

Daily Devotional, December 17, 2020 God Came Down

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. John 1:1-4 (NIV)

Sometimes I watch a videos on YouTube, and then that leads to another and another—and 4 hours later, I lift my weary body from the couch after a long, exhaustive string of videos. OK maybe not that long. It may be closer to 20 minutes, maybe even 45, but I digress. Anyway, while engaging in a recent bout of YouTube binging on some funny epic videos, I saw one that dealt with people on exercise equipment, which reminded me of something I had seen in a commercial. That led me to this thought that I want to share with you today.

There is a piece of exercise equipment that is a never-ending set of steps. Call it a stair-master or whatever, It is much like walking the wrong way on a small escalator. On this equipment, you can keep climbing, but you will never reach the top. No matter how hard you try, there will always be another step before you, and try as you may, you will never reach the top! A similar piece of equipment has rungs of a ladder, and works under a similar premise. No matter how hard you climb, there will always be another rung.

Watching someone on this equipment reminds me of the human striving in virtually every religion, ever. There is a god or a goal at the top of the stairs, a nirvana or a reward and you have to keep climbing up to reach or attain it. No matter how hard you try, you just can't quite get there. Some religions even indicate that just as in a video game, you will get multiple lives, to help you try to get to the top. In each of these various religions, the god on top calls out, "I want you to come to me. Achieve this level, so we can be together." Since the beginning of humanity, this has been the religion scene: Take these steps, and you can come to me, but getting there requires a lot of work - and no one is really sure if they ever make it or not. Since the time of the tower of Babel, people have followed the dos and don'ts of various religions, but there's always another step.

But there is one on the religion scene that stands alone. Out of the quagmire, the gospel – the Good News –upsets the religion scene. Look with me at the nativity narrative, that is found in John 1. Of all of the narratives in the Gospels, John's is the most supernatural, the one you have to stretch to understand. It's in verse 14 of John's first chapter, but for a little context, I want you to re-read the first four verses of John written above.

These verses introduce the Word. The Word is Jesus, and so in verse 14, we find a very short Christmas story. **"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."** (John 1:14, NIV) Out of a nowhere little town called Bethlehem, God became flesh. God came down!

I don't want you to miss that—**God came down**. God stopped the unending, unachievable escalator treadmill horror of religion, and God instead came down to us. Elsewhere, Jesus is given the name Emmanuel, which translates as "God with us." God said, "I know you can't get here, so I'm coming there." On that first Christmas, he came down. And on that first Easter, he carried us up to the top, so that finally we could say, "It is finished!" Now, in just a single step of faith, we can come to God—because of Jesus. We must let Him do what we cannot do, so we get to go where we want to be but cannot get to on our own.

This Christmas, though it will be more quiet than usual without family, I will enjoy my presents under the tree, but I will also enjoy His presence with and within me—God came down!

Prayer: Dear Jesus, You gave up your throne in heaven to come to earth to be born in flesh and blood. The angels knew of your glory and proclaimed it when you were born as a baby. They proclaimed it to lowly shepherds so they would know of your peace and love. You came to serve

the lost, the weak, and the sick. Thank you for your incredible everlasting love for all of us. Thank you for coming to save us, as only an Almighty, loving God could. Thank you for freeing us from the bondage of our sins and giving us freedom in You. Thank You for choosing to live among us and coming near us just to know us and for us to know you. You did not have to save us, yet you came when we were yet sinners. Thank you for saving us from our sins. Amen