

What Spirit?

John 14:15-21.

If you love me and keep my commands. This sounds like an ultimatum. If you meet my standards, then God will give you a really special present.

Let's unpack this. What if we were to look at it differently?

We talk about spiritual awareness and peace and kindness and harmony in the world. Loving your neighbour, the marginalised and the foreign refugees, the disabled and three-legged puppy dogs. But what if it is all just words, what if our hearts were not really affected and what if all this peace and harmony stuff is simply for our own selfish comfort and self-pride in being good, to make our own little hovels insular from the nasty things out there.

I grew up in the sixties and it was all peace and anti-war, unrestrained faith in the whatever you wanted. Underneath all this, it was as shallow as a field full of boulders. No one really found peace and the hippies grew up, became politicians and wars still raged on.

The rub is what do we really love and how do we love God beyond ourselves.

Is it for the things that serve us, or is it for something that can give us a peace even when we are suffering? That gives us hope when despair is knocking on our doors. That brings us assurance that no matter what is happening, there is a presence of a power far greater than Hawking's *theory of everything*.¹

This is what Jesus spoke about when he said the Father will give you an advocate, something far greater than the power of our own brains and emotions and yet we know that this power within us is so very real, or rather, very true.

But what is this something, how do we get it and how do we make it make us happy?

Sorry, it doesn't work that way.

When we seek that which is good, when it is our desire to let God come out in what we say and do, more than our trying to put on a pretty mask and calling it "Godly". Then the something begins to happen, the something begins to grow in us, and eventually we realise that God's Spirit is not a big spook in the sky but a presence within our own souls.

The special thing is, if you are knowing this then others are seeing this and if others are seeing this then something is happening beyond our own boundaries that blesses others, opens doors for healing, and instils hope, even in a time of darkness, isolation and loneliness. You see, God is not about blessing us, then that is it; He is into making you a blessing to the external and when you become a blessing beyond yourself, then you are truly blessed. In this aspect then, there is that assurance that God is with you and His spirit in you. You started off seeking God, then you realised you love him (and who would not love something that gives you all the goodness a soul can hold) and then you realised he loves you. Us in Him and He in us, it really is that simple.

1. In his bestselling book "A Brief History of Time" (Bantam Books, 1988), physicist Stephen Hawking discussed his desire to help create a theory of everything (which was also the title of [his 2014 biopic](#)). But the famous scholar changed his mind later in life; he thought such a theory would be out of reach forever because human descriptions of reality are always incomplete.