

Notes from Swedenborg-Each of us and God

Transcripts of YouTube clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwpb04OY11I> based on the insights Emanuel Swedenborg experienced as recorded in his writings. Produced by the Swedenborg Association of Australia (SAA) www.swedenborg.com.au
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There is a helpful saying about us and God, that God loves each of us as if God only had each one of us to love. While that's quite cute, it's also quite deep, and very true, and it also says something very important about God. God does not look at us from a distance and see us all warring, squandering, judging, and so on, and then wring his hands over our condition. God is completely there with each one of us, present with everything God is, like there's nothing else anywhere else. This is probably one of the most important things we can say about God, if we can get our head around it.

But God can also be present completely with all of us, all at once. Let's mention all those people who've lived and died, and people who haven't yet come into existence, and, who knows, all those anywhere in all of creation. And let's also include those in heaven and hell. What a vast number of beings! God sees it all, all at once. From inside it all, not outside. And one more thing, God sees our - yours and mine - our individual place in the whole of it, and understands our unique part and use in the overall plan.

We're great at referring to God as something somewhere which is separate and away from us. We do that because we're human, and because we live in space and time. God doesn't, but God knows we do. One thing we could helpfully do is to no longer refer to God being somewhere else but to meet God far more in ourselves... Hello God!

This isn't a crazy idea. One of the big things that Swedenborg keeps bringing up is that our own life is being kept happening at every single moment by God. Don't think of it as being 'poured' into us because that's from outside; think 'held in place', 'kept going', all the time. The energy inside us. So much so, that we can say that God *is* our life, but that doesn't lessen you or me one bit, it makes us such a lot more. From where we are, we are - each one of us - a vessel, a receptacle, container, even that Biblical picture of an oyster with the pearl of great price in it, with God in us.

All that is happening, yet God wants each of us to feel and sense that our life is entirely our own, so that we can feel free, be who we are, determine things, choose our loves and activities, and live the kind of life we make ours. Hopefully, for us to have a deep and fulfilling life, which is the greatest wish and gift of God for us.

God has great wisdom in the way he provides and looks after us. He initially puts us in a world where for a handful of years we can see and find beauty, kindness, mystery, and wonder, but also cruelty, sadness, hate and unfairness, both kinds more or less equally showing themselves. This world allows us to find and develop our personal views and values for ourselves, which we will inevitably do as we encounter the contrasts that life brings. And these become embedded in us by us.

In all of that, God is quietly there on the sidelines, with no demands and no pressure, no intrusion. But God does do one important thing for us human beings with our thoughts, feelings and life's questions. He *seeds* in us an almost imperceptible idea, almost an ache, that there is something more than this, more to this. What is it, we ask? I can feel it but I can't give it a name.

This is actually a tremendous gift from God. It has the potential to keep us seeking for something, finding a bit, missing another, never getting the full answer to it all, but it won't leave us alone. The answer, of course, is God himself, but when we take that on we find even more avenues that we can't see the end of. It is an eternal journey and we travel it in participation with God who is always seeking to lead us away from our own self to abide in *his* Self, and be led by this more and more, coming back and finding more, but it is never the last page.

It is very clear that God wants us to become more aware of our heart because this is our real being, our very life. This we can handle, because we can explore what's in our heart and when we see what it is we can choose to refuse it or to embrace it. These are the values we hold in our living, and in their own way they are God being with us in a more accessible form. Put it this way...there is God, and there is what is *of* God.

God is not over there but right here. God is in us, with us, around us, over us, under us, alongside us, for us, between us, among us, behind us and before us. His love and work is to lead us from whatever reduces us or spoils us to what will ennoble us and fulfil our being, which is the greatness and glory of God who is life, and goodness, and all joy. God, the conceivable everything there is, is right there in each of us, as if he is nowhere else.