



Dear Friends,

When I read the statement this week, “The Christian life is going to God,” it made a deep impression on me. It prompted questions: How do I go to God? Am I going to God? Do I avoid going to God?

Going to God is one way to describe the Christian life. Another way to describe the Christian life is discipleship. To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

Jesus is the only way to know and be rightly related to God. The only way to follow Jesus is by way of the cross. In the gospels, the Twelve follow Jesus on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus goes there to be crowned king. While Jesus enters the Jewish capital with lots of fanfare as crowds line the streets to welcome the king, by the end of the week, he hangs from a Roman cross with a sign above his outstretched and lacerated body that says, “The King of the Jews.”

You can follow Jesus only because he first went to the cross to die in your place. This truth lies behind Paul’s statement in Eph 4:1 that believers are “to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” The Greek word translated as “live a life” is walk. Christians can only walk the Jesus way because we have first been called by God. We are saved by God to follow Jesus. So, you could say the Christian life **is** discipleship.

What about thinking of the Christian life as going to God? Just as discipleship is only possible because Jesus died to forgive our sin and has given us his Spirit, Christians can go to God only because he first sent Jesus to go after us. Whether we follow Jesus or go to God, we can only follow or go because God first saved us in Christ and has given us his Spirit.

Going to God is built into Christian practices. You go to God when you pray. You go to God when you open the Bible to read it. You go to God when you gather with your church family for worship. You go to God when you meet with your growth group, youth group, or Sunday school.

Going to God requires intentionality and regularity. These activities are to be built into our daily and weekly routines. If you are a new Christian, it can take a while for these practices to become regular. You need to be intentional to get to church on a Sunday when that has not been your usual practice in the past. Going to church regularly may not have been too hard to begin with when Jesus first saved you. Back then, you looked forward to church. It felt easy. But after a while, the initial burst of enthusiasm can begin to wane. Going to God can then feel like hard work.

When you practice going to God regularly in prayer, reading Scripture, gathering for worship or meeting with a growth group, going to God gradually becomes more natural to do in all of life. I need to go to God when I am feeling disgruntled at work, or having an argument with my spouse, or preparing for a tough exam, or getting impatient in traffic.

Going to God is more than a religious activity. By going to God in prayer, Scripture, worship and Christian fellowship, I learn to practice going to God in all of life, because I need God in every relationship and situation. Christians experience what everyone else does – work stresses, family conflict, cost of living rises, depression, aging bodies, high blood pressure, loneliness.

The difference for Christians is that we can go to God, so that whatever struggle, grief or worry we face, “we know we are preserved by God, we know we are accompanied by God, we know we are ruled by God” so that “no matter what doubts we endure or what accidents we experience, the Lord will preserve us from evil, he will keep our life.” (Eugene Peterson)

God Bless,
Mark Adams