear will not. Light abides in us, so darkness must not. Truth and life abides, so falsehoods and death need not. Salt, yes Salt, abides, so decay and a bland (read meaningless) life ought not, but a thirst for righteousness.

I like what paragraph says about the distance between us and God. There is none! We determine, only in our limited thinking, how far away God is. If we would only look within, we would discover that He is really closer than we think. As close as our breath. As close as a kind deed.

So let's get real! Is the concept of an indwelling Creator readily accepted by the average Christian? Perhaps not. Perhaps it is. If it is, the evidence doesn't support it. This is by no means meant to be critical or cynical. This question is also directed to me personally. How do I, on this monastic path, embrace, internalize and manifest the abiding of God within?

The more I read, study, talk to mature Christians, and pray, the more I appreciate my unique role in the grand design of The Divine, and the more I am enthused in performing that role. Also, taking scripture verses in their proper context, I am more willing to accept what scripture has to say regarding who I am in Christ and who God is who abides in me. To be sure, to capture the full import of this, is not a switch that can be turned to "on", however, many resources are making the journey a joyful one with an expected outcome.

If there is one thing that I would wish to zero in on regarding this reflection, it is: ***"Christ in you, the hope of glory."*** <sup>(Colossians 1:27)</sup>

Because He abides in us, we are assured of a glorious future. Now, seeing that the future is guaranteed and the past is behind us, it is His will, and in our best interest, that we live, move and have our being in Him <sup>(Acts 17:28)</sup> in the **now** - the present moment. This, with an attitude of love and service to Him and all of His creation.

Live the hope. Live the assurance. Live.

A whole other question I ask myself, and you:

"What kind of Landlord are you to the indwelling Christ?"

Selah.

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