

HENRY, RICHARD,  
AND MIKE **BLACKABY**

CLAUDE V. **KING**

EXPERIENCING  
**GOD**

Knowing & Doing  
the Will of God

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*The illustrations of the authors are written solely from their personal viewpoints. Others who were involved, if given the opportunity, could write different and more complete accounts.*

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Henry has spoken in 115 countries, as well as at the White House, United Nations, and Pentagon. He worked extensively with business leaders, including CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. Henry has written numerous books, including: *Fresh Encounter*, *Spiritual Leadership*, *Hearing God's Voice*, *Experiencing God: Day by Day*, *Flickering Lamps*, *Called and Accountable*, *The Man God Uses*, *The Solomon Promise*, *Joshua: Called to Be God's Leader*, *Experiencing the Cross*, and *Abraham: Called to Be God's Friend*. Henry and his wife Marilyn have five children, all serving in Christian ministry. They live in Atlanta.



CLAUDE V. KING is a discipleship and church health specialist who served at Lifeway Christian Resources over 22 years prior to retirement. In addition to this course, Claude worked with Henry to develop the *Fresh Encounter* resources. He worked with T.W. Hunt to develop *The Mind of Christ*. He is the author or coauthor of more than 20 books and courses, including *The Call to Follow Christ*, *Come to the Lord's Table*, *Meet Jesus Christ*, and *Return to Me*. Claude serves as the president of the board of directors for Final Command Ministries. He is a graduate of Belmont University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.



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MIKE BLACKABY, Henry's oldest grandson, currently serves as a church planter in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. He holds a Ph.D. in Worldview and Apologetics from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a master's degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Prior to moving to Canada, Mike served as a pastor for young adults near Atlanta.

He and his brother Daniel have co-authored two books together: *When Worlds Collide: Standing Up and Stepping Out in an Anti-God Culture* and *Seven Steps to Knowing, Doing, and Experiencing the Will of God: for Teens*. Mike is married to Sarah, and they have three sons and a daughter.

# PREFACE

When we first wrote *Experiencing God* in 1990, we didn't realize the enormity of the spiritual hunger in the hearts and lives of God's people to experience God. God's people had head knowledge about God but little heart and life experience with God. They knew there had to be more to the Christian life than continuous religious activity, but they didn't know what was missing, nor did they know what to do about it. They longed to experience God.

Over the course of my life, God had graciously granted me an understanding of Himself and His ways. He had also brought Avery Willis and Claude King into my life. God was ready to respond to the cry of His people:

Show me Your ways, O LORD;  
Teach me Your paths.  
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,  
For You are the God of my salvation;  
On You I wait all the day (Ps. 25:4-5, NKJV).

*Experiencing God* was my life message. This is how I have always understood and walked with God. This is how I pastored and guided God's people to relate to God. I shared these truths in many places where I was asked to speak. Over and over again people asked, "Have you ever written anything on what you are teaching? God's people need to hear these truths." Avery Willis, the person responsible for adult discipleship training at Lifeway Christian Resources at the time, gave me the encouragement and opportunity to put my message in writing in the workbook *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*.

Since 1990 God has used this study to dramatically impact and transform millions of lives and thousands of churches around the world. Currently more than eight million copies of the workbook in English had been sold as well as numerous other related resources. This workbook is now published in 47 languages and has been used in almost every Christian denomination. We are amazed that God, in His mercy and grace, would use such a modest work by ordinary people! He has chosen to grant His favor on His truth expressed in this study. The original workbook has given birth to many *Experiencing God* resources, listed at the right.

We have been overwhelmed by the response to the truths shared in *Experiencing God*. So many lives have been radically changed—in prisons; in the military; and in all walks of life, including lawyers, judges, CEOs, professional athletes, and politicians. Thousands of churches, high schools, colleges, and seminaries have been greatly helped and radically changed by its truths. God has used these truths to affect people around the world, including leaders of countries, government officials, and diplomats. Hundreds of missionaries are serving around the world because of this study, and thousands of others are now serving as pastors, evangelists, and faithful servants. Only heaven knows the extent to which God has chosen to use *Experiencing God*.

This resource has also had a profound effect on my life and my family. God has called each of my children into His service, and all fourteen of my grandchildren are currently walking with the Lord, several of whom are in full time Christian ministry. As we seek to be good stewards of His grace, we cry out, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:1-2, NKJV).

As God has granted us—especially as a family—many open doors to share with God's people, we ask our friends and the many friends of *Experiencing God* to pray for each of us: Marilyn and me; Richard and Lisa, Michael, Daniel, and Carrie; Tom and Kim, Erin, Matthew, and Connor; Mel and Gina, Christa, Stephen, and Sarah; Norm and Dana, Emily, Douglas, and Anne; Carrie and Wendell, Elizabeth, and Joshua, and now a growing number of great grandchildren.

Thanks must also go to Claude King, who helped develop the first workbook and who continues to remain faithful to the Lord in serving Him, and to those at Lifeway Christian Resources who continually improve and provide *Experiencing God to the thousands* of people around the world, still hungry to experience God.

*The Blackabys*



# UNIT

# 1

## VERSE TO MEMORIZE

“I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.”

**JOHN 15:5**



# GOD'S WILL & YOUR LIFE

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## Vancouver World's Fair

When the World's Fair was coming to Vancouver, our little association of churches was convinced God wanted us to try to reach the 22 million people who would visit our city. We had about 2,000 members in our churches. How in the world could our small group make much impact on such a mass of tourists from all over the world?

Two years before the fair, we began to set our plans in motion. The total income for our association was \$9,000. The following year it grew to \$16,000. The year of the World's Fair, we set a budget for \$202,000.<sup>1</sup> We had commitments that would provide 35 percent of that budget. Sixty-five percent of it depended on prayer. Can you operate a budget on prayer? Yes. But when you do that, you are attempting something only God can do. What do most of us do? We set the "practical" budget, which represents what we can afford. Then we might set a second hope or faith budget. The budget we really trust and use, however, is the one we can accomplish by ourselves. We do not really trust God to make a practical difference in what we do.

As an association of churches, we decided God had definitely led us to the work that would cost \$202,000. That became our operating budget. All of our people began praying for God to provide for everything we believed He had led us to do during the World's Fair. At the end of the year, I asked our treasurer how much money we had received. From Canada, the United States, and other parts of the world we had received \$264,000. People from all over North America assisted us. During the fair we became a catalyst to see almost 20,000 people accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. You cannot explain that except in terms of God's intervention. Only God could have done that. He accomplished it with a people who were determined to be God's servants and who were moldable and available for their Master's use.

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1. Throughout this book I will give illustrations that sometimes mention amounts of money. Don't get caught up in the amounts, since they are relative to the year when the event took place. Some amounts may seem small by current standards, while other amounts may seem inconceivably large in other cultures or economies. Focus instead on the faith required or the miraculous timing and provision of the Lord in regard to the need. In the case above, the amounts merely indicate the size of the faith required when the people compared the proposed budget to their previous experience.

# DAY 1

## JESUS IS YOUR WAY

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



**Real  
Christianity  
is not merely  
a religion; it is  
a relationship  
with a Person.**

1 Corinthians 2:14  
“But the person without the Spirit does not receive what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually.”

Jesus said, “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent —Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). The essence of eternal life and of this study is for you to know God and to know Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Knowing God does not come through a program or a method. Real Christianity is not merely a religion; it is a relationship with a Person. It is an intimate love relationship with God. Through this relationship God reveals His will and invites you to join Him where He is at work. When you obey, God accomplishes through you something only He can do. Then you come to know God in a more intimate way by experiencing Him at work through your life.

I want to help you move into the kind of relationship with God through which you will experience eternal life to the fullest degree possible. Jesus said, “I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance” (John 10:10). Would you like to experience life in its fullest measure? You can if you are willing to respond to God’s invitation to an intimate love relationship with Him.

### A PREREQUISITE—A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

In this course I assume you have already trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior and have submitted to Him as the Lord of your life. If you have not made this important decision, the rest of the course will have little meaning for you because spiritual matters can be understood only by those who have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them (see **1 Cor. 2:14**).

**1 If you sense your need to accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord, now is the time to settle this matter with God. Ask God to speak to you as you read the following Scriptures.**

- Romans 3:23: All have sinned.
- Romans 6:23: Eternal life is a free gift of God.
- Romans 5:8: Because of His love for you, Jesus paid the death penalty for your sins. Confess and repent of your sins against a holy God
- Romans 10:9-10: Confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead.
- Romans 10:13: Ask God to save you, and He will.

To place your faith in Jesus and receive His gift of eternal life, you must—

- recognize you are a sinner who needs a saving relationship with Jesus Christ;
- confess (agree with God about) your sins;
- repent of your sins (turn from sin to God);
- ask Jesus to save you by His grace;
- turn over the rule of your life to Jesus, letting Him be your Lord.

**2 If you need help, call on your minister or a Christian friend to assist you. If you have just made this important decision, tell someone the good news of what God has done in your life. Then notify your church about your decision so they can celebrate with you and help you grow in your relationship with Christ.**



## LOOKING FOR MORE IN YOUR EXPERIENCE OF GOD?

You may have been frustrated in your Christian experience because you know God has a more abundant life for you than you have experienced so far. Perhaps you have been a believer for many years, but your Christian life has become dry and monotonous. Maybe you have heard others excitedly talking about what God is doing in their lives, and you long to have a dynamic walk with God too. Or you may earnestly desire God's directions for your life and ministry. You may have experienced tragedy in your life. Standing bewildered in the middle of a broken life, you don't know what to do. Whatever your present circumstances may be, my earnest prayer is that during this study you will be able to—

- hear when God is speaking to you;
- clearly identify His activity in your life;
- believe Him to be and do in your life everything He has promised;
- adjust your beliefs, character, and behavior to Him and His ways;
- recognize a direction He is leading in your life and identify what He wants to do;
- clearly know what you need to do in response to His activity in your life;
- experience God accomplishing through you what only He can do!

It is impossible for this course to achieve these goals in your life. These are things only God can do. I will serve as your guide, encourager, and catalyst (someone who assists in bringing about an action or a reaction) for a deeper walk with God. I will share with you the biblical truths by which God guides my life and ministry. I will tell you about some wonderful works the Lord has done as God's people have applied biblical truths to following Him. In the learning activities I will invite you to interact with God so He reveals to you the ways He wants you to apply these truths in your life, ministry, and church.

The Holy Spirit will be your personal Teacher (see **John 14:26**) during this study. He will guide you to apply these truths according to God's will. He will work to reveal God's character, His purposes, and His ways to you. Jesus said, "If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own" (John 7:17). This will be true of this course as well. The Holy Spirit working in you will confirm in your heart the truth of Scripture. When I present what I see as a biblical truth, you can depend on the Holy Spirit to confirm whether that teaching comes from God. Therefore, your intimate relationship with God, cultivated through prayer, meditation, and Bible study, will be an indispensable part of this course.

The Bible is God's Word to you. The Holy Spirit honors and uses God's Word in speaking to you. The Scriptures are your source of authority for your faith and practice. You cannot depend on traditions, your experience, or others' opinions and experiences to be accurate authorities on God's will and ways. As you study this material, use the suggested Scriptures to examine your experience and tradition against God's Word.

Anything significant that happens in your life during this study will be the result of God's activity in your life. Let the Spirit of God lead you into an intimate relationship with the Creator of the universe, "who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us" (Eph. 3:20).

This book is different from most material you may have read. It is not designed for you to sit down and read from cover to cover. I want you to study, understand, and apply biblical truths to your life. This important exercise takes time. To get the most



The Holy Spirit  
will be your  
personal Teacher.

John 14:26

"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things."



The Scriptures  
are your Source  
of Authority.



The goal is not to finish this course but to have a life-transforming encounter with God.

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from this resource, you must take your time by studying only one day's lesson at a time. Do not try to study several lessons in a single day. You need time to let these truths sink into your understanding and practice. The goal is not to finish this course but to have a life-transforming encounter with God as you study these materials. You want to experience a Person—Jesus Christ. Time, meditation, and personal application are necessary to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you into a deeper, more profound walk with Christ.

Do not skip any learning activities. They are designed to help you learn and apply the truths to your life. They will help you establish a personal, daily walk with God. Many activities will lead you to interact with God through prayer, meditation, and Bible study. If you leave out these activities, you may miss an encounter with God that could radically change your life. You will learn that your relationship with God is the most important part of knowing and doing God's will. Without an intimate relationship with Him, you will miss what He wants to do in and through your life.

**3** The learning activities are indicated by the symbol that appears beside this paragraph. Follow the instructions given. After you have completed the activity, continue reading.

Normally, you will be given answers following the activity so you can check your work. Write your own answer before reading mine. Sometimes your response to the activity will be your own opinion, since there is no right or wrong answer. If you have difficulty with an activity or if you question the answers given, write a note in the margin. Discuss your concern with your leader or small group.

Once each week you should attend a small group session designed to help you discuss the content you studied the previous week, share insights and testimonies, encourage one another, and pray together. Small groups should not have more than 10 members for maximal effectiveness. Larger groups will experience less closeness, less intimate sharing, more absenteeism, and more dropouts. If more than 10 persons want to study the course, enlist additional leaders for each group of 6 to 10.

If you have started studying *Experiencing God* but are not involved in a small group, enlist some friends or family to study the course with you. Other members of the body of Christ can help you more fully know and understand God's will. Apart from a small group experience, you will miss much of the intended learning from this course.

## JESUS IS YOUR "MAP"

For 12 years I pastored a church in a city surrounded by farming communities. One day a man invited me to visit him at his farm. His directions went something like this: "Go a quarter mile past the edge of the city, and you will see a big, red barn on your left. Go to the next road and turn left. Take that road for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. You'll see a large poplar tree. Go right for about 4 miles, and then you will see a big rock ..." I wrote all of this down, and only by God's grace did I eventually manage to find the farm!

The next time I went to the man's house, he was with me in the vehicle. Because there was more than one way to get to his house, he could have taken me any way he wanted to. You see, he was my map. What did I have to do? I simply had to listen to him and do what he said. Every time he said, "Turn," I did what he said. He took me a way I had never been and could not have discovered on my own. I could never retrace that route by myself. The farmer was my map; he knew the way.

**4 When you come to the Lord Jesus to seek His will for your life, which of the following requests more closely resembles the way you generally ask? Check your response.**

- a. 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? Whom do You want me to involve along the way? And please tell me what the outcome will be.
- b. Lord, as You go with me, tell me what to do one step at a time. I will do it.

Isn't the first response typical? We tend to ask God for a detailed road map. We say, "Lord, would you just tell me where I am heading, then I will be able to set my course and go."

He says, "You don't need a map. You need to follow Me one day at a time." This response comes only from those who have learned to walk closely with God and to trust Him to care for the details of their lives. We need to come to the place where the second response is how we function. Who knows the way for you to go to fulfill God's purpose for your life? Who knows how you can experience abundant life? God. Jesus said, "I am the way" (**John 14:6**).

- He did not say, "I will show you the way."
- He did not say, "I will give you a map."
- He did not say, "I will tell you which direction to go."
- He said, "I am the way." Jesus knows the way; He is your way.

**John 14:6**

"I am the way, the truth, and the life."

**5 If you do everything Jesus tells you one day at a time, will you always be in the center of where God wants you to be? Check your response.**

- No, Jesus does not guide people specifically.
- No, God gave me a brain and He expects me to use it!
- It is much wiser to wait until God tells me all the details before I begin moving my life in a particular direction.
- Yes, if I follow Jesus one day at a time, I will be in the center of God's will for my life.

When you get to the place in your life where you trust Jesus to guide you one step at a time, you experience tremendous freedom. If you don't trust Him to guide you this way, what happens if you don't know the way you should go with your life? You worry every time you make a decision. You may become immobilized by doubt. This is not the way God intends for you to live.

I have found that when I release my way to God, then I immediately respond to everything He tells me each day. He gives me plenty to do to fill every day with meaning and purpose. If I do what He says, I am in the center of His will when He wants to use me for a special assignment. My primary concern should not be, What should I do with my life tomorrow? but, What does God want me to do today? As you follow Jesus one day at a time, He will keep you in the center of God's will.

## FOLLOWING ONE DAY AT A TIME

**Abram** (later God changed his name to Abraham) is a good example of this approach to following God. He walked by faith and not by sight.

**6** Read about Abram’s call to do God’s will. Notice how much detail he was given before God asked him to follow Him. Underline where he was to go and what he was to do.

“The LORD said to Abram: ‘Go from your land, your relatives, and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.

‘I will make you into a great nation,  
I will bless you,  
I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.  
I will bless those who bless you,  
I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt,  
and all the peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you.’

“So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan.” (Gen. 12:1-5)

What did God say? How specific was He? “Go from your land.” Go where? “To the land that I will show you.”

**7** Are you ready to follow God’s will that way? Check your response.

- No, I don’t think God will ask me to go anywhere without showing me ahead of time where I am going.
- I’m not sure.
- Yes, I am willing to follow Him by faith and not by sight.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Many times, as with Abram, God called people to simply follow Him. (Tomorrow you will read about several.) He is much more likely to ask you to follow Him one day at a time than He is to spell out all the details before you begin to obey Him. As we continue our study together, you will see this truth illustrated in the lives of many people in the Bible.

**Matthew 6:33-34**

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

**8** Read Matthew 6:33-34 in the margin; then pause and pray.

- Agree that God is absolutely trustworthy.
- Agree with God that you will follow Him one day at a time.
- Agree to follow Him even when He does not spell out all the details.
- Agree that you will let Him be your Way.

**If you cannot agree to these now, openly confess your struggles to Him. Ask Him to help you want to do His will in His way. Claim the promise “It is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose” (Phil. 2:13).**

## DAILY REVIEW

At the end of each day’s lesson, I will ask you to review the lesson and pray. Ask God to identify for you one or more statements or Scriptures from the material that He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. This is a personal-application question that has no wrong answer. If God makes a statement or a particular Scripture meaningful to you, that is the correct response. I will also ask you to reword that statement or Scripture into a prayer of response for your life. Pray about what God wants you to do in response to that truth. This should become a time of prayer and meditation each day as you ask God what He wants you to do in light of the truths you encountered in the lesson. You may want to take notes in the margin each day as you study. God may reveal several actions He wants you to take. Don’t let those thoughts get away from you. Write them down so you can review them. When God speaks, it is important to write down what He says. You may want to keep a notebook for recording your spiritual journey. I will talk to you more about journaling in a later unit.

After today’s lesson a person might have responded like this:

- What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?  
“Jesus is my Way. I don’t need a complete road map to stay in the center of God’s will.”
- Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.  
“Lord, I will follow You even if I don’t know where You are leading.”
- What does God want you to do in response to today’s study? “I need to quit worrying about tomorrow and trust Jesus to guide me one day at a time.”

**9** Each week I have given you a verse of Scripture to memorize. You will find memory cards for these Scriptures in the back of the book. Cut out the card for unit 1 (John 15:5). If you prefer, you may use a different translation for the memory verses in this study. The verses on the cards are from the Christian Standard Bible. Read through John 15:5 several times. Then begin memorizing it one phrase at a time. Write your memory verse for this unit. Practice your memory verses daily.

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**SUMMARY STATEMENTS**

As I follow Jesus one day at a time, He will keep me in the center of God’s will.

Jesus is my Way. I don’t need any other road map.

**Review today’s lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

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Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

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What does God want you to do in response to today’s study?

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# DAY 2

## JESUS IS YOUR MODEL

*Jesus watched to see where the Father was at work and joined Him.*



Look to see what God says and how He works in the Scriptures. Make your decisions and evaluate your experiences based on biblical truths.

Malachi 3:6  
“I, the LORD, have not changed.”

During this course and throughout your life, you will have times when you want to respond to situations based on your own experience or understanding. Such an approach will get you in trouble. This should be your guideline: always go to the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of your situation. Look to see what God says and how He works in the Scriptures. Make your decisions and evaluate your experiences based on biblical truths.

When you study the Scriptures, do not base your decision on one isolated verse or story. Look to see how God generally works throughout the Scriptures. When you learn how God has consistently related to people throughout history, you can expect Him to work in a similar way with you. Your experience is valid only as it is confirmed in the Scriptures. I never deny anyone’s personal experience. I always reserve the right, however, to interpret it according to what I understand from Scripture. At times individuals get upset with me and say, “I don’t care what you say. I’ve experienced this.” I gently respond, “I don’t deny your experience, but I question your interpretation of what happened because it is contrary to what I see in God’s Word.” Our experiences cannot be our guide. Every event in your life must be understood and interpreted by the Scriptures, for the God revealed in Scripture does not change (see **Mal. 3:6**).

### 1 Mark the following statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- a. I can trust my experiences as an effective way to know and follow God.
- b. I should always evaluate my experiences based on the truths I find in God’s Word.
- c. I may get a distorted understanding of God if I do not check my experiences against the truths of Scripture.
- d. I can trust God to work in my life similarly to ways I see Him working throughout the Scriptures.

Statements b, c, and d are true. The first statement is false because your experiences must be interpreted in light of the Scriptures. Experience alone is not a trustworthy guide. You must be cautious about isolating a single event from the context of Scripture. Instead, observe the way God works throughout the Bible. You will never go wrong if, under the Holy Spirit’s instruction, you let the Bible be your guide.

## THE BIBLE IS YOUR GUIDE

Christians are becoming increasingly unfamiliar with the Bible as a guide for their daily living. Consequently, they turn to worldly solutions, programs, and methods that appear to provide answers to spiritual problems. I use God’s Word as a guide to what I should do. Some people say, “Henry, that is not practical.” They want me to disregard the Bible and to rely on the world’s ways or on personal experience. But as a Christian disciple, I cannot abandon the guidance I find in the Bible. The Bible is my guide for how to relate to God and how to live my life.

How do you let God's Word become your guide? When I seek God's direction, I insist on following the directives I see in His Word. Yesterday's lesson is an example. Does God call people to follow Him without giving them all the details in advance? We know He called Abram to follow that way. Is that pattern consistent in the Scriptures?

**2 Read the following Scriptures about Jesus' call for people to follow Him. Write what Jesus told these people to do.**

Matthew 4:18-20: \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 4:21-22: \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 9:9: \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 9:1-20: \_\_\_\_\_

In some cases God gave more details than in others. We will look at Moses' call and discover God gave him a bigger picture of the assignment than He usually revealed. In every case, however, the individual had to stay close to God for His daily guidance. For Moses and the children of Israel, God led through a cloud by day and fire by night. For Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, and Saul, God disclosed little detail about their assignments. He basically said, "Follow Me, and I will show you."

## WHAT IS GOD'S WILL?

When people seek to know and do God's will, many ask the question, What is God's will for my life? One of my seminary professors, Gaines S. Dobbins, used to say, "If you ask the wrong question, you will get the wrong answer." Sometimes we assume every question is legitimate. However, when we ask the wrong question, we may find an answer but remain disoriented to God and His activity. Always check to see whether you have asked the correct question before you pursue the answer.

What is God's will for my life? *is not* the right question. I think the proper question is, What is God's will? Once I know God's will, then I can adjust my life to Him. In other words, what is it God is purposing to accomplish where I am? Once I know what God is doing, then I know what I need to do. The focus needs to be on *God*, not on *my life!*

When I want to learn how to know and do God's will, I can find no better model than Jesus' life. During His approximately 33 years on earth, He perfectly completed every assignment the Father gave Him. He never failed to do the will of the Father. He never sinned. Would you like to understand how Jesus came to know and do His Father's will?

**3 Read John 5:17,19-20 in the margin and answer the questions.**

a. Who is always at work? \_\_\_\_\_

b. How much can the Son do by Himself? \_\_\_\_\_

c. What does the Son do? \_\_\_\_\_

d. Why does the Father show the Son what He is doing? \_\_\_\_\_

Some people read these verses and have difficulty understanding that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human. Our minds can't comprehend the truth that Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30). We will examine their oneness later. But make no mistake. Jesus is God and He lived on earth in human flesh. In these verses Jesus clearly states how He knew what to do. Jesus watched to see where His Father was at work and joined Him. Jesus' approach to knowing and doing His Father's will can be outlined like this:



The proper question is, What is God's will?

John 5:17, 19-20

<sup>17</sup>"My Father is still working, and I am working also."

<sup>19</sup>"Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does these things.

<sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing, and he will show him greater works than these so that you will be amazed."

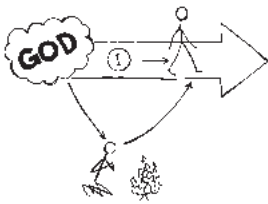


# Watch to see where God is working and join Him!

### Jesus' Example

1. The Father has been working right up until now.
2. Now the Father has Me working.
3. I do nothing on My own initiative.
4. I watch to see what the Father is doing.
5. The Father loves Me.
6. He shows Me everything He is doing.
7. I do what I see the Father doing.

**REALITY 1**



**GOD'S WORK**

This model applies to your life personally and also to your church. It is not a step-by-step approach for knowing and doing God's will. It describes a love relationship through which God accomplishes His purposes. I sum it up this way: *watch to see where God is working and join Him!*

## GOD IS ALWAYS AT WORK AROUND YOU

At this very moment, God is working all around you, as well as in your life. One of the greatest tragedies among God's people is that, although they deeply long to experience God, He is at work all around them day after day but they do not recognize Him. By the end of this course, you will have learned many ways to clearly identify God's activity in and around your life. The Holy Spirit and God's Word will instruct you and will help you know when and where God is working. Once you know where He is active, you will adjust your life to join Him in His activity.

You will experience God accomplishing His purposes through your life. When you enter this kind of intimate love relationship with God, you will know and do His will and experience Him in ways you have never known before. You cannot achieve this by following a spiritual formula. Only God can bring you into this kind of relationship.

**SUMMARY STATEMENTS**

The Bible is my guide for faith and practice.

The right question is, What is God's will?

Watch to see where God is working and join Him.

God is always at work around me.

**4 Turn to the diagram inside the back cover of this book. Read all seven of the realities of experiencing God. Personalize the first statement and write it below, using *me* instead of *you*.**

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Later this week we will take a closer look at these seven truths.

**Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	What does God want you to do in response to today's study? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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# LEARNING TO BE A SERVANT OF GOD

## DAY 3

Many Scripture passages describe Jesus as God’s servant. He came as a Servant to accomplish God’s will to redeem humanity. Here is what Paul said about Jesus: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a *servant*, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Phil. 2:5–8, emphasis added).

In His instructions to His disciples, Jesus (the Son of man) described His own role of servanthood this way: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:26–28). Jesus also identified what our relationship with Him should be like: “As the Father has sent me, I also send you” (John 20:21).

*To be a servant of God,  
you must be moldable  
and remain in the  
hand of the Master.*

**1** Based on these Scriptures and others are you comfortable with having the identity of being a servant of God?  Yes  No

**2** Briefly describe a time when you gave your best effort for God but felt frustrated that little or no lasting fruit resulted. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3** What is a servant? Define *servant* in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was your definition similar to: “A servant finds out what his master wants him to do and does it”? The world’s concept of a servant is that a servant goes to the master and says, “Master, what do you want me to do?” The master tells him, and the servant goes off *by himself* and does it. That is not the biblical concept of being a servant of God. Being a servant of God is different from being a servant of a human master. A servant of a human master works *for* his master. God, however, works *through* His servants.

## POTTER AND CLAY

My understanding of a servant is depicted by the potter and the clay (see **Jer. 18:1-6**). The clay must do two things:

1. The clay has to be molded. It has to be responsive to the potter so he can make it into an instrument of his choosing.
2. The clay has to remain in the potter’s hand. When the potter has finished making the instrument, it has no ability to do what it wants. It must remain in the potter’s hand to be effective. Suppose the potter molds the clay into a cup. The cup has to remain in the potter’s hands so he can use that cup to fulfill its purpose.

### Jeremiah 18:1-6

“This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ‘Go down at once to the potter’s house, there I will reveal my words to you.’ So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, working away at the wheel. But the jar he was making from the clay became flawed in the potter’s hand, so he made it into another jar, as it seemed right for him to do. The word of the LORD came to me: ‘House of Israel, can I not treat you as this potter treats his clay?’—this is the LORD’s declaration. ‘Just like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, house of Israel.’”

These characteristics are quite different from the world’s view of a servant. When you come to God as His servant, He first wants you to allow Him to mold and shape you into the instrument of His choosing. Then He takes your life where He wills and works through it to accomplish His purposes. Just as a cup cannot do anything on its own, you do not have the ability to carry out God’s will except to be where He wants you to be.

**4 Answer the following questions about being a servant of God.**

- a. How much can a servant do by himself or herself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. When God works through a servant, how much can that servant do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. What are two things a servant must do to be used by God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



To be God’s servant, you must be moldable and remain in the hand of the Master.

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To be God’s servant, you must be moldable and remain in the hand of the Master. Then the Master will use you, the instrument, as He chooses. The servant can do nothing of Kingdom value alone, just as Jesus said, “The Son is not able to do anything on his own” (John 5:19) and “you can do nothing without me” (John 15:5). With God working through a servant, however, he or she can do anything God can do. Wow! Unlimited potential! Servanthood requires obedience. Servants must do what they are instructed but must remember it’s God who is accomplishing the work.

If you have been working from the human approach to being a servant, this concept should change your approach to serving God. You do not get your orders and then go out to accomplish them on your own. You relate to God, respond to Him, and adjust your life to Him so that out of your relationship with Him, He does what He wants to do through your life. Let’s look at how God worked through His servant Elijah.

When **Elijah** challenged the prophets of Baal (a Canaanite fertility idol) to prove once and for all whose God was the true God, he took a big risk as God’s servant.

**5 Read 1 Kings 18:1-2,15-39 and answer the following questions.**

- a. Elijah was God’s servant. How many false prophets did he face at Mount Carmel? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What test did Elijah propose to prove whose God was the true God?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. What did Elijah do to the altar of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. What did he intend to prove through this experience? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. How did the people respond? \_\_\_\_\_
- f. What did God’s work do? \_\_\_\_\_
- g. What did Elijah’s work do? \_\_\_\_\_



Elijah was outnumbered 850 to 1. If God had not displayed His power by coming in fire and consuming the sacrifice (and altar) as Elijah had proposed, Elijah would have utterly failed. That would have cost him his life. Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord. He had to remain where God assigned him and do everything God commanded him. This was God’s plan; not his. He went where God guided him when God told him and did what God instructed him. Then God accomplished His purposes through him. God wanted the people to recognize the Lord as the true God. As God worked through His prophet Elijah, that is exactly what happened.

Did Elijah or God bring down the fire from heaven? God did. What was Elijah doing? Being obedient. Elijah had no ability to perform the miraculous. When God did something only He could do, all the people knew He was the true God. God convinced people of His powerful presence through His obedient servant.

**6 As your study time permits, read the following questions. Try to answer each one before moving to the next one. You may want to jot down some notes on the response lines.**

a. What will be the difference between the quality of service and the quantity of lasting results when God is working and when you are working?

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b. What are you doing in your life personally and in your church that you know cannot be accomplished unless God does it?

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c. What are you doing in your life and church that can be done without God’s involvement? \_\_\_\_\_

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d. Why do you think you experience meager fruit that doesn’t last? \_\_\_\_\_

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## DON'T JUST DO SOMETHING

We are a doing people. We always want to be doing something. Every now and then someone will exclaim, “Don’t just stand there; do something!”

In contrast, I think God is crying out to us, “Don’t just do something. Stand there! Enter a love relationship with Me. Get to know Me. Adjust your life to Me. Let Me love you and reveal Myself through you to a watching world.” A time will come when doing will be called for, but we can’t skip the relationship. The relationship with God must come first.

Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me” (John 15:5). Do you believe Him? Without Him you can do nothing. He means that.

**7 Turn to the diagram inside the back cover. Read again all seven realities listed there. Personalize the last (seventh) reality and write it below, using *I* and *me* instead of *you*.** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Don’t just do something. Stand there!**

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### SUMMARY STATEMENTS

To be a servant of God, I must be moldable and remain in the Master’s hand.

Apart from God I can do nothing.

God can do anything through me.

When I find out where the Master is working, then I know that is where I need to be.

I come to know God by experience as I obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through me.

God wants you to come to a greater knowledge of Him by experience. He wants to develop a growing, deepening love relationship with you. He wants to involve you in His Kingdom purposes. He wants to accomplish His purposes through you.

Do you want to be a servant of God? Find out what is on the Master’s heart. Discover where the Master is working. That is where you need to be. Find out what the Master is doing. That is what you need to do. Jesus said, “If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant also will be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him” (John 12:26).

**8 Practice quoting your Scripture memory verse aloud and/or write it on a separate sheet of paper.**

**Review today’s lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does God want you to do in response to today’s study?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Disbanding Church Revitalized

A church in an inner city had suffered years of decline as its neighborhood transitioned and church members moved to the suburbs. When only a remnant was left, they concluded they should disband their church. As a final activity the members decided to study *Experiencing God*. At the conclusion of the study, they would close the church doors for the last time. At the beginning of the course, the people learned that God is always at work around them. They chuckled at the thought, since nothing unusual had happened in their church for years. Nevertheless, they decided to watch during the week to see where God might be working.

That week an apartment manager approached a church member and asked if her church could do anything about all the kids in the apartment block with nothing to do. He offered the free use of the apartment’s common room if the church would provide activities. The church decided to offer a children’s program during the final few months of its existence. This soon brought several unwed mothers to their attention. Then some drug addicts were attracted to the church, as well as some gang members. Before this little group of people realized what was happening, they had launched several new ministries and were seeing people come to faith in Christ almost every week. At the close of the 13-week study, instead of disbanding, the church, now revitalized, began to minister powerfully to its community. Rather than remaining discouraged, the people realized they were in the center of God’s activity. He had been working in their community all along.

# GOD WORKS THROUGH HIS SERVANTS, PART 1

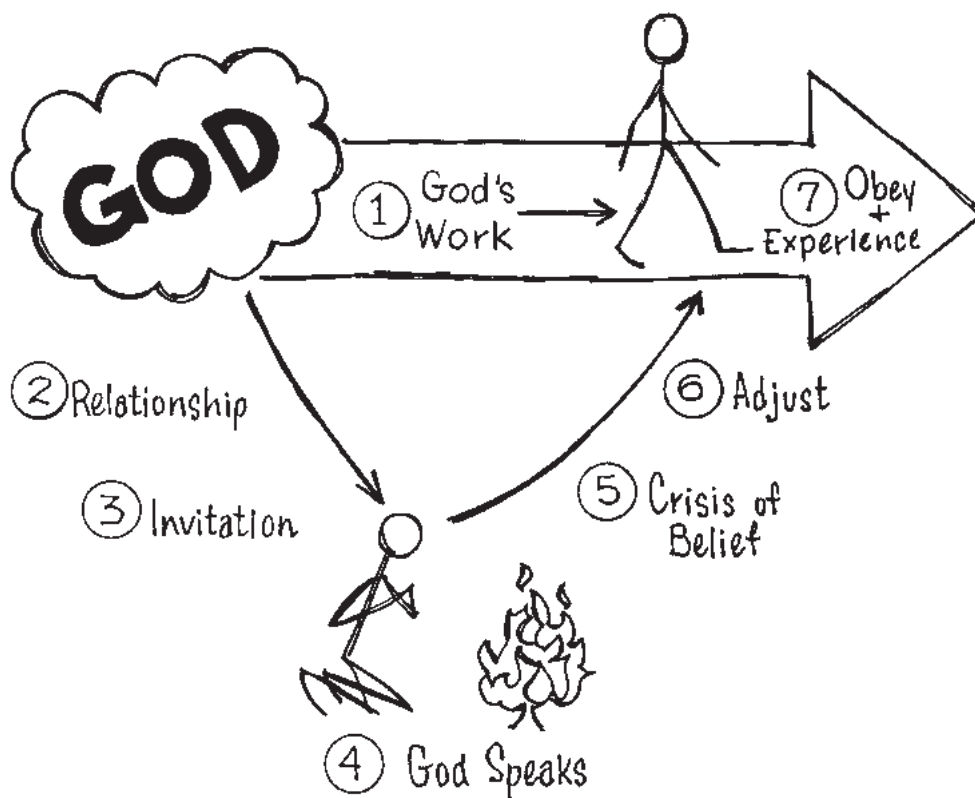
## DAY 4

We often act as though God tells us what He wants us to do and then sends us off by ourselves to try and accomplish it to the best of our ability. Then anytime we need Him, we call on Him, and He comes to help us. That is not the biblical picture. When God is about to do something, He reveals it to His people. He wants to accomplish His work through His people.

When God is about to do something through you, He has to get you from where you are to where He is, so He tells you what He is doing. (Later, I will help you understand how you can clearly know when God is speaking to you.) When you know what God is doing, then you know what you need to do: you need to join Him. The moment you know God is at work where you are, your life and its activity will be thrown into contrast with God and His activity. You cannot stay where you are and go with God.

### SEVEN REALITIES OF EXPERIENCING GOD

The illustration below (and inside the back cover) summarizes the way you should respond to God's initiative in your life. The text of the realities is in the margin.



*You cannot stay the way you are and go with God.*

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

**1 Complete the following to begin learning the seven realities. Use the text of the realities in the margin on page 21.**

a. Underline key words or phrases that help you recall the seven realities.

b. Write the key words or phrases on the following lines. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Slowly read each reality. Write in the margin questions about any of the realities you do not fully understand.

d. Using only the words or phrases you recorded, see if you can mentally summarize all seven realities. Review before moving to the next question.

e. On a separate sheet of paper, try writing each of the seven realities from memory. They do not have to be word for word, but they should cover the key points. Start with your key words or phrases if that helps.

Throughout this course we will focus on one or more of these realities as we unpack their implications for your life and your church. You may notice that I frequently repeat different aspects of this cycle. I use the repetition in different situations to help you learn how you can respond to God’s activity in your life.

In the assignment above, you could have selected various words or phrases. Yours may be different, but I chose *God/work, love relationship, involved with Him, God speaks, crisis of belief, adjustments, obey*. You may have asked questions like these:

- What is involved in a love relationship with God?
- How can I know when God is speaking?
- How do I know where God is at work?
- What kinds of adjustments does God require me to make?
- What is the difference between adjustment and obedience?

As I’ve worked with people in many settings, I’ve been asked questions like these. I will answer as many questions as possible during the remaining units of this course. We will address other issues in the video teaching that accompany this course.

We can identify three similarities in the lives of Bible characters through whom God worked:

1. When God spoke, they knew it was God.
2. They knew what God was saying.
3. They knew what they were to do in response.

Wouldn’t you like for your walk with God to be such that He worked through you that way? He wants to move you into that kind of relationship. I trust this course will help you grow in your understanding of God.

Moses’ call and ministry are good examples of the way God worked with people in the Bible. Exodus 2–4 describes his early life and God’s invitation to join His activity. Other passages of Scripture also help us see how Moses came to know and follow God’s will. Using the seven realities, let’s look at Moses’ call and response. (You may want to read Ex. 2–4 first.)

**Reality 1. God was already at work around Moses.**

“The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor, they cried out, and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the Israelites, and God knew.” (Ex. 2:23-25).

**Reality 2. God pursued a continuing love relationship with Moses that was real and personal.** Moses was a murderer, yet God took the initiative to come to Moses and initiate a love relationship with him. God told Moses He would go with him into Egypt. Many texts throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy illustrate the way God pursued a love relationship with Moses. Here is one example:

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain and stay there so that I may give you the stone tablets with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction.’ When Moses went up the mountain, the cloud covered it. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses from the cloud. Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain, and he remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights” (Ex. 24:12,15-16,18).

**Reality 3. God invited Moses to become involved with Him in His work.**

“I have come down to rescue them [the Israelites] from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land. Therefore, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt” (Ex. 3:8,10).

**2 Answer the following questions about the three preceding statements.**

- a. Reality 1: What was God already doing for Israel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Reality 2: What evidence demonstrates God wanted a real and personal relationship with Moses? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Reality 3: How did God involve Moses in the work He was already doing? \_\_\_\_\_

(1) God was accomplishing His purpose in the world. Even though Moses was an exile in the desert, he was on God’s schedule, in the fullness of God’s timing, in the middle of God’s will. When God was about to deliver the children of Israel, the important factor was not God’s will for Moses but rather His will for Israel. (2) Time and again God invited Moses to talk with Him and to be with Him. God initiated and maintained a growing relationship with Moses. This relationship was based on love, and God daily fulfilled His purposes through Moses. (For other examples of the love relationship, see Ex. 33:7–34:10; Num. 12:6–8.) (3) God’s purpose was to deliver the Israelites. God worked through Moses to accomplish His purposes.

Whenever God prepares to do something, He reveals to a person or His people what He is going to do (see **Amos 3:7**). God accomplishes His work through His

**Amos 3:7**

“Indeed, the LORD GOD does nothing without revealing his counsel to his servants the prophets.”



people. This is the way God will work with you. The Bible is designed to help you understand God's ways. Then when God starts to act the same way in your life, you will recognize that it is He who is working.

This is a two-part lesson, so we will continue with statement 4 tomorrow.

**Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

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Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

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What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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# DAY 5

## GOD WORKS THROUGH HIS SERVANTS, PART 2

God reveals what He is about to do. That revelation becomes an invitation to join Him.

Yesterday you studied the first three realities of God's working with Moses. Now look at the last four.

***Reality 4. God spoke to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.***

“Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush. . . . God called out to him from the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ ‘Here I am,’ he answered.

‘Do not come any closer,’ he said. ‘Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’ Then he continued, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’

“Then the LORD said, ‘I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors. I know about their sufferings, and I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land . . .’” (Ex. 3:2-8).

“If there is a prophet among you from the LORD,  
I make myself known to him in a vision,  
I speak with him in a dream.  
Not so with my servant Moses;  
he is faithful in all my household.  
I speak with him directly . . .” (Num. 12:6-8).

**Reality 5. God's invitation for Moses to work with Him led to a crisis of belief that required faith and action.** Moses expressed a crisis of belief when he made the following statements to God.

“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

“If I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I tell them?”

“What if they won’t believe me and will not obey me but say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you’ ”?

“Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent—either in the past or recently or since you have been speaking to your servant—because my mouth and my tongue are sluggish.”

“Please, Lord, send someone else” (Ex. 3:11,13; 4:1,10,13).

**Reality 6. Moses had to make major adjustments in his life to join God in what He was doing.** Moses’ crisis called for faith and action.

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin. . . . By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king’s anger, for Moses persevered as one who sees him who is invisible. By faith he instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch the Israelites. By faith they crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to do this, they were drowned” (Heb. 11:24–29).

“Now in Midian the LORD told Moses, ‘Return to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.’ So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt” (Ex. 4:19–20).

**Reality 7. Moses came to know God by experience as he obeyed God, and God accomplished His work through Moses.** Many texts throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy illustrate how God revealed His nature and His purposes to Moses. As Moses obeyed God, God accomplished through Moses what Moses could not do in his own strength. Here is one example in which Moses and the people came to know God as their Deliverer.

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to break camp. As for you, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide the it so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. As for me, I am going to harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them, and I receive glory by means of Pharaoh, all his army, and his chariots and horsemen. . . .’

“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back with a powerful east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land. So the waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left. The Egyptians set out in pursuit.”

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the water may come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots and horsemen.’ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal depth.”

“But the Israelites had walked through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left. That day the LORD saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. When Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses” (Ex. 14:15-17,21-23,26-27,29-31).

**1 Answer the following questions about the last four realities.**

- a. Reality 4: What did God reveal about Himself, His purposes, and His ways?  
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- b. Reality 5: What did Moses have trouble believing about God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Reality 5: How would you summarize Moses' faith as it is described in Hebrews 11? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Reality 6: What adjustments did Moses have to make? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e. Reality 7: How do you think Moses felt when God delivered the Israelites through him? \_\_\_\_\_

God reveals what He is about to do. That revelation becomes an invitation to join Him. (4) God talked to Moses about His will. God wanted Moses to go to Egypt to be His instrument to deliver the Israelites from their bondage. God revealed to Moses His holiness, His mercy, His power, His name, and His purpose to keep His promise to Abraham and to give Israel the promised land. (5) Moses offered many objections. He questioned whether God could do such a great work through someone like him (see Ex. 3:11), whether the Israelites would believe God had appeared to him (see Ex. 4:1), and whether he was capable of speaking eloquently enough to accomplish the task (see Ex. 4:10). In each case, Moses was doubting God more than himself. Moses faced a crisis of belief: is God really able to do what He says? (5) Moses' faith is described in Hebrews, however, as a model of self-sacrifice and trust in almighty God. Once God let Moses know what He was about to do, that revelation became Moses' invitation to join Him. (6) Moses made the necessary adjustments to orient his life to God. Moses had to come to the place where he believed God could do everything He said He would do. Then he had to leave his job and in-laws and move to Egypt. After making these adjustments, he was in a position to obey God. That did not mean he was going to do something all by himself for God. It meant he was going to be where God was working so God would do what He had purposed to do in the first place. Moses was a servant who was  *moldable* , and he  *remained*  at God's disposal to be used as God chose. God accomplished His purposes through him. When God does a God-sized work through your life, you will be humbled before Him. (7) Moses must have felt unworthy to be used in such a significant way. Moses obeyed and did everything God told him.

Then God accomplished through Moses all He intended. Every step of obedience brought Moses (and Israel) to a greater knowledge of God (see Ex. 6:1-8).

## WHAT CAN ONE ORDINARY PERSON DO?

A wonderful Scripture that has helped me at this point is “Elijah was a human being as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the land. Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit” (Jas. 5:17-18). Elijah was an ordinary person just like us. He prayed, and God responded powerfully.

When God healed the crippled beggar through Peter, **Peter and John** were called before the Sanhedrin (the highest Jewish court in the land) to give an account of their actions. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter boldly spoke to the religious leaders. Notice the leaders’ response: “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, *ordinary* men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13, NIV, emphasis added).

The people you generally see in the Scriptures were ordinary. Their relationships with God and the activity of God made them extraordinary. Did you notice this statement: the leaders recognized Peter and John “had been with Jesus”? Anyone who takes the time to enter an intimate relationship with God can see Him do extraordinary things through his or her life.

**Dwight L. Moody** was a poorly educated, unordained shoe salesman who felt God’s call to preach the gospel. Early one morning he and some friends gathered for prayer, confession, and consecration. They heard Henry Varley say, “The world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to Him.”

Moody was deeply moved by those words. Later he listened to the great preacher Charles H. Spurgeon. Moody thought:

“The world had yet to see! ... with and for and through and in! ... a man!”  
Varley meant *any* man! Varley didn’t say he had to be educated, or brilliant, or anything else! Just a *man*! Well, by the Holy Spirit in him, he’d [Moody] be *one* of those men. And then suddenly, in that high gallery, he saw something he’d never realized before,—it was not Mr. Spurgeon, after all, who was doing that work: it was God. And if God could use Mr. Spurgeon, why should He not use the rest of us, and why should we not all just lay ourselves at the Master’s feet, and say to Him, “Send me! Use me!”

Dwight L. Moody was an ordinary person who sought to be fully and wholly consecrated to Christ. One ordinary Christian in the hand of almighty God can do *anything* God commands. Through this one common life God began to do the extraordinary. Moody became one of the greatest evangelists of modern times. He preached in revival services across Britain and America, where hundreds of thousands came to Christ.

**2** Do you believe God could work in extraordinary ways through your life to accomplish significant things for His kingdom?  Yes  No

You might say, “I’m not a D. L. Moody.” You don’t have to be. God doesn’t want you to be a D. L. Moody. He wants you to be you and to let Him do through you whatever He chooses. When you believe nothing significant can happen through you, you have said more about your belief in God than you have declared about yourself. You have



“The world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to Him.”



When you believe nothing significant can happen through you, you have said more about your belief in God than you have declared about yourself.

said that God is incapable of doing anything significant through someone like you. The truth is, He is able to do anything He pleases with one ordinary person who is fully consecrated to Him. Would you be willing to make yourself wholly available to Him?

## GOD'S STANDARDS ARE DIFFERENT FROM OURS

Don't be surprised that God's standards of excellence are different than the world's. How long was the public ministry of **John the Baptist**? Perhaps six months. What was Jesus' estimate of John's life? Jesus said, "I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John" (Luke 7:28). None greater! John had six months completely yielded to God, and the Son of God declared that his contribution to the kingdom of God was unsurpassed.

Don't measure your life by the world's standards. Many denominations are doing that. Numerous pastors and churches are doing that. Think about it. By the world's standards, a person or a church may look impressive, yet in God's sight, be utterly detestable. Similarly, a person or a church may be completely yielded to God and pleasing to Him yet appear insignificant in the world's eyes. Could a pastor who faithfully serves where God placed him in a small, rural community be pleasing to the Lord? Certainly, if that is where God assigned him. God will look for and reward faithfulness, whether the person has been given great responsibility or little.

God delights in using ordinary people to accomplish His eternal purposes. Paul said God deliberately seeks to use weak and despised things because from them He receives the greatest glory (see 1 Cor. 1:26-31). Then everyone knows only God could have done something through them. If you feel weak, limited, or ordinary, you are the exact type of person through whom God delight to work.

### SUMMARY STATEMENTS

God reveals what He is about to do.

The revelation becomes an invitation to join Him.

I can't stay where I am and go with God.

God is able to do anything He pleases with one ordinary person who is fully consecrated to Him.

God's standards of excellence are different from ours.

**3 Review your Scripture memory verse and be prepared to recite it to a partner in your small group session this week.**

**4 Spend a few minutes in prayer for your small group. Pray that the Lord will have complete freedom to mold, shape, and guide each one to be perfectly in the middle of His will.**

This is the end of this unit's lessons. The following page will be used in your small group session this week. It includes notes from the video teaching and a review of the content you have studied this week.

**Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

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Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

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What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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# GOD'S WILL AND YOUR LIFE

## SESSION 1

### VIDEO TEACHING NOTES

1. The Bible is God-centered.
2. Throughout the Bible, God is speaking to people, but it's always for His purposes—to invite people into His work.
3. God doesn't necessarily speak in every moment, but we should be in such a relationship with God that when He does speak we are able to receive it.
4. It would be crazy to stay after God has said to go.
5. When we take our eyes off of ourselves and put them on God, we experience abundant life.
6. One person turning their eyes toward God and asking what He is doing around them can have enormous implications.

#### Scriptures Referenced

John 10:27  
 John 5:1-19  
 Ephesians 3:20

#### Get Acquainted

1. My name is ...
2. My immediate family includes ...
3. The thing I liked best about my hometown was ...
4. Something interesting you might not know about me is ...
5. I chose to study this course on knowing and doing the will of God because ...

### YOUR NOTES

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### UNIT REVIEW

**Write a key word or words for each of the seven realities of experiencing God. If you need help, you may review the inside back cover.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

Check your answers, using the inside back cover of your book.

Video sessions available at [lifeway.com/eg](http://lifeway.com/eg)