


# Windows of the Soul: Experiencing God in New Ways

*Ken Gire*

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## **Windows of the Soul: Experiencing God in New Ways Ken Gire**

Praise for Windows of the Soul Every once in a while a book comes along that makes you stop and think-- and then think some more--like Ken Gire's wonderful book Windows of the Soul. --John Trent in Christian Parenting Today Ken Gire has created a book that gently pours forth, like water out of a garden bucket, cleansing our thoughts and opening the petals of our spirits, providing us with a new sense of clarity in our search for God. --Manhattan (KS) Mercury Each word, each phrase, is painstakingly wrought, loaded with thoughts and prayer, and filled with new glimpses of God's love, grace, and strength. --The Christian Advocate Windows of the Soul will surprise you with the many and varied windows God uses to speak to us. With the heart of an artist, Ken Gire paints word pictures in prose and poetry that will thrill your heart. --Mature Living Windows of the Soul is a rare book, resounding with the cry for communion that is both ours and God's. With passion, honesty, and beauty, Ken Gire calls us to a fresh sensitivity to God's voice speaking through the unexpected parables that surround us. --Christian Courier

## **Windows of the Soul: Experiencing God in New Ways Details**

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## **From Reader Review Windows of the Soul: Experiencing God in New Ways for online ebook**

### **Patricia says**

I liked the format of the book. The author stresses that we experience God in all of life. Literature, art, music, nature etc., are all places to encounter the One whose we are. His writing flows easily and he ends each small chapter with a prayer for application of the former lesson. A nice devotional reading.

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### **Elizabeth Kosorski says**

I liked it. It spoke to me. What else can I say. If I don't like a book I usually don't finish it, and thus don't feel justified in marking it "read".

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### **Jeff says**

Ken Gire is one of my favorite writers, not just because he can turn a phrase with the best of them, but also because he has such a heart for a thriving relationship with God. In this book, Ken helps us learn to be alert for God's presence and messages in the people and situations we face, and in all we do. By following his lead, we'll be better able to see deeper meanings that are often clouded by what lies on the surface, and thereby grow in our ability to touch others (and be touched ourselves) by God's heart.

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### **Kyle McManamy says**

This is probably my fourth time through this book. It could be my sixth. I always open it with pleasure and close it with benefit. It's the book that I gift the most and one of the ones which, had I to choose just a few to read for life, I would select. I find myself hard-pressed to distinguish whether it just has a personal connection to me (because of the insights and enjoyable style) or if it's a truly wonderful book, but I lean towards the latter. I will never say, "I have now read this for the last time."

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### **Gary B says**

I first read this book around 10 years ago and thought it time for a re-read.

For me the primary purpose or achievement of the book is to consider how and where you may hear God speaking outside of Scripture. Ken Gire takes the reader through different places or ways that God may speak - through vocation, through movies, through art, through poetry, through tears, through depression, etc.

In the conclusion Ken writes:

It could be argued, though, that to open the possibility of GOD's speaking through other means than the clear teaching of Scripture is to let in all sorts of confusion. After all, a window lets in pollen along with the breeze, flies along with the sunshine, that cackle of crows along with the cooing of doves.

If that were your argument, I would have to agree.

But if we want fresh aid, we have to be willing to live with a few flies.

Years ago I would have opted for the stale air, but today I'd prefer to open some windows (and live with swatting flies).

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### **Délice says**

This book was a revelation to me. A beautiful journey into understanding mystical moments everyone experiences and a profound insight into them. Wonderful. Great read for an artist...

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### **Wade says**

This is a great book that just feels very different from a lot of the Christian books I usually read, it just feels more poetic. It's about just being intimate with God and connecting with Him deeply.

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### **Liz says**

Wow! I know this is a good book because I can't stop thinking about it. Sometimes it's so good that I have to put it down because it's so thought provoking.

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### **Olivia Elmes says**

I am going to read this book many more times in my life! It's one of those reads, that just ties things together. It makes sense! It's creative and so well written, truly impacted the way I will read and write and sing, with a new attuned spirit towards seeking God! Sorge is an artistic and truthful writer.

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### **John Bechtold says**

The author shared many good insights and more than most other books, I identified with this author as he shared his struggles with trying to begin a career as a writer. He shows many ways to see God and our soul in the everyday activities and events surrounding our lives. This was a good book.

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## Neil R. Coulter says

People at work wanted to read this and discuss it together, which we'll start doing next month. And so I wish I enjoyed it a lot more than I did. It's not terrible, it's just a little syrupy for my tastes. One challenge for me as I read it is that I didn't know anything about Ken Gire, but his writing style feels like what you'd say to a close friend. I don't have the trust relationship yet, so until he started telling his own personal history, I didn't care very much about what he was writing (because of the nature of the book's personal, spiritual content). Later in the book, he does tell his story, bit by bit, so that helped.

Two chapters that stood out to me were "Windows of Vocation" and "Windows of the Wilderness." They resonated with where I'm at right now—though Gire is on the other side of it, and I'm still stuck in the middle of the wilderness, which is a little painful. Gire writes:

Suddenly I found myself against a God who baited me and then set the hook. But it was not the punishment of the hook. That was nothing. It was the hunger in my soul, and that I was against something, or something was against me, that I did not comprehend. That was everything.  
(108)

I know that feeling, and I can't wait to be through it and looking back on it in hindsight. Someday.

Gire's chapter "Windows of Art" is a really nice example of one person getting to know an artist (Van Gogh) and finding depth and meaning in the journey. That chapter made me want to read more about Van Gogh.

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## David Campton says

This is a book that I have had on my bookshelf for a long time, and despite it being repeatedly recommended by others, especially during a period of prolonged depression, I never got round to reading it. I'm so glad I now have and would recommend it to anyone. It has hints of Philip Yancey's style and spirituality about it, but rather than using the experiences of others, as is Yancey's journalistic approach, Gire uses his own life experiences as hooks to hang his thesis on. Coming from a thorough-going "Bible-focused" evangelical perspective, Gire encourages us to open our eyes to see and hear God speaking to us through other "windows" of revelation. The confessional, devotional tone and Gire's poetic turn of phrase (which actually I found more evident in his prose than his poetry) makes up for any lack of theological depth. A good Lenten study particularly if you want something that is awake to literature and the arts. A second reading wasn't perhaps as good as the first, but that is the nature of the book and doesn't detract from my initial assessment of its merits.

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## Claxton says

Sometimes sentimental, but I love how Gire can start a sentence & even halfway through I have no idea where it's going, & it regularly ends in pleasant surprise, making connections I didn't see coming. He's probably too soft & even sappy for many (esp. men), but so well read -- this work is a tapestry of great writers and thinkers and artists -- there is depth and brilliance here, not just sentiment.

Here are a few favorite passages (again, for my sake mostly):

Whenever I hear Górecki's "Third Symphony" or Rachmaninoff's "Vespers," whenever I read Rilke's poem "The Man Watching" or Harper Lee's book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, whenever I see the movie *Camelot* or the stage play *Les Misérables*, something "Tookish" wakes in me, a sleepy-eyed awareness that there is more to me than I know. And suddenly I want to set aside my walking stick and strap on a sword, and leave the cozy security of my hobbit hole in search of some far-off adventure.

Like the dormant gene that wakes with the dawn of our adolescence, rousing us toward adulthood, moments like these reveal we are destined for greater things than make-believe adventures in the fenced-in yards of our youth.

Art, literature, and music waken us to the alluring beauty of that destiny. But, as C. S. Lewis cautions, "The book or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing.... They are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never visited." .....

This longing that wells up in us, though, does not spring into existence on its own. "God is always previous," is the way the theologian von Hügel put it. "You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you," is the way Aslan put it, the lion in the *Narnia Chronicles* who called Edmund and three other children from England into the magical land of Narnia. The way the apostle John put it was, "We love because he first loved us." Maybe, too, that is why we long.

"God's yearning for us stirs up our longing in response," said Howard Macy in *Rhythms of the Inner Life*. "God's initiating presence may be ever so subtle—an inward tug of desire, a more-than-coincidence meeting of words and events, a glimpse of the beyond in a storm or in a flower—but it is enough to make the heart skip a beat and to make us want to know more." .....

Parables are pictures that emerge from the jigsaw events of life, however irregular or disconnected they may first appear. "All happenings, great and small, are parables whereby God speaks," said Malcolm Muggeridge; "the art of life is to get the message." To see all that is offered us at the windows of the soul and to reach out and receive what is offered, this is the art of living. ....

Art can warm even a chilled and sunless soul to an exalted spiritual experience. Through art we occasionally receive—indistinctly, briefly—revelations the likes of which cannot be achieved by rational thought.

It is like the small mirror of legend:  
you look into it but instead of yourself you glimpse for a moment the  
Inaccessible, a realm forever beyond reach. And your soul begins to  
ache ...

#### ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN

C. S. Lewis explained the right way to look at a work of art when  
he said: "We sit down before a picture in order to have some-  
thing done to us, not that we may do things with it. The first de-  
mand any work of art makes upon us is surrender. Look. Listen.  
Receive."

For many of us, though, that is not what we do. We look and  
listen, but instead of receiving, we react; instead of surrendering,  
we resist; instead of coming away changed, we come away crit-  
ical. And that is true whether we come away from a movie we see  
on Saturday night or a sermon we hear on Sunday morning.

The spiritual world ... cannot be made suburban.  
It is always frontier, and if we would live in it,  
we must accept and even rejoice that it remains untamed.

HOWARD R. MACY

Rhythms of the Inner Life

All of this, and, if I paid the tuition, showed up for classes,  
did the required work, I would become in four years a master of  
theology.

It was all so safe.

And safe is what we all really want to be, isn't it? It was what  
the children wanted to be in C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and  
the Wardrobe*, when they first heard that the true king of Narnia  
was a lion.

Susan asks the Beavers. "Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather  
nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver, "if  
there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees  
knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver  
tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe.  
But he's good."

"The Man Watching" by Rainer Maria Rilke.

I can tell by the way the trees beat, after  
so many dull days, on my worried windowpanes  
that a storm is coming,  
and I hear the far-off fields say things  
I can't bear without a friend,  
I can't love without a sister.

The storm, the shifter of shapes, drives on  
across the woods and across time,  
and the world looks as if it had no age:  
the landscape, like a line in the psalm book,  
is seriousness and weight and eternity.

What we choose to fight is so tiny!  
What fights with us is so great!  
If only we would let ourselves be dominated  
as things do by some immense storm,  
we would become strong too, and not need names.  
When we win, it's with small things,  
and the triumph itself makes us small.  
What is extraordinary and eternal  
does not want to be bent by us.  
I mean the Angel who appeared  
to the wrestlers of the Old Testament:  
when the wrestlers' sinews  
grew long like metal strings,  
he felt them under his fingers  
like chords of deep music.

Whoever was beaten by this Angel  
(who often simply declined the fight)  
went away proud and strengthened  
and great from that harsh hand,  
that kneaded him as if to change his shape.  
Winning does not tempt that man.  
This is how he grows: by being defeated, decisively,  
by constantly greater beings.

C.S. Lewis: "Why love if losing hurts so much? I have no answers,  
only the life I have lived. Twice in that life I was given the choice,  
as a boy and as a man. The boy chose safety. The man chose suf-  
fering. The pain now is part of the happiness then. That's the  
deal."

Søren Kierkegaard once said: "Life must be lived forwards,  
but it can be understood only backwards."

"The more I think it over," said van Gogh, "the more I feel  
that there is nothing more truly artistic than to love people."

Whenever you find tears in your eyes,  
especially unexpected tears,  
it is well to pay the closest attention.  
They are not only telling you something about  
the secret of who you are, but more often than not God



is speaking to you through them of the mystery  
of where you have come from and is summoning  
you to where, if your soul is to be saved,  
you should go next.

FREDERICK BUECHNER

Whistling in the Dark

Where did Solomon get his eyes and his ears and his heart to  
understand?

God appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon, telling him to ask  
for whatever he wanted. When he asked for “a discerning heart”  
so he could have the wisdom to rule God’s people, it pleased  
God so much He granted the request beyond Solomon’s wildest  
dreams.

It’s interesting to note that the word discerning comes from  
the Hebrew word that means “to hear.” A “hearing heart” is what  
Solomon literally asked for, a heart that could look at an over-  
grown field or an ant at work and see windows of the soul. That  
same word is used in the great commandment, “Hear, O Israel:  
The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with  
all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”  
The first step toward being wise is also the first step in loving  
God, and that is being attentive to the words He has spoken.

“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs  
through it,” wrote Maclean as he was concluding his book. What  
the psalmist writes is a little different. Eventually, all things  
merge into oblivion. All things on earth, that is. But in heaven  
stands the city of God, and a river runs through it. One of the  
things the river offers the city is its gladness.

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

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### **Lorraine Bilodeau says**

Read this years ago. I loved this book and refer back to it often! It looks at how God is in every part of our  
life experiences.

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### **Jeff Abramovitz says**

#### **Windows of the Soul is an incredibly powerful read!**

My wife and I read Windows of the Soul at the recommendation of a friend. I didn’t have a lot of  
expectations. But, as we progressed through the book, it became evident why this book has become one of

my friends' favorites and why it is now one of ours. I suspect that one time won't be the only time we read it. Ken Gire is to writing as Van Gogh is to painting. Masterful!

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