Experiencing God

Knowing and Doing the Will of God

BBC Student Ministries
2011/2012
Introduction

Have you ever found yourself in any of these situations?

- Frustrated with your Christian experience
  - You know that there should be more to your life than what you currently have
  - You know that there should be a deeper relationship between you and God
  - Your Christian walk has become dry and monotonous

- Begging God to show you what he wants you to do, but not getting any answers
  - You want that deeper walk and you put a ton of energy into asking God for it but you are still stuck in the same ruts
  - Feels like God is not listening, not there, not caring

- Desiring a deeper and more intimate walk with God, but not sure what to do
  - You know you need to be more in tune with God, to be more obedient to him
  - You have tried some things (i.e. reading your Bible, praying, etc.) but nothing seems to be working

Goals

- To be able to hear when God is speaking to us
- To be able to clearly identify his activity in your life
- To be able to believe him to be and do everything he has promised
- To be able to adjust our beliefs, character and behavior to God and his ways
- To be able to recognize a direction He is taking in our lives and identify what he wants to do through our lives
- To be able to clearly know what we need to do in response to his activity in your life
- To be able to experience God doing through us what only he can do
NOTE: Just going through this study is not going to achieve these goals. These are things that only God can do through us. You must be willing to take the things we discuss and actually implement them into your life in order for things to change!

Seven Realities
1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with him in his work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal himself, his purposes and his ways.
5. God’s invitation for you to work with him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what he is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey him and he accomplishes his work through you.
Keeping a Spiritual Journal

One of the goals for this study is to gain the ability to hear God when he is speaking to us. Part of learning to hear God involves learning to focus our heart and our mind on God. One way to gain this type of focus is through spiritual journaling.

For the purpose of this study, it will be good to have a notebook that can be divided up into five categories.

The first category is Testimonies. In this section, you will be able to write down how God is working around you and through you.

The second category is Daily Review. Use this section to record summaries of what God is saying to you through your time alone with him. You can also include areas in your life that you believe God is leading you to change or adjust to match with his will and other steps of obedience that you know God is calling for.

The third category is for Weekly Review. After going through each week’s group teaching you can use the following questions to review God’s activity in your life. Some weeks you may not need to answer each question.

- What has God revealed to you about himself? (His name, character, nature)
- What has God revealed to you about his purpose? (His will, plans, desires, activity around you, assignment for you, goals objectives)
- What has God revealed to you about his ways? (How he acts, what he does, how he responds in certain circumstances, the kind of people he uses, the ways he involves people in his work, the way he accomplishes his purposes)
- What Scriptures has god used to speak to you about himself, his purposes or his ways?
• What particular person or concern has God given you a burden to pray for? What has he guided you to pray for this person or concern?
• What has God done through circumstances that have given you a sense of his timing or direction about any aspect of his will?
• What adjustment is God leading you to make in your life?
• What acts of obedience have you taken this week?
• What acts of obedience do you know God wants you to take?

The fourth category is *Spiritual Markers*. These are the times that God has clearly spoken to you. You need to write these events down so that you can go back to this journal and be reminded of how God has been faithful to do what he has promised to do.

The fifth category is *Prayer Requests*. Use this section to track prayer requests for yourself and for others. When God answers a request you have in your journal, be sure to go to that request and write down the date God provided the answer and a brief note how it was answered. These answered requests will become another type of spiritual marker in your life!
Small Groups #1

Memory Verse introduction
John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

- What is our role in our relationship with God?
  ______________________________________________________

- What is God’s role in his relationship with us?
  ______________________________________________________

- What type of relationship does a vine have with its branches?
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________

- What is one key to “bearing much fruit”?
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________

- What does “bearing fruit” mean?
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
  ______________________________________________________
Jesus’ Example

Read John 5:17, 19-20 below and answer the questions that follow.

17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

19 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

1. Who is always at work?

   ____________________________________________________________

2. How much can the Son do by himself?

   ____________________________________________________________

3. What does the Son do?

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Why does the Father show the Son what he is doing?

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

This passage clearly shows how Jesus knew what he should do. Here is an outline of Jesus’s approach to knowing and doing God’s will.

- The Father has been working right up until now.
- Now the Father has me working.
- I do nothing on my own initiative.
- I watch to see what the Father is doing.
- I do what I see the Father is doing.
- The Father loves me.
- He shows me everything he is doing.
Consider This
Take a moment to really evaluate your life. What is your relationship like with God right now? Are you a branch that is connected to the True Vine? Are you drawing your strength and your direction from God?

If you are not “branching from God” in any area of your life, how’s that working out for you? Do you have the joy and peace in your life that you really desire?

Ask God to help you honestly evaluate your life to find those areas where you are relying on someone or something other than God. Ask God to help you surrender those areas to him every day! Ask God to show you his will for you in life and to have the strength and courage it will take to follow him wherever he will lead you.

It might help to actually write down your prayer in your journal.

NOTES

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
Jesus – the way and the model

Memory Verse:
John 15:5 - I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Jesus is the way
A relationship with Christ is the beginning point to having a deeper, more personal relationship with God.

Once we have begun the relationship with God through salvation, we should want to grow in our walk with him. God does not want us to simply have the benefit of eternal life – he wants us to have a life in this world that is complete and full:

- John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
  - __________-abundant in _________________ and _________________!

Jesus is our “map”
Which of the following requests more closely resembles the way we ask God for guidance/to know his will for our life?

_____ Lord, what do you want me to do? When do you want me to do it? And please tell me what the outcome will be!

_____ Lord, just tell me what to do one step at a time and I will do it.

Typically, we want to have ________________, ________________ and ________________ “road map” from God before we will do anything.
John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

- He did not say, “I will show you the way.”
- He did not say, “I will give you a road map.”
- He did not say, “I will tell you which direction to go.”
- What did Jesus mean when he said “I am the way?”

Example of Abram
Genesis 12:1-5

- What did God want Abram to do? ________________________
- How did God direct Abram in this passage? ________________________
- How did Abram respond? ________________________

Many times, God simply calls people to follow him without giving many details. When God seems to be calling you to do something but not providing the details, remember Matthew 6:33-34:

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

If we really desire to be obedient to God in all areas of our lives, we can follow him with confidence even when we don’t have the details we would like to have.
Jesus is the model
When we learn how God has consistently related to people in the past, we can expect him to relate to us in a similar way.

True or false:
_______ I can trust my experience as an effective way to know and follow God
_______ I should always evaluate my experiences based on the truths I find in God’s word
_______ I may get a distorted understanding of God if I do not check my experiences against the truths of Scripture.
_______ I can trust God to work in my life similarly to ways I see him working throughout the Scriptures.

Our Guidebook
“Look to see what God says and how he works in the Scriptures. Make your decisions based on biblical truths/principles.”

Why is it important to read the Bible?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

When God called Abram in Genesis 12, Abram was given very few details. Look up the following references and see if there is a pattern we can expect to see in our own life – next to each reference, write who was called and the details they were given.
Matthew 4:18-20 ______________________________________________________
Matthew 4:21-22 ______________________________________________________
Matthew 9:9 ______________________________________________________
Acts 9:1-9 ______________________________________________________
Sometimes God gives details, sometimes he doesn’t. **Regardless of the amount of details that are given, we must stay ________ to Christ – we have to maintain our ___________ with God to encounter him.**

**Asking the right question**

“If we always ask the wrong question, we will always get the wrong answer!”

What is the right question and why?

- “What is God’s will for my life?”
- “What is God’s will?”

John 5:17, 19-20 - ^17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.” ^19 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ^20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

- Who is always at work? ________________________________
- How much can the Son do by himself? __________________
- What does the Son do? ________________________________
- Why does the Father show the Son what he is doing? __________

**Summary of Jesus’ example in John 5:17, 19-20**

1. The Father has been working right up until now.
2. Now the Father has me working.
3. I do nothing on my own initiative.
4. I watch to see what the Father is doing.
5. I do what I see the Father doing.
6. The Father loves me.
7. He shows me everything he is doing.
Reality #1 – God is always at work around me

One of the greatest tragedies we experience is that, although we really want to experience God on a deeper level, we are encountering him day after day and failing to recognize him!

This week, pray that God will help you to see where he is working around you and that you would be willing to adjust your life so that you can be in the center of his activity.
Being a Servant of God

Matthew 20:26-28 - 

26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be __________ among you must be your ____________, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Defining a “servant”

• One who __________ __________ what the master wants them to do and then ______________ it.

World’s View = servant finds out what the master wants and goes off by _______________ to do it.

God’s View = _______________ and clay

• Servant is _______________ by the master for a ____________.
• Servant must be _______________.
• Servant must _______________ in the master’s _____________.

Servant Example – Elijah – 1 Kings 18:16-39

• Elijah was outnumbered __________ to 1 – verse 19
• ____________ obeyed God and challenged the false prophets
• God did amazing things.
  o Elijah was willing to be _______________.
  o Elijah was willing to _______________ in the master’s hand.

Key Principle

“Don’t just do something, stand there!”

• Too many times we are “busy” and don’t take the time to actually sit and listen for God’s leading.
• “Find out where the Master is, then that is where you need to be”
o John 15:5 - I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for _________ from me you can do ____________.

o John 12:26 - If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, ____________ will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Summary Statements

- To be a servant of God, I must be moldable and I must remain in the Master’s hand.
- Apart from God, I can do nothing.
- With God working through me, I can do anything God can do.
- When I find out where the Master is, then I know that is where I need to be.
- I come to know God by experience as I obey him and he accomplishes his work through me.

Servant Example – Moses – Exodus 2-4

Seven Realities in Action

1. God was already working around Moses.
   - Exodus 2:23-25 – 23During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.24And God ________ their groaning, and God ___________ his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.25God saw the people of Israel-and God ____________.

2. God pursued a continuing love relationship with Moses that is real and personal.
   - Exodus 3:10 – ______________, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”
3. **God invited Moses to become involved with him in his work.**

- Exodus 3:8, 10 – “and I have come down to ________ them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to ________ them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 10. Come, I will ________ you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

4. **God spoke to Moses to reveal himself, his purposes and his ways.**

- Exodus 3:2-8 – “And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush...” 4. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God ________ to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” 5. Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” 6. And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. 7. Then the Lord said, “I have surely ________ the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have ________ their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their ____________, 8. and I have come down to ________ them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to ________ them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey...”

5. **God’s invitation for Moses to work with him lead to a crisis of belief that required faith and action.**

- Exodus 3:11, 13 – “__________ _______ _______ that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 13. Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your
fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what ________ ______ ________ to them?”

- Exodus 4:1, 10 – Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not _______ me or _______ to my voice, for they will say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you.’” But Moses said to the Lord, “Oh, my Lord, I am not ________, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”

- Exodus 4:13 – But he said, “Oh, my Lord, __________ send someone else.”

6. Moses had to make major adjustments in his life to join God in what he was doing.

- Hebrews 11:24-29 – By __________ Moses, when he was grown up, __________ to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, __________ rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By __________ he __________ Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By __________ he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. By __________ the people __________ the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

7. Moses came to know God by experience as he obeyed God and God accomplished his work through Moses.

- Exodus 14:15-16, 21-22, 31 – The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it,
that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry
ground.\textsuperscript{21} Then Moses \underline{________________} out his hand over the
sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all
night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were
\underline{________________}.\textsuperscript{22} And the people of Israel went into the midst
of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their
right hand and on their left.\textsuperscript{31} \textbf{Israel saw the great power that the}
Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord,
and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

\textbf{What can one “ordinary” person do?}
\underline{________________} person + \underline{________________} with God +
\underline{________________} with God = \underline{________________}.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29  
\textsuperscript{26} For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were \underline{__________}
according to worldly standards, not many were \underline{__________}, not many
were of \underline{__________} birth.\textsuperscript{27} But God chose what is \underline{__________}
in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is \underline{__________} in the
world to shame the strong;\textsuperscript{28} God chose what is \underline{__________} and despised
in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that
are,\textsuperscript{29} so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

\textbf{Summary Statements}
\begin{itemize}
  \item God \underline{__________} what he is about to do.
  \item The revelation becomes an \underline{________________} to join him.
  \item I can’t \underline{__________} where I am and \underline{__________} with God.
  \item God is able to do \underline{__________} he pleases with one ordinary
    person fully \underline{________________} to him.
\end{itemize}
God-centered Living

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-centered</th>
<th>God-centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life focused on self</td>
<td>Life focused on God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in self and your accomplishments</td>
<td>Confidence in God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on self and your own abilities</td>
<td>Depending on God and his ability/provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to be acceptable to the world and its ways</td>
<td>Seeking to be acceptable to God and to his ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at circumstances from a human perspective</td>
<td>Looking at circumstances from God’s perspective/Kingdom perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who was self-centered and who was God-centered?**

_______Eve saw the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and that it was pleasing to the eye desirable for gaining wisdom, so she ate it – Genesis 2-3

_______Joseph resisted the temptation of Potiphar’s wife because he did not want to sin against God – Genesis 39

_______Ten of the spies Moses sent into the Promised Land said “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we.” – Numbers 13

_______Joshua and Caleb said, “If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land...and will give it to us.” – Numbers 14

_______King Asa was facing the army of Zerah the Cushite. He said, “Lord, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the might. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you and in your name we have come against this army.” – 2 Chronicles 14:9-11
King Asa and Judah were being threatened by Baasha, king of Israel. Asa sent gold and silver from the temple and his own palace to the king of Aram asking for his help. – 2 Chronicles 16:1-3

John 12:23-25 - 23And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

God’s purposes, not our plans
A God-centered life focuses on God’s _______________, not our own _______________.

When God acts in the world, he always uses people:
• When God was going to destroy the earth with a flood in Genesis 6, he came to _______________.
• When God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18, he came to _______________.
• When God was going to deliver the people from slavery in Judges 6, he came to _______________.
• When God was going to start the greatest missionary explosion every recorded, he came to _______________.

In each of these situations, what mattered most?
   God’s plans       Man’s plans

None of these people were planning on _______________ God.
None could imagine what God was _______________ to do.
So none of their plans could have _______________ up with God’s plan.
You never find God asking people to dream up what they want to do for him!
God’s plans versus our plans
Moses - Exodus 2:11-15

Moses had a plan to free the Jews from slavery:
• His ____________ were good.
• His plans did not match ______________ plan.
• He chose to _______________ his plans.
• Results of Moses’ plan:_____________________________________________________

We cause many of our own problems in this life by insisting on following our plans instead of God’s plans.

Israel - Numbers 13-14
People’s perspective - __________________________________________
God’s perspective - ________________________________________________

God hasn’t changed
God has not changed the way he works with people to carry out his plans and his purposes.

We have to ________________ our lives to God so that he can do ________________ us what he wants to do.

God is not our _________________ - he will not move to meet us!

Summary statements
• To know and do the will of God, I must ____________ self and have a God-______________ life.
• I must seek to see from God’s _________________ rather than from my own distorted human perspective.
• I am the _________________ – I have to ________________ my life to what God is about to do.
Key Verse
John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Read John 15:1-11 and answer the following questions:

• What is our role in our relationship with God?

• What is God’s role in his relationship with us?

• What type of relationship does a vine have with its branches?

• What is one key to “bearing much fruit”?

• What does “bearing fruit” mean?
Seven Realities
1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with him in his work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal himself, his purposes and his ways.
5. God’s invitation for you to work with him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what he is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey him and he accomplishes his work through you.

The Seven Realities in Action
1. God was already working around Moses.
   - Exodus 2:23-25
   - What was God doing in these verses? How was working already in this situation?
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________

2. God pursued a continuing love relationship with Moses that is real and personal.
   - Exodus 3:10
   - How was God seeking a personal, real love relationship with Moses? (What had he done in the past to show Moses He was seeking him?)
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
3. God invited Moses to become involved with him in his work.
   - Exodus 3:8, 10
   - **How did God invite Moses to become involved in what he was doing?**
     
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________

4. God spoke to Moses to reveal himself, his purposes and his ways.
   - Exodus 3:2-8, 10
   - **How did God reveal himself to Moses?**
     
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
   - **What were God’s purposes?**
     
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
   - **What method would God use?**
     
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
5. God’s invitation for Moses to work with him lead to a crisis of belief that required faith and action.
   - Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10; 4:13
   - What was the Crisis of belief for Moses?
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________

6. Moses had to make major adjustments in his life to join God in what he was doing.
   - Hebrews 11:24-29
   - What adjustments did Moses have to make in order to join God?
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________

7. Moses came to know God by experience as he obeyed God and God accomplished his work through Moses.
   - Exodus 14:15-16, 21-22, 31
   - What things about God did Moses learn through his obedience and through God accomplishing his work through the life of Moses?
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
     ______________________________________________________
God-centered living

To live a God-centered life, you must start seeing things from God’s viewpoint or perspective rather than our own distorted viewpoint. You never find God asking us to dream up something big that we want to do for him. Our dreams and plans and goals will always be so small when compared with what God wants to do.

- *Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

Read John 12:23-25 and answer the questions below. Don’t just give the expected answer…try to really personalize it—What do I need to do? What do I need to change? How should I be living my life?

- **Explain verse 25 in your own words.**

- **How do we “hate this life”?**
• **What are some things that are standing in the way of your relationship with God?** What are some things you need to “lose” and “hate” in your life?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Consider your current relationship with God. Are you living for yourself or for Him? Are you carrying out your own plans and dreams or are you focused on God’s plans for you?

Take a few minutes to write out a prayer to God asking him to help you live a God-centered life.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
God Speaks

God takes the first step
List several examples from the Bible of someone who went to God with a great idea or plan and God implemented that plan and blessed it. Be sure to give references!

Every great thing that happened in the Bible was initiated by______________________.

Philippians 2:13 - for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

How does God reveal his plan or purpose to us?

- Through the______________________.
- Through the______________________.
- Through ________________________.
- Through ______________________________.
- Through the____________________ or other ____________________.

Practical advice for seeking God’s will – George Mueller

- Get my heart so __________________ on God that I have no will of my __________ in regard to the matter.
- Do not trust __________________ or ________________ so that I am not liable to great delusions.
- Seek the will of the _____________ of God through or in connection with the ____________ of God.
- I take into account providential ________________.
- I ask God in prayer to ________________ his will to me.
- I make a deliberate ________________ according to the best of my ability and knowledge.
- I ________________ to seek God’s wisdom and insight and peace.
- I then proceed if my mind is at ____________.

How did Mueller begin in his search for God’s will?
___ He tried to decide what he wanted to do for God.
___ He tried to make sure he had no will of his own.
___ He tried to want only God’s will.

What did Mueller say leads to possible delusions or false directions?
___ Basing the decision on feelings alone.
___ Following the slightest impressions.
___ Looking to the Spirit alone for direction.

In which of the following pairs did Mueller look for agreement?
___ His desires and circumstances.
___ The Spirit and the Word.
___ The counsel of others and his own desires.
___ Circumstances and a sense of peace.

What was the final test whereby Mueller came to a judgment about God’s will?
___ He identified whether the “door” was open or closed.
___ He asked a pastor friend what he thought.
___ He proceeded with a hunch and watched to see if it worked.
___ He used prayer, Bible study and reflection to find lasting peace about a proposed direction.
God speaks to his people

One of the problems we have hearing God speak to us is that we don’t really believe that God wants to speak to us!

Hebrews 1:1-2a - ¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.

- How did God speak during the Old Testament? ________________
- How does God speak to us now? ________________

John 14:26 - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

- Who did Jesus promise to send as a helper? __________________
- What does the Holy Spirit do for us? ________________________
  _________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________

John 16:13-14 - ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

- What does the Holy Spirit do for us? ________________________
  _________________________________________________________
- Why is the significance of the Holy Spirit being called the “Spirit of truth”? ________________________
  _________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________

John 8:47 - Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”
There is no secret method or formula we can follow to know God’s voice. The key is having an intimate love relationship with God!

God speaks with a purpose
How many times in the Bible can you find an example of God speaking with someone to simply “shoot the breeze”? ______________________

When God speaks, he has a very specific purpose.

Genesis 12:1-3 – God’s purpose in telling Abram to move was ________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

The moment God speaks to you is the very _______________________
God wants you to __________________ to him.

Suppose you had planned to go to a movie or watch a football game or go to the mall. Then God confronts you with an opportunity to join him in something he wants to do. What would you honestly do?
___ I would finish my plans and then fit God’s plans into the next available time in my schedule.
___ I would assume that, since God already knew my plans, this new assignment must not be from him.
___ I would try to work out a way to do both what I want and what God wants.
___ I would adjust my plans to join God in what he was about to do.
Summary Statements

- God’s revelation of his activity is an invitation for me to adjust my lie to him and join in his work.
- “I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter.”
- “I do not leave the result to a feeling or simple impression.”
- “I seek the will of the Spirit of God through or in connection with the Word of God.”
- God has not changed – he still speaks to his people today.
- If I have trouble hearing God speak, I am in trouble at the very heart of my Christian experience.
- Knowing God’s voice comes from an intimate love relationship with God.
- The moment God speaks to me is the very moment God wants me to respond to him.
- The moment God speaks to me is God’s timing.
- God has every right to interrupt our lives! He is Lord. When you accepted him as your Lord and Savior you gave him the right to help himself to your life anytime he wants!
A Love Relationship, part 1

Review – Seven Realities

1. God is always at _____________ around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love _______________ with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become _______________ with him in his work.
4. God ___________________ by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal himself, his purposes and his ways.
5. God’s _________________ for you to work with him always leads you to a _________________ of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major _____________________ in your life to join God in what he is doing.
7. You come to know God by ______________________ as you ________________ him and he accomplishes his work through you.

Reality #2
“God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.”

How would you describe your relationship with God?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Mark 12:30 - And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

God created us for a very specific purpose – to have a love relationship with him! Anything else is wrong!
God loves us

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 - “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 14:21 - Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

Romans 8:35, 37-39 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 4:9-10, 19 - In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love because he first loved us.

Who is your “life”?

In what ways has God showed his love for us?
How can we show our love for him?
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

What does God promise to do in response to our loving him?
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

Who loved first, us or God? ________________________________

A love relationship with God is more important than any other factor in your life!
- Anything that ____________________________ with God is wrong.

Matthew 6:24 - “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

What things compete for your love of God?
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
Created for Eternity
We were created to have a _________________ with God that goes on into the future, not just while we are alive on this earth.

When we live our lives strictly for the here and now, we are not living a ____________________________ life.

What are some of the things in your past that are having a strong limiting influence on your life today? (handicaps, troubled family background, failures, shame or guilt, etc.)

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Philippians 3:4-14

4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:

5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ
Jesus has made me his own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

What are some of the things that Paul had done in his past that could impact his relationship with God?

How did Paul value these things? (vs. 8)

What was Paul’s decision to deal with his past? (vs. 13-14)

Investing for the future

Matthew 6:19-21, 33

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

To be loved by God is the highest relationship, the highest achievement, the highest position in life.
A Love Relationship, part 2

Walking with God
How much time do you spend “walking with God”? 
- Praying
- Reading the Bible
- Worship
- Listening

God desires to have a personal relationship with us.

We spend time with God because we ____________ a relationship with him, not because we ___________ __________ _____________ a relationship with him!

Are you having trouble spending time with God? ___________________

If so, do you truly love him?

God pursues a love relationship
God always takes the first step in our relationship with him. On our own, we have no real desire to seek God.

Romans 3:10-12 - 10 as it is written: None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”
- How many people are righteous on their own? ________________
- How many people understand spiritual things on their own? ________________
- How many people seek after God on their own? ________________
- How many people do good on their own? ________________
God draws us to himself
The New Testament word “draw” literally means to ________________.

*John 6:44a* - No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me **draws** him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

- Who can come to Jesus without being drawn by the Father?
  _________________________

God chooses
In each of the following passages, Christ takes the first step to invite people to join him. Read the passage and write down who God chose.

- Matthew 4:18-22 – __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________

- Mark 2:13-14 – __________________________________________________________

- John 1:43 – __________________________________________________________

- Acts 9:1-4 – __________________________________________________________

Consider the following verse very carefully.
*John 15:16, 19b* - 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

What does it mean to you in a practical way that God “chose” you?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________
A real, personal, practical relationship
We can all agree with the statement that God wants a relationship with us. But we struggle to view this “relationship” in the same way that we view our relationships with those around us.

It is hard to imagine having a relationship with God that is real, personal and practical.

Throughout the Bible, we have examples of God having a real, personal, practical relationship with people:

- Genesis 3:20-21 – After Adam and Eve sinned, God _______________ ________________ for them to hide their nakedness.
- Genesis 16:1-13 – God came to Hagar to _________________ and ________________ her after Sarai threw her out.
- Exodus 16:11-14 – God provided ________________ and ________________ for the Hebrews in the wilderness.
- Acts 12:1-17 – God ________________ Peter from prison and death
- Revelation 1:9-20 – God gives John a ________________ of Christ in all his glory and shows him that ultimately God ________________.

God desires to have a “real” relationship with us. All his efforts are made to bring this desire to a reality. God wants to pour his life into ours.

We can know God in a very practical way – God is a very practical God.

Summary Statements

- I do not choose God. He chooses me, loves me and will reveal his eternal purposes in my life.
- The relationship God wants to have with me will be real and personal and practical.
- God wants to work in real and practical ways in my life as I obey him.
**Challenge**

Spend at least 30 minutes this week (outside if possible) walking and talking with God. Focus your thoughts on God. Praise him for his love and mercy. Thank him for expressions of his love to you. Be very specific. Express to God your love for him. Take time to worship and adore him.

After you walk, answer the following questions:

- How did you feel as you walked with God?

- What aspect of your love relationship with God did you become more aware of?

- If this was a difficult or emotionally uneasy time, why do you think it was?

- What happened that was especially meaningful or joyful?
Relationship with God

Knowing God
It is not enough to simply know _____________ about God.
We need to get to know God through ________________.

Names of God
For the Hebrew, a person’s name described their _________________
or ________________.

Moses
Exodus 17:8-15 – Battle with the Amalekites
Jehovah _______________ - “The Lord is my _________________”

Abraham
Genesis 22:1-18
What did God ask Abraham to do (v. 2)?
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

What do you think verse 8 indicates about Abraham?
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

What did God do for Abraham (v. 13)?
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

What name did Abraham give the place (v. 14)?
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Why did God promise to bless Abraham (v. 15-18)?
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
God was in the process of developing Abraham’s ________________ to be the father of a nation.

- He _________________ Abraham to become ______________ with him (to get to know him by ________________).
- Abraham faced a _________________ of _________________.
- Abraham made major _________________ in his life to obey God.
- God provided Abraham _________________ what he needed, _________________ he needed it.
- Abraham now _________________ something about God that he did not know before
  - He learned through personal _________________ that God always keeps his _________________.
  - Abraham’s personal _________________ clarified his existing knowledge of God.

**We come to know God intimately as we experience him working in our life.**

Think about a time in your life, that you have personally experienced God. Briefly write down what happened – what was the situation, how did God work in your life, what did you experience about God that supported the “facts” you already knew?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
God’s Invitation, part 1

Loving God
Experience with God is crucial in the spiritual development of our life.  
• When we truly experience God, we learn something new about him.  
• When we truly experience God, we will become convinced of his love for us.  
• When we are convinced of his love, we can believe and trust him  
• When we are able to believe and trust God, we will obey him

If I love him, I will obey him!
John 14:21 - *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

• Who is the one that loves Jesus? __________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  

• How does the Father respond to the one who loves Jesus? _______  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  

• What will Jesus do for the one who loves him? ________________  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  

How do we demonstrate our love for God? _____________________

*Spirit of the law versus letter of the law*
Define “letter of the law”  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  

Define “spirit of the law”  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  
  _________________________________________________________  

49
Matthew 5:21-30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter of the Law</th>
<th>Spirit of the Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You shall not _______ - verse 21</td>
<td>You shall not be angry – verses 22-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not commit _______ – verse 27</td>
<td>You shall not ___________ – verse 28-30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why should we obey God?**

**God’s nature is love**

He will always express his will toward you in ______________ love

- He never gives us ______________ ______________
- He disciplines us because he loves us and wants us to be in the right relationship with him
- He places trials in our lives to help us grow more ______________ and more ______________ on him

*John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son”*
*1 John 3:16 – “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”*

**God is Love - His will is always ______________ !**

*1 John 4:16 - So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

*Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

*It is ________________ for you to really believe that God is love and not accept the fact that his will is best for us*
God is all-knowing – his directions are always right!
God is ___________________.
• Since he knows everything, it is only expected that his directions would be ____________ for us.
• We may not understand or like them, but they are still best

God is all-powerful – he can enable us to do his will!
God is ___________________.
• God can ________________ anything he plans to do!
• He will make sure his plans will work out ________________ the way he ________________ them to work out.

God’s Commands
God’s commands are for our own __________
Deuteronomy 10:12-13 - 12“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?
• We may not understand why God brings something into our life or why he wants us to do something, but we can be confident that they are what is best for us!

God’s commands ________________ our life
Deuteronomy 32:46-47 - 46 he said to them, “Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. 47 For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”
• God made a _____________________ to Israel – if they obeyed God’s commands, he would ________________ them
• We have the same type of promise – following God will always be ________________ and we will be ________________ for doing it.
Deuteronomy 6:20, 24-25 - 20“When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?’ 24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. 25 And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.’

- What is the purpose of God’s commands?
  _______________________________________________________
  _______________________________________________________

- What are some “land mines” we face in our daily life?
  _______________________________________________________
  _______________________________________________________
  _______________________________________________________
  _______________________________________________________

- How can God’s commands help you deal with these problems?
  _______________________________________________________
  _______________________________________________________
  _______________________________________________________

Summary Statements
- Obedience is the outward expression of my love for God.
- If I have an obedience problem, I have a love problem.
- God is love – his will is always best
- God is all-knowing – his directions are always right
- God is all-powerful – he will enable me to do his will
- If I love him, I will obey him!
Small Groups #4

Relationships

Describe the “perfect” relationship in the following cases:
Between you and your best friend
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Between you and your parents/guardians
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Between you and your significant other
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Between you and God
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

In each of these relationships, what are the signs of a healthy/good relationship?
Between you and your best friend
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Between you and your parents/guardians
___________________________________________________________
In each of these relationships, what are the signs of a bad relationship?
Between you and your best friend

Between you and your parents/guardians

Between you and your significant other

Between you and God
What words come to mind when you think of God?

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

What does it mean to have a practical relationship with God?

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

Experiencing God first-hand
There is a huge difference between knowing something because you have read it in book or because someone else has told you and knowing something because you have personally experienced it.

The same thing is true in our relationship with God. We can read about God and learn about God in many different ways! But until you actually experience God first-hand, you have not reached the depth of relationship that God wants to have with you!

Who are some of the people in the Bible that experienced God first-hand? Give scripture to support your choice

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________
Think about this:

Hebrews 4:14-15  

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Based on Hebrews 4:14-15, what did God do to show us how much he desires a first-hand experience based relationship with us?

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

Memorial Stones
Read Joshua 4:1-7 as a group.

What was the significance of the 12 stones?

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

In each of our lives, we have experienced God in some first-hand way. We may not realize all the times God has personally been involved in our life because we really don’t actively and intentionally look for them, but God is there.

Use the Memorial Stone sheet to write down the times that you have had first-hand experience with God. Keep it in your Bible so you can update it frequently and be reminded that God wants a real, personal love relationship with you!
My Memorial Stones
Joshua 4:1-7

Salvation: ______________________________________________

Baptism: ______________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________
God’s Invitation, part 2

What is the purpose of the Bible?
The Bible shows us that God has been ______________ in the world.

The Bible shows us the saving ______________ of God in our world.

When God was ready to judge the world, he came to ______________ in order to save his creation.

When God was ready to build his nation, he came to ______________.

When God was ready to save his people, he came to ______________.

In each of these examples, God could have just done things by ___________________.
But, he _________________ certain individuals and _____________ them to become involved.

True or False
_______ God created the world and then left it to function on its own.
_______ God is not absent. He is actively working in the world.
_______ People do God’s work by deciding on their own what they think would be good to do and then doing it.
_______ God involves people in his work.
_______ God always takes the initiative to involve people in his work.

God’s Revelation is your Invitation
Is it possible for God to be working around us and we don’t see it?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

58
2 Kings 6:8-19 – Elisha’s servant did not see that God was there protecting them ____________ God opened his eyes.


- The people ______________ the power of God.
- The people did not see ____________!

Two factors required to recognize God’s activity around you:
1. You must be living in an ___________________ ______________ ________________ with God.

2. God must take the initiative to ____________ your spiritual __________ so you can see what he is doing.

Knowing where God is at work
Certain things only God can do.

No one comes to __________ unless the Father draws them.

John 6:44 - No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Two things to remember
1. God speaks when he is about to ________________ his purposes.
2. What God ________________, God ________________.

- Isaiah 14:24, 27 – “The LORD of hosts has sworn: As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, for the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?
- Isaiah 46:11b - I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.
Hearing God, part 1

Reality #4
God speaks by the _________ ____________through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to _________ himself, his purposes and his ways.

Many different ways
Hebrews 1:1-2 - Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

How did God speak to people in the Old Testament?
• _______________ - Abraham, Gideon
• _______________ - Solomon
• _______________ - Elijah
• _______________ - Daniel
• _______________ - Moses
• _______________ - King David

Four keys each time God spoke
1. When God spoke, it was usually __________ to that individual.
   • Moses – ______________________
   • Gideon – ______________________
   • Elijah – ______________________
2. When God spoke, the person was _____________ God was speaking.
3. When God spoke, the person knew _____________ God said.
4. When God spoke, that was the _____________ with God.
   • When God_______________ ________________ to you by any means, that is an encounter with God.
A wrong pattern
“Lord, I really want to know your will. Please stop me if I am wrong and bless me if I am right.”
“Lord, this is what I am going to do. Please close the door if this is not what you want me to do.”
• ______________ God to stop us from not doing his will
• We are ______________ to hear God and follow him.

The right pattern (typically seen in Scripture)
God always gives ______________ on the front end.
• He may not tell you all that you __________ to know or all you __________ you __________ to know.
• He will tell you all you __________ need to know to obey him.
• Our job is to __________ and __________ until God gives us instructions and then to __________ him.

Specific instructions
Noah – Genesis 6-8
• God gave very specific instructions
  o ____________________________________________________________
  o ____________________________________________________________
• God left out some of the details
  o ____________________________________________________________
  o ____________________________________________________________

Abraham – Genesis 12
• God gave specific instructions
  o ____________________________________________________________
• God left out some details
  o ____________________________________________________________
  o ____________________________________________________________
  o ____________________________________________________________

Mary and Joseph – Matthew 1/Luke 1
• God gave specific instructions
God left out some details

God will give you enough specific directions to do ______________ what he wants you to do. When you ______________ more directions, he gives you more according to his _________________.

Summary Statements

- If I do not know when God is speaking, I am in ______________ at the heart of my Christian life.
- That God spoke is far more ________________ than how he spoke.
- When God spoke, it was usually ________________ to that individual.
- When God spoke, the person was ________________ it was God.
- When God spoke, the person ________________ what God said.
- When God spoke, that was the ________________ with God.
- If I do not have clear instructions from God in a matter, I will pray and wait. I will not try to bypass the love relationship.

God speaks by the Holy Spirit

- How did God speak in the Old Testament?
- How did God speak in the Gospels?
- How did God speak in Acts and to the present time?
- How do you come to know God’s voice?
- How do you know God’s timing?
John 16:5-11 - **But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’** *But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.* Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. **And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:** concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

We receive the Holy Spirit at ________________________.
The Holy Spirit resides ____________________.

People in the OT waited for God to come to them.
People in the Gospels saw God through Christ.
We have a 24/7 direct line to God through the Holy Spirit – we can reach God at any time!

**Encountering God**
Whenever God reveals truth to us, that is an ________________ with God.

Our responsibility is to immediately ________________ to God.
When we fail consistently fail to ________________ God, we will stop ________________ God.

*Amos 8:11 - . **Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land- not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.**

63
Reality #4
God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal himself, his purposes and his ways.

God reveals himself
Look up the following references and write down what God revealed about himself.

Genesis 17:1


Leviticus 19:1-2


John 6:51


Malachi 3:6-7


Look at the context of each of these references and write down why God chose to reveal these things.

Genesis 17:1


God reveals his purposes

Proverbs 19:21 - Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.
Psalm 33:10-11 - The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.

According to these two passages, why does God reveal his purposes?


Based on Psalm 33:10-11, answer the following questions:
What does the Lord do to the plans of the nations?
What does the Lord do to the purposes of the people?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

What happens to the plans and purposes of the Lord?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

God wants us to follow him daily, not just follow a plan. If we try to spell out all the details of his will in a planning session, we have a tendency to think: Now that we know where we are going and how to get there, we can get the job done. Then we forget about the need for the daily relationship with God! We may set about to accomplish our plans and forget all about the relationship with God.

Planning is not wrong – it is encouraged throughout the Bible. We need to be very careful that we do not plan more than what God plans for us or that we do not put our plans before God’s plans. We need to let God interrupt us and redirect us any time he wants. Remain in a close relationship with him so you can always hear his voice when he wants to speak to you.

God reveals his ways
Isaiah 55:8 - For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

Why does God reveal his ways to us?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
God reveals his ways to us because that is the only way to accomplish his purposes.

Micah 4:2 - and many nations shall come, and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

God reveals his ways to us so that he can get the glory.

When God does something through us, people will be drawn to God. When we do things through our own strength, people see us and not God.

Summary Statements

- God’s revelations are designed to bring me into a love relationship with him.
- God reveals himself to increase my faith.
- God reveals his purposes so I will do his work.
- God reveals his ways so that I can accomplish his purposes and give him the glory.
Hearing God, part 2

Reality #4
God speaks by the __________ __________ through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to __________ himself, his purposes and his ways.

Keys to Remember
- God can ______________ speak to individuals any way he chooses.
- God wants to ______________ himself to us.
- We need to be in and ______________ love relationship with God so that we can ____________ when he speaks.
- We need to ______________ to hear God speak to us.

True or False
__________ God can uniquely speak to individuals any way he chooses.
__________ In the present God primarily speaks through dreams and visions.
__________ When rightly related to God, his people will hear and recognize his voice.
__________ God often speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible.

The Spirit of Truth
The Bible is God’s ____________.
- It describes God’s complete ____________ of himself to man.
- It is spiritual ____________.
- We ______________ understand spiritual truth unless the Holy Spirit reveals it to us.

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 - 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

“natural person” = man without Holy Spirit
When the Holy Spirit reveals a spiritual ___________ from the Bible, he is personally _______________ to our life!

- This is an _________________ with God.

**Encounter with God**

REMEmBER: Understanding spiritual truth does not __________ you to an encounter with God, it is the ______________ with God.
Responding to Truth

How do you normally feel when reading the Bible?

When God reveals something to you from the Bible:

- ____________ it down.
- ____________ on it.
- ____________ it.
- ____________ the adjustments you need to make
  - Personal life
  - Family life
  - Church life
  - School life
- Write a prayer ____________ to God.
  - Admit - ____________________________
  - Pray - ____________________________
  - Thank - ___________________________
- Make the necessary _________________ to God.
- _______________ to see how God may use that truth in your life.

*One God has ______________ to you through the Bible, how you ______________ is crucial!*

- You must ______________ with the truth.
- You must ______________ that the truth applies to you in the particular instance brought to your memory
  - Confession of sin - ________________ with God that you have sinned.*
Hearing God, part 3

Reality #4
God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the ____________, ____________, circumstances and the church to ___________ himself, his purposes and his ways.

Prayer is a relationship
Prayer is ______ - ______________ communication.
Prayer is not _______________ ________________.
  • Religion

  • Relationship

Prayer in the Spirit
Romans 8:26-27 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

  • Why do we need the help of the Holy Spirit when we pray?

  • What advantages does the Holy Spirit have that we do not have?

  • What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

Key to praying in the spirit - ____________ ____________ _____________.

72
What is happening when we pray?

Spiritual Concentration

1. ______________ to see what happens next
   - Anticipate that God is __________ to work

2. __________ an answer
   - Be ready to make ______________
     - To your __________
     - To your ______________

When God is silent

*How we handle God’s silence tells us a lot about our relationship with Him.*

Two things that may cause God to appear silent

1. __________ is hindering our relationship with God
   - Sin is an obstacle to our relationship with God
   - God will not answer our prayers if we are holding on to sin
     - *Psalm 66:18 - If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.*
     - *Job – his friends kept telling him that he was going through this suffering as punishment for sins*

2. God wants to help us __________ in our relationship with him
   - John 11:1-44 – death and resurrection of Lazarus
   - Mary and Martha informed Christ that Lazarus “the one whom you love” was very sick
   - Jesus heard the news and was silent
   - *John 11:21 - Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."
   - *John 11:22 - But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.”
Ultimately, Christ wanted Mary and Martha to ________ in their walk with him by _________ something new about himself to them through the death of Lazarus.

Their knowledge and understanding of Christ and God the Father were now ___________ ____________ because they had an experience with God.

Their relationship with Christ and God the Father was now radically different because of their ____________.

God used a period of _____________ to prepare Mary and Martha for a spiritual ____________ spurt!

**What to do when God is silent**

- _____________ your life for unconfessed sin or areas that you have not fully _____________ to God
- Continue to _____________
- Continue to _____________
- Continue to maintain/grow your ____________ with God
- Do not give in to _____________
  - Guilt/shame – once you have confessed your sins, get rid of the shame
  - Self-condemnation – God doesn’t answer prayers based on how good you are
- _____________ God to answer
- _____________ to see what God is going to do
- Be ready to make the necessary ________________ as God reveals himself to you
Hearing God, part 4

Reality #4
God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the __________, ____________, _______________ and the church to ___________ himself, his purposes and his ways.

God’s perspective is vital
Job had no idea what was going on in his life when God allowed Satan to test Job.
• From his perspective all he could see was _______ and __________.
  o BUT: Job stayed true to his understanding of _________, even when he didn’t understand his ________________
    ▪ Job 1:21 - ...The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”
• If Job had simply gone with circumstances (and his friend’s comments), he would have believed that God was __________ or that God did not __________ him.
  o Both statements are completely untrue, but may have ______________ true based on circumstances alone!

Have you ever been in the middle of a tragic or confusing circumstance when you began to accuse Go of things you know are not true of God?

We need to always consider circumstances in light of God’s __________ – God will never contradict himself!

If our circumstances lead us to believe something that is ____________ to what the Bible says, we our ________________ our circumstances.
We have to see our circumstances from God’s _______________ before we will truly understand them.

When circumstances are confusing
1. ___________ in your own mind that God has forever demonstrated his absolute love for you on the cross.
2. Go to God and ask him to help you see his ______________ on your situation.
3. __________ on the Holy Spirit to help you understand your circumstances.
4. __________ your life to God and what you see him doing in your circumstances.
5. ________ all God tells you to do.
6. ________________ God working in and through you to accomplish his purposes.

The truth of your circumstance

Moses and the Hebrew slaves
From the ______________ of the slaves, circumstances indicated that God had _______________ them.

But God does not forget, he does not fail to keep his ______________.

Circumstances did not match the ______________ of God and God went out of his way to show the people who he was!

• The people had _______________ the circumstances and therefore _______________ God.
The Disciples and Christ
Matthew 8:23-27
• The disciples considered the “_________” of their circumstances - vs. 25 – “We are perishing!”
• Christ considered the “_________” of their circumstances
  o Verse 26 – calmed the storm
  o Verse 27 – the disciples “knew” Christ controlled the world but now they had experienced it first-hand
  o They _______________________ God in a new way and now ________________ more about who he was

Widow of Nain
Luke 7:11-17 - 11Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. 12 As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” 14 Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” 15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!” 17 And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

Before Jesus came, how do you think the widow of Nain would have responded to the question: “What is the truth of this situation?”

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

78
When Jesus was present, what difference did He make?

When Jesus revealed himself to the crowd, how did they respond?

Can you trust Christ with “the other half of the story”?

- Christ has made many promises to us in his word
- Christ has kept his promises to everyone in the Bible
- Can we trust that God will be faithful to his word and to us even when we are in the middle of the circumstances, when we can’t see how this is going to end well?

Summary statements

- God’s perspective is vital to understanding my difficult circumstances
- Never determine the truth of your situation by looking at the circumstances
- I cannot know the truth of my circumstance until I have heard from God
Small Groups #6

Reality #4
God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the ____________, ____________, ____________ and the church to ___________ himself, his purposes and his ways.

Select one of the following persons. Read about their encounter with God and answer the questions that follow.

- Noah – Genesis 6-8
- Moses – Exodus 17:8-16 or 24:1-11
- Abram – Genesis 12:1-8 or 13:1-18
- Gideon – Judges 6:11-24
- Joshua – Joshua 3:5-4:9
- Isaac – Genesis 26:17-25
- Jacob – Genesis 28:10-22 and 35:1-7
- Samuel – 1 Samuel 7:1-13

1. Describe the encounter between the person and God. What did God do?

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

2. Why do you think the person built an altar or set up the stone marker?

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

3. What, if any, special names of God or of the stone/altar are given?

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
Stone markers
We spoke in a previous lesson about the purpose of stone markers (Joshua 4). Throughout the Old Testament, stone markers were used to remind the people of an encounter with God. When we first talked about the stone markers, everyone received a “My Memorial Stones” sheet to begin tracking your encounters with God. What were some of the items you put on that list?

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Seeing God’s perspective
What does it mean to “see something from a different perspective”?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

How is God’s perspective on things different than ours?
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Read each verse and determine whether God was speaking of something in the past, something in the present or something in the future.

___________________________ 3:6 - And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”
3:7a - Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.”

3:7b-8 - I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land.

3:10 - Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

3:12 - He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

3:17 - And I have promised that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites... a land flowing with milk and honey.

3:21 - And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty.

God was helping Moses to see things from God’s perspective:
- God had been ________________ with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and even Moses’ father to build a nation.
- God had ________________ Abraham that he would bring the people out of bondage and give them the Promised Land.
- God had been ________________ over them while they were in Egypt.
- God was now ready to ________________ to the suffering of his people
- God had ________________ to involve Moses in his divine purpose for Israel – he was going to use Moses to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt.
• After Moses ________________, God would bring Israel to the same mountain they were on to worship – this would be a _____________ that God had sent Moses to the people and a reminder to Moses that God keeps his promises.

God has a plan, not just “for the world” but for you and me as individuals. We need to really believe this statement in order for us to see things from God’s perspective.

Every act of God builds on the past with a view toward the future.

NOTES