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## Surprises

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## Surprises

Planning a surprise for someone requires thought, skill, and usually a certain amount of luck. Have you ever tried, and perhaps failed, in attempting to organize a small party that was to be a surprise for a family member or a friend? In making arrangements, we have to know the habits and inclinations of the intended recipients of a surprise, and, if we live or work closely with them, continue to keep up appearances of normalcy while acting in secrecy. And for all the careful preparations we make, we might receive a kind of "counter-surprise" when something happens that we did not consider, preventing the fulfillment of our plan.

Spontaneous surprises are much easier to present to others than those that require a design and strategy to implement. Our prior attitude of wanting to please an individual or a group, and our knowledge of their personalities, are essential elements of successful unplanned surprises. When an opportunity arises, we act, and we surprise the intended recipient or recipients by what we say or do either as an individual or in concert with others. We do not have to plan in secret, but we do need to trust our caring inspirations when they occur.

Most of us appreciate pleasant surprises, such as an unexpected phone call, an unaccustomed invitation, or a gift on no particular occasion, especially when we recognize that they are the result of other's thoughtfulness. And we enjoy surprising others, in causing them delight, and in demonstrating the care or respect we have for them.

God takes pleasure in surprising us, and is completely aware of what will please us most at any and every moment, and in all circumstances. Even though God is closer to us than our own thoughts, keeping a secret is neither a necessity nor a problem. Those who reflect on their experiences with God learn to expect surprises, at any time. God has infinite capacity for initiating new events, insights, and movements on our behalf, as well as having a perfect sense of timing for those experiences that are familiar to us. God is so creative, that even in a matter where we have a precise expectation of a gift we are still surprised when we actually receive it.

Surprises are an easily perceptible sign of the presence and action of God in our daily lives. Some of us, when we reflect on the events of a day, will look for instances where people or events suddenly came together well, solutions presented themselves when we were not looking for them, or minutes or hours of time became available for us

when we could not see how we would manage to get through the day. These are very often the direct action of God who not only knows what we need, but sees the whole picture: all the consequences not only for us, but for every person who might in any way be affected by the occurrence that takes place.

God can easily surprise us. How could we ever surprise God? It seems impossible. We certainly cannot manage to create a secret plan. But we can spontaneously act: a prayer just to say "hello," or to give thanks; a pause in the midst of something we are doing to acknowledge the presence of the One who gives us the talents, intelligence, and desires to accomplish our tasks. All that we direct or aim towards God from our hearts can be our "surprise" gifts. Since God is pleased in giving us surprises, we can believe that receiving them from us is also a cause for delight.

Surprises.