



Daily God Walk

Virtues Series

Knowledge

Daily God Walk

Virtues Series

Knowledge:

Gateway

to God

Paul T Smith

© 2017 by Paul Smith – New Hope Ministry Resources
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be
reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any
means without permission of the author.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New
International Version (NIV). All other translations used
will be credited using these abbreviations:

(KJV) – King James Version

(NKJV) – New King James Version

(TLB) – The Living Bible

(TM) – The Message

New Hope Ministry Resources

PO Box 852

Lucerne, CA 95458

707-139-7043

www.nhmresources.org

www.dailygodwalk.org

paul@nhmresources.org

Tips On Leading A Small Group

You might find the Daily God Walk Study Guide Edition a blessing. One of the purposes of the Study Guide Edition is to provide a tool for leading small groups.

At the end of each day's devotion there are four additional sections: Principle, Affirmation, Reflection, and My Thoughts. below is an explanation of how to use each of them in a small group discussion.

Message: This is a principle pulled out of the devotion for the day. Ask the group to express how they can see this principle in the devotion then use that to kick off the discussion.

Affirmation: The affirmation is an example of how we can begin to internalize the principle of the devotion. We can repeat the affirmation in a prayer making it personal. We can also just repeat it throughout the day while giving thought to the principle.

Reflection: These statements and questions are designed to help guide discussion and make application of the devotion in the daily life of the participant.

My Thoughts: This section is just blank lines. Encourage your group to "Journal" their thoughts on the devotion each day. By writing out the thoughts that come from the devotion and the discussion on the devotion the individuals will find that their walk of faith is enhanced.

My experience is that we usually only make it through one or two of the daily devotions at one group setting, but it is good to encourage the group to work through the principle, affirmation, reflection and my thoughts section for each daily devotion at home.

For more information on using the Daily God Walk Study Guide Edition for small groups, go online at:

www.dailygodwalk.org/small-groups.html

We value your comments on the Daily God Walk. It would be a blessing if you sent us an email with your comments about our program. Email us at: paul@nhmresources.org

Day One

Add To Your Faith... Knowledge

Make every effort to add to your faith... knowledge. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. – 2 Peter 2:5-8

Have you ever heard the expression, “blind faith”? I think we all have, in fact many of us have used the term ourselves. We have sometimes said things like, “I’m just going on blind faith.” That isn’t bad if we are talking about something that has little consequence, but if we are talking about issues of eternal consequence we need to have knowledge based faith.

The aspect of faith that Peter is referring to here is not the faith to move mountains, it is the faith which forms the basis for our life. A meaning of this word in the original is “moral conviction.” It is our confidence, or faith, in Christ as the revelation of God which gives us the conviction for a life of being committed to the principles of God’s word.

Paul explains how this faith is formed in us. The pattern he gives is that we hear, we come to believe, our belief becomes faith and we act on the faith that we acquired (Romans 10). That is the faith of the new birth. We acted on our faith by committing our life to Christ and we were born into his kingdom.

We were born into the kingdom of God as babes in the gospel. There was much we did not know about the God of our salvation. Peter is telling us in this passage that if we are to mature in spiritual graces we must continue to add the knowledge of God and his ways to our faith.

The promise is that when we add knowledge, along with the other virtues listed in this passage, to our faith we will not fail to have an effective faith. Not only will we be productive and effective in our faith but we, “will never fall” (v10).

Have you been struggling with inconsistency in your life? Try adding knowledge of God and his ways to your faith.

Prayer: Dear Lord, grant me the grace and discipline to spend time studying your will and your way that my faith will be productive and effective. Amen.

Add To Your Faith... Knowledge

Message: It is our confidence, or faith, in Christ as the revelation of God which gives us the conviction for a life of being committed to the principles of God's word.

Affirmation: I am daily adding knowledge of God to my mind and heart and faith in his word gives me the conviction for a life committed to the principles of the faith.

Reflection: In order to continually be effective in our faith we must establish the pattern of adding knowledge of God and his plan to our heart and mind. What can you do to make adding knowledge to your faith a reality in your life?

My Thoughts:

Day Two

We Know God Through His Spirit

No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

- 1 Corinthians 2:11-12

We can know about God by reading his word, but we cannot know God until we are born of the Holy Spirit. Throughout this series of devotions we are taking a look at how we come to know God and how God reveals himself to us.

It is the attitude of many in the world that they get to know God by looking inside themselves because they believe that God is in all of mankind and we just need to release the god-person inside us to gain understanding.

There is some truth in that belief; but it is not the whole truth. The truth is that there is a place for God in all of us, but that place is not found by looking inside ourselves but by looking to the Lord himself as he is revealed in the person of Christ.

Paul is telling us in this passage that we can know ourselves (v11, "Who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?"), but we can only know God through his Spirit. God does not desire to be hidden from us, but there is a protocol that must be followed to release the knowledge of God through his Spirit that he places in us.

The way to know God is very simple. First we must receive the knowledge of Christ. We must, by faith, commit ourselves to Christ. When we do that the Holy Spirit is released into us and we are then qualified to know God in a personal way.

Once we have taken those steps toward God then we learn to seek him through communion with his Spirit. As we humbly seek him and submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he reveals himself to us.

God has words of peace, comfort and instruction that he releases to us through our communion and fellowship with him

Prayer: Lord, I know the answers to life are not in me but in you. Grant me the grace to know you through the Holy Spirit. In Jesus name, amen.

We Know God Through His Spirit

Message: The way to know God is very simple. First we must receive the knowledge of Christ. We must, by faith, commit ourselves to Christ. When we do that the Holy Spirit is released into us and we are then qualified to know God in a personal way.

Affirmation: I have committed my life to God through Christ and I am growing in understanding and grace as He releases Holy Spirit in me.

Reflection: It is good to establish the practice of listening to Holy Spirit as He speaks truth to our spirit. Give some thought to how you can establish patterns of listening to Holy Spirit.

My Thoughts:

Day Three

The Spirit Within Us Knows The Mind Of God

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

- Romans 8:26-27

This passage gives a good picture of the way Holy Spirit works in us. The Spirit knows the mind of God and with that knowledge knows what we need to pray even when we don't.

The Holy Spirit not only knows the mind of God but he also searches our hearts to know us. It is because he knows us, and he knows the will of God for us, that he can intercede through us.

We can know the mind of God by listening to the Spirit in us. One primary purpose of the indwelling Spirit is to guide us and to reveal to us the will of God. We must learn to listen and to hear him as he gently speaks to us.

Because the Spirit knows the mind of God he knows what lies before us. He knows what we need to do and he knows what we need to avoid. However, we don't always know those things. How do we learn them? It has been the experience of many people that I have talked to that they listen carefully to the Holy Spirit in them for direction.

I've never had the Holy Spirit shout out to me, "Don't go that way, there is disaster ahead," but I have had gentle nudgings from him that were directing me to change course. When I have listened to him I have avoided situations I would rather have avoided, but when I don't listen I am usually sorry.

Some may be asking, "How can I tell when the Holy Spirit is trying to tell me something?" You start by spending time with him. Learn to set aside time when you aren't asking for anything, you're just hanging out with the Lord. I have the practice of often through the day just taking a moment to say, "I love you Lord," and listening for anything he wants to say to me.

Prayer: Father, give me a heart to take the time to hear the Holy Spirit. Help me to be sensitive to his guidance. In Jesus name.

The Spirit Within Us Knows The Mind Of God

Message: We can know the mind of God by listening to the Spirit in us. One primary purpose of the indwelling Spirit is to guide us and to reveal to us the will of God.

Affirmation: The will of God is constantly being revealed to me because I am learning to listen to the gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection: A purpose of this reflection section is to give us guidance in listening to Holy Spirit as he speaks to us. Just now take a little time to communicate with him and give him time to communicate with you.

My Thoughts:

Day Four

The Shepherd Knows Us And We Know Him

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me... I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. – John 10:14-16

Jesus takes a considerable amount of time in this 10th chapter of John to explain the shepherd relationship he has with those who follow him. As we look at some of the things he says in this chapter I want to point out that the success of the shepherd-sheep relationship is based upon knowledge – he knows us, we know him.

In the first verses of this chapter he is talking about how people get in to the sheep pen. The shepherd must lead them in. He speaks of some who enter illegitimately, but those who belong to the shepherd follow him in.

“He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all of his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (v4-5). Those who are truly sheep of the shepherd know his voice and they follow him.

Jesus introduces another interesting truth in verse 7. He says, “I am the gate for the sheep.” It is interesting that he is the shepherd the sheep follow but he is also the gate through which the sheep must go to find safety in the sheep pen.

He goes on to tell of those who try to get into the pen without going through the gate and he calls them “Thieves and robbers.” He goes on to say that these thieves come to steal, kill and destroy, but the true sheep do not listen to them. They don’t listen because the voice they hear is strange to them. They don’t know the strangers.

Do you recognize the shepherds voice? Can you hear him speak in the word of God? Do you follow where he leads? The true test of being a believer is not whether we can recite a formula or a doctrine, but do we know the voice of the shepherd.

Prayer: Lord, sometimes it seems I can hear voices calling me to another path. Give me ears to hear only your voice. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Five

The Power Of Knowledge

A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength. – Proverbs 24:5

Knowledge and wisdom go together like a hand in a glove. The glove is knowledge. It is good, but alone it can do no good. Wisdom is the hand that guides the glove of knowledge. Knowledge with wisdom gives great power.

Have you noticed the tendency of young people to get a little knowledge then run off to use it before they develop the wisdom to make the knowledge effective? Many times I have gotten a revelation from Scripture only to have my revelation debunked by older and wiser students of the Bible.

I have learned to take my revelations to older and wiser people before I expose them to the general public. The result is that I have become wiser, and of course, I am now older too. Most of what you read in these daily devotions came from over 50 years of walking this journey of faith.

I know enough about computers to load software then follow instructions on how to use the software. This devotion is being typed on my computer using a software program that has been very beneficial to the ministry. It is a very complicated program that is very simple to use, as long as you follow the proper steps and keep everything in order.

One of the things I have learned about software is that the instructions don't tell you everything and they certainly don't answer every question. Some things are learned through trial and error.

My wife has a degree in communications, which includes computer use. It gives me a certain sense of satisfaction when she can't figure out how to do something and I can share the wisdom I have gained through the use of the program.

The practice of studying the knowledge I have gained in using the computer has given me wisdom in the application of its programs. How can you apply this principle to spiritual matters?

Prayer: Lord, I tend to run off with the least bit of knowledge before I have gained the wisdom to use it appropriately. Grant me the grace of wisdom. In Jesus name, amen.

The Power Of Knowledge

Message: Knowledge and wisdom go together like a hand in a glove. The glove is knowledge. It is good, but alone it can do no good. Wisdom is the hand that guides the glove of knowledge. Knowledge with wisdom gives great power.

Affirmation: I practice holding on to knowledge until it is seasoned into wisdom before applying it.

Reflection: Can you identify with this lesson? Have there been times when you thought you knew the correct application of something you had learned only to find out later that you only half understood? Think about it.

My Thoughts:

Day Six

The Discerning Heart Seeks Knowledge

The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly. – Proverbs 15:14

What is a discerning heart? The KJV translates this phrase, “The heart of him that hath understanding.” This phrase is a translation of the Hebrew word “*bene*” which means to separate mentally, or to be able to distinguish one thing from another. It can mean to have intelligence, or to be prudent or perceptive.

It isn't too hard to get the idea that the person who has a desire to understand things will seek knowledge. The writer contrasts that truth by reminding us that the foolish person runs off at the mouth with what little he does know with no regard for the depth of meanings it conveys.

There is a story in the life of David about the time his son Absalom was killed in battle. Absalom had performed a coup and had taken the kingdom from his father David. Rather than fight his own son David went into hiding. As Absalom pursued him David's army engaged him.

David was waiting for news of the battle when a messenger came to him. He asked, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” The messenger replied, “I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king's servant and me, your servant, but I don't know what it was” (2 Samuel 18)

In his zeal this young man had a message, but he didn't have the whole story and as a consequence his message carried no value. David said to the messenger, “Stand aside.”

Zeal is a good thing, but coupled with a little knowledge and no real discernment, no good thing will be accomplished. A person with a discerning heart will be prudent with his knowledge and will seek understanding that he may rightly discern how to use his knowledge. Don't settle for the excitement of gaining a little knowledge, but study what you learn so that you may be able to discern how to prudently use it.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to run off to use knowledge that I have little understanding or discernment concerning. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Seven

Knowledge and Understanding Of God Is A Great Treasure

If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. - Proverbs 2:3-5

The only way to truly understand the fear of the Lord is to find knowledge of God. When we don't understand the term, "fear of the Lord," we may think that we are talking about fearing in the sense that we might fear a bad person, or a bully. But that is not the fear of the Lord spoken of in scripture.

On the other side of that issue is people who have no fear of the Lord. They have become convinced that regardless of what they do or how they live God understands them and overlooks all of their sins. Those folks need to gain some knowledge of God so that the fear of the Lord will motivate them to live a righteous life.

On one side you have those who are expecting God to be around every corner with a club to clobber them for doing wrong; on the other side you have those who don't believe they are accountable to God for anything they do. Is there a truth in there anywhere? Yes there is! And that truth can only be found by searching for it as one would seek for a hidden treasure.

God has chosen to reveal himself to man by anointing men to write about him. The Bible is a record of the God of the universe revealing himself to man. Everything we need to know about him and having an effective relationship with him in Scripture.

When we value the words of his revelation as one values silver and we seek to know him through his word and seek understanding as if it were a literal treasure, we will gain knowledge of God. When we do that the Lord gives us wisdom and he opens our understanding to the knowledge of him.

Seek knowledge of the Lord and he will give you wisdom.

Prayer: Lord, I do want to know you better, but I am too often distracted from pursuing you. Grant me a heart to seek you. In Jesus name, amen.

*Knowledge and Understanding Of God
Is A Great Treasure*

Message: The Bible is a record of the God of the universe revealing himself to man. Everything we need to know about him and having an effective relationship with him is found in that revelation.

Affirmation: I am committed to studying Scripture which is the revelation of God and teaches me to how to have an effective relationship with him.

Reflection: The greatest treasure in life is to discover God's purposes for revealing himself to us. Consider how you can increase your knowledge and understanding of God.

My Thoughts:

Day Eight

Knowledge Guided By Love Produces Wisdom

We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God. – 1 Corinthians 8:1

This is an interesting passage. Taken alone one might not know just what is being said, but taken within the context of the entire passage one can gain insight into the nature of our faith walk.

Most of us are aware of the rules of the faith. The do's and don'ts that have been derived from the Bible and from the traditions of the faith. But what does it all mean to us today?

There are those who read the rules and try to make everyone conform to them. I worked in a jail once and there was another jailer there by the name of Ben. We never called him by that name. We called him "Do It" because he carried a rule book around with him and was constantly writing up inmates for minor infractions. He actually caused a riot in the jail with his "Do It" attitude.

Some people in the faith have the same problem. They have a set of rules, but they don't have the wisdom to appropriately apply the rules. That is why Paul writes, "Knowledge puffs up." Not that knowledge is bad, but knowledge without understanding, and not applied in love, causes more damage than good. Knowledge without understanding creates pride.

Paul is dealing with gentile believers who were eating meat that is sold in the market and that has been previously offered to idols. He makes the point that idols are nothing but gods man has invented and there is only one God. He seems to be saying that an idol has no power; no power to cleanse, and no power to corrupt, but God has all power.

The point he is making is that we should not allow the knowledge we have to give us the big head, but we should learn to understand knowledge through the love of God. And the person who loves God is known by God.

Prayer: Lord, give me the ability to grant to others the same grace that I seek for myself. Help me to apply knowledge with love. In Jesus name, amen.

Knowledge Guided By Love Produces Wisdom

Message: We should not allow the knowledge we have to give us the big head, but we should learn to understand knowledge through the love of God. And the person who loves God is known by God.

Affirmation: I have come to understand that I should use knowledge to judge myself, not others. If, when teaching others, I am guided by Love in impart wisdom.

Reflection: Most of us have tried to teach others something we had barely learned ourselves and discovered that without the seasoning of wisdom and God's love we are not very successful in training others in the truth. Think about that.

My Thoughts:

Day Nine

Knowing The Truth Makes You Free

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." - John 8:31-32

"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." People apply this verse to just about any truth, and there is a certain freedom that comes from knowing any truth, but that is not the application Jesus is making here.

Jesus is teaching about the freedom that comes from knowing him, believing his teaching and becoming his disciples. The Jews did not know what he was talking about. Their reply to him was, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

In his typical style Jesus had presented a truth, then, in response to the questions that arose from that truth, he gives an explanation. "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed."

However else one might apply this saying, the primary application of being freed from sin is the most impactful. All of mankind is slave to the nature that drives him to sin and man has attempted to free himself from this horrid slave-master since the beginning of time. But until Christ it couldn't be done.

Now he proclaims; "Get to know me - become my disciple; and I who am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6) will set you free from sin." He not only sets us free from sin but he delivers us from the judgment of sin and gives us eternal life.

The reason he could say the truth will set you free is that he is the Truth. The only way to be truly free from sin and the effects of sin is to become a disciple of Christ. Are you free? Do you truly know the Truth?

Freedom from sin is God's gift to those who know the Truth. The "Truth" is more than a fact, it is the person of the Christ.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for this great revelation. I am grateful that the Truth has freed me from sin. Grant me the grace to continue in the Truth. Thank you Jesus! Amen.

Day Ten

Knowing Him Gives Us Eternal Life

Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now, this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. – John 17:3

The scene of this prayer Jesus is rendering to the Father is a somber one. He has clearly revealed the coming events and now he goes to a private place to pray. He prays, “Father, the time has come.” Indeed, the time had come for Jesus, the Son of God, the one we call Christ, to be offered a sacrifice for our sin.

It was time for Jesus to fulfill his purpose for coming to earth. He came as a lamb to be offered; the only lamb that could accomplish the purpose of his coming. He came to be the eternal sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.

“Now, this is eternal life: that they may know you.” He knew the purposes of the Father and he knew what he must do. His hope was that through the sacrifice of his life others would come to know the Father also.

One of the greatest tragedies in the church is that we have made being a Christian as simple as reciting a magic formula or joining a church. Disregard the person of the Truth; disregard the work of the Holy Spirit; just go through the motions. The result is that the unconverted are leading people in ignorance of the Truth.

Those who do not know him will not be known of him. To know him is to be transformed into his image – if we are not being changed into his likeness we may not know him.

As I write this I am moved to think of the moment Jesus was praying men were coming to arrest him and place him cruelly upon a cross of crucifixion. Yet, knowing this he finally concedes, “Not my will but yours be done.”

In this moment of trial his thoughts were on you and me – those who would believe upon the name of the Son of God.

Prayer: Lord, my heart is filled with gratitude that the very Son of God would willingly lay down his life for me. Thank you Lord. Amen.

Day Eleven

God Knows His Plans For Us

I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29-11

Sometimes we forget God's plans for us. We get caught up in the affairs of the world and we become more influenced by the circumstances around us than we are by the promises of God. We must remember his plans for us.

The Jews were about to suffer the consequences for turning away from God. They had been unfaithful and Jeremiah had been telling them about the judgment God was about to bring upon them. Then, in the middle of prophesying doom and gloom Jeremiah writes, "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise" (v10). Jeremiah promises grace in tribulation.

A pastor friend explores the process of grace and hope. He said first God gives us grace which is a gift from God. Grace inspires hope which becomes the motivation for our life. Then, in order for more grace to come to us we must endure character producing pressure. Thus, there is a cycle; Grace - Hope - Pressure - Grace - Hope - Pressure - Grace....

What happens to many of us is that we respond to pressure by giving up our hope. We feel the pains of tribulation so we try to relieve the pressure. When we do that we destroy the hope that grace has placed in us and we must begin the process over.

The Jews were about to enter pressure like they had never faced before. They were to be taken to Babylon for seventy years. The promise was that when this period was over they would realize the plans God had for them and he promised, "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you" (v12).

God has promised blessings for those who would commit to following Christ. To receive those blessings we must endure the pressure.

Prayer: Lord, I am grateful for your grace and the hope it brings, but I need your strength to endure the pressure hope produces. Amen.

Day Twelve

God Knows The Secrets Of Our Heart

If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart? – Psalm 44:20-21

I am continually amazed by people who claim to know Christ but seem to be totally unaware that he reads their heart. Their attitude and their lifestyle show their true commitment, and God knows the secrets of the heart.

You know the ones I'm talking about. They are the ones who shake the preachers hand and tell him how good the sermon was then go on about their life as if they had not heard anything about Christian living. They are like, "a man who looks at his face in a mirror... and goes away forgetting what he saw" (James 1:24).

I know people who claim to know Christ, but when you talk to them about the way they do business they will say something like, "Business is business and church is church." They have spread their hands to the god of mammon.

Remember the WWJD bracelets? They asked the question, "What would Jesus do?" We would all do well to remember that Jesus knows what we are doing and he knows the motivation of our heart. Our motivation should be to do what Jesus does.

The reality is God doesn't care what kind of bracelet we wear, he cares about what we have in our hearts. Our words don't mean a thing if our heart is not in it. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

The third command is, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" (Exodus 20:7). This command includes those who will claim the name of the Lord for any reason other than from the motivation of being in right relationship with him. God knows your heart – Be careful how you use the name of the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to want people to think I am more spiritual than I am, but you know my heart. Grant me a pure heart. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Thirteen

God Knows And Weighs Our Deeds

Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the Lord is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed. - 1 Samuel 2:3

There is a good story behind this passage. It is a part of the prayer that Hannah, the mother of Samuel made, when she brought him to be dedicated to the service of the Lord.

Hannah's husband, Elkanah, had another wife, Peninnah. Hannah was not able to have children, but Peninnah had children. It was bad enough that Hannah was barren, but Peninnah kept making fun of her.

Elkanah loved Hannah and tried to reassure her of her place in the home, but the constant reminder of her barrenness had led her into a depression. Her husband loved her, but she was not able to return that love by giving him a son.

Finally, desperate for a son she went to the house of God to pray. She was so distraught that her tears and actions caused the priest to think she was drunk. But God heard her prayer and she conceived Samuel. This son was born to her as a direct result of her desperate cry to the Lord.

Samuel was raised in the house of God and he was not only to become a priest but a great prophet. Two books in the Bible carry his name. He anointed the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David. Samuel was true to his calling.

When Hannah made this prayer she seems to be addressing attitude of Peninnah; but the second half of the verse is referring to herself; "for the Lord is a God who knows." Hannah knew her heart was right. She knew that she had conducted herself in an upright manner. When she prayed she knew she had a just cause, and it was her confidence in a just God that gave her the strength to intercede.

When your motive is right and your deeds are right, God will give you the strength to persevere regardless of how you are treated by your adversaries.

Prayer: Lord, I am sometimes tempted to retaliate in like manner against those who oppose me. Grant me the grace to seek your grace. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Fourteen

God Knows The End From The Beginning

Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

- Isaiah 45:9-10

Isaiah had been prophesying hard times for Israel. They would be taken into captivity in Babylon because of their continued disobedience and turning to idols. This prophesy is about a time of deliverance that would come to Israel.

The prophet begins this chapter by speaking against the gods that are made by men to be worshipped by men. The Lord asks, "To whom will you compare me or count me equal?" (v5). Then he says of idols, "Though one cries out to it, it does not answer; it cannot save him from his troubles" (v7).

He is contrasting the gods of men who know nothing and cannot speak anything to he who is the eternal Lord God. God says, "I make known the end from the beginning... My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."

The difference between the God of the Jews and the gods of Babylon is that the Babylonians created their gods and the God of creation created the entire human race. The gods of Babylon will not help a man to do more than he could do without his gods; but the God Israel, the God of creation, can do all that we ask, or even think (Ephesians 3:20).

The Jews were under God's discipline, but God was declaring, "My purpose will stand." What was his purpose? The answer is in verse 13, "I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel." God's purpose was to bring Israel to repentance so he could bless them.

We who are people of faith today, like Israel, are being called to, "Remember the former things." There are times when we are in a troubled place, but that is not the end of God's plan for us.

Prayer: Lord, Many times I have been in trouble as a consequence of my own behavior. Help me walk in repentance before you. In Jesus name, amen.

God Knows The End From The Beginning

Message: We who are people of faith today, like Israel, are being called to, “Remember the former things.” There are times when we are in a troubled place, but that is not the end of God’s plan for us.

Affirmation: I know God's plan is to bless me and give me hope for a future. I know God's discipline is to bring me to a place where he can bless me.

Reflection: God is good, and his desire is to bless us - but, there are times he must first discipline us to get us into a place where he can bless us. Think about it.

My Thoughts:

Day Fifteen

God Knows All Things

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. – Hebrews 4:13

No one knows how he does it, but God knows everything about everything and everybody. That truth is both exciting and scary. If God knows everything he knows my most secret thoughts, and that is scary.

There are a lot of ideas about how God knows everything. Some believe that God is the universal mind that is the source of all intelligence and as people tap in to that intelligence they are given access to it. Some others believe that God is the intellect that is in all of us and we can open doors to the divine presence by our intellectual efforts.

Christians believe that God is the Master of the universe and , though we do not understand it entirely, he is the benefactor to all who will receive him. Beyond that we know very little except that he continually reveals himself as the loving eternal Father to all who come to him.

There are many more ideas about God, but all of them fall short because they are using finite, human intellect to explain an infinite divine concept. We have no basis for fully comprehending it, but when we can accept God in faith he begins to reveal himself to us in a way that is appropriate.

Whatever our explanation of how God knows, we must all come to the realization that he does know all things. Our passage today tells us that all things are uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must all give an account. However he does it doesn't matter, but we must realize that he is keeping record.

What does that mean to we who have received Christ as our savior? It simply means that God keeps record of our life and for those who will receive it, Christ bears the burden of giving account for our sins.

Prayer: Lord, It is a scary idea that you know everything I do. Grant me the grace to do good, and forgiveness when I haven't done well. Amen.

Day Sixteen

Jesus Reveals The Father To Believers

All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

- Matthew 11:27

The problem the Jews had with Jesus in his day is that they didn't know him as God knew him. Some knew him as the carpenter's son from Nazareth. Some knew him as the Galilean. Some knew him as a prophet. A very few knew him as the Christ.

It is interesting that Jesus was telling the Jews that they did not know the Father when their entire religion was based upon what they thought they knew about God. The religious leaders of that day knew a God who was rigid and required obedience to laws no man could keep. The result was that they saw an angry vengeful God. They did not know the Father as Jesus knew the Father.

Jesus was introducing an aspect of God that the Jews had not yet learned. He was revealing a God of love and mercy. In the very next verse he said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Jesus was offering hope to those who would hear him.

The Lord was always offering hope in his ministry, and anyone who came to him with an open heart received that hope. When people received him as Christ he began to reveal the Father to them. Jesus will only reveal the Father to those who come to him in faith, and when he does he opens a whole new world to them.

Today we who have believed know the Father in many wonderful ways. We know him as the one who reconciles men to himself through faith in Christ. We know him as the indwelling Spirit that leads us, guides us and empowers us to serve. He is the Spirit of renewal that makes us well on the inside.

We know God through the Christ of restoration - the anointing of God that is restoring believers to the people God intended us to be from the creation. Jesus, the Christ, has revealed God to those who will believe in him.

Prayer: Lord, I do not know all about you - but Jesus has revealed you to me as the loving Father who redeems me. Thank you Father.

Jesus Reveals The Father To Believers

Message: We know God through the Christ of restoration – the anointing of God that is restoring believers to the people God intended us to be from the creation. Jesus, the Christ, has revealed God to those who will believe in him.

Affirmation: God is revealing himself to me and in me through faith in Jesus the Christ of God.

Reflection: When we try to know the Father without faith in the Son we get a skewed view of the Father. When we try to know the Son without committing to know the Father, we get a skewed view of both. Give some thought to this.

My Thoughts:

Day Seventeen

No Man Knows The Future

Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come? No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power of the day of his death. – Ecclesiastes 8:7-8

There are some things that we don't know and what the future holds is one of them. We can make some predictions based upon known facts, but we cannot predict with certainty that nothing will happen to change the data we now have.

The Gulf Coast region of the United States had endured hurricanes for centuries and everyone thought they were well prepared and secure. Their confident preparation had not prepared them for two storms which entered the region within a month of each other in 2005. Hurricane Katrina was the single worst natural disaster in the history of the United States doing over \$100 billion in damage, and over 1800 people lost their lives.

Were the people of the Gulf Coast prepared for a storm? Yes they were, but they had never seen a storm as devastating as hurricane Katrina. Though they were prepared to face any storm that they had known in the past they had no way of knowing how devastating this storm would be.

None of us knows our own future. We can prepare for all the things we know could happen, but we cannot be fully prepared for the unknown. A wise man prepares for the future, as he knows it – the wisest of men put their trust in the one who knows the future.

So, how can we at least be emotionally prepared to face the unknown? We can be prepared by placing our hope in the one who does know the future.

Ira Stanphill understood our need to trust the Lord for the future. He wrote the song, "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow." The chorus of that song goes like this; "Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand; but I know who holds tomorrow, and I know who holds my hand." We cannot know the future – but we can know the one who does.

Prayer: Lord, I cannot bear the thought of going into the future with your hand holding mine. Keep me near you. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Eighteen

No Man Knows When His Hour Will Come

No man knows when his hour will come. As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them. – Ecclesiastes 9:12

There are warnings in the Scripture to constantly be alert because we don't know when evil will approach us. Jesus warned, "If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into" (Matthew 24:43).

Peter warns, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The message is clear; we don't know what danger awaits us so we are to be prepared for the attacks of our enemy at all times.

I don't know who coined the phrase, "To be forewarned is to be forearmed," but that is wisdom we should all take to heart. We must be mentally and emotionally prepared for the inevitable time when evil will overtake us and we will be at a point of danger.

One of the interesting phenomena of our time is the scam artists who are constantly finding new victims. We are warned time and again to be careful of people who make you an unbelievable offer. If it is unbelievable it probably shouldn't be believed. Yet, you hear about people all the time who are duped into taking advantage of an unbelievable offer.

We can't prevent evil from coming our way, but we can prevent being caught in an evil device unnecessarily. Being prepared to resist evil is part physical, part emotional and part spiritual. If we are prepared spiritually to resist evil then we will be prepared emotionally and take the physical precautions that we should.

The verse following the one in 1 Peter instructs believers to "Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering" (v9).

Prayer: Lord, I see evil and calamities all around. I ask for your protection and your strength to resist the evil one. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Nineteen

I Know My Redeemer Lives

I know that my redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth... I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! - Job 19:25-27

Job was an incredible man of faith. Can you imagine being a person of influence in the community one day and the next being stripped of everything; livestock, servants, even his children - everything? That's what happened to Job.

Job's response to these calamities was remarkable. On this day of calamity one servant after servant after another came to report the tragedies until finally it was all gone. "At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground to worship" (Job 1:20) He had just lost everything and he worships.

Part of his prayer has been recorded in Job 1:21: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." The next verse says, "In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrong doing."

From this low point in his life things just got worse. Sores came up on his body from head to foot. In this condition his wife says, "Job, just curse God and die." Job shows his deep faith in 13:15, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him."

In all of his trials Job wrestled with more than his own pain. He questioned life and death. Looking at the trees and observing how they seemed to die in the winter yet come to life in the spring he asks rhetorically, "If a man die, will he live again?" Then he answers his own question in this passage.

Even when he had lost everything, even his health, his faith sustained him. He didn't know about tomorrow, he didn't know if he would recover in this life, but he did know this; "My redeemer lives... I myself shall see him." In the midst of trials remember this: I know my redeemer lives!

Prayer: Lord, I have never had to endure what Job has endured, and I have never been persecuted as some have; grant me the faith and strength to endure if that should come to me. In Jesus name, amen.

I Know My Redeemer Lives

Message: In the midst of trials remember this: I know my redeemer lives! Do not let the circumstances of this life rob you of your peace.

Affirmation: I do know my redeemer lives and regardless of how challenging the present circumstances may be I know He will deliver me, if not in this life then in the life to come.

Reflection: Job, in one day lost everything, and later even lost his health, but in all of his suffering it was his faith in God which gave him the courage and strength to continue on. Reflect on how a person comes to that kind of faith.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty

We Know That Jesus Is The Savior Of The World

They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.” - John 4:42

The story of the woman at the well is a foundation passage for evangelism. In just a few short paragraphs I am going to outline the process by which Jesus reached an entire village with the kingdom message. I encourage you to read the entire story of the conversion of the woman and the village.

When Jesus met the woman at the well he had a pretty tough job ahead if was going to see her converted. She was a life toughened woman. There was mixed up relationships on top of a mixed up religion.

How was Jesus going to approach her in a way that affected her heart? He chose to reach past her religion and her lifestyle to touch her at the point of her need. All of her life had been spent going to the well of desire expecting to draw up the waters of hope, but she had walked away empty and used every time.

Jesus revealed that he knew who she was (vs16-18) and yet, knowing her history he was still concerned for her. Unfortunately, too many believers have a different response when they find out who a person really is.

She tried to get Jesus off track by bringing up religion (v19-20) but Jesus ignores that and addresses her real need (v21-24) and that was to have a personal relationship with God.

When her eyes are finally opened to the truth of what God wanted to do for her she ran into the town telling everyone she knew about Jesus. Her testimony influenced an entire village to check out the claims of Jesus. The result was that many in that village accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

Here's the pattern in a few words: perceive the need, give them the answer to their need with signs that validate the message. That pattern opens the heart to hear the message of Christ.

Prayer: Lord, help me to not judge people by what they are but to look at them as you see them; redeemed and restored. In Jesus name, amen.

We Know That Jesus Is The Savior Of The World

Message: Here's the pattern of an effective witness in a few words: perceive the need, give them the answer to their need with signs that validate the message. That pattern opens the heart to hear the message of Christ.

Affirmation: I work at being sensitive to the needs of others so that I might show Christ as the answer to their need.

Reflection: Jesus was effective in reaching this woman because he saw her need and did not judge her by her sin. Give some thought to how you can become more sensitive to the needs of others and how to respond to those needs.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty One

We Know God Intends Good For Believers

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

– Romans 8:28

It isn't always easy to see the hand of God in the circumstances of our life. I lost my father to cancer when I was just 20 years old. I didn't understand why God would take my father just as I was getting old enough to appreciate what he had invested in me. Frankly, I still don't know why, but I have concluded that God knows best and I have accepted that.

Believers around the world have comforted one another with these words, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him and who have been called according to his purpose." Going through trying circumstances is never easy, but when we know that his purpose for us is to prosper us and not to harm us, to give us hope and a future, we can endure.

The way I have often rephrased this verse is that God is working the circumstances of our life for our ultimate benefit. What I mean by that is this; God sees from a different perspective, he knows the end from the beginning and he knows the long term effect that he is trying to work in our lives.

The only way we can truly know that is to gain understanding of his purposes for us and to have faith in what he has revealed concerning Christ and our relationship with him.

If we are constantly measuring God's love for us and his acceptance of us by the circumstances of our life we are going to be on an emotional roller coaster. Paul wrote in Philippians 4, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (v12-13).

You may not see it now but God really is working the circumstances of your life for your ultimate benefit.

Prayer: Lord, when I focus on the circumstances I tend to become discouraged. Help me to see your hand at work in my circumstances. In Jesus, name, amen.

We Know God Intends Good For Believers

Message: God sees from a different perspective, he knows the end from the beginning and he knows the long term effect that he is trying to work in our lives.

Affirmation: I know God is in control and I trust him. He knows the end of my trials and he is working all of the circumstances of my life for my ultimate benefit.

Reflection: Think about how bad things can ultimately benefit us. Can you remember a circumstance in your life that if you had not gone through a trial you would not have realized a greater blessing? Think about it.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Two

We Know An Eternal House Waits For Us

We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. – 2 Corinthians 5:1

The hope of every believer through the ages is that when this human existence marked by suffering is over there is an eternal home awaiting us. Paul calls our physical body a tent that is stretched over our inner person – and it is as temporary as a tent, but God has eternal plans for us. He is preparing a residence for us that will never wear out and never need repair.

Job, the ancient example of patience and perseverance in the face of the most extreme circumstances said, “Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure” (Job 14).

It seems that mankind spends the first half of their life as if they will never die and spend the second half in fear of death. There is a truth that is common to all; we will all die. That in itself is not a comforting thought, but Paul in this passage in 2 Corinthians is making a case for the resurrection and the eternal life with God that is the hope of the believer.

We are not promised that we will not suffer in this life, but we are promised that if we endure to the end we will be well rewarded. Paul wrote in Romans 2:7, “to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give external life.” If we are to persist in our faith walk we must know beyond doubt that he has life beyond the human existence for us.

Often the early writers of the church addressed the believers as “sojourners,” or as aliens and strangers in this world. Albert Brumley penned these words in favorite hymn of the past century, “This world is not my home, I’m just passing through, my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.” We must keep in mind that all we see around is as temporary as a tent, but what he has prepared for us is eternal. We know an eternal house awaits us.

Prayer: Lord, this life has not been easy. I ask you for the grace to endure as I travel this path from here to eternity. In Jesus name, amen.

We Know An Eternal House Waits For Us

Message: “To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.” If we are to persist in our faith walk we must know beyond doubt that he has life beyond the human existence for us.

Affirmation: I persist in doing good because I know God has prepared an eternal home for me. My good works are not to earn that home but they are in gratitude for the home He has prepared for me.

Reflection: It is a shame that most people live in the hope of repairing the old tent rather than preparing to move into their eternal home. Give some thought to your own life and ask yourself if you worry too much about the tent and not enough about your eternal dwelling place.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Three

We Know We Can Trust Him

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am convinced he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

- 2 Timothy 1:12

Few of us have as dramatic a conversion as the apostle Paul. On the road to Damascus with the authority to persecute believers in Jesus, he was stricken to the ground, a bright light shined upon him and the Lord spoke to him personally. His response was to cry out, "Lord, who are you?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5).

From that experience forward his life was forever changed. It was this experience and subsequent encounters with the Lord that gave Paul the confidence to declare, "I know whom I have believed and am convinced he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." All of us need a Damascus road experience. We need to make the commitment that lasts a lifetime.

Long ago I heard the story of a farmer who had been converted, but he was constantly plagued with doubts about his salvation. He would frequently go forward for prayer for assurance. Finally the pastor made an appointment to go out and visit him. He showed up with a wooden stake in his hand. He said to the man, "Let's go out behind the barn."

Once behind the barn the pastor said, "We're going to settle this once and for all." He then counseled the man from the scriptures about assurance and prayed with him. As at other times the man truly felt the Lord and knew he was saved. Then the pastor had him drive the stake into the ground. He said, "Every time you doubt your salvation come back here and remember what happened when you drove this stake in the ground."

We need to drive a stake in the ground and know that he is able to keep that which we have entrusted to him for that day.

Prayer: Lord, it is easy to doubt when times are hard, but grant me the grace to stand firm in my faith regardless of the circumstances. In Jesus name, amen.

We Know We Shall Be Like Him

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. – 1 John 3:2

There is a lot of speculation about heaven and what it will be like there. Some see harps and clouds, some see streets of gold. I know one brother whose hope is that there will be camping in heaven. Give him a good tent and a campfire and he is happy.

The truth is that none of us really know what heaven will be like, but we do know this; “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” One of the things that statement says is that we do not fully know him now. We do know him, but only to the extent that he has revealed himself to us and in us.

Scripture teaches that we are becoming the sons of God (John 1:12). As long as we in this body we are in the becoming state. In fact, 2 Corinthians 3 Paul tells us that we “are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory” (v18).

We are being transformed, but we can only be changed so much in this body. In another place Paul writes, “We eagerly await...the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21).

The Spirit of God in us is transforming our inner man to conform to his image. Our thoughts are changing to be his thoughts; our mind is being changed to be his mind; our actions are being changed to be what he would do. We are the sons of God and we are the becoming sons of God.

While we are becoming we are also being. What we are being is a human body with a transformed spirit. One passage reminds us that we are in the world but we are not of the world – but there is coming a day when we will stand before him fully transformed and we know we shall be like him.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for the Hope of being forever with you in the home you have prepared for us. We shall see you and become like you. Amen.

We Know We Shall Be Like Him

Message: The Spirit of God in us is transforming our inner man to conform to his image. Our thoughts are changing to be his thoughts; our mind is being changed to be his mind; our actions are being changed to be what he would do.

Affirmation: I know that I shall be like him because I know I am being transformed into his likeness and his ever-increasing glory is being manifest through me.

Reflection: We are born again, but we are not born into a perfection representation of him. However, we are being transformed into his image. Think on what that means to you.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Five

We Know We Have Passed From Death Unto Life

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. - 1 John 3:14

Those who thought Jesus came to establish a physical kingdom to rule over men missed him because they missed the point of his coming. Even today there are those who claim his name but miss the point because they believe that Jesus came to establish a doctrine, and it is usually a doctrine that is peculiar to them and that they believe it is a necessary doctrine to be called a believer.

One of the things that has amazed me as I have visited churches across America is the bigotry in the pew. I'm not just talking about racial bigotry, there is that for sure, but I am talking about cultural and socio-economic bigotry as well. In many churches there is the attitude of "Thank God I'm not like them."

James addressed this issue in his writing. He writes, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? ... You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight (James 4:1-3). And John writes, "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life." That's a scary thought when I count up all the people I have hated in my life.

John tells us we must love our brother, but we ask, "Who is my brother?" The answer is really quite simple. When Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor," he introduced a whole new definition of neighbor. I think the same principle will apply here. Our brother is anyone who needs a brother.

John is making it very clear that if we choose certain groups of people and declare, "They are not my brother so I don't have to love them," then we are missing the point altogether. Those you hate will be the chains which bind you from God's blessings.

Prayer: Lord, it doesn't come natural for me to love those in certain groups. Grant me the grace to love as you love and not to allow hatred and bitterness toward others to live in me. In Jesus name.

Day Twenty Six

Know The Power Of God

A second time they summoned the man who had been blind, "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" - John 9:24-25

I have many discussions (arguments) with unbelievers over doctrine, but there is one thing that can't be argued and that is my personal testimony.

Once we have known the power of God, whether it is in salvation, a healing, or any miraculous manifestation, we have a proof of his existence.

There was a man born blind, everyone in the community knew him and knew that he was blind. Then Jesus came along and healed him. This was an irrefutable healing.

The religious leaders didn't try to disprove the miracle because they couldn't, so they tried to discredit the miracle worker. They called Jesus a sinner and the formerly blind man replied, "I don't know whether he is a sinner or not, but I do know this; I was blind but now I see."

So it is with us. We have had a God encounter and there is no convincing us otherwise. I teach on evangelism and one fact I drive home is this; there is no greater witness to the love and power of God than our own testimony.

Those of us who have been converted and have chosen to be a Christ follower have been given a precious gift and God wants that gift to be shared with others.

Many of us can remember the way it was before we had our personal God encounter. Everyone else may have thought things were OK with us, but we knew what was really happening on the inside. Our smiles never quite hid the pain and disappointment.

Then we encountered Jesus, the Christ, and everything changed. We are changed because we know his power.

Prayer: Lord, You have given me a most precious gift and I want to spend the rest of my life telling others of your power to heal, restore and deliver. Grant me that grace. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty Seven

God Knows What We Need

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." - Matthew 6:7-8

If God knows what we need, and he loves us, why do we need to pray at all? If he doesn't want us to babble on and on, why does he even want us to ask at all?

I've had people pose that question many times, in fact, I've even asked it myself. So, why does the all knowing God want us to ask for things he already knows we need?

I think it comes down to freedom of choice. God has given us the ability to choose our own way in life and we can choose to trust ourselves, trust him, or trust some other thing. There are many "self-made" people who will tell you they got there by their own devices, and that is somewhat true.

God has shown that he doesn't arbitrarily interfere with our lives by interjecting his will in opposition to our will. He does offer his way, but he lets us choose whether we will follow him.

In this Matthew passage Jesus is warning against the religious practices which seek to impress God, and anyone else who is listening, with the "spirituality" of the one praying. He seems to be telling us that God is not impressed with our ability to render beautiful prayers, but at the same time he is letting us know that he is concerned about our needs and desires.

God is always ready to answer when we call, but we must call. He wants us to let him know that we are ready for his intervention. Remember Elijah and the prophets of Baal from 1 Kings 18? The challenge was that both Elijah and the prophets of Baal were to call upon their God and the one who answered by fire would be God.

If Elijah had not called God Would not have answered. God wants to be your answer, He is just waiting for your call.

Prayer: Father, I don't want to speak just to be heard by others, but I do want to let you know when I need you. So I ask you to be my healer, savior and deliverer. In Jesus name.

God Knows What We Need

Message: God is not impressed with our ability render beautiful prayers, but at the same time he is letting us know that he is concerned about our needs and desires.

Affirmation: My prayers are not to impress man, or God. I pray to show my trust in God and his caring concern for me.

Reflection: Was Jesus telling his disciples that they should not use many words in prayer, or was he talking about the attitude a person should have in prayer? Think about the difference between personal prayers and public praying.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Eight

Get To Know Him By Seeking Him

Acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. - 1 Chronicles 28:9

We are so tuned in to this world system that it is hard to be open and vulnerable to God. In the world system we rarely lay all of our cards on the table because then we would be vulnerable to others. When applying for a job we only put the good stuff on our resume. We are even somewhat guarded with our closest friends.

It is because we are so programmed to always be holding something back in reserve, just in case, that we find it difficult to seek the Lord with our whole heart holding nothing in reserve. Oh yes, we want his blessing with our whole heart, but we find it difficult to trust him with everything. We tend to have a plan B.

Perhaps that is why so many of us struggle so much with our own spirituality. We sing the song, "I surrender all," and mean it, except that just in case we have an alternate plan.

Just remember this: The Lord knows the motives behind your thoughts. He knows why you ask and he knows what you will do if he does come through, and he knows what you will do if he doesn't come through.

I like the attitude of the Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. When faced with the fiery furnace they declared, "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But, even if he does not, we want you to know, O King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

Those three young men had made themselves totally vulnerable to the will of God. If God answered, they were saved, if he didn't answer they would burn, but in any event they were committed with their whole heart. Are you committed with your whole heart?

Prayer: Lord, it is hard to get past the way things are in the world, but grant me the grace to serve you with my whole heart and to hold nothing in reserve. In Jesus name, amen.

Get To Know Him By Seeking Him

Message: The Lord knows the motives behind your thoughts. He knows why you ask and he knows what you will do if he does come through, and he knows what you will do if he doesn't come through.

Affirmation: I know that God knows my heart and that is why I first submit my heart to him before I ask for favor.

Reflection: Sometimes I fantasize about what I would do if I won the lottery (it is just a fantasy - I would have to play to win). I think of all the things I would do with the money. Give some thought to what you would do if God answered all of your prayers - then practice acting as if he had.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Nine

Let Us Press On To Know Him

Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth. - Hosea 6:3

God will come through and all he asks is that we trust him. Just as surely as the sun rises he will come through. Just as the rains come God will provide. Just as the sun rises in its time, and the rains come in their time, so God will come through in his time.

Hosea was a unique prophet. God had instructed him to marry a prostitute. And his marriage to that prostitute would symbolize God's relationship with Israel. He was asked to live out a metaphor.

The woman he married, Gomer, was unfaithful. She left him and lived among her lovers. God told Hosea that this was a type of Israel who had committed spiritual prostitution with foreign gods.

Just as God's hand was heavy on Gomer, and she found no peace among her lovers, his hand would be heavy on Israel. They would endure many hardships and suffer separation from God.

But in the midst of this hardship Hosea speaks the word of the Lord declaring the faithfulness of God to those who know him and acknowledge.

In the end Gomer returned to Hosea and pledged herself to faithfulness. Hosea declared that he would tear up the writ of divorce and would marry her forever.

This story is about Gomer and Hosea, God and Israel, and in a greater sense it is the story of us all. We all at one time were wandering outside of God's protection. Even though we believed in him we were not committed to him. We were attracted by what the world had to offer.

It was during that time in our life God began to call us to himself and promise that he would be there for us just as surely as the sun rises and the rains come.

Our hope is this: Regardless of what we have done God is saying, "Come home my love and be restored in my house."

Prayer: You know I haven't always been faithful Lord, but you have always been faithful to me. Grant me the grace of being as faithful to you as you have been to me. In Jesus name, amen.

Let Us Press On To Know Him

Message: Just as surely as the sun rises God will come through. Just as the rains come God will provide. However, just as the sun rises in its time, and the rains come in their time, so *God will come through in his time.*

Affirmation: I am learning to trust the Lord in all things and I know he will come through in his time.

Reflection: The story of Hosea and his adulterous wife Gomer is one of the strangest, but it is a type of our relationship with God. We stray and he invites us back. We divorce him and he says I'll never divorce you. Think on it.

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty

God Knows The Futility Of This World's Wisdom

Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

- 1 Corinthians 3:19-20

Why is the wisdom of this world foolish? When we see the advances of science and technology in the past hundred years we marvel at the wisdom of men, yet, Scripture declares the wisdom of man to be foolish and futile. Why is that?

I don't know if we have a definitive answer to the question, but I do have some ideas. First let's look at the perspective of man's wisdom as compared to the perspective of God's wisdom. The first difference that jumps out at me is man's wisdom is based in time and matter while God's wisdom is based in timeless eternity.

The second difference which gets my attention is all of man's wisdom points to the conclusion that man doesn't need God, indeed, man becomes his own God, master of his own destiny.

The wisdom of man today reminds me of the tower of Babel from Genesis 11. Man said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves." Their goal was to invade the heavens, the home of God, and thereby make the statement, "We don't need God, we are our own gods."

The futility of their efforts was shown in v7-8, "Let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth.

In the many thousands of years since man's first attempts at becoming god he hasn't found a way to start with no matter, no substance whatsoever, and from that nothingness create something. In contrast, God simply stood on the edge of eternity and said, "Let there be light, and there was light." I'll follow the light source.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for giving me the understanding that you alone are God and there can be none beside you. Amen.

God Knows The Futility Of This World's Wisdom

Message: The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

Affirmation: I realize the wisdom of this world leads mankind to rely upon his own resources. I choose to trust the God who is the supreme resource for life and light.

Reflection: Give some thought to the idea that the wisdom of man seeks to find a way without God while the wisdom of God is to show mankind the way more perfectly. How can you see that in your relationship with God?

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty One

Make Sure The Children Know Him

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your heart. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

- Deuteronomy 6:6-9

The way truth is passed from one generation to the next is through training the children of the next generation. Our Scripture passage today tells us that we are to impress the commands and promises of God upon our children and to keep these truths ever before them.

A sure way to lose the next generation and consequently, all future generations, is fail to impress the children with the principles of life given us by the Lord.

Our theme for this devotional has been, "Knowledge - the gateway to God." This theme is based in Romans 10 which declares, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

My earliest childhood memories are hearing my mom and dad tell the stories of healings and answered prayer. I remember being regaled by the stories of David the mighty warrior, Moses the great leader, and Jesus our Lord and savior. It was those early memories of being told about God's greatness and his goodness that were the building blocks for the life I have lived.

If indeed knowledge is the gateway to God then we must be sure that the next generation is equipped to pass through those gates into God's glory. We must ever keep God's word; his laws and his promises, ever before our children so they will come to know the God we have come to know.

If we don't train them in the ways of the Lord they will be trained in the ways of the World.

Prayer: Lord, grant us the grace to train our children and grandchildren in the ways of the Lord. In Jesus name, amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER DIRECTIVE

"This Then Is How You Should Pray"

- Matthew 6:9

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." - Luke 11:1

Jesus answered that request by giving what has become known as "The Lord's Prayer," and in some traditions it is called the "Our Father." We often pray this prayer in worship services and in our private prayer time. It is often used as the closing prayer in a meeting.

Did Jesus really intend for his followers to pray these words when they prayed, or did he intend for this prayer to be used as a pattern for prayer? I don't think his is an "either or," but I do believe Jesus meant for this to primarily be a pattern for prayer.

That is why we call it the Lord's prayer directive. He was answering the request of the disciples to teach them to pray. This small book is written with that idea in mind.

Every phrase in the prayer is broken down and an explanation is given as to what is being addressed and a sample prayer is given for that phrase. It is not intended for the sample prayer to be "the prayer" for that phrase, but it is just a guide for praying that phrase.

THE LORD'S PRAYER DIRECTIVE

Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as
it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our
debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from the evil one.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the
glory forever. Amen.

“Our Father in Heaven...”

Father brings to our mind two things; loving care
and authority. In our prayer we need to recognize
that God is truly our father. In fact, it is good to
begin your prayer with, “Our Father.”

It is good at the beginning of your prayer to
meditate upon the idea that God is Father, and what
that means to you.

Our prayer should be: “Father God, I thank you
for caring for me more than an earthly father could.
Help me to appreciate your love and yield to your
authority.”

“Hallowed be your name...”

In every prayer we should take a little time to honor the awesomeness of God. Think of what he achieved in creation. How he rules the universe, yet how he considers each one of us and knows everything about us.

We are given hundreds of names and titles of God in the Bible, and each one of them gives us insight into who he is. Here are some of his basic names:

“Elohim” – This is a unique reference to the Lord God and projects the idea of the majesty of God.

“El Shaddai” – This is the term translated “Almighty God.” This name projects God as the all sufficient one.

“Jehovah” – Here God is shown to be the eternally self existent one. He exists without the limits of time, and without dependence upon any other force. He is the only totally self existent one in the universe.

By taking a moment to reflect upon one or more of these names of God in our prayer we can begin to develop a sense of awesomeness about him.

“Your kingdom come...”

God’s kingdom will come, the question is will we participate in it? This is not a request but a statement, “Your kingdom [will] come.” We must accept that there is a higher force at work in the world, and that he has a plan.

Our prayer concerning the kingdom of God should be that our spiritual eyes are opened to see God working in his kingdom and seek him to know what he would have us do for him.

We should pray: “Lord, help me to see how that you are bringing your kingdom to men and show me what my part is in the kingdom.”

“Your will be done...”

It is easy to say, “God’s will be done,” but it is not always easy to accept God’s will. Even Jesus had to spend a lot of time praying the night of his capture and trial. Finally, after the sweat of his labor of prayer became as drops of blood, he was able to say, “Nevertheless Father, not my will but yours be done.” We don’t have to go to a literal cross like Jesus did, but we must come to the place that we are willing to do the will of God whatever it might be.

Our prayer here should be: “Help me to be willing to be yielded to your will Lord. Whatever you have for me to do I will do it. I will use whatever talent you have given me to do your will.”

“Give us today our daily bread...”

Whether we are employed or unemployed we still need to ask God for our daily provision. Our security should never be in our ability to earn money, but in God’s bountiful supply. Usually his provision comes through our labor, but it is still his provision.

This phrase is dealing with a mindset. Are we truly trusting him to guide us through the day or will we revert back to trusting our own instincts?

Our prayer here should be: “Lord, I need your provision today. Just as you gave daily manna to Israel in the wilderness I need your daily provision now. Open my heart and spirit to receive your blessing today.”

“Forgive us our debts...”

We have sinned, and if we say we haven't we are lying. Before you become upset with me for saying that, take note; it wasn't me who said it. 1 John 1:8 says that very thing. But verse 9 of that same chapter says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

God has made provision in Jesus Christ to forgive all our sins, but we have to ask him. In fact, every day when we pray through this prayer we should spend some time thinking through the previous day and ask God to bring to our mind anything we did, or thought about doing that we need to be cleansed of.

Then we should ask God to forgive us of those things. And he will because, “He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins.”

Our prayer should be: “I know I have sinned, and I need your forgiveness. Grant me repentance for all my sins and wash me clean of every wrong desire.”

“As we also have forgiven our debtors...”

It is a lot easier to ask God to forgive us of what we have done wrong than it is to forgive others of

what they have done against us, but Jesus said, “If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15).

We should pray: “Father God, grant me the grace to forgive those who have done things against me. Help me to have a forgiving attitude toward others.”

“But deliver us from the evil one...”

God will protect us from the tempter as we continue to trust him. This prayer is as much a statement as it is a request. We are saying that we will trust and depend upon him to protect us and our family from the evil one.

Our prayer should be: “I know the devil is always after me and my family but I also know you want to protect us. I ask now that you send angels to watch over us and protect us from the evil one.”

“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

Now it is time to give him the honor and glory he deserves. Think about it. He is the only one who can do what you have just asked him to do, and he wants to do it.

Sometimes we are so focused on our needs and desires that we forget to spend a period of time in praise and worship as we are ending our prayer.

The psalmist tells us that God inhabits the praises of his people (Psalm 22:3). We are told by Apostle Paul to submit our needs before God with thanksgiving and God will respond with giving us peace which is greater than any man can give (Philippians 4:4-7).

Let us conclude our prayer with praise and adoration.

Our prayer should be: “Father God, you alone are worthy of our praise and worship. I thank you for being who you are, and for doing what you promised. I commit all things to you now in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”
