



CHRIST, CLUTTER, AND THE CALENDAR COURSE WORKBOOK

*Also used for
Retreat/Small Group Leader Guide*

CHRIST, CLUTTER, AND THE CALENDAR

Retreat Leader Guide

WORKBOOK

RICHARD T. CASE





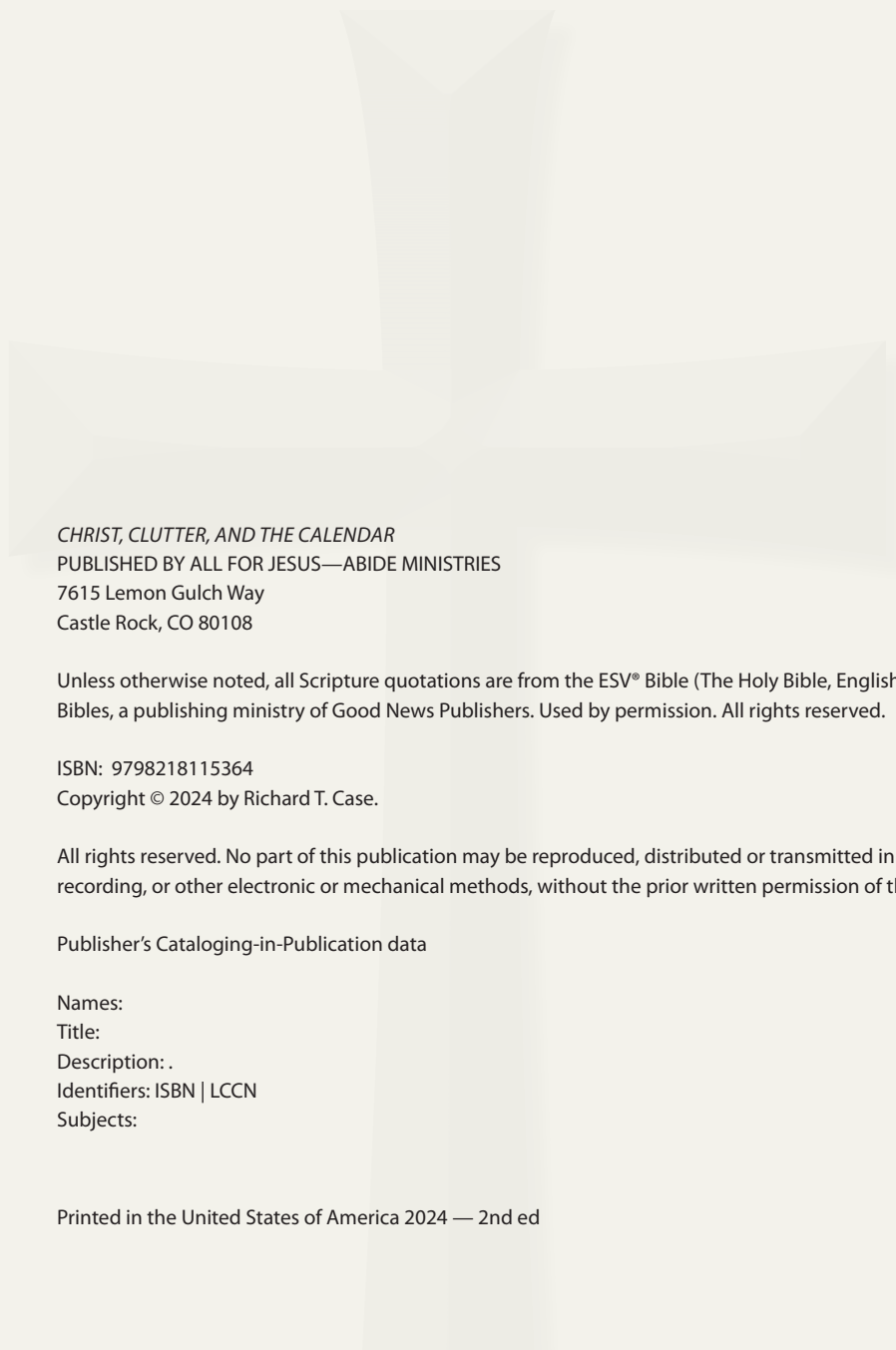
Acknowledgments

I wish to dedicate this course to and thank all of the leaders of our **Ministry: Living Waters—ABIDE Ministries**, along with my wife, Linda, who have all had to process through this consistent life issue of being too busy, not having margin, and burdened by life issues. We have walked together to learn to receive these truths personally, and thus all the time are assisting each other to live in freedom, margin, and experiencing God's best—verses falling into the normal life of Christians where we are trying to do all we can for God; and thinking that more is always better. Because of the dynamics of life, this is a constant issue that is not resolved once and for all—but is a process that has to be engaged all the time. Our leader's practice this, help Linda and I practice this, and then they give it away to their groups and friends who also have to deal with the struggle. Having freedom and margin is such a critical issue for all believers that this course is a required study in order to enjoy the fullness of the life with God. Thank you all for teaching these truths:

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Further, it is a joy for me to share this life with my wife, Linda, and family who together are do hold each other accountable to continue to process these truths in our everyday life—and thus we enjoy the beauty and margin of life intended by God for us.



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LESSON 1: GOD'S PLAN FOR US TO LIVE THE COVENANT: THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE; REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE



"God sets before us a really simple choice: life or death, blessing or cursing."

Welcome to our new course called *Christ, Clutter, and the calendar*. This is about people who are living a normal life. There's just so much going on and it's cluttered. You typically have lots of issues; you have time issues and you're doing too much. This course is about following Christ to reduce the clutter and reorganize our calendar. It's going to be a wonderful time in the word learning the truth of how to create and maintain margin and why He wants to live this way, and how we are to live this way.

What choice does God present to us? What is His purpose for this? Why is this such an important truth for our lives? What is described for how are we to make this choice?

Read Deuteronomy 30:15–20:

¹⁵ "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God^[a] that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,^[b] then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

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God sets before us a really simple choice: life or death, blessing or cursing. And He says, "If I were you, I'd choose life." It's a very powerful statement. Choose life. Our question then is: What life are we to choose? He says, "You either live in my kingdom or you're going to live outside of my kingdom." Now remember, He's talking to believers. And that means, are you letting Him be King, living in the spiritual realm of the kingdom where all things are possible? Or are you going to live in the flesh, where you're living on your own under the influence of the world and destruction? Which is why we tend to have clutter issues or things that are burdening us so we're too busy. Life in the kingdom is described in Romans 14:17. The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Righteousness, peace and joy. So, if you're living in the kingdom, you will be experiencing what?

Righteousness, peace and joy.

Joy and peace and God's righteousness where "I'll resolve these issues of clutter." And it'll be obvious. And simple. Are you living in joy? Are you enjoying life now? And, does that mean you won't have any trouble? No, it doesn't say that. Are you walking with God? Are you enjoying life? Are you in peace (shalom - favor)?

Read Romans 8:5–8: What are the three consequences of living in the flesh?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Why is it so important to our life to understand this, and thus be motivated to choose what God laid out for us in Deuteronomy 30?

Read Romans 8:5-8

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

When you're in the world, in the flesh (self), you are not following Him in His kingdom, which means you are choosing death, choosing curses. He says, "You have put to death the power for Me to act. You are at enmity against Me, working against Me. This takes you deeper into the clutter. You're going to deepen the burdens. You're going to deepen your busyness. So, either you can live in the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy and live a beautiful life of margin or you can live in the world where things aren't going to work out too well. Why? Your clutter is going to get heavier; your burdens are going to get heavier; the issues of life are going to get heavier; and your calendar is going to get filled up. And, interesting enough, this will partly come out of you trying to fix it. You spend a lot of energy on things that you're trying to resolve. And not just time, but the mental energy required to achieve resolution. "I have this difficult circumstance, but I can't resolve it. I'm trying and trying to resolve it, but it is not being resolved." Your mind is not in freedom. It's not in joy because you're burdened. God says, "The solution for you is simple: come to the kingdom and I'll give you this beautiful, peaceful life of your clutter being resolved and your calendar being settled so that you have plenty of space." This is His promise to us.

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Read through these verses, and review again what we have previously learned about the seven exceptional characteristics of life as originally designed by God for us. Why is this important for us to receive as we learn that God is going to provide margin for our calendar and resolve our issues of life?

Read Genesis 1:26–2:25:

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man^[a] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵ When no bush of the field^[b] was yet in the land^[c] and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on

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the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist^[d] was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat^[e] of it you shall surely die."

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for^[f] him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed^[g] every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam^[h] there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made^[i] into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."^[j]

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

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We have described this in detail in our course: Abiding in the Vine/Unity. It goes into the depth of these things—and we encourage you to go back to that course. We spend a lot of time describing what God intended for our life and why He structured life for us this way:

1. Exceptional authority
2. Exceptional Provision—financial freedom
3. Exceptional work—enjoying what is our daily occupation
4. Exceptional marriage/relationships—enjoying life with significant other as well as others in fellowship
5. Exceptional Identity in Christ. We are children of God
6. Exceptional Health and Healing—physical life is strong and enjoyable
7. Exceptional is communion with God—we are enjoying intimate life with God and speaking with and receiving His guidance—all the time

All these characteristics are working in sync with God's exceptional life for us. This is His provision.

He says that even though we're in enemy territory—a wicked world that's tough, difficult, and going to have clutter issues, Christ has come to give us life and give it to us super abundantly. (John 10:10) He will restore our abundant life that has been affected by the world, and the authority of Satan to kill, steal and destroy. As He states in Colossians 1:19–23, His desire is to restore the difficult life back to God's original plan of exceptional living

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What does God promise regarding restoring to us His abundant life when the life and the circumstances we are experiencing are difficult and oppressive? Why is this so important for us to receive and believe?

Read Isaiah 61:1–4:

The Year of the LORD'S Favor

61 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;^[a]
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;^[b]
² to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.^[c]
⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

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These are the truths that Jesus first spoke in Luke 4:16–21, where He describes why He has come. He says: “Yes, you are going to experience complicated issues of life, which is causing you to be burdened by heaviness, the struggles, the disappointments, the being in prison, the things that are part of our life. That is because we're in the world and have made ashes—things that we've ruined, things that need to be rebuilt, because you've destroyed them. God promises to give you freedom. Let me give you restoration. Let me give you beauty. Let me take you out of prison. That's what the abundant life looks like,” He says. “I know that's where you tend to live. Even as a believer, you can say, yeah, people are stuck in these difficult places, the wounds of the heart, the burdens of life. I can restore all these to have you experience the promised super abundant life.”

**What can we count on as we consider the life that God has planned for us?
Why is this so important for us to receive and believe?**

Read Jeremiah 29:11–14:

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare^[a] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

God has specific plans for you. His will for you is for good: Peace, Shalom, favor—the very things just reviewed in Isaiah 61. Restoration, freedom, joy. That's His plan for you. Not for evil. The word “evil” here isn't dark, awful, black. It's things that annoy, frustrate, irritate and come against you. He said: “That's not my plan for you to live there. As we look at resolution of clutter and calendar, the key is not putting up with what mediocrity. You guess this is the way life is and that you have

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to live with this difficulty. God says, "No, you don't. I can resolve it and I can share with you and show you how to live a life of freedom. That's my plan. Why don't you join My plan for you? Instead of you trying to figure all this out and making it worse; why don't you and let Me walk you into My exceptional plan?" Remember, this happens in His Kingdom, which is the Covenant.

What is the Covenant that was given to Abraham and still applies to us? What does that mean to us as we face difficulties and burdens of life?

Read Genesis 12:1-3:

The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD said^[a] to Abram, "Go from your country^[b] and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."^[c]

He said, "The reason that I want you to live in my Kingdom, in the Covenant life, is that I'm going to bless you with freedom, restoration, margin, enjoyment. I want you to be blessed with this." We tend to think of blessing as material (i.e., more stuff). Wealthy people often do not enjoy life. Money doesn't give you joy. It's how you live in the context of where you're placed. It's not about how much you have, thinking that you have more is blessing. It's not. It's about how does God have you live within the context of the life you have, which, by the way, will include financial provision called financial freedom. He doesn't want you to be burdened constantly thinking I can't make it, I can't make it, I can't make it. He says, "I'm going to bless you so that you are in a spot where you have freedom. I'm doing that because as you blessed, you will become blessing to others." And what would be a blessing to somebody

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else? You have them learn that God has an exceptional life for them personally, in the same way that you are living—with margin, resolution to issues, joy. Others also will be experiencing trouble or find themselves in awful situations filled with burdens and an overwhelming calendar. We know that God will resolve all that so that you can live a life of peace, joy and freedom, a life of blessing (and then they will be asked to become a blessing to others, which is why multiplication is so effective). The covenant life (blessed to be a blessing) is demonstrated as we live in the blessing of margin with issues being resolved.

What is promised if we hear and follow God's path for us? What then should we focus on for us to receive the blessings? If we turn to chase the blessings, what then by definition happens to us?

Read Deuteronomy 28:1–2:

Blessings for Obedience

28 "And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.

If you follow God, in His kingdom, hearing and following His instruction, what's going to happen? The blessings are going to come from behind and overtake you. You'll start to experience them. Since this is the covenant, you will then give it away. Further, if you start focusing on the blessing by turning around and chasing the blessing, what happens? The blessings stop. So, it is essential that we follow Him, in His Kingdom, with a heart to hear and follow.

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In order to experience the promised blessings as He makes things happen through His authority, what is important for us to understand and live out? Why?

Read Matthew 28:18–20:

Blessings for Obedience

28 “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.

When Jesus says all authority has been given to Me, He is not denying the authority of dominion (control) of Satan over the world, but that in His Kingdom, His authority is fully operational and is superior to that of the world. He has and can overcome anything. “Nothing is too difficult for Me.” We do live in both places: in the world, which is under the authority of the enemy and full of trouble (kill, steal, and destroy); but the potential is to live in His kingdom, experiencing the abundant, exceptional life. Our role, then, is to make disciples. A disciple is someone who we walk with to get connected to the Vine, to Christ, so that they can then receive the covenant life: blessed to be a blessing. It's not a program that can be done for these things because then our connection is to the program. Instead, we want to be connected to Jesus. We want to go out and make disciples for Jesus. So, when He says to make disciples, He wants us “to bring them to Me and teach them to do what? To follow Jesus as we are following Jesus. But in order for you to be disciples and make disciples, what's important? You have to be living in the kingdom, experiencing the freedom, and the resolution of clutter margin in your life. We then can both bear witness to the wonderful work of God in our life and then walk with others to experience the same.

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Since we live in the world, who is working to cause us to experience difficulties and burdens? Why? What is important for us to understand about this?

Read John 8:42-44:

⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The enemy is a deceiver and liar. And one of the key deceptions and lies in our lives is how Christians view and live out clutter and calendar: More is better; fix your own problems and issues and do not even consider God because God is not going to resolve this for you. Henry Blackaby, with whom I have co-taught to executives the truths of this life, says he's shocked that most Christians are living as practical atheists. An atheist lives entirely in the flesh, living life on their own. And then trying harder to do better, do more. That's the deception, and is a trap of the enemy.

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How does the enemy scheme to come against us and thwart God's will of providing the abundant, covenant life for us and restoring the things that have been lost, stolen, and ruined?

Read Ephesians 6:10–12:

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Satan has wiles, schemes, and tactics to keep us in the world, away from the life of God in His kingdom (where we are not experiencing righteousness, peace, and joy). What's he doing? Observing you, noticing what triggers you to not walk with God, but to continue to walk in the world? One of the big triggers is busyness. You fall for "more is better," filling up your day by chasing stuff and activity. We must understand these schemes and the impact on our life, contrary to the intended life of God for us.

What exactly does the enemy appeal to that leads us to "sin" – not follow God? What are the consequences of this if we respond to this appeal? Why is this so easy to fall into?

Read James 1:12–15:

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God,"

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for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Sin is what? Think “not of God,” not walking with God. It's not about my doing the right or wrong things right now, it is if you living in the kingdom or not. If you're living the world, in the self, you're where? In sin. Why? You are not following God. It's an issue of the flesh. It's not the thing you're doing but living in the flesh, making your own decisions, tempted by self and then exiting the Kingdom that then is sin, unwilling to follow God. The enemy keeps getting you to believe it would be better if you what? Decide on your own. And you see it and you exit and that's when you exit. It has now become sin. Why? Because you're now under the influence of the world, not under God so God can't protect you anymore. He cannot resolve your clutter; and your calendar is going to be filled up with your stuff. The enemy works to keep you in that place that produces an effect: what he has observed in your life works to keep you in the world, away from God. How does Satan do it? Two ways:

1. Too many tasks, too much stuff to do.

You're occupied with things that that don't allow you any margin, rest, recreation, or the ability to fulfill God's beautiful life of peace and joy.

2. An occupied thought life.

You're doing too much and then your thought life is occupied, and what Satan wants to occupy it with is what? Busyness and things that you are trying to resolve on your own, which then lead you to anxiety, fear, and worry. The focus tends to be on the outcome. And this probably is not going to work. This could be bad. I just had this thing happen to me and so I need to fix it. Soon it occupies our thoughts, plans, ways, etc. Our life is then occupied with the problem and the conflict. Life just gets heavier and heavier and heavier of worry and fear and anxiety.

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The tactics of Satan are to keep you busy. Give you too much stuff to do. Take over your calendar and thought life.

What is a key selfish appeal that we all tend to think about and pursue? What is it about this that appeals to us? Why?

Read Ecclesiastes 5:10:

¹⁰ He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

If you love money and financial gain (what you are pursuing as your goal and way of evaluating decisions), you won't be satisfied. You won't be fulfilled. It's true because it's not possible in this real life as God has given us. Rockefeller who started Standard Oil in the early 1900s and would be considered equivalent to Bill Gates in our time today—one of the wealthiest people on earth—was asked: How much money do you need? His answer was this: "A little bit more. I need a little bit more. That's it." We're never satisfied. We think that if we just had a little bit more, we could protect ourself a little bit more. Our thought is vanity and will not fulfill us and will not satisfy us.

What happens when we pursue wealth and money as our primary of making decisions? Why is this so difficult to understand and thus so difficult to just follow and trust God?

Read Proverbs 20:3–5:

³ It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife,
but every fool will be quarreling.

⁴ The sluggard does not plow in the autumn;

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he will seek at harvest and have nothing.
⁵The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water,
but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Though you may pursue wealth and even experience a little bit of it, this does not last. It is fleeting, and all of a sudden, it's not there. You put all your energy and focus on gaining wealth, but then it is gone and all that energy put into acquiring wealth is wasted and meaningless. Wealth isn't the answer.

What is another consequence of pursuing riches? Why then is this so important to understand as we alter our view on pursuing riches?

Read Proverbs 28:20:

²⁰ A faithful man will abound with blessings,
but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

If your focus is on riches you will not go unpunished. Your life is going to be empty. The punishment is you won't ever experience joy in righteousness and peace. You're empty; you're just chasing, chasing, chasing, and your life is empty. And then what do we do? Spend more time on more tasks to fulfill this life. We have too much that we're going to do in an attempt to gain wealth, but it is empty.

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What is true about our desire and attempt to serve both God (we all do want to) and money? Why is this consequence so critical to how we live?

Read Matthew 6:24:

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.^[a]

It's an absolute truth: you cannot serve both money (financial things) and God at the same time. It doesn't mean that God's not going to give you money. It's about who you serve. Who are you chasing? You can't serve both God and money. He says: "If you do, if you think you do, you're going to wind up serving one of them and you're going to wind up despising the other. If you're chasing money and you're filling your life with all these tasks to chase money, how do you despise God? You don't listen to Him. You do not pursue the truth of life offered when living in the kingdom of God, which brings righteousness, peace, and joy. Instead, you're despising it. And because of this attempt to serve both, you actually serve only money and will not experience the life that God has planned for you.

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In what way is pursuing wealth a trap? How does this trap us and cause us more difficulty? Why is this so important to learn?

Read 1 Timothy 6:9–10:

⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

The desire to pursue wealth creates trouble. It doesn't work out; you get snared in the oppression of going after the bait. The trap is that we think that pursuing this activity of wealth and finances first will bring happiness, but it's a trap. It doesn't. It leads to ruin and leads to evil. Remember, the word evil is things that annoy, frustrate, irritate, and oppress you. You think you're trying to get to security and safety but it is actually causing you trouble. Why? Because you're not living out the life of God; you may be experiencing financial gain, but the pursuit of it is filling your life with too many tasks, and the question then is really simple. Are you enjoying it? Almost always, the answer is no. Why? You have too many tasks that burden life. Filling our calendar occurs by setting your own goals, your own plans, your own timelines of what you want to do and have done. This is the trap!

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If we do not seek God's counsel, what are the consequences to us? Why?

Read Isaiah 30:1–3:

Do Not Go Down to Egypt

30 "Ah, stubborn children," declares the Lord,
"who carry out a plan, but not mine,
and who make an alliance,^[a] but not of my Spirit,
that they may add sin to sin;

² who set out to go down to Egypt,
without asking for my direction,
to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh
and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

³ Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame,
and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation.

God declares stubborn and rebellious those of us who pursue our own plans without His counsel and leading. We make an alliance with the world (Egypt) and not pursue the life and plans of God. We are pursuing our own plans and forget to ask for God's counsel. This leads to rebellion and stubbornness and not fulfilling what He has for you because you have your own plan. But this is not going to work well for you and actually will lead to more difficulty.

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In what way do we hurry to achieve certain personal goals? What are the consequences of this? Why then is this so important to how we live?

Read Proverbs 21:5:

⁵ The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

He asks us: "Why do you haste after the things of the world?" The word haste means to work as fast as you can with as much as you can. Why do you go to haste? Because you need to get this or that done. You must accomplish your plan. But this leads to frustration and poverty. Poverty means you're not going to experience the beautiful life He has for you. You might have some money. But He defines poverty as not enjoying the fullness of His life, and so you're devoid of what matters to the beautiful life that God wishes to deliver to you. This poverty is of things that are important like your relationship with your spouse, or. Your relationship with your kids, fellowship with others, freedom and joy, enjoying work, opportunity to give it away. All these things aren't going to happen.

What is the interesting truth of what happens to us as we seek our own gain and our own solutions? Why is this so critical to learn?

Read Haggai 1:3-11:

³ Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ⁴ "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? ⁵ Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁶ You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you

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drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

⁷“Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. ⁹ You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. ¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹ And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors.”

We know something about this from the New Testament. He's talking about building the house. Who is God's house? We are. He's talking about your life. Are you going to build your life in Him? He says, “Typically, you don't care about what I have to say. You've decided I'm going to go, do this or that and chase the wind. Everything that you're building is for naught.” The word there is empty, zero, worthless. He said, “Because you're focusing on self, building it on your own, you're in the world outside of Me, at enmity against Me, and it's not working.” On top of it, what does God say He's going to do? That He will blow away whatever you build up. You fulfill your stuff and He will bring problems. He will withhold the rain. He will withhold the blessing to you. The restoration isn't going to happen. Your clutter isn't going to resolve. Your calendar isn't going to get full of margin, even if you're trying on your own. He's going to blow it away. Why? God is working against you. You're actually declaring war against Him. And even though you may have a good thing, it is not God's thing and He thus cannot deliver to you His grand life. His desire always is for you. He invites you to join Him and His plan for you. Your life will be way, way better if you live in the kingdom and let Him resolve your clutter and reorganize your calendar.

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What does God reveal to us about trying to get everything done ourselves? Why is this "not good"? What would He have us consider that would help us recapture our energy and our time? Why?

Read Exodus 18:1–18:

Jethro's Advice

18 Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. ² Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, ³ along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner^[a] in a foreign land"), ⁴ and the name of the other, Eliezer^[b] (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"). ⁵ Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. ⁶ And when he sent word to Moses, "I,^[c] your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her," ⁷ Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. ⁸ Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them in the way, and how the Lord had delivered them. ⁹ And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the Lord had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

¹⁰ Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people."^[d] ¹² And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

¹³ The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" ¹⁵ And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; ¹⁶ when they have a dispute, they come

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to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.”¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.

Moses' father-in-law observes Moses' life and asks him: What are you doing? Moses replies that everybody comes to him, that he makes all the decisions because they need him. Moses' father-in-law says, “What you are doing is not good. You are going to wear out, and all these people also will wear out (wasting their time waiting for Moses to decide).” This is how we tend to live—by doing too many things ourselves, at work, at home, on our projects, even in good things like church and ministry. You're accumulating, working, staying busy, but you're not enjoying anything. You don't have any margin in your life and any time you have, you fill it up with stuff that you could give somebody else to do. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, reminds us that doing too many things ourselves without delegating and having others join, is not God's will. It's not good. You are wearing yourself out. He says, “Why don't you build up a bunch of people that can do what you do? And delegate so that you can go back to enjoying life? In both work and at home, you have an opportunity where you need somebody to help do things for you, and they can enjoy doing it as it provides occupation and income for them.” God wants us to learn to have others join the work we are involved with, and free up time, our most precious commodity in life.

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As we are making choices to follow God, what is important for us to get settled? Why?

Read Galatians 1:10:

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant^[a] of Christ.

We have a choice to make. Are we going to please others or please God? When we are seeking to please others, we actually are seeking to please ourself. We want the approval of others and think it is more important than seeking God's will. This is why relationships suffer at home. We are focused on work and pleasing the company or our boss. We don't even think about pleasing your wife. We get rewarded by my work, by getting more money. If I do the good thing, I please them. And when they're not happy with me, it bothers me. So, what am I going to do? Please them. We are not seeking God and the important things of the life of God, which are marriage, family, etc. and which leads me not to receive the freedom and life of God. Instead, we are pleasing ourselves.

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What is also important to understand as we follow God? In what ways do we get entangled in other activities? What are the consequences of that?

Read 2 Timothy 2:4:

⁴ No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

If you're in the military, you're getting entangled in civilian pursuits; and in the military, what are you supposed to do? Do what your commanding officer instructs: Just focus on that and fulfill his purposes and plans, as he knows better and is given the responsibility to lead all. The group's men and women willingly follow and do not consider other, outside activities. What happens when you do not follow the instructions but decide to do other things (civilian things) The word entangled means you're stuck in these other pursuits. How are you stuck in these other pursuits? You're committed to them and then you're now obligated to stay committed to them, and now there is conflict in what gets your attention and time as you try to fulfill both. God says you don't have enough time for both, your mind can't handle the burden of both, and your energy can't handle both. So, what happens? You're tired and weary and struggling; you have no margin and you're burdened. Why? Because you're trying to do both.

The consequences of particularly pursuing money, pursuing your task, is that you in the world, are not following God and are trying to please yourself. You become entangled and thus, frustrated, tired, weary, and struggling. He gave this picture of entanglement in Haggai that we reviewed earlier. You're filling up your bag with things that are worthless. And then you work harder to recover what is being lost and try to put it back in the bag. But the holes are still there. So, the cycle continues being entangled, you keep working too hard, and wind up still feeling worthless, frustrated, weary, tired, overwhelmed, burdened, anxious, fearful. All these things are happening because your life is full of clutter and your life is full

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of tasks. That is keeping you from having any safety and margin. And you're not experiencing the Kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy.

God said the enemy is trying to thwart what He would have for you, which is to have abundance, and to have you blessed to be a blessing. He wants you to enjoy life through righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. That's what He wants and invites you to.

As you consider your life right now, do an evaluation of your life and look at the things of your life and ask the simple question: Am I enjoying it? Do I have margin in my life? Am I trying to figure out my own plans? What are my own timelines and why have I not considered God's way? Am I entangled in things that have not been given to me by my master? As you list these things, in the next sessions, we can begin to ask God to give us His assignments and His wisdom to have us live a life of freedom and joy.

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"The enemy is working to keep us away from this blessed life by bringing us too many tasks like chasing money, chasing our own plan, chasing our activity of things that are going to occupy our time."

In the last lesson, we discussed the desire of the Father for us to live in His kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. With His life of margin and resolution of life issues, and involves Him in our personal clutter and calendar. The enemy is working to keep us away from this blessed life by bringing us too many tasks like chasing money, chasing our own plan, chasing our activity of things that are going to occupy our time. This leads to vanity as expressed in our review of Haggai. We're filling up our bag but our bag is full of holes. It is completely worthless and empty. God invites us to: "Let me give you abundant life." In Lesson 2, we're going to explore another element of this: an occupied thought life. The first issue that we have, which is a real burden for most believers, is unforgiveness.

What does God say about our prayer life and answers to prayers if we carry unforgiveness in our hearts? Why is this so important to our relationship and life with God? What then does unforgiveness mean regarding our relationship?

Read Mark 11:20–25:

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

²⁰ As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²² And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received^[a] it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."^[b]

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As a believer we are called to learn to pray with faith and power to see real circumstances change (mountains). He said: "If you have unforgiveness in your heart, you need to stop your activity and process your unforgiving heart with Me." Unforgiveness is generally toward other people. And what have those people done? They've offended you. They've hurt you. It's not that your response is improper. They deserve your anger because they've done something against you.

Unforgiveness also can be directed toward ourselves. Maybe you made mistakes and keep processing how the mistake has cost you important things that now are lost or ruined. Then, we continue in anxiety and fear. "If only I had done something differently. I am seeing and living the consequence of that. And I know it's because of something I did. I made a mistake and I'm now living with that mistake. I cannot let myself off the hook. I caused this and am continually reminded that I caused this." And so, you haven't forgiven yourself. You haven't released the past, the mistake, and moved on to God's solution "now forward." He says: "Yes, people have hurt you, and rightly so, you're angry about it. That part is natural and good. You've made a mistake. I understand that, but I need you to move on to the future where I will absolutely restore and bring resolution – now forward." When you're in unforgiveness because of the conflict or burden of mistake, you start stewing and thinking all the time about it, trying to bring resolution yourself by either attempting to work your own sense of achieving justice with the person who wronged you, or "fix" the circumstances of your mistake. You remain in unforgiveness either because you are seeking revenge or digging yourself deeper into a hole as circumstances do not fully resolve your mistake. Your energy is on the conflict or the problem, and all about the past, none of which you can change. God says this issue of forgiveness is critical because it is preventing you from experiencing the joy of seeing prayers answered. It's a mind occupier of negative and wasted energy (i.e., vanity).

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What causes us to “fret” and be anxious? What does God say to us regarding why we are called to not fret or be anxious?

Read Psalm 37:1–8:

He Will Not Forsake His Saints

^[a] Of David.

37 Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

be not envious of wrongdoers!

² For they will soon fade like the grass

and wither like the green herb.

³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;

dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.^[b]

⁴ Delight yourself in the LORD,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;

trust in him, and he will act.

⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,

and your justice as the noonday.

⁷ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;

fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,

over the man who carries out evil devices!

⁸ Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!

Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

You're fretting, anxious, and worried because you are trying to solve this conflict to your own satisfaction (revenge) or solve this problem from the mistake you made. But when that doesn't work, you try something new, something different. But this only brings more fretting since this does not really offer a solution or freedom.

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As we focus on circumstances, what is our thinking regarding the likely consequences of these difficulties (how did the spies respond?); and how does this thinking prevent us from moving forward into God's solution? Why?

Read Numbers 13:30–14:4:

³⁰ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."³¹ Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are."³² So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height."³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

The People Rebel

14 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. ² And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴ And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

God had promised the nation that He was going to deliver to them the promised land, a fantastic place to dwell, bountiful, with protection and peace from the enemy. The 10 spies looked only at the circumstances and went to fretting. "These guys never have been defeated and we're not as big as them, and they're going to easily defeat, capture, and likely kill all of us." They grumbled. They

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complained. Their minds were occupied with the circumstance, and they looked at it and responded with four things that we tend to do with our circumstances, which cause us to fret and go to anxiety.

1. *If only I had done something different...* I wouldn't be in this circumstance that is now problematic. Then, going backwards you say, "Yeah, probably I would have been on a different path and perhaps I made a mistake and it's my fault... if only."
2. *Why has God brought us here?* To kill us? Here, the mind is going where? To the worse-case scenario. "I thought God would take care of me. Why is God causing me to experience this?" We begin blaming God. Our focus is on why has God brought me here to harm me, causing me irritation, frustration, difficulty that I can't overcome? So, my conclusion is that there is no hope. If God's doing this, then I'm not going to get past this. My mind is occupied toward anger at God.
3. *Wouldn't it be better if?* "I have a plan. I'm going to overcome this myself. Wouldn't it be better if I did this or that? I'm going to develop my own plan to resolve the circumstances that I'm anxious and fearful about." Where do you spend your time? On your plan. You think you should fix this and all your energy goes toward your own solution, which is not going to actually solve anything.
4. *I think I will. You start down a new path and guess what?* Nothing happens. Your clutter is not resolved. It only leads to digging a deeper hole, making things worse. It's getting worse and worse and worse, and your mind now is further occupied with more clutter, taking more wasted time.

We tend to experience all these excuses and thoughts for not following the path of God that leads to freedom. If only. *Why is God doing this to me? Wouldn't it be better if? I think I will.*

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In the face of overwhelming difficulties, what was Saul’s response to the situation? What was the effect of this and why did he not seek God? Why is this so critical to us as we face difficulties?

Read 1 Samuel 17:4–11:

⁴ And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six^[a] cubits^[b] and a span. ⁵ He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels^[c] of bronze. ⁶ And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. ⁸ He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." ¹⁰ And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." ¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

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The situation here is that Goliath and the Philistines have come against Israel. The way battle was done back then, which actually was done up until really World War 1, was this: We're coming to battle against you, bring your guys, we'll bring our guys, and we're going to line up and let's see who wins. Generally, whoever had the most people won the battle. This came with much death, and then occupation by the winner. Here, the Philistines come against Israel in En Gedi, south of Jerusalem, in a desert area. In this situation, as in all the battles, if you do not come to the battle, then the enemy comes after you, to your main city and attempts to kill everyone, including women and children. So, Israel and Saul go to the battle line. Goliath says: "Why don't we just save all the killing stuff? You get your best guy and you come against me (the biggest). Whoever wins will prevail. The loser then surrenders and we can avoid all this killing."

Saul's response in verse 11 was what? Extreme fear, dismay, terrorized to the point of believing of believing there was no way they could win. Why would any of us get to that point in our circumstances, as he did? And, did he sense this correctly? He did evaluate the situation correctly, but he made a mistake. He only considered the natural with the conclusion that there's no way out. "I cannot figure out. I'm trying. I'm trying and trying. There's no way out. This is going to be bad." The mistake that Saul made at that moment was not being afraid, but instead was that he didn't go ask God and stand on the promises of God. It was purely in the flesh, his natural response to a real situation that led to anxiety and fear.

What does God say about being angry? How can this lead to sin, and then what are the consequences of that? Why is this so important to our everyday lives?

Read Ephesians 4:26–27:

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

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It's OK to be angry. Bad stuff happens. People are doing things that aren't fair. Events happen that don't seem right. The IRS sends you a notice of an audit, which makes you angry. Why did they pick me? Your business has an issue. Your customer decides to move to another company, your vendor doesn't supply the service. There's all kinds of reasons why you get angry. It says, "Be angry and do not sin by giving a place to the devil." How do you give a place to the devil? You stay angry. You don't resolve. You have to take care of the anger issue to get freedom. But you don't. Why don't you? You're not resolving your anger. You're giving place to the devil. How come? What do you do? You're trying to come up with the answers on your own. And interesting enough, the more you focus on it, what happens? You stay angry. You get even more angry. You're stewing because you're not dealing with the conflict and anger and your energy is going to the conflict. Your energy is going to the fear.

What is the outcome of us staying in anger and exercising wrath? Why?

Read Psalm 37:8:

⁸ Refrain from anger and forsake wrath!
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

Wrath, anger. Here in the Hebrew this refers to your nostrils are flaring up like a bull. What does a bull do? Snort and goes after you to harm you. You're giving room to letting this anger now consume you by attempting to exercise your wrath with your mind occupied. All this bring so much negative energy.

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What causes strife in our lives? What is going inside of our hearts and minds that promotes strife, and how is this harmful to us?

Read James 4:1–2:

Warning Against Worldliness

4 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions^[a] are at war within you?^[b] ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

You're in conflict and it's causing quarrels, battle, strife, contention and opposition. Why are you having this? Because your passions are at war within you. You are coming up with your own position without considering others positions. What you think is right is actually causing conflict. You want what you want. The other person wants what he or she wants, and so you are in battle and coming against each other. Each is attempting to persuade the other that they are right. Then we go to deep contention. Conflict. Why? Because you haven't resolved it in your soul. You just want what you want, you don't care about pursuing God's solutions, and so you wind up in fighting, arguing, debating, angry, upset.

We won't take the time here, but we could read the book of Samuel from chapters 13 to 31 and review Saul's life. He was miserable. He never had freedom, never had joy, always lived in fear, always living in anxiety. And because of those, he made mistake after mistake after mistake. Deeper, deeper, and deeper into the hole. And he's fighting completely against God, which meant he was also fighting against David since David was trying to honor God at all times. Saul's response to David was jealousy and fear. So he was consumed by attempting to chase down and kill David. That's what it looks like when we're caught in mistake after mistake after mistake, and then try to fix that mistake. You become obsessed by it and it occupies your mind.

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What are the consequences to how we live when we are obsessed and occupied with difficult circumstances? What then happens as we work to solve these issues ourselves?

Read Psalm 38:1–12:

Do Not Forsake Me, O LORD

A Psalm of David, for the memorial offering.

38 O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath!

² For your arrows have sunk into me,
and your hand has come down on me.

³ There is no soundness in my flesh
because of your indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.

⁴ For my iniquities have gone over my head;
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

⁵ My wounds stink and fester
because of my foolishness,

⁶ I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;
all the day I go about mourning.

⁷ For my sides are filled with burning,
and there is no soundness in my flesh.

⁸ I am feeble and crushed;
I groan because of the tumult of my heart.

⁹ O LORD, all my longing is before you;
my sighing is not hidden from you.

¹⁰ My heart throbs; my strength fails me,
and the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me.

¹¹ My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague,
and my nearest kin stand far off.

¹² Those who seek my life lay their snares;
those who seek my hurt speak of ruin
and meditate treachery all day long.

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This is very descriptive. What's happening to your thought life, to your soul when you are obsessed and occupied with self and your difficult circumstances? You are consumed with "Woe is me" thinking. It's heavy and it takes all your energy as you think that all your enemies are against you. "Nothing's happening. My plans aren't working. I don't know what to do. I'm in great anxiety and fear, and it's so heavy that I can hardly function. I am hopeless, on the verge of giving up. Yes, on the verge of giving up because I don't see any solution. If I only could have changed it? I should have changed it." The very negative outcome focuses blame and guilt, but offers no solution. So, you're literally stopped and it's getting so heavy and more difficult to function.

What happens when we cannot figure things out and see no solution to our situations?

Read Psalm 6:1–10:

O LORD, Deliver My Life

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments; according to The Sheminith.^[a]
A Psalm of David.

6 O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath.

² Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;
heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.

³ My soul also is greatly troubled.
But you, O LORD—how long?

⁴ Turn, O LORD, deliver my life;
save me for the sake of your steadfast love.

⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of you;
in Sheol who will give you praise?

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⁶ I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
⁷ My eye wastes away because of grief;
it grows weak because of all my foes.
⁸ Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.
⁹ The LORD has heard my plea;
the LORD accepts my prayer.
¹⁰ All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled;
they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.

This describes the situation when we are stuck: We become disturbed, anxious, afraid, nervous, tired, and weary. The word grief noted means great frustration, anger and vexation: "I can't figure this out. I made a mistake. I have people against me. I can't get there." Your mind is occupied with trying to get the resolution, but to no avail.

Describe spiritually what happens when we focus on circumstances and we resolve it on our own. Why is this so critical to understand since we will always have trouble in our lives (because we live in the world, which is characterized by trouble)?

Read John 8:34–35:

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave^[a] to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.

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If you practice sin (an occupied thought life in things of the natural and not pursuing God), you are then its slave. The issue is not the individual activity that we tend to call sin, but rather its operating in the flesh, self, and not walking with God, all the while remaining occupied with working our own solutions. You're living in the world, you're separated from God, and you're a slave to the world and self. Why? Because you keep trying to fix things yourself.

Spiritually, then, what is the consequence of being a slave to the world, to focus on difficult circumstances? Why is this so important to understand as believers?

Read Isaiah 59:2:

² but your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.

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When you're walking in the kingdom of the world and in the flesh, we read in Romans 8, you're at enmity against God. He said in Galatians 5:1–4 that you've severed your relationship with Christ as a believer. You've severed your relationship with Christ. You're burdened by that because your mind is focused on that and you have said to God: "I'll do this myself, and I'm not even going to pursue you because I think I'm going to do it myself without the life and power of God." But this only makes it worse. Your mind is occupied to the point of being a slave to this (i.e., consumed).

In the following six verses, when we are trying to figure things out on our own, what are we missing? What consequences do we then face? Why?

Read Jeremiah 2:7–13:

⁷ And I brought you into a plentiful land
to enjoy its fruits and its good things.
But when you came in, you defiled my land
and made my heritage an abomination.
⁸ The priests did not say, 'Where is the Lord?'
Those who handle the law did not know me;
the shepherds^[a] transgressed against me;
the prophets prophesied by Baal
and went after things that do not profit.
⁹ "Therefore I still contend with you,
declares the LORD,
and with your children's children I will contend.
¹⁰ For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see,
or send to Kedar and examine with care;
see if there has been such a thing.
¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods,
even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory
for that which does not profit.
¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this;
be shocked, be utterly desolate,
declares the LORD,

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¹³ for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water.

What's the problem? What have they decided? That they don't care what God has to say. They're going to go do it themselves. It's not going well and they're having trouble. They are constantly occupying their minds without thought of going to God. It's getting heavier and heavier and heavier because they're trying to figure it out alone. He says, "You are separating yourself from me, because you've decided that you are going to solve your own clutter, you're going to solve your own calendar issues. And when that happens, your mind is occupied, which adds to the burden because you have no freedom. It's all focused and sucked under by the energy of that. Why have you separated yourself from me?"

Read Amos 2:13–16:

¹³ "Behold, I will press you down in your place,
as a cart full of sheaves presses down.
¹⁴ Flight shall perish from the swift,
and the strong shall not retain his strength,
nor shall the mighty save his life;
¹⁵ he who handles the bow shall not stand,
and he who is swift of foot shall not save himself,
nor shall he who rides the horse save his life;
¹⁶ and he who is stout of heart among the mighty
shall flee away naked in that day,"
declares the LORD.

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If you try to figure this out yourself, what's going to happen? Nakedness. That's not a pretty picture there. In essence, it means nothing. The reason you're doing it in the first place is trying to resolve your burden. He said as you try to do it yourself, you can't do it. So, guess what? It stays unresolved. And your mind becomes occupied with that. So, what then happens next week, what happens next month? Another burden comes. You are dealing with this first one, which isn't going away and now you have another one. Do you try to solve both? Guess what happens a month after that? Another one. The burdens pile up and you are out alone. In essence, you are naked with no resolution in sight.

Read Matthew 6:25–32:

Do Not Be Anxious

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?^[a] ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

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Your focus is on what can overwhelm you: basic provisions, cares, things that are not being resolved. So, what do you do? You care about them and spend your energy on the cares. If you have an issue, what does God want to do? He wants to resolve it. And you're driven that way. That's how you're built—to seek solutions that bring freedom and release from the burdens. There are two fundamental issues:

1. Jesus said, "In the world, you're going to have trouble. Things will happen that you're going to have to deal with."
2. Jesus said, "If you're walking with God, you're walking with Me. If I say turn right and you turn left, guess what? You've just created a bunch of problems, which now become cares I can resolve, but you're always going to be having cares. The issue is not the care itself but you not letting God resolve them, trying to resolve them yourself. And they remain unresolved and that's burdensome. And you keep thinking about it, keep thinking about it, keep thinking about it and your mind is occupied."

Read Psalm 85:10–11:

¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

¹¹ Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.

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God was angry for 40 years at the nation of Israel who refused to believe and follow God. They were not willing to be persuaded that what God had to say was true. "I'm stuck in my solution to the issues at hand, and I just wander around, in vanity, meaningless life." You're occupied, you're occupied, you're occupied, and you're never going to live the beautiful life of joy.

Read Jeremiah 8:13; Jeremiah 9:13–16:

¹³ When I would gather them, declares the Lord,
there are no grapes on the vine,
nor figs on the fig tree;
even the leaves are withered,
and what I gave them has passed away from them."^[a]

¹³ And the Lord says: "Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it, ¹⁴ but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them. ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink. ¹⁶ I will scatter them among the nations whom neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them."

You're consumed with your thought life, trying to resolve your own issues. God says the consequence of that is what? Bitter food, poisoning, and the nations will send a sword. after them. God says, "I'm going to take away things and it will not go well for you. Your focus on your own solutions results in constant consternation, anxiety, fear, worry, double binds. You make things worse and add to the burden that you can't resolve. And then you go to blaming God? "Why didn't you prevent me from doing this and being in this mess?" He says: "That's what you chose. You never came to me, so there was no real resolution, and now you are heavy."

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Read Jeremiah 17:1–6:

The Sin of Judah

17 “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, ² while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, ³ on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory. ⁴ You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.”

⁵ Thus says the LORD:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,^[a]
whose heart turns away from the LORD.

⁶ He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.

He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

Trusting in man is trusting in yourself. And when you trust in yourself, He says, what's it going to? What's going to happen? You will be cursed. And the curse looks like what? You're suffering. It's awful. It's terrible. It's difficult. You can't get out of it. You're withering away. You're in a place of bitterness all because you have decided your life, which includes all the things that you're occupied with in your mind. This is on top of your calendar, which is filled with stuff directed toward solving the problems. He says: “Why would you do that?” The good news is that there is opportunity for us to do something different, and that's why this course is so critical. We must learn how to live differently to enjoy life and live in freedom.



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"...we occupy our minds with unforgiveness, trying to resolve things on our own, separate from God, and coming to a place where you're weary, worried, and fearful."

In this course, Christ, Clutter, and the Calendar, we're first talking about the resolution of the issues of life that tend to burden us, then move to our calendar, which tends to be too full. We're doing too many things and we're not enjoying the freedom, the margin that God wants us to have. He sets that forth right at the beginning. "I set before you, life and death, blessing and cursing. Live with Me and the kingdom where I'm going to give you margin, where I'm going to give you resolution to the burdens. I want you to focus on receiving it as opposed to you trying to figure it out and worry about it. Let Me give it to you." We have explained that His plan is to give us freedom, to give us resolution, to give us joy, to give us peace, to give us a life of wonder. However, the enemy works to do the opposite: to steal abundance, pressure us, burden us, cause us to be anxious and fearful, and not living out the covenant of blessed to be a blessing to others (because you never received that blessing). We are driven to pursuing money, working our own plans, creating your own schedule and thus wind up tired, weary, and heavy as we fill our life with too many tasks.

On top of that we occupy our minds with unforgiveness, trying to resolve things on our own, separate from God, and coming to a place where you're weary, worried, and fearful. You're anxious and things are just not being resolved, so the burdens of life are getting heavier and heavier and heavier.

Here in Lesson 3, we're going to talk about the opportunity for reversing that and start to live out a life free of the burdens, as well as creating a calendar with margin. Remember, the issue is where you live and the choices you make—either living in the kingdom or out of the kingdom, in the world where the enemy has power and influence. Satan's going to keep working to cause you to be fearful, anxious, overworked, etc. So, it starts with our choice. Do you want to live with God in the kingdom and let him resolve life issues or continue to choose to walk in your own flesh and solve it yourself? God's not going to force you. It's always by invitation. So, the invitation is why don't you come back? Why would you need to come back while you're experiencing these difficult things? Because we know we're living in the world and understand what it means to live in the kingdom.

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Since we now understand that figuring things out on our own and separating ourselves from the life of God and the resolution available from God for our life circumstances, what is the remedy for returning to God and seeking Him to resolve our issues? How fast does this then put us back on track to the abundant life of God for us? Why is this so critical to how we live?

Read 1 John 1:9:

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This simple remedy as our first step is a beautiful thing. Confession implies repentance. What is repentance? A desire to turn things around. Think of it in this simple way: You've been walking the wrong way. Repentance means you understand you're walking the wrong way and are ready to turn around and return back to God—back to the abiding relationship, back to the joy of walking with God, of having fellowship with God, and trusting Him to guide me to joy and freedom. Here's the good news: The Kingdom of God is always what? A step away.

We say, "But you don't know how far I've gone. It would have been better if I had repented a year ago or six months ago." Yes. But to God now, does it matter? No. He invites you to come on back and let Him resolve it all, to give you a better calendar and resolve your issues. He recalculates everything like the GPS. We went way off on the planned route as we thought we knew better, but then realized we were not able to get where we wanted to go. We re-engaged with the GPS and it recalculated where we are at that moment and gets us back to where it wants us to be. The Kingdom of God is just that. When we step away and we turn to God, He then knows where we have gone and re-calculates how to get us back onto His beautiful path of freedom and joy.

He says: "How about coming back now? You don't need to do or fix. I will welcome you back. Let's go. Let me now resolve your issues and develop your calendar."

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As related to the following two verses, as we restore our relationship to God, what is necessary for us to learn to be able to follow Him? What does this mean practically in our lives?

Read Psalm 37:1–8:

He Will Not Forsake His Saints

^[a] Of David.

37 Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

be not envious of wrongdoers!

² For they will soon fade like the grass

and wither like the green herb.

³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;

dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.^[b]

⁴ Delight yourself in the LORD,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;

trust in him, and he will act.

⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,

and your justice as the noonday.

⁷ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;

fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,

over the man who carries out evil devices!

⁸ Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!

Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

As we now are coming back to have Him walk us to freedom and joy, we next need to learn to how to trust. You're coming to learn how to believe and trust that God's will is best and then better. He says twice: "Learn to trust. I'll bring it to pass. Trust in me and I'll fulfill the desires of your heart," which again, at the pure

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level means He'd like to have these issues resolved and He'd like to offer you a life of margin, which He then promises to deliver. What does the word trust mean? Confidence, belief, faith. Trusting that God will resolve your issues, no matter what is going on. You trust Him to bring resolution and give you peace along the way, to lead you and guide you because you learned to trust Him. He said, "Trust in Me, dwell in the land, feed on My faithfulness. Stay with me. Stay with me. Stay with me. I'll bring it to pass." This is a heart issue. You have not learned to trust God and this is why you try to go your own way, even though it increases the burden and the weariness of life. So, now we are called to learn this so that we can experience all that God promises to deliver.

Read Proverbs 3:1-6:

Trust in the LORD with All Your Heart

³ My son, do not forget my teaching,
but let your heart keep my commandments,

² for length of days and years of life
and peace they will add to you.

³ Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ So you will find favor and good success^[a]
in the sight of God and man.

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

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He says that as you understand trust, you learn that you're not leaning on your self-determination, but learning to follow God, Learning to trust in God. And then He makes a statement (and this is where the Hebrew is so much more powerful). It says, "Let loving kindness not depart from your life." The word for loving kindness in the Hebrew is Covenant Loyalty. Don't let the fact that He is loyal to the covenant ever depart from your thinking so that you lean on your understanding and not on Him. Why? He can deliver the covenant. He will deliver the covenant. He's loyal to the covenant that He's going to bless you to make you a blessing. What does this imply? That you have problem, a burden, or an unresolved issue. He says: "I'm going to deliver the covenant. You can believe it. You can stand on it. Trust that I'm going to guide you into it. Don't lean on your understanding and I will direct your steps, your path, to walk into the resolution as I so bring it step by step by step. Let Me direct your steps and give you wisdom. Turn right, turn left. Do this. And as we have learned: have forgiveness in your heart toward this person. Then I'll show you what to do next."

What is the significance of rejoicing? What does this mean as we face difficult circumstances? Why is this so important to us?

Read Philippians 4:4–9:

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness^[a] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned^[b] and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

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He says rejoice always. But what about when we have a problem? Rejoice. Yes, rejoice. But you have an unresolved issue, and can't seem to get an answer. Rejoice. Have joy, have a gladness. This goes back to trust. Why would you have gladness? Confidence. The Lord is going to resolve it. Trust that and rejoice. He's going to resolve this in a way that's going to bring you the covenant. I'm going to bless you to make your blessing. He promises peace, Shalom, favor, all of which will guard your heart. We know that when there is a heart issue we are drifting to the self where nothing is resolved and struggles continue. He says: "As you rejoice you will keep your mind on Me and Me delivering the covenant to you, all the time, every time. Think on things that are true. Think on things that are honorable. Think on things that are right. Think on things that are pure. Think of things that are lovely. What's admirable? What's excellent? That's what I need you to think about." What are those things? It is on Him and what He says, and His promises to deliver the covenant to us in the middle of the difficult circumstances. We continue to think on this as we then know that He is going to resolve this. This is going to wind up being excellent. We tend to think that it could really turn out bad. That's where we will guard our heart. He says, "Keep thinking about what I'm saying. What am I saying? What's my perspective on it? What's my viewpoint on it? And trust that as you rejoice."

When we are heavily burdened by difficulties, what are we called to do? What does then God promise to us? Why is this so wonderful for us to experience?

Read Matthew 11:28–30:

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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He says, "You have a heavy burden. What's the first thing you do? Come to Me. If you come to Me one thing happens immediately, I will release the pressure of the burden. I'm going to give you rest." What He is saying is, "I'm going to release the pressure of the burden by you coming to Me when you recognize a simple thing. I got this. That releases the pressure." Think about when you have a problem, maybe in business. You've got an issue financially and go to your CFO with this problem. His comment is, "I got this." What does that do for you? I releases you of the pressure. You no longer have to worry about it. The same is with God when He says, "I got this." He didn't say how He's going to do it. He's just saying that He'll take care of it. Then He says: "Now that you're here, 'Let's yolk up,' let's get tied together so we can't pull apart. We have to stay together. Stay with Me. Yoke up with Me. Let Me lead you. And stay yoked with Me. Learn of Me." What does that imply? He is teaching, helping you process and educating. That doesn't mean you aren't going to stumble. You may. But don't worry. He will help you try it again as you learn to stay in step. And you find out its way easier if you stay in step with Him, but that has to be learned and comes through experience. The result then is a deep rest for your soul, which then is a deep abiding trust in God delivering the Covenant—everytime—all the time. You will come to a place where you'll be in complete freedom, you'll be living in peace, and you'll be living in joy at the soul level.

**How are we to pursue God and His answers for us in difficult circumstances?
What does He promise, and why is that so comforting to us?**

Read Matthew 6:33–34:

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴ "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

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Don't be troubled. Don't let cares occupy your mind. The way to the remedy is to seek what? Seek the kingdom, seek to live in the kingdom. If you're seeking to live in the kingdom, who's the king (God) and who's not (you). Therefore, in order to live in the kingdom, you have to do what? Surrender your will to him. Let him resolve the issues and guide you in your calendar. He said to seek that, you are to stay there. Surrender your will, deny self, take up the cross, follow Him. Always seek the kingdom. That's the remedy for the mind being occupied with trouble.

To walk with God, what is required Why? How does it practically work for us to live this way?

Read Psalm 40:6–8:

⁶ In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted,
but you have given me an open ear.[a]

Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.

⁷ Then I said, "Behold, I have come;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me:

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart."

God doesn't delight in performing correctly. The real issue is may it be written in the book of Life, that we delight to do His will. This is one of the key questions of all of us. Is this written of you in the book? David did much, but he understood that what God delighted in was that David delighted to do His will. That's what we all should like to be known for. Surrendering to him. Why? This means we are living in the kingdom. We want that to be our mark in life. Are we following God's will? Are we enjoying life? Or, are you burdened by cares? Is your calendar too tough? Let God help you. Follow God's will. And may it be written of you that you love to do God's will.

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How did Christ live when He was here on Earth as a man? What did He demonstrate for us. Why is that so important to how we live?

Read John 4:34; 6:38:

³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

Jesus said: "My purpose is to do the will of the Father. I'm not even exercising My own will. No. Every day. I'll follow the will of the Father by Him speaking to Me, and that's what I delight in." He is reminding us to seek first the kingdom where God has His will for us, where He has answers for your burdens, has answers to your unresolved issues, has answers for your calendar. We are to seek His will, which translates into this life that He's trying to give us. If we try to do it on our own, we're missing His will. This is where we are going to stumble.

After God created everything, what did He do? What is the meaning of this and why so important to how we are live our lives?

Read Genesis 2:1-3:

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

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God created all from nothing, which He called work. He spoke everything into existence. On the seventh day, He did what? He stopped working. He rested. Sabbath. Restoration. The word means to cease from the activities that you normally are engaged in. We need rest. It's an immutable thing. If you don't take rest, what's going to happen? You become tired, weary. Ultimately, you'll get sick and you're going to wind up resting anyway. Because there's nothing you can do. And He said, "I'm going to force you to rest if you can't, because it's an immutable truth. Rest is critical." The reason for this is that this is within the nature of God—God rested. If He rested, then we're supposed to live the same way. There's something more about this: It's important to life. It's part of the life of the kingdom. But again, the question to all of us is: How's rest going for you, are you taking breaks, are you resting? Are you stopping your normal work and doing things that are pleasant and enjoyable and refreshing? What are most people's answers? I'm not doing great at that. In today's life we have this thing called a cell phone and emails. And then we have people who we are working with who don't have any clue about rest. And so what are they doing: contacting you all the time, wanting answers from you. In this day and age, it's far more difficult to deny rest because it's twenty-four/seven—and according to the world, that is a good thing. We're proud of having the full calendar that shows how busy we are and all that we do. God says: "No, you need rest and margin."

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What are the ingredients to how we are to take sabbath/rest? What are the purposes of these and why are they so important to our normal living?

Read Isaiah 58:13–14:

¹³ “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,
from doing your pleasure^[a] on my holy day,
and call the Sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure,^[b] or talking idly;^[c]
¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;^[d]
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

The Sabbath is to be a delight. So stop doing what? Going your own way. Stop deciding to continue to keep your activity, your work, your things that are important to you. He says, “Let Me give you this moment of Sabbath, this moment of rest. In the Hebrew culture, they had Sabbath every week. Then they had multiple feasts throughout the year. These generally were seven days long and times of refreshment and celebration of life together. Then they would have Sabbath years where they would take a complete break and get away from it all, The concept of Sabbath was built upon the context of: You need breaks to be refreshed. Are you taking rest? Is there rest in your life as a routine, as a regular part of living? The result is that we are given the heritage of Jacob who was Isaac’s son. His name originally meant deceiver. He started out as someone who is of the flesh. What happened to him over time? What did he learn? He learned how to surrender his will, and he’s the one who wrestled with God. Jacob said, “I’m not going to let you go until what you bless me. I’m staying with this until I really get surrendered and receive the Covenant, which was given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (blessed to be a blessing). Sabbath and rest

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mean we are learning how beautiful it is to surrender to God's will. And if we have to wrestle that through, let's wrestle it through; then, you're going to be blessed with the Covenant. I have to build this into my calendar. I am called to have margin, I am to have rest.

As branches of the vine, what can we expect regarding pruning? What is the purpose, and what is the result? What does this look like in our lives?

Read John 15:1-5:

I Am the True Vine

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

As we learned in our course on Abiding, you're the branch. He's the vine. He says part of the process is "I'm going to prune you. It's inherent in the very relationship of abiding. What kind of branches are pruned? Healthy ones. Why do they have to be pruned? They keep growing. They get too big. There are two things that happen:

1. They clutter the space, so there's no more sun, no more water can get into the system because it gets too thick.
2. As it gets too big, if the fruit that is being produced starts to touch each other, it rots. You have too much, you're growing so big that ultimately no fruit is produced. It looks beautiful, but is of no value. Rather, it has to be cut back all the time.

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Remember, it's not changing your nature. The branch is the branch. It's not changing the nature of the branch. It's cutting back the bigness of what's going on. After watching this course for two weeks, you'll agree that you are doing too much. We tend not to allow ourselves to be pruned. We just keep adding. But then other things get squeezed out. Time with your spouse, time with your kids, time for rest and recreation, all vanish. And worse, this includes time to be with God. Those are the things that get squeezed out, but you're getting more and more and more and more and more. And God says in order to have the life He has planned for you, you need Him to create margin and space so you can enjoy life and produce fruit. The key is a principle of how we're going to reorient. We have to do less. To learn to change weariness to freedom and joy – to be fruitful as God has so designed (the vinedresser), we need a time of restoration.

In the following three sets of verses, what is required for us to be pruned and have God create margin our lives? How do we practically apply this?

Read Ephesians 5:15–21:

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

We are to walk in wisdom, redeeming the time. What time? Make sure your time is lived in redemption, in wholeness and in fullness. How? Walking in wisdom. He said, so that you discover and understand what? The will of the Lord. His will includes the need to prune you. One thing is He needs is to guide you into His

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calendar (not yours). So, seek that. Keep looking for that. Keep understanding that. He says, "Don't grieve the Holy Spirit." And what would grieve the Holy Spirit or make the Holy Spirit sad? Not caring and living a life of burden and heaviness and unresolved issues in your calendar. The Spirit says: I can give you that beautiful life because I'll give you the wisdom of what to do with it all.

Read Proverbs 8:12–21:

- ¹² "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
and I find knowledge and discretion.
- ¹³ The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.
- ¹⁴ I have counsel and sound wisdom;
I have insight; I have strength.
- ¹⁵ By me kings reign,
and rulers decree what is just;
- ¹⁶ by me princes rule,
and nobles, all who govern justly.^[a]
- ¹⁷ I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.
- ¹⁸ Riches and honor are with me,
enduring wealth and righteousness.
- ¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.
- ²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
in the paths of justice,
- ²¹ granting an inheritance to those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

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Seek wisdom, seek wisdom, seek wisdom. He says something interesting. All of His paths are what? Peaceable. The word there is shalom, which is full of favor. This includes all the paths, each and every one, including the one for us. This includes the way of your calendar, your life and the things of life that are all to be peaceable, pleasant, joyful, enjoyable, and relaxed.

He further says to hate evil. This is where the Hebrew is so critical. The word here is not dark, awful, black, but rather means things that annoy, frustrate, irritate, or cause you difficulty. This is why your calendars are so full, your burdens are too heavy. He says, "Do you recognize that you're tolerating that stuff? I want you to hate it. If you hated it as you're experiencing it, what would you say? 'I don't need to put up with this. I don't need to live this way. I don't know how yet, but something is wrong.'" Remember, this does not mean it will not happen as in the world, because you're going to have difficulty, irritations, frustrations, annoyances and hardships. He just said not to let it characterize you and stay over you. He wants you to hate that, to say, "Wait a second, I don't need to put up with this." Then next, He says that we should hate pride. What's pride? Self. When we determine that we know better. He said if I were you, I'd hate that because the only way for you to get my wisdom is by seeking it. When you seek it, you're saying, "I'm not going to step in, but rather follow You." Pride says, "I don't need you. I'll follow myself." He said If I were you, I'd hate pride, hate evil, and instead seek Me and I'll give it to you in My ways that are pleasant and shalom." If you really believe this what would you do? Learn to seek His wisdom, follow Him and not your own path, which has led me to this place of "evil."

Read James 1:5-8:

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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As you're seeking wisdom, remember to be specific. Here are the steps and the things He needs you to do to change your calendar. Here are the things He needs you to do to resolve your issues. On your own, you lack wisdom. Why? Because we do not know what is going to happen in the future, what is around the corner that we can't see yet. He says if you lack wisdom, which we do, and you're looking for specific answers about your calendar and about resolution of issues: all you have to do is just ask Him for wisdom and His will. He said, "I will give it to you, generously, which means with great clarity. You will know exactly the path you need you follow to experience my Covenant life planned for you."

As we end this session, we've learned how fantastic it is that while we do have struggles, burdens, calendars that are too full, that we do not fall. We don't know what to do, but God says, "Surrender, repent, come back, learn to trust me, learn to walk with me. Seek first The Kingdom and all these things are going to get resolved. Learn Sabbath and rest. Let Me start applying the truth of pruning and wisdom and insight to your specific things of life."

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"He says: "If you live there, I'm going to bring resolution to you and I'm going to show you your calendar issues so that you have joy in life..."

We now come to Lesson 4 of Christ, Clutter, and the Calendar. We've discussed the issue of "Doing too much." Our calendars are full and we think, "Isn't that a good thing?" But actually, we're tired, weary, and worn out. Our minds are occupied with things of life, trying to get resolution to issues of life that are real. They need to be resolved, but we're trying to solve them ourselves. And God sets forth for us a line that you need to cross moving from the world where we're trying to figure things out on our own to where we're living in the Kingdom of God of righteousness, peace, and joy. He says: "If you live there, I'm going to bring resolution to you and I'm going to show you your calendar issues so that you have joy in life. If you live in the world on your side of it, it's just going to keep getting more heavy and more heavy and more heavy."

So, we've learned about the aspects of the enemies trying to keep us there, distracting us, and filling us up with burdens that we can't resolve. And then we try to figure this out all our ourselves, which is actually the opposite of what God is saying. We learned last time that the key to that is we are to come back to the kingdom, repent, learn to trust God, learn to walk with Him, seek first The Kingdom and all these things will be added, and also to have a Sabbath of rest and then ask for wisdom specifically as it applies to your situations. This is what we're going to discuss as we move forward in our study.

From the following two sets of verses, please answer these questions: Since unforgiveness is such a critical issue for us to resolve in our normal lives (since we live in the world which is kill, steal, and destroy and we are surrounded continually by self-centered people who cause us difficulties), what must we understand about our life with God? How does this then apply to our call to forgive others? Why does God have us live this way?

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Read Romans 8:1–2:

Life in the Spirit

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

^[a]2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you^[b] free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Therefore, now, since Christ is the answer, there is no what? Condemnation. What's condemnation? Shame, punishment, judgment. He's saying that, yes, people who have hurt you deserve condemnation. And, along the same lines, the mistake that you made means you, too, deserve condemnation. But because of His love toward you, what has He done? He's forgiven us past, present, and future—once and for all, at the cross. This is not because of anything we have done to earn it or obtain it, but instead strictly on His own nature and Him taking on the penalty for our sin (propitiation)—and fulfilled it once and for all. This is entirely based upon His nature, which is forgiveness, which is love. He acted on your behalf and He forgave everybody at the cross. However, though everyone is forgiven, is everybody reconciled? No. Why not? It takes both parties to come to a point of reconciliation.

It always takes two parties. He said: "Even though it's My will, that none should perish. And I've acted on your behalf, forgiven you, that in order for you to be reconciled, you have to process the truth of what I have done, to receive, believe, and process that truth." So, we're not talking here about reconciliation (we will discuss this later). We are talking here about pure forgiveness. You are called to be released from the heaviness of focusing on the hurt, the opposition, the offense. Yes, you may feel people deserve it and your tendency is to try get even: how can I avenge this? How can I avoid seeing them? How can I hurt or punish them? God says, "I understand this, but you are called to go to forgiveness so you can have freedom. And that includes, by the way, that I forgave, I've forgiven you. You deserved My wrath, but on my own nature I forgave you. In me, there is no condemnation from anywhere, from any source."

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You are to receive His forgiveness and then extend that forgiveness to those people who have hurt you, releasing you of carrying the burden of the offense that occupies your heart and mind. Further, you are called to let yourself off the hook. Go to forgiveness, learn forgiveness, stay with forgiveness. He said, "It's not about you working to do it, rather, it is you receiving it, which is my nature, and it will be extended to others. This is to be our life, all the time, every time. There's not anybody, any situation that doesn't have the opportunity for you to forgive them. It's not about how severe it is, it's about the freedom of it."

Read Hebrews 10:10–18:

¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ^[a] had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ "This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,
and write them on their minds,"

¹⁷ then he adds,

"I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

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Forgiveness is once and for all—completed, finished. For whom? For everybody. Then there is no longer a required offering for sin. In other words, there's nothing for you or anybody else to do to earn or achieve forgiveness. As part of forgiveness, the requirement to be perfect to establish again a relationship with God has been released. That doesn't mean you're reconciled with Him. He says you still must receive forgiveness personally in order to experience it. And, how do they receive it? What do you have to do? Understand and believe that: "I'm separated from God; I deserve His wrath; I can't get there myself. It's not by works that I can earn it. He did it all for me. I believe He did it for me, and that He died at the cross and was resurrected. I processed this truth, repented (the only remedy to experience this) and received Christ as my Lord and Savior. Now I can experience the forgiveness. Does He alter that truth so that people are saved? He can't. It's not His will that any should perish: "I would like everyone to be reconciled to Me, but because of the truth I have relationship with anyone unless they receive that truth. I cannot alter that truth in order for them to be reconciled." Has He forgiven us? Yes. Is He free of the burden of that? Yes, because why? He never has to do it again. "I've completed it. It's done. My forgiveness is real, pure and always there since it is fully completed." He's forgiven, but there's the other side of it. The truth of reconciliation, which is why He allows people literally to be separated from Him in eternity and live in hell because He can't alter that truth of being forgiven, but not reconciled.

Thus, the burden of your life is that we are not to ask those who have hurt us, opposed us, offended us to have to reconcile. You can't unless there's truth being processed. Both parties must process this truth together, and we cannot force the other party to process this truth through to a resolution. But what God does ask you to do is to live a life of forgiveness. If you're living in the kingdom, why would you have and live the life of forgiveness? Because that's his nature in us and His nature of forgiveness. This is an indicator if you're living in the kingdom: that you have forgiveness toward everybody who has hurt you. Further, you will have let yourself off the hook, you will have released your guilt. It's absolute. And what is that demonstrating? God's nature in you. If you're living in the kingdom, walking in Him, then My forgiveness is being extended on the same basis you've been forgiven. You can forgive others to release it. And what it does is takes away the heaviness of you having to be burdened by what they did to you.

We can't be reconciled with others if we don't first forgive. Without forgiveness, you then would require those who have hurt you to do various things to satisfy your hostility and your anger. Rather, we are to release any requirement so that we can live in freedom. Forgive them on the same basis that Christ forgave you. We can offer others to reconcile by processing the truth of what they did against us, but it is not required for us to live the joy of our life.

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God says in Mark 11–25: “When you are praying, learning the very power of prayer and I remind you that you have forgiveness in your heart, stop and go to forgiveness, and live the life that I have given you, based upon my nature of forgiveness. Stay in the kingdom and demonstrate you are living life with Me.”

For the following two sets of verses, please write your responses. As we move forward toward seeking God and His resolutions to our circumstances, what do we need to do to have God do this for us? What does this mean practically and why does God ask us to live this way with Him as we seek resolutions and answers?

Read Psalm 25:1–5; 12–15:

Teach Me Your Paths

^[a] Of David.

25 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

² O my God, in you I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

³ Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴ Make me to know your ways, O Lord;

teach me your paths.

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all the day long.

¹² Who is the man who fears the Lord?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

¹³ His soul shall abide in well-being,

and his offspring shall inherit the land.

¹⁴ The friendship^[a] of the Lord is for those who fear him,

and he makes known to them his covenant.

¹⁵ My eyes are ever toward the Lord,

for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

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He says, "Trust Me. Wait for Me. Let Me teach you the steps that I have for you to resolve your issues. What I want to do and how I need you to walk with me into my resolution of abundant life is to let me guide you. Trust and be guided. Who's the man or woman who fears the Lord?" Remember that the word fear is: Do you believe that what I have to say is true? Realize that I have a path for you and am calling you to walk on that path. I'll tell you secrets, things that nobody else knows. Secrets of what? How to calendar, how to let me resolve your issues. I'll reveal and have you experience My covenant. What does that mean? I'm going to bless you to make you a blessing. And I'm loyal to that. It will be absolute. You will get things resolved. You will have a life of freedom. And so, learn to follow My path. Let Me guide you and teach you how to walk into it. It will become very specific, and it will be absolute."

Read Jeremiah 17:7-8:

⁷ "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.

⁸ He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit."

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He says here again, "Learn to trust in me. Your trust is in what? In me. What am I going to do in your life to bring resolution and freedom? Follow on My path. Trust me, it's me, you're in a relationship with me, and I am all-powerful to deliver the abundant life promised." He then says, "When drought comes, what's going to happen to your leaves? They won't wither. Your leaves will stay green. Being in drought (dryness, difficulty) is normal, but He promises to take care of it. You don't need to worry about it." He says, "Don't be anxious when things are difficult. You still will bear fruit. Fruit is the joy of life. As we learned in John 15, you will experience My supernatural work, which is going to be your fruit. You're going to keep bearing fruit. So, nothing's going to bother you while you learn to trust me. I got this. I'm going to resolve your issues." Two of the major issues that we encounter are issues related to conflict and anger. These are some of our biggest burdens. We experience anger, frustration, conflict, people against us. Things aren't working and it's difficult. We must follow His path.

As we face difficulties, especially those involving other people who are road blocking us, causing trouble, or coming against us, how are we to process toward a resolution? What does this look like in practical living? Why is this God's way for us?

Read Ephesians 4:25–27; 29–32:

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

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Handling anger, frustration, and conflict is all built on your forgiveness, on the same basis that Christ forgave you. Do you deserve His forgiveness? Did you earn His forgiveness? Did you fix yourself and say, "I'm sorry and get it all resolved?" No. He did it on his own nature. Go to forgiveness. Get that resolved. Get that settled. Then speak the truth in love.

In your anger, don't sin. Anger is natural. When other people hurt us or cross our line of justice, what they did wasn't right. Our anger is natural and a normal response. But in that anger we are not to sin. How? Speak the truth in love. First, are you in forgiveness? What would that look like if you're truly in forgiveness and you have this heavy opposition of people coming against you or things coming against you? Things that aren't right. Things that are hurting you. What does forgiveness look like? You have no edginess because you're living in freedom, not residing in a level of wrath and bitterness. You are not trying to hurt them even when you are angry, but instead are released from the energy going to attack them in order to get what you want.

Instead, you're now leaving it up to God. And what do you do? Speak the truth in love and in a way (v. 29) that no words attack their character. Your energy is not riled up. Rather, by speaking the truth in honor and respect, you impart grace, and thus prevent the grief of the Holy Spirit. The process starts with forgiveness so you know that you can sit and talk with this person with respect and honor, and then talk truth (without attacking or edginess to the conversation).

We do have an important question. What do you do if the relationship, even if you've forgiven that person, when the underlying nature of your relationship is unhealthy? If we do not experience healthiness, God asks us to let it go. However, that relationship may involve family members, or fellow church members, so we are not fully able to let it go since we will be around them. We first must understand that God's heart is directed toward bringing us freedom and joy and living in healthiness. God's heart is for those people who are continuing to hurt, manipulate or oppose you also to repent, to go to forgiveness and work through to complete reconciliation with you. However, He does not violate their free will, so cannot force someone to follow His heart and will. So, when those around you do not have a heart to process well, but because of their selfish nature continue

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to hurt, frustrate, or come against you, then God is going to give you wisdom for no longer being harmed by other peoples' unhealthiness. He will show you proper boundaries and how to keep your heart from receiving their arrows. He will fully resolve this for you, to have you release the burden of this and operate in a way that is healthy for you.

When we have been the ones to cause an offense against someone else (and thus are experiencing difficulties because of it), what does God ask us to consider and then respond to His way on this Why is this our responsibility and why is this so important to our living in freedom?

Read Matthew 5:21–26:

Anger

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother^[a] will be liable to judgment; whoever insults^[b] his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell^[c] of fire.²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.²⁶ Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.^[d]

If God reminds you that you're the cause of bringing offense against another, and you are even in worship, what are you supposed to do? Stop immediately. Go say, I'm sorry. I hurt you. I'm sorry that I hurt you. I understand the truth of that. Would you forgive me so that we could renew our relationship? So, if it's up to you,

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then go take care of it. And humble yourself and say that you're not going to let your pride get in the way because God reminded you that you were the cause so you are going to ask for forgiveness and work together with the other party to process the truth through to reconciliation, which is God's will for us all.

When others have offended us, what is our perspective and what is our role to move toward resolution in this situation? What does an ambassador do and who does He represent? Why is this such an important concept as we seek resolution on difficult relationships?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:12–21:

¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. ¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

^[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling^[b] the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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Your role when someone has offended you, hurt you, or come against you is to serve as an ambassador. An ambassador represents the one who sent you. Who do you get your instructions from? The person who sent you. And we are called not to consider things in the flesh (from a self-centered perspective where we wish to seek revenge and have justice served by us). Rather, we are to regard this in a spiritual way. He says, "You are representing Me, and I'm going to ask you to follow My instruction as My ambassador, including when rejected or when others are unwilling to process." At this point, the ambassador is called home. In this situation, you are called to release the situation and move on to your path of joy and freedom, which does not include continuing to try to persuade someone who does not want to know or seek truth.

As an ambassador, we are called to make an offer of reconciliation. You are offering the opportunity to be reconciled to you, and ultimately to God. This opportunity is to speak together the truth until they see and experience the truth, which is a satisfactory resolution to the hurt and offense against you. We remain in the role of ambassador, regardless of the other party's response. Our instruction comes from God and He will resolve every relationship for us, which is why it is so important to go to forgiveness, to ask for forgiveness if we have caused the offense, or be an ambassador and offer to reconcile. This is to allow us to live in freedom and joy, and thus can let things go if the other party will not engage in a healthy process of discussing and resolving truth. God has further instructions about this scenario, which in this life will happen often.

Though we carry the role of an ambassador with a heart to work toward resolution/reconciliation with others, how are we to handle when others are not willing to process truth with us? What is to be our heart? Our perspective? Our specific actions in this situation that we cannot force to a reconciliation? On what basis does God wish us to live this way? Why is this so critical to understand and follow? What can we thus expect for ourselves?

Read Romans 12:9–21:

Marks of the True Christian

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit,^[a] serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

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¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.^[b] Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it^[c] to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The context here is that you are experiencing a difficult scenario. You have people against you; they've hurt you, they might still be hurting you and it's unhealthy; things aren't right. He says: "Remember, as an ambassador, you approach it with honor. What would honor look like when you're dealing with somebody who's against you, opposing you, being difficult?" Speak to them with respect. Speak calmly with respect, and speak the truth. The response of the other party is not your burden. You can still treat them with honor, even though they're not treating you with honor. It doesn't matter. Treat them with honor and offer your peace to them. Consider how you can work this out. Offer your peace and determine what's true. It's got to be true of you. You're in forgiveness in the spirit, and you're in the spirit because you have peace to offer. If you're agitated, if you're irritated, if you're upset, or if you're angry to the level of not being honorable toward them and where you don't have any peace, He says, "Let's you and I go get that resolved. You stay with Me. Receive My peace. You are to offer them the opportunity to discuss it, whether they are willing to or not. If you're in forgiveness, you're always able to offer that, even later. If they say: You know what, I'm kind of sorry the way I had treated you, and I know you offered this before, but how about now? Your answer would be what? Yes. By the way, I've been in forgiveness. I haven't let this bother me at all.

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When they are not willing or continue to not process the truth while they attack or hurt you, God tells us not to take vengeance. That's not our role. He says two things about this, "Get out of the way for My wrath. Vengeance is Mine." This is what sayeth the Lord. There's something absolute about that. If they're not willing to process with you and work through, what's going to happen? They're cursed and they're going to experience God's wrath.

Get out of the way. Leave room for God's wrath, because this is going to be so. This is based on something that goes back to another statement He makes: He said, "I will resolve all your issues so you can live in peace, joy, and freedom." And while He is providing that to us, He tells us further in verse 16, to bless them. Wait a second. God has already told us that we are to leave room for His wrath and that vengeance is His. They're cursed. How do you reconcile those two statements? Think of what reverses the curse for us when we were unbelievers. What reverses any curse?

I have to repent. The only way it stops is to repent. God says that when you repent, you have flipped from the curse to blessing. Now, repentance is a simple thing of deciding to walk with God in the kingdom so the curse can be instantly reversed. You could be cursed and you would be experiencing the results of the curse and then you decide to repent. What does God do at that moment? Welcomes you to His Kingdom to bless you. How then would you bless someone else who is opposing you and isn't willing to process with you? Your prayer is that they repent so they (as have we) can now reverse the curse and experience His blessing. Until then justice will be served (as noted, vengeance is Mine, sayeth the Lord), and we can move on from being burdened by their opposition to us with a heart that they would repent and reverse the curse. In the meantime, you can learn to let this go.

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As we consider how to operate with people who oppose us, come against us, or cause us difficulty, what does Christ reveal regarding how we are to approach this? What do we do if people agree to process with us? What do we do when they do not? What is the benefit to us and why is this so important to live out?

Read Luke 10:1–13:

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two^[a] others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ² And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ ⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷ And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Woe to Unrepentant Cities

¹³ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

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In the context of difficult relationships causing conflict, hurt, or opposition, He says, "Offer your peace by saying 'would you be willing to sit down and work this through?'" If they say yes, stay with it and work it through. If they say yes and don't do it or they say no, they aren't willing he tells us to dust our feet off. Move on. Forget it. Don't spend any more energy on it. This relationship is not going to be reconciled. Why? Because they're not willing. You have forgiveness and a heart to process the truth, but there is nowhere else to go since it takes two parties to reconcile.

You can't force them to be willing to process truth toward reconciliation, and you can live with not being reconciled. God will handle it. That's why He says, "I can resolve every relationship issue you have. You can live free of the burden of that relationship." It's up to you to follow the way of God vs. either maintaining your anger (which turns into bitterness) or going to resignation and allowing others to continue to hurt and oppose you.



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"His plan for us is to resolve all of our issues so that we live in freedom."

As we complete our course with Lesson 5 of Christ, Clutter, and the Calendar, we have a fundamental choice to make: life or death, blessing or cursing (Deuteronomy 30:11 – 20), a choice to live in the kingdom with righteousness, peace and joy, and being led by the Spirit. Or you can live in the world, in the carnal, and where you put to death the power of the spirit, at enmity against God where you cannot please Him. We discussed how that impacts the life that we have. His plan for us is to have joy. His plan for us is to have margin. His plan for us is to resolve all of our issues so that we live in freedom. The enemy wants to do the opposite. He wants to tie us down. Keep us in bondage, to keep us too busy, to keep us burdened. If we live in the kingdom, God can lead us into his beautiful, planned life that He has for us and move us from our complicated life of too many tasks driven by either pursuing money or just my own plan or unresolved issues, relationships, or things that are circumstantial. They just keep going on and on and on and never get resolved. So, it's burdensome to us. Our thought life goes to thinking about that all the time. And now we're not free to enjoy. And we're doing too many things at the same time. The remedy of all this is to come back to the kingdom, repent, learn to trust God, learn to walk in his ways, understand his process, (particularly when it's about relationships we know are difficult). Yes, we're going to get angry, but he doesn't want us to get stuck there. So, He's asking us to stay in forgiveness and then let Him lead us into reconciliation, which we spent a lot of time in the last lesson discussing.

As we walk with God to bring resolution to our difficult circumstances and our difficult relationships, how should we handle the things that have happened already? Why is this so important to learn as we move forward to receive Christ's answers for these?

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Read Philippians 3:12–16:

Straining Toward the Goal

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Paul says something really important: “One thing I’ve learned.” We know Paul learned a lot and he wrote a lot. So, when he makes a statement, “One thing I’ve learned,” he’s saying of all the things he’s learned, this is one of the most important things of how to live out life. He states, “Forget the things that lay behind and press forward to the high calling of Christ Jesus.” He learned to let go. What that means is he’s forgetting and not paying attention, not spending energy on what happened yesterday, what happened last week, what happened last month. He’s moving forward because life is always “now forward.” God says, “If you’re going to live this life of freedom, the things that have happened to you need to be released. Move forward.” That doesn’t mean to ignore those things. You might be in the middle of working something out. There’s something that happened yesterday. He’s not saying you shouldn’t think about it at all. He’s saying not to spend energy on what the whys and hows of yesterday. Rather, go with Him into the resolution. God needs your energy toward Him so He can resolve this. Understand it and go forward. If you made a mistake, forget about it. If somebody hurt you and is coming against you or there’s a circumstance that happened, don’t dwell on it. Go forward regardless of the terms of relationships, events, or things you did.

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This principle of resolution is so critical because your attention has to be on Him as He delivers this resolution. Now forward. It is critical not to get stuck on the past because it's moot. In other words, can you go back and do something about that? You can't. It's occurred. It's happened, whether you caused it, whether somebody came against you, whether there's a negative circumstance, it happened. Your focus is now to be about resolution.

For the two next set of verses, respond to these questions: As we leave things behind, what then is important for moving forward into God's answers for us? What does it mean to set our mind on the Spirit and be led by the Spirit? How does this play out practically for us?

Read Romans 8:5:

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

To move forward into God's answers and resolutions, your thinking is to be set on the things of the Spirit: What He has in mind, where He wants to lead you. The word here is to come into unity with Him. Cherish the same view as Him. Be harmonious with Him. As you set your mind on Him it means we are asking: What are you saying to me? What are you leading in guiding me to that which is Your way? What's on Your mind that You want me to pay attention to? Yes, I have an unresolved issue. I'm trying to figure out my calendar. There are two choices. If you live in the world, how are you going to approach that? You are going to try to solve it, which is not effective, and in fact it makes things more complicated and more oppressive. Rather, if you set your mind on the spirit by living in the kingdom, you're going to be guided into His perfect.

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Read Romans 8:12–17:

Heirs with Christ

¹² So then, brothers,^[a] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons^[b] of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Paul says you're not obligated or indebted. Don't expect to be normal, to live according to the flesh. Most Christian churches teach that you're a sinner and you're going to fail. But Paul is trying to say that's not so. Rather, he said, a child of God (implying living in the kingdom) is being led by The Holy Spirit. If He's leading us, what are we doing? We're following Him. And that means, by definition, He's showing us the way because we're following. He promises that He will show you the way. “I'll give you the answers when you ask for wisdom.” Then He says, you don't have the spirit again to bondage, which is going to put you back under the oppression of the calendar or unresolved issues. Rather you have the spirit of adoption of sons and daughters by which we cry out “Abba, Father.” What does that mean? Daddy. It means you're to have the life of a toddler. It's living in freedom because toddlers are not concerned about are you going to feed me? Where am I going to college? What kind of career am I going to have? What's the future like? They don't think that way. Their attitude is simply that they want to be with you. The heart of being led by God is to live in freedom and anticipation of Him resolving our issues and our calendar. How does He want you to organize my calendar? And, how often do you have to deal with your calendar? All the time.

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Why? Because it changes. Things happen. We are to let our calendar be fluid as we seek Daddy and His will for our day. Ask. Daddy, how would You have me live today? The Holy Spirit's job is to lead you. And then in verse 16, He bears witness that you're a child of God. He keeps reminding you, do you know who you are? You're a child of the king. There are privileges to that, as His plan is to bless you. His plan is Covenant life for us. Do you understand that? You're a child of the king, and He can deliver the abundant life to you, his son or daughter.

What is the Holy Spirit's (who is resident within us) role on our behalf? What is He doing? Why? What then must He do for and in us to lead us to God's will? What are God's answers for us in our situations?

Read Romans 8:26–27:

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because^[a] the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The Spirit's intercession is on your behalf. Who's He talking to as He's interceding? The Father, the vinedresser. He has everything planned out. "I have a will" and it is "now." The Spirit is interceding in accordance with His will, which is the Father's will for you today. And there might be some things coming down the pike for which He is to alert you (tell you of things to come). Primarily, He will alert you to how He wants you to live today, including His promises. He will help you resolve issues and lead you as you calendar. This is happening all the time, even while you are sleeping. The Spirit is talking to the Father: Father, what's your will for Rich tomorrow? How do you want him to function tomorrow? How do you want him to organize his life tomorrow? What steps do you want him to take? What decisions does he need to make, and how can we confirm your will to him and to Linda together in unity. Then His role the next day is to what? Father, communicate

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that to Rich—day by day, step by step, moment by moment. Why? Because He's in concert with the Father and resident in me to lead me. According to God's will, so we can be assured that God's will is going to be shown, revealed so that we can walk into it. He's going to lead me as a child of God so I can live the life of a toddler. Don't be so fretting about the stuff of life. You know God has it. he'll take care of it. And he'll show you how to live it out.

For the two next set of verses, please respond to these questions: On what basis are we to understand, receive, and then respond to God's will? What does that look like and how do we live this out practically?

Read Colossians 3:15:

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Let peace (Shalom) rule in your heart. Think of an umpire. What does an umpire of any sport do? Calls right or wrong, in bounds or out of bounds, fair or foul, touchdown or fourth down – all according to the rules of the game. The calls are clear. He has the answer. What are we to umpire our life? Peace. Are you at peace? Are you settled? In the Spirit's job, if it's not his will and you're not understanding something, is to trouble you or cause you not to be at peace. And he's going to help you understand the difference. Confirme you're at peace. If not, then something's not right. When something's not right, often you may not even understand it at first. What would you do? You would not act until you understand this, so you pursue His will further with Him. That's the beauty of using your spouse or other people in that others who also have the same Holy Spirit can say they are troubled and do not yet have confirmation of God's will. Let peace umpire your life, as you together seek God's will, which you know is best and none better. His job is to lead you to and confirm through peace His will.

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Read Romans 14:17:

¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Living in the Kingdom, where you hear, receive, and experience His will—best and none better—is righteousness (life in Him), peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. He says: “You’ll understand it, you’ll know when you’re in, you’ll know when you’re not. Remember the remedy when you’re not, is what? Repentance. Come back. Don’t fix anything, just come back.” So as we apply this to calendaring, which is tricky because we’re starting out too busy and we have too many things on our plate, we have to let him prune it back. So, an exercise to go through is to write down all the things you’re involved in and get as detailed as you can. Write them all down and do not censor or evaluate, just list them all. Now you take a clean sheet of paper and you start to write down: what do I know for sure? What do I know is God’s will for me? What does He want me to spend my time on? Are they things that are important for joy, freedom, the wonder of life for me? These are absolute. Are you spending time with Him abiding with Him? Are you spending time with your spouse? And again, because of the season of life, you have to process what is true and healthy for both of you. So, if I’m going to put that down, it is necessary to have discussion and process with my spouse for what that looks like for both of us. “Hey, Linda, what’s important to you? What does it look like for you? Here’s what it looks like for me, for us to spend time together. And what would be healthy for you and enjoyable for you? Once she described her answer, we then process, I put that time down because my relationship of going to unity with my spouse is as a primary thing, and that takes time and energy. And then we should do what? Process. This is what is God revealing and directing us in order to receive His resolution to the clutter or issues in life. We need time for some of these things. Same for kids and grandkids (and they are in different seasons that take different blocks of time from us). We have small group. I’ve got a business. I have a

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role in that business. How much time is that going to take? And I have to process how to stay in balance with that, so I do not let business consume me.

As I write down the primary things—time with God, time for recreation and rest, time for spouse, kids and grandkids, time for business, time for small group and church, I then can see if there are any hours left after these primary things. I then can ask and receive how the Father would have me spend other time (especially in giving away the blessings of my life to others such as discipling, teaching, counseling, etc.) where I then have margin to enjoy life and be available for the surprises and time required to interface with others during the day like employees, spouse, kids, friends, etc. Margin is leaving open space in my calendar. Why? Things happen. Your kids need you. Your spouse needs you. Your people that you're discipling need to talk to you. You need to take a break. You need rest. You need to take an extended time with God. You will be led to your sweet spot of righteousness, peace, and joy, which bring relaxed, freedom. This is why it takes continual processing, since things change, grow, and new opportunities come. When they do, we then process together to confirm that God is wanting to add something new, and then by definition, have us reduce or stop something else—not to add and then become burdened, but to remain in our sweet spot, which is now carefully crafted by God. This is a critical exercise since we tend to just add and not replace, (as God would want). Be clear and know what God's will is regarding adding that new thing.

What does it mean that all things work together for good? To whom is this promise given, and thus what is necessary for us to experience? Why is this again so important to understand as we move to receive God's answers?

Read Romans 8:28:

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^[a] for those who are called according to his purpose.

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All things work together for good (our good), but there is a condition for those who love God? He defined what that was in Romans: Set your mind on the Spirit and be led by the Holy Spirit. This confirms that we are showing our affection for God. Why? Because we are seeking His will and not our own. "I've surrendered my will, and with that commitment, I can be assured that I will have all things work for my good (God's will being best and none better) according to His purpose." What's his purpose? To illustrate and demonstrate and give you His will, the covenant. You've got an issue? He'll solve it because it'll make all things work together for good. And that's the whole issue right now. The thing that's happening, your perspective of this difficult issue is what? That this isn't good. So what's happening right now? "I've got this conflict. I have a family problem and I can't resolve it. It's what I call a sticky wicket. I can't figure this thing out, and it just doesn't seem to be clear to me. I got a business issue, a ministry issue, a relationship issue. They're all sticky wickets." Things happen to you and now they are problems. And these can include when you make a mistake, when you go to the flesh and not follow the lead of God into His will. That wasn't such a good idea. It caused a problem. It caused it even to go deeper. And God said: "If you have a heart to follow Me, I'll fix it. There's nothing that is excluded. It's always: how about now, I'll make all things work together for good. Are you going to seek me because you believe that? Or are you going to try to do it yourself? But that isn't going to work out so well." If you've got an unresolved issue, go to God.

For the two next sets of verses, respond to these questions: As we settle that all things will work together for our good, what is important to our process and how do we experience this process? Why?

Read Psalm 46:1–2:

God Is Our Fortress

To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamo^[a]. A Song.

46 God is our refuge and strength,
a very present^[b] help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

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He's describing things as kind of falling apart, or being a big problem. He says: "Don't go do fear." Your focus may be on the negative, may be on the consequences, on the outcome, as you worry that all is falling apart. But He promises to be a very present help when you're in the middle of this big problem. "I'll take care of it. Come to Me, come to Me, come to Me and seek My answers." He says. He will resolve your hardships.

Read Psalm 85:4–13:

- ⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us!
- ⁵ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
- ⁶ Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?
- ⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.
- ⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.
- ⁹ Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.
- ¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
- ¹¹ Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.
- ¹² Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
- ¹³ Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.

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When we are in trouble, our prayer to God is for Him to show us His loving kindness. The Hebrew word here is “covenant loyalty.” Show me your covenant loyalty. Show me your loyalty to the covenant that in the middle of this problem, I expect that you will deliver to me the Covenant despite the problem. I am going to be blessed to be a blessing. There isn't anything too difficult for you. God, you can do this, you will do this, and you'll resolve it. We pray for God to give us what is good, what is excellent, supernatural, pleasant, the resolution to the issue and to show me, teach me, lead me, guide me into that. I expect it and believe it. This difficult thing is going to turn out well, it will be resolved and turn into blessing, which is the covenant.

For the next two sets of verses, respond to these questions: To understand, receive, and then be able to follow God's path and steps for His answers to our circumstances, what process had God given us to obtain confirmation and certainty? Why is this so important for our process?

Read Matthew 18:18–20:

¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed^[a] in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

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To assist each other in understanding God’s will to bring resolution to our life issues, or to provide clarity of a calendar of margin, freedom and joy, we are called to:

1. Gather in His name together, to seek His will, His answers, His way, His path and not our own. Always ask Him, “What do you have to say about this?”
2. Then, work together in process until you come to unity, an agreement that you now know His will. Remember this is not negotiation or working to come to agreement between us. Rather it is together to come to unity or agreement with the Spirit who will confirm God’s will; He uses peace to umpire this and then to bring us both or all to unity in agreement with this confirmation, what we call the “Holy Yes,” meaning you have understood, received, and now know His will. We can further trust that when we have not reached this place of understanding and clarity, that his role is to trouble us until we do. We can trust that, so that when we do receive the “Holy Yes,” we know that we know that we know. It is not up to us to figure it out, rather to receive it and then know it with certainty.

Read Malachi 3:16–18:

The Book of Remembrance

¹⁶ Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. ¹⁷ “They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

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At a recent retreat in Europe, while we were discussing the issues of life together, we are talking to each other, processing, trying to understand, seeking answers. What is God doing first? He's listening. He's listening to you talk. This is a new understanding of prayer. We think prayer is asking God to do something for us and to consider what I think is the solution. He says: "Actually, it's dialogue." One of the most important pieces of bringing resolution is you and your spouse or group are to be actively discussing and processing. While you're processing, God is listening. That's prayer. And that was a big aha, because there were a lot of people who thought that when you're talking, you're not praying. But God tells us: Actually, when you're talking, you are praying. What does God have to show us and reveal to us as we process the truth of this situation? While you're in this process, who's resident in you? The Holy Spirit. He gives you the insight, the wisdom, the "Oh, look at what you just said. You just said something really important. Let's focus on that." There's a piece of the puzzle and it becomes obvious to you because it strikes your spirit.

This course is critical to our life that God has planned for us. It brings us margin (a calendar with space, joy and excitement) and a trust that God will resolve all our issues of life. We do not need to be greedy, be burdened, work our own plans, stay in the difficult. Rather, we are to enjoy His life for us as we learn to be led by Him, live out the calendar that He has planned, and then stay living in the Kingdom so this sweet life will be normal and regular.