A photograph of a long, straight asphalt road with a dashed white center line, stretching into the distance between rolling green hills. The sky is filled with grey, overcast clouds. In the distance, a few wind turbines are visible on the horizon. The entire image is framed by a thick, solid green border.

40 DAYS
of
HEARING
from
GOD

Journeying the Highway of Holiness

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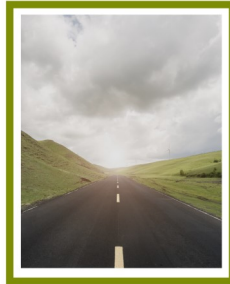
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Week #1:



Hearing God/ God's Thoughts

The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.

—Isaiah 50:4



God's Eternal Will

1.1

Day 1

“Where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law”.
(Proverbs 29:18)

“The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations” (Psalm 33:10-11).

The plan and counsel of God never change but His people do. When there is no light (revelation and prophetic insight), people transgress His will and lose the way of happiness. One commentator on Proverbs 29:18 says “the people run naked.” This, of course, indicates that they lose their covering.

Truly, since we want to be happy, we ought to purpose to hear and obey. As we embark on this 40 Days of Hearing From God, let us purpose to find His plan and counsel which stands forever. James reminds us that any planning we do ought to be as the Lord wills:

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil (James 4:13-16).

Obviously, the Lord is interested in our short-term plans as well as our eternal destiny. He will lead us if we will walk with Him. Amos 3:3 poses the question: “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” This means two have chosen the same course and agreed on the final destination. God knows exactly where He has predestined our lives and will give us revelation of His will so that we may walk together. Commit today to journey with God Who will guide us on the Highway of Holiness; indeed, we are taught to pray Matthew 6:13: “And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, lead us away from temptation and deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom we seek.



God's Will Is To Guide You

1.2

Day 2

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule, *Which* have no understanding, *Which* must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you” (Psalm 32:8-9).

How awesome it is to know that the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Almighty God will instruct and teach us. Notice that His way is to guide you with His eye. This means not only that He is watching carefully over us but that His way is gentle. It is not the way of bit and bridle which are used to direct beasts of no understanding by discomfort but rather, it is the gentle and comforting way of the caring parent.

Our choice, then, is to look into His eyes as a child would look to Mommy or Daddy for guidance and to have such a close relationship with Him that a glance speaks volumes. How I remember how much one look in my mother’s eyes would say. How I remember the times, in raising my own seven children, when one look would be enough to direct them away from harm and the consequent loss of happiness. Of course, I remember the other times also, when one look was not enough and the “bit and bridle” needed to be employed. At these times when gentleness was not enough, love still dictated delivering them from evil. Because I loved them, I would do so with as much care and gentleness as the situation allowed. How much more will Father watch over us?

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13).

“Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:9-10).

We are recipients of the love of God and destined to partake of His holiness. Peter adds to this by telling us that we are “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (the desires of the flesh)” (2 Peter 1:4).

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
Draw near to God and He will draw near to you....” (James 4:7-8).

“...as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,” (1 Peter 1:14-15).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, guide me with Your eye. I will draw near. As an obedient child I submit to You and resist evil. I am watching to see what You will say.



The Way Of A Man Is Not In Himself

1.3

Day 3

“O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not in himself; *It* is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).

“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? *There is* more hope for a fool than for him” (Proverbs 26:12).

How deceitful it is to trust in oneself, in our own understanding, our own wisdom, or our own ability to direct our steps. How foolish it is not to seek guidance from above. Jeremiah admits this (above) and then points out the very cause of such foolish behavior in chapter 17:9-10: “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.”

Our problem is essentially one of heart condition, a problem so desperate that it leads to greater deceit than any other source. At this level of desperation, men have no recourse but to admit the condition and turn the matter over to the Great Physician to search, test and prescribe remedy. If a man sees no need for this, “There is more hope for a fool than for him.” David recognized his youthful errors and achieved some wisdom as he grew more mature in relationship to God and His word. He had been through some very difficult times because of his sins and lack of repentance and he learned not to trust in his own ability to know the depths of his heart. He said: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

As we journey on, let us be mindful that we need God’s guidance even in knowing our own condition. Wisdom is never self-derived but it is freely ours in Christ. Seeking Him as the resident fount of wisdom will lead to life and that abundantly.

“...but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:24-25).

“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I know that my ways are not Your ways, but I am in Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom (Colossians 2:3). Grant me, Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding.



God Will Not Override Your Will

1.4

Day 4

“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, *And* hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13).

Jeremiah speaks here of cisterns and a fountain. Notice, first, that God refers to Himself as “the fountain of living waters.” He is the singular source of life whereas cisterns are spoken of in plural with no mention of life. The charge laid is that God’s people are intent on building their own means of sustenance of life rather than being thoroughly dependent on Him. The comment then points out that these efforts are futile and ultimately a grand waste of time and effort since they always break down and disappoint. Furthermore, God’s own indictment of such frivolous treatment of His person is to declare it as “evil.” When God says something is evil it is obviously something to be avoided at all costs since the cost of His displeasure would be far greater than any other cost and the loss of His pleasure far greater than any other loss.

Notice, this living water (or water of life) is just what Jesus offered the Samaritan woman at the well:

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10).

“...but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

Then He offered the same to the crowds at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem:

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39).

Life can be dry but life with Jesus is not. His presence goes with us continually, even in the wilderness: “...and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I am finished with the emptiness of self-effort. Give me this water that I may not thirst.



If Anyone Will To Do His Will, He Shall Know...

1.5

Day 5

“If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether I speak on My own authority*” (John 7:17).

Thus far we have recognized that it is God’s will to guide us and it is not in any man to direct his own steps, but Jesus is the source of life to whom we turn since He is the treasure trove of godly wisdom. We submit which is to say we adjust ourselves to Him and we draw near. We become those who forsake the broken cisterns, the empty attempts to sustain our own lives and we drink of the Spirit. We become those who will to do His will and with this rightful positioning comes knowledge. This attitudinal adjustment is known as the fear of the Lord, or reverence of the Lord (not the phobic fear of judgment or death).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, *But* fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

“In the fear of the LORD *there is* strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To turn *one* away from the snares of death” (Proverbs 14:26-27).

The Lord will guide us and lead us out of temptation and evil. As we draw near to Him, He draws near to us and we grow in wisdom and understanding. Another proverb is useful here, this time quoted by James from Proverbs 10:19: “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;” (James 1:19).

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).

When we will to do His will we will have an assurance that the direction we receive from Him is indeed taking us further along the Highway of Holiness. As we stop simply talking at Him and get still enough to listen to Him, He will then listen to us and guide us in paths of righteousness.

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I will to do Your will. Teach me and guide me. I will listen and follow You as an obedient child is led by a loving parent.



God Opens Ears

1.6

Day 6

“The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to *him who is weary*. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned” (Isaiah 50:4).

The introductory sermon given the week prior to launching these 40 days of devotions was entitled The Open Ear. Whenever the New Testament makes mention of the word *doulos* which is translated as servant or slave, it is making reference to the bond-slave, one who by choice had determined that life outside his master’s house was simply uninviting and that he would stay of his own free will. To publicly attest to this decision he was then taken to the doorpost of the master’s house where his ear was pierced with an awl. Subsequently, he wore an earring to show forth the mark of his decision made willingly and not by force or unhappy circumstance.

The following Sunday as we launched these devotions was opened with the sermon, Hearing God. Hearing Him is the birthright of every born-again believer, the natural outworking of being a sheep under his Good Shepherd, and the given responsibility of every soldier in the army of the Lord. We recognize that conversation is necessary and normal in every relationship of earthly proportion; how much more is it necessary to a vital relationship with God? Thus, we have prepared ourselves through our journey thus far to be able to say, “He awakens my ear to hear as the learned.”

It is important to make this confession or acknowledgement at this time, certifying that regardless of whatever lack of hearing we may have historically known, our ear is now open and hearing. God speaks to us as the learned and grants then that we speak as the learned. We are quick to hear and slow to speak but we do speak in season and the weary are assisted.

It is always vital to agree with God and our faith actually demands that what we believe in the heart we confess or acknowledge with our mouth.

“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10).

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,” (Hebrews 3:1).

Jesus, Himself, is both the High Priest and the Apostle (one sent forth) of our confession. He will enforce what we say when it agrees with what the Lord has said.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

**Lord, you have awakened my ear. Morning by morning, I hear Your voice.
Lead me in the way everlasting.**



Seek Guidance Regularly

1.7

Day 7

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” (Colossians 1:9-10).

Paul’s ongoing prayer, his morning by morning request on behalf of the saints was that they increase in the knowledge of God. This particular choice of terms for “knowledge” comes from a long list of Greek terms, each with a different perspective on how we might interpret the general English term. Paul’s choice here is the word *epignosis*, which signifies something above knowledge or what we would think of as revelation knowledge rather than learned knowing. His prayer leads up to this state of increasing revelation of God by a distinct set of cause and effect relationships. First, notice he wrote we are to be fully knowing His will. Second, having heard, we are to walk out what we know. Thirdly, we will be fruitful because the doer of the work, not the hearer only, is blessed. The sequence is significant. First press in to know; then press on because when you know His will and submit to it, you can then experience His working it out.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).

God is present to both will and work but in that order. This is why it is the daily imperative to find His will and then do His will, always with His guiding help.

As He awakens our ear, day in and day out, the teaching of the Vine and branch and fruitfulness comes to bear. In John 15:3, Jesus says you are clean (or pruned) because of the word He spoke to you. This is the power of hearing His voice, that we be pruned so as to bear more and healthier fruit. Then verses 4-7 exhort staying in that close relationship and verse 8 and 16 say:

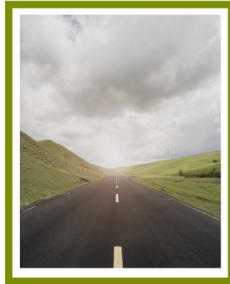
By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples (John 15:8).

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you (John 15:16).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I am here to bear fruit and glorify the Father. Speak, Lord, that I may know Your will, walk it out and be Your disciple (disciplined one).

Week #2:



The Word and the Spirit Agree/ Centering Down; Focusing The Inner Man

Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David.

—Isaiah 55:3



The Natural Man Cannot Receive The Things Of The Spirit

2.1

Day 8

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

Thank God we have the Spirit of God so that we can know more and more of that which God has freely given us in Christ. Paul asserts that the natural man and his natural means of gathering information, the eye and ear, does not and even cannot receive revelation knowledge because it is spiritual. He quoted Isaiah 64:4 at the beginning of his teaching in 1 Corinthians 2:9: “But as it is written: *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*”

So, the eye and ear of the natural man will not receive spiritual wisdom or understanding, but the spirit can be instructed by the Holy Spirit, which Paul states in verse 6 is, “not the wisdom of this age,” but the hidden or mysterious wisdom which God ordained for our glory (v. 7). Such wisdom remains unknown to the rulers of this age (v. 8) but, although no natural eye has seen, no natural ear has heard and no human heart has understood, we can because of the Spirit of Christ within us.

“But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

Since only the Holy Spirit knows the things of God and only the spirit of a man knows the things of the man, there must be a union of these two if ever we are to hear from God.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I thank You that You have given me spiritual eyes to see and ears to hear. Teach me spiritual things that I may know the things that have been freely given to me in Christ.



Tune Your Ear To The Holy Spirit

2.2

Day 9

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26).

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

Thank God for the Helper. Thank God for the teaching of all things concerning now and the things to come. Thank God for having the ear of the learned that we may know “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). Thank God that the Holy Spirit has been given that we may know how God has blessed us in Christ with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3).

Thank God that He has brought us into the new covenant by the blood of Christ and prepared us to be the dwelling place of His holiness and Spirit.

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13).

“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:18).

“...in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22).

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*” (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Thank God that He has prepared us, received us, blessed us and equipped us. Thank God that we have not received the old spirit of bondage to fear, but the Spirit of adoption (literally, “son-placement”) to lead us and guide us.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Romans 8:14-15).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, thank You for Your generous Spirit (Psalm 51:12). Holy Spirit, uphold me and lead me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Cause me to grow in the image of the Son as I tune my ear to Your lead.



Judge All Things By The Word

2.3

Day 10

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” (2 Timothy 3:16).

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

The Holy Spirit always agrees with scripture. You can see here in John that Jesus indicates that life comes from the Spirit of God but it also comes from His words spoken to us. This is how the Spirit gives life:

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give account*” (Hebrews 4:12-13)

The Hebrew word for Spirit is *ruach* which also translates as “breath” and the word “inspiration” found in today’s meditational verse in Second Timothy comes from the Greek language and means literally, “God-breathed.” You can easily see that it is formed from spirit-in. The Holy Spirit inspired (or put the spirit in) men to write the words of God so that all men might be profited by: sound doctrine (hygienic teaching); reproof (conviction and rebuke if one has erred in the way); correction (restoration to an upright state which indicates improvement of life and character); and for instruction (training) in righteousness.

This is the purpose of scripture and this is the role of the Holy Teacher. Each separately points to the truth and each agrees with the other.

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

The starting point for being led of the Spirit is scripture. As Jesus said, we will be sanctified (set apart) by God’s word. Therefore, it is always the written word that takes precedence over inner promptings. This is our strongest filter for truth: is what I sense in line with the word of God? The Book of Acts says that the Bereans were noble, open to receiving new truth but daily searching the Scriptures to prove it out (Acts 17:11).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, sanctify me by Your word. Daily I will search Your truth and that truth will set me free (John 8:31-32).



The Inner Witness

2.4

Day 11

“He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son” (1 John 5:10).

Yesterday we saw that the Scriptures are given to us so that we might be instructed in and upheld by righteousness. Anything more that the Lord wants to communicate to us by His Spirit will always be in absolute agreement with the written word. The two will never be in disharmony but, rather, will perfectly harmonize. All general revelation of God, that which pertains to all men, is already written and will account for almost all answers to life’s questions. However, when the Lord needs to give us specific revelation for our personal lives, Scripture will not, by itself, be enough. Such needs will be met by the inner promptings of God, the inner witness.

When we come to God in Christ we become spiritually alive and God puts the light on in our spirit.

“The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the inner depths of his heart” (Proverbs 20:27).

“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Until we are born-again of the spirit, there is a lamp in us but there is no oil and no light but when the Holy Spirit comes, He is the oil that keeps our inner light burning brightly. He then searches all the inner depths and (we will see in tomorrow’s devotional) bears witness with our spirit. We have this witness within and we can learn to be attuned and led by the Spirit. As we journey further, look for the inner light (e.g., revelation knowledge). Sometimes, because we expect to hear with our natural ear, we rely only on words we know instead of the pure light of simply knowing.

...And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater... He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself...(1 John 5:6-10).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I desire to hear Your voice and receive Your inner witness. I will search the Scriptures and I will know Your communion as the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit agree in heaven and in me.



2.5

The Holy Spirit Bears Witness With Our Spirit

Day 12

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16).

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

We have recognized that the Holy Spirit carries the testimony of God to our spirit, communicating personally with us. It is important to recognize again that the natural man does not receive this communication. When we first looked at that verse we found that it is our spirit that receives. Now, we need to see what does not receive. The “natural man” of the original Greek language is *psuchichos*. As we bring this word into the English language it gives us “psychological.” The root *psuche*, meaning “soul” is transliterated to English as “psyche” or “mind.” Thus, we can see that God’s communications are **not** to the mind.

Since this is the only way in which we have been trained to receive information, how then are we to interpret communication that is Spirit-to-spirit and not mind-to-mind? Firstly recognize that the language of heaven is not English or any other earthly tongue. It is not that our mind won’t ultimately have to find words to express what has been revealed to us but it is necessary to know that God does not speak directly to our mind and, therefore, does not need words. He uses the spirit of wisdom and understanding and He uses the universal language of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the prophet Joel (2:28) says that when the Spirit of God is given, He will arrive with dreams and visions (picture language).

“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28).

“...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:17-18).

Notice that Paul’s prayer is to the end that the light will shine brightly within you. While it is true that the Lord will sometimes be discerned as having used words to convey His mind to us, it is more frequent that He will show by picture language or, in other words, give us the complete picture all at once which we then process the only way we know, in words. Expect God to show you what He has to say: “I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me,” (Habakkuk 2:1).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, show me what You are saying to me. Like Habakkuk, I will set myself to watch to see what You will say to me (Habakkuk 2:1).



Listen Carefully

2.6

Day 13

Isaiah lambasted the people of God for seeking safety apart from the Lord. In chapter 30 he spoke of their coming difficulties as a consequence for trusting in the arm (power) of the flesh instead of in the arm of God. He then spoke of the future, a time when the Lord, who patiently waited to be gracious (v. 18) would restore His people who would fully know His will and recognize His voice (v. 21).

“Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him” (Isaiah 30:18).

“Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21).

“For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.’ But you would not,” (Isaiah 30:15).

Before He would restore them, He waited for them. He waits for us to return and rest and we are then saved. Then, lest we again forsake the fountain of living water and construct our own cisterns, He provided us with a holy gyroscope to keep us on course. Every step of the way, the Holy Spirit will guide us.

“The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds *him* with His hand” (Psalm 37:23-24).

“For You have delivered my soul from death. *Have You* not *kept* my feet from falling, That I may walk before God In the light of the living?” (Psalm 56:13).

“The law of his God *is* in his heart; None of his steps shall slide” (Psalm 37:31).

“A man’s heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps” (Proverbs 16:9).

Thank God for the faithfulness of God to direct our path by His word and His Spirit.

“Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me” (Psalm 119:133).

“Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, in returning and rest which I find in Christ I thank You for saving me to the uttermost. I will listen carefully for Your direction.



2.7

Test All Things

Day 14

“Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

As we seek guidance we must always sort through what we sense and separate what is good and right with God, holding fast to that. I refer to this filtration as the “window principle.” Simply stated, it is: keep the window open (to enjoy the breeze) but keep the screen down (to avoid the insects). We cannot give credence to all that we hear lest we be listening to the deceits of our own heart. Good is not always right and therefore not always God. This distinction is crucial to pleasing Him.

“Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the LORD his God” (2 Chronicles 31:20).

Not all that seems good is ultimately from God. It is relatively easy to sort out the bad but a bit more sensitivity is needed to sort out the goodly from the Godly. That is, we are to hold fast what is good *and right* in the sight of God. As we mature in this, we undergo transformation of our mind so as to prove what is the good will of God. This “prove” in the verse below is the Greek word *dokimazo* and means to test, to prove with the expectation of approving. It essentially means test for approval.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

We test all things and hold fast the good until we have moved on to what is even perfect as the will of God. As we do, we keep the screen down, filtering out what is not good, acceptable and perfect. A good way to do this is to apply the wisdom test.

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

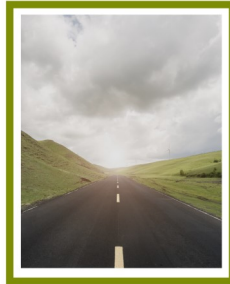
Any thoughts which do not engender these attributes and which are self-seeking will fail the test. It really is rather simple. Does my intended action fulfill God’s highest will or does it serve my purposes? Is it an act of love toward Him or my neighbor, or is it self-loving?

“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there” (James 3:14-16).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I am transformed and renewed to find Your perfect will. Guide me in the wisdom from above as I test and approve and see You bring forth good fruits.

Week #3:



Internal and External Means Of Guidance/ Journaling

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

—James 3:17



Internal Guidance Is Grounded In Union With Christ

3.1

Day 15

“But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*” (1 Corinthians 6:17).

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

All true believers are united to Christ in a vital and complete union of spirit. Their body is His home and not their own. The Spirit of adoption (Son-placement) is in them crying out, “Abba, Father,” (Romans 8:15) because God is “the Father of spirits” (Hebrews 12:9). This union with Christ is the ground of internal guidance.

The presence of His Spirit is of such perfection that it is frequently signified as a seven-fold presence (e.g., complete or perfect). We see this in Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 4:5 and 5:6. The seven spirits are seven lamps, seven eyes and seven horns. This indicates perfect light (lamps), perfect sight (eyes), and perfect might (horns are the symbol of power and authority as in the ten headed, ten horned beast of Anti-christ).

Obviously, there are not multiple Holy Spirits, but His presence with you, His perfections in you are perfectly designed for you to experience divine revelation (sight and light) so you will have victory in the good fight of faith (as He exercises might and right).

The picture of these seven spirits is:

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:1-2).

You are one spirit with Him and, therefore, the temple of the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I am Yours. Holy Spirit, I am joined to You. Lord, help me to know You in all Your perfection and to grow in Your light, sight and might.



Learn To Depend On Your Spiritual Ears

3.2

Day 16

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*” (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

Let us notice again that the new covenant truth of our lives is that God has put His own Spirit in us to cause us to walk in a manner pleasing to Him. We will grow in our walk as we become more sensitive to His voice within us. We can build out of a new spirit and heart what we never could do without them – a keen sense of His presence and a dependence on His guidance from within. Our heart has been fully replaced with a softness toward the things of God, our minds and hearts know His law of love because the Holy Spirit has brought it. (Romans 5:5—“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”)

Elijah sought the Lord and experienced a great wind, an earthquake and a fire “but the Lord was not in” these things. Then came “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:11-12). This is a good depiction of how we must get past the outside noise and activity, center down, and find the still small voice. (Psalm 46:10—“Be still, and know that I *am* God;...”).

Before we are made with a new spirit and a new heart we are not the dwelling place of God. We were born with a conscience but through willful disobedience, neglect, and disregard, we lost sensitivity to this inner voice. After we are born again we must redevelop sensitivity in this area because the Holy Spirit will use it.

“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 9:1).

“This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men” (Acts 24:16).

The word conscience is actually a compound of “con” and “science” which means “together” “knowledge.” As Paul said, the conscience and Holy Spirit work together. Paul even said some stray from the faith by missing the aim of our charge (1 Timothy 1:5, 19-20; 4:1-2) concerning conscience and that church servants must hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

**Lord, help me to live in good conscience before You all the days of my life
(Acts 23:1).**



3.3

No Form Of Guidance May Refute The Revealed Word

Day 17

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

Whether we sense guidance as coming from the inner voice of conscience or of God, or we experience some outward manifestation that we perceive as guidance, there is never an acceptable refutation of the revealed word of truth (Scripture). There are dreams and visions, angelic visitations, theophanies (e.g., the burning bush), prophecies, and other supernatural works of God that are valid means of guidance but none are ever to be exalted above His word. Indeed, David wrote, “You have magnified Your word above all Your Name” (Psalm 138:2). That is, every word must be true and every word must be fulfilled or God’s name is lost. It means His word is settled forever in heaven (Psalm 119:89) and though earth will pass away, it will remain. Jesus explained it this way:

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17-18).

So, beware any form of guidance, regardless of the source if it runs contrary to God’s word. It simply isn’t possible for God to refute His own word. (Romans 3:4—“Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar....”).

“For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

“And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

This is never negotiable. Anything you believe the Lord is showing you must conform 100% to the word. Lying signs and wonders will multiply in the last days as it says in Revelation but we do not follow signs; we look at them to see that they signal Christ (are signposts pointing to Him as the Savior/King and if not, we discard them. The Lord expects this of us. In Deuteronomy 13:1-3, the Lord says “If there arises among you a prophet and he gives you a sign or a wonder saying, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I love You with all my heart and soul and I will walk after You, reverence You, keep Your commandments and obey Your voice. Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.



The Gifts Of God Are To Build The Church

3.4

Day 18

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men” (Ephesians 4:7-8).

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,” (Ephesians 4:11).

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of *all*!” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

As we explore external means of guidance we cannot overlook the work and giftings of God in our corporate self, the church family. God’s graces are distributed to each and every member of the Body of Christ for the corporate well-being. These gifts of God are for building up the Body: some are graced with the ascension gifts of Christ (Ephesians 4:11) and are set as key leaders whom we are to follow as they follow Christ.

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct” (Hebrews 13:7).

Other gifts given to us through the corporate Body of Christ are the charismatic, or descension gifts of the Holy Spirit.

...for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

These, like the ascension gifts, will build us up. They will profit us, but only as they are used and appreciated (1 Corinthians 12:7; Romans 12:6; 1 Peter 4:10). When they are, corporate discernment is exercised to insure peace (1 Corinthians 14:26-33). This corporate reliance helps us to understand better what it is to test all things. Note the context in which this mandate for testing is given in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21: “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.”

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, employ me as a builder of Your church by the exercise of Your supernatural gifts within me. I stir up the gift of God in me and ask that You manifestly use Your gifts throughout all the church family to build me up.



Get Corporate Discernment

3.5

Day 19

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2).

Note here how the Holy Spirit responded to corporate prayer and fasting and made known to the corporate leadership structure what He had already signified to Barnabas and Saul. Then, in full corporate unity, the church sent them on their apostolic journey. This is a more involved process than many will wait for but it separates those who are truly sent from those who just went. Those who are sent are sent by God through His established church and go in the grace of God to accomplish the work to which they are called.

“Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away” (Acts 13:3)

It is always important to wait until the Holy Spirit says, “Now....” Paul could have simply gone but waited until it seemed good to all through the witness of the Spirit. This is a principle that is shown throughout the Book of Acts, that the Holy Spirit is to be the chief voice and the prime mover. The Jerusalem Council met in this understanding to consult with the Lord and later said: “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us...” (Acts 15:28)

It is not easy to submit our perceptions to corporate discernment but it is a safety to keeping guidance pure and undefiled by our own fleshly desires.

“Where *there is* no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors *there is* safety” (Proverbs 11:14).

“Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established” (Proverbs 15:22).

Ultimately we must recognize that even personal guidance must be subject to trusted counsel because we are not isolated bodies but one new man in Christ, mutually dependent on one another, members of One.

“And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (1 Corinthians 12:21).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, connect me to Your Body in interdependence on one another. Grant me trusted counselors and use me as an aid to others coming to know Your will.



Jesus Opens The Understanding

3.6

Day 20

“And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45).

As we determine to hear from and learn from God, we must first understand the Scriptures. Teachers in the Body of Christ, along with other giftings of office of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 12:28) are a major source of help but it is Jesus, Himself, who opens the understanding through His Spirit.

“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things” (1 John 2:20).

“But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him” (1 John 2:27).

We are to recognize our teachers and leaders as God’s authority (Hebrews 13:7, 17) and not disdain their office but respect it. However, they are not the learner; we are. The responsibility is on us and as we learn to lean not to our own understanding, we can actually begin to understand by the help of the Lord. The anointing of the Spirit within is our Teacher and helps us to receive truth when it is preached and avoid error when it gets preached.

Before we received Christ, our condition could be described as:

“...having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;” (Ephesians 4:18).

After we received Christ, we were new creations described as:

“...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,” (Ephesians 1:18).

In Christ we are possessed by a spirit of wisdom and understanding and knowledge: (Isaiah 11:2—“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord”). Our blindness is cured and our eyes enlightened. With the coming of the spirit of knowledge we can assemble our A-B-C’s. With understanding we can assemble A-B-C’s into meaningful arrangements (C-A-T spells cat which says “meow”). With wisdom we can act (as in feeding the cat). Wisdom (rightful choice of action) is the ultimate goal but understanding must come first. Jesus will open the understanding to those who will act righteously.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, open my understanding and I will walk accordingly.



Heaven's Guidance Always Carries Wisdom

3.7

Day 21

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

This is a verse that we saw earlier in our devotions. Today, let us focus on the fact that heaven has wisdom for us. Truly, as we build on and do the word of God, Jesus calls us wise (Matthew 7:24—“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock”).

It is significant to note that we were not wise when God called us but only became wise after we received Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18-31, esp. vv. 24 and 30). Of course, there is a wisdom of this world which you may have tasted, but God calls that “foolishness” (1 Corinthians 3:19).

“...but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

As we grow in our dependence on the word and the Spirit of Christ, as we build our lives on Him who is the wisdom of God, there is a promise we need to recognize.

“Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength; For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors *there is safety*” (Proverbs 24:3-6).

You can see that your house will be established, built, and furnished with riches which will be not simply precious but pleasant. (It is one thing to prosper outwardly but quite another to do so pleasantly.)

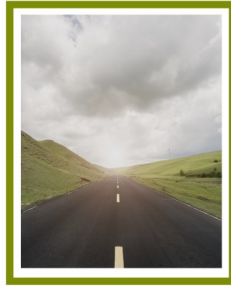
Know, also, that you will be strong and keep growing stronger, so strong that you will not require outside assistance to live in victory...although you will never grow to a place of independence from counsel.

Wisdom has fruit too numerous to mention here. Suffice it to say that Jesus is wisdom and Proverbs 8 defines all He is made unto you who are in Christ. (We will take this up in more detail during devotions of week 6).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, You are my wisdom. Help me to walk in righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Week #4:



Communion With God/ Test All Things

Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: “Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.

—Isaiah 45:11



Avoiding Captivity And Destruction

4.1

Day 22

“Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge; Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst” (Isaiah 5:13).

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6).

Captivity and destruction are the companions of neglecting or rejecting the knowledge of God. Horribly, the consequences are both corporate and generational. Conversely, those who seek Him, even if it be during captivity and destruction, will find Him. (Deuteronomy 4:29—“But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul”).

Clearly, this 40 days journey is designed to keep us from such negative consequences and deliver us as we find Him and all He is to us, for us, and in us. Jesus said we must seek first His government and then we can expect all else to be added to us (Matthew 6:33). He said you will find what you need when you seek (Matthew 7:7). Indeed, Paul taught that the Lord’s eternal purpose for all mankind is that they would seek the Lord and find Him (Acts 17:26-27).

As you seek Him with all your heart, know that you please Him because of your faith.

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Those who do not seek by faith (Romans 9:32) do not please Him but those in faith do. Those seeking to establish their own righteousness do not (Romans 10:3) but those seeking the righteousness of faith do. So, today, tune in to the Holy Spirit and forsake all seeking of natural needs (Luke 12:22-31) and lift your eyes to the hills from whence cometh your help.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1-3).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I come boldly to Your throne above in search of my life, safely hidden with You in God.



Revelation Follows Surrender

4.2

Day 23

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

As we reverence God, we will receive instruction and direction in all our paths. As we trust Him in the way that a sheep trusts the good shepherd, He will direct our walk.

“He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness...” (Psalm 23:3).

This comes from a life of submission or surrender. We cease from our own works and enter His.

“...again He designates a certain day, saying in David, ‘Today,’ after such a long time, as it has been said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts’” (Hebrews 4:7).

“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His” (Hebrews 4:9-10).

“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12)

We recognize that our thoughts are not His thoughts and our ways are not His ways (Isaiah 55:8-10). We turn in humbleness of heart and He undertakes to advance us in our God-given destiny.

“The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way” (Psalm 25:9).

“Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, ‘The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously’? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you....” (James 4:5-8).

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

Yours is an upward calling and only the Lord can exalt (lift) you.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I wait on You. Teach me Your way and lift me up on eagle’s wings.



Ask For Wisdom

4.3

Day 24

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).

The Lord desires to instruct us and, as we humbly seek Him and His righteousness, He promises to answer our call. Sometimes we lack the big picture and can't seem to connect the dots. This is what James says: if we lack wisdom (Greek's *sophia*, which is the big picture, the whole in view), we are to ask God who will never reprove us for asking but will liberally answer. As any good Father would, He desires us to grow and will be pleased to show us things we do not yet see.

Likewise, Jeremiah points to the fact that God desires to be called upon. This is a mystery that God the Creator receives requests of His creation and is not for us to solve since God will do whatever He pleases to do. It is enough to know that He desires communion with us and prayer develops that. As we converse with Him it is His delight to show us great and mighty things we never saw.

The point today is this: you need to ask. Whether you understand why you must ask or not doesn't change the fact that the Lord has set this gracious provision in place for us and is waiting to be asked.

“...Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures” (James 4:2-3).

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

“Thus says the Lord, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: ‘Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me’” (Isaiah 45:11).

Go ahead. Now is a good time. The Lord is seeking your fellowship.

“...that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I am asking. I know Your word declares I have the mind of Christ. I know, too, I am to let this mind be in me (Philippians 2:5). Show me Your thoughts.



Testing For Tasting

4.4

Day 25

Does not the ear test words And the mouth taste its food?" (Job 12:11).

"For the ear tests words As the palate tastes food" (Job 34:3).

As we continue our 40 days journey and tune our spiritual senses to God, we grow in maturity. In the Scriptures above we are reminded to, "Test all things; hold fast what is good." Just as we would spit out any foul substance entering our mouths, we can learn to have our ears, both natural and spiritual, test words. We can develop more and more sophistication in testing words in the same way that we grew in ability to eat good, adult food. This growth of filtered listening requires that we mature just as a small child matures from milk to cereal and on to strained vegetables and, ultimately, to strained meats and then adult food.

I believe we have all been exposed to words that left a "bad taste in our mouths" because we lingered too long before we spat them out. Now we know better and just as we learned to do this with bad food tastes, we will learn to do likewise with what we hear.

This idea is carried further by the author of the book of Hebrews. He reproves the saints for dullness of hearing and ties it to their backward movement in achievement in Christ by likening it to what they are eating as opposed to what they ought to be eating.

"... you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:11-14).

Those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil would obviate that there is need of choosing to grow and the rebuke is for the fact that these Hebrew believers had not and actually had gone backwards needing to be taught all over again the basics of faith. Their hearing had become dull due to lack of exercise.

He has essentially said, hearing has not been developed, senses have not been exercised, and those who ought to be serving as leaders in maturity are back to nursing the bottle though they had tasted much stronger food (Hebrews 6:4-5). He ends, though, in confidence of their salvation (v. 9) and an exhortation to diligence to press into the inheritance (vv. 11-12).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I will taste and see that You are good and that Your words are sweeter than honey to my mouth (Psalm 34:8, 119:103).



Confirmation Is Needed

4.5

Day 26

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

As we take an honest look at ourselves we must conclude that there is truly a great gulf between what we actually know and what we would like to know. Now, there is no excuse for ignorance due to an uncaring attitude but, on the practical side of things, even the most astute disciple, Paul, says we know only partially and will wait until we are glorified to know fully.

This is why it is imperative to check, recheck, and get confirmation on the guidance we believe we have received. This is why there is always a plurality of elders in the new testament church and why when a prophet speaks, others are to weigh and judge (1 Corinthians 14:29). This is, of course, also exactly why we need to receive confirmation in guidance.

We can never be 100% certain that any subjective guidance is without flaw. When the Bible states something in absolute terms, this is objective and needs no confirmation but when we interpret the meaning or when we receive guidance from some other means, this is subjective. That is, it is subject to our own limitations. That is why the Bible states frequently that one witness is not enough (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6, etc.). Jesus stated the same principle and so did Paul.

“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15).

“But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established’” (Matthew 18:16).

“This will be the third time I am coming to you. By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1)

Therefore, always seek confirmation from trusted witnesses. Throughout the Scriptures we see those who were about to act wrongly saved from disaster by the words of a faithful friend. David heard from a man’s wife, a total stranger, and was saved from blood guiltiness. Naaman heard from a household servant girl and was saved from leprosy. Notice, it isn’t that we only hear from expected and revered sources; just listen.

“Apply your heart to instruction, And your ears to words of knowledge” (Proverbs 23:12).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, send witnesses across my path, those who testify to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.



The Integrity Of The Upright Will Guide Them

4.6

Day 27

“The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them”
(Proverbs 11:3)

Here is a faithful saying: those who walk uprightly (righteously) before God will dwell in the house of the Lord (Psalm 15:1-5; 24:3-5). Their own integrity of heart will keep them on course. (These two sections of the Psalms are excellent guides to righteous living. Below is just a sample.)

“Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;” (Psalm 15:1-2)

The upright are seeking first the government of God and His righteousness and God has promised to add all else to them (Matthew 6:33).

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11).

“You who are named the house of Jacob: ‘Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good To him who walks uprightly?’” (Micah 2:7).

“My defense is of God, Who saves the upright in heart” (Psalm 7:10).

Actually, the promises of God to the upright are too many to enumerate here so let us focus on guidance only. The Lord says in Proverbs 3:32 that His secret counsel is shared with the upright. This explains why their advance in life becomes so easy, even in dark times.

“The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway” (Proverbs 15:19).

“Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness;...” (Psalm 112:4).

Yes, the integrity of the upright will guide them. They have a simple life formula: trust God and do right.

“The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and trust in Him. And all the upright in heart shall glory” (Psalm 64:10).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, “Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness” (Psalm 143:10).



4.7

Meditation Leads To Blessings

Day 28

“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3).

Blessings abound for the man who delights in God’s revelation and who meditates on it. It is always their season, they never wilt, and all that they do prospers. They know that bad company corrupts good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33) and have chosen not to sit, stand or walk with them but rather to devote their time to pursuing knowing God’s word. They have determined to abide in the word until the word abides in them.

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’” (John 8:31-32).

This principle of abiding in the word or meditating in it day and night is also found in Joshua.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

Here we see that there is cause and effect at work. The meditating leads to careful observation to do all that is written and this, being the counsel of God for a happy, prosperous and abundant life, leads to success. Jesus simply said, it will make you free and Paul explained that freedom.

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Galatians 5:13-14).

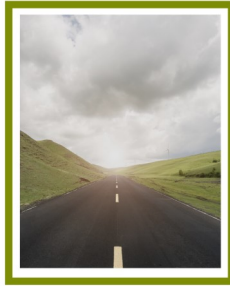
“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

You are free to love and, in doing so, will fulfill all the law. The blessings described in Psalm 1 and Joshua 1 become yours.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, teach me to love as You love. Day and night teach me to walk in the Spirit as the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart are found acceptable in Your sight (Psalm 19:14).

Week #5:



Knowing Your Destiny/ Getting The Most Out Of The Bible

And have put on the new man who is renewed
in knowledge according to the image of Him
who created him.

—Colossians 3:10



You Were Predestined

5.1

Day 29

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

You are a special creation. Before you were born God called you into existence. The prophet Jeremiah and the apostle Paul give us some facts beyond the mention here of “good works” as your destiny. Jeremiah was told, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5) Paul wrote, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace...” (Galatians 1:15). And he wrote regarding all of us, “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,” (Ephesians 1:4).

You, too, are ordained. Our daily verse calls you His workmanship (Greek *poiēo* which gives us the word poem). You are especially designed by God for His glory and He has brought you to such a time as this and such a place as this for that glory to shine.

“And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,” (Acts 17:26).

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:29-31).

What an awesome calling and destiny. God has a plan for your life and an expectation that you will fulfill it. That is, He has called you and is waiting to communicate the plan.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope....And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11, 13).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I am ready to find and fulfill Your will for my life. I look to You for my future and my hope.



Be Filled With The Knowledge Of His Will

5.2

Day 30

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” (Col. 1:9-10).

As you pursue the knowledge of His will for your life, live in expectancy that there is always more He will say and show you. Paul had heard how well things were going for the maturation of the saints at Colosse and he intensified his prayer for all wisdom and all understanding of the will of God to fill them. This is an awesome thought that we might actually become recipients of such wisdom and understanding that we would be vessels filled with certainty of the will of God.

Yesterday we meditated on the fact that God has a future and a hope laid out for us even before birth. Here is a thought from King David the psalmist who was said by God to be a man after His own heart and who certainly understood that our times are in His hands.

“Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!” (Psa. 139:16-17).

Paul indicates in today’s devotional verse, Col. 1:9-10, that you can fully know His will and thoughts and the product will be that you walk worthily of the Lord, bear fruit at all times and continue to increase in the knowledge of God, in the fullest discernment of His will and of Him. He goes on to add:

“...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light” (Col. 1:11-12).

Yes, the Lord has an inheritance for you and has pre-qualified you to partake in Christ. He has destined you for the throne and undertaken to deliver you to it as you receive His grace and truth. He has not only qualified you, He has equipped you with all that you might ever need to advance in His will.

“...as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, show me the days fashioned for me even before they are here.



5.3

There Is Need Of Obedience

Day 31

“My son, keep your father’s command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Proverbs 6:20-23).

“My son, let them not depart from your eyes— Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble” (Proverbs 3:21-23).

How good it is to keep the word of God upon the heart and be led in safety. How good it is to forsake self-government and do the will of God. If only King Saul had this simple revelation, he never would have lost the kingdom. Unfortunately, he thought he could obey the general counsel of God and self-manage the rest (1 Samuel 15). He was fully in charge of the situation and had only to do what the prophet had instructed on behalf of God but he developed Plan B which, of course, was not Plan A and therefore missed the mark completely. (The Greek word translated as “sin” is *hamartia* which means “to miss the mark”).

“...But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal. So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king” (1 Samuel 15:21-23).

As you can see, it was not. Listen to God’s own words on this folly of thinking that we need not obey if we can find a better, more noble way:

“I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.”... (1 Samuel 15:11).

Obedience is hearing and doing. Anything more we add to His instructions or anything we avoid doing because we logically deduce that we can improve on God’s word is disobedience rooted in stubbornness or rebellion. God forbid that we would ever take such a path. Rather, let us hear and receive the words of Mary, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” (John 2:5).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I bind Your word upon my heart knowing it will lead me, keep me and speak with me. Like a lamp and a light it will keep me from stumbling.



Put Off The Old And Put On The New Man

5.4

Day 32

“...and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,” (Colossians 3:10).

“...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Day by day we advance in our pre-destiny. Earlier in our devotions, we had used Romans 12:2, “...be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Here we find that you are to be “renewed in the spirit of your mind.” The difference in verb tenses of the original Greek makes it clear that Romans refers to a one-time change but today’s verses refer to continual action. Together, we understand them to point to one original decisive action and then a daily renewing of what has already been done.

This daily renewal is necessary because of the constant pressure of the law of sin at work in our members against the law of life. Paul describes this ongoing conflict in Romans chapter 7 and concludes with thanksgiving for the work of Jesus Christ our Lord who is the only one who can deliver us from “this body of death” (Romans 7:24-25). His reference of death is of a particular Roman death sentence which was enforced by lashing a dead body to a wrongdoer who would then slowly die because of the corruption. Paul’s point (even for him as a great apostle) was that freedom from this bodily corruption would come only as we walked in the spirit of life (Romans 8:1-4).

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:1-4).

To do this, you will daily have to get your thoughts to align with His:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I present You with every thought taken captive until my obedience is fulfilled.



5.5

Run Your Race With Perseverance

Day 33

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Day by day we are renewed. Day by day we see deliverance from the “old man” of the flesh and the ascent of the “new man” of the Spirit. Day by day we see the landscape of our mind and thought life transformed as “every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” is brought down. Daily, there is less and less that can obscure fully knowing Him. Hebrews speaks of us running and exhorts us to persevering purpose. Paul points out that he had run with that very kind of focused life. For us to do as he did would mean, as it says in our devotional verse, that we must lay aside all of those things that weigh us down. Weights might be alright in the workout but they must be removed if we are to run. We also lay aside all things that would trip us up on the raceway. It would be a tragedy to trip on ones own shoelaces in the Olympics.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified .
(1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

This is not an easy road but it is a good one. In today’s verse Paul calls it a “race set before us.” The Greek term he employed was *agon*. Obviously, an *agon* set before you does not conjure up a picture of a picnic in the Poconos. He mentions to Timothy that in keeping faithful he had fought and he had run to finish. We, too, fight and run and we, too, can finish well if we will run with endurance or perseverance. So let us purpose today to drop everything that weighs us down and all that stumbles us.

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, cheering us on from heaven. Paul is one, Abraham is another, and I’m sure you know countless others. Indeed, let us run our race as they ran theirs:

“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Hebrews 6:11-12).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I run into Your arms. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).



The Effects Of Obedience

5.6

Day 34

“Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the Lord your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go. Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea” (Isaiah 48:17-18).

The Lord’s goal in guiding you is to lead you to green pastures and still waters (Psalm 23:2); seeing your peace flowing like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea in their unending cascade. The thought is one of movement and change and newness. God’s will is for improvement and His teaching for profit. He knows just how we should go and desires to lead us.

“My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:20-23).

Knowing how much He desires to see us live profitably, we turn our ear again and open our hearts. We also recognize that though it is His responsibility to produce life for us, it is our responsibility to “keep” our heart with all diligence. This “keeping” means essentially to guard. Adam was assigned to keep the garden (guard it) but didn’t and he lost it all. Here we are told to guard our heart “for out of it spring the issues of life.” This we ought to do with all diligence.

When translated everywhere else in the Bible, this word “issues” is always rendered as “borders” or “boundaries.” In that sense it would seem that our heart is the springboard for the size, scope and sphere of our lives. Any desired change in life is going to start there. Any outward expansion of life, any experience of life with abundance, will flow out of our hearts as we conform to His will, hear His voice and meditate on His word. As we store His word up in our hearts and guard it with care, we can expect to see increase, profit and cascading peace.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things (Philippians 4:6-8).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, with thanksgiving I roll my cares upon You. As You mount garrison over my heart and mind, I let the peace of God rule in my heart (Colossians 3:15).



Because We Love, We Know

5.7

Day 35

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8).

“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death” (1 John 3:14).

As we are conformed to His image, we necessarily add to our faith. We know that apart from Him we will be unfruitful but in Him as the Vine there will be much fruit in us as the abiding branches. Peter speaks of diligence to pursue growth until this fruit is evidenced by two kinds of love: *phileo* (brotherly love) and *agape* (the God-kind of love). The actual aim of our charge (or calling or commandment) is *agape*.

“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,” (1 Timothy 1:5).

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35)

This kind of love is selfless. *Phileo* is a reciprocal love or a love of friendship and lasts as long as the friendship does. Should something occur that damages the friendship, then the reciprocal affection gets damaged along with it. *Agape*, though, does not depend on another’s reciprocal affection. It emanates from the giver solely by choice and remains unaffected if unrequited.

Notice that 1 John 3:14 says we know that we have eternal life because we are able to show eternal love (*agape*). Without this kind of love John says we are not of God for the message from the beginning (as preached by Jesus) is that “we should love (*agape*) one another.”

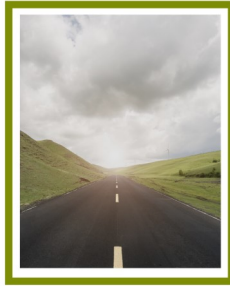
“In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,” (1 John 3:10-11).

“My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, show me today how to love as You love.

Week #6:



Faith Comes By Hearing

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only,
deceiving yourselves.

—James 1:22



Seek First The Divine Government And Righteousness

6.1

Day 36

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

As we draw near to the end of our 40 days of pressing into hearing from God we have learned much. Seeking, however, is more than learning. It is actively doing what needs to be done. This final week of devotions is aimed at stirring that necessary activity of faith. When Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17), he was not saying faith is hearing but that hearing leads to faith. The simple truth is that when God speaks, it is not an option to weigh whether to act or not; we are to obediently act on what we hear. The word “obey” in any language, new or old, including the Bible languages of Hebrew and Greek as well as our English language, is always formed from the verb “to hear” and the prefix “under.” To obey is to come under the hearing. Note the juxtaposition of the words “obeyed” and “believed” in the following two verses. Since the Holy Spirit authored both we can conclude that one is the other in these two representations of Abraham. (Hebrews 11:8—“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance...”; Romans 4:3—“For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness”).

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” (James 2:21-22).

Begin today, as never before, to act on God’s word.

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

“...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:4).

All His promises are “through us.” Partaking of His nature is available through us.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I will act on Your instruction. I thank You that You have delivered me to Your marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9) and choose to glorify Yourself through my participation in all of Your promises.



Show Me Your Faith

6.2

Day 37

“But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18).

James is a no-nonsense kind of leader. He really bores in and is refreshing in his simplicity. In this verse he presents the impossibility of having true faith without evidence. He is saying that he can produce evidence by his works that he truly believes when God directs and anyone who has no manifest evidence is misguided. This is a simple “Show me, don’t snow me,” philosophy. Earlier, he had already pointed out that faith without corresponding acts was self-deceit and faith without works was dead. (James 1:22—“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 2:17—“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”)

To be blessed, says James, one must be a doer. The word of God he likens to the perfect or complete law of liberty and then speaks of abiding in the word until it is done. How often have we heard a great sermon that we thought was transformational but just one week later couldn’t even remember the title? This is because if we don’t act, we forget what we saw. We have to act on what we hear. Indeed, the faith heroes of Hebrews 11 are always action figures. None are remembered for what they heard, but each is known for his or her actions. Consider carefully the formula of each introduction of a new character: 11:4—“By faith Abel offered...”; 11:5—“By faith Enoch was taken away....”; 11:7—“By faith Noah,...prepared an ark”; 11:8—“By faith Abraham obeyed ...And he went out...”; 11:9—“By faith he dwelt in the land of promise...”; 11:11—“By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed,...”; 11:17—“By faith Abraham,...offered up Isaac,...”; 11:20—“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come...”; 11:21—“By faith Jacob...blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped...”; 11:22—“By faith Joseph... made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones...”; 11:23—“By faith Moses...was hidden three months by his parents...”; 11:24—“By faith Moses... refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,...”; 11:27—“By faith he forsook Egypt...”; 11:28—“By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood...”; 11:29—“By faith they passed through the Red Sea...”; 11:30—“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down...”; 11:31—“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace”; 11:33—“who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions...”

We are surrounded by this “great cloud of witnesses” cheering us on (Heb. 12:1) so let us, as they did, act on what we have heard.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, help me show by good conduct that my works are done in the meekness of wisdom (James 3:13) and help me to show others my faith.



The Lord Will Guide You Continually

6.3

Day 38

“The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail” (Isaiah 58:11).

What a glorious promise of divine guidance and provision. This was spoken in the context of a people who used religious form instead of power. They argued over religion instead of acting on its content. Paul said the last days would be marked by such men, “having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:5). The promise given here is for all those who would turn from such a superficial reception of the will of God and actually turn to doing acts of love and compassion.

Not only would the Lord’s guidance be continuous and His provision plenteous, but the blessings would overflow: “Your healing shall spring forth speedily” (v. 8), “The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard” (v. 8), “And your darkness (gloom) shall be as the noonday” (v. 10), “Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth” (v. 14).

This last item regarding high hills is Hebrew thought for God putting you over rather than under, for God exalting you. To achieve to this the context of Isaiah 58 is: stop working so hard to show off, compete, and otherwise exalt yourself. Just love God and love your neighbor as yourself and leave all else to the Lord.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

“So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’”

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”

Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 4:1-7).

They heard but they didn’t act, at least not appropriately, so there was no profit.

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I cease from self-effort and choose You as my rest. I delight myself in You. Lift me up.



Wisdom Will Build Your House

6.4

Day 39

“Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches” (Proverbs 24:3-4).

Our devotions this week have primarily been on the need to act, “putting legs on our faith.” Today, let’s turn to the results we are already experiencing. We have grown in wisdom (which in Hebrew thought is more than sagacity. It is the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action). We have been building the house of the Lord by growing in response to His voice. Now we expect the Lord to be building our house.

In Proverbs 8, wisdom is personified and we know from the New Testament (esp. 1 Corinthians 2) that Jesus is made Wisdom. Hear these words as if they came from His lips:

“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge *and* discretion. The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom; I *am* understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, All the judges of the earth. I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me. Riches and honor *are* with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. My fruit *is* better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasuries. “The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth. When *there were* no depths I was brought forth, When *there were* no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I *was* there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him, Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight *was* with the sons of men. “Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children, For blessed *are those who* keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain *it*. Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD; But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death.” (Proverbs 8:12-36)

During our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, I have found You who have come that I might have life and have it abundantly. Make it so, Lord.



Your Journey Is The Highway Of Holiness

6.5

Day 40

A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it *shall be* for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, Nor shall *any* ravenous beast go up on it; It shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk *there*, And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:8-10).

Today we end our season of 40 days but not our journey. We can rejoice in our growth in hearing God and we can be thankful for the advances He has given us individually and corporately, but we cannot slacken our pace or change our focus. We are on a Highway of Holiness and it will take us where we need to go. As the redeemed we “shall walk there...with singing, with everlasting joy...and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

We dare not turn back, veer away or be distracted from our journey. Paul saw this happen to the churches of Galatia and wrote a strong reproof in which he said, “You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?” (Galatians 5:7). His language denotes progress hindered by someone strewing their path with rocks or stumbling blocks and, in context, points to the legalistic crowd trying to move them away from their liberty in Christ. Never let this happen.

“For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you” (Galatians 5:5-8).

“But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?” (Galatians 4:8-9).

Keep your eyes on Jesus, your feet firmly planted on the Highway to Holiness, and your complete trust in Father’s love. Keep your ears open and your heart ready.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:15-16).

As we close our 40 days journey, make this your prayer:

Lord, in You I am a new creation. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become (and keep on becoming) new. Lead me in newness of life (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Growth Group Roster

Name	Telephone	E-mail

Prayer Requests

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

