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- *Find strength to hold the vision of the resolution of conflict*
- *God does not take sides*
- *Prayer does not activate God*
- *Give thanks for blessings and challenges alike*

God guides the direction of your shared lives and your individual lives. It is God that ultimately provides both the ability to see and the object of that vision. You are each given the gift of seeing evidence of God in your lives. This blessing is indeed in the seeing as well as the vision that is observed, the sense of God's presence, a vision that brings reality to what you pray for. Your seeing is a process but it is also the product.

You are being asked, you are being challenged to see. The vision that you get, the perspective that you observe, is an important component of that blessing, but the ability to see makes all else possible. You can talk about God's presence in worldly affairs, but can you see that presence? You talk about the spiritual essence of everyone, but can you see that essence? It is your ability to see that is the chief blessing, for without the ability, a thousand concepts, a thousand ideas, a thousand goals are but what you seek and never become who you are, for what you seek to become who you are, you must learn to see.

If you want to know God, you must see God. If you want to know about love, you must see evidence of love. Love is not a word—It is a way of life. If it is to be a way of life, it is physical. There is evidence, there is proof. There is nothing theoretical about God. There is nothing theoretical about the presence of spirit in life. It is very tangible, it is very real. God, love, spirit are as tangible in their manifestation as a flower.

When we speak to you of the manifestation of spirit, we speak to you of reality, of application. It is easy for many to relegate God, spirit, to some kind of concept that is constructed by human beings to give meaning to life. There is no need to construct in order to provide meaning. What some say must be constructed, already exists.

From your sharing together, it is clear that each of you is concerned about the dignity, the value, of all human beings. There are countless ways in which that dignity is violated, and it is precisely those violations about which you have spoken. It is not a new phenomenon that human beings act in violation toward others. It is part of the totality of human experience. The challenge for all is to find within this chaos the presence of God.

You seek a sense of logic, you seek a path that leads to clear resolution of conflict, and that is a worthy objective. But when you feel overwhelmed by your understanding of injustice, you may reestablish the strength of your anchor if you bring your attention to that concrete, tangible, personal evidence that God is. When all around is chaos, it is difficult to find order. When there is the clamor of hatred, it is

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difficult to hear the ring of love. When there is the rush to judgment, it is difficult to sense the presence of peace.

How is it that you can keep your sense of direction and purpose amidst such uncertainty and tragedy? The stability, the direction, the sense of sureness that each of you looks for in your lives, can only be fully achieved when you see God on a daily basis. We strongly suggest that every day you deliberately find evidence of God in the world. That evidence provides you strength. It all begins with the vision of which we speak. Certainly you want to see a resolution to those issues that are of great concern, but it is the seeing that comes first, and the resolution is sure to follow.

In the midst of the chaos, where do you find God? You find God in people around you. You find God in nature. You find God in the smile of a stranger. You find God in your own motivations to reach out. It's not difficult to find God, but it does take commitment. As we have said before, if you spend all of your energy pleading, there is nothing left to hear God's response. There is no energy left for the vision to see that response.

When you embrace God totally, you embrace the reality that God is a part of everything. God is with those who suffer. God is with those who observe. God is with those who act. God is with those who are ignorant, who have no knowledge. God is with those who act blindly. There is nothing in life that is without God. If you accept this reality and you are bolstered by a vision of God in your daily life, you will know that God is a part of all for whom you pray. You will know that God is a part of the solution. Knowing that, you can be assured that that for which you pray and work will be achieved because God is a part of that enterprise when that enterprise is based on affirmation and support.

A country or a leader who claims that God is on his or her side does not reflect an awareness that God is on all sides. Individuals may act with the best of intentions, and yet those actions may be blind to reality. Difficult as it may be, you must recognize that God is a part of that individual's constitution, essence, humanness just as much as that loving spirit is a part of you. You are all together. You all share the same space and time. If you perceive some to behave in a way that is not affirming, that is not peace-loving, your prayers must be for that individual's vision. Praying that God will change something or that God will intercede does not move God to such change or intercession. Rather, it moves individuals to look for God and in seeing God, that change, that intercession is realized. God is not placed into action. It is human beings who are given vision.

You pray for healing...you are praying for a vision of health. You pray for peace—you are praying for a vision of what makes for peace. When you know what health means, when you know what peace brings, the natural inclination of all human beings is to follow that vision. There is nothing natural about rejecting health. There is nothing natural about rejecting peace. All wish for peace, all wish for health. How both are

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perceived is critical to the realization. If you pray for peace assuming that means the complete cessation of war, it is an admirable goal, but it is not a goal that is reached in short time. Praying for peace is praying for that vision of what makes for peace, namely mutual respect, nonjudgmental love. Out of that comes the peace that you seek.

When you pray for health, you pray for an inner sense of peace, a lack of anxiety, a commitment to the connection that you have with God. When one feels that connection, when one is committed to the permanence of that loving relationship, issues of physical health become less important. If you consider you are in physical health and yet are filled with anxiety and torment, are you healthy? Treat health as your relationship to God, a relationship that is in balance, that sense of constancy with God, not just feeling you are close to God when all is well and you are far from God when all is not well. That is not a relationship in balance. The state of balance is the state of constancy. If you are balanced in your connection to God, you are in total health. All else is insignificant. You may be in pain and yet be healthy, for that pain no longer has the sense of permanence, for your vision is of the permanence of your relationship to God.

If you seek balance in your life, reach out to the person next to you. Be affirming, patient, be nonjudgmental, be affectionate, be a good listener, be compassionate. In so doing, you are the hands and arms and eyes of God. Seeing that connection brings the peace that all seek.

Your challenges in life are the efforts that are necessary to achieve that balance. Be loving, be compassionate, listen. Open your eyes to God. Be quiet to listen for the response of God. Observe God's presence around you, and be committed in your acknowledgement that if God is everywhere, you have nothing to fear. You have nothing to doubt, you have no reason for anxiety, you have no reason for anger, for God is constantly present. God is constantly a part of all difficulty. God is constantly a part of any conflict, for the natural direction of a conflict is ultimately its resolution, and it is God that is a part of that resolution.

It is good to be concerned when you see injustice. It is good to be concerned when you see insensitivity. It is good to be concerned when you see evidence of ignorance or a lack of caring, for that is the motivation to act out your faith, and in so doing, *you* become the vision of someone else's sight, *you* become the objective, *you* become the example, *you* become the hope. It is your actions that give evidence of God to others.

Open your eyes and see the vision of God. It is all about you. You are a part of that vision, you are a part of that reality. Rejoice in the sight that each of you is blessed to possess, and let that guide you through your commitment to God in your daily lives.

God is with you. Each of us is with you. Your blessings overflow beyond your imagination. Give thanks to God for life and for all that life brings you—all that is easy, all that is difficult, all that brings joy, all that brings anxiety, frustration, anger. Grow in

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your ability to overcome those negatives, and realize that those negatives are necessary for that growth to take place.

You are with God...

You are God...

All creation is God.

Amen.