

Spoiled

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I've been spoiled my whole life. Being the youngest of four kids and having parents with hearts of gold, I guess it goes with the territory. My mom spoiled me all the time especially when she packed my school lunch with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Wow, that was a good day!! My sister and two brothers have spoiled me my entire life and they still do, to this day, even though I'm now a senior citizen.

And my wife spoils me. In fact, she's been doing it for the last 25 years. My friends spoil me too – I have one friend who would probably take a bullet for me. Well, maybe. I'm not sure why everyone seems to want to enable my spoiled "bratness" but what the heck; I'll take it.

So of course, doing what I do best – thinking about myself – I realized I'm spoiled by someone else in another way. You can't really see this one though. It's not like opening a lunch sack and seeing a PB&J inside. It's hidden from view, but nonetheless it's there and it's definitely a spoiled brat enabler. In fact, it's probably the greatest personal spoilation (if that's a word) of all time.

What is it you ask? It's the gift of a God who longs to have a personal relationship with me. I'm not any kind of historical scholar or theologian, but I doubt there are many religions that can make the claim of a personal relationship with their god. It seems like most gods are somewhere out there or up there and you pray to them, begging for something good.

But the relationship I have with my God really can't get any more personal. The essence of the Eternal Being who has caused all things to be in existence dwells within my inner being. How much more personal can you get? Even better, I'm consciously aware of it. How much more can you ask for?

You died to this life, and your real life is now hidden with Christ in God; you have a new life where all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

The word "hidden" (Greek *kryptos*) means to be concealed, to be kept secret. A personal relationship with someone is just that: personal. It's meant to be intimate with things only known by the two parties involved – things that are hidden, concealed, secret –worthy of being called *treasures*.

That's what I have with my God – another life available to me within my innermost being, one that's unique. It's a life with another set of laws. Jesus referred to it as a *kingdom*. It's not constrained by time, geographical boundaries, religions, or laws of nature (including the effects of gravity on our bodies – the shifting of our body mass, as in "I think my pants shrunk").

This life is hidden. It can't be seen, but I know it's there because *this kingdom does not come with observation; for the kingdom of God is within you*. It's here where the hidden treasures are found – wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. It's here where you'll find peace; and here where the greatest of all laws exists, the Royal Law...the law of love. It's here where I'm spoiled.

I'm spoiled because I know, within this kingdom, I'm loved unconditionally. I know I've been blessed with every spiritual blessing. I know I've been declared righteous. I know I'm

accepted. I know I'm not constrained within the laws of the kingdom where I physically reside. I know I've been given a freedom to love others in the same way I'm loved. I know this hidden world is governed by another set of laws – above what I can see, feel, and hear. And I know I can enter this place - this kingdom - at any moment. Yes, I'm spoiled.

If this wasn't important, why would Jesus have spent so much time talking about it? Why would His teaching center around how to view life and life's circumstances within the perspective of this kingdom? And why would He have come to earth in the first place to tell us these things if it wasn't important? It's important alright. It's important in that I'm given the ability to view life from a different vantage point, just like the time Zacchaeus climbed the sycamore tree. He was above the noise and confusion with a clear view of that certain man everyone came out to see.

To *enter the kingdom* is to see life from God's perspective by understanding the nature and character of the only true God and the incarnation of that God, the man called Jesus. To truly understand someone and develop a lasting relationship built on trust, isn't it true you must get to know them intimately? And isn't this what separates Christianity from all other religions: the availability and willingness of our God to have a personal and unique relationship with each one of us? His kingdom, His very life is within us – that's as personal as it gets. And moment by moment, He's calling out: *Enter my kingdom*.

I'm convinced the single most important act of Christianity is getting to know the God of Christianity – Jesus Christ – and getting to know Him intimately. Everything else is secondary. Getting to know the attributes, character, and nature of Jesus and getting to know Him in a personal way – unique only to me – enables me to live life within His kingdom. There, I begin to see life's circumstances from a vantage point above the noise and confusion. I begin to understand life from the perspective of my God, from “up above” – the place where He exists.

I find it truly amazing how this *Kingdom* is made available to me. I find it amazing that my *real life is hidden with Christ*. And I find it even more amazing that I have a personal relationship with my God with *secret treasures* unique only to me.

Isn't this an incredible gift? Isn't this an incredible God?

Do you see why I'm incredibly spoiled?

Col 2:3 & 3:3; Lk 17:20-21; Mt 7:21; Jn 17:24

“You spoil me every day of my life, Lord. Thank you for your indwelling spirit full of secret treasures known only to me and you. And for wanting to have a personal and intimate relationship with me, one that is totally unique. I know you want me to continually be in tune with your Kingdom. I thank you that you've given me the gift to call out to you at any moment, any time, and you're there waiting for me. And you'll give me the ability to see things from your perspective. Thank you, Jesus, for spoiling me.”