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These are his exact words, he said the academic load here at Stanford is heavy you know, I used to have a vibrant prayer life in high school but I've gotten so busy with studies, fraternity life and just trying to fit in that I've grown careless in my relationship with Jesus and I really miss him. Then he turned aside because he didn't want me to see that he was wiping tears away from his eyes. Then he continued, I wish I could feel his presence like I used to but life in the fast lane keeps me so distracted that sometimes I wonder if I trust in God at all then I get scared. But I keep doing the same stuff out of habit because I can't imagine anything other, any other alternative. I wish, oh, how I wish I was closer to God.

Well, The next morning a woman faculty member comes to my room for counselling, and what she said was almost an identical repeat of what the student said last night. And here's what she said, Brennan, at one point in my life I had a faith so strong that it shaped the very fibre of my day, the fire of Christ really burned inside of me. I was conscious of God's presence even in stressful situations but since I got here to Stanford almost imperceptibly I stop sitting at the fireplace she said. The academic competition here among the faculty is worse than it is from the students and then with the sigh, she sank back in her chair and I saw tears rolling down her cheeks. Then she continued, I came to your lecture last night in the love of God and I cried for the entire hour, my life is so empty I see so much pain and suffering on and off campus. I feel a deep resistance that God is really loving, I think I still have faith but I can't feel it. I've lost any sense of God's presence, I'm like Mary Magdalene in the garden crying out, where is my beloved gone? I miss God so much right now that I feel frantic, I longed for the relationship I used to have.

And here's what I ask each one of you to do for the next 60 seconds, imagine that you are the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ, that you're the risen Jesus yourself and you are looking at these two people, the student and the faculty member. The young man is sad because he misses you, he is downcast that he is not closer to you, he is grieving that he's gotten so busy as to neglect you and he's close to panic that he doesn't trust in your love anymore. The woman is in tears because she can't feel your presence as she once did, her heartache lies in experiencing your absence rather than your presence. She too has been ambushed by academia, she fears that her faith is fading that she's lost you forever now.

Now, you're the risen Jesus, look at these two people, what are your feelings towards them? Do you think they have a relationship with you? Do you think that they love you? Is your heart overflowing with compassion because they feel exile from you? Do you see their entire lives right now as a cry of longing? A prayer of heartfelt longing for you alone and the moment they call your name when you sweep up and up in your arms and embrace them. Well, take your own feelings multiply them exponentially into infinity and you've got a vague hint of the love of God for you in Christ Jesus with a strong affirmation of your goodness and a gentle understanding of your weakness. God is forever loving you and there's nothing you can do to increase this love for you and nothing you can do to diminish it. Maybe in the past few months you've gotten waylaid in your walk with Jesus by busyness, depression, family problems, unemployment, or something worse, maybe you feel that God has abandoned you and you're wandering off the path.

You will never believe that God abandoned you, in fact, you will never flinch, hesitate, or worry about being welcome in the arms of Jesus Christ and no matter where you are in the journey, you maintain a quiet confidence that your trust in God gives him immense pleasure. Of course, if you picture God as touchy, unapproachable, easily annoyed, you imagine God as being haughty, indifferent or angry, with unlovable qualities, then you'll dismiss the way of trust as a soft, easy path for wimps and wusses. It'll be your

skepticism, your cynicism, your lack of belief in the wild, passionate, furious, pursuing, furious love of God that will remove Jesus in our midst onto the great, beyond, and you'll assume he's totally disengaged from you, your joys and struggles of your life.

When I was a child, our family was very poor, so we never gave presents at Christmas and never gave presents on birthdays, and we made things for one another. The one great source of feminine love in my life was my paternal grandmother. I look back now and I see that as my first experience of unconditional love, my grandmother would take me to St. Patrick's Day Parade, and because I was so short, she'd hoist me up on her shoulders for well over an hour to watch all the floats as they pass by.

Then they go, she would buy me ice cream, she loved me in a way that simply defies description. Well, on my 12th birthday in 1946, my grandmother left a little card with a piece of cardboard with her handwriting on it, her own hand and since then, I've had that card plasticized. I've had it laminate, I've had it hugely blown up and now I have it in a frame on the wall of my office back in New Orleans. And all the words on the card say, never was a mother so blind to the faults of her child as the Lord Jesus is towards ours so never be discouraged by your faults. Once again, never was a mother so blind to the faults of her child as the Lord Jesus is towards ours so never be discouraged by your faults.

In the Gospels You've taught us, Lord, that fear is the enemy of trust, You said to your disciples, do not live in fear, little flock, it is pleased my father to give you the kingdom. Why not? Because you're terrific, not because you're saying the right things or doing the right things or becoming the right things. You inherit the kingdom because in that lovely Greek word, Ordea, My father and his sheer good pleasure, wants to give you the kingdom. To the sinking Peter in the sea of Galilee, You said, don't be afraid Peter, it's Me. When You walked into the home of Jarius, all the relatives thought the child was dead, You said the child is not dead the child is alive. They began to mock you and You said to them fear is useless, what is needed is trust. Jesus, I humbly ask that you walk down the aisles of this church and Your great compassion lay Your healing hands upon each one of us and free us from fear. Free us of shame about our past, of fear about the present or anxiety about the future, anoint us with that unwavering, unflagging, unblinking, invincible trust and Your love and teach each person here as you've taught me, trust is our gift back to God. And You Lord Jesus, have found it so enchanting that you died for love of it and that was the end of his sermon. And his famous quote is, God loves you as you are not as you should be because you'll never be as you should be.

And in my own personal experience wanting to know the future, wanting to know this, wanting to know that. The Lord kept asking me not to check on the media, not to do that kind of thing, not to go searching and delving into things to see what's going to happen next basically He said, don't do that. And He didn't say why and then I realized, all of a sudden, why? Just trust him that's why. You don't need to have all the answers besides, none of your answers are going to be completely accurate, situations change. But trust that He's got your back, trust that He has you, trust that He knows what your needs are and He's providing for you and your love ones. Stop worrying and trust, that doesn't mean you should ignore Him when He tells you to put this or put that up for the future. If He does that then obey Him but don't go beyond that, don't be compulsive about it, go deeper, dig deeper, be better prepared, have more of this, have more of that for all contingencies, no just trust Him. He knows what's going to happen and He knows what your needs will be and He knows your loved ones, and He's made provision for all of that.

And to me, what's the saddest thing in the occult community is fear, constant fear of attacks, constant fear of someone having more power and dislodging you, the constant fear of failure and losing everything, with the Lord it's not that way. If you lose everything, He just continues to provide for you in a new way, He doesn't leave you helpless. So you see working for the enemy, working for Satan is a losing deal totally

losing deal. First of all, he can't provide you with anything after this earthly sojourn and second of all, he hates your guts and he is using you to hurt the Lord because the Lord created you out of the love of His heart. And since he can't get back at the Lord, he's tormenting you and stealing your soul to hell to get back at Jesus for kicking him out of heaven.

Come on guys, take a real look at this creature, this fallen angel, seriously. Take a look at what he teaches you and then tell me that if he teaches you to lie, steal, kill and destroy that at the end of your life he's going to reward you, no, he's going to laugh you to scorn. Please consider what I'm saying, you can't sow disease, harm, murder, stealing, lying and expect at the end of your life to receive blessings, security, rewards because you sowed destruction you will reap destruction. Please consider these words, consider who you're really working for, a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit.