



Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. When people have this faith, they are peaceful because they fear nothing, and no worry about the future upsets them. People come into this state of being in proportion as they come into a loving relationship with the Lord.

Secrets of Heaven 8455, By Emanuel Swedenborg

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The path to grow spiritually is simple.

LOOK TO THE LORD

Learn what God teaches. Ask Him to show you what changes need to be made in your life. Pray for guidance every day.

LOOK AT YOURSELF

What habits or behaviors are harming your relationship with God, your family members, your friends, and others?

CONFESS TO THE LORD

Admit to the things you do which you see are wrong. Pray that God will remove any selfishness you may have and help you move forward.

WORK ON IT

Choose one habit, thought pattern, or behavior that you wish to change, and ask God to remove it from your life. Take action yourself, but remember that it is the Lord who gives you the strength to overcome temptations and change. Pray for the power to change.

BEGIN A NEW LIFE

Ask God to help you look forward in this new direction, and show you new opportunities to be of service to other people. Through this process you will become more compassionate, more peaceful, wiser, and less fearful. You will experience greater closeness to God. This is spiritual rebirth.

THE NEW CHURCH



www.newchurch.org

Where Is God?

NEW CHURCH PERSPECTIVE SERIES

“Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6,7).



Where is God?

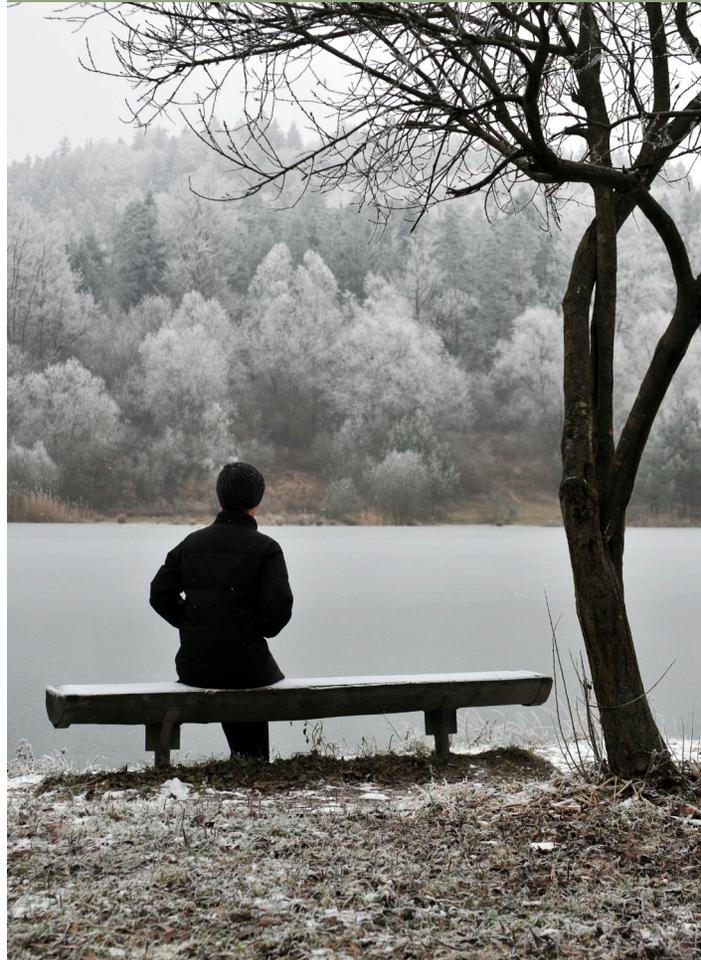
Why did God create the world?

God’s nature is pure love. He created the universe so that there would be somewhere to extend His love and put it into action. He created us to be able to think, understand and love so that we could choose to be in a relationship with Him. We are someone to love.

How is God present with you?

God is life itself. Everything else, the stars, the earth, plants, animals, and people have life and existence from God. Nothing exists independently except God. The New Church teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ is the human manifestation of God. Jesus said, “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26), and “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

God is uniquely present with people through the Word or Bible. From the Word we can come to understand and connect with a visible God, who is Jesus Christ. He is also present in all the abilities that make us human. The Lord provides and constantly maintains our ability to judge what we believe is right and wrong and to freely choose how we will live. When we choose to follow what God teaches, we grow in wisdom. We become increasingly, personally, connected to Him as spiritual people.



Where is God when bad things happen?

God is present in the events of our lives. Sometimes it may seem to us that this can’t be true. Bad things happen to us and to people we love and we wonder where God is and why He let this happen. God is at work in the smallest details of everyone’s life. Nothing is allowed to happen that will not potentially be able to serve the goal of our eternal well being. The Lord never interferes with our spiritual freedom to choose how we want to live.

The harmful or evil actions in life come from two general causes. One is that human beings have a tendency to love controlling and having power over other people. The second source of harm is that we have a tendency to love possessions. No matter how much we have, we generally want more. The Lord allows all people to act freely according to their own rational thought, so these two harmful drives are not always restrained in us or in society. If these desires were not allowed to surface, we would not clearly see how harmful they are to us and others. Along with this

clarity comes the choice to accept or reject these desires. By freely choosing to reject them, we are spiritually reborn. This freedom to make good or poor choices is one of the reasons that evil and harmful actions are not prevented by acts of God.

The Lord loves us and never wishes us to suffer. He grieves for the tears and the hurt that we feel. Emanuel Swedenborg uses the word ‘permission’ to describe things the Lord does not want to have happen but which He allows to occur. As we are ready, the Lord works in our hearts and lives to heal us. He uses even these sad experiences to help us become more loving, compassionate, wise and forgiving.

For more on this topic read “Why did the Lord let it happen?” by Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss, and *Divine Providence* by Emanuel Swedenborg.