

Along the Way

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I hope you won't be offended when I say I don't think there is a single one of us who does not at least occasionally feel intimidated in the presence of God. I don't mean intimidated in the bully sense or the way you might feel inferior in the presence of an expert in something of which you thought you actually had a working knowledge. I mean those times when we are so aware and full of our own imperfections (or something we've done or not done) that the idea of calling upon our great God makes us feel inadequate and unworthy. And sometimes, the more aware we are of our mistakes, flaws and imperfections, the more difficult it is to call upon the creator of all. After all, he created us to be better than this, didn't he?

Well, maybe not. Though we were created in his image, we were not created to be perfect. Thank God. Literally.

He created us to be his: to love, follow and depend on him through Jesus Christ. And yes, we certainly need to try to be better people each and every day of our lives. But when we try to "measure up," we can't. Sooner or later, we fall back or mess up again.

So if we feel intimidated by God or too lowly at any time to call upon him, then we are thinking in human terms, not in divine terms. I don't think *he* asks us to "measure up." That's a human response.

He asks us to love, first and foremost. And right there, all our feelings of inadequacy should be thrown out the window, for there is no way to measure, judge or apportion love. It simply is.

Love doesn't have a quantity. It can't be divided or multiplied or measured. You can't say there is more love "here" than there is "there." This makes me think (and I might lose a younger reader here) of the Smothers Brothers, a comedy duo from the 60's and 70's. One of their routines was that Tommy would say to Dick: "Mom always liked you best." It was funny when *he* said it. But it dug at something that is common in families...children measuring who a parent "loves best." It's one of the most natural things in the world. We're human; we measure. But among the many things we can learn from the Bible is that God does not. In God's world—heads up you math-haters—there are no numbers, fractions or ratios. In God's economy, we do not measure love or appreciation or effort *or* the achievement the effort yields. We love.

So I guess what I'm getting to is: take your mess to God. Your whole messy self. Don't let feelings of inadequacy or something you've done recently or at any time keep you from going to God.

I'm pretty sure he would rather have you—*all* of you, the "good" and the "bad"—than watch you try to walk alone. If we don't go to him, not only are we missing out on experiencing the depth of his love and forgiveness, we are also not truly letting him guide us through whatever it is we have done or not done.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." **Matthew 11:28-30**