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Receiving and Being Received

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Receiving and Being Received

When we eat and drink, what we consume is changed, and becomes part of us. We gain energy, while the food and beverage lose their identity. When we receive God, we gain much more than a temporary source of energy, while God does not lose anything, and becomes greater and more present to us. Additionally, the more we take God into us, the more we are taken into God.

We receive God in many ways. Whatever nourishes us in body, mind, or spirit is of God. There is nothing we can find, take, or discover that does not have its origin in our Creator. Today's first glass of water did not only come from a faucet or a bottle, but from clouds and rain, and the entire system of weather, solar system and cosmos; from God, to us. We also take into us the Giver of all that exists through our relationships with people. Every person is beloved of God. Whether we receive affection, knowledge, and positive assistance from others, or lack of respect, dissonance, and interference, we can find grace and closeness with our Creator in every human interaction.

God is present everywhere all the time, but our awareness of God in nature, people, circumstances, and events, grows and deepens both as a result of repeated experiences, and also because we are at the same time drawn more fully into God. A subtle but real change takes place in us when we think, say, or do anything that is accepting of the goodness, truth, or beauty of God: we enter more completely into communion with the Source of goodness; we receive God, and are received by God.

When we have been often occupied with taking God into us, we might recognize the sign of our having been taken into God: we do not "run out of love" no matter how many people we love or how deeply we involve ourselves in caring for family and friends, people with whom we work, and people we have never met but whose needs we meet. We can lose energy, and become exhausted in living out the love we have for others. But our capacity to love increases with every loving decision we make; the more we love, the more we are able to love. The distinction between us and God has been lessened, as we live the Love in which we are created. We have been received by God as we have received God in the choices we made.

When we let people into our hearts, including those who are difficult to relate with, we also receive God. The Hebrew Scriptures contain stories about people who received angels (particular manifestations of

God's care) when they treated strangers kindly. In the Gospels, God is identified with "the least little ones." No one is a stranger or a foreigner to God. No one, for God, is a terrorist, a politician, a worker a retired person, or any of the categories we might use of one another. All are God's, more than children are their parents' or spouses or lovers are each others'. As we become capable of believing and acting as though we are all members of one family – God's – we receive people as brothers and sisters and are received wholly and completely as children of God.