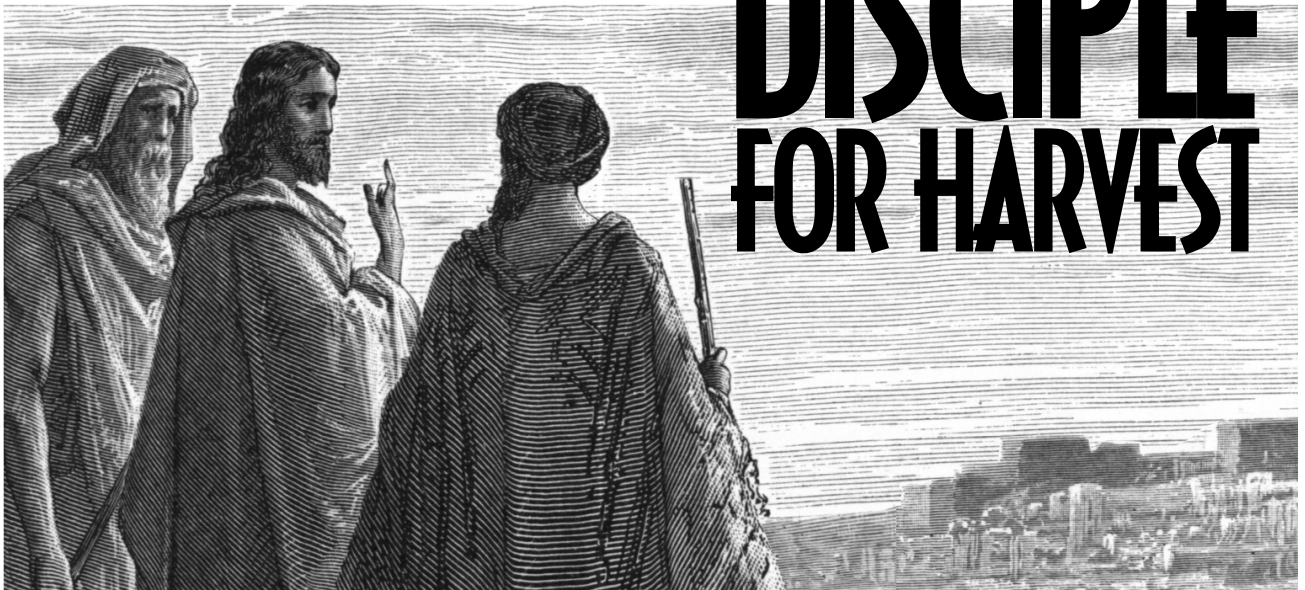


seek
stand
strengthen
serve

DISCIPLE FOR HARVEST



SEEKING God

THE FOUNDATION OF GROWTH

The first step in discipleship is to teach a new Christian how to seek God through prayer, Bible study and devotions, etc. The Lord impressed me that the key to spiritual growth was seeking Him. We must teach Christians to seek God first; it is the foundation of the Christian life.

The Lord showed me that seeking is a continual process that is necessary to produce fruit. He said, "Steve, much of the work the church is doing today is hay, wood and stubble because they are doing it without seeking me in the process."

STAYING ON THE PATH

The Lord explained this to me with a mental picture. I saw a prehistoric landscape with tar pits, lava and much danger all around. Then I noticed a stone path winding through this landscape.

The Lord told me that the path was His perfect will for our lives and to stay on the path we must seek Him continuously and aggressively. I saw many demons coming right up to the stone path and waiting for Christians to move off the path.

The Lord said that in the past he had given us grace and mercy when we had veered off the path, but that He no longer was going to allow Christians to move off the path without a great cost. The Lord even said He had given the demons authority to attack Christians that got off the path.

I asked the Lord why he would allow these Christians to be attacked by the enemy and He said, "They are moving into an important and dangerous period for the church. I must teach them that seeking me is their only hope." I did not quite understand the full meaning of this until the Lord began to explain.

OUR LIVES PURPOSE

The Lord asked me, "What is your purpose?" As a full-time missionary, I said (and had taught), "Go into all the world and make disciples."

The Lord told me, "No!" He said, "Your purpose in life is Gen. 3:8—to walk with me and fellowship with me.

Then the Lord took me to Revelation 4:10-11. "Why are you going to

Genesis 3:8
And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

give me the crowns you earn when you get to heaven?"

"So we can honor you and because we love you."

The Lord told me, "No, that is the mentality of the church today; it is performance based. You are giving the crowns to me because they are my crowns anyway, I earned them not you."

The Lord said our sole purpose is to seek him so he can flow through us and produce much fruit. John 15:5 says, "Abide in me, and I in you, and you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." We read that, but we don't understand it. Our sole purpose in life is to walk with God, fellowship and know with Him. When we are constantly focused on Him, He can work through us. God does the work, if we seek Him.

HIS POWER TO WORK

If Christians would learn this principle it would lift such a burden off their shoulders. We can be a success every day if we seek God. Even if the Lord tells us to go and build a building, if we don't consistently seek Him in the whole process we prevent the Lord from doing the work through us. We can start out on the path but find ourselves off the path when we don't continuously seek the Lord through the whole process.

We can see that this means the Church's primary role is to seek and minister to God. When we do that, He will manifest Himself in such a way that men will be drawn to us. When we don't seek the Lord intently we are missing His power to work in our lives and our ministries. Why else is the Church in America so powerless?

EVERYTHING FALLS INTO PLACE

It is interesting to note that the foremost commandment is Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul. If we don't do this, we sin. When you go off and commit another sin, you have already sinned before you get to the threshold of that sin. Because you have stopped seeking God. If only we would really come to understand that seeking God is our sole purpose in life. Once we begin to do that, everything else falls into place. That is what is meant when we say, "rest in Christ." The Christian life is much easier when our number one priority is seeking God. It is also a purpose that you can accomplish every day. That is our purpose and the foundation of discipleship, to help a new believer learn how to seek God.

Hebrews 11:6 - God rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Rev. 4:10-11

...the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

SEEK

If we seek Him, we will find Him.

Any builder or architect will tell you—you must always start with a good foundation. Without it, your structure will fail.

The same is true in discipleship. We must first teach Christians how to seek God. They must understand that without this as a priority, the Christian life is hopeless and unfruitful.

When you ask Christians what their purpose is (or the purpose of the Church), you may hear things like, “Go and make disciples of all nations” or that we all have many purposes.

Actually, we as Christians have one primary purpose.

Foremost on God’s heart is that we be in communion with Him. Our purpose is to seek God first. We read in Gen. 3:8 that God was walking with Adam in the garden. Jesus said the greatest commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul.” John 17:3 says eternal life is to know God. When we seek Him we will know Him, because he promises us in His word that if we seek Him we will find Him.

When we seek God, everything else springs from Him. That is what He meant when Jesus told us in John 15:5, “If you will abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” Clearly God’s word tells us we can do nothing on our own. But He can do everything—if we will abide in Him.

John 15:5 has a promise: if we abide in Him, He will abide in us. The word “abide” comes from the Greek word *meno*, which means to be a continuous part of, not separate. How are we to be a continuous part of God? We must know His mind and heart about things. We must seek Him and find Him, then we will begin to know Him.

How do we seek God? First we must realize that seeking God is not necessarily a list of things we must learn to do everyday. We can do all the things we need to do to seek God and still not be seeking Him. We must do these things in order to know God.

Seeking God is a desire, an attitude of the heart. Hebrews 11:6 says God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. That reward is to know God! Discipleship involves learning to teach others to develop skills so they can seek God. We will be learning how to develop a devotional life, how to study the Bible, the beginning basics of prayer and understanding what seeking God truly is and means.

DEVOTIONAL METHOD

of Bible Study

The ultimate goal of all Bible study is not interpretation—it's *application*. God wants to change our lives through His word, so it is important to learn how to apply scripture to our lives. The final step in any Bible study should always be application.

When application is the only technique used, it is called the **devotional Bible study method**. This simple type of study is excellent for your quiet time.

The Devotional techniques you will learn should be used in all other Bible study methods.

WHY APPLICATION IS IMPORTANT

The Bible was given to show us how to have a relationship with God. It was given to change our lives to become more like that of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul declared that it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training the believer in righteous living (2 Tim. 3:16).

Bible study without personal application can be just an academic exercise with no spiritual value. The Bible was written to be applied to our lives. If you study the word of God without applying it to your life, you are no better off than the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' day. You really don't know the scriptures until you put them into practice.

Bible study without application can be dangerous because knowledge puffs up. James declared, "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22). God's commands are not optional.

APPLICATION IS HARD WORK

Application doesn't happen by accident. We have to plan for it or it will never happen. Three of the reasons that make applying scripture to our lives so difficult are: it requires thinking, the devil fights it viciously, and we naturally resist change.

1. Application is hard work because it requires serious thinking.

Sometimes it takes a long period of meditation (concentrated, prayerful thinking) before we see a way to apply a truth of scripture we have studied. Sometimes it means looking beneath a temporary rule to see a timeless principle in the text. Sometimes it means looking beyond a local custom to see a universal insight. All this takes time and concentration which we may be hesitant and reluctant to give.

Definition

The Devotional Method of Bible study involves taking a passage of the Bible, large or small, and prayerfully meditating on it until the Holy Spirit shows you a way to apply its truth to your own life in a way that is personal, practical, possible, and measurable. The goal is for you to take seriously the Word of God and "do what it says" (James 1:22).

2. Application is hard work because Satan fights it viciously.

The devil's strongest attacks often come in your quiet time when you are trying to apply what you have studied. Satan knows that as long as you are content with merely having head knowledge of the Word, you are not much of a threat to his plans. But as soon as you get serious about making some changes in your life, he will fight you tooth and nail. He hates doers of the Word.

3. Application is hard work because we naturally resist change.

Often we don't feel like changing, which is what true application requires. We live by our emotions rather than by our wills, for we are content to stay the way we are. We hear Christians saying they don't like studying the Bible, they don't like praying, they don't feel like witnessing. Feeling has nothing to do with the Christian life, for feelings come and go. The key to spiritual maturity is to live for Jesus Christ not because we feel good, but because we know it is the right thing to do. If the only time I study the Bible is when I feel like it, the devil makes sure I never feel like it.

FOUR STEPS TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION

When you do a devotional Bible study, follow four simple steps. These steps can be summarized in the words pray, meditate, apply, and memorize.

Step One - PRAY for insight on how to apply the passage

Ask God to help you apply the scripture you are studying and show you specifically what He wants you to do. You already know that God wants you to do two things: obey His Word and share it with others. In your prayer tell God that you are ready to obey what He will show you and that you are willing to share that application with others.

Step Two - MEDITATE on the verse(s) you've chosen to study

Meditation is the key to discovering how to apply Scripture to your life. Meditation is essentially thought digestion. You take a thought God gives you, put it in your mind, and think on it over and over again. Meditation may be compared to rumination; that's what a cow does when it chews its cud. It eats some grass and sends it to its first stomach; then it lies down, brings the grass up, chews on it, and swallows it again. This process of digestion is repeated three times. Scriptural meditation is reading a passage in the Bible, then concentrating on it in different ways. Here are several practical ways you can meditate on a passage of scripture:

Picture the role - SEE: Put yourself into the biblical situation and try to picture yourself as an active participant. Whether you are reading the historical books of the Old Testament, the gospels, or the book of Acts, see yourself in that historical context. Ask yourself how you would feel if you were involved in that situation. What would you say? What would you do?

If you are studying John 4, for example, see yourself as being right there with Jesus, the woman at the well, the disciples, and the inhabitants of Sychar. How would you feel if you were the one Jesus had asked for a drink of water? What would your emotions be if you were one of the disciples who witnessed this incident?

Pretending - FEEL: Another example of seeing yourself in the Bible story is to pretend you're the Apostle Paul in prison writing the letter we know as Second Timothy. Picture yourself in that Roman jail, condemned to death, and awaiting execution, all alone except for Luke. Feel the loneliness Paul must have felt, but also feel the triumph he must have felt as he wrote, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). When you start to picture a scene in your mind, scripture comes tremendously alive to you.

EMPHASIZE words in the passage under study. Read through a verse aloud several times—each time emphasizing a different word—and watch new meanings develop. For instance, if you are meditating on Philippians 4:13, you would emphasize the words as follows:

- "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."
- "I **CAN** do everything through Him who gives me strength."
- "I can **DO** everything through Him who gives me strength."
- "I can do **EVERYTHING** through Him who gives me strength."
- "I can do everything **THROUGH** Him who gives me strength."
- "I can do everything through **HIM** who gives me strength."
- "I can do everything through Him **WHO** gives me strength."
- "I can do everything through Him who **GIVES** me strength."
- "I can do everything through Him who gives **ME** strength."
- "I can do everything through Him who gives me **STRENGTH**."

You will get 10 different meanings from this verse as you go through and emphasize a different word each time.

PARAPHRASE the passage under study. Take the verse or passage you are studying and rephrase it in your own words. As you think on it, use contemporary words and phrases to express timeless biblical truths.

PERSONALIZE the passage you are studying. This can be done by putting your name in place of the pronouns or nouns used by scripture.

Use the S-P-A-C-E-P-E-T-S acrostic.

The S-P-A-C-E-P-E-T-S acrostic is a useful aid to meditation. Each letter represents a question that can help you apply the passage to your life. If you memorize the nine questions which the acrostic represents, you will have them available every time you want to meditate on a passage. This acrostic asks:

Is there any

***Sin** to confess?

Do I need to make any restitution?

***Promise** to claim?

Is it a universal promise? Have I met the condition(s)?

***Attitude** to change?

Am I willing to work on a negative attitude and begin building toward a positive one?

***Command** to obey?

Am I willing to do it no matter how I feel?

***Example** to follow?

Is it a positive example for me to copy or a negative one to avoid?

***Prayer** to pray?

Is there anything I need to pray back to God?

***Error** to avoid?

Is there any problem that I should be alert to, or beware of?

***Truth** to believe?

What new things can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or other biblical teachings?

***Something** to praise God for?

Is there something here I can be thankful for?

PRAY the verse or passage back to God. Put the passage under study into the first person singular, turn it into a prayer, and pray it back to God. The book of Psalms is a good example of this method of meditation. David memorized the Law of God, then personalized it and gave it back to God in the Psalms. A good example is Psalm 23, verses 1-3.

Whichever of these methods you use should be the one that best fits what you are studying, or any combination of them.

Step Three - WRITE Out an Application

Write an application of the insights you've discovered through your meditation. Writing your application out on paper helps you be specific. If you don't write something down, you will soon forget it. If you can't put it down on paper, you haven't really thought it through. It's been proven that if you

write something down, you'll remember it longer and be able to express to others what you have learned.

You need to remember four factors in writing out a good application:

1. Your application should be **PERSONAL**—you should write it in the first person singular. When you write out the application use the personal pronouns “I,” “my,” and “mine” throughout.
2. Your application should be **PRACTICAL**—it ought to be something you can do. Plan a definite course of action which you intend to take. Design a personal project which will encourage you to be a “doer of the Word.” Make your application as specific as possible. Broad generalities can make you feel helpless and produce little action.
3. Your application should be **POSSIBLE**—it should be something you know you can accomplish; otherwise you will get discouraged.
4. Your application should be **PROVABLE**—you must set up some sort of follow-up to check up on your success in doing it. It has to be measurable so you can know that you have done it. It is also good to set a time limit on your application.

Step Four - MEMORIZE a Key Verse from Your Study

So that you can continue to meditate on the passage you are applying, and to help remind you of your project, memorize a verse that is key to the application you have written.

Sometimes God will work on your life for several weeks or even months. It takes time to change ingrained character traits, habits, attitudes. We should not fool ourselves into thinking that writing out an application will be a magic formula which will produce instant change. It must be thought of as part of a process of growth. The memorized verse will help.

The ultimate test by which we study and apply scripture is the Person of Jesus Christ. We have to ask, “Does this application help me to become more like Jesus?” If we do not apply the biblical insights God gives us, we become spiritually hardened and callous. We become dull to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Application of God's word is vitally necessary to our spiritual health and our growth in Christian maturity.

CHAPTER SUMMARY METHOD

of Bible Study

Definition:

The Chapter Summary method of Bible study involves gaining a general understanding of the contents of a chapter by reading it through at least five times, asking a series of content questions, and summarizing the central thoughts of the passage.

Tips on how to read a chapter of the Bible:

Read from a Bible without notes. If you try using this method by reading a Bible in which you have made notes, you'll have the tendency to concentrate on the same ideas. Let God speak to you in a fresh way, and give you new insights.

*** Read it without stopping.**

During your first few readings don't stop in the middle of a chapter, but read it from the start to finish. Your goal is to feel the flow of the chapter, so don't be concerned with the details at first. Try to capture the central theme.

*** Read it in several different contemporary translations.**

This will give you additional insights as you see how each translator rendered the original writing. Make notes on the interesting differences you find.

*** Read it aloud quietly to yourself.**

If you have a problem with concentration, this will help tremendously because you will be hearing yourself read. Many people have found that reading aloud helps them focus their attention better on the text.

THE 10 C's

As you are rereading the chapter, begin looking for the following 10 specific things and write your answers on your Chapter Summary Form or on a blank piece of paper. You may fill in the 10 C's in any order saving step 10 for the last step.

1. Caption
2. Contents
3. Chief People
4. Choice Verse
5. Crucial Word(s)
6. Challenges
7. Cross-References
8. Christ Seen
9. Central Lesson(s)
10. Conclusion

One - **Caption**

Give the chapter a short, descriptive title. The shorter the title, the more likely you will remember it. In fact, if you use this method on every chapter in a selected book of the Bible, you can remember the contents of the whole book by memorizing your chapter titles. Use one word if possible (1 Cor. 13 might be titled "Love") and five words at most (Hebrews 11 could be "Heroes of the Faith"). Try to find the key word of the chapter and fit it into your title. If your title is catchy, or produces a mental picture, you will remember it longer. One creative person gave "Well-Well" as a title for John 4. Two key events of that chapter are the woman at the well and the nobleman's son whom Jesus made well.

Two - **Contents**

Describe, summarize, paraphrase, outline, or make a list of the major points in a chapter. The method you choose will depend on the literary style of the chapter and on your own preference. Some people like to summarize; analytical people enjoy outlining. Choose the method with which you feel most comfortable and one that is easy for you to do. Don't try to interpret the chapter; just make observations on its contents. Record on your form what you feel the writer said.

Three - **Chief People**

List the most important people in the chapter. Ask questions such as, Who are the main people in this chapter? Why are they included? What is significant about them? If the chapter contains pronouns (he, she, they, etc.) you may have to refer to the previous chapter to identify the people. Write down your reasons for choosing certain people as the chief ones of the chapter. When you come to long genealogies (lists of people), don't try to list each one but summarize the list.

Four - **Choice Verse**

Choose a verse which summarizes the whole chapter or one which speaks to you personally. In some chapters you may find a key verse which summarizes the writer's argument; in other chapters there may not be a key verse. On other occasions you may want to pick a verse from which you will be writing your application, one you believe God would have you apply to your life.

Five - **Crucial Word(s)**

Write down the key word or words of the chapter. Many times the key word will be the one that is used most frequently ("love" in 1 Cor. 13 and "faith" in Heb. 11). Sometimes the crucial word may be the most important word

but not the most used one. In Romans 6, for example, the word “count” (KJV “reckon”) is the important word though it is used only once (Rom. 6:11). Also, a chapter may have more than one crucial word.

Six - Challenges

List any difficulties you may have with the passage. Are there any statements you do not understand? Is there any problem or questions you would like to study further?

Often while doing a chapter summary you will get ideas for other types of studies you may want to do in the future. For instance, a certain word in a chapter may catch your attention. Make note of that word. Later you may want to do an in-depth study of it. A question about a doctrinal matter might motivate you to do a topical study on that particular teaching.

Seven - Cross References

Using the cross references in your study Bible, look up other verses that help clarify what the chapter is talking about and list them on your form. Ask the question: What else in the Bible helps me understand this chapter? Cross-references are important because they are helpful tools in interpreting the meaning of a chapter; they enable you to see what the Bible as a whole has to say on any given teaching. You can look for several types of cross-references.

Eight - Christ Seen

The entire Bible is a revelation of the Person of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus used the Old Testament to teach His disciples about Himself. On the Day of Resurrection on the Emmaus road, Jesus taught two of His disciples: “Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27).

As you study each chapter be alert for statements that tell you something about Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or God the Father. Ask yourself, What can I learn about the nature of Jesus from this chapter? What attributes of God in Christ are illustrated here? (Here are some examples: His love, justice, mercy, holiness, power, and faithfulness.) This step may be the most difficult to complete in some portions of the Bible, particularly in Old Testament narratives and in passages where symbolism is used.

Nine - Central Lesson(s)

Write down the major principles, insights, and lessons you learn from this chapter. Ask yourself, Why does God want this passage in the Bible? What

does He want to teach me from this chapter? What is the central thought the writer is trying to develop? A possible answer might be: “We should be loving in all interpersonal relationships” (1 Cor. 13).

Ten - Conclusion

This is the application portion of your study. Develop a project to help you implement in your life a lesson you have learned from the chapter or portion. It will benefit you to conclude your chapter summary by asking yourself two questions:

- (1) How do these truths apply to me personally?
- (2) What specifically am I going to do about them?

CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

Chapter

Read 5 times: (Check when done)

1. Caption (title):

2. Contents:

3. Chief People:

4. Choice Verse:

5. Crucial Word(s):

6. Challenges (difficulties I need to study):

CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

7. Cross-References:

8. Christ Seen:

9. Central Lessons:

10. Conclusion (personal application):

SEEK

VERSE-BY-VERSE METHOD

of Bible Study

The study is built around the verse-by-verse analysis chart. You will follow five simple procedures for each verse that you study. To begin, select the passage you want to analyze verse-by-verse. Work through the passage in a logical order, writing out your first verse in the first space of column 1, second verse in the second space, and so forth.

Step One - Write a Personal Paraphrase

Write out the verse in your own words. Do not use one of the modern paraphrases except to get the idea of how to do it. Stay true to the verse you are paraphrasing, and try to condense rather than expand it.

Step Two - List Some Questions, Answers, and Observations

In column 3 of the form list any questions you have on the verse or on words, phrases, persons, topics, and doctrines in that verse. Write down any answers you are able to find to your questions. Also record any observations you have on that verse. Mark these as follows:

Q - *Question*

A - *Answer*

O - *Observations*

Step Three - Find Some Cross-References for Each Verse

Using the cross-reference in your study Bible or from your personal scripture memory, write down some cross-references (try for a minimum of one) for the verse you are studying. Identify the word or phrase in the verse that you are cross-referencing. Use a concordance if you do not have a cross-referenced Bible.

Step Four - Record Any Insights You Get from Each Verse

Having thought through the words, phrases, and concepts in the verse, record any insights that you get from it. These could be further observations, words and names that you have looked up and defined or any other thought that comes to you. Let your imagination go and be as creative as you can as you move on to the fifth column called Personal Application.

Step Five - Write Down a Brief Personal Application

Because of the number of verses you will be studying, you will not be able to design an application project for each verse. Instead just try to record some devotional thoughts that come to you from each verse. Later, in a devotional Bible study, you can pick one of the thoughts and plan to work on it. Or, if a particular verse seems to meet an immediate need, go ahead and write an application that is possible, practical, personal, and measurable.

VERSE-BY-VERSE ANALYSIS FORM

Book or Topic:

Verses	
Personal Paraphrase	
Questions & Answers	
Cross References	
Insights	
Personal Applications	

VERSE

DAILY DEVOTIONS WITH GOD

How to Plan a Daily Quiet Time

Adapted from:
Robert D. Foster - *Seven Minutes with God*
Sylvia Gunter - *Prayer Portions*

THE MORNING WATCH

It was in 1882 on the campus of Cambridge University that the world was first given the slogan: Remember the morning watch.

Students like Hooper and Thomson found their days loaded with studies, lectures, games and bull sessions. Enthusiasm and activity were the order of the day. These dedicated men soon discovered a flaw in their spiritual armor—a small crack, which if not soon closed, would bring disaster.

They sought an answer and came up with a scheme they called the morning watch, a plan to spend the first minutes of a new day alone with God, praying and reading the Bible. The morning watch sealed the crack. It enshrined a truth so often obscured by the pressure of ceaseless activity that it needs daily rediscovery:

To know God, it is necessary to spend consistent time with Him.

But these men found that getting out of bed in time for the morning watch was as difficult as it was vital. Thomson was determined to turn indolence into discipline. He invented an automatic, foolproof cure for laziness. It was a contraption set up by his bed: The vibration of an alarm clock set fishing tackle in motion, and the sheets, clipped to the line, moved swiftly into the air off the sleeper's body. Thomson wanted to get up to meet his God!

The idea caught fire. "A remarkable period of religious blessing" followed, and culminated in the departure of the Cambridge Seven, a band of prominent athletes and men of wealth and education, for missionary service. They gave up everything to go out to China for Christ.

MAINTAINING YOUR WATCH

The intimacy of communion with Christ must be recaptured in the morning quiet time. Call it what you want—the quiet time, personal devotions, the morning watch, or individual worship—these holy minutes at the start of each day explain the inner secret of Christianity.

It's the golden thread that ties every great man of God together—from Moses to David Livingstone, the prophet Amos to Billy Graham—rich and poor, businessmen and military personnel. Every man who ever became somebody for God has this at the core of his priorities: time alone with

The intimacy of communion with Christ must be recaptured in the morning quiet time.

God! David says in Psalm 57:7, *“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.”* A fixed and established heart produces stability in life. Few men in the Christian community have this heart and life.

One of the missing links has been a workable plan on how to begin and maintain a morning watch. I want to suggest that in order to get underway, you start with seven minutes. Perhaps you could call it a daily “Seven Up.” Five minutes may be too short, and ten minutes for some is a little too long at first. Are you willing to take seven minutes every morning? Not five mornings out of seven, not six days out of seven—but seven days out of seven! Ask God to help you:

“Lord, I want to meet You the first thing in the morning for at least seven minutes. Tomorrow when the alarm clock goes off at 6:15 a.m., I have an appointment with You.”

Your prayer might be:

“Morning by morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; morning by morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation”
(Psalm 5:3).

How do you spend these seven minutes? After getting out of bed and taking care of your personal needs, you will want to find a quiet place and there with your Bible enjoy the solitude of seven minutes with God.

Prayer for Guidance:

Take the first 30 seconds to prepare your heart to listen to God. Thank Him for the good night of sleep and the opportunities of this new day.

“Lord, cleanse my heart so you can speak to me through the scriptures. Ask him to open your heart, mind, and spirit. Ask Him to fill your heart. Make my mind alert, my soul active, and my heart responsive. Lord, surround me with Your presence during this time. Amen.”

Read your Bible:

Now take four minutes to read the Bible. Your greatest need is to hear some word from God. Allow God to impress you with meaning from His Word. Don't rush through this time! Keep reading until something quickens your heart. God is always speaking and desiring us to know him better! Make notes of things you might want to study later.

One of the gospels is a good place to begin reading. Start with the book of Mark. Read consecutively, verse after verse, chapter after chapter. Don't race, but avoid stopping to do a Bible study on some word, thought, or

theological problem which presents itself. Read for the pure joy of reading and allowing God to speak—perhaps just 20 verses, or maybe a complete chapter. When you have finished Mark, start the gospel of John. Soon you'll want to go ahead and read the entire New Testament.

Respond to God in prayer:

After God has spoken through His Book, then speak to Him—in prayer. You now have two and a half minutes left for fellowship with Him in four areas of prayer that you can remember by the word ACTS.

A - ADORATION.

Begin with an attitude of thanksgiving and move into praise and worship. This is the purest kind of prayer because it's all for God—there's nothing in it for you. You don't barge into the presence of royalty. You begin with the proper salutation. So worship Him. Tell the Lord that you love Him. Reflect on His greatness, His power, His majesty and sovereignty!

“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord is the kingdom; you are exalted as head overall” (1 Chron. 29:11).

C - CONFESSION follows.

Having seen Him, you now want to be sure every sin is cleansed and forsaken. Confession comes from a root word meaning “to agree together with.” Apply this to prayer. It means to agree with God.

Something happened yesterday.

You call it a slight exaggeration—God calls it a lie!
You call it strong language—God calls it swearing.
You call it telling the truth about somebody in the church—God calls it gossip.

Let the Holy Spirit lead you as he points to sins in your life. It is also good to confess sins as soon as they happen.

*“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me? (Psalm 66:18).
But if we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).*

T - THANKSGIVING.

Express your gratitude to God. Think of several specific things to thank Him for: your family, your business, your church and ministry responsibilities—even thank Him for hardships. *“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

S - SUPPLICATION.

This means to “ask for, earnestly and humbly.” This is the part of your prayer life where you make your petitions known to Him.

Ask for others, then for yourself. Why not include other people around the world—such as missionaries, students studying abroad, friends in distant places—and above all the people of many lands who have yet to hear about Jesus Christ?

An important part of supplication (or asking) is to wait for an answer. Allow time at the end of your prayers to hear the Lord. He will speak to you throughout your prayer time. I have found it to be so sweet to wait on Him to share or speak to me. Sometimes we just hang out together for a while. Often he will reveal some awesome truth that I have been searching for. Enjoy the presence of God as you commune with your Father.

Let’s put these seven minutes together:

0:30 Prayer for guidance (Psalm 143:8)

4:00 Reading the Bible (Psalm 119:18)

2:30 Prayer

- Adoration (1 Chronicles 29:11)
- Confession (1 John 1:9)
- Thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:20)
- Supplication (Matthew 7:7)

This is simply a guide. Very soon you will discover that it is impossible to spend only seven minutes with the Lord. An amazing thing happens—seven minutes become 20, and it’s not long before you’re spending 30 precious minutes with Him. Do not become devoted to the habit, but to the Savior. Do it not because other men are doing it—not as a spiritless duty every morning, nor merely as an end in itself, but because God has granted the priceless privilege of fellowship with Himself. Covenant with Him now to guard, nourish, and maintain your morning watch of seven minutes.

PRAYING THROUGH THE TABERNACLE

Entering Into the Fullness of God's Presence

by Steve Gray

The Old Testament tabernacle was a pattern for God's plan to bring His children into the fullness of his presence through prayer. The priest had a set pattern of steps or conditions that had to be met before he could enter behind the veil of the temple and into the presence of God.

Only once a year—on the Day of Atonement—the high priest would make his journey into the Holy of Holies. Even before he set foot onto the tabernacle grounds, he was to prepare himself and wear special garments.

Bringing a sin offering of a bull and ram, the priest entered the court. As he passed through the Gate, he saw the smoke billowing from the Altar of Burnt Offerings and heard the sounds of worship and sacrifice. Other priests encircled the altar along a platform, making sacrifices for the people. The sacred fire on it was kept burning day and night—it was never to go out. After offering his own sacrifice, the high priest took some of the coals with him in a censer.

He now made his way to the great brass bowl in front of the Tent of Meeting. Here at the Laver, he would wash himself before entering the Holy Place.

As he stepped into the Tent of Meeting, the air was thick with the sweet smell of incense. The light from the Lampstand cast its warm glow over the room. The ornate menorah was made of pure gold, its branches continually fed with olive oil and lighted each day by a priest. On the opposite wall stood the gold overlaid Table with 12 loaves of consecrated bread.

The Holy of Holies was veiled not only by a massive blue and purple curtain, but also by the smoke from the Altar of Incense. Morning and evening, a holy incense was burned over the small altar. From here, the High Priest would finally pass through the veil. A scarlet cord was tied to his ankle, so if he were struck dead behind the veil, he could be pulled out by the other priests.

Finally, he stood before the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant where the glory cloud rested. Here, he offered up incense from the sacred coals and the blood from his own sin sacrifice, and entered into the very presence of God.

We as believers can also move through the same spiritual stages in prayer. These steps prepare us and bring us into the spiritual condition that God requires for us to move behind the veil and into an intimate communion with Him. These are the very same steps Jesus gave the disciples when they asked him to teach them how to pray.

These steps bring us into the spiritual condition that God requires for us to move behind the veil and into an intimate communion with Him.

1. THE GATE - The Way

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

Psalm 100 says we are to enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. The Old Testament priest entered the gate in an attitude of thanksgiving, praise and worship.

This entry area was called "The Way." The gate had a curtain covering the entrance. This curtain was made up of four colors: purple, white, scarlet and blue. These colors represent the four offices of Jesus and the four perspectives of the gospels. As you begin to pray, picture yourself approaching the gate with adoration for these four areas of our Lord's character and ministry.

In Matthew, He is the KING:

I obey - Lord, thank you for being my king. I humbly bow my will before you and worship you as your subject. You are wise and rule with justice and mercy. I am thankful to be in your kingdom and I desire to be a loyal subject. As my king, I give you my allegiance and pledge to serve you faithfully all the days of my life.

In Mark, He is the MAN:

I identify with - Lord, you gave up the glory of heaven to come to earth and take on the limitations of a human body. Help me to understand just how awesome an act that was. You came to give me an example and to show me the Father. You suffered and endured temptation and the struggles of human life. Lord, thank you for such love and sacrifice. Your resurrected body you will carry forever, and in so doing, you have changed your unlimited infinite nature forever. This we will never understand, but you made a great sacrifice to take on the human body of a man. And because you did, I can identify with you.

In Luke, He is my SAVIOR:

I am forgiven - Lord, thank you so much for your death on the cross. You suffered the terrible ordeal of the cross; the pain, the humiliation, the separation from the Father. Help me to understand and appreciate this sacred act and to not devalue it in my life with sinful living. Lord, thank you for dying for my sins and redeeming me from eternal torment.

In John, He is the SON OF GOD:

I worship Him - You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. You are worthy to be praised. You are God, part of the Trinity. You are God's only begotten Son and I believe in you. I can know the Father through

you and your word. Your Spirit is in me and I am in you. We are one as the Father and you are one. I worship you as the Son of the Living God.

Today Christians often talk about Jesus as an intimate friend. We are to be intimate with Him but we must also realize he is God. We need to have a respectful fear of the Lord. I pray we will fear the Lord and live holy and keep His commandments.

As you pray, God may give you different thoughts and show you different aspects of His nature and Son. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak and lead you into this time of reflection on the character and nature of Jesus our Lord. You will see yourself move through the gate and come toward the Brazen Altar.

2. BRAZEN ALTAR: The sacrifice - The Blood

Your kingdom come

The priest then was to take two goats. One was killed for the atonement for sins. The other, called the scapegoat, was released. The brazen altar is symbolic of the blood of Jesus. We are to focus and recognize the value the blood plays in our journey into the presence of God.

THE BLOOD:

We are to enter boldly into the presence of God (Hebrews 10:19). We have no other means or grounds in which we have access to God except, and only by, the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us in Ephesians that part of our armor is the shield of faith that quenches the fiery darts of the evil one. Why does a shield of faith stop the fiery darts of the evil one? Our faith rests on the value and operation of the blood. Without the knowledge of the value of the blood, Satan's accusations siphon our faith and we are prevented from entering into God's presence. Satan has succeeded in getting us to think that our fellowship is dependent on our worth. Satan reminds us of our failures and if we don't understand the value of the blood, our faith leaks away.

The Blood has three aspects we need to remember as we pray:

The blood is for God -

The shed blood of Jesus Christ is for the forgiveness of sin. It is for God the Father. He gives the blood its value. If God says it has paid for my sins and He can remember them no more, then who are we to question it (Rom. 3 :25, Ephesians. 1:7, 1 Peter 1: 18,19)? It is a matter of faith in God's word. We can believe the blood is precious to God because he says it is so. The blood is acceptable and satisfies a Holy God.

Thank you Lord, that your blood covers my sins and pays their penalty.

The blood is for man -

The blood of Jesus has a second value that we must understand—it cleanses our conscience.

In the epistle of Hebrews we find that our heart (spirit) is sprinkled with the blood to cleanse our evil conscience (Heb. 10:22). The blood does not *cleanse* our heart (Jer. 17:9, Ezek.36:26). We must have a *new one* through the “new birth.” The flesh (our mind, emotions and will) is hopelessly corrupt, so we must crucify it daily. But how does the blood cleanse our evil conscience? Once I remember and accept the blood’s value to cleanse my guilt, I can boldly enter into God’s presence. Even though my conscience is constantly reminding me of my unworthiness whenever I start to approach God, the precious blood of Jesus cleanses my conscience and gives me the right to enter into God’s presence.

Every one of us has known the feelings of guilt after a sin. We feel so unworthy. But once our sin is confessed we stand under the cleansing power of the blood. The process of sanctification (or the process of our death on the cross) can leave us feeling like we must attain some standard to enter in. Are we really seeking the way into the presence of God by the blood—or by some other grounds? It is only by the blood, thank you Jesus.

The blood is for Satan -

The blood has a third value that is most important. One of Satan’s most powerful weapons is accusation of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). It is through this special ministry of our High Priest that Jesus confronts Satan “through His own blood” (Heb. 9:12).

The blood operates against Satan by putting God on our side. Satan accuses us to God and Jesus defends us as our mediator. Satan also accuses us to our own conscience. The temptation is to look within ourselves to try and find some ground of self defense for our behavior or to believe that Satan is wrong. We can often admit our helplessness and go to the other extreme and yield to depression or despair. Accusations become one of Satan’s most powerful weapons against us.

The reason we accept his accusations is that we are still trying to find some righteousness on our own. But we are wrong. Satan has succeeded in getting us to look in the wrong direction. Our faith then leaks away because we are not worthy to enter into God's presence. However, it is by faith—faith in God's word, faith in God's value of the blood, the shield of faith—that stops all the fiery darts of the evil one. Our answer to Satan's accusations is always the same: the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Once you have remained at the brazen altar and have remembered and thanked God for His blood and its value you can picture yourself moving toward the bronze laver.

3. THE BRONZE LAVER

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

The Old Testament priest would come to the laver to wash after a sacrifice. If he did not wash he could be struck dead if he entered into God's presence. God is serious about sin and will not allow it in His presence.

Once I feel the Holy Spirit releases me to move toward the bronze laver I want to confess sins in my life. I will ask the Holy Spirit to point out anything he desires me to confess. I want to be clean so nothing will keep me from God's presence.

This is a key area. Wait on the Lord and don't rush past this step. If you try to picture yourself moving forward into the Holy Place and you feel you are being held back or moved back to the laver, it's okay. There is still sin the Holy Spirit wants you to deal with. I have had the Lord move me back several times. Pray and desire to be clean before the Lord. Ask Him to show you what you may have overlooked. Finally you will feel a release to move forward into the Holy Place.

4. THE LAMPSTAND - Holy Spirit, Revelation, the Rhema Word

Give us this day our daily bread

The priest would move into the Holy Place and then turn to his left and face the lampstand. It stood for revelation knowledge. It is here that we ask God to speak to us through His Holy Spirit. We should desire to know the person of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to make himself real to you. You may feel a stronger sense of God as he speaks into your life.

The Lord's Prayer says *give us this day our daily bread* (Matt. 6:9). Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." We need to hear God's spoken word to us. Nothing can give us more peace and purpose than when we hear God give us clear

direction for our lives. He will often speak in this place about areas that are not submitted to him. New areas of called surrender. The Lord may call you to fast or to pray more or to do something that will be a new command. These spoken words are a source of great progress in your walk with God. We do not want to try and categorize what God will say. Just listen and receive.

Once you have heard and you feel released from the lampstand turn around and walk across the tabernacle and you will face the table of showbread.

5. TABLE OF SHOWBREAD - The Cross - Submission, Obedience

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

Once we receive revelation words from the Holy Spirit at the lampstand, we are to turn around and face the table of showbread.

The table of showbread contained 12 loaves of unleavened bread. These loaves had pierced holes and stripes. It also was sprinkled with frankincense. This is a picture of the crucifixion. Isaiah 51 says, “*He was pierced for our transgression and by his stripes we are healed.*” Frankincense is symbolic of persecution. When this substance was burned, scorpions and snakes fled.

There is power in the cross. We have protection on the cross. We are in effect to say, “Lord, about the things you have spoken to me, I will submit. I will yield. I will do these things you have spoken to me about.” There is tremendous power in submitting our desires to the cross and yielding to God when he has pointed to an area of our lives. He may tell me to give more of a tithe at the lampstand. When I turn to the table of showbread. I am to say, “Yes Lord, I will give this.”

Once we have submitted to the things God has spoken to us about and we feel the Holy Spirit release us to go toward the veil, we then proceed to the altar of incense just in front of the veil.

6. THE ALTAR OF INCENSE - Prayer Through the Veil

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

The burning of incense in the Holy Place was an emblem of prayer (Psalm 141:2; Rev. 5 :8). Just as the brazen altar is considered a type of Christ with respect to His atonement, the golden altar of incense represents His priestly office of intercession. Christ not only shed His blood for us, He also pleads for us to the Father.

The smoke from the incense was to precede the priest through the veil into the Holy of Holies. The horns of this altar were also sprinkled with the blood. This allows us to not only be forgiven but to have the right of prayer. When you begin to pray and walk through the veil, thank God for his work of the cross. See how He rent the veil with His death and allowed us to move

freely into His presence. Prayer takes us into God's presence (Psalm 140).

7. THE HOLY OF HOLIES - The Glory and Presence of God

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

Once through the veil, we should feel the presence of God come upon us like a cloak or mantle.

Immediately I'm overcome with the presence of God. All I care about and can think about is Him. I just worship and enjoy Him. Soon I know what God wants and begin to pray and sense His direction. It is not like He is interceding through me. It as if I know Him, because I'm abiding in Him to such a degree. I can ask for anything because I know His mind—it is instantly granted. The world seems distant as I commune with the Father.

Real prayer is not talking to God—it is *communing* with Him.

The Ark of the Covenant:

Behind the veil rested the Ark of the Covenant. Beneath the covering of the Ark's Mercy Seat were three items: the stone tablets of the Word, a jar of manna, and Aaron's budded rod. In the Old Testament all Israelites had to go to the tabernacle in order to pray and enjoy God's presence. Under the new covenant we have the Holy Spirit within us, we are the tabernacle. However, the three articles in the Ark are clues as to how we can enjoy the fullness of God's presence on a regular basis.

The Tablets: The WORD - The tablets are symbolic of the written word, the *logos*. If we will stay in the word, read it and study it regularly God will use it to speak to us and direct our lives. "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*" (Ps. 119:105).

The Jar of Manna: PRAYER - Manna for the Israelites was food sent from heaven to feed them in the wilderness. They were to collect it daily. Jesus said, "*Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*" (Deut. 8:3). The jar of Manna stands for consistent prayer. We are to pray without ceasing. If we want to experience God's fullness we must seek Him through prayer. Prayer is a gateway to God himself.

Aaron's Budded Staff: PURPOSE - The staff throughout the Old Testament was the symbol of a person's authority. Moses used it to show Pharaoh that he had God's authority. It was synonymous with a person's calling. God placed Aaron's budded staff in the Ark because it shows us that our purpose is to produce fruit (John 15:5).

We will not experience God's consistent presence in our lives until we have accepted our true calling or purpose. The anointing is given to empower us so we can accomplish what God has called each of us to do. When you spend time in the Word and in prayer and desire to do His will for your life, then you will experience the fullness of His presence.

The Mercy Seat: God chose to live among His people on the basis of His mercy. He knew that His people would sin against Him. He knew His people would break His laws, doubt His provisions, and ignore His prophets. God's people throughout history have complained and grumbled against His ways and plans. We all have broken God's principles.

How thankful we can be as we enter the Holy Place, His Presence. The cherubim that had guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden now sit kneeling with their eyes looking down on the Mercy Seat. According to God's instructions, the eyes of the golden cherubim were to look down upon the cover on which the atoning blood was sprinkled. The guardians of God's holiness now had their eyes fixed not on the sinner but on the blood. As you enter God's Holy Place, the cherubim are not looking at you they are looking at the sprinkled blood of Christ on the mercy seat. *"Therefore, brothers ... we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus."* (Heb. 10: 19)

8. THE PRIEST

It's easy to concentrate on the tabernacle while overlooking the priest himself. The whole purpose and focus of the tabernacle was the presence of God among his people. God's presence is the central focus of the Christian life. God wants communion with us; he wants each of us to know him (John 17:3).

God set up the tabernacle as a map to himself—to know him and live in his presence. Everything in the tabernacle is a picture of Christ. The posts in the outer court are made of acacia wood with metal caps—bronze on the bottom (judgment), and silver (redemption) on top. The ropes on the posts were made of woven goat's hair—it was a scapegoat which carried the sins of the people into the wilderness.

God initiated the building of the tabernacle in Exodus 25, because it is also a picture of Himself. As He increases our understanding of the tabernacle, our understanding of Him increases also. His heart and ours are to be one (Hebrews 8:10 & 11).

Of course, there is no veil in the New Testament tabernacle. However, the desires of the flesh can place a veil of Self which can keep us from the fullness of God. As long as we hold onto Self, we are not free to get through the veil.

African hunters capture monkeys using the same principal. They set out narrow-necked jars with a piece of fruit inside. The monkey can easily reach in to grab the fruit, but as long as he holds onto it, he can't pull his hand back out. Few ever want to give up what they possess, so there they stay until the hunter comes back to collect them!

We must possess nothing to get through the veil of Self.

The secret is in Matthew 16:24-25—we must give up everything. As we become more and more like Him, we desire death as gain (Eph. 3). Possessing nothing is the result (Phil. 3:1-7). *“Blessed are the poor in spirit”* (Matthew 5:3).

In Genesis 22, Abraham was willing to offer up his only son as a sacrifice to obey God. In verse 18 we see that after he possessed nothing, God blessed him.

How do we get through this veil of Self? Hidden within the tabernacle are three keys to move into God's manifest presence; Divinely Revealed Truth (we receive through study and prayer), Faith (acting on the truths God reveals), and Life Experiences (lessons God teaches us to reveal these truths to us).

Divinely Revealed Truth:

“You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

Divine truth has been revealed by the Holy Spirit through scripture. The Spirit then illuminates that divine truth—but it's still our responsibility to seek these truths through study of the word and prayer.

For example:

The Christian life starts with knowing **our position**. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, at the right hand of Almighty God (Eph. 1:3, 18-20, 2:6, Heb. 1:3). This is a position accomplished by Jesus' death on the cross—not by anything we can do. On the cross, Jesus cried out *“Tetelestai,”* which means it is finished—the debt is paid in full.

Every believer needs to understand the meaning of **the cross**. Our way of life is to be the cross, not what is right or wrong. Seeing our death on the cross in Christ is an important key being free from the bondage of sin. Once we are dead to our own self-will, we are free from sin.

Another major truth is what the **blood of Christ** accomplished. God gives Christ's blood its value. His word says it satisfies our sin penalty and restores our relationship with Him.

We also need to know that we face a **dual problem** of the sins we have committed and our own sin nature that we battle each day. We are sinners by nature, not because of sins committed.

Faith:

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”
(Hebrews 11:1)

Faith is not just hoping for something. Building faith means *acting upon divine facts*. A good start is to claim Romans 6:11—that you are dead to sin, but alive to Christ.

God's children know so little of the habitual communion with Him. Why do we live in chronic unbelief? We must have faith. Faith enables our spiritual sense to function. But where faith is defective, the result is numbness and spiritual apathy.

Faith is the basis of our relationship with God. In the Old Covenant, you had to obey to be blessed (Exodus 19:5). If you obeyed, you received fellowship with God. Of course, it is impossible to perfectly obey His law under our own power. God's solution: He has given us a New Covenant and a new heart and Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). This New Covenant is through faith, instead of works. We receive the desire and power to be obedient and receive covenant blessings.

In 2 Cor. 6:19, 20 we learn that the New Covenant was to get us into the Most Holy Place—fellowship with God. Like the priests of old, we are ministers of a New Covenant. This New Covenant prepares our way into His presence (Hebrews 6:19, 20). What do we need? FAITH. We must *know* and then *walk* in these truths.

Faith allows us to be obedient in new power and to walk as ministers of the New Covenant power. HOW? Faith in resurrection power—we no longer operate in the flesh, but the same power that raised Jesus from the dead gives us the power to live in the spirit (Romans 8: 9-11).

Life Experiences:

These are examples of divine truth that God must reveal to us in His word.

Once they are revealed, then He will illustrate them to us through life experiences. These are living parables that God shows us—“God's School” changes us by teaching us.

This process of *divine truth*, acted upon by *faith* and then deepened and substantiated through our *life experiences* is how we learn to appropriate and experience the fullness of the Christian life.

We as priests can enter boldly—and learn to live—in the very presence of our God.

1975

YEYS

YEYS