

DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

DISCIPLINE OF DEVOTION

ADORATION

The disciplines of devotion should culminate in sublime *adoration and worship*. This begins with a proper sense of awe in the presence of the God we know and serve.

Contemplation

At the very heart of adoration is contemplation. Numerous Psalms call us to contemplate God as seen in His creation. They never suggest that God is in His creation, but that His excellencies can be seen in His created works. [Psalm 29](#), for example, ascribes glory to God through the visual medium of a great thunder and lightning storm. [Psalm 19](#) begins with these majestic words: **“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge” (vv. 1-2)**. Listen to God speak through His macrocosm, says the Psalmist! In contrast, [Psalm 139](#) celebrates God’s omniscience ([vv. 1-6](#)), omnipresence ([vv. 7-12](#)), and omnipotence ([vv. 13-16](#)) in the microcosm of the human mind and body.

Nature radiates and breathes the glory of God. The very trees do this if we take time to notice. Perhaps you have *really looked* and had an experience like that of **Annie Dillard** and have seen your backyard tree for what it is: full of lights, “each cell buzzing with flame,” and you were “knocked breathless,” and your heart went up in wonder to God.

Listen to a testimony by Pastor Frank Gillard, “I remember fishing at Cabo San Lucas at the mouth of the Sea of Cortez, with the cloudless, windless day, the perfect sunlight dancing rhythmically on the water in platinum and blue. I recall gliding into an emerald cove surrounded by a cactus desert, donning a snorkel, and slipping over the side into a world of green and turquoise and yellow and pink — another world of slower, gentler rhythm. I also remember the sunset, with its Pacific fire, as we sat on the sand gazing at the summer stars. I was indeed seeing God through His handiwork. That same day I marveled at His animate creation: the ever-present gulls in flight, a seemingly endless sea of yellow-finned tuna and porpoise I could not see across, a striped marlin walking on its tail and crashing back into the water like a fallen horse.”

Then there is the microcosm: a newborn baby, eyes and mouth wide open, arms reaching for life — the apex of God’s creation. The baby’s mind is an amazing computer,

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recording virtually everything it experiences. Its eyes pass on incredible amounts of data — first through the cornea, then through the focusing lens, where the image strikes the retina and stimulates 125 million nerve endings simultaneously. This is processed by millions of micro switches and funneled down the optic nerve, which contains one million separate insulated fibers (so there are no short circuits). When the information reaches the brain, an equally complex process begins — all of which takes place in a millisecond! Likewise, the infant's ears are so tuned to the vibrating around her that one day she will make music. What a God we have!

*Take not, oh Lord, our literal sense Lord, in Thy great
Unbroken speech our limping metaphor translate.*

Through the Scriptures, theologians have discerned about twenty attributes of God (though the number is disputed), and contemplation of the attributes has been a time-honored avenue to adoration. Spending twenty consecutive days with a book like **A. W. Tozer's *The Knowledge of the Holy***, which devotes three pages to each attribute — **God's self-existence, God's eternity, God's infinitude, God's omnipresence, God's grace, God's holiness**, to name a few — can catch one's soul up to glory.

Lastly, contemplation and meditation join hands in contemplating God through His mighty acts as described in Scripture. Take the Transfiguration, for example. Read of it in [Matthew 17](#) and [Mark 9](#) and visualize what happened. See it from the disciples' perspective: Jesus is framed by a thousand summer stars, and His clothing has become a glowing white. Overhead are the Bear and Pleiades, and Jesus is shining like a star Himself! Or see the Transfiguration from Jesus' perspective: His glory illuminating the faces of His awestruck inner ring of disciples — His very image dancing in their wide eyes. **See it. Touch it. Smell it. Taste it.** Participate in the story, and fall down with Peter, James, and John in worship.

This can also be done with such events as the Incarnation, Jesus' death, and the Resurrection, or with the great saving acts of God in the Old Testament — perhaps the Israelites' march through the parted Red Sea, or the revival preaching of Jonah after being delivered from the belly of the great fish. There is much marvelous fuel for reverent meditation from [Genesis 1](#) to [Revelation 22](#).