

The Search For More

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We would like to share with you some insights, ideas, feelings and experiences that we and others have had as companions on our journey. What we have to share is the Gospel message, the message of Good News, the message of relationship and love.

Does the statement, "wherever you are in your relationship, it can be better," sound familiar to you? It certainly does to us. It was said to us before we made our Marriage Encounter Weekend in 1971 and we repeated it to others. We said it on Weekends, at Information nights, to friends, anyone we wanted to interest in going on a Weekend. That statement was true for us then and it is still true.

However, we are using it in a different context right now. We are saying to you, "Wherever you are in your relationship with God, it can be better."

We discovered after many years of involvement in Encounter, that as we grew closer in our own relationship, there was a deepening desire to grow closer to God. On the basis of our own experience and other couples that we have come in contact with, we know there are many of you who are searching for more in your relationship with the Father.

Our own personal search started on our original Weekend and continued on Weekends as a Team Couple, a trip to Lourdes, Marriage Retorno, Prayer meetings, Retreats and now an attempt to share our lives in a Prayer Community. As you can see, this has not been a "quantum leap," but a step-by-step, day-by-day, year by-year-process in a never-ending search for more.

Where each of us is right now in our relationship with God is a direct result of our faith heritage, our roots. These roots go all the way back to the Old Testament. The Prophets, like Jeremiah and Isaiah, told of the coming of the Lord and endured many trials. The Israelites followed God's command and wandered in the desert for 40 years. What faith they passed on to us! In the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote of Jesus' birth, life and death. This is the kind of heritage we have!

But the people who lived in biblical times were not the only ones who provided us with our religious heritage. Our faith has been handed down to us by countless others. They protected it and bequeathed it to us in spite of many hardships. Have you ever thought of all the trials our ancestors endured to pass us their precious heritage? Through many difficult times, including emigration, famine, unemployment, depression, sickness, and death, their faith lived on.

Stop and think right now of the people who have touched your life Grandparents, parents, spouse, relatives, friends or a particular Priest, Sister or Brother who has had a hand in shaping your faith experience.

We can personally think of an Irish grandmother who sprinkled Holy Water around the house during a storm to protect her grandchildren; an Italian grandfather who had a vision of the Blessed Mother when he was unemployed and continued on trying because of her inspiration. There was the Sister who seemed so strict and yet instilled in us a true, basic belief because of her deep faith and commitment to God.

The price has been paid for our faith by those who have gone before us. And because they have paid the price, we can seek the "more" that is always there. In fact, we have an obligation to them to continue to seek and share that heritage with those who will come after us!

Our search for a deeper relationship with God started with the realization of the heritage we had. We were not alone, we were not starting from scratch, we had the foundation. We only had to be open to the opportunities that the Lord provided. We also needed encouragement from others. One of these opportunities came when we mentioned to dear friends that we had a desire to be closer to the Lord; they told us we were closer than we thought! This caused us to see ourselves in a new light.

And so we say the same to you. If you have a desire to be closer to God, you are closer than you realize. Your very desire indicates a closeness. Be open to Him; be open to the many opportunities He provides. Be aware of the relationship you already have with Him and build on it!

Please take a moment now to think back on the significant events in your life and how these have all contributed in some way to bring you closer to God. These "faith experiences" might include your reception of the Sacraments, witnessing another's reception of a Sacrament, a Marriage Encounter Weekend, Cursillo, Retorno, Retreats or a Parish Renewal. For example, witnessing our son's reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation made us more deeply aware of what our own reception of the Sacrament means to us now. This was a joyful experience for us both that brought us closer to God.

Each of these faith experiences has been part of your search for "more." He has provided you with the foundation and continues to provide you with the experiences with which to build your closer relationship with Him.

"Wherever you are in your relationship with God, there is more."

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR DIALOGUE, PRAYER OR REFLECTION.

Jeremiah 1:4-10 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you."

Revelations 3:20-22 "Here I stand, knocking at the door."

Isaiah 55:1-13 "Seek the Lord while He may be found."

REFLECTIONS

1. Heritage has provided us with a foundation to build on.
2. The various faith experiences that we have been involved with have each provided us with growth.
3. Our desire to be closer to the Lord is evidence of our openness to growth in the Lord.