



Reflections

April 2014 - *Communion with God is Real Whether Feelings are There or Not*

Just before the confirmation and first communion of his goddaughter, Sarah, C.S. Lewis gave her some money (the role of her “fairy godfather”). However, in his primary role as her “serious Christian godfather,” he gave her some spiritual advice that can be applied to child and adult alike. Lewis writes,

As for No 1, the serious Christian godfather, I feel very unfit for the work – just as you, I dare say, may feel very unfit for being confirmed and for receiving the Holy Communion. But then an angel would not be really fit and we must all do the best we can. So I suppose I must try to give you advice. And the bit of advice that comes into my head is this; don’t expect (I mean, don’t *count on* and don’t *demand*) that when you are confirmed, or when you make your first Communion, you will have all the *feelings* you would like to have. You may, of course: but also you may not. But don’t worry if you don’t get them. They aren’t what matter. The things that are happening to you are quite real things whether you feel as you would wish or not, just as a meal will do a hungry person good even if he has a cold in the head which will rather spoil the taste. Our Lord will give us right feelings if He wishes – and then we must say Thank you. If He doesn’t, then we must say to ourselves (and Him) that He knows us best. This, by the way, is one of the very few subjects on which I feel I do know something. For years after I had become a regular communicant I can’t tell you how dull my feelings were and how my attention wandered at the most important moments. It is only in the last year or two that things have begun to come right – which just shows how important it is to keep on doing what you are told.



Oh – I’d nearly forgotten – I have *one* other piece of advice. Remember that there are only three kinds of things anyone need ever do. (1) Things we *ought* to do (2) Things we’ve *got* to do (3) Things we *like* doing. I say this because some people seem to spend so much of their time doing things for none of the three reasons, things like reading books they don’t like because other people read them. Things you ought to do are things like doing one’s school work or being nice to people. Things one has got to do are things like dressing and undressing, or household shopping. Things one likes doing – but of course I don’t know what *you* like. Perhaps you’ll write and tell me one day.

Of course I always mention you in my prayers and will most especially on Saturday. Do the same for me.

Your affectionate godfather

C.S. Lewis

Spiritual feelings are fickle and can come and go. The truth of God’s faithfulness and constant presence in our lives whether we feel Him or not is based on the solid foundation of Scripture and the wisdom of saints gone before. And as we follow Jesus in obedience, doing the things we ought to do, we’ve got to do and the things we like doing, often the feelings follow.

¹⁷The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. ¹⁸The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.”

PSALM 145:17-19 (NIV)

¹C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Children*, Letter to Sarah, 3 April 1949. Touchstone: New York, 1995, pp. 26-27.