



Recognizing God's Hand Print

This article is written especially for those who have difficulty with spirituality or who dismiss it as not being interesting or important. The fact is that we are all spiritual beings and the only question is whether we ignore it or nourish it.

Spiritual growth presumes there is a spiritual baseline from which to begin and measure. That starting point may well differ among us although the subsequent process is the same for all. As we begin we must first acknowledge the existence of a spiritual realm within which God operates. In order to give place in our minds for the existence of spiritual things, we must somehow modify our common acceptance of *reason* as the definitive measure of truth—reason being the mental process used to make sense out of data.

When it comes to things spiritual, reason is not the most useful tool for defining and measuring truth. While reason

is indispensable in determining and measuring physical and mental truth, it is necessary to employ other tools when involved with spiritual truth.

How then do we choose appropriate tools to determine and measure the validity of spiritual reality? We begin with *God's promises* followed by *human experience*—both collective and personal.

God's promises are evident in scripture and also appear within our own human history. Summary statements might be:

“I will be your God and you will be my people.”

“My love and care for you are without equal.”

Then there is the footnote:

“Ask and you shall receive.”

In any love relationship many exchanges take place that enhance and nourish the relationship. We accept and understand these enriching exchanges as being *truth without proof*. If someone who cares about you says something nice to you, you respond with *thank you*. Something inside us accepts the exchange as being authentic. Sometimes, alas, within human relationships we do get fooled. However, over time we do learn whom to trust or mistrust, plus we learn to trust our own ability to recognize God's handprint.

The way we learn to evaluate our relationship with God is certainly a spiritual experience. The process is the same as with human interaction. We allow ourselves to trust these exchanges and develop a sense for recognizing God's involvement in things that happen in our lives, asking: *Does this occurrence fit God's promise?* Little by little we develop an internal spiritual monitor that tells us: *Yes, this is of God* or *No, this is not of God*. We grow by learning and learn by growing.

In caverns beneath the surface of the earth we see the slow but certain growth of stalactites and stalagmites, each growing one drop at a time. Spiritual growth is somewhat the same—ever so slowly—one experience at a time. As each drop in the caverns contains a small deposit of minerals that build up over time, so our spiritual development grows slowly one fulfilled promise at a time.

Each experience contains elements of an act of God that gets deposited on our own spirit and slowly builds up our spiritual strength. Once that process begins, it continues overtime increasing and enhancing the spiritual dimension and capacity of our lives.

The one response required of us is that we be open to this growth process, acknowledging that those special events that occur in our lives are *of God* and not mere happenstance, good luck or solely the result of our own efforts.

When we get immersed in this process and become more and more acute at recognizing God's handprint, it is then that we develop an overall *attitude of gratitude*. This is the ultimate as a way of life.

Thus, it is not with reason, but with the tools of God's promises and their fulfillment that enables us to grow spiritually.

Viewing your life in retrospect is a helpful way of determining the growth you have experienced in your spiritual journey.

