



*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.

¹⁷But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."¹⁹So 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.²⁰For 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**:

³³But *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?”

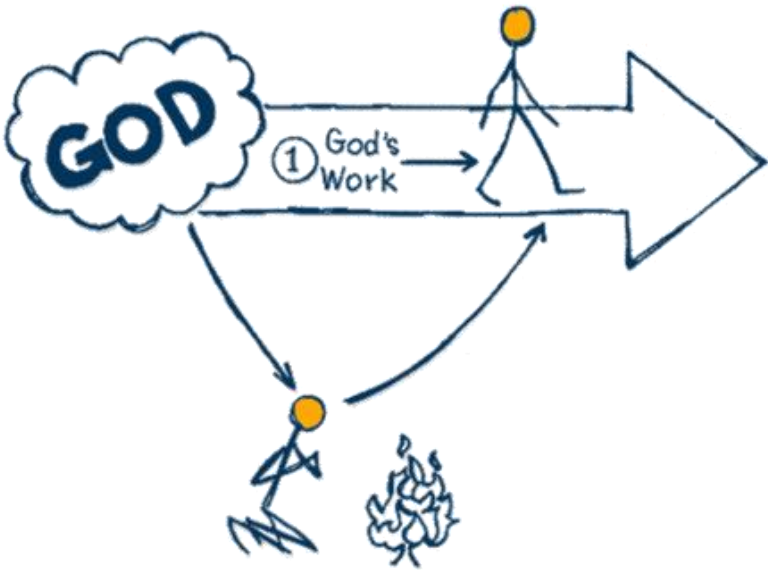
John 5:17, 19-20 - ¹⁷But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”¹⁹So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.²⁰For the Father 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 - ²⁶It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be _____ among you must be your _____, ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸even 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.
 - Elijah was willing to be _____.
 - 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”

- 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 _____.
- 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 – ⁸and 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 – ²And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush...⁴When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, **God** _____ to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”⁵Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”⁶And 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.⁷Then 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** _____, ⁸and **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 – ¹¹But Moses said to God, “ _____ that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”¹³Then 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 – ¹Then Moses answered, "But behold, **they will not _____ me or _____ to my voice**, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" ¹⁰But 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 – ²⁴By _____ Moses, when he was grown up, _____ **to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,** ²⁵ _____ **rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.** ²⁶He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷By _____ **he _____ Egypt**, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸By _____ **he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood**, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. ²⁹By _____ **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 – ¹⁵The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶**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.²¹ **Then Moses _____ 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 _____.**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.³¹ **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.**

What can one “ordinary” person do?

_____ person + _____ with God +
 _____ with God = _____.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

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

Summary Statements

- God _____ what he is about to do.
- The revelation becomes an _____ to join him.
- I can't _____ where I am and _____ with God.
- God is able to do _____ he pleases with one ordinary person fully _____ to him.

God-centered Living

Self-centered

God-centered

Life focused on self	Life focused on God
Confidence in self and your accomplishments	Confidence in God
Depending on self and your own abilities	Depending on God and his ability/provision
Seeking to be acceptable to the world and its ways	Seeking to be acceptable to God and to his ways
Looking at circumstances from a human perspective	Looking at circumstances from God's perspective/Kingdom perspective

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.

Small Groups #2

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,²but 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.¹⁴He 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."

- Why do people not hear from 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 life 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 - ¹⁹I 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,²⁰loving 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 - ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹nor 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 - ⁹In 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.¹⁰In 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.¹⁹We 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.

Mathew 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

⁴though 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: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed, 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 ⁹and 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-¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not 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.¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,¹⁴ 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, ²⁰but 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 - ¹⁰as it is written: None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All 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 - ¹⁶You 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. ¹⁹If 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"

Matthew 5:21-30

Letter of the Law	Spirit of the Law
You shall not _____ - verse 21	You shall not be angry – verses 22-26
You shall not commit _____ – verse 27	You shall not _____ – verse 28-30

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, ¹³and 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 - ⁴⁶he 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. ⁴⁷For 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

Between you and your significant other

Between you and God

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- ¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For 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?

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

Luke 19:41-42 – Christ weeping over Jerusalem

- 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 – ²⁴The LORD of hosts has sworn: As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, ²⁷For 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
 - _____
 - _____
- God left out some of the details
 - _____
 - _____

Abraham – Genesis 12

- God gave specific instructions
 - _____
- God left out some details
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

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 - ⁵But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.⁷Nevertheless, 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.**⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹concerning 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 - . ¹¹Behold, 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.

Small Groups #5

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

Leviticus 19:1-2

John 6:51

Malachi 3:6-7

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 - ¹⁰The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. ¹¹The 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.

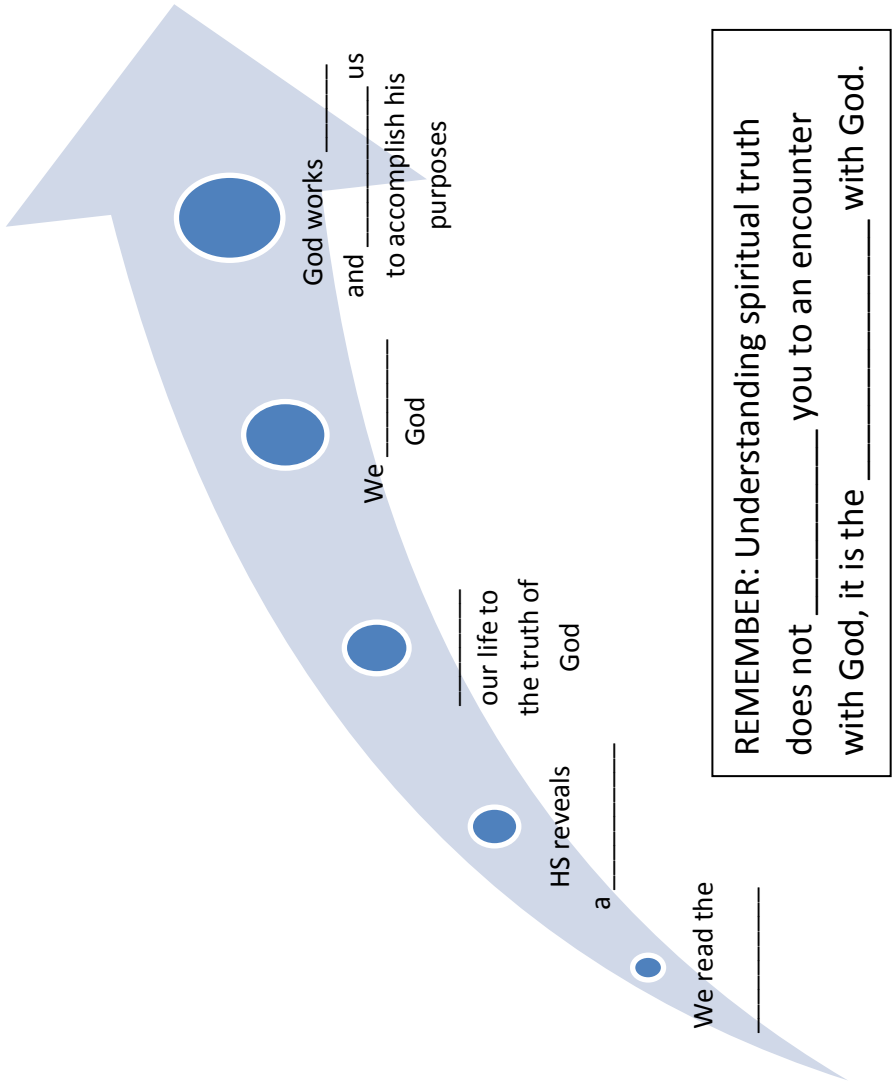
1 Corinthians 2:14-15 - ¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.¹⁵The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

“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



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 8:26-27²⁶Likewise 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.²⁷And 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 - _____.

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 _____.
 - 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.
 - 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
 - Verse 26 – calmed the storm
 - Verse 27 – the disciples “knew” Christ controlled the world but now they had experienced it first-hand
 - 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.¹²As 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.¹³And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”¹⁴Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.”¹⁵And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.¹⁶Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!”¹⁷And 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?”

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.

