

Knowing and Doing The Will of God

*The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he **know them**, because they are **spiritually discerned**. 1Corinthians 2:14 (NKJ)*

Objectives

1. **Adjust** your beliefs and behavior to allow God to direct your life
2. **Identify** the activity of God in your life
3. **Hear** when God is speaking to you
4. **Obey** God's directives
5. **Trust God** to do everything He promises in your life
6. **Experience** God doing through you what only God can do

Overview

As you learn to **follow Jesus** one day at a time, He will keep you right in the center of **God's will**:

- We must first and foremost **cultivate our relationship** with Jesus Christ.
- Through this relationship, God then **reveals** His will
- When you obey, God **accomplishes** in you and through you something only He can do
- You then come to **know God** and His Will for you through experiencing Him at work in your life
 - ⇒ The key is **knowing God through Christ**: **Read John 17:3**
 - ⇒ We must **allow God to work** through and in us: **Read Ephesians 2:10**
 - ⇒ The more we **hear and obey God**, the fuller and richer our lives: **Read John 10:10**

God's Corporate Will

God will not reveal to you His **individual plan** for your life until you are fulfilling His **corporate plan** for every Christian believer

- It is God's will that all believers should:

1. Read and Meditate on God's Word daily
(Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2)
2. Pray often and seek God's Presence (Luke 6:12, 18:1-8, 1Thessalonians 5:17, Psalm 27:8, 22Chronicles 7:14)
3. Praise Him, because God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3 (KJV), 148, 150)
4. Worship Him (Psalm 22:27, John 4:23-24, Revelation 4:10-11)
5. Obey His Commandments (Deuteronomy 11:13-17, John 15:14-17)
6. Know Him (John 14:7, Philippians 3:10, 1John 2:3-4, 5:20)
7. Glorify Him in our daily walk (Psalm 96:8, 2Corinthians 3:7-11, 1Thessalonians 2:10-12)

The extent to which you are fulfilling God corporate will, is the extent to which God will reveal His individual will for you life

Seeking God's Individual Will for Your Life

When you come to the Lord Jesus **to seek His will** for your life, which of the following requests is most like what you ask?

1. ____ Lord, **what** do you want me to do? **When** do you want me to do it? **How** shall I do it? **Where** shall I do it? **Who** should I do it with?
2. X Lord, just tell me what to do **one step at a time** and I will do it?

The first response is the most **typical**. We are always asking for a detailed *road map* so that we can set off on our own way.

- However, Jesus doesn't work that way. He simply says "*Follow Me.*"

Read the following Scriptures: Who did Jesus ask to follow Him without giving them any details about what the future held in store for them?

Matthew 4:18-20 Peter & Andrew

Matthew 4:21-22 James & John

Matthew 9:9 Matthew

Acts 9:1-20 Saul/Paul

Asking the Right Question

The reason we don't know what God wants from us is because **we're asking the wrong question:**

- If you ask the wrong question, you get **a wrong (or no) answer**
 - ⇒ The **wrong** question is: "What is Your will for my life?"
 - It is **too broad**, too all-encompassing
 - It also presumes to ask for **all the answers** up-front, the road-map approach, in which we still seek to set off **on our own**
 - ⇒ The **right** question is: "What do you want me to do now?"
 - The more **specific** and the more **immediate** the better
 - **No answer** doesn't mean God doesn't care or that you are unable to hear Him; rather, in many instances we are simply **left on our own**

Jesus is the Way

If we **truly trust Jesus**, we will allow Him to guide us **one step at a time**.
He didn't say:

- "I will show you the way"
- "I will tell you which direction to head."
- "I will give you a road map."

Instead, Jesus *is* your way:

⇒ **Read John 14:6**

When we **allow** Jesus to lead us every step of the way, we experience a profoundly new and different **freedom** -- freedom from worry!

⇒ **Read Matthew 6:25 & 33**

Jesus' Example

During Jesus' 33 years on earth, He perfectly completed every assignment God gave Him to do. He never failed to do the **will of His Father**:

Read John 5:17 & John 5:19-20

1. Who is always at work in this world? God the Father
2. How much could Jesus do by Himself? Nothing
3. What did Jesus do? only what He say His Father doing
4. What did God show Jesus? everything that He is doing

God is Always at Work

Right now, God is at work all **around you** and **in your life** -- to the extent that you let Him.

- One of the greatest tragedies among God's people is that they long to experience His presence in their lives, but they **don't know how to recognize His presence** (see **Hebrews 13:5**)

- ⇒ When you enter into an **intimate relationship** with God, you will come to **experience** God and know His will for you
- Once you know **how and where** He is at work, you can then adjust your life to **join Him** there
⇒ **Read Philippians 2:13**
 - The **Holy Spirit** and the **Scriptures** will instruct you and help you know when and where God is working in your life
⇒ **Read Romans 8:26-28 and 2Timothy 3:15-17**
 - Jesus is **always standing** outside the door of your heart **waiting for you** to open up to Him
⇒ **Read Matthew 7:7-8 and Revelation 3:20**
 - However, what we ask must be **consistent with God's will**
⇒ **Read John 14:13**

Abraham, Our Role Model

Does God call people to follow Him without giving them much information? Is this pattern **consistent** in the Scriptures?

Abraham is the **best example** in the Bible of how we should follow God's Will:

- Abraham walked by **faith**, not by sight

Read Genesis 12:1-5

1. How specific was God? not very
2. Where did He tell Abram to go? to a land that He "will show you"
3. What did Abram have to leave? country, family, home
4. What did God promise? make him a great nation; bless all families
5. What did Abram do? trusted and obeyed

Walking By Faith

*“We walk by faith, not by sight.” (2Corinthians 5:7)*305

In order to walk by faith, not by sight, you must make several commitments:

1. That God is **absolutely trustworthy** -- you have **no doubts** about His promises.
2. That you will follow Him **every moment** of every day wherever He leads.
3. That you will follow Him even when you **don't know where** you're going or **don't understand what** He's asking you to do.
4. That you will **let Him** be your **Way** -- and rely **solely on Him** and not yourself or anything in this world.

⇒ If you cannot yet make these commitments, **confess your struggles** to Him and **ask for help**.

Learning to Be a Servant of God

Jesus repeatedly let everyone know that He had come into this world as a **servant of His Father**:

⇒ **Read Philippians 2:5-8**

One of the **primary requirements** in knowing and doing the will of God is that we must approach God the Father in the same way Jesus did -- **as His servant**:

⇒ **Read Matthew 20:26-28**

Jesus also made it clear that **we are to do just what He did** in His Father's name:

⇒ **Read John 20:21**

Nor was this instruction **just for the disciples**:

⇒ **Read Matthew 28:19-20**

- The disciples could not reach “all nations” unless their commission was carried out through the ages **by those who followed**

What Kind of Servant does God Want Us to Be?

There are two ways in which a servant can **respond to their masters**. Which one do you think best describes **how God wants us to act**?

1. Find out what the master wants and then go do it.
2. Allow the master to work through you.
 - The first way is how it is done in the **natural world**
 - The second way is how it is done in the **spiritual realm**

The difference between the two is primarily one of **being vs. doing**

Read Jeremiah 18:1-6 & Isaiah 64:8

What Can a Servant Accomplish?

1. How much can servants accomplish **on their own**? not much
2. When **God works through His servants**, how much can they accomplish?
great things
3. What two things must a servant do to be **useful to God**?
 - a) be willing to be molded
 - b) remain in the Master's hands

Even Jesus admitted that He could do nothing on His own:

Read John 5:19

Similarly, we can do nothing without Jesus working through us:

Read John 15:5

However, with Jesus working through us we can accomplish truly great things:

Read John 14:12

God wants to **mold** us and **use** us:

Read 1Peter 2:5

Elijah Challenges the Prophets of Baal

Elijah took a big **personal risk** when, as a **servant of God**, he challenged the prophets of Baal (a Canaanite fertility god) to prove once and for all whose God was the **true God**:

Read 1Kings 18: 1-2, 17-39

1. Who instigated this challenge? God
2. How much information was Elijah initially given? "Go to Ahab" and I will send rain

3. When do you suppose God gave Elijah more details about His mission?
_____ at the moment he needed to know _____
4. How many prophets of other gods did Elijah face off against? _____ 850 _____
5. What test did Elijah propose to prove who was the One True God?
_____ which God could set fire to the altar _____
6. How did the people respond? _____ fell on their face and cried out to the Lord _____

This was an **awesome display** of God’s power working through a **true servant**.

- Elijah **trusted** God
- He acted in **obedience** to God’s command and not on his own initiative
- He went **where** God told him, **when** God told him, and did **what** God told him to do.
- Then **God accomplished His own purposes** through His faithful servant
⇒ *Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. Matthew 25:21 (NKJ)*

Doing versus Being

The **natural** world is a “**doing**” world whose motto is:

- “Don’t just stand there, **do something.**”

God’s world is a **kingdom** of “**being**” whose motto is:

- “Don’t just do something, **stand there!**”
⇒ *Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10*
⇒ *Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Eph. 6:13 (NKJ)*
⇒ *If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor. John 12:26 (NKJ)*

God Works Through His Servants

*Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your **servant**. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your **slave**; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but **to serve**. Matthew 20:26-28 (NKJ)*

The 7 Steps to Walking With God

The chart below illustrates the 7 steps to we must follow to walk with God. After the following overview material, the rest of the course will explore each step in-depth with many Biblical examples.

God's Path	Our Path
1. God is always at work around us	We don't see Him
2. God pursues a relationship with us	We're not paying attention
3. God speaks to us through Holy Spirit, the Bible, prayer, the church, situations, visions, dreams, etc.	We're not listening – or, we're listening to the wrong voice (i.e. the devil and his deceiving demons)
4. God invites us to follow Him and join Him in His work	Even if we hear God, we're afraid of the consequences
5. God's will often creates a crisis of belief that requires faith and change	We become angry with God and turn away from Him
6. God desires that we trust and obey Him	We demand a road map so that we can set off on our own
7. You come to know God and His Will through experience	We walk in darkness and never come to truly know God

Three Similarities of Biblical Role Models

When God spoke:

- They knew it was **God**
- They knew **what God was saying**
- They knew **what they had to do next**

Moses' Example

Using the 7 steps to experiencing God, let's look at **Moses' call and response:**

Background

- Moses was raised by Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:1-10)
- He killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew (Exodus 2:11-12)
- He then fled to Midian where he married and became a shepherd (Exodus 2:13-20)

Step 1: God was Already at Work around Moses

Read Exodus 2:21-25 and 3:1

What work was God already doing? God's purpose was to deliver the children of Israel from slavery

What was Moses doing at this time? watching the sheep, an exile in the desert of Midian

Step 2: God Pursued a Relationship with Moses

Read Exodus 3:2-4

How did God initiate a relationship with Moses? burning bush

How did Moses respond? "here I am" i.e. ready, willing

Step 3: God Spoke to Moses

Read Exodus 3:5-6

How did God speak to Moses? directly – not visions, dreams, etc.

Read Numbers 12:6-8

Is this a typical or special way? special – doesn't happen often

Step 4: God Invited Moses to Join Him in His Work

Read Exodus 3:7-10

What did God reveal about His purposes and plans? He had “come down” to rescue Israel from the hand of the Egyptians to a land of “milk & honey”

What did God say Moses was to do? be sent to Pharaoh to bring “My people” out of Egypt

How specific were God’s instructions? not very specific, just the “big picture”

Step 5: God’s Will Creates a Crisis of Belief

Read Exodus 3:11, 13 & 4:1, 10, 13

What was Moses’ response to God’s invitation? he stated every possible excuse and objection to get out of it

What was Moses’ crisis of belief? lack of faith and trust

Step 6: God Desires that we Trust and Obey Him

Read Exodus 4:14-17

How did God resolve Moses’ crisis of belief? made Aaron the spokesman; he was already on the way; God knew what would happen

What did God promise He would do for Moses? that He would be “with” Moses & Aaron to speak through them and tell them “what you shall do”

What did God require of Moses? trust and obedience

Read Exodus 4:18-20

What adjustments did Moses have to make? left his family in Midian; took his wife and donkey to Egypt (similar to Abram)

Step 7: Moses Came to Know God and His Will through Experience

Read Exodus 12:29-31

Who brought the Israelites out of Egypt? God

What did Moses do? obeyed

How do you think Moses felt when it all worked out? relieved, awed, humbled, inspired

What Can One Ordinary Person Do?

Elijah and Moses were not extraordinary men -- they were **ordinary** just like us.

Read James 5:17-18

Peter and John were also ordinary men -- **uneducated** as well.

Read Acts 4:13

John the Baptist's ministry lasted around 6 months. What was Jesus' evaluation of John's life?

Read Luke 7:28

All the great Biblical heroes were **ordinary people**

- It was their **relationship with God** that made them **extraordinary**

Don't measure the **worth** of a person by the **world's standards**

- If you feel **weak, limited, ordinary**, you are the **best material** through which God can work

⇒ **Read 2Corinthians 12:9**

- Because it is the **ordinary person** who **God most likes to use!**

⇒ **Read 1Corinthians 1:26-31**

3. G King Asa asked God for help (2Chronicles 14:9-12) S King Asa asked Aram for help (2Chronicles 16:1-3, 7-8)

Like King Asa, we can **avoid** this subtle trap one time and **fall** right into the trap the next time

- God-centeredness requires a **daily death of self** and **submission to God**

Read John 12:23-25

God's Purposes, Not Ours

To live a God-centered life, we must **focus our life on God's purposes** and not our own plans and schemes.

- We must seek to see things **from God's perspective**, not our own incomplete and distorted viewpoint

In order to **recognize and "hear" God**, we must see what God is already doing around us and within us.

1. What was **God about to do** when He came to **Noah** and asked him to build an ark? (Genesis 6:5-14) destroy the world with a flood
2. What was **God about to do** to **Sodom and Gomorrah** when He came to Abraham? (Genesis 18:16-21; 19:13) destroy them
3. What was **God about to do** when He came to **Gideon**? (Judges 6:11-16) deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Miiianites
4. What was **God about to do** when He came to **Saul** on the road to Damascus? (Acts 9:1-16) bring the gospel to the Gentiles

In each of the above circumstances, **what was the most important factor?**

 What the **individual** wanted to do for God?

X What **God** was about to do?

The Biblical Pattern

We are **not** supposed to sit down and **decide for ourselves** what we want to do for God and then **call on Him to help** us accomplish it.

- Rather, the **Biblical pattern** is that:
 1. We **submit** ourselves to God
 2. We **wait** and **watch** until God shows us what He is about to do
 3. We **join** God in what He is trying to accomplish
 - ⇒ Understanding what **God is about to do where we are** is more important than telling God what we want to do for Him.

Who delivered the children of Israel from Egypt -- God or Moses?

Read Exodus 2:11-15

- What might have happened if Moses had tried to deliver the children of Israel through his own human approach? failure

- What did Moses' impulsively human approach cost him? _____
40 years of exile
- When God eventually delivered Israel, how many lives were lost? _____

Read Psalm 81:10-12

- What had God already done for Israel? brought them out of Egypt
- What did God promise to His people? take care of them
- How did the people respond? would not listen nor submit
- What did God do? gave them over to their own devices

Read Psalm 81:13-14

- What would God have done if Israel had listened to Him? subdued their enemies

Read Hebrews 3:7-19

- Why were the children of Israel denied entrance to the promised land? _____
_____ lack of obedience; hardened hearts; unbelief _____

We're the Servants, Not God

When God called the prophets, He had a **three-fold message**:

1. This is what I have **been doing**
2. This is what I am **doing right now**
3. This is what I am **about to do**

⇒ Then He called on the people to **respond** to the prophet's message

Similarly, we must **adjust our lives to God** so that He can do through us what He wants to do.

- **God is not our servant** Who must make adjustments to our plans
⇒ If we choose **not to submit**, God will leave us to our **own devices** and we will **never experience** what God is waiting and wanting to do **for us** or **through us** for others
- What good would **Abraham** have done by telling God how he was planning to go **door-to-door witnessing** in Sodom and Gomorrah the day before God was going to destroy the cities?
- We need to know what God has **on His agenda** and then **adjust to His plans**

Prayer:

Pray this coming week and ask for God's guidance on how you should **respond to Him** in the following areas:

- in your **personal life**
- in your **family**
- in your **church**
- in your **work**
- in your **community**
- in your **nation**

Step 2: God Pursues a Relationship

Jesus said to him, " You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. Matthew 22:37-38 (NKJ)

God Takes the Initiative

Throughout the Scriptures, God always takes the initiative when He wants someone to **do something for Him**

- He does not wait to see what we want to do for Him
- Instead, He comes to a person and reveals what He is doing and what He wants the person to do
- This means the individual must **adjust to God**, not God to the individual
 - ⇒ God came to Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden
 - ⇒ God came to Abraham, Moses and Noah
 - ⇒ God came to the prophets
 - ⇒ Jesus came to the disciples
 - ⇒ Jesus came to Saul on the road to Damascus

Read Romans 3:10-12 and then answer the questions below:

1. How many people are righteous on their own? no one, not even one
2. How many people understand spiritual matters on their own? no one
3. How many people seek God on their own? no one
4. How many people do good on their own? no one

Read John 6:44-45 & 6:65 and then answer the questions below:

1. Who can come to Jesus without being drawn by the Father? no one
2. What does a person do who listens to the Father? learns from Him and comes to Jesus

Read John 15:16 & 19 and then answer the questions below:

1. Who chose the disciples? Jesus
2. Who takes the initiative in your relationship with God? God & Jesus
⇒ You cannot know the activity of God unless He takes the initiative to reveal it to you

Read Jeremiah 31:3 & Hosea 11:4 and then answer the questions below:

1. How does God draw us into a relationship with Him? with lovingkindness, gentles cords and bands of love
2. What does God do to reach out to us? lifts the yokes from our necks and stoops down to feed us
3. What kind of love does God offer us? unconditional, everlasting love

Read Philippians 2:13 & Revelation 3:20 and then answer the questions below:

1. Who is at work in our lives? God
2. Who stands at the door of our hearts? Jesus
3. For whose purpose? God's purposes

God Pursues a Love Relationship

Which of the following phrases describe **your relationship** with God (check all that apply):

- I obey God's commands
- I am God's servant
- I worship and honor God
- I respect and fear God
- I love God with all my heart

A **love relationship** with God is **more important** than any other single factor in your life -- this is what God wants the most from us.

- **Everything** in our lives depends on the **quality of your love relationship** with God

Read the following Scriptures to see **what God has to say** about a love relationship:

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

John 3:16

1John 3:16

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

John 14:21

1John 4:9-10

Mark 12:30

Romans 8:35-39

1John 4:19

Answer the following questions based on the preceding Scriptures:

1. Who is your “**life**”? The Lord God
2. In what ways has God **demonstrated** His love for us? draws us to Him, sent His Son to save us; Jesus laid down His life for us
3. How should we **show our love** for Him? choose life, listen to God, hold fast to Him, believe in Him, obey His commandments, lay down our lives for others
4. What does God **promise** to do in response to our loving Him? _____ blessings, not curses; be more than conquerors, eternal life never separated from His love
5. Who **loved first** -- we or God? God

- When you have a **right relationship** with God, you will **always be in fellowship** with Him no matter where you are or what you are doing.

⇒ *And we have known and believed the love that God has for us.*

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 1John 4:16 (NKJ)

Step 3: God Speaks

He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God. John 8:47 (NIV)

God Speaks in Many Different Ways

Throughout the Scriptures, God has spoken to His people in many different ways:

⇒ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. Hebrews 1:1 (NKJ)*

Old Testament - Read the following Scriptures and fill in how God spoke:

- Genesis 15:1 visions
- Genesis 16:7-8 angels
- Genesis 28:10-12 dreams
- Exodus 8:20-25 miraculous signs
- Exodus 28:30 Urim & Thummim (i.e. casting lots)
- Jeremiah 18:1-6 symbolism
- 1Kings 19:11-13 gentle whisper (NIV) still, small voice (NKJ)

There were **4 common factors** each time God spoke in the Old Testament:

1. When God spoke, it was **unique** to the individual
⇒ The key is not *how* God spoke, but *that* He spoke
2. When God spoke, the individual **knew it was God**
⇒ When Gideon lacked assurance, God revealed Himself more clearly (see Judges 6:11-24)
3. When God spoke, the individual **knew what God said**
⇒ Although Moses objected, he knew what God expected him to do
4. When God spoke, the individual **experienced God**
⇒ Regardless of the method, the individual had an encounter with God

Gospels

In the Gospels, God spoke **through His Son Jesus**:

- **Read John 1:1** -- Who was & is Jesus? _____
the Word
- **Read John 1:14** -- How did Jesus break the communication barrier? _____
the Word became flesh
- **Read John 14:8-10** -- How did the disciples encounter God? _____
through Jesus

Acts to the Present

After Jesus was crucified and risen, God speaks to us **through the Holy Spirit**

- **Read John 16:7** -- Why was it to our advantage that Jesus go away? _____
to make the Holy Spirit available to every believer
- **Read 1Corinthians 3:16** -- Now where is God's temple? _____
within us
- **Read 1Corinthians 6:19** -- Now how can we encounter God? _____
directly, through the Holy Spirit within us
- **Read 1Corinthians 2:9-12** -- How does God reveal His thoughts to us? _____
through the Holy Spirit within us
- **Read John 16:13-14** -- What does the Holy Spirit bring to us? _____
the truth, tells us of things to come

God Reveals Himself

When God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit, He reveals:

- His name, nature, and character
- His truth, wisdom and discernment
- His will

We never “**discover**” the truth

⇒ **Truth is revealed** when, where and how God chooses to do so

Read the following Scriptures and write what God revealed about Himself:

Genesis 17:1 Hisname, God Almighty

Leviticus 19:1-2 His holy nature

Malachi 3:6-7 He is unchanging; He is forgiving; He wants a relationship

John 6:51 Jesus is the “living bread” – i.e. eternal life, the “way”

Why Does God Reveal Himself?

God reveals Himself at appropriate times in order to:

1. To involve a chosen person in His work

- We need to be **alert** to what God is doing around us
- We need to be **ready** to hear God when He speaks

2. To help the chosen person respond in faith

- We can respond better when:
 - ⇒ we **believe** God is who He says He is
 - ⇒ we **believe** God can and will do what He says He will do
- This is critical when we reach the **crisis of belief** which requires personal change (i.e. Step 5)

In these same Scriptures, **why** did God reveal Himself to His chosen representatives?

Abram (Gen. 17:1) so that Abram would believe that God could give him a son in his old age

Moses (Lev. 19:1-2) so that His people would respond by being holy themselves

Malachi (Mal. 3:6-7) so that people would believe in His forgiving nature if they respond by returning to Him

Disciples (John 6:51) so that the disciples and followers would believe in Him and receive eternal life

Why Does God Reveal His Purposes?

God not only reveals Himself, He also reveals His purposes so that:

1. We know what He plans to do

- He tells us just enough so that we understand how we fit into the bigger picture

2. We know when, where and how to join Him in His work

- We will miss the boat if we don't hear and respond to His immediate call to action

3. We follow Him daily, not just follow a road map

- Plans change as circumstances change -- but God's purposes never change

4. His purposes become our purposes

- He wants us to join Him in His plans -- our plans are of little or no consequence
- If we don't join Him, God won't work through us and we, therefore, won't fully experience Him

Read Psalm 33:10-11 and Proverbs 19:21

- What happens to the plans and purposes of people and nations? _____
_____ the Lord foils and thwarts them
- What happens to the plans and purposes of the Lord? _____
_____ the Lord's purposes stand forever and prevail

Read Amos 3:7

- Can we expect God to reveal His plans to us? _____
_____ yes, always, but not necessarily as early as we would like

Why Does God Reveal His Ways?

God's purposes must be accomplished in His ways.

- God's ways bring **glory to Him**, not to us
- We must learn to do Kingdom work in **Kingdom ways**

Read Micah 4:2

Why do we need to learn **God's ways**? _____ so that we can walk in His paths

1. God's ways are different than ours

- We employ natural principles to accomplish human purposes
- God employs Kingdom principles to accomplish Kingdom purposes

2. God's ways are redemptive

- Our ways are selfish and divisive
- God's ways are holy and inclusive

3. God's way is the only way to accomplish His purposes

- Our ways may seem good to us and may even appear to work for awhile
- However, unless we adapt to God's ways, we will never attain His goals

Read Proverbs 14:12 and Isaiah 53:6 & 55:8

1. What happens when we follow our own ways? _____
_____ we go astray leading to death

2. Why must we surrender ourselves to God's ways and purposes? _____
_____ we cannot think like God

Read Matthew 14:13-21

1. What plan did the disciples suggest? _____
_____ send them home

2. What did Jesus accomplish using Kingdom principles? _____
_____ fed them all and had food left over

God Speaks Through the Holy Spirit

Today, God speaks to us through the **Holy Spirit**.

- The Holy Spirit is **God's presence** in the world today
- The Holy Spirit lives in **every believer's heart and soul**

Read the following Scriptures and fill in the words that best describe **the role of the Holy Spirit** in the world today:

John 14:16 helper (NKJ) counselor (NIV) comforter (KJV)

John 14:17 the Spirit of truth

John 16:13 our guide to the future

Ephesians 1:17 gives us wisdom, revelation, knowledge

Acts 9:31 comforter, encourager

Romans 8:26 helps our weaknesses, tells us what to pray

Romans 8:27 our intercessor, knows the mind of God

The Holy Spirit reveals **God's Truth**

- **Truth** is not just some concept to be studied -- **Truth is a Person!**
 - ⇒ Jesus **did not** say, "I will **teach** you the truth."
 - ⇒ Jesus said, "I **am** the way, **the truth**, and the life." (John 14:6)
- Thus, the Holy Spirit is leading us to a **relationship** with the person of **Jesus Christ**

The Holy Spirit Speaks

The Holy Spirit speaks to us **primarily** through:

1. **The Bible**
2. **Prayer & Fasting**
3. **Circumstances**
4. **The Church**

1) The Holy Spirit Speaks Through the Bible

The Bible is **God's Word** -- that is, His direct communication with us

- The **Word of God** is a dynamic, living entity -- namely, **Jesus Christ!**
⇒ **Read Revelation 19:13**
- The Bible is God's **complete revelation** of His nature, purposes and ways
⇒ **Read 2Timothy 3:16-17**
- We cannot **fully understand spiritual Truth** unless the Spirit of God **reveals it** to us
⇒ **Read 1Corinthians 2:14**

The Holy Spirit relates the Word **uniquely to our personal lives** in the following sequence:

1. You **read** the Bible -- the Word of God
2. The Spirit of Truth takes the Word of God and **relates** it to your life
3. Your mind receives a unique **revelation** of the Truth
4. You **adjust** your life to this Truth of God
5. God **works** in you and through you to accomplish His purposes

How to Respond to a Key Scripture

When the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart and mind through a Bible verse:

1. **Write** it down
2. **Memorize** it
3. **Meditate** on it
4. **Pray** about it
5. **Adjust** your life to it
6. **Watch** to see when, where and how God puts this **Kingdom principle** to use through you!

Example:

Let's say someone who is an **ungiving person** and who has borrowed money and **not repaid** it reads the following verse:

Read Psalm 37:21

1. How might the Holy Spirit **relate** this verse to the person's life? _____
_____brings to remembrance, convicts of sin_____
2. What **thoughts** would probably spring to mind in this person? _____
_____oh no, that's me! Remembers person owed, sees self as not a giver_____
3. How should this person **adjust** to being convicted by the Holy Spirit? _____
_____pay debt immediately, be more giving, seek forgiveness, repent_____

Respond at Once

Once God has spoken to you through His Word, how you **respond** is crucial:

1. You must **agree** with the truth (i.e. those who borrow and do not repay are wicked in God's sight)
2. You must **acknowledge** that the truth applies to you in the particular instance brought to your memory
3. You **obey** and rectify the wrong (i.e. repay the debt)

2) The Holy Spirit Speaks through Prayer & Fasting

Prayer is a **two-way communication** with God:

1. **You** speak to God
2. **God** speaks to you
 - Most people **do not** give enough (or any) time to **listening**
 - **Listening**, however, is even **more important** than speaking to God

⇒ *Be still, and know that I am God.* Psalm 46:10 (NKJ)

Prayer is a **relationship** not a religious activity:

- God is **always** pursuing a **relationship** with us
- Prayer is how we **consummate** that relationship
- God doesn't need our prayers, but **He wants us to pray**

The Bible is very clear about the **necessity of praying**.

- Read the following verses and write down the **key word(s)** that describe the importance of prayer:

Jeremiah 9:12-13 God listens when we pray with all our hearts

1Thessalonians 5:17 maintain a prayerful attitude at all times

Philippians 4:6 everything in prayer, make requests known to God

Ephesians 6:18 always in prayer, in the Spirit, watchful

Praying in the Spirit

To pray *in the Spirit* means that we are abiding in His Spirit as His Spirit abides in us -- it is more than just an intellectual activity

Read Ezekiel 37:1 & 1John 4:13 & Revelation 21:10

- In your own words, what does **praying in the Spirit** mean to you? _____
God's Spirit is active within us

The Holy Spirit **assists** us in our prayer efforts:

Read Romans 8:26-27 again

1. Why do we need the help of the Holy Spirit when we pray? _____
we do not know how/what to pray at all times
2. What advantage does the Holy Spirit have that we do not have? _____
the Holy Spirit knows our hearts as well as the mind/heart of God
3. What does the Holy Spirit do for our prayer life? _____
intercedes for us according to the will of God

Hearing God's Voice

Can we be sure that we can **hear and know** God's "voice"?

Read John 10:4

- Who knows God's voice? His "sheep" – i.e. followers/believers

Read John 16:13

- What does the Holy Spirit speak to us? what He hears from the Father
- What does the Holy Spirit tell us? what is yet to come

Read Philippians 2:13

- Who is at work in us? God
- For whose purpose? His

Read 2Timothy 3:16

- How can we know whether what we hear is indeed God's voice? verify against God's Word
- How does the Word of God help us to evaluate what we hear? doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, righteousness

How to Respond to God's Answers to Prayer

When you have heard God's voice in prayer, how you respond is **crucial**:

1. **Write it down** -- maintain a **spiritual journal**
2. **Meditate** about what you hear
3. **Pray** about what you hear
4. **Immediately adjust** your life to conform to God's will for you
5. **Watch** to see when, where and how God puts this **Kingdom principle** to work in your life.

What Happens When You Pray?

Many people feel that their prayer time is **not effective**:

- We often feel that **God has not heard us**, but that is never the case:
⇒ **Read Isaiah 65:24**
- We also are prone to feel that **God has not answered us**:
⇒ **Read Psalm 20:6**

In fact, **God's answers** to a righteous prayer yield **far more** than we could even imagine or ask for!

⇒ **Read Ephesians 3:20-21**

- Would you rather have what **God wants** to give you or what you are **asking for**? what God wants

There are **three problems** we must overcome in our prayer life:

1. **Lack of spiritual concentration**
2. **Preconceived expectations**
3. **Enduring the silences of God**

1. Spiritual Concentration

- The natural mind **cannot comprehend** spiritual thought processes:
⇒ **Read 1Corinthians 2:14**
- Much of prayer's effectiveness lies **below the surface** of our natural mind, working in the spiritual realm:
⇒ **Read Romans 12:2 & Ephesians 4:21-24**
 - What is being **renewed**? our mind, transformed from natural to spiritual
 - Can you **detect** when this process is taking place? No
 - What then should we **do** in our prayer time? give the Holy Spirit time to work within us

Preconceived Expectations

If you have been **praying in one direction** and you see **God working in a different direction**, you need to:

1. **Decide** whether you are going to **do what you want** and ask God to bless it - or, decide to **join God** in what He is doing.
⇒ **Read Proverbs 14:12**
2. **Watch** to see what happens next
⇒ **Read 1Corinthians 16:13**
3. **Wait**, for time is irrelevant to God
⇒ **Read 2Peter 3:8-9**
4. **Be patient** -- don't start implementing your own plans hastily
⇒ **Read 2Thessalonians 3:5**
5. **Expect** an answer
⇒ **Read Psalm 62:5-6**

3. God's Silences

Everyone goes through a period where God is silent for a lengthy time.

- Sometimes this is due to **sin in your life**
- If there is unconfessed sin, **repent** of it and seek God's forgiveness
⇒ **Read 2Chronicles 7:14**

After washing yourself **clean** from sin:

1. **Continue** to do the last thing God told you to do
2. **Watch and wait** with an attitude of **expectation, faith and trust**
3. Immerse yourself in **God's Word** and spend a lot of **prayer time listening** in the Spirit

Example:

The story of the death of **Lazarus** shows us how **Jesus used silence** in order to accomplish a more significant miracle:

Read John 11:1-6

- What was Jesus' relationship to Mary, Martha and Lazarus? _____
_____ He loved them _____
- What did Jesus do when He heard that Lazarus was sick? _____
_____ He stayed 2 days where He was, made no reply _____

Read John 11:7-15

- Why was Jesus glad that Lazarus was dead? _____ so that people (including His disciples) would fully believe in Him _____
- How do you suppose Mary and Martha felt after burying Lazarus and not hearing a word from Jesus? _____ hurt, perhaps angry, confused _____

Read John 11:16-22

- What was Martha's attitude when Jesus finally came? _____ reproachful _____
_____ and then respectful _____

Read John 11:23-27

- What did Martha think Jesus meant when he said Lazarus would "rise again?" _____ at the resurrection on the "last day" _____

Read John 11:28-33

- Why did Jesus "groan in the Spirit?" _____ He didn't want to see people hurt, but nevertheless He had to do God's will _____

Read John 11:34-45

- What happened as a result of Lazarus arising from the dead? _____ Many of the Jews believed in Him, more than if He'd healed Lazarus when he was just sick _____
- What did Jesus say to the Father afterward? _____ He thanked Him – "I know that You always hear Me _____

3) The Holy Spirit Speaks through Circumstances

How God speaks to us through **circumstances** is seen in the way that **Jesus discerned** what the Father wanted Him to do:

Read John 5:17,18-20

- How did Jesus know what the Father wanted Him to do? He “saw” what the Father was doing
- When we see the Father at work around us, what should we do? Join Him in His purposes and plans

Circumstances can be both “**good**” and “**bad**”

- It is **easy** to respond to circumstances when they are **good**
- Most of the time we respond to **bad circumstances** by asking, “Why is this happening to me?”

Job had extremely **bad circumstances** happen to him even though he was a **righteous man**

Read Job 1:1

- Did Job **deserve** to have bad things happen to him? No

Job wrestled with understanding his circumstances because he didn’t know what was happening from **God’s perspective**

Read Job 1:6-12

- Were Job’s bad circumstances a result of anything he had done? No
- Why then did God allow Satan to destroy all that Job had? As a test of Job’s faith; as a lesson for us; God’s “higher ways” are often unknowable

Job **passed the test** because he never “**cursed God to His face**”

Read Job 2:9-10

- What did Job’s wife want him to curse? God
- Why didn’t Job curse God? Because He realized you can’t accept the good from God and then curse Him over the bad

Read Job 3:1

- What **did** Job curse? His birth

Job also **complained** about his circumstances

Read Job 6:1-2

- What did Job want God to consider about his circumstances? That he was in anguish & misery; the “poor me” pity party
- Was God aware of Job’s circumstances? Of course!

Read Job 6:24

- What was Job asking of God through his “friends?” Show me where I have been wrong and how I have sinned

Read Job 7:20

- What universal question was Job asking God? Why me?

Read Job 9:33-35

- What did Job want most out of this situation? An intercessor or mediator to take up his cause since he couldn’t talk to God himself (i.e. Jesus Christ!!)

After a long period of suffering, **God finally answered** Job:

Read Job 38:1-2 and 40:1-2

- What did God rebuke Job about? Speaking without knowledge; correcting and rebuking God

Job then **responded** to God’s rebuke:

Read Job 40:3-5 and 42:1-6

- How did Job respond? He said he was unworthy to have spoken thus; that he despised himself; that he should repent in “dust and ashes”
- What did Job realize he had done wrong? That he had questioned God and had not trusted patiently in Him

Had Job known the “rest of the story” he would have suffered less anxiety, but the **test of faith** that God imposed would also have been **invalidated**:

Read Job 42:10-17 and James 5:11

- Why was Job blessed by God even though God found him at fault? Because he did ultimately pass the test of faith and not cursed or renounced God; and because he prayed for his three misguided friends

What to do when circumstances are confusing:

1. Settle in your own mind once and for all that **God has forever demonstrated His absolute love for you** on the cross.
⇒ That love will **never change**
2. **Do not question God's character or motives**
⇒ Instead, go to God and ask Him to help you **see things from His perspective**
3. **Wait** on the Holy Spirit to **speak to your circumstances** through the **Word** and through **prayer**
⇒ **Listen** intently and **endure** patiently
⇒ **Watch for confirmations & signs** – put out a **fleece**
4. **Adjust your life** to what you see **God doing** in your circumstances
⇒ Don't ask God to adjust your circumstances to suit **your purposes**
5. **Immediately do** all that He tells you to do
⇒ **Experience God** working in and through you to accomplish His purposes

Spiritual Markers

A spiritual marker identifies a time of transition, decision or direction when you **clearly know that God has guided you.**

- Over time, you can then look back at these **spiritual markers** and see how God has **faithfully directed** your life according to His divine purpose

This is akin to the Old Testament practice of **building an altar** to mark the spot where **God was directly experienced**

Read Joshua 4:2-7

- ⇒ Others who built an altar or a stone marker include **Noah** (Gen. 6-8); **Abram** (Gen. 12:1-8 & 13:1-18); **Isaac** (Gen. 26:17-25); **Jacob** (Gen. 28:10-22 & 35:1-7), **Moses** (Ex. 17:8-16 & 24:1-11); **Gideon** (Judges 6:11-24); **Samuel** (1Sam. 7:1-13)

IV. The Holy Spirit Speaks Through the Church

Evangelical churches have led the way in encouraging Christians to develop a **personal relationship** with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

- However, many born-again Christians think that they **do not need the church**

Read Matthew 16:18

⇒ Who is building the Church? Jesus

⇒ Does Jesus expect it to last? Yes! Forever!!

Read Ephesians 1:22-23

⇒ What is the Church? The Body of Christ

⇒ Who is the head of the Church? Jesus

Read Ephesians 4:15-16

⇒ Who forms the Body of the Church? All believers

⇒ How is the Body held together? By its “supporting ligaments” of love and unity

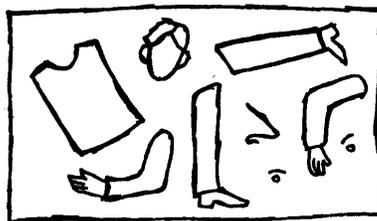
⇒ What is the purpose of the Body of Christ? 1) to grow up into Christ; 2) growth/edification of the Body

Read 1Corinthians 12:7-11

⇒ For whose benefit are we each part of the Body of Christ? For the profit of all

Read 1Corinthians 12:12-26

⇒ Which picture below best represents how **members** of the Body of Christ should **function**?



This one = Unity

⇒ Who decides how the members of the body should be arranged?
God, not us

Read 1Corinthians 12:27-31 & Romans 12:4-5

⇒ Does each member have the same function? No, different functions

⇒ Who does each member belong to? all the others, the whole Body

God Speaks Through the Church

Apart from the Body of the Church, you cannot **fully know** God's will for you through **your relationship to Jesus Christ**, who *is* the Body

- **Every member** needs to **listen** to what the other members are saying
 - ⇒ Don't ever be afraid to allow the body of believers in your church to **assist you** in knowing God's will for you
 - ⇒ Bear in mind, however, that **one individual** does not necessarily represent the **entire body** -- you still need to go to God yourself
- However, what will often happen is that a number of things begin to **line up** all clearly pointing in the **same direction**
 - ⇒ What you are hearing from the **Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church** will all begin to say the **same thing** -- then you can proceed with **confidence!**

The Body of Christ

A church needs to **function as the Body of Christ** -- as Paul instructed in Romans 12

Read Romans 12:1-2

- What two things did Paul recommend to members of the Body so that the **whole body** would be able to **discern God's will**:
 1. Offer out bodies as a living sacrifice, our reasonable service
 2. Be transformed by the renewing of our minds to prove the the perfect will of God

Read Romans 12:3,10,16

- What are some specific things you can do to prevent problems caused by pride? don't think too highly of ourselves
honor others more than ourselves; live in harmony with others;
be humble; associate with the humble

Read Romans 12:4-6

- Why are other members of the Body of Christ important to you? _____
accountability, encouragement; fellowship
knowing God's will as an individual and as part of the Body

Read Romans 12:9-21

- Which three of the many instructions for the Body of Christ mean the most to you?
 1. fervent in Spirit
 2. bless and not curse others
 3. overcome evil with good

The **Body of Christ** is also addressed in Corinthians 12:

Read 1Corinthians 12:4-7

- Although there are **diversities in gifts, ministries and activities**, what binds everyone together into one Body? the same Spirit, Lord & God
- To whom does the Holy Spirit manifest Himself? every believer

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11-31

Write in the verse that applies to each of the statements below:

12-14 The body is a single unit made up of many parts

18 God puts spiritual leaders and members where He wants them

28-30 Leaders and members of the body have different assignments from God for the good of the whole body

11 The Holy Spirit decides who to give assignments to

21-24 Members of the body need every other member of the body

- 25 The body should be united as one, not divided
- 17-20 The body is not complete without *all* the leaders and members
- 15-17 Members of the body do not decide their own role in the body
- 25-26 Members of the body should have equal concern for each other
- 11 The Holy Spirit enables each member to accomplish God's will

Life in The Body of Christ

Effective “**Body Life**” begins with **each individual** being **rightly related** to God

- And continues to the degree that **all members** are rightly related to **Jesus Christ** as the **Head** of each and every church

Read each of the following Scriptures and write a **brief summary** of God's will for **relationships** in the church body:

Romans 14:1, 12-13 be accepting of others without passing judgment

1Corinthians 10:24 don't be selfish

Ephesians 4:25 be truthful

Ephesians 4:29 build others up, don't tear them down

Ephesians 4:31-32 be compassionate and forgiving

Ephesians 5:19-20 encourage one another with rejoicing in God

Ephesians 5:21 submit to the Body of Christ

Colossians 3:13-14 be patient with one another and love one another always, unconditionally

God Builds the Local Church

Christ is the Head of the local Body of believers and **He builds the local church** to accomplish **specific objectives**:

- God does not add members to the church accidentally -- **each member** is an **important part** of the Body and has a role to play

When you respond to God's invitation to an intimate love relationship with Him, He brings you into a **partnership** with Him

- As Head of our Church, Christ Himself is guiding and working through the church to accomplish **the will of the Father**
- In this partnership, we each become involved in **His mission** to reconcile a lost world to God
- To be related to Christ is to **join Him** on His mission -- you **cannot** be in relationship with Jesus and **not** be part of that **mission**

⇒ **Read John 20:21**

Who is being sent on the mission to redeem a lost world? _____
_____ We are, all of us _____

Kingdom Ways

When we join God in His work, we must employ **Kingdom Ways** instead of our usual **human ways**:

Read Acts 8:25-39

1. Who guided Philip to involve him in what God was going to do for the Ethiopian? Angel of the Lord
2. How much information about what he was to do did Philip have at the beginning of this assignment? Go along the road
3. When Philip saw the Ethiopian, what did the Spirit tell Philip to do next? go to the chariot
4. What did Philip do to find out what God was doing in the Ethiopian's life? saw him reading Isaiah, asked him if he understood it
5. What did God do in the Ethiopian's life through Philip? _____
was born again and baptized; brought the Gospel message to Ethiopia

6. Based on what v.27 tells us about the Ethiopian, what impact to you think this incident had on the spread of the gospel? huge, Ethiopia became a strong outpost for Christianity
7. Was Philip a “Lone Evangelist” or was he functioning as part of the Body of Christ? He had been sent by the Jerusalem church

Read Acts 1:13, 6:5, & 8:5-6

Kingdom Parables

Jesus told many parables about His Father’s Kingdom which help us to understand how to employ **Kingdom Principles** as members of the Body of Christ:

Read Matthew 13:24-30 & 13:36-43

Draw lines below to connect the **parable element** on the left with the **Kingdom Principle** on the right:

Parable Element

The one who sowed the good seed

The one who sowed weeds

The good seed

The field

The weeds

The harvest

The harvesters

Kingdom Principle

The devil

The sons of the evil one

Angels

The Son of Man

The end of the age

The sons of the Kingdom

The world

1. According to this parable, what two kinds of people will appear to be members of Christ’s Kingdom? 1) true believers
2) lost, evil people

2. When will the two kinds of people be separated and by whom? God makes the final determination on Judgment Day

Read Matthew 13:31-32

1. How small does the Kingdom start? as a mustard seed
2. How large does it wind up? the largest of garden plants
3. What causes the growth? God – He is the light and the living water
4. What is our role? Believe, trust, obey

Read Matthew 13:33

Which of the following best describes the way the Kingdom spreads and grows?

1. ____ The Kingdom grows rapidly like an explosion
2. X The Kingdom grows steadily and thoroughly
3. ____ The Kingdom grows very little

Read Matthew 13:44-46

1. How valuable is entrance into the Kingdom? priceless, beyond imagination
2. What would a wise person be willing to do to enter the Kingdom? _____
sell all that we have

Read Luke 14:33

1. What does Jesus demand in order to be His disciple? _____
give up everything

Read Matthew 25:14-30

1. What reward was given to the faithful servants who were good stewards? share in Jesus' happiness, put in charge of more/greater things
2. How did the wicked, lazy servant misuse the money entrusted to him? _____
buried it, hid it
3. To whom is more given? to those who have (believers)
4. From whom is more taken away? from those who don't have (unbelievers)

Kingdom Principles

1. When God gives you or your church resources (people, skills, money, etc.), He **expects faithful stewardship**.
2. To those who are faithful stewards, He will **entrust even more** and greater things.
⇒ What does this mean for you and your church? do all the little things that God and the Body of Christ ask you to do

Kingdom Parables - Part 2

Read the parables below and identify the **Kingdom Principle** that they teach:

Read Matthew 13:47-50

- **Kingdom Principle:** God and His angels will sort through the wicked and righteous, not us

Read Matthew 18:23-35

- **Kingdom Principle:** Forgive others as God forgives us

Read Matthew 20:1-16

- **Kingdom Principle:** God treats new believers and old believers the same – all receive the same salvation

Read Matthew 25:1-13

- **Kingdom Principle:** We must be ready at all times – don't wait to "start tomorrow" for tomorrow may not come

Read Matthew 25:31-46

- **Kingdom Principle:** Show our love of God by loving/helping others

Read Mark 4:26-29

- **Kingdom Principle:** God gives the increase – apart from Him we can do nothing

Read Matthew 20:25-28

- **Kingdom Principle:** Our purpose is to serve

Read Mark 9:38-41

- **Kingdom Principle:** Whoever is not for Christ is against Him

Hear God's Voice Through Fellowship

It is through the **interaction** with other **believers** in the Body of Christ that we see **what God has in mind** for our lives.

Read 1John 1:3-7

- If we claim to have fellowship with God, who must we also have fellowship with? others
- When we have fellowship with others, who else are we also having fellowship with?
God

Read the following Scriptures and write in the **one word** that best describes the type of **fellowship relationship** we are supposed to have with our **brothers**:

- 1John 2:9-11 Loving
- 1John 3:10 Loving
- 1John 3:14-15 Loving
- 1John 3:16-17 Loving
- 1John 4:7-8 Loving
- 1John 4:11-12 Loving
- 1John 4:20-21 Loving
- 1John 5:1-2 Loving

⇒ What restrictions do the Scriptures place on who we should love?
None

⇒ How is your relationship with God reflected in the relationships you have with your "brothers"? It should be the same

⇒ Based on your relationship with your "brothers," what kind of relationship do you have with our Father? the same

Christian Love

Read 1Corinthians 13:4-8

On the lines below, list what Christian love is and is not:

Love is:	Love is not:
<u>patient/long suffering</u>	<u>envious</u>
<u>kind</u>	<u>boastful/proud</u>
<u>rejoices in the truth</u>	<u>rude</u>
<u>protects, trusts</u>	<u>easily provoked</u>
<u>hopes, perseveres</u>	<u>evil thoughts</u>
<u>never fails</u>	<u>no grudges</u>

Example:

- Suppose a person claimed to be a Christian and also claimed to love Jesus
- Yet suppose he was harsh, unkind, and hateful with others; consistently in arguments with them; publicly ridiculing and slandering them

Check the statement below that you think best describes this person's relationship with God:

- This person is a Christian who really loves Jesus
- This person has a very serious problem in his relationship with God

Read John 13:35

- How does Jesus say others will know we are His disciples? _____
if we love one another

⇒ You cannot **know** God if you don't have a love relationship with Him

⇒ You cannot **love** God if you don't have a love relationship with others

⇒ You cannot **hear** God's voice if you don't know him

Christian Love Checkup

Evaluate your Christian love life — and, therefore, your love relationship with God — by checking off all the statements below that are true of you:

- I don't love anybody
- I love my family
- I love those who love me first (i.e. conditional, not unconditional)
- I love those whom I know will love me too
- God has helped me love those around me who are irritable and unfriendly
- God has enabled me to love those who are unlovable
- God has taught me to love those who are very different from me
- God has equipped me to love people who are openly living in sin
- God has given me the grace to love my enemies

Fellowship in the Body of Christ

Fellowship is not an option for the Christian believer -- nor is it optional for the church:

⇒ *If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have **fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.* 1John 1:7 (NKJ)

Only God can produce **genuine Christian love and fellowship**

- Which of the following statements represents the **greater demonstration** of God's ability to create and maintain fellowship between people?

Godly fellowship between people with **similar** ethnic background, language, education and economic conditions

Godly fellowship between people who are very **different** in back-ground and social standing

- **Read Galatians 3:28-29**

⇒ Who is allowed into God's Kingdom? All who believe

God's Remedy for Broken Fellowship

Broken fellowship with a brother or sister in Christ indicates a **broken fellowship with God**

- The break **begins** in your **relationship with God**
⇒ it does **not start** with your relationship to **another person**, that is only the **symptom**

Sin is what separates us from our **intimate relationship** with God

- Which of the following can break our relationship with God:
 - X Acts of evil, wickedness or immorality
 - X Rebelling against God
 - X Refusing to follow Him where He leads
 - X Missing the mark of His purposes in your life

In the Old Testament, this **broken relationship** is symbolized by **God's hidden face**

- **Read Isaiah 54:8 & 57:17 & 64:7**

⇒ Why did God hide His face? Sin

The **face** contains all the major **communications organs** -- the eyes see, the ears hear, the mouth speaks.

- A **broken relationship** with God means we are **no longer in communication** with Him and therefore can no longer know His will for us
- Read the following Scriptures -- which part of God's "face" are involved?
 - ⇒ **Psalm 66:18** ears
 - ⇒ **Amos 8:11-12** mouth
 - ⇒ **Habbakuk 1:13** eyes
 - ⇒ **Isaiah 59:2** eyes

God "hides His face" from us in order to **discipline** us as an **expression of love** designed to **draw us back into fellowship** with Him

⇒ **Read Hebrews 12:1-11**

God's **remedy** for a **broken relationship** with Him is a **gift** which is available to anyone at any time:

- **Read 2Chronicles 7:14 and 1John 1:9**

In the two Scriptures above, what 5 things are **required of us** in order to receive God's gift of forgiveness?

1. humble ourselves
2. pray
3. seek God's face
4. turn from our wicked ways
5. confess our sins

What 4 things does **God promise to do** when His people return to Him?

1. hear from Heaven
2. forgive our sins
3. heal our land
4. purify us from all unrighteousness

- **Read Numbers 6:22-26**

In this Aaronic Prayer, what do each of **God's blessings** mean to you?

Bless you: bestows His favor upon us

Keep you: protects us from harm

Shine upon you: bask in the light of His love

Be gracious to you: gives us mercy and forgiveness

Turn His face toward you: re-opens communication with us

Give you peace: freedom from worry/strife

What To Do When You Hear God's Voice

When God does speak to you, it is absolutely **crucial** that you **respond immediately**:

- The usual human response is to get into a **long debate** about it while the window of opportunity slips by

Read Luke 8:5-15

1. In what ways does **God's truth** slip through our fingers? devil takes it away (lies); withers away (doesn't take root - neglect); thorns (troubles) of the world cause us to lose focus
2. What must we do to ensure that we **hold on** to God's truth? be open and receptive; submissive (humble); nurture God's Word; remain in the world, but not of the world

Read Luke 8:18

3. What happens to those who **"hear"** God's word? more is give (i.e. more of His wisdom, revelation, knowledge, etc.)
4. What happens to those who **don't "hear"** God's word? what they have is taken away

Read 1Samuel 3:19

5. What happened to **Samuel** because he **heard and obeyed** God's word? Lord was with him; He let none of His Word fall to the ground
⇒ When God speaks to you, be like Samuel and **don't let any of His words "fall to the ground."**