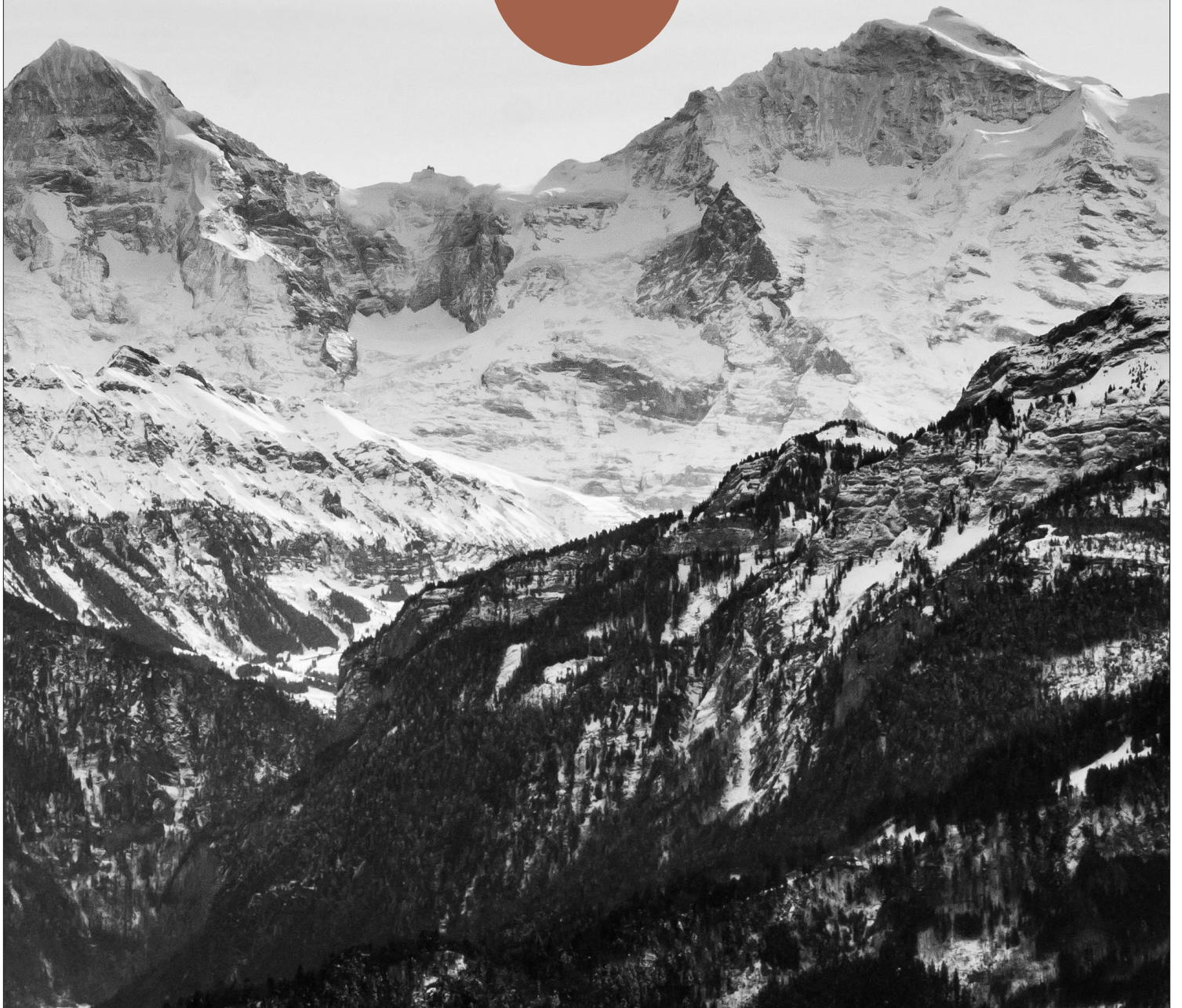


Living Life God's Way

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Living Life God's Way

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Living Life God's Way

Introduction: Inheriting God's Heart

Spiritual truth to be mastered: We were created by God to inherit His heart and rule with Him over His creation which He calls the Kingdom of God.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without it, our lives fall short of God's purposes; we would return to Him as largely untrained babes in Christ not having been available to Him for the expansion of His Kingdom.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 6:9-13: "This then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.'"

Matthew 6:33: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

1 John 5:3: "This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome..."

Matthew 16:18: "And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it."

This teaching is about why God created us and how He wants us to live. Many ultimate issues come up when we come before God with an open heart. If these ultimate issues are dealt with honestly, our lives can be changed. However, sustainable change is only the result of practice.

- How can we move beyond the pain that life serves up?
- How can we discover the power of living with a strategy?
- What is the way of the Lord?

We don't find life in "theory"; we find life in what works. Jesus practiced truth and it worked. **Hebrews 5:8** says that "although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." Jesus was fully human and fully successful. He practiced truth and so should we.

There is a way to live: The way of the Lord.

What does the word "heaven" mean? The Greek root describes it as a place of rising up and bursting forth without restraint. God has given us eternal life. This phrase "eternal life" is not just about the amount of time, it is also tied to the quality of life. The quality of life promised in Christ is a place of rising up and bursting forth without restraint. This is true freedom.

**People don't read
our tracts; they read
our faces. What is
yours saying?**

Unlike most 20th-century Christians, Christ was free to relate to the common person with conviction and authenticity. Our message must be relevant to the person on the street and in the office building. The authenticity of our message modeled on Christ's life is based on whether we are living the things we profess. Religious unreality that binds Christians into irrelevancy must be broken.

“Living Life God’s Way” is about giving you the ability to move through life with a plan and a vision that is on the offense. The Church is not a group of victims, rather we are rulers set free by the Truth.

Practice is the issue. **PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT.** If you practice the wrong things, it will never work.

Hebrews 5:11-14 “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by practice have trained themselves to discern good from evil.”

Living a victorious life is about practicing the Word of God and having someone coach you who knows how to make it work. Training and practicing produces maturity.

1 John 5:3: “This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not grievous.”

Matthew 16:18-19: “And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Truth that becomes a reflex makes life easy. What truths are you practicing right now so that they will become reflexes?

Is your life a “drag” because you are simply marking time waiting for Jesus to return?

As a coach, God plays everybody who is in shape, and He plays us at our level of trained preparation.

The issue is learning how to live... because escaping life is not an option.

As a book Proverbs, focuses on the words, “wisdom” and “instruction.” The Hebrew translation for “wisdom” is literally “skill.” What are your skills? The Bible tells us in [Proverbs 4:7](#) that “wisdom [skill] is supreme.” The word “instruction” translated is literally “discipline.”

Jesus came to give us “the way He lives.” God has a life, and He wants us to live like He does.

Wisdom: Hebrew, *chokmah*, derived from *chakam*, meaning wise in mind, word, or act; intelligent, skillful, or artful.

Instruction: Hebrew *muwcar/musar* derived from *yacar*, meaning bond, check, discipline, chastise.

Philippians 3:12: “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”

Paul was asking the questions, “What does God want with you?” and “Why did He take hold of us?”

- For salvation?
- For retirement in the sky?
- For no real reason?

The Nature of Pain

Why do we experience pain in our lives? Most of the time it happens because we’ve gotten ourselves into a mess. God uses our messes to train us. The resistance produces something God is after. It is the sand in the oyster that produces the pearl. NO PAIN, NO GAIN. These trials or pains force us to grow up. Father allows pain to make us grow up.

There is a problem with pain: It can freeze our learning capacity. You can't "close up" from the pain and learn at the same time. The pain in a person's face tells you they are stuck in something. What is the missing ingredient? How do we get out of it? The positive outlook on pain is that it is a stimulant to growth.

The Joy of the Lord is Our Strength

Where is the reality of this "joy?" What makes God happy makes you strong. So, if you want to be strong, you must change your motivation. **YOU** are no longer the focus; **GOD** is. **You don't get strong trying to get happy.** All that will produce is self-centeredness; you must become Christ-centered.

Religion is not going to free us. If religion was going to work, it would have already. This isn't about some kind of Christian magic—if I just say the "right thing" it will work. The way of the Lord is far more than religion.

A. Defense vs. B. Offense

On the A-side, all our skills focus on self-mastery. This side tends to be oriented heavily toward self-awareness, self-actualization, ego needs, and self-esteem.

**In the game of life,
God plays everyone
who is in shape.**

On the B-side, the focus is on attacking demonic powers, ideologies, and governmental systems. This side is focused on freeing people and seeing the Kingdom on earth. This is the life Christ lived.

What does this have to do with my salvation? NOTHING. This has to do with living in victory, now! This has to do with moving from being victims to being warriors. Jesus was a warrior who knew how to tell the devil where his place was.

Seven Major Questions

There are seven major questions we must address. God's revelation is our source for the answers.

QUESTION ONE: Why did God create me?

The answer is because He loved the thought of you. He loved the notion of you sharing in His life with Him and His family. Seeing the love He has moves us and motivates us unlike anything else. Out of this love, He has designed you to inherit His heart.

Philippians 3:12: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."

Romans 8:17: "Now if we are his children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

Until we begin to approach solving the sin and pain problem God's way, life's pains or hurts tend to trap us in a defensive and protective perspective on life, freezing our learning capacities. This makes the protection or exaltation of flesh our primary reaction to life's pressures.

QUESTION TWO: Of what benefit is life's pain?

The benefit of pain in our lives is that it tells us where we really are. Life's pain is like the nervous system in our body. Pain is informative. It is a signal that something is out of order. Pain in life is ultimately the result of the fall of man into sin.

God is not surprised by sin or Satan. God uses His children's battle with the flesh to mature and train them into righteousness. Since we are justified freely by Christ's sacrifice but are still alive in the flesh, we must overcome sin by the transformation of our minds through the Holy Spirit.

**While frozen
in pain and the
pattern of exalting
our flesh,
we unwittingly
have the life
drained from us.**

Until we begin to approach solving the sin and pain problem God's way, life's pains or hurts tend to trap us in a defensive and protective perspective on life, freezing our learning capacities. This makes the protection or exaltation of flesh our primary reaction to life's pressures.

QUESTION THREE: Why did God permit sin and our fallen state?

In God's goodness and sovereignty, He allowed sin and its consequences to teach us to solve problems His way and to partner with Him to turn pain and evil into strength and blessing.

God gave man the power to choose. Adam chose death. Because Adam was the assigned ruler of the earth ([Genesis 1:26-28](#)), sin, death, and Satan took authority over man as he stepped out from Christ's covering and relationship ([Romans 7 & 8](#)). Satan still plays his con game, deceiving many into fear and intimidation. Christ, however, as the last Adam, regained full authority for man ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)).

**Without resistance
there is no growth.
NO PAIN, NO GAIN!**

QUESTION FOUR: How do we overcome and master sin?

Genesis 4:7: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

The solution to pain, non-creativity, wasted living, and "frozen learning skills" is found in searching for truth ([John 8:32](#)) and correctly practicing it ([Hebrews 5:14](#)) until we walk in the fullness of who we are in Christ.

[John 8:32:](#) "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

[Hebrews 5:14:](#) "But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."

By loving truth ([John 3:19-21](#)) and practicing obedience, we enter "the way of the Lord" through the Holy Spirit's power. This power transforms our will to obey ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)). What we really believe is what we do most often. What are you doing?

QUESTION FIVE: What spiritual skills must I practice to achieve this "reigning in life?"

Romans 5:17: "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ."

Power is guarded by problems: God opens more of His power and resources to us as we incrementally learn how to solve life's problems God's way.

Seven spiritual life skills to begin the journey to mastery (one skill per day of the week):

1. The recognition and rejection of death and the practiced art of choosing life and truth.
2. The constant affirmation of God's work in my life and the use of every situation and relationship to grow and to please God.
3. The daily, monthly, and yearly planning with God of the relationships He wants me to sow into, yielding the character qualities and projects He wants me to produce in my life and the lives of others.
4. The constant rejection of accusation and bitterness against self or others and the release of people to God after we have fulfilled our biblical obligations to them.
5. The recognition that God has called us to both rule and judge in obedience upon the earth, gain God's perspective, and reject the fear of man.
6. The grateful recognition of God's commitment to take us to levels of excellence and opportunity we could never reach without the help of others.
7. The blessing of practicing daily the calling that is on our Master, Jesus Christ, as the life of God grows within us.

QUESTION SIX: How will our lives most benefit each other?

Our lives will most benefit others as we fulfill the destiny we have as children of God. That destiny is to be transformed into servant-rulers. As we move into this way of life, we finish our earthly obedience by passing on the inheritance we received: **Father's heart to bring every son and daughter to maturity in Christ.**

The transfer of God's heart and blessing removes the curse of [Malachi 4:5-6](#) and releases the godly transfer of our hearts to the next generation.

QUESTION SEVEN: How do we enter the joy of the Lord and experience the same kind of life He is living?

We must stand before Him each day before we stand before anyone else. We must seek a moment-by-moment relationship with Him. We must love Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. We must take up the cross of crucifying our flesh daily.

[Nehemiah 8:10b](#): "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

What makes God happy, makes me strong. We must move from the mentality of "pain killers" to the idea of the healing of God. This will occur only as we practice the truth God reveals to us. Life's greatest joy is to be used by Him to express His life, truth, and love to others as He brings the Kingdom into human lives through us. We are after the very life of God.

Questions for Reflection:

1. If God plays everyone who is in shape, what will I do tomorrow morning to begin getting in shape?
2. How long did you spend in prayer today?

As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal. What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today's workout?

Living Life God's Way
Introduction: Inheriting God's Heart
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. What are some things that people value about the Bible?

2. What does the way that people use the Bible in their lives reveal about how they really see it? Give some examples.

3. Read Hebrews 5:11-14. How do these verses encourage us to use the Word of God?

4. What primary excuse is preventing you from being more proactive in the way that you apply the Bible to your life?

5. How would a greater knowledge and understanding of the Word of God impact your life?

6. What one action are you going to take this week to begin to increase your knowledge of the Word of God and your ability to apply it to your life?

Living Life God's Way

Chapter One: Choosing Life Every Day

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Recognizing and rejecting death while practicing the art of choosing life and truth.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill, our daily perceptions and choices come from our flesh. Therefore, we live defensively in a flesh-protection/exaltation mode and miss Father's heart for our lives.

MONDAY:

I am committed to spending every day with You, Father. I will pray for myself and others as we build my life together on your Holy Word.

Deuteronomy 30:19: "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

Psalms 119:133: "Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me."

Proverbs 23:26: "My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways..."

John 3:19: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

We have the power to choose life every day.

Are you walking around in your "sleep?" If you're not starting each day with God and continuing in your "right mind" throughout the day, you are asleep. To practice staying "awake," we must do the following:

1. Spend time with God as we start each day to get into our "right mind."
2. Ask God throughout the day to keep us "awake" and dependent on the Holy Spirit.
3. Remember and confess that every day is a gift and an opportunity to "work out" and grow in God's gym called life.

You have been working out all day. The question is, on what have you been working out? How many times did you miss God because you were so into "your stuff" that you never heard him?

Our minds are like a radio antenna; they pick up "signals" from many different sources. We are accountable for the sources on which we focus, not on what the sources are sending.

Why do we let death dwell in us? When we, as integrated beings—body, soul, and spirit—let death dwell in us, it affects all parts of us. This is the root of sickness. When we choose death spiritually, it shows up in our bodies. This is the result of "falling asleep."

What conspiracies do we permit to operate in us and are keeping us "asleep?"

1. *I am content to be saved and going to heaven. Works won't get me any more saved than I already am!*
2. *Jesus loves me and accepts me, faults and all.*
3. *Because of sin and Satan's obvious power on earth, I won't really live in victory until I get to heaven.*
4. *No one else I know is really living in victory either. Those who appear to be are probably in some secret sin. If I knew them better, I'd see it.*

5. *I'm stuck by besetting sin and can't go forward.*
6. *I was once really on fire for God but then _____ happened.*
7. *My life circumstances and lack of spiritual resources (parents, mentors, etc.) left me unable to live the way I want to live.*
8. *My life is fine the way it is. I go to church, read my Bible, and I'm not in any major sin.*
9. *God is in control of my life. You can't change how He made you or make any real plans for your life anyway.*
10. *I would be living much differently if it weren't for _____ (fill in person's name).*
11. *I guess I still enjoy some of my sins too much to give them up. They are friends.*

True life, God's life, is in the eternal "now."

II Corinthians 6:2: "For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.'"

John 2:10: "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

God dwells in the "now." He isn't going somewhere. He isn't on His way. He is here. If you are anywhere but "now," you are missing it. He said, "I am," not "I was" or "I will be." In the Western world, we must slow down enough to be in the "now."

Did you wake up in your "right mind"? I am not "awake" or in my "right mind" unless and until I find the presence and reality of God and His ultimate issues. Your sleep doesn't just affect you! The lost see right through our "Jesus smile" and discern our "asleepness." Deception is truth distorted. We need God for ultimate truth.

Jesus loved us enough to lay down His life. He wasn't stuck in Himself. God help us to get out of "self."

We stand before each other as we stand before God. How can we go through our days and not be before the Lord? What makes us think we can live with any kind of victory apart from this intimate relationship?

How much do you care about being free? Not just for yourself, but for those you love? Isn't God love? What is in us that we don't spend time before Father on their behalf?

What is it about us that wants to choose death? The more time we spend with Him, the more alive we become.

John 10:10: "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly."

Success before Father is being what He wants us to be and nothing else. What is it that Father is calling you to be? Are you so focused on what you are doing that you've forgotten who you are? Being in the Word is a prerequisite for being awake. You will find your life and being in the Word of God.

Making It Real

The joy of life is found in consistently choosing life in Christ (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Every day, all day, we live in the constant choice of whether to choose to act in Christ or in the death and sin of our flesh. When you truly see it, the reality of life can be overwhelming. It is then that we see the gracious goodness of our Father. We can appreciate His provision for our lives. His most notable provision is, of course, His Son, Jesus.



While outside of Christ, it is questionable whether man has any real freedom of choice. This is due to the corruption of man's nature. In Christ we are free to choose the quality and productivity of our lives. Our choices will determine our "reward."

1 Corinthians 3:9-15: "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."

God is looking for men and women who, in the midst of massive sin and upheaval, tremble at His Word. They know the Word is their lifeline to God, truth, and relationships.

We are always operating under some influence of power. It can be the power of the flesh, the power of Satan, the power of God, the power of unbelief, etc. These powers are not the same in terms of strength or longevity. For instance, gravity is not always the strongest power present in our lives. This is evident when we are on an airplane. The force of the engines overcomes gravity's power to keep us on the ground. We know that a rocket or space ship can all but remove us from the effects of gravity, at least earth's gravity. It is not as though one power goes away; it's rather that there exists a hierarchy of powers. At the top is God's power, and all others fall in order underneath Him. The order is determined by what brings Him the most glory. For instance, when Peter walked on the water, the power of gravity was superseded by the power Jesus used to enable him to walk on the water. Gravity was not dismissed. If it had been, the water would have begun to float up into the air, the moon would have flown off into space, and a whole host of events would have transpired. Apparently since, among other things, the moon is still orbiting the earth, gravity is still a power. Therefore, we can say that Jesus utilized a power that glorified God more than the power of gravity in that situation.

Every morning we must find the power of the Holy Spirit and walk, think, and abide in it. All other powers are subservient to the power of God. We do Him a dishonor to walk by any power other than His. As a matter of fact, walking by any other power is nothing other than a lack of faith at its most fundamental level. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him" ([Hebrews 11:6](#)).

Questions for Reflection:

1. How will I choose life today? To what pattern can I daily hold myself accountable?
2. How do you hope to respond to everyday disappointments in life?
3. When my eyes first open tomorrow morning, what will I do to ensure that my day will be bathed in the "joy of the Lord?"
4. When I recognize death in a situation, will I be satisfied to criticize it, or will I move offensively to overcome it so that I bring life? How will I do this?
5. My family has patterns of choosing death. How will I attack those patterns in them and in myself without attacking people?

As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal. What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today's workout?

Living Life God's Way
Chapter One: Choosing Life Every Day
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways we can describe what it means to be “awake” in life?

2. What are some of the greatest obstacles we face to “waking up” and “staying awake” during our days?

3. Read John 10:10. What can we draw from this verse about the role that Jesus wants to play in helping us “be awake” in life? How do we welcome Him playing that role in our day?

4. What is keeping you from “waking up” and “staying awake” in your life right now?

5. What significant opportunities do you foresee that developing the ability to “stay awake” will make available to you?

6. What is one thing tonight and one thing tomorrow morning that you will do to help you “wake up” and “stay awake?”

Living Life God's Way

Chapter Two: Using God's Choices to Fulfill My Destiny

Spiritual truth to be mastered: The constant affirmation of God's work in my life and the use of every situation and relationship to grow and please God.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill, I will not be able to see God working in and around me and will miss His "clues" to my destiny and His encouragement. I won't see what He has made me to be and do.

TUESDAY:

I am committed, Father, to finding You in all situations and to turning pain and pressure into life and growth.

Spiritual truth to be mastered: The constant affirmation of God's work in my life and the use of every situation and relationship to grow and please God.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill, I will not be able to see God working in and around me and will miss His "clues" to my destiny and His encouragement. I won't see what He has made me to be and do.

Ephesians 1:11: "In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will..."

Hebrews 5:8: "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered."

Hebrews 12:10-15: "Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 'Make level paths for your feet,' so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

John 5:17: "Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.'"

God's Word has the power to change us. You must read the Word for yourself. If your frame of mind is to read for "teachings" or for "others," you will miss what God has for you. God says His Word is your life ([Deuteronomy 32:47](#)). Getting in your "right mind" happens as the Word penetrates you and challenges you. God's Word is a scale that measures where you are. It is a mirror and a picture of who God is. The Word is alive and powerful ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

The speed of our lives is what keeps the Word from penetrating us. We must slow down and find God's pace. We must fight being overly trafficked. **You and I ARE the message.**

We are going to have to be the message. For that to happen, we must hear from the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. This will only occur when we slow down!

The purpose of a Sabbath is to slow down enough to hear God. The Sabbath is not about God; it is about you. We need the regular pause that the Sabbath provides. This is part of the strategy God has for us.

We won't be awakened by anything but God no matter how "religious" it is. It is God who wakes us up. Why would we ever try to start our day without Him? He wants us to be conscious of His intimate involvement with us.

Matthew 10:30: "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Matthew 6:26: "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

Psalms 34:15: "The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry."

Psalms 50:10-11: "For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is mine."

Psalms 68:19: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, the God who is our salvation. Selah."

We must see the "holds" we get in during the day as opportunities to practice the truth that works. In our churches, we must dismiss "excitement" and "information" and get into real practice and instruction. We must stay on truth until we get it. How?

- By confessing and searching for God's sovereign choices in my life and the lives of others.
- By searching for God's voice and will in the events and circumstances of each day.
- By practicing "posting" when I feel pressured while distancing myself momentarily to focus on God's presence.

Our question in every situation must be: Where are You, God, and what are You doing?

Hebrews 12:10-15: "They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

The challenges in life have one primary purpose: **TRAINING US.**

What are you getting out of your training? What are you learning? Training means the repetition of the right things until they become a reflex. Walking in our sleep, bumping into all manner of things, we rebuke and push away the training God has brought to help us. The secret to training is accepting it as God's sovereign choice for your life. He is planning on what you're going to look like thousands of years from now. He sees us in the eternal perspective.

"Training means the repetition of the right things until they become a reflex."

-Living Life God's Way, Lesson 2
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God is a master weaver, and He is weaving your life.

Are you at peace with God's choices for your life? If not, you need to do business with Him now.

Evolution is a fundamentally racist idea. Darwin's book is a colonial justification for European imperialism. Its full title is, ***On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.*** Evolution has undercut the notion of destiny and purpose. Things don't "just happen."

God turns evil into good. In His sovereignty, He permits sin to come against us because He knows how to bless us and others through us. Take two great examples:

Joseph in [Genesis 50:19-21](#): "But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.' And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them."

Jesus in [1 Corinthians 2:8](#): "None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

To reject God's choices is to reject God and find fault with Him. Who are we to tell God, based on our own "supreme knowledge," that we have a more accurate assessment of our condition, convicting Him of lying about how He thinks of us? The "self-acceptance" trip is an accusation against God Almighty. Stop fighting the reality of who God has made you to be. What is the blessing Father is looking for from your life?

Our response to God must come from a place of humility. "Father, it hurts, but I bless You for the deep purpose You have for me in this. Teach me. Train me. Get what You want out of this situation." We must know at our base level that He has our best interests in mind.

[Isaiah 28:10](#): "For He says, 'Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there.'"

God is a systematic teacher. He is only working on two or three things in your life at a time. You are being worked on the same things every day. When you see His way, the chaos will be shown to be a pattern of strategy. You will not go on to the next level until you master this one. He is into mastery, not completion. When you get free, you can help break holds on others.

Satan wants you to think there is no pattern. He wants you to think that you and everyone around you are constantly "evolving." Satan is trying to get you to work on things God doesn't have for you now. **THIS PRODUCES SPIRITUAL HERNIAS!!**

What is Father after in your life? Life is not about "right and wrong." It's about growing up. It is about training and learning. It is about the real stuff of life. Life is the opportunity to work out your salvation. You have to find what God is after today. NOW is the acceptable time to train and choose life.

Life is playing the cards God has dealt you, to His glory.

Making It Real:

Strategy is best defined as a calculated plan of action set forth to achieve a certain goal. By this definition, God is strategic. He tells us that He plans.

[Jeremiah 29:11](#): "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

If God is a planner (and He is) and Jesus, His only begotten Son, does only what He sees the Father doing, then you and I must follow in those footsteps. The only question is how?

Purpose cannot be derived apart from the reality of being created by God. Purpose presupposes design. Design presupposes a designer. God is our designer.

How do we see God's plan? The answer is daily revelation. We must seek God in every circumstance we enter. He is there, and He is working with us to fulfill His purposes in the earth.

In the modern, democratic state, we have a sense of equal treatment for equal offense. Our justice system in the United States is supposed to be predicated on the belief in the equal "rights" of all its citizens without regard to race, gender, age, or religious belief. This system is aptly named "justice." But God is not only the God of justice. He is also the God of mercy. Justice is blind and issues its judgment without partiality. Mercy, however, is considerate and empathetic. How can God be both? The simple answer is because He is a father. Punishment is for the purpose of justice. Discipline is for the purpose of training.

Our Father allowed Jesus to take all our due punishment in terms of justice. However, in terms of training, [Hebrews 12:7](#) says,

"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?"

So, it becomes easy to see that justice in an ultimate sense is a "done deal." Training, on the other hand, is an ongoing affirmation of being God's children.

To reject God's choices is to reject God and find fault with Him.

How does God view me?

I am loved enough by God for Him to die for me ([John 3:16](#)).

I am saved in Christ by His work in and for me ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)).

In my flesh, my fallen self, I am motivated by selfishness, fear, ([Hebrews 2:15](#)), and self-deception ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)).

The power of God through the Holy Spirit will triumph in God's plan to make me into a person conformed to His image.

The question is not, "Will you work out today?" rather, "What will you learn from your workout today?" Self-acceptance is only found in trusting God's choices, believing He is leading us to freedom and maturity.

**Training is
an ongoing
affirmation of
being God's
children.**

**As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal.
What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today's workout?**

Living Life God's Way
Chapter Two: Using God's Choices to Fulfill
My Destiny
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. List some common Christian perceptions about God's heart for us.
2. In what ways does God interact with us?
3. Read Hebrews 12:11-13. What does this verse say about the way we should view and respond to discipline in our life?
4. What is your life pattern of responding, in accordance to the Word, to the "shaping circumstances" God has allowed for discipline in your life?
5. In you were to change your approach to discipline for the next ten years, how do you think your life would be different than it is today?
6. What is your plan this week to discover where God is working in your life?

Living Life God's Way

Chapter Three: Planting Crops of Life and Blessing

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Spiritual truth to be mastered: Planning daily, monthly, and yearly with God concerning the relationships He wants me to sow into and the character qualities/projects He wants me to produce in my life and the lives of others.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill we will live without planning and planting the crops which produce the life Father longs to see in our lives.

WEDNESDAY:

WEDNESDAY: I am committed, Father, to accept full responsibility for my actions and reactions as we strategically plant the crops of life.

John 5:17: “But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’”

John 5:30: “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Galatians 6:5-7: “For each one will bear his own load. The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

We need to begin to “see” where Father is working and come alongside of His plan. We will only be as effective in our work as we are perceptive of where He is working. When we see where He is working, our level of tension decreases. If we stay tense, we can’t survive.



How do we practice the truth of planting crops?

We are partners with God. He works with us, not for us. He gives us new levels of responsibility as we grow up. The law of action and consequences is one of God’s most fundamental laws. Ideas have consequences because they lead to attitudes and actions. Every thought that is in our head builds attitudes that show up in our actions. The summation of a person’s actions is his character. We exist in a community of actions and ideas. They are intertwined.

Faith is sown by what you think and speak. There is life in Him and His Word—what He thinks and says.

Neurosis is the sickness we have spiritually when we do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. It is the fundamental law of sowing and reaping that promises, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” ([Galatians 6:7](#)). It was this revelation to the common man during the Reformation that led to modern science, namely market economy, scientific method, etc. What you sow, you reap; this is true both in the spiritual and in the physical.

The heart of Christianity is found in sowing to God. Putting God's seed into your life and the lives of other people plants crops of blessing. **The first evidence of our fallen state is the "blame game."**

Proverbs 18:2: "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself."

IT'S NOT MY FAULT!

- Freudianism
- Evolution
- Marxism
- Devilism
- Behaviorism

Solving the problem doesn't start "out there"; it starts "in here." We are responsible for our reactions. We are free to choose our responses to the training God sends. Jesus demonstrated this in an ultimate way on the cross. He went voluntarily. It was about Him, not about the Romans. It was about Him, not Satan, not the Pharisees, not Pilate. Our problems are not primarily about Satan; they are about us. They are a result of what WE have planted. Most of what happens in life is about sowing and reaping.

You cannot learn and accuse at the same time. To learn, I must come out of the blame game. Since blame and accusation exist in the Church—the anointed leader of the earth ([Genesis 1:28](#))—the world has it in spades. When the Church gets a cold, the world gets cancer. God says nine times in the first chapter of Genesis that everything produces fruit after its own kind. What you put energy into comes back to you. The attitudes you invest in come back at you.

We need to WAKE UP! We need to ask God to show us and help us move beyond these destructive patterns. He will not take away the crops you plant. He will make sure you have a "never again" list. He will let you practice this until you master it.

Hebrews 5:14: "But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."

Why are we longing for His return when He is still longing for us to wake up? We must become awake and aware of what we plant. We must bless God and those He allows us to touch by planting and sowing Life.

What seeds are you investing in the lives of those to whom you relate?

LIFE:

- Reality
- Restitution
- Responsibility
- "Never-Again" List
- Repentance

VS.

DEATH:

- Denial
- Blame
- Anger
- Repetition

- To what thoughts am I giving energy?
- To what attitudes am I giving energy?
- What kind of crops do I, or should I, expect from these seeds?
- Into what relationships am I sowing and why?
- Into what character qualities am I sowing and why?
- Into what projects am I sowing and why?
- What current negative crops are bearing fruit in my life?
- What must I do to stop them?
- What truths must I begin practicing in order to plant long-term crops of blessing in the heart of God, others, and my own life?

Strategic living is about understanding the laws of sowing and reaping.

[Isaiah 48:17-19](#): “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 in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand, and your offspring like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed from My presence.’”

When God doesn’t do a miracle, it is because He is investing in your “never again” list. He lives in planting carefully and systematically to develop you eternally. Eternity is about life, not retirement. Our view of heaven tends to be very juvenile. But by God’s grace and the seeds He has planted, we will begin to see the long-run like He does.

Making It Real:

[Galatians 6:5-7](#): “...for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

- Some things in my life I planted long ago and have not been sowing recently. What will I do to eliminate the crops that keep coming up?
- What crops will I strive to plant this week? Which ones is Father telling me to plant and with which people?
- What will be the marker to let me know that I am starting to play the “blame game?”

We move through life with the same problem that showed up in Adam. We want to hide from God because in our innermost being we are ashamed of the sin that operates in us. Therefore, our tendency, in the flesh, is to play the blame game—sometimes at any cost!

“Religion” is a classic example of this tendency to hide. A pattern of behavior (which is what religion is by definition), when worshipped in place of God, becomes idolatry. This is what the Pharisees were guilty of. Religion, as man’s attempt to be God, cannot produce life. It only produces the death from which it was born.

Jesus taught that we know a tree by its fruit. The fruit of “vain repetitions” is broken fellowship with our Father:

[Matthew 6:7](#): “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”

The fruit of the world system is the excuse of all people from the consequences of sin through the legitimization of the power to blame. This is seen clearly in the example of Adam.

Some examples of this fruit in the present time are as follows:

- **Freudianism:** Parental blame; Christian cultural sexual repression
- **Marxism/Socialism:** Economic determinism
- **Behaviorism:** Environmental determinism
- **Evolution:** Superiority/inferiority due to ethnicity
- **“Devilism”:** Overestimating Satan’s control over us

**Ideas have
consequences
because they
lead to attitudes
and actions.**

When we do not accept responsibility and learn from our mistakes, we cannot grow or receive further responsibility. Our actions are the litmus test for our beliefs. We can confess things all day long, but in the final analysis, our actions will bear out what we really believe. To move forward in God’s plan for our lives, we must realize that responsibility is surrounded by tests that we must pass to qualify to enter that responsibility. Better put: **Power is guarded by problems.**

Our struggles in life are designed to guard us from prematurely touching power and responsibility beyond our ability to handle it.

Galatians 4:1-2: “What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.”

Revelation 2:26: “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.”

In these verses, we see that there is a system, be it “trustees and guardians” or things to “overcome,” that doesn’t permit free access to TRUTH and the power therein. The concept of “the water bucket” illustrates this truth. If you have a one-gallon bucket and it is full of water, you cannot add any water, or anything else for that matter, without causing some water to spill out over the edges. To add something new to the bucket, you must first make room for it. This would be even more apparent if the water were frozen! To place a baseball at the bottom of the bucket, you would need to remove quite a bit of ice. Finally, the ball would be in the bottom, but look at all the ice that had to be removed.

This simple example is meant to show that in our lives, we are full (this is not the same as complete!). Something is occupying every part of us. Usually we are not aware of what all those things are. We notice that which we most often visit. For instance, what is the serial number on the back of the computer or phone you are using? Most of us would not know that number without looking because we don’t see it frequently. In the same way, it is also true that there are parts of our being that we don’t visit often and of which we are not aware.

When we enter a problem, it presses on a part of us that we may not even be aware exists. The problems we encounter are designed to do just that. So, there is a kind of displacement that takes place. Without it, nothing changes. Just as in the water bucket example, unless something moves out, nothing else can move in. Because of our fallen nature, we don’t typically like things moving around at this level. Therefore, we protect what is “already in the bucket,” good and bad. We must come to trust that the problems we encounter are “identifiers” of what must move. And we must be willing to let God move it all if He wants.

The great thing about God is that He is relentless in this way! You will encounter the same thing over and over and over until it is worked out. This is “taking up your cross daily” and dying to self.

Matthew 16:24-25: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.’”

Sowing & Reaping

Hebrews 5:14: “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

I Corinthians 9:24-27: “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

Philippians 4:9: “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

II Peter 1:10: “Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble.”

Proverbs 6:20-23: “My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-9: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

1 John 1:6: “If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.”

1 John 3:10: “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.”

Step One: The Seed	Step Two: The Crop	Step Three: My Reaction to the Crop/Results	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thoughts• Words• Energy• Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results	LIFE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reality• Responsibility• Repentance• Restitution• “Never-Again” List	DEATH: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Denial• Anger• Blame• Repetition



As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal. What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today's workout?

Living Life God's Way
Chapter Three: Planting Crops of Life and Blessing
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. What comes to mind when we hear the word “consequence?”

2. How much of our current life circumstances do you think can be traced back to a “seed” that we have sown?

3. Read Galatians 6:7. What is it about the sowing and reaping process that warrants this verse beginning with “do not be deceived?”

4. Identify a consequence that you are reaping in your life where it is unclear to you what you are sowing to produce it.

5. What vision do you have for crops (maybe in a particular character quality or relationship) that you want to begin to reap over the next year?

6. What seeds will you sow this week in faith for the crop that will emerge at a later time in that area?

Living Life God's Way

Chapter Four: Refusing Bitterness and the Mental Movies

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Constant rejection of accusation and bitterness against self or others and the release of people to God after we have fulfilled our biblical obligations to them.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill, we will live trapped in the bitterness of the past as we run the “mental movies” of all the perceived injustices and violations of our rights others have committed against us while expecting “more of the same” from current and future relationships.

THURSDAY:

I am committed to forgiving others who have hurt me and to release them to You, Father, for Your redemptive purposes.

Hebrews 12:15: “See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

Romans 14:4: “Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.”

Matthew 11:6: “Blessed is anyone who does not stumble (*skandalizó*) on account of me.” (*skandalizó*: to stumble, trip up, or entrap.)

You are blessed when you deal with a situation you don’t think you should have to deal with, but you keep a root of bitterness from coming up. We must reject the bitterness. Some of us are bitter against all sorts of things and people. Most often, we Christians are bitter against ourselves.

We must also reject accusation (the mental movies). The movies are in the past, but eternal life is in the “now.”

How do we practice this truth?

- Ask the Holy Spirit to make us constantly diligent to reject seeds of bitterness when they are being sown into our minds and hearts.
- Pray for God’s redemption and blessing upon people who have sinned against us or others.

Matthew 18:15-18: “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Galatians 6:1-5: “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions.

Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.”

Matthew 6:14-15: “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Whatever is operating in someone else’s (sin) is also in you to a greater or lesser degree. Seeing this removes our zeal to judge others. We are all fallen. We all have the “bad stuff” in us. We have the disease. It is our spiritual immune systems that prevent the disease from killing us. Therefore, we must keep our spiritual immune systems healthy by feeding our spirits on God’s Word and spending time with Him.

Everyone has opportunities to be bitter. We cannot afford to be bitter. You must deny these opportunities, for in bitterness, you will lose twice. God’s “randomness” can produce bitterness in us because it is different than our expectations. Jesus “scandalizes” us, and His actions reveal our hearts. Since He already knows our hearts, it must be us that needs to know them.

**Satan is anxious
to water the seeds
of bitterness once
they are in you.**

Romans 12:14-21: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Conversation means discovering and asserting. The moment we stop discovering, we move into the “derby.” We posture ourselves to answer and inevitably stop listening. We use silence not to listen, but in preparing to respond.

When I get offended with someone, I go into the prison of blame. But the lock is on the inside of the door, not the outside. I am the only one who can let me out. It is a self-imposed sentence. When we stop holding an offense against someone, it drops to the floor. This breaks the pattern of bitterness. The quicker we recognize patterns, the more spiritual we are. Knowing the patterns of sin and life make us like Jesus. It is by this recognition that we move into a fuller life.

Forgiveness is the key in our hand. It will free us from the jail of bitterness. We can’t afford to stay in the prison. We can’t

afford to play the game of “wrong and right.” We must forgive. We must yield our “right” to take revenge.

We must spend time with Jesus to stay awake. We must live and breathe Him and His Word. It is His strength that preserves us in our weakness.

Everyone is given the “right” to be bitter, to seek revenge, and drop out of effective service to God. If we listen to the “accuser,” we will find enough reasons to disqualify others, ourselves, and eventually God. It is the fallen state of man that plays so easily into this pattern. Human nature plays the “blame game,” giving everyone the “right” to be bitter.



“The quicker we recognize patterns, the more spiritual we are.
Knowing the patterns of sin and life make us like Jesus.
It is by this recognition that we move into a fuller life.”

-Living Life God's Way, Lesson 4
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We get trapped in the bitterness jail when we refuse to follow the Bible's rules on how to resolve conflict. Usually this is the result of ignorance, cowardice, and false views of love and compassion. If you are looking for reasons to live in blame, anger, and accusation, life will give you many opportunities to find them.

Making It Real:

Getting free of the "destruction derby" and the "mental movies" is a matter of choosing the way that leads to life. Often it will come out of these questions:

- Is this the proper time to have this conversation?
- Do we have enough time to fully discuss the problem?
- Are we clear of past offenses or do we have them enough under control to share clearly without hate or seeking revenge?

When you get hit with pain, remember to "post." Ask for God's help to know whether to get a breath and go on, or to call off the conversation until the proper ingredients are there for success.

What is a "Spiritual Hernia?"

A "spiritual hernia" is the condition that occurs due to our ego need to try to help someone God has not called us to help. We must remember that Jesus did not "help" everyone He saw. He did not heal everyone. How did He make that kind of decision? He made it by following the lead of His father. Jesus tells us that He only did what He saw His father doing. We must ask ourselves the question, "Is 'fixing' this person what God is telling me to do?" Is this act within the borders of my spiritual power or authority?

How many times have you tried to "help," and the result was two hurting people instead of one?

Psalm 131:1-3: "My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content. Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore."

II Corinthians 10:13-16: "We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you. We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory."

**To avoid "derbies,"
we need right
attitudes, respectful
speech, proper
spiritual referees
(authority figures/
mediators), requests
for forgiveness,
restitution if
necessary, and
prayerful release
into the power and
healing of Christ.**

**As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal.
What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today's workout?**

Living Life God's Way
Chapter Four: Refusing Bitterness and the
Mental Movies
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so hard for people to forgive others when they have been wronged?
2. How do you forgive someone?
3. Read Hebrews 12:15. Why is bitterness so expensive?
4. Which of your mental movies is a blockbuster? Are you ready to be freed from it?
5. How would your life be impacted if you were totally free from unforgiveness and bitterness?
6. What are you going to do instead of “going to the movies” this week? Who are you going to forgive this week?

Living Life God's Way

Chapter Five: Life is Designed to Make You a Ruler

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Recognizing that God has called us to both rule and judge upon the earth as we obey God, gain His perspective, and reject the fear of man.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill, we permit our own disobedience to God using the excuse of “tolerance” to justify our refusal to hold ourselves and others accountable to God's Word.

FRIDAY:

I am committed, Father, to walking in the fear of You, not man— learning how to exercise judgment according to Your Word and the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:1-5: “Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life? If then you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren?”

Revelation 2:26-27: “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father.”

Matthew 7:1-5: “Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”

Genesis 1:26-28: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

Romans 8:17: “...and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”

II Corinthians 10:13-16: “But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we shall be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another.”

Rulers don't run, and runners don't rule

Rulers avoid the game, "I won't tell what I see if you don't tell what you see," also known as, "I won't judge you if you won't judge me." Trying to feel good about yourself is missing the point. This is about God. Because God accepts us, we are acceptable. It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. If God is for us, who can be against us?

We were given the responsibility to rule the earth. Earth, not heaven, is our place of rulership. Our authority is on this planet. This means we need to know what our authority is and then measure it out in a proper way.

Father is incrementally bringing us up to the "full stature of Christ" ([Ephesians 4:13](#)). This "bringing" is how He fellowships with us. According to our faithfulness, God will put us over cities and nations in the age to come.

A man's view of heaven will tell you what he values in life. If our heaven is a picture of cookie-cutter automatons, we are seriously deluded and likely have offended our Father. He has so much power to give, but He won't give it to untrained hands.

The training in God that qualifies you to receive power works in such a way that by the time you get power, you don't want it anymore. Rulers hold their power as if it were someone else's. In reality, it is someone else's power—God's.

Luke 19:12-26: "So He said, 'A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. The first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.' The second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' Another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.' He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?' Then he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.' I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."

What are you doing with what God has given? How long do you think God will wait for a people who can give an acceptable account? God is not after our comfort; He's after our growth. God isn't going to rescue us from our training.

Judgment is a critical skill that God wants us to have. Jesus is a judge; therefore, we must become judges. He has a way to judge, and we must follow it. Our spiritual immune system must be suppressing that which we are judging in someone else. If we are truly helping them in our judgment, we must have that thing suppressed enough in our own lives that we don't disqualify ourselves.

The Church is hated because of our hypocrisy. We must clean our own house. Judgment begins first in the house of God.

The saints as judges of the faith:

1. Personal
2. Saints
3. World
4. Release of the saints for the created order

**Are you following
your own opinion
and calling it God?**

What are the obstacles to proper rulership?

Our first major challenge is our own disobedience. We cannot, in the name of love, remove the consequences of disobedience. Don't cut others' cocoons. [Proverbs 12:10](#) says, "...the compassion of the wicked is cruel."

Our second major obstacle is the fear of man. We must care more about God's opinion than man's.

Our third major obstacle is the Church's ignorance of its responsibility to exercise godly judgment.

If you can't run with the footmen, what will you do when the horsemen come? If you have trained diligently, you will be prepared. Grace gives me the power to confront the fear of man.



Galatians 6:1-2: "Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."

You must get your spiritual immune system fixed. If you don't, you will approach everyone out of revenge. We must show others how to get free. We must approach them like a coach would. We must demonstrate how it works. You can't give something to someone if you don't have it. A disciple is giving away that which has been given to him and apportioned for others.

How many times do you honestly bring a word without fear of rejection? How much do you love them? Your discipline out of love is far better than the discipline that will follow in your absence.

Why don't we set up Christian law courts all over the world? Wouldn't the world stream to our courts if we obeyed God and lived in righteousness? This will happen even though it may not be the way we want. He will be obeyed regardless of the motivation. He will have a clean and spotless bride. He will be diligent to clean us thoroughly.

Making It Real:

As rulers-in-training, we must accept the authority and responsibility Christ has given His people to exercise rulership on the earth. Man has been given the responsibility to rule. It is on earth that man has rulership.

Psalm 115:16: "The heavens are the heavens of the LORD; but the earth He has given to the sons of men."

Psalm 82:1-8: "God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality Earth is our place of training and rulership to the wicked? Selah. Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. They do not know nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, 'You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless, you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is Thou who dost possess all the nations.'"

Matthew 16:19: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Earth is our place of training and rulership

As we exercise faithful rulership and it expands on the earth, we are preparing ourselves and others for God's next phase in His plan for man. Earth is our training ground. It is plain to see that the desire to "escape" or "fly away to glory" is in direct contradiction to the purpose God has for us in the earth.

As believers, we are to rule over ourselves, our families and churches, and bring Christ's discipline mandate to bear on all facets of public life within the nations.

Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

Ask God to reveal to you what the world would look like under the discipline of the sons of God. What is His response?

Read **Matthew 7:1-6**. Write a short strategy that you will use to judge yourself righteously.

Read **Romans 8:17-22**. What will you look like when the real "you" is revealed? Ask God to show you.

II Corinthians 10:6: "... and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete."

Is your obedience complete? If not, why not? What is your system or plan for completion? We cannot measure others against God's Word (judge) if we ourselves aren't obeying the standards in question. Man is afraid of God's standards and exercising judgment because they expose our rebellion and destructiveness, and they make us accountable.

In the United States of America, we have organized this rebellion into a legal structure and have used public funds to shield people from the consequences of their sinful choices.

Galatians 6:1-4: "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another."

We are called to judge sin for the sake of God's righteousness but not to have a judgmental spirit. In your journal, keep track of how people perceive your attitudes toward judgment.

Questions for Reflection:

What is the Spirit saying I should do in each of these five major areas?

- Body
- Possessions
- Finances
- Relationships
- Talents

As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal. What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today's workout?

Living Life God's Way
Chapter Five: Life is Designed to Make You a Ruler
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. Why is the push for tolerance in our culture such an important issue with which Christians need to wrestle?
2. Why should we care about making judgements about things that do not immediately affect us (for example: tobacco lawsuits or how your neighbors raise their kids)?
3. Read Matthew 7:1-5. What does this verse say about the way we should approach making judgements?
4. What is a situation in your life where you, being in a position to judge, have decided not to make a judgement? Why have you not passed judgement?
5. Describe the changes you think would happen if your family became equipped to maturely judge the conflicts that arise among you and concerning you.
6. What one thing are you going to do this week to help remove the things "from your eye" that are keeping you from making necessary judgements in your life?

Living Life God's Way

Chapter Six: Using the Coaches God Has Given Me

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Grateful recognition of God's commitment to take us to levels of excellence and opportunity we could never reach without others' help.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill, we will never really understand God's mediating grace in the body of Christ, nor will we reach the scope and levels of excellence that God intends us to achieve.

SATURDAY:

I am committed, Father, to holding myself accountable to those You have placed in my life as guardians and teachers according to Your Word.

Ephesians 4:8-16: "Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men. Now this expression, 'He ascended,' what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

Hebrews 13:7: "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."

Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to them for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

Isaiah 28:10: "For He says, 'Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there.'"

Hebrews 5:13-14: "For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

We must understand that God does His work through people. We must come to peace with His choice to use fallible humans. God uses people to get us to higher levels of play. We can call these people "coaches." They help us see around our "blind spots." Humility is learning from anyone God selects to teach you.

How can we practice this truth in our daily lives?

- By affirming and seeking regular input from the coaches in our lives and those close enough to hold us accountable to God's Word.

- By asking God to teach us and train us through those people without resenting their position or our need of them.
- By keeping current record in a journal of the things we are working on and the principles and progress we are learning and making.
- By studying the lives, knowledge, and character skills of people God has called us to pattern ourselves after.

We need to find people who can demonstrate the things they are preaching. We don't seem to have enough coaches. We need people to help us find the way out of our problems and immaturity.

We all need coaches. We will only rise to the level at which we are being coached. What we've seen determines what we become. It is critical, therefore, that we demonstrate the highest level of play for those looking to us.

Every champion has had a coach. A coach carries God's heart for you and has a strategy to get you equipped to serve Father's purposes. To maximize training, we must work with God's coaches, not against them. Most believers spend their time rebuking the coaching and training of God.

Jesus was not a self-made man. He trained and had coaches. Solomon, one of the wisest men to live, was disciplined (coached) by Bathsheba.

Jesus trained well because He let equality go. He trained thoroughly because He wasn't concerned about being equal with His coaches. Jesus wasn't concerned with originality. He said that He only did what the Father did. His goal was to become exactly like our Father. Originality was not an issue. Do you want to learn, or do you want to be equal?

Coaches get us to do things that we could never do on our own. How much change do you want to occur in your life? Two people together create a synergy that results in exponential growth.

Synergy: From the Greek, *synergos*, meaning working together.

You must be ready for the Holy Spirit to speak through you. Don't think the wisdom is coming from you. It is from God. If we need this process so much, why do we reject it so often?

Do you think a good coach is concerned with your comfort? NO! God, as our ultimate coach, is not after the elimination of pain; He is after the elimination of sin. We must move out of the mentality that says God would never permit this much pain. Out of ignorance, we can become discouraged in this process. There is always someone God will send to help you if you diligently seek Him.

You must look to see Jesus in the people God has placed in your life. God reveals Himself through people. It may be your friends, leaders, authorities, teachers, parents, etc. At the same time, those who look to you as their authority are looking for Jesus in you.

Coaches show us the right tools to use.

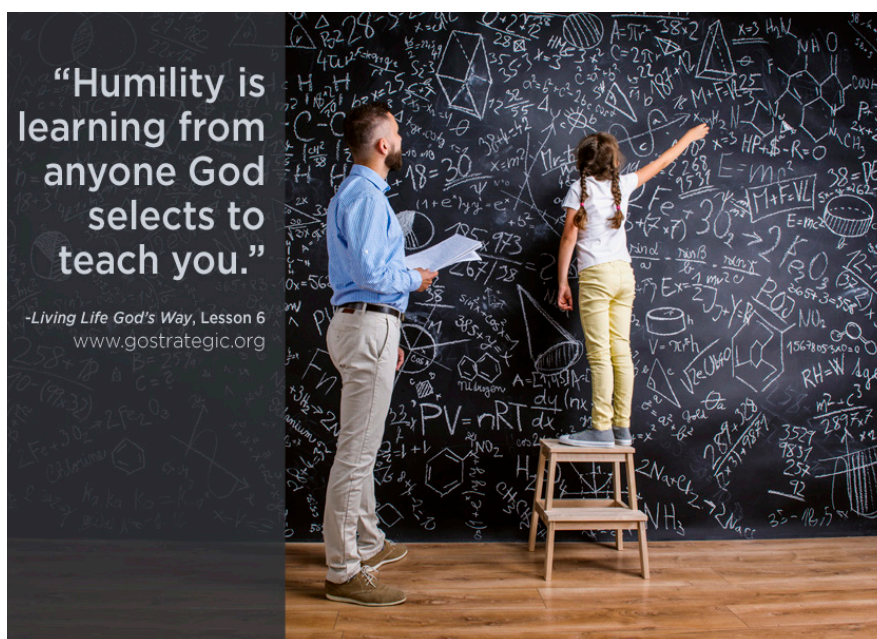
People are only as effective as the tools they are using. Coaches show us the right tools to use. Without the right tools, we become extremely frustrated. Not only do coaches show us the right tools, they show us how to use them.

Are you in accusation against someone in authority over you? Why doesn't God just teach us Himself? Why did Jesus come in a body? God works through flesh. Demons want flesh, because a body is the ticket to the game on earth. Therefore, God uses bodies; people in the flesh are motivated by the Holy Spirit to mediate God's grace for us. We are bridges to God for each other. We must overcome the "dirt field" to get to the "treasure." This will come against your pride.

Making It Real:

God has placed coaches in your life. They come in all shapes and sizes. They are men and women who have flaws and imperfections. You must seek these people out. You must find your coaches and get into training. All champions have coaches.

Luke 2:46-47: “Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.”



Matthew 3:15: “Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John consented.”

John 5:17-30: “But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’ For this cause, therefore, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.’”

God’s government comes through people. When we reject the authority above us or that we have been given, we are rejecting God. The following verses in Isaiah give us a good picture of what a culture looks like when it rejects God’s government and peace.

Isaiah 3:1-12: “For behold, the Lord GOD of hosts is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support, the whole supply of bread, and the whole supply of water; The mighty man and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, The captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the expert artisan, and the skillful enchanter. And I will make mere lads their princes and capricious children will rule over them, And the people will be oppressed, each one by another, and each one by his neighbor; the youth will storm against the elder, and the inferior against the honorable. When a man lays hold of his brother in his father’s house, saying, ‘You have a cloak, you shall be our ruler, and these ruins will be under your charge,’ On that day will he protest, saying, ‘I will not be your healer, for in my house there is neither bread nor cloak; you should not appoint me ruler of the people.’ For Jerusalem has

stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their actions are against the LORD, to rebel against His glorious presence. The expression of their faces bears witness against them. And they display their sin like Sodom; they do not even conceal it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves. Say to the righteous that it will go well with them, for they will eat the fruit of their actions. Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him, for what he deserves will be done to him. O My people! Their oppressors are children, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray and confuse the direction of your paths.”

The following are scriptures you should study. Look for the pattern Jesus set of copying His Father. As you read and study these scriptures, ask Father to reveal the nature of His mediating grace.

John 5:17: “But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’”

John 5:19: “Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.’”

John 5:24: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

John 5:30: “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

John 14:16-20: “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

John 14:26: “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 that I said to you.”

John 16:7-14: “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you.”

Ephesians 4:8-16: “Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.’ Now this expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

Hebrews 13:7: “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”

Hebrews 13:17: “Obey your leaders and submit to them for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

I Thessalonians 5:12-13: “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

John 17:20: “I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.”

I Peter 5:1-7: “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.”

Matthew 23:39: “For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Exodus 22:28: “You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people.”

Questions for Reflection:

How coachable are you?

In these areas of coachability, how do you respond?:

1. Openness to correction
2. Not being critical of the coach
3. Not being afraid of failure
4. Not being afraid of disappointing the coach
5. Willingness to practice what the coach says
6. Inner faith to achieve my goals
7. Willingness to play with pain
8. Willingness to play where the coach wants me to play

As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal. What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today’s workout?

Living Life God's Way
Chapter Six: Using the Coaches God Has Given Me
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. What are some key components of any coach's job description?

2. Why does God use other people in our lives to help us mature?

3. Read Hebrews 13:7. What is the core message of this verse?

4. What endeavors in your life are important enough to require coaches? If you do not have coaches in each of these areas, why not?

5. What one obstacle do you feel is most hindering your ability to be coached? What would it look like if you were able to overcome it?

6. What specific thing are you going to do this week to become more coachable? Who are you going to ask to help you evaluate your progress?

Living Life God's Way

Chapter Seven: Living as a King and a Priest

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Practicing daily the same calling that is upon our master Jesus Christ, the Lion-King and Lamb-Priest.

Why do we need this truth operating in our lives? Without this skill, we never will become courageous in faith, skilled in spiritual battle, composed under pressure, able to rule with a sense of what our redemption cost Christ, or worship Father for the truth He has let us see and the mysteries we do not yet understand.

SUNDAY:

I am committed to live my life as a warrior and a worshiper as You, Father, develop my life-rulership skills, extending Your Kingdom on earth.

Zechariah 6:12-13: Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.'"

1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"

Psalms 24:8: "Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle."

Matthew 11:12-13: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John."

Psalms 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

How do we practice this truth daily?

- By refusing to avoid the conflicts God has set in front of us and by being "in training" for conflict until we die.
- By worshiping God throughout the day in prayer, intimate conversation, song, and confession.
- By peacefully resting in the conflict between "knowing" and "mystery" as God trains us to both know what He knows and trust Him for what He doesn't tell us.

When you preach the gospel of the Kingdom, it calls violent men and women. It calls people who are going to make something happen. Jesus is not just King of pastors; He is King of kings. The sound of the King makes you want to enlist and get up and do something. Jesus is a man whose mission is worth dying for.

Most of the Church has not preached the gospel of the Kingdom.

John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

**Deception: trickery;
ingenious acts intended
to dupe or cheat.**

When we see the deception, we become “violent.” The people of the world-system are the “squatters,” not God’s kids. The fact is that Jesus is not going to come until His enemies are subdued. We need to take dominion over the earth. Our abdication does not prompt a rescue.

Jesus’ goal is not to rescue us from our training. It is not to save us from ridicule. It is to conform us to His image.

Living like a ruler comes from feeding off the problems present in the “promised land.” We must reject the evil report that the land is too hard to take. We must see our enemies as our food. We must see that Christ owns all power and authority, and we are His royal ambassadors to exercise that power and authority in the earth.

Triumphalism is the act of killing “lions” that are not between you and your Father’s house. Samson killed the “lion” that was between him and his father’s house. We are only responsible for the lions between us and our Father’s house. If Father rescues us from the “lions,” we will never grow up. We don’t need to be rescued; we need to grow up.

Isaiah 3:1-12: “For behold, the Lord GOD of hosts is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support, the whole supply of bread, and the whole supply of water; The mighty man and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, The captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the expert artisan, and the skillful enchanter. And I will make mere lads their princes and capricious children will rule over them, And the people will be oppressed, each one by another, and each one by his neighbor; the youth will storm against the elder, and the inferior against the honorable. When a man lays hold of his brother in his father’s house, saying, ‘You have a cloak, you shall be our ruler, and these ruins will be under your charge,’ On that day will he protest, saying, ‘I will not be your healer, for in my house there is neither bread nor cloak; you should not appoint me ruler of the people. ‘For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their actions are against the LORD, to rebel against His glorious presence. The expression of their faces bears witness against them. And they display their sin like Sodom; they do not even conceal it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves. Say to the righteous that it will go well with them, for they will eat the fruit of their actions. Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him, for what he deserves will be done to him. O My people! Their oppressors are children, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray, and confuse the direction of your paths.”

There are things worth dying for. Jesus at Calvary is “Exhibit A.”

Disobedience is a red flag to the devil. You are saying, “Hey! Come and get me.” Apart from the grace of God, you are wide open. When the devil hits you, it lets you know, by God’s grace, what the hole in your defense was. Now that you see it, you go on the offense and demonstrate that you can now block that punch and block that kick. If Satan seeks to devour people like a prowling lion, then you must become a lion hunter. You must become one who can reproduce other lion hunters.

When we are weak, we are strong!

Making It Real:

Disciples of Christ must have a warrior’s spirit. We must feed off our enemies, adversaries, “giants in the land,” and problems that guard the power God has for us. There is no such thing as freedom on earth apart from dealing with the following:

1. Mental strongholds
2. Damaged, hostile people
3. Demons

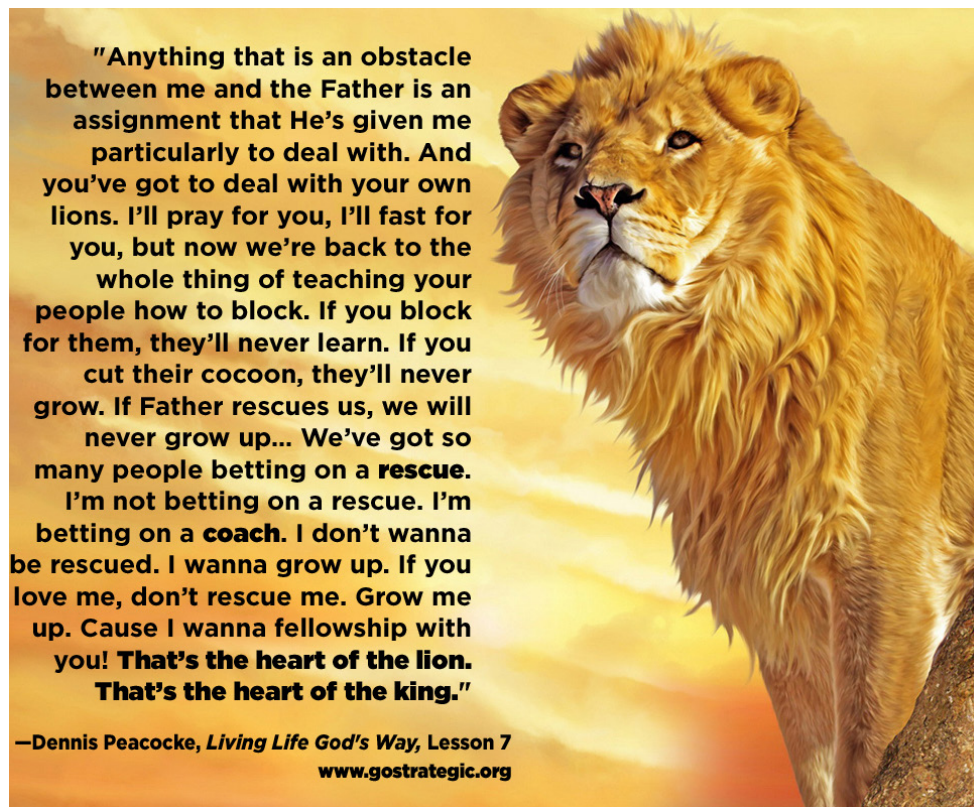
**In the hour of
despair, Father will
ask us to choose
whether we will
choose the tree of
life and worship
the mystery of God
or whether we will
hold on to reason,
choosing the tree
of the knowledge
of good and evil.**

Those who resist, repress, ignore, or use any other device to escape the conflict and who do not use their opponents to show them their weaknesses will not experience true Kingdom living in this age.

The Kingdom of God attracts only violent men and women who press forward when confronted with the raw truth that confronts them.

Matthew 13:11-13: “And He answered and said to them, ‘To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore, I speak to them in parables; Because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.’”

Christ, as the “Lord God mighty in battle” ([Psalm 24:8](#)), permits life to injure us to develop new muscles. God’s purpose for pain is to produce obedient, knowledgeable, and resolute people who are open to each other but closed to escapism. Our God “trains our hands for war” ([Psalm 18:29, 33-34, 39](#)).



As you reflect on this lesson, pray about it and make notes in your journal. What is the Lord saying, and what are you thinking about today's workout?

Living Life God's Way
Chapter Seven: Living as a King and a Priest
SUGGESTED MEETING QUESTIONS

1. What can we list as the defining characteristics of a “warrior” and of a “worshiper?”

2. How do you determine whether you should respond to a situation as a warrior or a worshiper?

3. Read 1 Peter 2:9. As stated in this verse, what is the purpose of God creating us as a “royal priesthood” (warrior-worshippers)?

4. What is a conflict or challenge in your life that you know God is wanting you to face in the near future?

5. How do you position yourself as worshiper, prior to engaging that conflict, when you do not yet know the outcome?

6. What one practice will you engage as you complete this study that you believe will foster consistent growth in your life? What accountability are you going to set up to help you in following through?

LIFE STRATEGY JOURNAL



Living Life God's Way

Life Strategy Journal

INSTRUCTIONS

To transform the *Living Life God's Way* teachings into lasting lifestyle change, we ask you to commit to keeping a Life Strategy Journal. Please note that this is not “homework” in the traditional sense, in that you will not turn it in, and it will not be graded. However, we encourage you to take full advantage of the contents herein and in developing the habit of journaling both in the context of this series and as a life practice. These are your private notes, and we encourage you to write openly and honestly before the Lord!

Consider the best journaling method for you. Here are some ideas:

- Print out this Life Strategy Journal and use it to hand write both your answers to the printed questions and your daily journal entries. You are welcome to expand on your journal entries by printing out extra Daily Journal Entry pages.
- Write in a separate journal or notebook. You can buy one specifically for this purpose or add to one you already use.
- Create a digital journal using your favorite word-processing software such as Word, Pages, or Google docs.
- Download a journaling app on your smart phone, tablet, or laptop. There are numerous free and paid options; online reviews can help you choose which features are most important to you.
- It is beneficial to be able to access your journal throughout your day to record what God is speaking to you, to look up something you'd like to share with a friend, or for adding notes while listening to a teaching or sermon. If going digital, consider cross-platform choices such as Google Docs or apps where you can view and edit from multiple devices for on-the-go journaling and reference.

Your daily journal entries may include but are not limited to:

- The date and time.
- Situations and issues you are praying about.
- New insights and truths you are working on.
- Notes on the direction you are receiving from the Lord.
- Answers to prayer, testimonies, and praise reports.
- Teaching notes and Scripture references.

Living Life God's Way Life Strategy Journal

Introduction: Inheriting God's Heart

Spiritual truth to be mastered: We were created by God to inherit His heart and rule with Him over His creation which He calls the Kingdom of God.

Some ultimate issues raised by addressing our situations:

1. Why should I live?

2. What should I expect from life?

3. How much control do I really have?

In answering these questions, we will be endeavoring, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to equip you to not just “hear a good word” but put your faith into action. “The Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power” ([1 Corinthians 4:20](#)). The tools or skills needed can be identified by these related questions:

4. What is my mission?

5. What skills do I need to please God and live strategically, thereby fulfilling my earthly mission?

6. How do I practice and use those skills?

Why did God create me? The answer is because He loved the thought of you. He loved the notion of you sharing in His life with Him and His family. Seeing the love He has moves us and motivates us unlike anything else. Out of this love, He has designed you to inherit His heart.

7. In what ways does this understanding about how God sees me change how I value and view myself?

8. How will my responses to life change now that I see, apart from any action of my own, His full acceptance and delight in me?

Of what benefit is life's pain?

The benefit of pain in our lives is that it tells us where we really are. Life's pain is like the nervous system in our body. Pain is informative. It is a signal that something is out of order. Pain in life is ultimately the result of the fall of man into sin.

God is not surprised by sin or Satan. God uses His children's battle with the flesh to mature and train them into righteousness. Since we are justified freely by Christ's sacrifice but are still alive in the flesh, we must overcome sin by the transformation of our minds through the Holy Spirit.

9. Since pain is designed to train and strengthen us, how will I respond differently to the pain in my life?

10. When "that person" who often offends me or "that situation" comes around again, will I first assert my "rights," or will I see the truth?

11. List an example of a relationship where you are working on handling pain (what you can do differently, points of prayer, etc.).

12. Will I see God as good even though He has allowed events to occur that go beyond my understanding of “good?” If so, why?

13. When someone lies about me or hurts me, what will be my response in light of the knowledge that Father wants to train me to rule with Him?

14. How many times today will I pray that the Holy Spirit will empower me to choose “the way of the Lord?” What will remind me?

15. How will my co-workers see me living as one who loves truth? What will be the evidence?

16. How will I train so that these skills become habits? Today? Tomorrow? Next year?

17. What person that I interact with at least five times per week will hold me accountable in my use of these skills?

18. Which skills will I pray about in my quiet time with the Lord tomorrow morning?

19. How will I show _____ that I am committed to serving them and laying down my life for them?

20. What will I do today to begin preparing to pass on the inheritance I have received to the next generation?

21. How will I overcome feelings of inadequacy in light of this task?

As a coach, God plays everybody who is in shape, and He plays us at our level of trained preparation.

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Living Life God's Way

Life Strategy Journal

Chapter One: Choosing Life Every Day


Spiritual truth to be mastered: Recognizing and rejecting death while practicing the art of choosing life and truth.

1. How will I choose life at work tomorrow?

2. In what previous situation(s) have I chosen death instead of life?

3. Since I have the power to choose life all the time and I must practice choosing correctly, what will be my strategy for training?

4. How do you hope to respond to everyday disappointments in life?



“Religion is pretending to be something before God that we aren’t before others.”

-Living Life God's Way, Chapter 1
www.gostrategic.org

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Living Life God's Way Life Strategy Journal

Chapter Two: Using God's Choices to Fulfill My Destiny

Spiritual truth to be mastered: The constant affirmation of God's work in my life and the use of every situation and relationship to grow and please God.

I will accept myself because God does. I will also show that I accept others in the same love Jesus has for me.

1. If God has my best interest at heart, why do I become so anxious when I don't understand my circumstances?

2. Am I finding fault with God concerning any events in the past 5 years, 10 years, or lifetime?

3. If God really is dwelling in my daily circumstances, what will remind me to think in terms of a day that He strategically designed in which to train me?

4. Name two significant life events that you blamed on someone else. Can you see these events as parts of God's plan to shape and mold you into the image of Christ? Why do you think He allowed these events?

5. Begin a “never again” list. In light of what God is showing you, write down a few things that you will never do again.

6. Tomorrow when some little thing disappoints or upsets you, will you react out of a “fairness” mentality or out of gratitude for the training you are experiencing? Describe in detail the scenario as you envision it.

7. Write one of the truths you have been taught and place it where you will see it often.

“Training means the repetition of the right things until they become a reflex.”

-Living Life God's Way, Lesson 2
www.gostrategic.org



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Living Life God's Way

Life Strategy Journal

Chapter Three: Planting Crops of Life and Blessing

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Planning daily, monthly, and yearly with God concerning the relationships He wants me to sow into and the character qualities/projects He wants me to produce in my life and the lives of others.

How do I practice this truth daily?

Use the following sections to write about goals and planning for yourself, your spouse, your children, other committed relationships, your ministries at church and work, and responsibilities to your community and nation:

SELF:

My "never-again" list:

Life and project goals list:

Overall strategic planning - plans for each specific goal:

SPOUSE:

Life and project goals list:

Overall strategic planning - plans for each specific goal:

CHILDREN:

Life and project goals list:

Overall strategic planning - plans for each specific goal:

COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS:

Life and project goals list:

Overall strategic planning - plans for each specific goal:

MINISTRY AT CHURCH:

Life and project goals list:

Overall strategic planning - plans for each specific goal:

MINISTRY AT WORK:

Life and project goals list:

Overall strategic planning - plans for each specific goal:

RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND NATION:

Life and project goals list:

Overall strategic planning - plans for each specific goal:

SOWING & REAPING

Welcome to the world of strategic thinking and the power of strategic living!

This kind of living is LIFE. The questions become:

1. To what thoughts am I giving energy? To what attitudes am I giving energy?

2. What kind of crops do I, or should I, expect from these seeds?

3. Into what relationships am I sowing and why?

4. Into what character qualities am I sowing and why?

5. Into what projects am I sowing and why?

6. What current negative crops are bearing fruit in my life?

7. What must I do to stop them?

8. What truths must I begin practicing in order to plant long-term crops of blessing in the heart of God, others, and my own life?

Step One: The Seed

- Thoughts
- Words
- Energy
- Actions

Step Two: The Crop

- Results

Step Three: My Reaction to the Crop/Results

LIFE:

- Reality
- Responsibility
- Repentance
- Restitution
- "Never-Again" List

DEATH:

- Denial
- Anger
- Blame
- Repetition



9. Examine the crops you are planting and have planted. List the destructive seeds you have planted and commit yourself this day to stop sowing them.

Thoughts towards yourself:

Thoughts towards your church:

Thoughts towards your spouse:

Thoughts towards your parents:

Thoughts towards your vocation (your ministry):

10. Ask the Lord what He would have you do about these crops. Write down His response and plan a time frame for implementation.

11. Ask God to show you how to pray over your good crops! Write down His answer.



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Living Life God's Way

Life Strategy Journal

Chapter Four: Refusing Bitterness & the Mental Movies

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Constant rejection of accusation and bitterness against self or others and the release of people to God after we have fulfilled our biblical obligations to them.

1. How many people am I going to forgive today? Who are they? When will I tell them I have freed them from the bitterness jail?

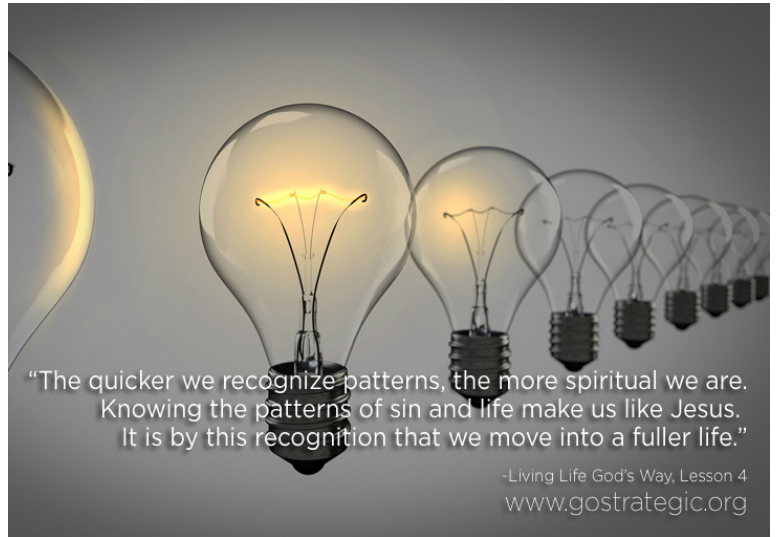
2. Since I have no legitimate right to bash someone with my words, how will I monitor my language? How much of Jesus' language will I memorize this week?

3. What movies will I stop from "showing?"

4. Whom have I been trying to "fix" and why?

5. How much time in a day do I spend asking God about whom I should try to help?

6. Recognizing the pain I cause when I don't seek God's counsel in my decisions, what Scripture verse will I memorize to ensure I keep my way pure?



Dealing with Destructive Conflict in My Life

"I am committed to forgiving and accepting or rendering restitution to those who have hurt me and to myself for others I have injured. I release my vengeance to God."

7. I am currently engaged in "destruction derbies" with the following people:

8. I fight a desire for vengeance over the following situations from my past:

9. I fight watching the "mental movies" over these situations:

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Living Life God's Way Life Strategy Journal

Chapter Five: Life is Designed to Make You a Ruler

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Recognizing that God has called us to both rule and judge upon the earth as we obey God, gain His perspective, and reject the fear of man.

As we exercise faithful rulership and it expands on the earth, we are preparing ourselves and others for God's next phase in His plan for man. Earth is our training ground. It is plain to see that the desire to "escape" or "fly away to glory" is in direct contradiction to the purpose God has for us in the earth.

1. How have you seen this mentality played out in your life or in the lives of your parents?

2. Read Matthew 18:15-18, I Peter 4:19, and I Corinthians 6:1-5 and write down 10 things God shows you concerning how you relate to other Christians:

▷

▷

▷

▷

▷

▷ _____

▷ _____

▷ _____

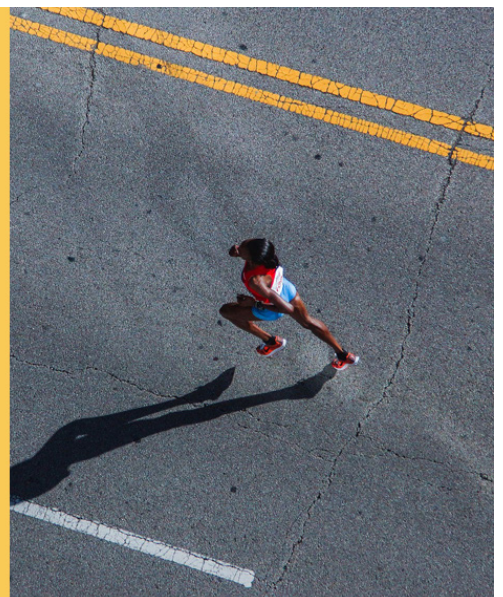
▷ _____

▷ _____

3. What routine is God showing me in the Word to train on concerning my role in judging the world?

**“God is not
after our
comfort;
He’s after
our growth.”**

-Living Life God's Way, Lesson 5
www.gostrategic.org



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Living Life God's Way

Life Strategy Journal

Chapter Six: Using the Coaches God Has Given to Me

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Grateful recognition of God's commitment to take us to levels of excellence and opportunity we could never reach without others' help.

Examining the coaches in my life:

1. What projects in your life today are important enough to require good coaches around you?

2. What confessions do you make that set you up for failure?

3. What significant problems have you had in life? List three or four, then write, "conquered me" or "conquered it" next to each one.

4. Make a list of men and women in the Bible who were blessed or suffered based on the how they responded to God's coaches for them.

5. Make a list of the major goals you have set in your life. Keep them in prayer daily concerning the coaches God would bring into your life to help you achieve those goals.

6. Make a list of the “injuries” you’re working on and the new strengths you’re developing because of them.

7. List character attributes you are working on and the principles and progress you are learning and making.

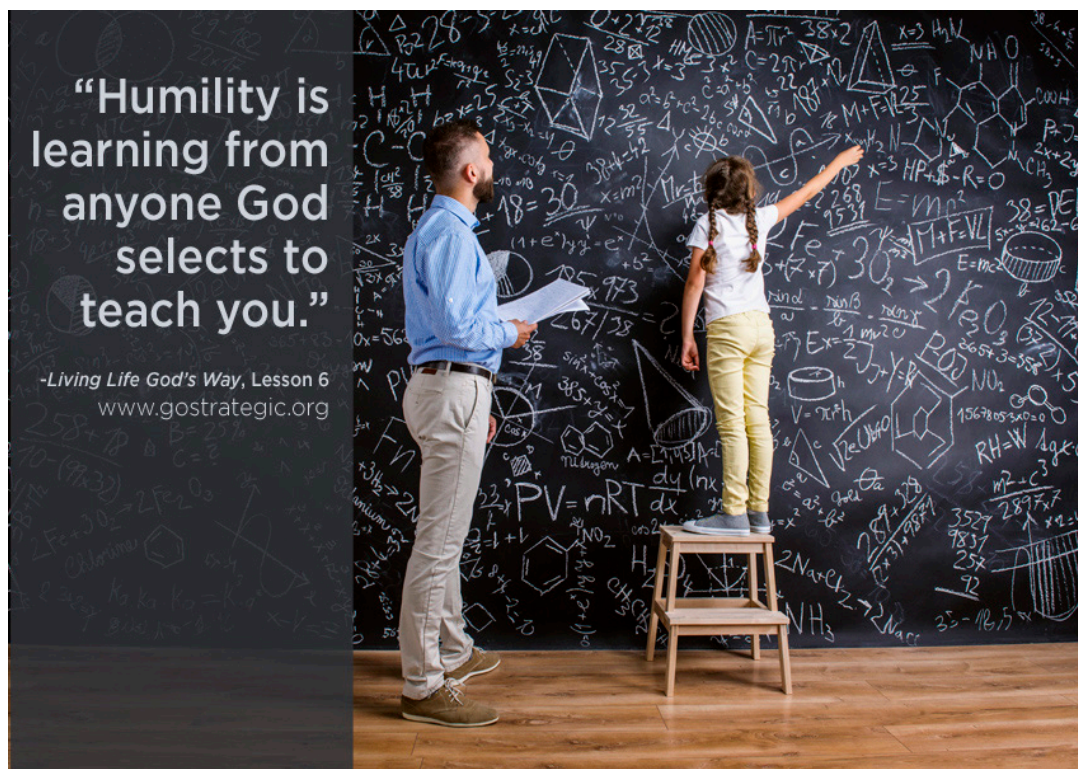
8. Whom do you think God has placed in your life as a coach?

9. Whom do you think God is having you coach?

10. Since you have a responsibility to both your coaches and those you coach, what are you going to do about it in the next week?

11. Who is my point of accountability? At home? At work? At school?

12. What am I doing to bring God's government in my house?



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Living Life God's Way

Life Strategy Journal

Chapter Seven: Living as a King and a Priest

Spiritual truth to be mastered: Practicing daily the same calling that is upon our master Jesus Christ, the Lion-King and Lamb-Priest.

1. Where is the battle in my life? What am I going to do about it?

2. As I read the Bible, how often do I now see Jesus as a priest and a king?

3. Am I guilty of trying to escape the pain of life? How will I break that habit?

4. If Jesus had to deal with "hurts" and He did so successfully, what pattern of speech will I employ to let my family know I intend to succeed like Jesus?

Dealing with trauma and warfare:

5. List three or four traumas you have experienced in life. Underneath each of them, name one new positive “muscle” that grew out of it.

6. List attributes you want God to put in you to make you a better warrior.

7. List attributes you want God to put in you to make you a better worshiper.

8. In what areas of your life do you want God to help you “stick it to Satan” in terms of victory and damage to Satan’s strongholds?


9. What are you doing to prepare for this?

10. Give examples of where you “played with pain” and God honored it.

Dealing with worship and reason:

11. What has God allowed to be done in life to you or others that remains a mystery?

12. Are you worshiping Him or demanding answers? List areas where Satan is trying to grow a “root of bitterness” in you.



"Anything that is an obstacle between me and the Father is an assignment that He's given me particularly to deal with. And you've got to deal with your own lions. I'll pray for you, I'll fast for you, but now we're back to the whole thing of teaching your people how to block. If you block for them, they'll never learn. If you cut their cocoon, they'll never grow. If Father rescues us, we will never grow up... We've got so many people betting on a **rescue. I'm not betting on a rescue. I'm betting on a **coach**. I don't wanna be rescued. I wanna grow up. If you love me, don't rescue me. Grow me up. Cause I wanna fellowship with you! **That's the heart of the lion. That's the heart of the king.**"**

—Dennis Peacocke, *Living Life God's Way*, Lesson 7
www.gostrategic.org

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