



16 Ways
You
Can Live In The

Spiritual
Realm

BRENDA COBB MURPHY

16 Ways You Can Live in the Spiritual Realm

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We prefer to call Holy Spirit by his name, instead of talking about him by adding "the" in front of his name.

The name satan and related names are not capitalized. We like the way Destiny Image Publishers put it, "We choose not to acknowledge him, even to the point of violating grammatical rules."

Cover image courtesy of Micah.

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INTRODUCTION

As I sat chatting with a friend he commented on how I have such an intimate, constant walk with God, and asked me an intriguing question. "How can I keep focused on God?" We tossed some ideas back and forth but I mulled on his question for weeks afterwards.

It's one of those "What's the meaning of life?" kind of questions, where the answer isn't that easy to define.

Sure we love God and we might even be involved in a ministry of some sort, but while it's easy to focus on God in great meetings, what about the rest of our life? The part where we're living day to day stuff, like kids or work or chores? Is it possible to walk out life during those times and still be aware of and interacting with God?

I have found that not only is it possible but doing so is such a natural part of my life that it took a while to define how I do it. Living a joyful life in a constant interaction with God isn't about "disciplines," it's about retraining your mind to expect, to see, and to experience him. Each of the things below play a huge part in living a life focused on God, and not only focused but walking in a joyful, supernatural relationship with your Bridegroom, Jesus.

Some of these may sound like simple things that "everyone" knows, or you may feel disappointed, thinking "I already believe those!" Staying focused on God isn't just believing this though, nor is it hoping for them to happen to you. It is actively creating a mindset or spiritual *habit* of these things until you're experiencing them automatically. Living focused on God is so much more than believing--it's a lifestyle! It doesn't just fall on you and happen while you go to church and read your Bible and pray. You expect it, you watch for it, you create a culture of it in your life. It's not hard, but it does take effort. However, you'll quickly begin to see God moving and interacting with you, you'll begin to hear him clearer, and you'll learn to recognize what he's doing. You'll begin to see how he loves being involved with you in the daily routines of your life.

Here are the things that I've culled from sorting through how I live my life hand in hand with Daddy-God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, making my path glow with Joyful Adventure!

#1 -- HANGING OUT

Jesus and I hang out, spending time together. This isn't reading-your-Bible time or worship time or devotional time—while those are good you can do them later, this is your get-to-know-Jesus-as-your-best-Friend-and-Bridegroom time. Most of the time when I'm with him we chat, joke, laugh, and goof off, in the same way I do with my friends. Because I make time for him, he comes to hang out. As Christians we're generally introduced to Almighty God in his Throne Room--holy, and possibly waiting to catch us doing something wrong. Worship and prayer are the focus of what we're taught in our interactions with God. We're told that God wants to be our friend and that he wants a relationship with us yet we're not usually shown that aspect of him. Church is about his holiness and our reverence for a God who is God of the Universe. We're taught from a young age to be quiet and respectful in church. Of course all this is true, but we're rarely shown how to be best friends with God.

Jesus wants to just hang out with you, and he has a wonderful sense of humor. For me, being with God is rarely serious and the things he says to me are rarely deep spiritual revelations. Friends aren't like that. While there are times when he'll explain something, for the most part we cut up and tease and laugh. On a road trip by myself once I was eating my McDonalds breakfast and I asked Jesus what he was having. "I'm not having anything," he told me.

"What, you're too good for McDonalds?" I asked.

He laughed and said, "Well, let's just say 'I'm not hungry.'" I was like, "Yeah, right, let's face it, you're too good for McDonalds."

He is interested in everything about me, and he keeps me laughing. He also makes me think. He can point out things about me in a teasing way to where I see what he means and yet it's not condemning or negative. For example, one time I was (spiritually) walking on the

beach with him, down by the water on the wet, packed, sand. I told him it was better exercise if we walked in the dry sand.

"There's always a purpose for everything," he told me, grinning. What he meant was that I don't ever relax and just enjoy something, I'm always figuring out how to make it "productive." The more I thought about it the more I saw how true it was! Taking the time to get to know God quietly and alone is the basis for everything else on this list, because this is where you get to practice experiencing him with your spiritual senses.

#2 -- SPIRITUAL SENSES

I use my spiritual senses. If we can't use our physical senses to experience God and haven't learned how or known we *could* use our spiritual senses, no wonder God is vague! It's like having a relationship with someone in a fog--no reference point to relate to them. Without our eyes we're just two voices in a fog! Spiritual senses mirror our physical senses. We hear God with our spiritual ears, not our physical ones. It's how we see God and feel his presence, how we can supernaturally experience him while here on earth. We have physical bodies but we are spiritual beings, and using our spiritual senses is such a vital part of the Christian walk that I can't imagine life without them, it would be relating to nothing more than a belief and a book, instead of a Person.

One night I got in bed to read before falling asleep but my heart wanted my beautiful Jesus. "Hey, sit by me!" I said. He plopped down so close to me on my right that he was practically on top of me. "Good grief!" I said, "it's a king-sized bed, you know!"

To see him, feel him, and hear him takes practice, expectation, and a desire for him. We can't experience a spiritual person in a spiritual dimension without spiritual senses.

#3 -- LISTENING

I don't mean just listening while I pray or listening as in Bible Roulette—the open-and-point way of hearing God. I look for God's voice in everything around me, 24/7. I mean *actively* listen. God is constantly speaking, there's no limit to how he will speak to us, and we just have to develop a mindset that can hear him. How do you do that? One way is by creating a habit in your mind of continually listening, and eventually you'll find that you're listening all the time. Often when I'm in public I'll just stop and look around with my spiritual eyes and listen to see if there's anything God wants to say or do.

Another way is to practice using our spiritual senses. God is desperate to communicate with us and he'll use anything. He has spoken to my husband Terry and me through everything from a washing machine ad at Best Buy ("Forward thinking") to a billboard ("It's not a resolution, it's a lifestyle") to the Burger King logo ("The king wants to play"). He has used a Nestles Quick bottle ("I'm giving you a new name) and a greeting card ("I'm in love with you!"). He speaks revelations, opening your spirit to wonderful things, he shares jokes that are just between the two of you, and he chats and laughs with you just because he loves being with you.

#4 -- DREAMING

I listen for God in my night-dreams. I find he'll show me things coming up, give direction, and provide insight into my life. At a point when Terry and I were struggling through some frustrating circumstances I dreamed that there were snakes in our house, but Terry had on boots and with one stomp by him the snakes would crumble into pieces. God used that dream to remind us that we have the authority to change our circumstances. Often God will speak as we're waking, in that in-between time between deep sleep and consciousness. Listen to what you hear and be sure to write it down because you won't remember it come morning, no matter how sure you are that you will. I keep a clipboard by my bed where I can jot things down that I hear in the night. God uses that time to speak to us because our mind is out of the way and we're more open to hearing him. He'll often phrase something in a way that you know it's him, because if you were making it up you wouldn't have phrased it that way. For example, I've heard, "I'm going to give you the tools you need to be able to change your future," And "R-E-L-A-T-I-O-N-S-H-I-P— that's the key." I've heard "Almost heavy with fruit," and "After all that, 5 weeks & 2 months."

#5 -- WATCHING

When things out of the norm catch my eye I ask, "God, what are you saying?" Many things that happen to us are prophetic, as in, the physical represents something spiritual. For example, over a period of two weeks I lost the same pair of earrings three different times, finding them each time (until that day I don't remember ever losing a pair of earrings). I asked God what he was trying to say, and he told me, "You've stopped listening."

When our rear-view mirror fell off the windshield and forty-five minutes later our son told us that *his* rear-view mirror had fallen off, we knew God was reminding us of what he'd told us two weeks before, "Don't look back." God is always speaking to us, we must create the habit of hearing him.

#6 -- BELIEVING

I actually *believe* that I'm hearing God. I know that I might mistakenly think something is God that is just me, but it doesn't matter. If out of my love for him I make a mistake, he loves me enough to overlook it. Practice is the only way to learn, and he'd rather I risk a mistake and learn to hear him than to be so safe I never hear him say anything. When you understand that God loves you more than life and he only wants good for you, if you end up giving him glory and gratitude for something that was just "life" (though he orchestrates our lives), he isn't going to be upset that you gave him glory for something he didn't actively do.

When you believe that God will speak to you and you're actively listening for him, you'll hear him. Whether you allow your flesh (or satan) to convince you that you made it up or not is up to you. Once, as I was finishing lunch out with a friend, I felt that Holy Spirit was telling me something about our server, a young man who had been attentive and friendly, and we had enjoyed him. I told him that I felt like God wanted him to know that God knew he had big dreams, and that God's dreams for him were bigger than any he had come up with. That God was walking with him and he was right where God wanted him, but that God was going to help him pursue his dreams. I gave a large tip (more than the total of our meal) saying that I wanted to sow into those dreams. He was stunned, telling us how he wanted to go to Bible school and was working to save his money, but the last few days he had gotten discouraged thinking that it was too big a dream, and that he was just wasting his time waiting tables and wasn't where God wanted him to be. I could have easily told myself I was making that up and not said anything to him, but I've learned to believe that God is speaking to me.

#7 -- EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED

I am emotionally involved in God and he is emotionally involved with me. Love is expressed through our emotions. God is an emotional God and he created emotions in us. Love is a heart thing—he showers me with his love, just like he does you, but you have to nurture the mindset to see it and receive it. God gives me gifts. Physically, many times, he has given me the desires of my heart, for example, a red, REACH toothbrush and the Proverbs calendar I was desperate for. He also gives me spiritual gifts, like the shining gold heart he lay in my hand once, telling me "My heart is in your hands."

He whispers words of love to me, and he makes me laugh. He treats me like a lady. Because I have developed an intimate relationship with my Bridegroom Jesus, I can feel his love, sense his presence, and respond to him. I have felt him draw me, wanting to spend time with me, and it melts my heart. I've danced with him, had adventures with him, and love sitting quietly and just being together. My emotions impact him and his emotions impact me.

God responds to my emotions. Once, in a roomful of company, I was suddenly overwhelmed with noise and children and people, and I escaped to my laundry room for a moment of peace and quiet. Jesus wrapped his arms around me, holding me tightly against him, not saying anything but filling me with peace and quiet. After a few minutes I was ready to go back and join the group, restored and smiling.

#8 -- TALKING

I understand that prayer is continual communication between God and me. Prayer isn't limited to something formal that must be done aloud, publicly, by me, or in a certain posture. God hears my prayers by intimately knowing my heart. When my heart hurts it is "praying" (crying out) without me even realizing it. When I'm joyful I'm "thanksgiving" whether I form the words or not. When I have a need he knows it before I ask, because he knows me. Prayer is rarely a formal request, nor is it constantly re-stating problems or a "wish list" to him. Prayer isn't even "talking" as much as it is chatting, being together, talking about my day, what I'm doing, and getting his two-cents worth on it. Sometimes it's asking him to help with a situation, but most of the time it's just knowing he's the answer and being satisfied with that. He is enough.

I realized one day that most of our prayers are born out of fear, doubt, and pain. That makes for a shallow relationship, making him nothing more in our lives than the Emergency Room. He wants so much more than that with you! Even if you feel like your prayers are more than that, listen to yourself. How much of them are asking for something or saying "thank-you." There is so much more to prayer than that! I think this is an easier concept for women to get because we can imagine sitting down with a girlfriend and we know what that conversation sounds like. We talk about everything! That's the way Jesus wants to converse with us. This mindset or habit of staying in a constant conversation and awareness of him plays a big part in staying focused on him.

#9 -- SEEING

I expect God to perform miracles, therefore I see them and live them. I refuse to create my doctrine to match my experience. That means that if I've not seen any miracles personally I'm not going to then create my belief system based on that experience, believing that God doesn't do miracles outside the Bible. While we often define miracles as something physically impossible (and I've seen those), it doesn't have to be impossible to be a miracle. Many times miracles come in how God is using something to speak to us. The timing and the impact it has on us is miraculous. Or God can use a perfectly ordinary thing to speak to us and it becomes *our* miracle. While I've seen a woman get out of a wheelchair and walk, and read and heard of the blind seeing and the deaf hearing and the dead being raised, it's the daily miracles in my life that I'm talking about.

For example, a while back I needed a job, and though it was after Christmas and stores were letting all the holiday help go, I still started with the bookstore where I've always wanted to work. I introduced myself to the manager, and by the time I left I had an appointment for an interview and was hired at that interview. A month later I needed a second job just for a few extra hours, but I had tried all day and no one would work around the flexible hours of my first job, much less give me the few hours I needed. Discouraged, I told God, "This is impossible, no one is going to hire me with these limitations, and I don't know what else to do!" Two days later I was chatting with my friend at Starbucks, and she told me that she needed someone to work for her for only the exact number of hours I needed, and she would willingly work around my hours. I left Starbucks with a job.

One Christmas my husband Terry wanted two cookbooks by Alton Brown. I went to the bookstore and discovered that, miraculously, they had both books! However, when I went to pay, there was a problem with my credit card and I couldn't buy them. It turned out that the card had been "compromised" and I had to verify some purchases before I

could use it. While it worked out easily, I was so frustrated over not being able to buy the books while they had them. Later I was in another bookstore and checked for the books. Not only did they have them, but they were in a special boxed set that was twenty percent off! That was a miracle for me. If you're watching for a miracle, you'll see it.

#10 -- SUPERNATURALLY

I walk in the supernatural. I believe that God is a spiritual God and that we walk with him in the spiritual realm, which makes it supernatural. Therefore, my expectation is that he will do supernatural things. For example, once when God was speaking to us about satan trying to close doors in our lives, Terry and I were watching TV when upstairs the bathroom door suddenly slammed shut. When I tried to slam it myself it wouldn't, the cushion of air kept it from barely touching the doorjamb, much less actually closing. The windows were all closed so no wind had blown in.

Terry and I began speaking "open doors" over our lives. As a prophetic act (where the physical represents the spiritual) I went around and opened every single door in our house, from cabinet doors to the dryer door. I prayed over our house and our lives, speaking to the spiritual realm and declaring that God was opening doors in our lives that satan could not close.

Soon after that our children (who all worked for us at that point in time) were at the office when suddenly all three of them heard a door open. The sound came from a place where there was no door. As they told Terry about it they were puzzled. We knew God was telling us that he was opening doors for us.

#11 -- HOLY SPIRIT & ME

Holy Spirit plays a huge part in my life as he teaches and guides me. We cannot fathom how important Holy Spirit is, from enabling us to walk supernaturally, to being the key to our relationship with our Bridegroom, to being our Friend and Tutor. Lately he has been teaching me about habits—ones I want to create and ones I need to change. He wants to help us become the best we can be and he'll teach us about who we are and what works for us. For example, I've learned that when it comes to writing I don't do well with "output" (measuring how much I've accomplished), I work better with "input" (increments of time). So instead of "write 500 words a day" I need to set a goal that is "write thirty minutes a day."

If you begin to listen to him he'll teach you all sorts of fascinating things, enabling you to move deeper in intimacy with Jesus and showing you how to move in the spiritual realm.

Practice walking in discernment by looking at the people around you in public and asking Holy Spirit to show you how to bless them, or how to discern when you've "tracked in some spiritual poop." We can easily bring home demonic "poop" without realizing it, and we need to learn how to recognize it. For example, many years ago my son had hidden something in our home that we had forbidden, and I began to have nightmares at night. I asked Holy Spirit to show me why I was having the nightmares and almost immediately I found the offending item. I calmly told my son that Holy Spirit had shown it to me and to please get it out immediately.

We can't access the spiritual realm without Holy Spirit, and the closer we walk with him the more we hear and learn. Practice looking for him when you're out in public. Stop and ask him if there is anything he wants to show you or tell you. Look around to see if you see anything in the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm is superimposed over our physical world, but they don't necessarily coincide. For example, you

might see a room in the spiritual realm but its walls aren't in the same place as the walls in the physical room.

Learn to walk closely with Holy Spirit because he is your protection and your guide in the supernatural.

#12 -- TRUSTING

This might sound like a “well duh!” but I’m referring to trust on a deeper level. I trust Jesus to love me for who I am. I know that he cares more about my heart than my actions, so I can let down my hair and just be real, not expecting him to fall on me in judgment or to back off if I’ve hurt him. I’ve learned that, to him, my heart for him matters more than anything else. He accepts and loves me as I am. That doesn’t mean that he approves of my faults, it means that he loves me and is gently moving me into deeper and better places in him, teaching me his heart. The more I grow in intimacy with him the more it hurts me to disappoint him. *Love* changes me, not judgment, fear, and condemnation.

Trust is something that is built over time. We can't just decide to trust and BOOM!—we trust. Part of trust is a choice—I choose to believe that he is for me and working for my good whether I see evidence of it or not. We start out by choosing to trust, however we feel. In that stage we might still feel fear over our circumstances but we can decide that God is bigger than our circumstances and we choose to praise him whatever happens. By doing that, one day we realize that our feelings of his having everything working for our good are real, not something we actively choose to declare. We actually believe it! That's real trust. Now, when I feel myself beginning to worry about one of my children I say, “You love him. I trust you.” And I can let it go, at least until I need to remind myself of that again!

At one point in our lives Terry was laid off for a longer period of time and we ran out of money for gas to take the kids to school and for lunch money. Up until that point, as little as we’d had, God had always provided what we needed for our three children to get to school, and I couldn't understand why he would let us run out of money for that. It had been my "testimony" that God had always provided so the kids could go to school. And then he didn't.

However, Terry and I had learned to trust God, so we told the kids that "tomorrow is a holiday, no school, and we're partying." They knew it was because we had no money, we couldn't hide that, but we made a holiday out of it. I had no idea what we'd do the following day for school, we couldn't just keep them home indefinitely, but even though I didn't understand it I trusted God. We slept in, watched movies, and just had a fun day at home, keeping a celebratory atmosphere. That night a friend knocked on our door, handed us fifty dollars, and said that God had told her "last night" to bring it out and give it to us but she hadn't obeyed. Not only did we then have the money for school the next day but it was a good lesson in how God had a plan to provide but the person's disobedience had caused the lack, not God. Our kids still talk about the day they got to stay home from school and what fun it was to take a holiday no one else got. But I think of that day as a response to trusting God.

#13 -- EATING

I feed myself spiritually. We grow distant when we're not emotionally involved with something. "Use it or lose it" is the saying. Whether it's building a website, practicing my recorder, or doing yoga, if I've not done something for a while it loses the edge I had with it. It's easy to be too tired to call my friend if I've not talked in a long time, harder to remember the notes on my recorder if I don't practice, and I get confused and frustrated building my website when I've forgotten what I'm supposed to be doing. Unless we've developed our spiritual habits, like creating a thought-life that includes God in everything, it's easy to be too tired, too busy, and too swallowed up with "life" to focus on God.

There are many ways to spiritually feed yourself. For example, getting with others who are passionate about God and what he's doing, to not only hear their stories but to tell yours. Ministering to other people can spiritually feed us, as in praying for them and speaking into their lives, or helping them. When you talk about what God is doing with like-minded friends you'll find that you feed off each other, getting more excited as you talk.

I keep a "Food-For-Thought" folder of things that quicken me spiritually. Listen to worship music. Collect things that remind you of what God has spoken to you, and put them around where you can see them. The physical represents the spiritual. And, of course, the best food in the whole world is to hang out with Jesus, one-on-one, feasting on his wonderful company! Over time, as you apply the things above you'll see quick results that keep you excited and motivated to pursue your relationship with him. Spiritually feeding yourself keeps you moving forward until the day comes when you realize how much your life now revolves around your love and relationship with Daddy-God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit.

#14 -- WRITING

I write down my interactions with God. The most amazing way to stay focused on God is to write down the times when you experience him through your spiritual senses. Write down the times when you see him moving in your life. No, don't tell me that you never kept up with your journal, diaries are for sissies, or that you don't have time and you're not a "writer." This isn't a journal, a diary, or something that is a burden. This isn't the leather-bound, 5-year commitment. You don't have to write in it every day or tell what you did all day. This is a "spiritual notebook" where you jot down the date and what you felt/saw/thought God did. That's all. No commitment to scribbling out copious volumes. Just notes that no one will ever see but you. GET IT RECORDED.

I like to use a middle-sized, red, plastic-covered 5-Star notebook (they have all colors that are beautiful and bright, and they're much cheaper at Walmart than anywhere else). While I love the beautiful journals, I like a spiral notebook that lays flat or can fold back on itself for easy writing in my lap when I'm at Starbucks, the park, or in my Jesus-space chair. Also, I'm on notebook number 30, and if I were buying nice journals that could get expensive.

I also want to mention that you don't have to use paper and pen to take notes of your God-stuff. I now mostly talk my notes into my phone email app, save them into my computer, and then have them for reference where I can easily search through them.

There are numerous reasons for writing down your God-experiences.

1) It causes you to think through details that you wouldn't have thought of without actually putting it on paper. Have you ever written down a night dream? You think it's all so clear but when you start writing it down you remember all sorts of details that weren't in the part you actually dreamed.

2) The act of writing something down embeds it into your brain so it's easier to remember.

3) You can go back and read over the things you've written to see the big picture of how God is moving and working in your life (even when it didn't feel like he was). It is exhilarating to reread things God has done for you personally and it lets you see the puzzle pieces to put together of specific things God wants to show you. Something will happen or you have a dream and you think, "Wait, that's familiar, I've seen/thought/heard/dreamed that before. Where was that?" Or, "When did that happen?"

For example, one night as I drove our youngest son to town, my eye caught on a fish-shaped mailbox. Being an exceptionally unobservant person, I picked up on the fact that over the next few days it continually caught my eye. I finally asked my husband, "What's with the fish mailbox, it's driving me crazy. Have you seen it?" He (the exceptionally observant one) hadn't noticed, but referring to the story of the gold coin in the fish's mouth (Matthew 17:27) he said, "I think God is telling us that money is coming in the mail." Over the next two weeks, from unexpected sources, our mailbox delivered to us a total of \$1,876.00. I know that only because I write these things down.

#15 -- IMAGINING

I use my imagination. You were probably expecting to hear the other things on this list but this one might surprise you as you wonder how this links to the spiritual. Well, believe it or not, this is huge in your spiritual life, and I'm going to spend a bit more time on this one so you understand where I'm coming from. The Hebrew word for how we're made in God's "image" is from the Hebrew word for imagination. So not only are we made in his image but also out of his imagination! The Bible says a lot about using our imagination but most of the time it's translated using a different word, like "mind." We're warned not to use our imagination for negative things, meaning he *wants* us to use it for Godly things. Here are some of the ways your imagination impacts your spiritual life.

It keeps you from working to keep your mind blank when you're trying to hang out with Jesus. I have a hard time forcing my mind blank in order to hear God. Our brain wasn't created to be a vacuum, it's unnatural and we can't do it for more than a few seconds at a time. When you're trying to make your mind blank to hear God you just make it harder to hear him because you're focused on not hearing anything!

Your imagination gives you something to do to initiate time with Jesus. I used to have a hard time sitting and trying to interact with God, just sitting and waiting ... on what? I didn't know, but after a while it was boring and distracting. Now I imagine walking on the beach with Jesus or doing something together, and in that setting we talk naturally.

Your imagination often transfers you into the spiritual realm. You might be imagining something and before you realize it what was your imagination has become something you wouldn't have thought of. Holy Spirit will often use your imagination as a springboard into the spiritual realm. However, what about the times it's not the spiritual realm? God created your imagination and he just goes with you into whatever you're imagining.

Your imagination is great fun and lets you interact with Jesus. It doesn't matter what you do with him, you get to know him as you make memories and have fun.

For example, my dad once told me he wished he experienced God like I did. I told him this: "Tonight as you lay in bed waiting to fall asleep, or any time you have alone, do this—pick a favorite place you've been to at some point in your life and then imagine Jesus walking beside you as you show it to him. Imagine him as if he were standing there with you, not as a vague God-in-the-sky person. While you show it to him tell him why it has an emotional impact on you—why you wanted to show it to him.

Visiting my dad a few days later he was excited to tell me that he had tried it. When he was growing up he lived on the river, at a place near the dam that was shallow and covered with rocks where he could walk out into the river. He spent a lot of his childhood playing there, in spite of all the cottonmouth snakes that lived in it. My dad took Jesus and showed him the river. As my dad told me about it he was animated and excited, saying how much fun it had been to relive it and to show Jesus, telling him all about it.

That created a memory for my dad of sharing a special time with Jesus. Doing things with Jesus makes him feel physically with us, like someone we can relate to as a friend. What builds a relationship is to have history together. Memories together build a connection. A history together is what changes a person from being a stranger to a friend to a spouse.

Normally we don't think about creating memories with God. He's wonderful, loving, good, and he takes care of us and protects us. We have stories of things he *does* for us but not usually memories of being friends, of hanging out together and going places and having adventures. Yet this is the secret to doing it. Jesus and I have had the most marvelous spiritual adventures—we've been to the beach, flying in a small airplane (that wasn't my imagination, I hate flying!), playing in the snow, walking on water, diving for treasure, and dancing on the stars. There is no limit to your imagination or where Jesus wants to go with you. (For more on this see my book, "The Door With A Handle.)

#16 -- EXPECTING!

I EXPECT! It's hard to express how life-changing it is to expect God to be involved in your life. I expect him to talk to me. I expect him to do miracles for me. I expect him to treat me like he loves me. I expect him to talk back. I expect him to give me night dreams, to romance me, teach me, and to be emotionally involved with me. Your expectations set him free to move in your behalf, to respond to you, and to let you experience him.

The better we know ourselves and allow ourselves to be emotionally healed (which is not only God healing us but also *our* working to create healthier thought patterns and self-talk), the more we open channels for God, gain knowledge, and move in the spiritual realm. "Walk in the light as he is in the light" (I John 1:7) is a choice. God rarely overrides our will, if I don't believe in miracles he rarely forces one on me. Even if I do believe in miracles, if I'm not looking for one, I miss it. People who are so set in their beliefs that they know exactly what God would do and what he wouldn't do are actually binding God's hands against helping them, as much as he would like to. "I know miracles don't happen outside of the Bible." So those people don't get miracles, they refuse them. Sure, God can and does override people's beliefs at times, but why make it some cataclysmic event for God to give you a miracle, why not have them all the time?

If you believe something limiting then at least leave it open, for example, it's better to say, "God, I know that you don't do miracles anymore but I wish you did, I know you can and that you want to." That attitude is fertile ground for God to act. It's not that we don't believe the rules but we're open to God changing what we believe, not in the basics of our belief or anything anti-Biblical, but in ways where we haven't been open to the possibilities that God is bigger than man's interpretations and doctrines. The question is, are your rules in concrete so that God can't act outside of them? If you'll allow God to

move, to show and do for you, then you'll find that he is *wanting* to move on your behalf.

One night many years ago I lay in bed frustrated and disappointed with my Christianity. I mentally smashed my doctrinal boxes and told God, "I'm letting go of everything I believe about prayer, faith, and healing, 'cause none of them work. I don't know what "works" but I sure know what doesn't work! I drop everything I believe about them, and you teach me the truth about them." Over the years he has taught me many things, and I still have a lot to learn, but I'm open to what he has to say about them.

CONCLUSION

These are some of the ways I focus on God day-in and day-out. They keep me living supernaturally, passionately, and madly in love with God!

I often talk about specific interactions with Daddy-God, Holy Spirit, and Jesus. While they are one God, they manifest in three distinct personalities that perform three different functions of the Godhead.

I prefer to talk about Jesus, Daddy-God, or Holy Spirit instead of "God" for a couple of reasons. Referring to God as "God" is a vague term, like calling you "human" instead of by your name, and he wants us to know him more intimately than as a generic God. he has three different aspects or personalities that he uses to relate to us and relating to him only as one big God can emotionally keep him at a distance. We have a Daddy-God who longs to hold us in his lap, tickling and playing with us. We have Holy Spirit, our Tutor-God who lives in us and is here to not only show us lovely things but to be our Guide and Counselor. And we have a Bridegroom, Jesus, who, when we're ultimately set free from this human body, will throw his arms around us and welcome us into a place where we can finally SEE him! And since we will be Jesus' bride, why wait until the wedding to start getting to know him, when he's desperate to know us now?

Here's an example of God moving in a personal way, this is a Holy Spirit action. Just now as I was writing this I remembered a place in a past article where I laid this out in a way I wanted to use here. But out of forty-eight articles I wasn't sure where to begin looking. I pulled out the binder of hard copies to skim for what I wanted. I had a guess of a particular one to start with, so I looked for that one. Unfortunately, I'm not that organized with my articles and I don't have a Contents, so I began to flip through for that particular one. Immediately one caught my eye, not because it would have the clip I wanted but because it was about my husband, and after his death a few years ago I wanted to

reread it, just to remember. There, in the middle of that article, was the paragraph I wanted! Of all the articles, that one would have been the last one I would have looked in, yet in less than five minutes, in the very first article I looked at, there it was. Now that's God!

As you begin to create spiritual habits of the things above, actively incorporating them into your life, you'll begin to experience God as the Trinity—interacting with each Person in it and getting to know them as distinct Personalities. This is not only fascinating but fun, and you'll grow to love them and relate to them closer as you build that constant relationship.

The key here isn't to stress when you forget to focus on God or when you get busy and don't think about your spiritual life, but to relax, listen, and interact. The greatest help in this is to take time alone with God, any aspect of him, and just get to know him. We're so programmed to use our "crutches" of reading or studying the Bible, worshipping, or reading our devotionals, and those are good and fine, but we don't take time to get to know God as our Friend. Until you can get to know him and build a history of memories with him, it's hard to have any true relationship. The things above don't work with a stranger, or a God that is so big and far away you don't feel that he's there beside you except vaguely. Once you begin to sit down and hang out, just talking and listening, you'll find that you relate to him differently.

I believe that only out of that intimacy with God do I have anything to give the world. Neither is exclusive or linear, but out of my time with him I'm filled with his heart and what he wants me to do and say. If I try to take love to the world without getting his love first then I'm just giving away fleshly love, I can only get supernatural love from him, and only through the context of a relationship with him.

One time in a meeting the speaker made what he thought was a funny remark about another denomination, but it wounded my spirit and I felt God's heart towards that denomination. Suddenly I was sobbing in compassion towards that people group.

Unless I am walking with him in intimacy, I have nothing to give to others except myself. And in this world, that's not enough.

Another thing that could be on this list is to develop a mindset of gratitude, doing that makes a huge difference in your daily walk. How is that keeping focused on God? I am constantly seeing the positive in my life as I thank him for it, which keeps my eyes on him. This is a life with God that is so much larger than the general list of gratitudes we can usually come up with—a nice home, food to eat, a healthy body, a wonderful family, etc. This is noticing the details of how God orchestrates your life, of how he cares for you as an individual.

I want to emphasize again that supernaturally walking with God is a lifestyle. At first it's an effort as we work to change our brain, both in our thoughts and in our routines. However, you'll find that it soon starts becoming a habit, a constant mentality of walking with God.

To learn more about my ministry visit:

<http://brendacobbmurphy.com>

I talk a lot more in depth about the items on this list and what they look like for me in everyday life in my book [The Wild Romancer](#).

Books by Brenda Cobb Murphy

[*The Wild Romancer: Uncovering the Romance Jesus Longs to Lavish on You*](#) – The Lover of your soul deeply desires to romance you. Learn what it looks like and how to develop an intimate relationship with your Bridegroom, Jesus. He is calling you into intimacy with Him to taste of a love beyond anything you have ever imagined. Learn what the key is to His inner chambers, and how to use it to enter into the Love story to end all love stories.

[*The Journey Guide*](#) – A companion volume to *The Wild Romancer*, this is a 12-week personal guide to your own intimacy with Jesus. For those of you who, after reading *The Wild Romancer*, wanted me to tell you “how to get this relationship for myself” here it is–*The Journey Guide!*

[*Jesus Space*](#) – By creating a physical and spiritual place to hang out with Jesus you can learn to not only experience Him using your spiritual senses but you can have amazing adventures in the spiritual realm!

[*The Door With A Handle: How Holy Spirit Turns Your Imagination into Reality*](#) – I had no idea that something as simple as using my imagination would open the door to the spiritual realm. I’ll show you: the marvelous reason to open this door, what the Bible says about it, and the difference between your imagination and the spiritual realm.

[*Puzzle Pieces, Fences, & Fortune Cookies: And Other Ways to Live Everyday Life in the Spirit*](#)– This is a collection of 30 of my best articles I wrote over a four-year period, now available to everyone. It tells about God’s puzzle pieces and how they show you a picture of how involved he is in your life, how, while we need fences to give structure to life’s chaos, those fences can quickly become a prison, and that you daily write fortune cookies for yourself, which have

more power than you can imagine. In this book you'll learn new ways to experience an everyday walk with Jesus.