

# OUTLINE • 11.1

- I. Anybody can start, but it's the people who stick with it and finish who really make a difference.
  - A. Unfortunately, the body of Christ is cluttered with people who have fallen by the wayside.
  - B. The fact that you are reading a study guide about God's will is an indication that you are serious about your relationship with Him—you are excited and seeking the things of God.
  - C. But not every person who gets off to a good start is going to finish his or her race.
  - D. I'm not trying to be negative—I just want you to recognize the importance of learning how to fulfill God's will in your life, once you find it and begin to follow it.
  - E. It's totally up to you whether or not you stay full of God and excited about His plans for your life.
- II. Obedience may be a dirty word to some, but we have to learn to obey God if we want to finish our race and cross the finish line as winners.
  - A. Obedience is inseparable from fulfilling God's will in our lives.

*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. [19] If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.*  
ISAIAH 1:18-19
  - B. We have a Savior who paid for our sin, and that is the only way sin gets dealt with.
  - C. Isaiah 1:19 says that we have to be willing and obedient in order to eat the good of the land.
  - D. Disobeying God doesn't change His grace nature.
  - E. God still loves us, and He isn't going to be upset with us—He accepts us through Jesus.
  - F. God's purpose for us is completely separate from what we deserve.
- III. Obeying God in order to experience all the blessings He desires to give us is not the same as saying God won't use us *unless* we obey Him.
  - A. It isn't that God won't so much as He *can't*.

B. If we don't follow God's leading, Satan is going to take advantage of our disobedience.

*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

ROMANS 6:16

C. Whomever we obey and make the master of our lives is going to control us.

D. God calls us, but in order to fulfill our purpose, we have to follow His leading.

E. We are never going to fulfill God's calling on our lives waiting around for every possible circumstance to line up perfectly.

F. This is so simple, yet so many people who know what God is calling them to do won't step out, because they are afraid of the cost.

G. I can guarantee that not everyone is going to support our decisions.

*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*

PROVERBS 29:25

H. If we need to have people's approval before we step out on what God calls us to do, we are never going to make it.

### *Andrew's Recommendations for Further Study:*

<sup>1</sup>This is a topic that deserves more attention than I can give it here. I have written a book called *Living in the Balance of Grace and Faith* that goes into far more detail. Also, you can access the free audio teaching for *Living in the Balance of Grace and Faith* on the AWM website: [www.awmi.net/extra/audio/1064](http://www.awmi.net/extra/audio/1064).

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 11.1

1. Anybody can start, but who really makes a difference?

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2. Discussion question: How does knowing God's will for your life help you finish your race?

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3. It's totally up to \_\_\_\_\_ whether or not you stay full of God and excited about His plans for your life.

- A. God
- B. Your pastor
- C. Andrew
- D. Fate
- E. You

4. Discussion question: What are some examples—from Scripture and/or from your own life—of people who have been obedient to God. Share what you can learn from these people and their actions.

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5. Obedience is inseparable from what?

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6. Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as \_\_\_\_\_ as snow; though they be red like \_\_\_\_\_, they shall be as wool."

7. According to Isaiah 1:19, what will happen if you are willing and obedient?

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8. Discussion question: Does your thinking line up with the Word when it comes to God's attitude toward you; i.e., that God loves you, He isn't upset with you, He accepts you through Jesus, etc.? If not, what are some areas where you might need to renew your mind?

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9. Discussion question: What is the difference between the idea of obeying God in order to experience all His blessings and the idea that God won't use you *unless* you obey Him?

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10. "Know ye not, that to whom ye \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto \_\_\_\_\_, or of obedience unto \_\_\_\_\_?" (Rom. 6:16).

11. You are never going to fulfill God's calling on your life by doing what?

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12. Discussion question: In what ways, if any, has fear kept you from stepping out and doing what God has called you to do?

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13. What does Proverbs 29:25 say?

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# SCRIPTURES • 11.1

## **ISAIAH 1:18-19**

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. [19] If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.

## **ROMANS 6:16**

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

## **PROVERBS 29:25**

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

## OUTLINE • 11.2

- IV. It isn't enough just to hear God's voice; you have to *do* what He says in order to fulfill your purpose in life.

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. [23] For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. [25] But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

JAMES 1:22-25

- A. You move into God's will for your life by stages: the good, the acceptable, and the perfect (Rom. 12:2).
- B. God's will is always perfect, but the degree to which you experience His perfect will changes relative to how much you cooperate with His plans.
- C. God shows you things step by step—which means you have to act on what He leads you to do before you will ever see the next step.
- D. Hearing and obeying God—or failing to obey—causes a ripple effect in your life.
- E. For example, if you don't trust God with your money, you won't trust Him in other areas either.
- F. Giving is an indicator of where you put your trust.
- G. Trusting God in the area of your finances isn't just for "super-saints"—trusting God is basic to your faith.
- H. Failing to obey God in areas where He has already given you direction gives Satan an inroad into your life.
- I. You release the power of God by acting on what He has told you to do.
- J. You release the power of the devil through your wrong actions, or lack of action.
- K. When God tells you to do something and you don't do it, you yield yourself to Satan—the author of the fear or temptation that is keeping you from obeying God.
- L. God doesn't change the way He relates to you according to your behavior; His grace is always the same.
- M. But Satan is out to hinder you.
- N. You can't let Satan come into your life and encumber you with all sorts of weight, and still win the race.
- O. You need to obey God if you want to finish your race.

V. Saving faith (Eph. 2:8) is always accompanied by action.

*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? [17] ... faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*  
JAMES 2:14 AND 17

A. Anyone who says “I believe” but doesn’t act on it doesn’t really believe.

B. Your actions reveal what you truly believe.

*Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. [19] Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. [20] But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*  
JAMES 2:18-20

C. The devil believes—but his works are against God; therefore, he doesn’t have saving faith.

D. Faith without corresponding action is not true faith.

E. The Bible says with the heart man believes, and with the mouth confession is made (Rom. 10:10).

F. If you believe with your heart and confess with your mouth, you will see it come to pass.

G. *Actions follow faith—they don’t generate faith.*

H. You believe with your heart, and your faith will be made perfect as you begin to act on what you believe.



# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 11.2

14. James 1:22 says, “But be ye \_\_\_\_\_ of the word, and not \_\_\_\_\_ only, deceiving your own selves.”

15. You move into God’s will for your life by stages (Rom. 12:2). What are these stages?

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16. Discussion question: What is the step God has for you now? Has God shown you your next step yet? What do you believe that is?

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17. Giving is an indicator of where you put your \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Cash
- B. Hat
- C. Trust
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

18. How do you release the power of God?

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19. How do you release the power of the devil?

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20. Discussion question: What do James 2:14 and 17 mean to you?

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21. According to James 2:18-20, the devil believes in God, so why isn't he saved?

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22. True or False: The Bible says that with the head, man believes, and with the mouth, confession is made (Rom. 10:10).

23. Actions \_\_\_\_\_ faith—they don't \_\_\_\_\_ faith.

# SCRIPTURES • 11.2

## **JAMES 1:22-25**

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. [23] For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. [25] But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

## **ROMANS 12:2**

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

## **PROVERBS 3:9**

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.

## **LUKE 16:10**

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

## **GENESIS 1:26-28**

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. [28] And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

### **JOHN 4:4-26**

And he must needs go through Samaria. [5] Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. [6] Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. [7] There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. [8] (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) [9] Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. [10] Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. [11] The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? [12] Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? [13] Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: [14] But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. [15] The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. [16] Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. [17] The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: [18] For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. [19] The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. [20] Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. [21] Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. [22] Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. [23] But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. [24] God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. [25] The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. [26] Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

### **ROMANS 3:23**

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

### **JAMES 2:14**

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

**JAMES 2:17-20**

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. [18] Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. [19] Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. [20] But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

**EPHESIANS 2:8**

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

**ROMANS 10:10**

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## OUTLINE • 11.3

- VI. Many Christians let their feelings control how they act instead of letting faith steer them.
- A. Seeing God's will fulfilled in your life means learning to obey Him no matter how you feel.
  - B. Trust God and follow His leading.
  - C. He will never lead you to do something you can't do or something that isn't in your best interest.
  - D. You can always do what God is asking you to do—you may lack the motivation, but you *can* do it if you really want to.
  - E. This modern culture is always trying to shift the blame onto someone else or some exterior circumstance—anything other than accepting responsibility themselves.
  - F. To fulfill God's will, you have to accept responsibility in your life.
  - G. You are a person created in the image of God; therefore, you are responsible for your actions.
  - H. God commanded believers: "*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice*" (Phil. 4:4).
  - I. God would be unjust to command you to "*rejoice in the Lord always*" if it wasn't possible.
  - J. You don't have to feel joy to rejoice in the Lord, because you always have joy in your spirit, whether you can feel it or not (Gal. 5:22).
    - i. You can do what God tells you to do regardless of how you feel.
    - ii. Rejoicing is like putting a bucket down into the well of life in your spirit and drawing out the fullness of God.
  - K. Emotions should be like the caboose on a train—going wherever the train goes—but not determining anything.

- VII. Elijah received a word from God and acted on it.

*And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab,  
As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor  
rain these years, but according to my word.*

1 KINGS 17:1

- A. He could have focused on the dangers to himself, but instead, he was obedient to the Lord—he received a word from God and *acted* on it.
- B. Elijah became the most dominant man in the entire nation because he received direction from God and acted on it.

C. Immediately after Elijah prophesied the drought, God gave him further direction:

*Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. [4] And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. [5] So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD.*

1 KINGS 17:3-5A

- D. God gave Elijah a promise of protection, but notice that the promise to provide for Elijah didn't come until *after* he obeyed His first instruction.
- E. This is why so many people don't fulfill God's will for their lives—God reveals His will, but people start trying to rationalize how everything is going to work out before they act on what He has told them to do.
- F. God sent Elijah's provision *there*—not where Elijah was but where God told him to go.
- i. Also, notice that God had already commanded the provision.
  - ii. Likewise, God doesn't send your provision to *you*; He sends your provision to where He told you to *go*.
  - iii. You can't make following God's leading conditional upon seeing His provision first.
  - iv. One reason you might not be seeing God's provision in your life is because you are too much *here* and not enough *there*.
- G. Many born-again, Spirit-filled believers look at their lives and only see problems—they don't understand that they have the same power on the inside of them that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Eph. 1:18-20).
- H. *God's power isn't out in heaven someplace—it's on the inside of you.*
- I. Instead of looking for a “fresh” word from God to fix your problem, act on the direction He has already given you in Scripture.
- J. Every time you hear a word from God but fail to obey it, your heart becomes hardened.
- K. Even though your heart will become hardened, God will never stop speaking to you (John 10:27).
- L. Being obedient doesn't make God love you more; failing to obey doesn't make Him love you less—but God can't lead and direct you into His blessings and fulfillment without your cooperation.
- M. God has given you everything you need to live a victorious life and see His will fulfilled in your life (2 Pet. 1:3-4)—you simply need to act on His Word and His leading.

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 11.3

24. Does seeing God's will fulfilled in your life mean learning to obey Him no matter what?

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25. He will never lead you to do something you can't do or something that isn't in your

- \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Best interest
  - B. Game plan
  - C. Life goals
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above

26. Discussion question: Why or why not Do you agree with the statement "You can always do what God is asking you to do—you may lack the motivation, but you *can* do it if you really want to"?

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27. What did God command believers in Philippians 4:4?

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28. Discussion question: What things in your life have you allowed to be determined by your emotions? Do you think any changes need to be made in those areas?

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29. How did Elijah become the most dominant man in the entire nation?

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30. Where did God send Elijah's provision?

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31. Can you make following God's leading conditional upon seeing His provision first?

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32. Discussion question: Do you think the idea that "one reason you might not be seeing God's provision in your life is because you are too much *here* and not enough *there*" applies to your life? If so, how?

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33. True or False: Even though your heart will become hardened, God will never stop speaking to you (John 10:27).

# SCRIPTURES • 11.3

## **PHILIPPIANS 4:4**

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

## **JOHN 16:33**

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

## **GALATIANS 5:22**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.

## **1 KINGS 17:1**

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

## **1 KINGS 18:10**

As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

## **1 KINGS 17:3-5**

Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. [4] And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. [5] So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

## **EPHESIANS 1:18-20**

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, [19] And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, [20] Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

## **ISAIAH 28:11-12**

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. [12] To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

## **JOHN 10:27**

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

**2 PETER 1:3-4**

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: [4] Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

# OUTLINE • 12.1

I. Patience is a God quality, not a human quality.

A. Only through God can we obtain patience and endurance.

*He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. [30] Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: [31] But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

ISAIAH 40:29-31

B. Waiting on the Lord is more than just killing time until something happens.

C. We need to wait upon the Lord by watching, looking, and searching for ways to help.

D. *We need God's ability to endure* because it is not human nature to be patient or persistent—we hate waiting and we're prone to give up when things get tough.

E. The Christian life is a marathon, not a sprint.

F. Some people start the race well, pulling out ahead early—but they don't have any endurance.

G. This is a major problem in the body of Christ.

II. Many preachers will quote the scripture that says tribulation *works* patience (Rom. 5:3), but that scripture means *work* in the sense of “exercise”—tribulation does not *create* patience.

A. Tribulation only gives you the opportunity to grow and exercise patience.

B. *Patience is simply faith over a prolonged period of time.*

C. Momentary faith is something you can build up in a person by encouraging them; patience is long-term faith that doesn't waver.

D. When you are born again, God gives you patience (Gal. 5:22-23), but you have to do something to activate it (Rom. 10:17).

E. When tough situations or trials come against you, they give you an opportunity to grow and develop in your faith—but faith must already be in you through the Word and through what God has put in your heart.

F. Embracing problems is not going to help you.

G. Satan puts problems in your life to steal the Word (Mark 4:15).

H. Patience is important in the Christian walk, but it doesn't come through hardship—it comes through the Word of God (Rom. 15:4).

- III. In contrast to being slothful or lazy, believers are encouraged to be followers of those who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

*And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: [12] That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

HEBREWS 6:11-12

- A. Faith and patience take a lot of effort.
  - B. When you put effort into something, you get more out of it.
  - C. You have to make a commitment to seek God.
  - D. Remaining constant is also important.
  - E. Nature tends toward a state of decline.
  - F. A lot of people think they don't have any control—but they do: *You* resist the devil, and he will flee from *you* (James 4:7).
  - G. It takes diligence for you to have the faith and patience necessary to resist the attacks of the Enemy and stay in the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).
  - H. Abraham had a promise that he anchored his faith to, and after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise (Heb. 6:13-15), but it took a long time (Gen. 15:4-5 and 21:5).
  - I. You need to realize that it often takes time to see God's will come to pass—especially outside of healing and other areas when an immediate miracle is needed.
  - J. Trying to find and fulfill God's will for your life is a process.
  - K. It takes time, so you need to have patience not to give up along the way.
- IV. Patience will keep us going day after day and year after year—it's how we endure.

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, [2] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

HEBREWS 12:1-2

- A. We get it by looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.
  - i. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).
  - ii. It comes through the Word of God (Rom. 15:4).
  - iii. Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1 and 14), both living and written—therefore, fruit comes through a personal relationship with God.

- B. When we have a good relationship with God, not only do we talk to Him, but we also hear His voice when He speaks to us.
- C. A great example of the importance of staying focused on Jesus is given in the Gospel of Matthew when Peter walked on water (Matt. 14:29).
  - i. Peter took his attention off of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith, and started focusing on his circumstances.
  - ii. When he did that, he began to sink.
- D. It is notable that Peter didn't sink all at once; he just *began* to sink.
- E. In the same way, we don't lose our faith or get impatient all at once.
- F. It is usually so gradual that we don't even realize we are taking our attention off Jesus and looking at other things.
- G. Scripture goes on to tell us how to avoid this downfall:

*For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

HEBREWS 12:3

- H. We have to guard our thoughts because Satan comes to us through our thinking (Prov. 23:7).
- I. The sad fact is that most of us have allowed the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things to turn our attention away from the Lord and choke out His power in our lives (Mark 4:19).
- J. If this is a problem for us, then the solution is simple: We should focus on Jesus, not our circumstances.
- K. Many seek what God has to offer, but they don't seek God Himself.
- L. Our goal should be to seek a relationship with God first; then everything else will be given to us.

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 12.1

1. Is patience a God quality or a human quality?

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2. Isaiah 40:29-31 says, “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth \_\_\_\_\_. [30] Even the youths shall \_\_\_\_\_ and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: [31] But they that \_\_\_\_\_ upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

3. Discussion question: What does waiting on the Lord mean to you?

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4. Discussion question: Why do you think some people start their race well but don't finish?

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5. True or false: Tribulation creates patience.

6. Patience is simply faith over what?

- A. Your circumstances
- B. A prolonged period of time
- C. The next ten minutes
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

7. Discussion question: How have you used tough situations and trials as opportunities to grow and develop in your faith?

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8. If patience doesn't come through hardship, where does it come from?

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9. Discussion question: Read Hebrews 6:11-12. How can you apply this passage to your life and walk with God? Give some examples of "*them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*"

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10. What happens when you put effort into something?

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11. Discussion question: Have you put this principle (see #10) to work in your life? Has it worked for you? In what ways?

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12. Trying to find and fulfill God's will for your life is a \_\_\_\_\_.



13. Discussion question: What does Hebrews 12:1-2 mean to you?

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14. \_\_\_\_\_ is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

- A. Patience
- B. Pineapple
- C. Passion fruit
- D. Pomegranate
- E. Productivity

15. What is a great example of the importance of staying focused on Jesus?

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16. Discussion question: Why is this a great example (see #15)? What can you learn from it?

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17. Discussion question: "It is usually so gradual that we don't even realize we are taking our attention off Jesus and looking at other things." How has this happened to you and how did you deal with it?

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# SCRIPTURES • 12.1

## **ISAIAH 40:29-31**

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. [30] Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: [31] But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

## **ROMANS 5:3**

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.

## **GALATIANS 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, [23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

## **ROMANS 10:17**

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

## **MARK 4:15**

And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

## **ROMANS 15:4**

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

## **HEBREWS 6:11-15**

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: [12] That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. [13] For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, [14] Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. [15] And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

## **JAMES 4:7**

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

**GENESIS 15:4-5**

And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. [5] And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

**GENESIS 21:5**

And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

**ROMANS 12:2**

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

**HEBREWS 12:1-3**

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, [2] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. [3] For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

**JOHN 1:1**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**JOHN 1:14**

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

**MATTHEW 14:29**

And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

**PROVERBS 23:7**

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

**MARK 4:19**

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

# OUTLINE • 12.2

- V. Elijah had a string of unbroken successes.
  - A. He won a face-off against 850 false prophets, he then killed those 850 false prophets (1 Kin. 18:17-40), and he prophesied, prayed for, and saw the end of a three-year drought (1 Kin. 18:41-46).
  - B. But he ended up running from Jezebel who'd threatened his life (1 Kin. 19:2).
  - C. This left Elijah wanting God to kill him (1 Kin. 19:4).
  - D. Elijah's story illustrates the point I'm making: You have to look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith and keep your attention on Him (Prov. 16:18).
  - E. The moment you start patting yourself on the back and believing your own press releases, you are in trouble—it doesn't matter what you accomplish; you are still only a man or a woman.
  - F. You aren't doing those things—God living in you is doing them.
  - G. Elijah didn't have the patience to endure in this situation, because he got caught up in pride.
  - H. If you aren't careful, the circumstances of life will cause you to take your eyes off Jesus.
  - I. Patience is the ability to fix your attention on Jesus, not looking to the right-hand or to the left—it's the ability to remain unmoved by your circumstances.
  - J. Just do what God told you to do until He tells you differently.
- VI. Like Elijah getting caught up in self-pity and saying something he knew was a lie (1 Kin. 19:10 and 18:13), this is what happens when you focus on your circumstances.
  - A. You know things aren't really as bad as you think they are, but you get so focused on the problem that it becomes overwhelming.
  - B. You have to put things into perspective: Stop focusing on your problems, and start focusing on God.
  - C. Some people miss God because they look for Him in the spectacular—but God delights in faith, and you need to be listening for Him in the still, small voice that is on the inside of you (1 Kin. 19:11-13).
  - D. Elijah did not fulfill God's purpose for his life, because he lost his focus (1 Kin. 19:15-17 and 19-21).
  - E. He got caught up in pride and took his attention off God—the Author and Finisher of his faith; he quit operating in patience.
  - F. Elijah missed it big time, but God still loved him (2 Kin. 2:11).

- G. You may have a tendency to think that God gets mad when you fail, because that's your experience in human relationships, but God doesn't operate that way.
- H. Even if you don't do everything that God calls you to do, His grace will still abound toward you (Rom. 5:20)—God will still love you.
- I. But you have a job to do, and it isn't just about you being blessed.
- J. A lot of people start the race, but not many stay at it over the long haul.
- K. Finishing is more important than starting.
- L. You inherit the promises through faith and patience.
- M. Make a commitment that you're going to love the Lord to the best of your ability.
- N. Determine now that you are going to keep running your race no matter what.
- O. You have to seek God with your whole heart—but it's worth it!

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 12.2

18. Discussion question: What lessons can you learn from Elijah?

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19. True or false: The moment you start patting yourself on the back and believing your own press releases, you are in trouble.

20. Why didn't Elijah have the patience to endure?

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21. How long should you do what God told you to do?

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22. Discussion question: Do you relate to the statement that “you know things aren't really as bad as you think they are, but you get so focused on the problem that it becomes overwhelming”? In what way? How did you resolve the situation?

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23. Some people miss God because they look for Him in the \_\_\_\_\_—but God \_\_\_\_\_ in faith, and we need to be \_\_\_\_\_ for Him in the still, small voice that is on the inside of us (1 Kin. 19:11-13).

24. Did God stop loving Elijah even though he missed it big time (i.e., didn't fulfill God's purpose for his life)?

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25. Discussion question: In what ways, if any, do you think your experience in human relationships has influenced the way you relate to God?

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26. Even if you don't do everything God calls you to do, His grace will what?
- A. Leave and never come back
  - B. Ignore you but stay around
  - C. Still abound toward you
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above



# SCRIPTURES • 12.2

## **1 KINGS 17:1**

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

## **1 KINGS 18:17-46**

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? [18] And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. [19] Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. [20] So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. [21] And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. [22] Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. [23] Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: [24] And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. [25] And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. [26] And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. [27] And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. [28] And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. [29] And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. [30] And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. [31] And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: [32] And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. [33] And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt

sacrifice, and on the wood. [34] And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. [35] And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. [36] And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. [37] Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. [38] Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. [39] And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. [40] And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. [41] And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. [42] So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, [43] And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. [44] And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. [45] And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. [46] And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

### **1 KINGS 19:2-4**

Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. [3] And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. [4] But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

**1 KINGS 17:13-23**

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. [14] For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. [15] And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. [16] And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah. [17] And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. [18] And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? [19] And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. [20] And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? [21] And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. [22] And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. [23] And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

**PROVERBS 16:18**

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall

**1 KINGS 19:9-13**

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? [10] And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. [11] And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: [12] And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. [13] And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

**1 KINGS 18:13**

Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

**1 KINGS 19:15-16**

And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: [16] And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

**1 KINGS 19:19-21**

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. [20] And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? [21] And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

**2 KINGS 8:13**

And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

**2 KINGS 9:1-6**

And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramothgilead: [2] And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; [3] Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not. [4] So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead. [5] And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. [6] And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel.

**2 KINGS 2:11**

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

**GENESIS 5:24**

And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

**ROMANS 5:20**

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

# OUTLINE • 13.1

- I. We all possess an intuitive knowledge that God is holy and we are not.

*Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*

ROMANS 1:19-20

- A. Some people may say they have no conviction about living in sin, but in truth, God has revealed Himself to every human being and we all know in our hearts that sin is wrong.
- B. The Bible says, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).
- C. Stillness brings an awareness of God; the world drowns this out with activity.
- D. Every minute of every day, God reveals Himself to us—but the noise of this world drowns out the still, small voice of God.
- E. We can deaden ourselves or get calloused to the voice of God, but God will never stop reaching out to us.
- F. It’s possible to push God far enough away or harden our hearts to the extreme that we become “*reprobate*”—this means that God takes all conviction away from us (Rom. 1:28).
- G. Even at that point, though, it doesn’t mean we don’t know that God exists—it just means that we are past feeling remorse for rebelling against Him.
- H. Insensitivity to God is built up by countless denials of the simple witness of God in our hearts, but it happens.

- II. The steps in this passage describe the progressive process by which people’s hearts can become hardened toward God:

*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

ROMANS 1:21

- A. No one is going to fulfill God’s will for their life by allowing their heart to become hardened toward Him.
- B. I believe that if we do the opposite of the process described in this scripture, we will remain sensitive to God and avoid being desensitized.
- C. This verse says that although they knew God, they didn’t glorify Him as God.

- D. The Greek word used here for “*glorified*” means “to render (or esteem) glorious” (*Strong’s Concordance*)—which is another way of saying to value, or to prize.
- E. In other words, they didn’t value or prize the things of God.
- F. This is important because Satan will always try to get us to decrease the value, esteem, or worth that we place on the things of God.
- G. When we share the values of the carnal world instead of His values, the hardening process begins.
- H. The Lord’s values are completely different from most of what the world values.

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

1 JOHN 2:15-16

- I. *Whatever we focus our attention on is going to dominate us*—the Holy Spirit draws us toward a more intimate relationship with God, while the world pulls us the other way.
- J. When our opinion of God is up, everyone else’s opinion is going to be lower or of less significance.
- K. On the other hand, if we start accepting the values and views of people, our esteem for the things of God will decrease.
- L. It isn’t possible to highly value both the opinion of man and the opinion of God at the same time (John 5:44 and Prov. 29:25).
- M. Nobody likes rejection, but we can’t be troubled by it, because the first step to diminishing the impact of God in our lives is to start worrying about what other people have to say (2 Tim. 3:12).
- N. It’s not that we don’t care about other people; it’s just that we shouldn’t need them to pat us on the back in order to feel good about ourselves.
- O. When we esteem God’s opinion the highest, what other people have to say just won’t matter all that much.

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 13.1

1. Romans 1:19-20 says, “Because that which may be known of God is \_\_\_\_\_ in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are \_\_\_\_\_ seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without \_\_\_\_\_.”

2. Discussion question: Why do you think people deny God and ignore the conviction about their sin? Have you ever experienced a situation similar to this? How did you resolve it?

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3. Which verse says to “*be still, and know that I am God*”?

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4. Discussion question: Do you think you need more stillness in your life? Why or why not?

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5. True or false: It’s possible to push God far enough away or harden your heart to the extreme that you become “*reprobate*” (Rom. 1:28).

6. \_\_\_\_\_ to God is built up by countless denials of the simple witness of God in your heart.

- A. Surrender
- B. Insensitivity
- C. Glory
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above



7. According to Romans 1:21, what are the steps described by which man's hearts can become hardened toward God?

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8. Discussion question: Why do you think a hardened heart will keep you from fulfilling God's will?

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9. What will happen if you do the opposite of what's described in Romans 1:21?

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10. Satan will always try to get us to decrease the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ that we place on the things of God.

11. Discussion question: This lesson says that the Lord's values are completely different from most of what the world values. Where do you feel your values lay—closer to the Lord's values or closer to the world's? What, if anything, do you think should change?

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12. Discussion question: What are your thoughts on the idea that "whatever we focus our attention on is going to dominate us?"

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13. True or false: The first step to diminishing the impact of God in your life is to start ignoring what other people have to say.

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# SCRIPTURES • 13.1

## **ROMANS 1:19-21**

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: [21] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

## **PSALM 46:10**

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

## **ROMANS 1:28**

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

## **JOHN 6:44**

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

## **1 JOHN 2:15-16**

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

## **ROMANS 10:17**

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

**JOHN 11:38-53**

Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. [39] Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. [40] Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? [41] Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. [42] And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. [43] And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. [44] And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. [45] Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. [46] But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. [47] Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. [48] If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. [49] And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, [50] Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. [51] And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; [52] And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. [53] Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

**LUKE 16:19-31**

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: [20] And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, [21] And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. [22] And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; [23] And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. [24] And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. [25] But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. [26] And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. [27] Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: [28] For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. [29] Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. [30] And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. [31] And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

**JOHN 5:44**

How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

**PROVERBS 29:25**

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:12**

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

## OUTLINE • 13.2

- III. The flow of God's love can only be stopped by you.
- A. God is constantly showering you with His love, so if you don't know the love of God, it's because you aren't receiving what He has already given you.
  - B. It's up to you whether or not you feel the love of God; it's up to you whether you are happy and joyful—it's not up to God.
  - C. Whenever you aren't feeling the love of God, it's because you have begun to value something else—diminishing what God has spoken to you.
    - i. You can even lose your joy by esteeming your own efforts to please God, instead of esteeming God's grace and the finished work of Jesus.
  - D. Another way to explain what it means to glorify the Lord is to use the word *magnify*.
    - i. The same Greek word that was translated "*glorified*" in Romans 1:21 was translated "*magnify*" in Romans 11:13.
  - E. So, when you place value on God and focus on what He has done, it magnifies Him.
  - F. Ignoring God doesn't make Him smaller, just as failing to value or glorify Him doesn't change how big He is—but it will change your perception.
  - G. *Focusing on God makes Him get bigger in your way of thinking and perceiving.*
  - H. Your mind is like a set of binoculars: Whatever you focus your attention on gets larger—it grows bigger and bigger, and the more you think about it, the bigger it gets.
  - I. You need to do the exact opposite: You need to magnify God and focus on what He has done, until your problems shrink in comparison.
  - J. A lot of people go through mountaintops and valleys in their relationship with God, but it isn't because God wants it that way.
  - K. If God ordained you to go through mountaintops and valleys and only enjoy His presence for an hour before it wears off, then you would just have to deal with it—you can't do anything to change God.
  - L. Discovering that the problem is with *you* is cause for celebration, because you can fix yourself—you can change the way you think; you can do something about your behavior.
  - M. Stop focusing on your problems and begin to glorify God; rehearse your victories and talk about how good God is.
  - N. Sickness, disease, worry, hurt, grief, and pain will fade away as you focus on how good God is.
  - O. Glorifying God and being thankful are how you can stay in God's will—they will keep you from getting discouraged and giving up.

- P. If the way you are living isn't producing the desired results, don't be resistant to change.
- Q. In order to stay on track and finish your course, you have to keep the things of God fresh in your lives, and the primary way to stay sensitive to God is to glorify Him above everything else.

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 13.2

14. Who is the only one who can stop the flow of God's love?
- A. You
  - B. Satan
  - C. Your pastor
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above

15. What is not up to God?
- A. Whether or not you feel the love of God
  - B. Whether you are happy and joyful
  - C. If you have begun to value something else
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above

16. What happens when you place value on God and focus on what He has done?

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17. Discussion question: What are some examples of situations where focusing on God and making Him bigger in your way of thinking and perceiving have helped you overcome difficulties? (If you are unable to give examples from your own life, cite examples from the Bible.)

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18. Discussion question: Have you experienced focusing on something, positive or negative, until the more you thought about it, the bigger it got? How did this help/hinder you?

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19. Why is discovering that the problem is with you a cause for celebration?

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20. Discussion question: What are some of the victories you've had in God and some of the ways He has been good to you?

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21. Are glorifying God and being thankful how you can stay in God's will?

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## SCRIPTURES • 13.2

### **JUDE 1:20-21**

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, [21] Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

### **ROMANS 1:21**

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

### **ROMANS 11:13**

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.

# OUTLINE • 14.1

- I. Believers should be getting stronger and stronger in the Lord as time goes on.

*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

ROMANS 1:21

- A. God never intended for the potency of our relationship with Him to fade, yet that is exactly what happens to many Christians.
- B. The first step in staying sensitive to God and maintaining the intensity of our relationship with Him is to glorify Him—to value His opinion above the opinions of man.
- C. In terms of practical living, however, glorifying God, being thankful, and having a godly imagination aren't separate issues; they are all interconnected.
- D. So, this second step of thankfulness is something we add to our lifestyle of glorifying God in all circumstances.

*I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*

PSALM 69:30

- E. Being thankful and rehearsing our victories makes God bigger in our perspective—it puts more glory, worth, and value on Him.
- F. We should rehearse our victories on a regular basis.
- i. In fact, this is the reason there are a number of scriptures in the Old Testament that commanded the Israelites not to take away their neighbor's landmark (Deut. 19:14, 27:17; Prov. 22:28, and 23:10).
- ii. Landmarks served as a reminder.
- iii. In the same way, we need to erect landmarks in our lives to remind us of the victories God has won for us.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. [2]  
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*

PSALM 103:1-2

- G. The reason this scripture tells us not to forget is because the natural human tendency is to focus on what's wrong and to forget what God has done for us.
- H. When little problems come along, we have an inclination to magnify them until they take over our entire lives.
- I. We can reverse this tendency by thanking God and focusing on the good (John 16:33).

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 14.1

1. True or false: Believers should be getting weaker and weaker in the Lord as time goes on.
2. Romans 1:21 says, “*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were \_\_\_\_\_; but became \_\_\_\_\_ in their imaginations, and their \_\_\_\_\_ heart was darkened.*”
3. Discussion question: What are some practical ways that you can maintain the potency of your relationship with God?

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4. “*I will praise the name of God with a song, and will \_\_\_\_\_*” (Ps. 69:30).
  - A. “*Play instruments to his glory*”
  - B. “*Magnify him with shouting*”
  - C. “*Magnify him with thanksgiving*”
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above

5. Discussion question: Meditate on Psalm 103:1-2 and share any thoughts and revelation you receive.

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6. Why does Psalm 103:2 tell you not to forget?

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# SCRIPTURES • 14.1

## **ROMANS 1:21**

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

## **PSALM 69:30**

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

## **DEUTERONOMY 19:14**

Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

## **DEUTERONOMY 27:17**

Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

## **PROVERBS 22:28**

Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

## **PROVERBS 23:10**

Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless.

## **1 SAMUEL 7:12**

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

## **PSALM 116:6**

The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

## **LUKE 19:40**

And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

## **PSALM 103:1-2**

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. [2]  
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

## **JOHN 16:33**

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

**ACTS 16:9-12**

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. [10]

And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. [11] Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; [12] And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

**ACTS 16:16-26**

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: [17] The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. [18] And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. [19] And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, [20] And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, [21] And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. [22] And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. [23] And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: [24] Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. [25] And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. [26] And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

## OUTLINE • 14.2

- II. The Apostle Peter said that the last days began over 2,000 years ago on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17), which puts us in the *last* of the last days.

*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. [2] For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, [4] Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-4

- A. Scripture says that in the last days, people will become lovers of themselves—and most people today are very self-centered.
- i. Self-love is like an addiction; no one can get enough of it.
  - ii. We can't satisfy self; self has to be denied.
- B. In the end times, it says people will be covetous.
- i. The Bible teaches us that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5).
  - ii. Most covetous people wouldn't say they are idol worshipers—but they are.
- C. In the last days, people will be boasters.
- i. People generally think it's a good thing to act like they're awesome and the world revolves around them.
  - ii. Sadly, even a lot of Christians act like that; they are boasters.
- D. Next, the Scripture says people will become blasphemers, children will be disobedient to parents, and people will be unthankful and unholy.
- i. Let's look at the list that being unthankful is put in: It's sandwiched right in there with people who lack natural affection and who are trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, and lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.
    - a. The word "*incontinent*" in this verse means having totally unrestrained emotions.
    - b. People today are totally dominated and controlled by their emotions.
- E. Finally, the Scripture says that people will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.
- i. Without a doubt, people spend way more time and money on pleasure than they do on God.

- F. If we want to finish our course and fulfill our destiny, one of the things we can do to keep our hearts in the right place is to make the decision to bless the Lord at all times.
- G. We can get to a place where we are so positive that no matter what happens to us, we will find something to praise God about.

III. Paul called his trials a “*light affliction*,” yet he had a lot more problems than we do (2 Cor. 11:23-27)—he endured tremendous persecution and rejection.

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; [18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:17-18

- A. If Paul could call his persecution a “*light affliction*,” how can we believe our problems are such a heavy burden?
- B. It’s because we don’t have the same perspective that Paul had.
- C. Paul was so focused on God that he could say, “*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (Phil. 1:21).
- D. One of the ways we can get the same perspective is to remember that our afflictions are “*but for a moment*.”
- E. We can take any problem we might have right now and put it into the perspective of eternity.
- F. The sufferings of this world are not even worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed when we go to be with Jesus (Rom. 8:18).
- G. Having an eternal perspective will change our way of thinking about everything.
- H. Maybe events in our lives aren’t perfect, but we can always find something to praise God for.
- I. Being thankful is how we fight against the natural human tendency to focus on problems.
- J. *Problems are going to come, but having an eternal perspective will give us the momentum to roll right over trouble.*
- K. We can build up so much momentum in our Christian lives that no problem can take away our joy or keep us from glorifying God.



# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 14.2

7. List at least four of the traits of people that 2 Timothy 3:2-4 says are characteristics of the last days.

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8. Discussion question: Have you seen any evidence in your life that self does have to be denied? How have you handled those situations?

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9. Which scripture says that covetousness is idolatry?

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10. Discussion question: What do you think that scripture means by that (i.e., covetousness is idolatry)?

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11. Discussion question: Why do you think being unthankful was put into the same list as false accusers, traitors, despisers of those who are good, high-minded, etc.?

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12. People spend way more \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on pleasure than they do on God.

13. You can get to a place where you are so positive that no matter what happens to you, what will happen?

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14. How did Paul refer to his trials?

- A. As nothing to worry about
- B. As a hard burden to bear
- C. As suffering for Jesus
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

15. What is one of the ways you can get the same perspective Paul had?

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16. Discussion question: Take one of the problems you are facing now, and put it in the light of eternity. How does that change your attitude in the matter?

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17. What does Romans 8:18 tell you?

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18. Discussion question: What are some things in your life for which you can praise God?

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19. \_\_\_\_\_ is how you fight against the natural tendency to focus on problems.

# SCRIPTURES • 14.2

## **2 TIMOTHY 3:1-4**

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. [2] For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, [4] Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

## **ACTS 2:17**

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:5**

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 4:17-18**

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; [18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 11:23-27**

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. [24] Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. [25] Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; [26] In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; [27] In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

## **PHILIPPIANS 1:21**

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

## **ROMANS 8:18**

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

**3 JOHN 2**

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

**ACTS 10:38**

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:8**

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

**PROVERBS 17:22**

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

**HEBREWS 13:8**

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

# OUTLINE • 15.1

- I. Romans 1:21 reveals that the last step in hardening your heart toward God is becoming vain in your imagination.

*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

ROMANS 1:21

- A. *This doesn't mean your imagination stops working—it means it starts working against you.*
- B. *Imagination is defined as “the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).*
- C. *Imagination is the ability to see something with your mind, or your heart, that you can't see with your eyes.*
- D. You can't function in your daily life without using your imagination—you think in pictures.
- E. You can't really understand something until you can picture it in your mind.
- F. If you can picture something, you can do it!
- G. Imagination is further defined as “creative ability” and “resourcefulness” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)—you can't create without an imagination.
- H. If you can't see something on the inside, you won't be able to see it manifest in your life (like healing).
- I. *Yetser*—the Hebrew word translated “imagination” in the Old Testament—was also translated “*mind*”: “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee*” (Is. 26:3).
- J. When it says “keep your mind stayed on the Lord,” it's talking about more than just having thoughts concerning God; it means to think about God until it paints an image on the inside of you, and you begin to see things from His perspective.
- K. Imagination is a very important concept to understand; it is one of the things that will allow you to fulfill God's will.
- L. You have to go beyond the surface, to the point where the Word of God literally changes the way you see things with your heart.

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 15.1

1. According to Romans 1:21, what is the last step in hardening your heart toward God?

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2. What does it mean to have a vain imagination?

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3. Discussion question: Has your imagination ever been vain? In what ways?

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4. What is imagination?

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5. True or false: If you can't see something on the inside, you will be able to see it manifest in your life.

6. Discussion question: What does it mean to you to “keep your mind stayed on the Lord” (Is. 26:3)?

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# SCRIPTURES • 15.1

## **ROMANS 1:21**

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

## **ISAIAH 26:3**

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

## OUTLINE • 15.2

II. Hope is your *imagination* (Rom. 8:24-25), and faith is the *substance* of things hoped for.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

HEBREWS 11:1

- A. If you can't hope for something first (i.e., imagine it), then you can't receive it by faith.
- B. One of the things you need to have, when it comes to fulfilling God's will and staying consistent over a long period of time, is a strong sense of hope.
- C. Hope is the anchor of your soul (Heb. 6:19).
  - i. Hope will keep you from being blown off course and missing your destination.
- D. The Hebrew word *yetser* ("imagination") also means "conception" (*Strong's Concordance*)—this reveals a significant truth: *Your imagination is where you conceive things.*
- E. You have to conceive in your imagination what the Word says; for example, you have to see yourself healed.
- F. But there is a *big* difference between imagination and fantasy.
  - i. "Imagination" is the power, or process, of seeing something you can't see with your physical eyes, whereas "fantasy" is delusion.
  - ii. Fantasy is imagining something that isn't real—it's fiction.
- G. A sanctified, godly imagination is the part of you that conceives the things of God; it's the creative part of you that has a vision for the future.
- H. Take the Word of God, and let it soak down into the creative part of your mind—your imagination—until you can see yourself successful or healed.
- I. A godly imagination is directly tied to glorifying God and being thankful.
- J. The Bible says that if you don't glorify God and if you aren't thankful, your imagination becomes vain (Rom. 1:21)—instead of being creative and conceiving good things, a vain imagination conceives evil.
- K. When you believe negative words or ideas that are pushed on you, it forms an image on the inside of you about who you are and what you can do.
- L. Even though your talents and abilities could enable you to go further, you don't allow them to—somehow you find a way to self-destruct.
- M. You don't see yourself being who God says you are.
- N. Glorifying God, putting value and worth on Him, and being thankful will cause your imagination to come alive and start working for you.



- O. A positive imagination will help erase all of the self-defeating ideas you have wrongly believed about yourself, and you will begin to imagine yourself the way God sees you.

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 15.2

7. \_\_\_\_\_ is your *imagination* (Rom. 8:24-25), and \_\_\_\_\_ is the *substance* of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1).
- A. Faith / hope
  - B. Hope / Jesus
  - C. Hope / faith
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above

8. Discussion question: What do you think about the statement, “If you can’t hope for something first (i.e., imagine it), then you can’t receive it by faith”?

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9. What does Hebrews 6:19 tell you?

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10. Discussion question: How will hope keep you from being blown off course and missing your destination?

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11. Is there a big difference between imagination and fantasy?

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12. Discussion question: How do they differ (see #11)? In what ways have you seen either or both in your life?

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13. A positive imagination will help erase all of the \_\_\_\_\_ ideas you have \_\_\_\_\_ believed about yourself, and you will begin to imagine yourself the way \_\_\_\_\_ sees you.

# SCRIPTURES • 15.2

**HEBREWS 11:1**

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**ROMANS 8:24-25**

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? [25] But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

**HEBREWS 6:19**

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.

**PROVERBS 23:7**

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

**DEUTERONOMY 34:7**

And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

**ROMANS 1:21**

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

**MARK 16:18**

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

## OUTLINE • 15.3

- III. In the New Testament, the same word that was translated “imagination” was sometimes translated “understanding.”
  - A. The Bible is full of references to the importance of having understanding (Matt. 13:19).
  - B. Understanding is how we get something down on the inside of us.
  - C. The Word won’t minister to us at its fullest until we get it down to the level of understanding.
  - D. We have to meditate on the Word until it paints a picture, until we truly see what is happening.
  - E. That’s how we use our imagination to conceive the things of God in our hearts.
  - F. We will get more out of the Word of God once we engage our imaginations.
  - G. We would be much better off if we spent time encouraging our imaginations—we can’t allow other people to spoon-feed us all the time.
  - H. We also can’t let what other people say determine our identity and future.
  - I. We need to find out what the Word says about us; then we need to pray and let the Holy Spirit give us an image of what He wants us to do—and who He wants us to be.
    - i. We can’t become who God says we are until we can see ourselves as He sees us.
  - J. We will become exactly what we imagine—whether that image is positive or negative.
- IV. How you see yourself is important.
  - A. You have to see yourself as able to do, or be, the things you are praying for.
  - B. You won’t see miracles come to pass if you don’t believe that God can do a miracle through you.
  - C. Before you see something happen, you have to be focused on it.
  - D. It has to become so real that you see yourself doing it in your dreams.
  - E. You won’t see the miraculous power of God if you are defeated, discouraged, or depressed in your imagination.
  - F. The Word says that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Prov. 23:7).
  - G. You have to resurrect your imagination and start using it in a positive way.
- V. I researched every time the word “imagination” was used in the Bible, and with the exception of one verse (1 Chr. 29:18), it was always used in a negative way.

- A. It used to puzzle me that imagination could be such a powerful thing but always carry negative connotations in Scripture.
- B. I prayed about it until the Lord showed me the answer:

*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? [25] But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

ROMANS 8:24-25

- C. *Hope is seeing something with your heart that you can't see with your eyes—which is exactly what imagination is.*
- D. I believe that hope is the scriptural word for a positive imagination.
- E. *Hope is your imagination working for you instead of against you.*
- F. Faith only provides what hope has already seen: “*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1).
- G. *Hope* turns on the ability of God, while *faith* is the power that makes things come to pass.
- H. Faith will either work *for* you or *against* you.
- I. A negative image will cause everything in you to work toward making the negative image you have bear fruit.
- J. You have to change the image that is inside of you by creating hope.
- K. Hope comes through the Word of God (Rom. 15:4)—this is the first step of faith.
- L. Notice that Romans 8:24-25 says you are saved by hope because you wait with patience for what you do not see—patience is also linked to hope and your imagination.
- M. If you have a strong sense of hope, or a strong imagination, then you will have the patience to wait for God's will to manifest in your life—even if it takes a long time.
  - i. A strong sense of hope will cause you to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that God's will is going to come to pass.
  - ii. You will know it in your heart and expect it because your imagination has made it real.
  - iii. No matter what might be going on in your life, you will know that you have what you are waiting for.

### *Andrew's Recommendations for Further Study:*

If you want to know more about Merci Santos' testimony, I encourage you to order the Healing Journeys, Vol. 2 DVD.

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 15.3

14. In the New Testament, the same word that was translated “imagination” was sometimes translated \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. “Understanding”
  - B. “Fantasy”
  - C. “Knowledge”
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above

15. Understanding is how you what?

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16. Discussion question: Why do you think that understanding makes a difference when reading and meditating on the Word?

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17. Discussion question: Take a scripture or a passage of Scripture and meditate on it using your imagination. In what ways, if any, does this change your perspective on this passage?

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18. True or false: You can't let what other people say determine your identity and future.

19. You will become \_\_\_\_\_ what you imagine—whether that image is \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

20. How do you have to see yourself?

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21. Will you see miracles come to pass if you don't believe that God can do a miracle through you?

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22. Discussion question: To see something happen, you have to be focused on it, to the point where you see yourself doing it in your dreams. Have you ever been that focused on a goal or desire? If yes, what were the results of that? If no, what goals or desires do you believe you should be that focused on?

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23. According to Romans 8:24-25, what is hope?

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24. Hebrews 11:1 says, "*Faith is the \_\_\_\_\_ of things \_\_\_\_\_ for, the evidence of things not seen.*"

25. Discussion question: In your life, how have you experienced the concept that hope turns on the ability of God, while faith is the power that makes things come to pass?

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26. What does Romans 15:4 say?

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27. Discussion question: How does having a strong sense of hope, or a strong imagination, give you the patience to wait for God's will to manifest in your life?

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# SCRIPTURES • 15.3

## **MATTHEW 13:19**

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

## **JOHN 14:12**

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

## **PROVERBS 23:7**

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

## **1 CHRONICLES 29:18**

O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.

## **GENESIS 6:5**

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

## **GENESIS 11:6-7**

And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. [7] Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-5**

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

## **ROMANS 8:24-25**

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? [25] But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

## **HEBREWS 11:1**

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

## **ROMANS 15:4**

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

# OUTLINE • 15.4

- VI. A positive imagination is a byproduct of you being truly thankful and valuing the things of God (Rom. 1:21).
- A. But if you don't magnify God and remain thankful, your imagination will become negative, and then your heart becomes hardened.
  - B. A foolish, darkened heart (Rom. 1:21) is a hardened heart—and once your heart is hardened, you are separated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18).
  - C. Having a hard heart doesn't necessarily mean you aren't trying to love God or follow His will for your life; it means you don't understand how much God loves you—He loves you totally separate from your behavior or performance.
  - D. Moving beyond that stage takes time and effort: You have to start obeying God, meditating on the Word, glorifying the Lord, and being thankful.
  - E. You need to have a vision that you are moving toward.
    - i. Vision is nothing but hope for the future—or a positive imagination.
  - F. It will give you the motivation to keep going and the focus to fulfill God's will for your life.
  - G. The Apostle Paul wrote,

*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18
  - H. Paul was looking at things that can't be seen by seeing them with his heart, or imagination.
  - I. You can't fulfill God's will for your life without using your heart to see.
  - J. Everything in the physical might be indicating one thing, but in your heart, the Word of God can paint a picture of something else.
  - K. Proverbs says that “*where there is no vision, the people perish*” (Prov. 29:18)—many people are falling by the wayside simply because they lack vision.
    - i. They don't have any direction, so they are stumbling through life, bouncing from one problem to the next like a pinball.
    - ii. You can't allow circumstances to dictate your direction like that.
    - iii. Find the purpose God has for you.
  - L. You won't fulfill God's plan for your life overnight; you have to be patient.

M. It may take God some time to get you back on track and heading in the right direction, but if you make seeking God your lifestyle, things will start to happen.

N. In a short period of time, your imagination will come alive; your heart won't be darkened anymore.

O. God will start directing you—putting you on track to fulfill His purpose for your life.

*Father, I pray that the truths in this study guide have helped people to find, follow, and ultimately fulfill Your perfect will for their lives. Bring back to their remembrance the things You have spoken to them through these teachings and give them the wisdom to apply their lives to them. Thank You, Jesus, for the awesome things that are in store for each one of them. Amen!*

# DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS • 15.4

28. What is a positive imagination a byproduct of?

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29. What does having a hardened heart *not* mean and what *does* it mean?

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30. Discussion question: What is your vision (hope for the future, or positive imagination). If you do not have one, meditate on what you think your vision could or should be.

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31. In 2 Corinthians 4:18, the Apostle Paul wrote, “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things \_\_\_\_\_: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things \_\_\_\_\_ are eternal.”

- A. “Which are seen”
- B. “Which God hath spoken”
- C. “Which ye have prayed for”
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

32. True or false: You can’t fulfill God’s will for your life without using your heart to see.

33. Discussion question: Have you ever faced a situation where everything in the physical was indicating one thing, but in your heart, the Word of God had painted a different picture? Share your experience.

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34. You can’t allow \_\_\_\_\_ to dictate your \_\_\_\_\_.

# SCRIPTURES • 15.4

## **ROMANS 1:21**

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

## **EPHESIANS 4:18**

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

## **2 CORINTHIANS 4:18**

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

## **PROVERBS 29:18**

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.