

SUNDAY ARTICLE

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Awaken Me Today

Scott Hubbard

Many of us walk through a world of sepia.

Maybe life was more vivid once. You went to bed and couldn't wait to wake up. You loved your job, or were engaged to be married, or just had your first child. But life changed, and slowly, the colours drained from your days. Now you wake up, walk through another bland day, and lie down, simply to do it all over again tomorrow. The calendar has become 365 shades of brown.

We need God to awaken us to today. We need Him to remind us again that "this is the day that the Lord has made" (Psalm 118:24) – a unique day, a meaningful day, a day that comes to us from the hands of divine love. We need God to help us resolve, as Clyde Kilby writes, that we will "not fall into the falsehood that this day, or any day, is merely another ambiguous and plodding twenty-four hours, but rather a unique event, filled, if I so wish, with worthy potentialities."

In order to come awake to today, we probably don't need to do something spectacular. We probably just need to meditate on the ordinary glories we so often forget. We probably need to look up, around, and ahead again.

Look Up

Look up to God today.

God is. The most basic fact about today is also the most wild and wonderful: *God is.* Behind all that we see and

feel today is an eternal dance of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: never changing, ever happy, a constant volcano of goodness and joy.

He is the Love beneath all love (1 John 4:8), the Beauty behind all beauty (Psalm 27:4), the Truth underlying all truth (John 14:6). He is the Creator, the Lord, and the King; the Shepherd, the Word, and the Saviour; the Comforter, the Guide, and the Teacher. He is the God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ (John 1:18) – and *He is.*

God is here. "We can't talk about God behind His back," John Webster said. Nor can we think, breathe, sleep, or eat there. There is no such place as "behind His back" – not on Icarus, nine billion light years away, nor in our living rooms. God is here, in this moment, holding us together by the power of His word (Hebrews 1:3). Breathe in, breathe out, and feel His speech expand your lungs. He hems you in, behind and before – seeing you, searching you, knowing you (Psalm 139:5).

God is for you. In Christ, this God is for you today – with all of His infinite heart and soul (Jeremiah 32:41). Look out at the sunrise, and feel His new mercies (Lamentations 3:22-23). Look behind you, and see His goodness on your heels (Psalm 23:6). Open His book, and hear Him rehearse the story of His love (Romans 5:8). Open your mouth, and pour your heart into His hands (Psalm 62:8).

Then, go out into your day, and know that He is with you – inside of you (John 14:17). He will help you. He will strengthen you. He will uphold you with His righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10). And He will weave whatever happens today, no matter how

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humdrum or heart-breaking, into a tapestry of goodness and mercy and love (Romans 8:28).

Look Around

Now, look around at the world today.

The heavens sing of His beauty. Why did the sun come up again this morning? Not out of clockwork necessity, but because “God,” as Chesterton puts it, “says every morning, ‘Do it again’” (*Orthodoxy*, p 29). And of course, the sun doesn’t mind: How could he stop telling us of God’s glory (Psalm 19:1)? When the sun steps over the horizon like a bridegroom coming for his bride, can you hear him shout for joy (Psalm 65:8)?

The earth is full of His love. The sun is just one member of creation’s choir – the bass, perhaps. Look down from the sky, and see God’s steadfast love spilling from every corner (Psalm 33:5). Yes, creation groans for the day when it will finally shed this cocoon of corruption and walk in the glorious freedom of God’s children (Romans 8:19-21), but creation is also shouting, chanting, dancing, singing to the tune of the Triune love song (Psalm 104:24).

Can you hear every gift whisper God’s goodness (James 1:17)? Can you feel His kindness in an autumn breeze? Can you hear His might in the midnight thunder? Can you feel His warmth in your wool sweater? Can you taste His sweetness in an apple strudel?

Tonight, when God draws the darkness over our continent like a comforter, look up at the stars. They come out because He calls them – by name (Isaiah 40:6). All one hundred billion of them. While we set our alarm clocks, brush our teeth, and kneel beside our beds, His voice will rush through galaxies we haven’t discovered yet, bringing out their host like a hunter calling His dogs.

This is our Father’s world. Don’t walk through the world asleep today, like a tourist who misses the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel because he’s staring at his phone. Lift up your eyes. Stop on the sidewalk. Roll down the window. Sit on the ground. And hear creation’s song.

Look Ahead

Finally, look ahead to your life today.

You are a soldier in the King’s army. On this ordinary, typical, predictable day, you walk through a war zone. Can you feel the battle for your soul today, as you face temptations toward anger, or lust, or envy, or worry (Romans 6:12-13)? Can you see the kingdoms clashing? Can you hear the serpent hissing? Can you feel his fiery arrows flying through the air (Ephesians 6:16)? And can you hear your Captain say, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20)?

You have people to love. Look again at the people you’re with today, especially the troublesome ones. Who is that man who just cut you off in traffic? Who is this cashier looking distracted? Who are these room-mates who irritate you?

They are image bearers of the living God (Genesis 1:27), crowned with glory and honour (Psalm 8:5), but marred by our common curse (Romans 3:23) and rushing toward eternity either with Jesus or without him. As C S Lewis reminds us, “It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendours” (*The Weight of Glory*, p 46). How will we treat these people today? As obstacles to our comfort? As mere annoyances? Or as people to listen to, serve, and forgive (Colossians 3:12-13)?

You have good works to walk in. Many of the good works in front of you today will not feel magnificent. But they are your birthright in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10), and not one will go unnoticed or unrewarded – from the biggest sacrifice of your comfort to the smallest deed done in faith (Ephesians 6:8).

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So call a depressed friend, and remind her of God’s character. Meet up with your dad, and look for ways to share Jesus with him – again. Go to work in dependence on God, and then fill out the spreadsheet, peel the potatoes, schedule the appointments, change the diapers, or write the lesson plan. And know that, in it all, the God of the universe sees and smiles (Matthew 6:4).

Come Awake

As you consider your life, maybe it feels mundane. Maybe it feels like you’re walking through a forest of boredom, monotony, or stress. To be sure, we will not be able to escape all of life’s tedium. We will walk through some days so bent over by this world’s futility that we can barely lift our eyes up to God, around to the world, or ahead to our life.

But can you believe, as you walk through this forest of routine, that God is able to lead you into clearings where the sun is shining, the air is tingling, and life is pulsing with wonder? He can. So look up to God today. Look around to His world today. Look ahead to your life today. And ask God to awaken you.



Scott Hubbard is a graduate of Bethlehem College & Seminary and an editor for desiringGod.org. He lives in Minneapolis.

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