

Feeling the Presence of Christ, the Infinity Behind Physical Reality

Pastor Jeffrey Grupp, Church of the Nazarene, July 2018

If desired, any person in physical reality can sense God—feel His presence—just by thinking about Him directly for a moment or a few moments, as indicated in Isaiah 26:3:

Isaiah 26:3 (ISV)

You will keep perfectly peaceful, the one whose mind remains focused on you, because he remains in you.

Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)

You will keep in perfect peace, all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV)

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

By “thinking about Him directly,” what I mean is one has to be talking to and/or thinking directly about Him: our minds can’t be wandering around, where we tell ourselves we are thinking about God, but where we really aren’t, and we are really mostly daydreaming about something else. If our minds stay on Him, we will sense His powerful joy-filled presence: one will sense the tip-of-the-iceberg of the Infinity of God, a peace that transcends all understanding, and which human logic cannot encompass. When you are watching a movie you are interested in, for example, your mind and attention are filled by the contents of the movie, due to the fact that you are looking outward at it: your awareness is on the movie, so your mind is filled with the content of the movie. We must do the same with God: look directly at Him, which starts by merely thinking about Him (Isa. 26:3), knowing He’s there, and consequently, one will feel His presence, which is a fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11). In simpler words, when I am talking to my wife, my mind may be wandering, where it seems like I am listening to her, but I am not, and my mind is filled with other thoughts—or my mind may be directly on her and in what she is saying as we talk, where I am aware of her, because I am focusing on her. The latter is what is needed in simply thinking about God in order to be aware of Him, and to thus feel His mighty presence, to have immeasurable joy all the time. This is why we are instructed to fix our eyes on Jesus in the Bible:

Hebrews 12:2 (NASB)

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The beauty, love, and faith of being aware of Him is available to anybody, at any time, and to orient our lives and our minds in this way all the time (1 Thess. 5:16-17) is what is involved in living as the Mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). We can all sense His realness, which is just behind all the appearances and physical forms of physical reality. If we look at the greenness of a leaf, we can sense God as the Power behind the leaf's mystery, the leaf's infinity, if we just put Christ in our thoughts and awareness as we do. Hereafter, I will call this awareness so-far discussed in this article as the faith-connection.

Church of the Nazarene Pastor, William Greathouse, quotes Wiley saying something very profound in passing, on page 152 of his book *Wholeness in Christ*: "Jesus' Sonship is original and infinite; ours is derived and finite. However, the being of both is from God" (from Wiley, H. Orton, 1984, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, Weigelt, Morris, ed., Kansas City: Beacon Hill, page 83). I view this as a profoundly significant issue, but I want to add to what Greathouse is saying, because I think that statement only applies to a pre-surrendered human (a human who has not begun to have regular communion with Christ in his daily life via the faith-connection). Our minds are fallen and finite, and our minds can only be infinite when we have the Mind of Christ and when we are crucified with Him (Phil. 2:5, Gal. 2:20, 1 Cor. 2:16), when we surrender fully to God, sincerely asking Him to control all aspects of our lives. When we surrender, we move from fallen emptiness, toward and into the blinding Light of the infinity of Christ. That infinity does not have any definition or logical formulation in the physical plane. Rather, it is non-scientifically and directly apprehended in accompaniment by the anti-worldly peace, joy, and love of the new creation that one becomes via the faith-connection: the new heart of the person with the Mystery of Christ in them (2 Cor. 5:17). That is infinity, a life of the infinite, and all of reality is related to Infinity by its being related to God via the relation of *createdness*. Let me put that in different words:

All objects in physical reality are continuously created and sustained out of nothing at every instant by Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and each object therefore derives from Infinity, and is related to Infinity, whether an apple, the blue sky, a hunk of metal, or our own brains,

and the infinite Creator can always be sensed as the Source, the Power behind any such objects, via the faith-connection.

When I look at an apple on a table, yes I can say it's a red solid object that creates a subjective experience of sweet taste in my consciousness, but that is not really getting at what the object really is (rather, that description just describes a bundle of sense perceptions I have). As philosophers for thousands of years have known, sense experiences about the physical world, such as color, surface, solidity and the like, are all experiences that are (1) without description or definition, since they are subjective/inner experiences (which are definitionless), but furthermore, (2) when one tries to define them the analysis always leads to contradiction. The same can be said of time, space, mind, energy, and matter. Zeno's paradoxes are the first known system of logical principles that showed that the external physical plane reduces to contradiction. So, more appropriately put, the apple should be described as

a mystery, an infinity (such as an infinity of atoms,¹ or an infinity of energy), that is spoken into existence by an infinite God (named Yahweh), and which currently exists in a distorted state due to its being contaminated by a force called sin, which pervades the physical plane, and which stems from the souls of humans who have tried to bring the infinity of God (and reality) down to limited and finite human understanding (violating Proverbs 3:5 and trusting their own understanding).

When we look at the apple, we should sense its Creator, Yahweh, "behind" it, as its Source. In my life of full surrender and ceaseless prayer to the Trinity, I can sense God "behind" everything—there is a source of infinite Joy (Yahweh) behind all, which all of nature is mourning the loss of awareness of, and mourning the loss of identification with (see Romans 8:19).

The human soul therefore has interconnection to all of reality. If the soul is corrupted/fallen/sinful, it can distort objects and other souls around it by participating in sin: by analogy, the sin spreads out like a ripple of death in a blackened pond containing deformed fish.

So, to return to where I started, humans are in an interesting position, where they can observe the starkest of contrasts between their fallen life (the pre-surrendered life) on the one hand, and their

¹ I am not referring to the atoms that scientists talk about, that have parts, such as the parts of electrons and a nucleus, and thus are not really atoms (uncuttable, final, basic building blocks of reality), but rather the atoms that philosophers discuss, that truly have no parts and are the bedrock of nature, of the physical plane.

saved life on the other (being surrendered, and living by the faith-connection as a way of life), because the former is a finite life of endless frustration, pain, worry, dysfunction, veneer “happiness,” and lostness, where the latter, the life in Christ, is an awareness of the Infinite all the time. One only need to gradually train their mind, their awareness, to move from the world, to the Word, showing the stunning difference between their life in the image of the Devil (1 John 3:8) verse their life of Infinite Love (1 John 4:8). Surrender or die!

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Work Cited:

Greathouse, William M., 1998, *Wholeness in Christ: Toward a Biblical Theology of Holiness*, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press.