



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020

9 WAYS YOUR EGO PREVENTS YOU FROM EXPERIENCING GOD

By Frank Powell

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Lately, I've been haunted by a question. How could so much violence, fear, racism, and divisiveness occur in God's name? I'll ask it a different way. If God is love, why does the narrative of Christianity include so little of it?

The impending election and media attention surrounding police brutality and national anthem protests make the question more visible and haunting. Everyone seems to have an increased desire to draw lines and share opinions, to determine who's on whose team. The ultimate goal is to prove why "they" are wrong, by any means necessary, but mostly by demeaning and dehumanizing.

I'm uncomfortable with all of it. The war of words looks more like a high school cheerleading spat than anything Christian.

But let's not pretend rivalries and dehumanization are anything new. Genuine Christians once justified slavery. I live in a country built on power and progress, two principles I see little of in Jesus.

How does this happen? Why don't more Christians, myself included, look more like Jesus?

EGO. You might call it "the flesh." I believe our definition for "ego" closely parallels Paul's definition for "flesh."

The ego is who you think you are. It's your false identity, your body image, education, theological knowledge, clothes, friends, social status, job, successes and accomplishments. And, as Paul says, your ego is against your Spirit.

Everyone has an ego, and I believe one of the major tasks of spiritual maturity is recognizing and letting go of the ego's lies in favor of something better.

This is hard work, however. It's excruciating, to be honest, almost like dying. I would guess most people don't let go of their ego unless life throws them a few gut punches. You probably know a few people who suffered unimaginable tragedy and have more peace and love as a result.

In the past year, I resigned from church ministry, mourned the suicide of a family member (and follower of Jesus), found and quickly lost a "dream job," mourned the death of, Matsy Grace, our adopted Indian daughter, and battled a strange illness that makes going outdoors my worst nightmare. I've wrestled with the darkness, questioning everything: my faith, my identity, and my calling. At times, I even questioned life. I've thrown a few pity parties that would rival the one I threw in high school when my parents were out of town. Sorry mom.

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FEASTS FOR AUGUST

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of August are:

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| 1 Alphonsus Liguori, Memorial | 22 Queenship of Mary, Memorial |
| 2 Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | 23 Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday |
| 4 John Vianney, Memorial | 24 Bartholomew, Feast |
| 5 Dedication of St. Mary Major, Opt. Mem. | 25 Louis of France; Joseph Calasanz, Opt. Mem. |
| 6 Transfiguration, Feast | 27 Monica, Memorial |
| 7 Sixtus II and companions; Cajetan, Opt. Mem. | 28 Augustine, Memorial |
| 8 Dominic, Memorial | 29 Passion of Saint John the Baptist, Memorial |
| 9 Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | 30 Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday |
| 10 Lawrence, Feast | |
| 11 Clare of Assisi, Memorial | |
| 13 Pontian and Hippolytus, Opt. Mem. | |
| 14 Maximilian Kolbe, Memorial | |
| 15 Assumption, Solemnity | |
| 16 Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday | |
| 19 John Eudes; St. Bernard Tolomei, Opt. Mem. | |
| 20 Bernard, Memorial | |
| 21 Pius X, Sunday | |

The feasts of St. Eusebius of Vercelli and St. Peter Julian Eymard (August 2), St. Teresa Benedicta (August 9), St. Stephen of Hungary (August 16), and St. Rose of Lima (August 23) fall on a Sunday so they are superseded by the Sunday Liturgy. ☐

THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 800 Our Father Devotion August 15, 2020	LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 800 Our Father Devotion August 15, 2020
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OUR CENACLE CORNER

Seeking a deeper relationship with God
through meditation of passages from Holy Scriptures

Litany of God the Father

GOD TOUCHED ME

*Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. — 1 Chronicles 16:24*

GOD THE FATHER'S PRESENCE IN MY LIFE

By CP, a devotee

Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people." And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."

Exodus 33:13-14

Coming from a large family of 10 siblings, with me being the 4th child among my brothers and sisters, our parents inspired us to have faith in God. The Angelus at six o'clock in the evening is a spiritual custom. We were all expected to be home before six o'clock to pray the Angelus together. Everyone's attendance to the Sunday Mass was also strictly observed. I loved going to church, which was a good two kilometers away and would even take the bus by myself to spend some quiet time praying or just sitting in front of the altar.

I lived a normal childhood until my second grade when I was diagnosed with an enlarged heart condition. Playing then was no fun at all as I get exhausted easily. And I could only breathe better in a squatting position. I quit the rest of the school year at the advice of my doctor. My mother and I prayed endlessly for me to get better – and three months after the start of third grade, I was indeed better. And even though I was behind a great deal in lessons and homework, I was able to catch up with the rest of the class.

Fast forward to adult years – God's continued blessings displayed in so many ways. He gave me a wonderful husband and begotten three beautiful and smart children. Raising three children and working hard to sustain our family's needs was a challenge but we managed quite well with His help. Sunday was my family's time with God, and we would never miss a Sunday Mass.

In the summer of 2004, at my cousin's wedding, something happened. My husband and I were dancing and all of a sudden, he said, "I am feeling dizzy" and I immediately told him to sit down. Unfortunately, my husband fainted before making it to our table. His lips turned blue and was unresponsive. I ran back to him and immediately started doing CPR on him. My cousins and I were performing CPR until paramedics got to the scene.

When the paramedics arrived, they administered drugs, but my husband was still unresponsive. I pleaded to the Holy Spirit as I saw his heart flatlined on the monitor! I begged for him to be given another chance in life. I

implored God to allow him to make it through and suddenly, I saw his breathing became spontaneous and he was starting to breathe on his own. Immediately after my prayer, my husband started to have circulation back and his heart rhythm became normal. That was one of the scariest moments in my life, but God was there with me and faithful as He is answered my prayers right away.

After a few years of the terrifying incident, a friend invited me to a devotional gathering. I immediately said yes even though I did not know where it is going to be. I have been wanting to join such group prayers but the demands of being a wife, mother and nurse did not allow me to do so in the preliminary years of family life. It was the Spiritual Army of God the Father Ministry. This was an amazing prayer gathering and it led me to know God the Father more. I am very grateful for being a part of this devotion. This devotion to God the Father led me to draw closer to Him.

Since I started going regularly to the prayer meetings every 1st and 3rd Saturdays, I felt closer to God more than ever. In 2018, my niece from the Philippines was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. When she came to visit us, I gave her a scapular of God the Father. My niece was very happy because she has been wanting to have the scapular of God the Father and she has been searching for one for a long time. As I gave her the scapular, I instantaneously said "go do the surgery because God the Father will be there". I said that without thinking and believed it was the Holy Spirit working through me. Today, she survived cancer, and we are grateful for the grace bestowed on her by God the Father.

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SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

SEEKING INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS THROUGH THE BIBLE

BY VICTOR ARANETA

THIS BOOKLET HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND COPIES ARE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE FOR A DONATION OF \$6.00 PER COPY.

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THE SPIRITUAL ARMY OF GOD THE FATHER NEWSLETTER STAFF

“ . . . I am your mother Mary

*Pray, pray, pray my children. God is offended enough
with all the lies and destruction of human lives
happening all over humanity.*

*My children, this is the fight between good and evil, as
the evil one penetrates even the main core of society
and church and has brought to submission.*

*My children you know to fight with the armor of God.
You will fight for your freedom spiritually and
physically for God has sent his Angels and me to assist
you in this fight. My son Jesus' Sacred Heart is there
to cover each and every one with His Precious Blood!*

*In short a time you WILL FIGHT FOR THIS
FREEDOM AND PREPARE TO FIGHT WITH
MORE VIGOR AND RESOLVE AGAINST LIES
AND MORE LIES like their “king” the father of all
lies, the evil one”.*

Mary, your Lady of Peace
07182020

Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**GOD THE FATHER FEAST DAY -
AUGUST 2, 2022**

1:00 TO 3:00 PM

**MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS
LOS ANGELES, CA**

10:30 TO 11:30:00 AM

**ST. SHARBEL CHAPEL
LAS VEGAS, NV**

**MOTHER MARY'S CROWNING
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2020**

IN LOS ANGELES:
CONVENT OF THE SISTER DISCIPLES
OF THE DIVINE MASTER
501 N BEAUDRY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

IN LAS VEGAS:
CENACLE HOUSE
8455 WEST SAHARA AVENUE
UNIT 172
LAS VEGAS, NV 89117

9 WAYS YOUR EGO PREVENTS YOU ...

Can I be honest? The past year has largely sucked. And I'm beginning to understand why. My ego was dying. And when the ego begins to die, it feels like death. My identity, my purpose, everything I used to convince myself I was somebody, that I was special, was losing out in favor of a different voice.

While I'm not an expert, I have realized a few things about the ego. I want to share those things with you. I hope you will take these and do some work. To be led by the Spirit and bear the Spirit's fruits (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control), we must move beyond the ego and its lies.

1. The ego equates all self-knowledge with self-absorption.

It's tragic that the American church equates self-knowledge with self-absorption. Maybe we're concerned self-discovery will inevitably lead to hugging trees and smoking "left-handed cigarettes"?

Not until my ego-centric identity crumbled did I begin re-examining the question "Who am I?" The answer led me inside, and I found some ugly stuff, an identity composed of success, affirmation, and selfish ambition. In the process, I saw how I manipulated relationships and used people.

This inward journey has also led me to believe we can't truly know God until we know ourselves. To uncover the Spirit, the True Self, you must wade through the ego's facades and smoke screens. Until then, the ego controls things, including Christian things. This might explain why we can't love our neighbor as ourselves, as Jesus tells us to do, especially when our neighbor is gay, Muslim or Democratic.

2. The ego is highly competitive and thinks in terms of win/lose.

Your ego wants to separate, divide, and draw lines to prove itself. Why else do we compete, except for superiority? And while healthy competition isn't wrong, most people never move beyond my team versus your team, my group against your group, my theology against yours.

For me, the opponent was other denominations. I believed my theology was superior, which made me a better Christian than you. Somehow, God chose to reveal the "real truth" to a small segment of mostly white people born in the last few centuries.

This is my story. For others, the ego uses political affiliation, social status, morality, skin color, nationalism to elevate itself.

Any thinking that makes you better than the person beside you for any reason is not from God. The Creator is love and doesn't need to compete.

3. The ego must be correct and does not accept contradictions.

Most of my "Christian" journey, I thought it was my duty to have the right answers. I studied hard, and when I wasn't really sure, I made something up.

But while helping others make sense of God, especially those troubling parts about suffering and eternity, I became less certain. Something in me knew God's nature and interaction with his creation couldn't be explained in a few sentences.

Now I believe that "something" was my True Self, the Spirit.

In our effort to commercialize Christianity and mass market the eternal message, many American churches have eliminated uncertainty because, quite frankly, it doesn't sell. It doesn't sell because it's both risky and time-consuming.

As I look at Scripture, however, I see a God who is incredibly risky (too risky for our comfort) and painfully patient. It seems God is more vulnerable than powerful and somehow God uses everything (love, death, celebration, suffering) in the larger plan.

Why did slavery happen? How could God allow the Nazis to murder so many Jews? Why are children overcome by cancer and others sold into sex slavery? For the first time, I can honestly answer, "I don't know." I find peace in the land of unknown. I have faith that somehow, someday God knows.

And death won't have the final word.

4. The ego hates change above all else.

If you asked the ego to rank its greatest fears, change would take the top spot. When your ego is in charge, you love comfort and the status quo. It should come as no surprise that Jesus' first sermon was "Repent!" (Mark 1:15 and Matt. 4:17), which literally means "change your mind."

The ego hates that message. But it's difficult to explain away Jesus' desire for us to change. So, most ego-centric people project the message onto a spouse, a child, a parent, a friend or life's circumstances. As long as the ego can find someone else to change, it's off the hook.

Your ego doesn't want you to grow or change. It doesn't want you to let go or stretch yourself beyond your current theological understanding. So, rather than accept the radical message of Jesus that essentially

says, "You change. You're the problem, not your spouse, child, or co-workers," your ego searches for a place that loves the status quo.

When you know whose you are, when you uncover your divine identity, change isn't threatening. Change is no longer an indictment on a particular generation, race, or leader. It's an indictment on your ego. ☐

Frank Powell is a freelance writer and speaker living in Birmingham. The site: Frank Powell, Restoring Culture Through Christ, is devoted to God. He hopes every word on this site gives glory to Him. His goal is to challenge status quo Christianity and push everyone (Christian or not) to see God with fresh eyes. His content has been featured on sites like Relevant, Church Leaders, Catalyst, Thought Catalog, Mogul, and FaithIt.

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GOD'S PRESENCE IN MY LIFE

Since attending this devotional prayer group and seeing and hearing the Bible come to life during the cenacles conducted at each gathering, I have been feeling at peace and I know that God will always have my back (as evidenced by the stories of my life narrated above). There was a particular instance, when I believe God the Father manifested himself to me. I was at Saint Francis of Assisi Church at the Mother of Perpetual Help novena – seated about ten pews from the altar. I first gazed at a beautiful shade of bright orange and suddenly the image of God the Father with His Hand extending a blessing was there. I was staring at and adoring the God the Father image for quite a while.

God is still sending us signs today as He tries to get our attention. Some may be obvious, while others subtle. Through a friend, mentor or relative, He may offer you guidance, or simply encourage you. Or He may send you a rainbow --- so be focused and stay alert always. All you need is to open your eyes, your ears, and your heart. He will take care of the rest.

God wants to be part of our lives and my devotion to the Spiritual Army of God the Father helped me become a better wife, mother, grandmother, and an enthusiastic member of my community. I know God the Father will continue to bless us and protect us, especially during these difficult times in our lives, country – in the whole world. ☐