

bread for the journey

God Talk

One of our adolescent patients at Rosecrance made a suggestion:

“The meditations you do are nice, but for once, could you talk about God—I want to know God.” It is not often we get sermon requests. When we do, we honor them. It is good for our congregations to know we listen and take them seriously. We honor one another when we hear one another. So here is a meditation on “God,” our favorite subject.

First, this is a daunting subject—a huge subject. Anything we say about God we humbly say; what we know about God is incomplete, debatable, and highly suspect. The more we know the less we know for certain. God resists, it seems, confinement and easy definition.

Second, there is no evidence God exists. Only testimony and stories of faith. The story of Moses is one in a long line of testimonials. If evidence was available, what we would have at the end of the day is merely one more argument for the existence of God—not God.

Third, God does not “exist” in the same way we exist. We know we exist; we are tangible creatures of space and time. We are limited to being in one place and one moment at a time. I cannot do business at Rosecrance while playing golf. It would be nice. But not possible. All things are possible with God. God is a Spirit and not subject to the inconvenience

of space and time limitations. Some say God is the only Absolute—only we don’t know God absolutely.

Fourth, developing faith in God is not a walk in the park. Mark Twain stated: “There are those who scoff at the school boy, calling him frivolous and shallow. Yet it was the school boy who said, ‘Faith is believing what you know ain’t so.’” What Twain failed to say was this: Simply because you know something ain’t so doesn’t mean it ain’t so. After all, how does one know for certain God “ain’t so”? We don’t. Or as an anonymous author once wrote, “Faith in God is seeing the Light with your heart when all your eyes see is darkness.” Faith at some point is a leap in the dark. It is walking to the very edge of what you know for certain and then taking one more step into the realm of which you are totally uncertain. When good old push comes to shove, faith in God is a choice. I choose to believe God exists. I trust you do, too!

Fifth, here are some debatable hunches people have had about God over the years.

- God is “bigger” than the religious constructs we make for him.
- God is not a “he” though over the years we have referenced him as a “he.”
- God laughs—at human pride and our feeble attempts to define or even “play” God.
- God doesn’t do interviews or take questions. Ask Job.
- God is more forgetful than forgiving of our moral wrongs and lousy behavior.
- God is more gracious than we’d like him to be—especially to our enemies.


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- God wins. At the end of the day. This is a good. Because if God wins, so do we.
- God's in charge but we must still show up for work.
- God is not into magic. If you need surgery, get it. Don't wait for the miracle.

Sixth, God's reputation for having a reason for all that happens is over-rated. Life is not a stacked deck. When bad things happen to good people—or not so good people for that matter, there is no plan unfolding behind the scenes. When bad things happen to us—it just happens. The good that might possibly come from bad stuff is on us. Tragedy is an opportunity for us to make healthy choices in response to the horror of what happened; otherwise, it is merely a loss we do not overcome.

Seventh, God is our refuge and strength, a present help in time of trouble. Foxhole prayer is no less real and no less heard by God than traditional every day morning or evening prayers. An emergency prayer is better than no prayer at all.

Eighth, the reality of God takes shape in our lives to the extent that we do His work and will in the world on behalf of one another all over the world. It is not the worship of God that draws us close to Him; it is the work we do on behalf of Him.

Obviously, these thoughts about God are merely thoughts I have developed over the past forty years. The mission of Rosecrance is Christ-centered. Having said that, Rosecrance honors and respects the stated opinions and perspectives of others pertaining to their own understanding of God. His thoughts and His ways are greater than our thoughts and our ways. Meanwhile, we do justice and mercy—and walk humbly with our God. 



The Rev. Dr. William Lenters, Chaplain

Rosecrance offers the best opportunity for lasting recovery. If you know someone who needs help, please call us at 815.391.1000 or 1.888.9AT.LAST. www.rosecrance.org.

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is a bi-monthly news and views letter from Rev. Dr. William Lenters, Chaplain at Rosecrance. Bread for the Journey is written on behalf of people who live with addictions. Together, and by God's grace, we will try to make a difference.

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