

FOR REFLECTION

LOVING THE LORD OUR GOD

In heaven loving the Lord does not mean loving Him in respect to His person,
but loving the good that is from Him; and to love good is to will and do good from love.
(Heaven and Hell 15)

In his sermon on “Seeing the Lord,” the Rev. Geoffrey Childs states that “To have a doctrinally correct idea of the Lord is first something of the head or intellect. But to be conjoined with Him is then something of the heart.” Our perspective of the Lord and relationship to Him changes as our spiritual development progresses:

As little children, we know and love Him as our Lord and heavenly Father, feeling His love and protection through the love and care of our parents. Then in adult life, if we shun evil and pray for His enlightenment, He comes to us in the beauty of truth: we are aware of Him primarily as the light. Later in mid-adult life He may come to us more closely in our love of the neighbor. He is felt then essentially as warmth in our love for others. And finally, He may come right to us, welcoming us at last into His arms, in our discovery of love of the Lord.

It is useful for us to be aware of this progression as we nurture our children and work on our own spiritual development. As we set our daily priorities for ourselves and our families, we may want to consider these ideas for learning to know and love the Lord.

Ideas for Learning to Know and Love the Lord*

- ◆ Read the Word!
- ◆ Reflect on the truths learned from the Word and try to apply them to your life.
- ◆ Learn the Lord’s commandments and obey them.
- ◆ Learn what evil is and flee from it (in intention, thought, and deed).
- ◆ Learn what the Lord means by “your neighbor” and perform uses to serve that neighbor.
- ◆ Promote the eternal well-being of others.
- ◆ Try to cherish honesty, justice, and other virtues for their own sake, making them principles to live by.
- ◆ Do your occupation faithfully and honestly.
- ◆ Come to the Holy Supper with genuine preparation; giving up merit and ascribing all that is good and true to the Lord.
- ◆ Pray, for prayer is speech with God.
- ◆ Take time to reflect on the beauty of the Word, the promise of eternal life, and nature as the work of the fingers of the God, the Divine Artist.

** These suggestions are from the article on “Loving the Lord” by the Rev. Daniel Heinrichs and from “The Lord Our Father” by the Rev. Geoffrey Childs (New Church Life, 1984).*