

OUR SPIRITUAL SENSES

In his book, *Covenant Discipleship*, David Watson identifies “spiritual promptings and warnings” as concepts which cause many members of Covenant Discipleship Groups great difficulty. Watson explains:

They are wary of using spiritual language to describe what they have always regarded as bright ideas, or hunches, or twinges of conscience. Yet learning to accept that these are promptings or warnings from God is precisely what makes this part of the covenant so exciting.¹

The reason why we have difficulty with “spiritual promptings and warnings” is because we have not given sufficient attention to our “spiritual senses.” John Wesley insisted that our spiritual senses are awakened by God’s prevenient grace.² “Just as we have five physical senses through which we gain knowledge of our physical world,” writes Theodore Runyon, “so we have a ‘spiritual sensorium’ whose purpose is to discern spiritual reality.”³ In a sermon entitled, “Awake Thou that Sleepest,” Charles Wesley defined the spiritual senses as “inlets of spiritual knowledge,” but he fails to name the spiritual senses.⁴ I have read through every Wesley sermon in which the spiritual senses are mentioned, but I find no attempt to name and explain the spiritual senses. It seems to me like a very important task if we are ever going to overcome our difficulty with the “promptings and warnings” of the Holy Spirit. I would like to make a meager attempt at naming and describing the spiritual senses. I would very much appreciate constructive criticism on my projections because I consider our understanding of the spiritual senses extremely important.

I do not intend to limit the spiritual senses to five. It just so happens that as I have thought about them, I have come up with five spiritual senses. This is a coincidence. I have not tried to parallel them with the physical senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. One might make a case for such a

¹ David Lowes Watson, *Covenant Discipleship* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1998) p. 117.

² Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), p. 31.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁴ Charles Wesley, “Awake Thou that Sleepest,” April 4, 1742. This sermon was delivered at the University of Oxford.

comparison. There are certainly Biblical images that can be used. Take for example, the following:

Sight: “I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty....”
(Isaiah 6:1)

Hearing: “Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.” (Isaiah 55:3)

Touch: “If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.”
(Matthew 9:21)

Smell: “...your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is perfume poured out.” (Song of Solomon 1:3)

Taste: “O taste and see that the LORD is good.” (Psalm 34:8)

Tim Dearborn takes this approach and says, “Though our five senses aren’t in themselves adequate vehicles for encountering the invisible God, behind each is a spiritual sense that, when awakened, opens up for us the awareness of another world.”⁵ I do not, however, intend to move in that direction. The five spiritual senses I intend to name and describe have little or no connection with the five physical senses.

Rational Sense

The first of the spiritual senses is the *rational sense*, that is *reason*. We are *rational* beings. This is not all that we are, but we are *rational* beings. The rational sense is one, not the only one, of our spiritual senses. We may not know everything by means of reason, but we can know some things.

Reason is the process of reaching logical conclusions from statements and facts which everyone understands to be true. This does not mean that we will draw the same conclusion. When we look at a religious masterpiece, for example, we can all agree that someone painted it, but acknowledging the artist’s work does not guarantee that we know the artist. The traditional proofs for God’s existence have limits. By means of reason we can draw the conclusion that there is a God, but reason alone cannot help us to know that God. Jürgen Moltmann, in his *Theology of Hope*, writes:

The traditional proofs of God can be divided into three major groups: (1) the proofs of God from the world, from the cosmos or the history of reality, (2) the proofs of God from human existence, from the soul or from the self-consciousness of man’s necessary ability and obligation to be a self, (3) the

⁵ Tim Dearborn, *Taste and See: Awakening Our Spiritual Senses* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1966), p. 30.

proofs of God from “God”, the proofs of the existence of God, or of the quest of God, from the concept or name of God.⁶

Even if one is convinced of one or more of the arguments for God’s existence, none of them can make the invisible God visible. “Reason’s last step,” wrote Blaise Pascal, “is to acknowledge that an infinity of truth lies beyond it.”⁷ Pascal used reason to establish God’s existence, but he understood reason’s limits. Even reason has to take the step of faith, which can be summed up in Pascal’s wager, which says: “...either God exists or he does not exist...What is your bet? The stake to be put up is slight or even nothing when compared to the prize to be won.” Pascal cleared the way for “the reasons of the heart.”⁸

Common Sense

The second spiritual sense that I would suggest is *common sense*. Common sense differs from the rational sense in that it draws conclusions from common experiences rather than from logical deductions. While an individual may exercise common sense, it is usually based on the agreement of more than one individual. That’s why this sense is called “common.” It is the sense of humanity in general.

I realize that many would oppose⁹ *common sense* as a spiritual sense, but like reason, it has a place in the spiritual sensorium, as long as it does not try to dominate it. Common sense is usually rejected as a spiritual sense because of its human origin, but the origin does not have to be human. Common sense can have a divine origin. Augustine, in his *City of God*, refers to a divine origin that overcame human wisdom:

And now we have three incredibles, all of which have yet come to pass. It is incredible that Jesus Christ should have risen in the flesh and ascended with flesh into heaven; it is incredible that the world should have believed so incredible a thing; it is incredible that a very few men, of mean birth and the lowest rank, and no education, should have been able so effectually to

⁶ Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 272-273.

⁷ Roger Hazelton, *Blaise Pascal: The Genius of His Thought* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 191.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

⁹ Two examples of theologians opposed to common sense are A. W. Tozer and Oswald Chambers.

persuade the world, and even its learned men, of so incredible a thing.¹⁰

I refer to the above as common sense because the disciples of Jesus, and many other witnesses, shared in those incredible experiences. They may not have been common to everyone, but they were common to them.

Emotional Sense

In addition to the more intellectual spiritual senses, there is also the emotional sense—the heart. “We know truth,” insisted Pascal, “not by reason only, but by the heart.” “The heart has its reasons which reason cannot know.”¹¹ One of the best biblical examples can be found in Luke 24:13-35, where two disciples walk with Jesus, but do not recognize him until they share bread with him. Then, as he disappears from their sight, they reflect back on his sharing of scripture with them, and cry, ““Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”¹² In commenting on this story, Thomas À Kempis writes:

Truly their great burning faith is a probable argument of Thy holy Presence; for they know verily their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so strongly in them by the presence of their Lord Jesus, then sacramentally walking with them. But verily, such affection and devotion, so strong fervour and love, be oftimes far from me.¹³

John Wesley had his heart strangely warmed at a Moravian Religious Society Meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. He too experienced some problems with the emotional sense.

I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, “This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?” Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation: But that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have

¹⁰ Augustine, *City of God*, p. 815.

¹¹ Hazelton, *Blaise Pascal: The Genius of His Thought*, pp. 101-102.

¹² Luke 24:27-32. The complete story begins with Luke 24:13 and ends with Luke 24:35.

¹³ Thomas À Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1964), p. 291.

mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will.¹⁴

By 1751, Wesley admitted that he and his followers had made a mistake. “All our preaching at first,” he said, “was pointed at the heart, and almost all our private conversation.” This caused others to almost laugh them out of their spiritual senses.¹⁵

Both Thomas Á Kempis and John Wesley recognized the problem, which Jeremiah had pointed out centuries before. “The heart,” said the prophet, “is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it?”¹⁶ The emotion of the heart is indeed a spiritual sense, but it too, like the rational sense and common senses, can be corrupted. That is why Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”¹⁷ In his *Imitation of Christ*, Thomas A Kempis concluded: “He that loveth God with all his heart, dreadeth neither death, nor torment, nor judgment nor hell; for perfect love maketh a sure passage to God.”¹⁸ Wesley could not have agreed with him more on this point and set out to aim at holiness of heart and life. The emotional sense must aim at holiness if it is to see God.

Moral Sense

The moral sense, which can be summed up in the word *conscience*, helps us to aim at holiness in heart and life. It is true that conscience can be misused or even abused, but it is still one of the spiritual senses. In his book, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, Paul Lehmann describes three kinds of conscience. There is the heteronomous conscience, which is oriented towards society’s laws, rules, and principles; there is the autonomous conscience which is oriented on one’s self; and, there is the theonomous conscience, which is oriented to the welfare or needs of the neighbor, where God is doing his humanizing work.¹⁹ It is the theonomous conscience that is the moral sense. Jesus included love for the neighbor in his great

¹⁴ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley on Compact Disk* (Franklin, Tennessee: Providence House Publishers), p. 103. This Compact Disk contains the unedited fourteen volumes of Jackson’s edition of *The Works of John Wesley*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221..

¹⁶ Jeremiah 17:9 (NRSV).

¹⁷ Matthew 5:8 (NRSV).

¹⁸ A Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, p. 57.

¹⁹ Paul L. Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 350.

commandment²⁰ Achieving holiness means that we have learned, with the help of conscience, how to love our neighbor. In the process of loving our neighbor, we also become conscious of the presence of God.

John Wesley asked the penetrating question: “But how shall I know that my spiritual senses are rightly disposed?” If a man makes a mistake in this, Wesley continues, “...he may run on in endless error and delusion.” He then focuses on the importance of “a good conscience toward God” (a theonomous conscience) and the “voice of the Spirit.”²¹ We know that we can rely on our conscience when we look beyond ourselves (autonomous conscience) and society (heteronomous conscience) for our cues. No one has offered better advice on how to do this than Mother Teresa, who said: “You need only ask at night before you go to bed, ‘What did I do to Jesus today? What did I do for Jesus today? What did I do with Jesus today? You have only to look at your hands. This is the best examination of conscience.’”²² We must admit that the conscience is imperfect. There are times when it focuses on self-interest and there are times when it remains silent in the face of indescribable evil. It is, however, one of our spiritual senses; and, rightly oriented, can be the holy whisper of God assisting the other spiritual senses.

Volitional Sense

The final spiritual sense with which I shall deal could be placed first, or last. It is either the foundation of them all, or it is the final arbitrator of the soul. In his *Confessions*, Augustine wrote: “One thing lifted me up into the light of your day. It was that I knew that I had a will, as surely as I knew that there was life in me.”²³ Augustine, like Paul²⁴ before him, struggled with that will. “So these two wills within me,” he writes, “one old, one new, one the servant of the flesh, the other of the spirit, were in conflict and between them they tore my soul apart.”²⁵ Believing that sin blinded him to any possible vision of God, he prayed: “I have eyes only for you. I long, Lord, for your

²⁰ Mark 12:31 and John 13:34. In Mark 12:31, Jesus commands us to love the neighbor as we love ourselves, but in John 13:34, he commands us to love one another as he has loved us. This points us towards a theonomous conscience, enabling to participate in God’s activity in the world.

²¹ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley on Compact Disk*, “The Witness of the Spirit,” Volume 5, Sermon 10, pp. 121-122.

²² Mother Teresa, “Jesus, the Word to be Spoken,” *Christianity Today*, Volume 31, Number 2.

²³ Augustine, *Confessions* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978), p. 136.

²⁴ See Romans 7:21-25.

²⁵ Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 164.

presence, for the soul that is blinded by wicked passions is far from you and cannot see your face.”²⁶ Then he discovered the value of confession. “For in my wounded heart,” he cried, “I saw your splendour and it dazzled me.”²⁷ He did not have to make himself purer, only more humble. Only in humility could he exercise the kind of free will which would enable him not only to see the invisible God, but to experience him as well. “My soul,” he concluded, “is like a house, small for you to enter, but I pray you to enlarge it. It is in ruins, but I ask you to remake it.”²⁸

King David’s will was to build a house for God, but it was God’s will that David, and his descendants, would become a house of God. In commenting on David’s mistake, Augustine writes: “For this house is built both by us through living well, and by God through helping us to live well; for ‘except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.’”²⁹ Augustine expands on this idea, making our hearts into God’s altar:

...for we are all His temple, each of us severally and all of us together, because He condescends to inhabit each individually and the whole harmonious body, being no greater in all than in each, since He is neither expanded nor divided. Our heart when it rises to Him is His altar...to Him we offer on the altar of our heart the sacrifice of humility and praise, kindled by the fire of burning love. It is that we may see Him, so far as He can be seen; it is that we may cleave to Him, that we are cleansed from all stain of sins and evil passions, and are consecrated in His name. For He is the fountain of our happiness, He the end of all our desires.³⁰

It is easy to confuse God’s will for our own. Israel’s greatest King did it. Our will is only free as long as it submits to God’s will, for we have been created in his image. To turn away from that image is not only an act of self-destruction; it also renders blind this spiritual sense. John Donne put it well in one of his prayers:

Thou hast set up many candlesticks, and kindled many lamps in me; but I have either blown them out, or carried them to guide me in forbidden ways. Thou hast given me a desire of

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁹ Augustine, *City of God* (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. 594.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

knowledge, and some means to it, and some possession of it;
and I have arm'd myself with thy weapons against thee.³¹

Conclusion

Two things are crystal clear to me. First, there are at least five, maybe more, spiritual senses; and we cannot rely on any one of them *alone* to discern the promptings and warnings of the Holy Spirit. All are needed. Second, we cannot discern the promptings and warnings by ourselves. We need others in a Covenant Discipleship Group to keep us honest and accountable. The purpose of our spiritual senses is to enable us to discern the Will of God so that we can make an effective witness in acts of compassion and justice. Christianity, to quote John Wesley, cannot exist without both the *inward experience* and the *outward practice* of justice, mercy, and truth.³² In the end we might also gain a vision of God. Rebecca Laird sums it up very well, even if she does not mention all of my suggested spiritual senses:

We cultivate friendship with God and discern God's will by listening to *conscience*, the inner voice that tells us what is right from what is wrong; *common sense*, the God-given ability to judge a situation through thoughtful assessment; *wise advice*, the insight of a friend who stands outside the emotional setting of our particular problems; *scripture and great literature*, the accounts of how God has led and upheld great men and women who have come before us; the *church*, the collective counsel of loving Christian people, both past and present; and the inner light, the knowledge that comes directly from God during prayer, meditation or soul searching. It is the "voice" of God that is heard in one's heart.³³

³¹ Quoted in The Harper Collins Book of Prayers (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1997), p. 127.

³² John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley on Compact Disk*. See John Wesley's Sermon, "On Living Without God," p. 353.

³³ Rebecca Laird, *Leslie Weatherhead's The Will of God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 89.

Free Will

But God has given neither you nor any man your own will, for your own will comes from the devil and from Adam. They made the free will which they received from God into their own will. For a free will desires nothing of its own. It only cares for the will of God, and so it remains free, cleaving and clinging to nothing.

-- Martin Luther, exposition of the Lord's Prayer; taken from Day by Day We Magnify Thee. Christianity Today, Vol. 30, no. 11.

Without free will, man would not be created "in the image of God." With it, he has the power to defy God's wishes and to bring misery on himself and others.

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

"Thou hast set up many candlesticks, and kindled many lamps in me; but I have either blown them out, or carried them to guide me in forbidden ways. Thou hast given me a desire of knowledge, and some means to it, and some possession of it; and I have arm'd myself with thy weapons against thee." John Donne (1572-1631) Book of Prayers, p. 127

"...that person is very well taught who forsaketh his own will and followeth the will of God." Thomas a Kempis, Imitation of Christ, p. 9

An unawakened child of the devil sins willingly; one that is awakened sins unwillingly; a child of God 'sinneth not,' but 'keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. P. 108 The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption,. JW

...Christianity cannot exist without both the inward experience and outward practice of justice, mercy, and truth; and this alone is genuine morality. JW, On Living Without God, p. 353

And why shouldst thou pay religious homage to him whom thou art unwilling to imitate, when it is the highest duty of religion to imitate Him whom thou worshippest? City of God, p. 264

Our heart when it rises to Him is His altar.” “It is that we may see Him, so far as He can be seen.... P. 306, City of God

The Paradise is the Church, as it is called in the Canticles; the four rivers of Paradise are the four gospels; the fruit-trees the saints; and the fruit their works; the tree of life is the holy of holies. Christ, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the will's free choice. For if man despise the will of God, he can only destroy himself. P. 431, City of God

..the source of man's happiness lies only in God, whom he abandons when he sins. P. 445 City of God,

The right will is, therefore, well-directed love, and the wrong will is ill-directed love. P. 449 City of God

My soul is like a house, small for you to enter, but I pray your to enlarge it. It is in ruins, but I ask you to remake it.” Confessions, p. 24

“I have eyes only for you. I long, Lord, for your presence, for the soul that is blinded by wicked passions is far from you and cannot see your face. P. 38 Confessions (See Psalm 26:8 and 27:8

Ps. 26:8 O LORD, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides.

Ps. 27:8 “Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!” Your face, LORD, do I seek.

One thing lifted me up into the light of your day. It was that I knew that I had a will, as surely as I knew that there was life in me. Confessions, p. 136

Under your guidance I entered into the depths of my soul, and this I was able to do because your aid befriended me. I entered, and with the eye of my soul, such as it was, I saw the Light that never changes casting its rays over the same eye of my soul, over my mind. It was not the common light of day that is seen by the eye of every living thing of flesh and blood, nor was it some more spacious light of the same sort. As if the light of day were to shine far, far brighter than it does and fill all space with as vast brilliance. Confessions, p.p. 146-147

So these two wills within me, one old, one new, one the servant of the flesh, the other of the spirit, were in conflict and between them they tore my soul apart. (Eph. 5:14) Confessions, p. 164

Eph. 5:11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Eph. 5:12 For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly;

Eph. 5:13 but everything exposed by the light becomes visible,

Eph. 5:14 for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Give me chastity and continence, but not yet. P. 169 Confessions

For in my wounded heart I saw your splendour and it dazzled me. Confessions, p. 249

Goal is not happiness, but holiness, the will of God.

It is a hard thing to leave evil customs, and it is harder to break our own will, but it is most hard, evermore to lie in pain and endlessly to lose the joys of heaven. Thomas A Kempis, Imitation, pp. 20-21

...some have Me in their mouth, but little in their hearts. Thomas A Kempis, p. 113

It is oft inquired whether a man be rich, strong, fair, able, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer; but how poor he is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout, and how inwardly turned to God is little regarded. Thomas A Kempis, Imitation, p. 177

Conscience

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1. Heteronomous Conscience. Conscience oriented towards conformity to laws, rules, principles, etc.
2. Autonomous Conscience. Conscience oriented towards nonconformity to anything or anyone but self.
3. Theonomous Conscience. Conscience oriented to the welfare or needs of the neighbor where God is doing his humanizing work.

CONSCIENCE. "It is the conscience--theonomously understood--which forges the link between what God is doing in the world and man's free obedience to that activity." 350. Paul L. Lehmann. Ethics in a Christian Context.

CONSCIENCE. The conscience functions as the regulator of behavior and brings the stuff of action under the control both of reason and of revelation. p. 309. Sanderson Paul L. Lehmann. Ethics in a Christian Context.

Conscience is e-mail your head gets from Heaven. Family Circus

A guilty conscience is a hell on earth and points to one beyond.

12 Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.
13 When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart,
14 I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. Jeremiah 29:12-14

A man could not have anything upon his conscience if God did not exist, for the relationship between the individual and God, the God-relationship, is the conscience, and that is why it is so terrible to have even the least thing upon one's conscience, because one is immediately conscious of the infinite weight of God.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Conscience is a three-pointed thing in my heart that turns around when I do something wrong, and the points hurt a lot. But if I keep doing bad, the points eventually wear off, and then it doesn't hurt any more.

Conscience is a walkie-talkie set by which God speaks to us.
James J. Metcalf

My conscience is captive to the word of God.
Martin Luther (1483-1546)

The conscience is an imperfect mental faculty. There are times when it condemns us for mistakes and human frailties that can't be avoided; at other times it will remain silent in the face of indescribable wickedness.
James C. Dobson (1936-)

The difficulty is to know conscience from self-interest.

■ W. D. Howells

CONSCIENCE. "Our conscience is the only moral window that we have. And what do we see through this window? Society, Scripture, What?"

A sanctified conscience is the holy whisper of God in the soul.

My conscience has been taken captive by the Word of God, and to go against conscience or Scripture is neither right nor safe.

■ Martin Luther, Leadership, Vol. 8, no. 2.

You need only ask at night before you go to bed, "What did I do to Jesus today? What did I do for Jesus today? What did I do with Jesus today?" You have only to look at your hands. This is the best examination of conscience.

■ Mother Teresa in Jesus, the Word to be Spoken. Christianity Today, Vol. 31, no. 2.

Cowardice asks the question: Is it safe? Consensus asks the question: Is it popular? Conscience asks: Is it right?

■ Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership, Vol. 16, no. 2.

Barclay: "The conscience is the seat and throne of God" in the human mind. Pulpit Resource, April-June, 1982, p. 20.

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CONSCIENCE. The conscience functions as the regulator of behavior and brings the stuff of action under the control both of reason and of revelation. p. 309. Sanderson Paul L. Lehmann. Ethics in a Christian Context.

CONSCIENCE. "Strictly speaking, conscience is not an ontic entity. It is not something you have, as if it were a distinct faculty among others in your makeup, a voice or oracle within you, a special moral sense among your other sensibilities. You do not have, you are a conscience. This is as true as that you are, you do have, a consciousness." Paul Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics. Pulpit Resources, Apr-June, 1982, p. 20.

CONSCIENCE. "The theonomous conscience is the conscience immediately sensitive to the freedom of God to do in the always changing human situation what his humanizing aims and purposes require. The theonomous conscience is governed and directed by the freedom of God alone." 358-59.

"The concrete instance of the theonomous conscience is the pre-eminent claim of my neighbor's conscience upon and over my own." 359.

"The neighbor's conscience can never function as a standard of conduct which applies to all people in all situations in the same way." p. 359. Paul L. Lehmann. Ethics in a Christian Context.

The "very consciences" of individuals "are tainted by the original sin of contentiousness." We are psychologically built upon trouble. Society needs individuals with consciences, but social conscience can be trained only by a process that inevitably awakens self-will. Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics, p. 321

But how shall I know that my spiritual senses are rightly disposed?" This also is a question of vast importance; for if a man mistake in this, he may run on in endless error and delusion. "And how am I assured that this is not my case; and that I do not mistake the voice of the Spirit?" Even by the testimony of your own spirit; by "the answer of a good conscience toward God." By the fruits which he hath wrought in your spirit, you shall know the testimony of the Spirit of God. Hereby you shall know, that you are in no delusion, that you have not deceived your own soul. Wesley, pp. 121-122 Volume 5 Sermon 10, The Witness of the Spirit.

You conscience beareth you witness in the Holy Ghost, that these things are so, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. P. 33 JW, Awake Thou that Sleepest, April 4, 1742, Charles Wesley at Oxford

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8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"All our preaching at first was pointed at the heart, and almost all our private conversation, 'Do you feel the love of God in your heart? Does his Spirit reign there? DO you walk in the Spirit? Is that mind in you which was in Christ?' were frequent questions among us. But while these Preachers to the heart were going on gloriously in the work of Christ, the false Apostles stepped in, laughed at all heart-work, and lauged many of us out of our spiritual senses: For, according to them, we were neither to see, hear, feel, nor taste the powers of the world to come; but to rest contented with what was done for us seventeen hundred years ago." P. 221 Volume 2, 1751 JW

Many have had similar experiences. Two of the most notable were Thomas a Kempis and John Wesley.

"The heart has its reasons which reason cannot know." P. 101 (E224 and P423)

"We know truth not by reason only, but by the heart." P. 102 E214 andP110

Pascal is reflecting here on his view that all demonstrative or analytical knowledge rests upon the direct apprehension, feeling, and intellect involved together.

Reason is through and through existential.

Must be careful of the heart. Jeremiah tells us why. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt...(Jeremiah 17:9-10)

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, or even touched, they must be felt with the heart.” Helen Keller

O if Jesu crucified were oft in our hearts and our remembrance, we should soon be learned in all things necessary for us!” Thomas A Kempis, p. 62

“...some have me in their mouth, but little in their heart. Thomas a Kempis, p. 113

Truly their great burning faith is a probable argument of Thy holy Presence; for they know verily their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so strongly in them by the presence of their Lord Jesus, then sacramentally walking with them. Thomas a Kempis, p. 291

Faith is “a kind of spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof. Accordingly the Scripture speaks sometimes of God’s giving light, of darkness, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul: “God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” And elsewhere the same Apostle speaks “of the eyes of” our “understanding being opened.” By this twofold operation of the Holy Spirit—having the eyes of our soul both opened and enlightened—we see the things which the natural “eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard.” JW. Manskar, p. 69

“All our preaching at first was pointed at the heart, and almost all our private conversation, ‘Do you feel the love of God in your heart? Does his Spirit reign there? DO you walk in the Spirit? Is that mind in you which was in Christ?’ were frequent questions among us. But while these Preachers to the heart were going on gloriously in the work of Christ, the false Apostles stepped in, laughed at all heart-work, and laughed many of us out of our

spiritual senses: For, according to them, we were neither to see, hear, feel, nor taste the powers of the world to come; but to rest contented with what was done for us seventeen hundred years ago.” P. 221 Volume 2, 1751 JW

Our heart when it rises to Him is His altar.” Augustine, p. 306 City of God

Purity of Heart.

Let those who are able to listen to your voice speaking to their hearts. Augustine, Confessions, p. 260

He that loveth God with all his heart dreadeth neither death, nor torment, nor judgment nor hell; for perfect love maketh a sure passage to God. Augustine, Confessions, p. 57.

We hear it said that Jesus Christ taught nothing contrary to common sense. Everything Jesus Christ taught was contrary to common sense. Not one thing in the Sermon on the Mount is common sense. The basis of Christianity is neither common sense nor rationalism.

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

It is an interesting thing that when he wants to get up, the Christian always starts down, for God's way is always down, even though that is contrary to common sense. It is also contrary to the finest wisdom on the earth, because the foolish things of God are wiser than anything on this earth.

A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

The possibility of the future far exceeds the accomplishment of the past. We review the past with the common sense, but we anticipate the future with transcendental senses.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

Pride is spiritual cancer; it eats the very possibility of love or contentment, or even common sense.

B. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are first, hard work; second, stick-to-itiveness; and third, common sense.

Thomas Edison

The man who strays away from common sense will end up dead!

Proverbs 21:16

Common sense is seeing things as they are and doing things as they should be done.

Common sense isn't as common as it used to be.

Will Rogers

Blaise Pascal

When we look at a beautiful painting we ask “Who painted that?” and we praise its creator. In the same way when we look at the universe we ought to want to know and praise its maker.

GOD, PROOFS OF -

1. Ontological – Anselm Use of reason alone. (Prove God by the idea of God)

2. Cosmological – focuses on causes. Aquinas Use of reason reflecting on observation. (Prove God by observing that nothing has its own cause; therefore, we go back to the first cause, which we call God.
3. Theological – Focus on the evidence of design and purpose in the world.
4. Ethical - Kant
5. Existential - Bernard/Bultmann
6. Aesthetic
6. Moral – Abelard focuses on the source of our moral values. Our sense of right and wrong.

Revelation refers to truths that God has revealed to us that would could not otherwise be known. Reason is the process of reaching logical conclusions from facts and statements everyone can see to be true.

Anselm: Seeks to demonstrate the existence of God from the idea of God.
 Thomas Aquinas. We can arrive at some truths about God as we use reason to reflect on what we see to be natural causes in the world.

Without reason we could not discern what God is saying. Without reason we could not identify or interpret anything. Faith needs reason.

Christians believe God is the source of reason, for he himself is supremely rational. Reason is a gift from God.

Christians in the middle ages formulated arguments which came to be known as proofs of the existence of God. Their arguments helped many Christians to understand that their faith is not totally irrational or unreasonable. We can and ought to ask such questions as:

- Is it more reasonable to believe that the universe was created by a personal God or that it came into being by itself?
- Is there convincing evidence for the historical events recorded in the Bible which have become the basis for Christian beliefs about God and Jesus?
- Are Christian beliefs consistent with one another, or do they contradict one another.

“Reason when it stands under God’s revelation becomes a servant of great value, which can be used to explore and reflect on the world in which we

live. It is only when reason is made master that it becomes a tyrant leading us into the blackest night of ignorance and confusion.” Jerram Barrs, p. 39 Handbook to Christian Belief

The word Philosophy literally means love of wisdom

Reason alone is not sufficient. Our knowledge must be based on the information provided by our senses, but then there are spiritual senses.

Christian theology believes that God reveals himself in nature, history and human affairs.

We are rational and moral beings. Like every part of our being, we have been infected by sin.

“the heart has its reasons, which reason knows nothing of. The heart, for Pascal, is the greatest human faculty, because we use it to love God. God is not to be proved, he is to be experienced.

Enlightenment is mankind’s endeavor to be guided by his own reason.

Reason interprets the five senses.

I thank thee, O blessed Lord God, for of thee cometh this mind: it is not of myself, but from the inspiration of thy blessed Spirit. Nicholas Ferrar (1593-1637), Book of Prayers, p. 142.

God has made us thinking beings, capable of perceiving what is present, and of reflecting or looking back on what is past. Wesley “The Witness of Our Own Spirit, p. 135

And the strongest reasoner whom we have ever observed (excepting only Jesus of Nazareth) was that Paul of Tarsus; the same who has left that plain direction for all Christians, JW, p. 12 An earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion

And till you have these internal senses, till the eyes of your understanding are opened, you can have no apprehension of divine things, no idea of them at all. Nor, consequently, till then, can you either judge truly, or reason justly, concerning them; seeing your reason has no ground whereon to stand, no materials to work upon. An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason, JW, p. 13

Threefold division: physical, logical, ethical. The natural having respect to nature, the rational to education, the moral to practice. P. 370. Augustine, The City of God

The eye was created to see light. The mind was created to see truth.

“Surely everyone whose senses are not impaired is aware of the universe around him? Why, then, does it not give the same message to us all? The animals both great and small, are aware of it, but they cannot inquire into its meaning because they are not guided by reason. Augustine, Confessions of Augustine, pp 212-213

P.S. – With the leadership of Doug Mckinney, Pastor Discipleship at Parker UMC, we have started a pilot Covenant Discipleship Group that meets every Monday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon.