

Be Near by Shane Barnard, performed by Shane and Shane
If you'd like to hear the song: <https://youtu.be/3DocK9VX4iA>

You are all, big and small; beautiful and wonderful.
To trust in grace through faith, but I'm asking to taste.
For dark is light to You, depths are height to You;
far is near but Lord I need to hear from You.

Refrain:

Be near, O God. Be near, O God, of us. Your nearness is to us our good.
Be near, O God. Be near, O God, of us. Your nearness is to us our good.

Your fullness is mine, revelation divine. But oh to taste,
to know more than a page, to feel Your embrace.
For dark is light to You, depths are height to You;
far is near but Lord I need to hear from You.

Refrain:

You are all, big and small; beautiful and wonderful. To trust in grace through faith, but I'm asking to taste.

Ephesians 2:4-8 "However, God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life with Christ while we were dead as a result of those things we did wrong. He did this because of the great love that He has for us. You are saved by God's grace! And God raised us up and seated us in the heavens with Christ Jesus. God did this to show future generations the greatness of His grace by the goodness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus. You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. This salvation is God's gift. It's not something You possessed."

The Common English Bible¹

Is it easy for you to trust God? Why do you feel this way? Describe a time when you trusted God. How did that feel?

Do you feel you deserve God's mercy? God's grace? If you answered yes, is it hard for you to accept them? Why? If you answered no, why do you feel this way? God is our Parent, and like any good parent looks at us through "the great love that He has for us". Does this concept make it any easier for you to accept that you are deserving of God's mercy and grace? Offer your hesitations to God, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you see your value through God's eyes.

For dark is light to You, depths are height to You;
far is near but Lord I need to hear from You.

2 Samuel 22:29 & 31 *“Suddenly, God, Your light floods my path, God drives out the darkness. What a God! His road stretches straight and smooth. Every God-direction is road-tested. Everyone who runs toward Him makes it.”* The Message²

Do you rely on God’s light to flood you path? Or do you rely on yourself? How does your choice feel? Would you change anything? Why?

Be near, O God. Be near, O God, of us. Your nearness is to us our good.

Romans 8:28 *“We are confident that God is able to orchestrate everything to work toward something good and beautiful when we love Him and accept His invitation to live according to His plan.”* The Voice Bible³

Isaiah 41:13 *“I am holding you by your right hand – I the Lord your God – and I say to you, don’t be afraid; I am here to help.”* The Living Bible⁴

Do you take the time to recognize God’s presence in your daily life? If you do, describe how you do it. If not, what steps can you take to help make yourself open to God’s nearness?

Your fullness is mine, revelation divine. But oh to taste, to know more than a page, to feel Your embrace.

Psalm 34:8 *“Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy.”* Common English Bible¹

Psalm 78:3-4 *“We’ve heard true stories from our fathers about our rich heritage. We will continue to tell our children and not hide from the rising generation the great marvels of our God – His miracles and power that have brought us all this far.”* The Passion Translation⁵

Taste – try, sample, experience, participate. Faith is a journey, along a path that brings us closer to God with each twist and turn, each time of uncertainty and deciding. As we learn, we move from sampling God’s love and grace, to truly experiencing it, then to participating in it. The knowledge moves from the page into our minds and hearts. When we truly experience it, we can feel God’s embrace, and when we participate, we can help others know God as more than words on a page.

Where are you on the twisting path to God right now? A calm, smooth, straight section? A side turn-off? A place that’s rocky and hard to move forward? A place that leaves you feeling like you’re turned away from God? It doesn’t matter where you are on the path, God is near and *“holding you by your right hand”*. God is calling you onward, on to a closer and deeper relationship.

Whenever you feel afraid, whenever you feel worried, whenever you feel alone, use the simple prayer from the song– *“Be near, O God.”* When you’re feeling secure, happy, content, use the other simple prayer – *“Your nearness is to us our good.”* Every word, every emotion, will reach God; and your direction on the path will become clearer, your connection with God will grow stronger. That’s what God wants you know, for us to reach out in any situation, in every situation.

“The way You counsel me makes me praise You more, for Your whispers in the night give me wisdom, showing me what to do next. Because I set You, Yahweh, always close to me, my confidence will never be weakened, for I experience Your wrap-around presence every moment.”
Psalm 16:7-8 The Passion Translation⁵

¹ CEB: Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible

² MSG: Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson

³ Voice: The Voice Bible Copyright © 2012 Thomas Nelson, Inc. The Voice™ translation © 2012 Ecclesia Bible Society All rights reserved.

⁴ TLB: The Living Bible copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. All rights reserved.

⁵ Passion: The Passion Translation ©Passion and Fire Ministries Inc