



Sensing God's Presence & Activity

One of the reasons spirituality has such appeal for those who are involved in it is the strong desire to be more closely connected to God. We long to have God more involved in our lives. We wish to live in the heart of God. There is awareness that God is more available to us than we are experiencing.

For example, we wish we knew how to get beyond our unsatisfying prayer life and into a more dynamic and intimate experience of communicating with God. We would be filled with joy if we would somehow have an experience in which we felt God had opened the blinds and we felt the radiance of being in the immediate presence of the Holy One. Or, perhaps, something has come into our consciousness that has given us the powerful feeling that our thoughts of the moment are so amazing that we are convinced that God must surely have put them there. These epiphanies are rare, even in Scripture, although they do occur. They can and do occur in our lives.

Our recognizing and identifying them as being from God is the key to experiencing joy. How do we learn to do that?

There is no secret methodology that assures success in this pursuit. However, there are well known ways to work at this phenomenal experience of sensing God's presence and activity in our lives.

Basically it comes down to being alert and sensitive and training ourselves to know what to look for.

Over the years as a hunter I have trained myself to look for signs of animals being present. Something on the landscape may have an unusual appearance—a spot, a color, a movement. Something unusual draws attention and upon closer examination may turn out to be a deer, fox, elk or coyote.

It takes that initial clue that you have trained yourself to notice. Then further investigation produces the pleasure of viewing an animal.

So it is with experiencing God. We can train ourselves to be alert to clues that just may hold joyful surprises from God. We may have been in the midst of the surprise for a long time without being able to see it as being of God, just as we might look at a landscape without seeing an animal although it is there.

Searching for God's surprises is worth the effort and discipline. Look for clues such as healing, a food bank, a warm home, a generous person, the eyes of a homeless person, a sense of being loved, a feeling of deep gratitude, being moved by music or sparkling frost on a tree. Stop and investigate any clue that catches your attention. Take the time to investigate thoroughly. You may discover that God is *hidden* but *present* and be surprised by joy.

