

Summary of Part I

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

Objectives

1. **Trust God** to do everything He promises in your life
2. **Identify** the activity of God in your life
3. **Hear** when God is speaking to you
4. **Obey** God's directives
5. **Experience** God doing through you what only God can do
 - As you learn to **follow Jesus** one day at a time, He will keep you right in the center of **God's will**
 - You then come to **know God** and His Will for you through **experiencing** Him at work in your life

God's Path	Our Path
1. God is always at work around us	We don't see Him
2. God pursues a relationship with us	We're not paying attention
3. God speaks to us through Holy Spirit, the Bible, prayer, the church, situations, visions, dreams, etc.	We're not listening
4. God invites us to follow Him and join Him in His work	Even if we hear God, we're afraid of the consequences
5. God's demands create a crisis of belief that requires faith and change	We become angry with God and turn away from Him
6. God demands that we trust and obey Him on a day-to-day basis	We demand a road map so that we can set off on our own
7. You come to know God and His Will through experience	We walk in darkness and never come to truly know God

Experiencing God - Part II

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

Step 5: The Crisis of Belief

This step is the **turning point** in making the **choice** to follow God's will in your life:

- When God **invites** you to join Him in **His work**, He has a **specific assignment** for you
- This is a **God-sized** assignment which you **cannot do on your own**
- This is the **crisis point** where many decide not to follow what they sense God is leading them to do

The word "*crisis*" comes from a Greek work that means "*decision*"

- You must **decide** at this point whether to **believe God** as well as what you believe **about God**
- How you **respond** at this point will determine whether you are going to **walk with God** or whether you will continue on your own way
- This is **not a one-time experience** – our God is a God of **second-chances**

Read the following Scriptures and describe the **crisis of belief** for each case:

Joshua 6:1-5 Joshua (& Israel) had to believe that such an unusual battle plan could actually work – i.e. trust God

Judges 7:1-8, 16-22 Gideon had to believe that they could defeat the Midianites with just 300 men – i.e. trust God

1Chronicles 14:8-16 David had to believe in a supernatural intervention of God – i.e. trust God

Matthew 17:24-27 Peter had to believe Jesus that he would find money in the fish no matter how implausible it seemed – i.e. trust God

Your Crisis of Belief

Have you ever faced up to a crisis of belief? ____ Yes ____ No

- If so, describe the situation: _____

- How did you respond? _____

- What was the result? _____

- What did your response demonstrate about your belief in God? _____

Daily Encounters With God Require Faith

When God speaks, your **response** requires **faith**:

- Without faith, we cannot know or do God's will

Read the following Scriptures and answer the questions below:

Hebrews 11:1 -- What is faith? belief in what we can't see, hope in the promises of God – i.e. trust God

2Corinthians 5:7 -- What is the opposite of faith? unbelief; belief in our natural senses and the natural world over God's Word

John 14:12 -- What is the potential of faith? unlimited!!! Can do even more than Jesus did

Matthew 17:20-21 -- How much faith is required for God to do through you what is humanly impossible? very little

Isaiah 7:9 -- What is the danger of lack of faith? without faith, we cannot withstand the forces of the world & Satan; get knocked down and out

1Corinthians 2:4-5 -- On what should we base our faith? God's Word
On what should we NOT base our faith? human wisdom

Faith Requires Obedience

When God lets you know what **He wants to do through you**, it will be something only God can do:

- If you have faith in God you will **obey Him** and He will accomplish His purposes through you
- If you don't have faith in God, you will not do what He wants -- that is **disobedience**

⇒ **Read Matthew 7:21-27**

1. Who will **enter Heaven**? all believers who do God's will; faith come first then the desire to do His will; we do not have to do so perfectly, but only desire in our hearts to do so
2. What happens to those who **obey God**? their house (life) is built on solid ground (the Rock, Jesus) and will withstand the storms
3. What happens to those who **do not obey God**? their house is build on shifting sand and will eventually collapse

Disobedience Comes From Self-Centeredness

The stumbling block to knowing and doing the will of God is our self-centeredness:

God-Centered

- Life focused on God
- Confidence in God
- Dependence on God
- Denying self
- Humble before God
- Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness
- Seek God's perspective in every circumstance
- Holy and Godly living

Self-Centered

- Life focused on self
- Self-confidence
- Dependence on own abilities
- Affirming self
- Proud of own accomplishments
- Seek acceptance in the world and its ways
- Look at circumstances only from a human perspective
- Selfish and worldly living

Antidotes to Self-Centered Responses

Without faith, our responses to God's directives reflect our own thoughts and desires -- for example:

- How can I possibly do that?

Read Mark 10:27 & Read Philippians 4:13

What is possible **through God**? Everything

- But that could hurt me!

Read Matthew 6:31-33

What happens if we put **God's Will** first in our lives? _____
He provides for all our needs

- But I don't have enough faith!

Read Luke 17:5-6

How much faith do we require to do great things **through God**? _____
just a little

God Seeks for You to Respond Today!

God has a **plan** for each of our lives:

- And there is something He wants you to do right now!

Do you know **what God is asking you to do**?

- **If so**, why are you hesitating? see Judges 18:9

⇒ **Pray** for God to give you the strength to overcome your self-centeredness

- **If not**, are you spending enough time with God to hear His voice? _____

⇒ **Pray** for God to help you to know and do His will

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

God-Sized Assignments

The kind of **major assignments** God gives in the Bible are always **God-sized**

- They are beyond what people can do because **God wants to demonstrate**:
 - ⇒ **His** nature and **His** strength
 - ⇒ **His** provision for **His** people
 - ⇒ **His** mercy and **His** grace

Read the following Biblical accounts of **God's activities** through His servants and answer the questions below:

1. Moses and the Red Sea

- What did God want to accomplish? (**Exodus 14:4**) that the Egyptians would know that He is the Lord God Almighty
- How did the people respond? (**Exodus 14:1**) the people feared and believed in the Lord

2. Joshua and the Jordan River

- What did God want to accomplish? (**Joshua 4:23-24**) that all peoples of the earth might know of the Lord
- How did the people respond? (**Joshua 5:1**) their hearts melted, no spirit (i.e. their own independence/rebelliousness)

3. Jehoshaphat and the Invading Army

- What did God want to accomplish? (**2Chronicles 20:15-17**) that Israel would see God defeat their enemies, that it wasn't their doing
- How did the people respond? (**2Chronicles 20:24 & 29**) the fear of God was in all kingdoms

4. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

- What did God want to accomplish? (**Daniel 3:17**) to show King Nebuchadnezzar that God would deliver them
- How did the people respond? (**Daniel 3:28-29 & 4:2-3**) the king decreed that no one could speak amiss of the Lord God of Israel and he proclaimed God's dominion over all the earth

5. Disciples Filled with the Holy Spirit

- What did God want to accomplish? (Acts 2:4-8) to show the reality and power of the Holy Spirit
- How did the people respond? (Acts 2:41) 3000 saved

6. Peter and John Heal the Beggar

- What did God want to accomplish? (Acts 3:6-8) demonstrate God's healing powers to foster belief
- How did the people respond? (Acts 3:9-10 & 4:1-4) the people saw that the healing was miraculous and 5000 believed in the Lord

7. Peter Raises Dorcas from the Dead

- What did God want to accomplish? (Acts 9:40-41) to demonstrate God's power over death
- How did the people respond? (Acts 9:42) many believed in the Lord

What the World Sees

Too often what the world sees is a **devoted, committed Christian** serving God:

- But, they are **not seeing God** because we are not attempting to do anything that only God can do!
- Our world is **not attracted to the Christ we serve** because they cannot see Him at work
- **Let the world see God at work** and He will attract people to Himself
- When the world see things happening through God's people that **cannot be explained except that God Himself has done them**, then the world will be drawn to the God they see.
⇒ *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."* John 12:32 (NKJ)

Saying versus Doing-

What you **do** reveals what you **believe about God** regardless of what you **say**:

- If you are **doing God's will**, your efforts will be **spiritually fruitful**
 - ⇒ This doesn't mean that life will be **easy**, but rather your life will be **blessed** as you are a blessing to others
 - ⇒ **Spiritual blessings** do not necessarily translate into material success
- If you are **not doing God's will**, your efforts will be **spiritually bankrupt**
 - ⇒ Even though you might be **materially successful**, you will not be accomplishing anything of value to God
 - ⇒ Nor will you experience the **peace and joy** that comes from being in a close relationship with God

Read 1Samuel 17:1-11

What crisis of belief did King Saul face? that any of his soldiers could defeat Goliath, even with God's help

How did he respond? he was afraid to do anything, immobilized for 40 days

What does this reveal about his belief in God? Saul didn't believe that God would or could help defeat Goliath; thus his faith was weak or nonexistent

Read 1Samuel 17:12-37

What crisis of belief did David face? whether or not he could defeat Goliath with God's help

How did he respond? he immediately arose to the challenge and wasn't afraid

What does this reveal about his belief in God? that God is faithful and that we can do all things through when He is with us

Read 1Samuel 17:38-51

In what ways did David demonstrate his belief in God? 1) he volunteered to fight; 2) he didn't need the armor or sword, but only the sling

What were the fruits of David's obedience and faith? victory over Goliath and the Philistines

To whom did David give credit for his victory? God!

Read 1Samuel 18:6-8

What were the fruits of Saul's disobedience and lack of faith? loss of face and reputation with the people

To whom did Saul give credit for David's victory? David – he continued to miss the point

Actions Speak

When God invites you to join Him in His work and you face a **crisis of belief**, what you **do next** tells what you **believe about God**

- Your actions really do speak louder than words!

Read the following case studies and check the statement that best describes the **belief in God** that was exhibited by the people involved based on their response (or lack of response):

1. Bill and Kathy have just heard a missionary speaker. They believe God wants them to go as missionaries to Africa. Kathy reminds Bill that her parents would never agree to let them move so far away with her parents' only grandchildren. They decide not to pursue that sense of calling to be missionaries. What do you think Bill and Kathy really believe about God?

God is Sovereign Lord and has a right to do anything in their lives that He pleases.

God is able to convince Kathy's parents that this is His purpose, so they will be understanding.

God may have been able to convince Pharaoh to let Israel go, but He would never be able to convince Kathy's parents to let Kathy, Bill and the children go to Africa. After all, times have changed.

2. Levona privately has been praying that God would lead her to a place of service in the church. The Sunday School Director has been praying for an adult teacher. He believes that God is leading him to ask Levona to serve in

that position. Levona responds, "I cannot accept that job. I don't have the abilities required. Besides, I have never done that before." What do you think Levona believes about God?

The Holy Spirit will equip and enable me to do anything He calls me to do.

God can't do anything through me that I am not able to do myself.

3. A group of adults has been meeting together for six months and praying that God would provide a church for their town. There are no Pentecostal churches in the town. As they pray, they sense that God wants them to approach the First Pentecostal Church in the neighboring town with an urgent plea to come and start the new church. First Church's members say, "We are still paying off a debt on our building. We can't afford to sponsor a new church right now. Why don't you try the Second Pentecostal Church downtown." What do you think First Church believes about God?

God's resources for work through our church are limited to what our people already give.

God owns everything in the world. He can provide resources to do whatever He purposes to do.

4. First Church's budget committee prayed together for a month prior to talking with leaders about next year's budget. They had asked the leaders to pray as well. They develop a challenging budget based on what they believe God wants their church to do this year. The church prayerfully considered the budget and voted unanimously to adopt it. The deacons led a pledge campaign that came up with 10% less than the adopted budget. The church required the budget committee to trim the budget by 10% so they would not overspend their income. What do you think First Church believes about God?

God is faithful. He will provide for all that He leads our church to do.

God is mean. He leads us to agree to do many things, but then He won't give us what we need to get the job done.

God can't do anything that we as a church can't afford.

Faith Requires Action

God always has something for us to do.

- Faith without action is dead!

⇒ *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith without works** is dead also.* James 2:26 (NKJ)

Hebrews 11 is referred to as “**The Roll Call of Faith.**” Read the following verses and answer the questions below:

1. Cain & Abel (Hebrews 11:4 & Genesis 4:1-8)

- Why was Abel’s offering superior to Cain’s? it was “first fruits the “fat” portion vs. later fruits brought “in the course of time
- What did Abel’s offering reveal about his belief in God? God is our provider and we owe Him thanksgiving and obedience
- What did Cain’s response reveal about his belief in God? God is someone to be placated and doesn’t deserve our thanks or obedience

2. Noah (Hebrews 11:7 & Genesis 6:9-19)

- What did Noah’s actions reveal about his belief in God? he had “holy fear” (NIV); “Godly fear” (NKJ); strong faith
- What did Noah receive as a result of his faithful actions? his family was saved and he became the “heir of righteousness” – a new Adam

3. Abraham (Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19 & Genesis 12:1-3, 18:11-12, 22:1-18)

- How did Abraham’s faith translate into obedience and action? he left his home and family without knowing where he was going; he obediently offered his only son Isaac as a sacrifice; he sired a child in his old age
- What do Abraham’s actions reveal about his belief in God? strong faith and obedience, although he was human and made his mistakes too

4. Moses (Hebrews 11:24-29 & Exodus 2:11-15, 3:1-11, 12:1-17)

- What works did Moses accomplish through his faith? _____
he rescued Israel from bondage in Egypt; parted the Red Sea; got water in the desert out of a rock
- What does Moses' actions reveal about his belief in God? _____
He believed God would do what He said He would

Outcomes of Faithful Actions

A faithful life of **doing God's Will** does not necessarily yield rewards in the natural world:

Read Hebrews 11:32-38

1. What **good** results were achieved by God's faithful? _____
administered justice, conquered kingdoms, shut mouths of lions, quenched flames, escaped sword, routed foreign armies, brought dead to life
2. What "**bad**" consequences happened to some of the faithful? _____
tortured, imprisoned, ridiculed, flogged, chained, stoned, sawed in half, killed

Read Hebrews 11:39-40

1. Did any of the faithful receive their **rewards** on earth? No
2. Did those who **suffered more** or those who **achieved more** receive the most blessings from God? neither
 - Outward appearances of **success** do not always indicate **faith**
 - Outward appearances of **failure** do not always indicate **lack of faith**

⇒ A faithful servant is one who does God's Will regardless of the outcome

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

1. Where should we seek our reward? Heaven
2. What should we ignore? hindrances, entanglements, discouragement
3. Who should be our model? Jesus

Adjusting Your Life to God

"So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:33 (NKJ)

Adjustments are Necessary

Many of us **want God to speak to us** and give us an assignment.

- However, we are **not interested in making *major* adjustments** in our lives
- **Biblically**, every time God spoke to people about something He wanted to do through them, **major adjustments were necessary**
- Once the adjustments were made, **God accomplished His purposes** through those He called
 - ⇒ Adjusting your life to God is the **second critical turning point** in your knowing and doing the will of God

God even required a **major adjustment** of His own **Son!**

⇒ *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes **He became poor**, that you through His poverty might become rich. 2Corinthians 8:9 (NKJ)*

Read 1Kings 19:13-21

- What adjustment was required of Elisha? leave family and job; “burn your bridges” – i.e. burned farm equipment and killed his oxen
- How did Elisha respond? immediate, unwavering obedience, used the oxen to feed the community

Read Luke 18:18-27

- What adjustment was required of the rich young ruler? give up his riches
- How did the rich young ruler respond? didn't do so, turned away

Read John 17:3

- What is eternal life? to know God and Jesus Chris

Kinds of Adjustments

Adjustments might be required in one or more of the following categories:

- In your **circumstances** (e.g. job, home, finances, etc.)
- In your **relationships** (e.g. family, friends, business associates, God, etc.)
- In your **thinking** (e.g. prejudices, attitudes, core beliefs, etc.)
- In your **commitments** (e.g. to family, friends, work, church, God, etc.)
- In your **actions** (e.g. at home, on the job, in the world, in church, etc.)
- In your **beliefs** (e.g. about God, His promises & purposes, His ways, etc.)
⇒ The hard part is **adjusting your life** to what **God wants** and taking the **actions** that demonstrate your faith.

Read each of the following Scriptures and write down which of the **adjustments** above **were required** (some may call for more than one type of adjustment):

1. **Matthew 4:18-22** primarily circumstances (job)
2. **Matthew 5:43-48** relationships (love enemies) - mindset
3. **Matthew 6:5-8** actions
4. **Matthew 20:20-28** thinking, actions (servant)
5. **Acts 10:1-20** beliefs

Absolute Surrender

God is interested in the absolute surrender of **every aspect** of your life to Him:

- If there is something you are **holding back** and it gets in God's way, you can be sure that **this is where God is at work in your life**
- Remember that any adjustment God expects of you is for **your own good**
- After you make the necessary adjustments, **then God will tell you what to do** next to obey Him
- **When you obey**, then you will **experience God** doing through you something only He can do

Obedience is Costly

You **cannot stay where you** are and go where God wants you to go and be what God wants you to be:

- You **cannot continue doing things your way** and accomplish God's goals -- they must be accomplished His way using Kingdom Principles
- **Obedience is costly** (in human terms) to **you** and to those **around you**
- **Obedience** requires **total dependence** on God who promises that He will watch over you and take care of you as you follow Him

Willingness to **pay the price** of obedience is the **last** -- and biggest -- **step** to doing the will of God

Read John 6:41-69

- Why did some of the disciples **abandon Jesus** at this point? _____
reluctant to fully believe Jesus and give up core beliefs
- Why did the others **remain with Him**? they fully believed in Him

Read Acts 9:1-25

- What kinds of **adjustments** did Saul have to make? total reorientation of his thinking and beliefs
- What did it **cost** Saul to forsake persecuting Christians and follow Jesus? he gave up his whole way of life

Read 2Corinthians 11:24-28

- What **further costs** did the Apostle Paul suffer in his obedience to Christ's Lordship in His life? He was beaten, stoned, killed, imprisoned, etc.

Read Philipplians 3:7-8

- Despite the great cost, how did the Apostle Paul **view** his many hardships? He felt that all these "losses" were actually "gains" because to receive the gift of eternal life is priceless and worth everything

Obedience is Costly to Those Around Us

We are sometimes **reluctant** to do -- or continue doing -- the will of God because of the perceived **costs** to our **family, friends and associates**.

Read Exodus 5:1-21

- When Moses obeyed God and told Pharaoh to “let my people go,” what did it cost the Israelites? harder work, harder times
-

Read John 19:17-37

- What did it cost Jesus’ mother, family, friends and disciples to watch Him die on the cross? agony, sorrow, great emotional distress
-

Read Acts 17:1-9

- When Paul was preaching the gospel at Thessalonica, what did it cost Jason and other followers? they were persecuted for the Gospel
-

Case Study

Hudson Taylor responded to God’s call to go to China as a missionary in the late 1800s. His father had recently died and he had to leave his widowed mother behind. Read Taylor’s account of their parting and try to imagine the emotions they each must have felt:

“My beloved, now sainted, mother had come to see me off from Liverpool. Never shall I forget that day, nor how she went with me into the little cabin that was to be my home for nearly six long months. With a mother’s loving hand she smoothed the little bed. She sat by my side, and joined me in the last hymn that we should sing together before the long parting. We knelt down, and she prayed – the last mother’s prayer I was to hear before starting for China. Then notice was given that we must separate, and we had to say good-bye, never expecting to meet on earth again.

“For my sake she restrained her feelings as much as possible. We parted; and she went on shore, giving me her blessing! I stood alone on deck, and she followed the ship as we moved towards the dock gates. As we passed

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through the gates, and the separation really commenced, I shall never forget the cry of anguish wrung from that mother's heart. It went through me like a knife. I never knew so fully until then, what 'God so loved the world' meant. And I am quite sure that my precious mother learned more of the love of God to the perishing in that hour than in all her life before.

"Praise God, the number is increasing who are finding out the exceeding joys, the wondrous revelations of His mercies, vouchsafed to those who 'follow Him' and emptying themselves, leave all in obedience to His great commission."

- What did it **cost** Hudson Taylor and his mother for him to obey God's will? complete separation; he left his whole life behind

- What did they **learn** about God's love through this experience? _____
the comfort and joy of doing His will

What was the **result** of Hudson Taylor's obedience? He established:

- ⇒ 205 preaching stations
- ⇒ 849 missionaries
- ⇒ 125,000 Chinese Christians

Total Dependence on God

When you are a **servant of God**, you must remain in an **intimate relationship** with Him in order for Him to **accomplish His work** through you.

- The **adjustment** you must make requires you to move from **doing work for God** according to:
 - ⇒ **Your** abilities
 - ⇒ **Your** judgments
 - ⇒ **Your** goals
 - ⇒ **Your** plans
- Instead, you must allow God to **work through you** according to:
 - ⇒ **His** abilities
 - ⇒ **His** judgments
 - ⇒ **His** goals
 - ⇒ **His** plans

Read the following Scriptures and record the **reason** you must **depend on God** to carry out **His purposes**:

John 15:5 can't do anything without Him!

1Corinthians 15:10 not us, but God's grace is what accomplishes Kingdom objectives

Galatians 2:20 it is not us that lives (and does), but rather Christ who lives in us

Isaiah 14:24 God will accomplish His objectives with or without us

Isaiah 41:10 He is our strength

Isaiah 46:9-11 He will accomplish His plans, that's guaranteed

Wait on the Lord

Without God at work **in you**, you cannot bear **Kingdom fruit**:

- If, however, you allow God to work through you, He **guarantees** that His goals and plans **will be accomplished**
⇒ Therefore, you **don't take the initiative**, but rather you **wait on God** until He tells you what, when and where to do something

Read the following Scriptures and record why we should **wait on the Lord**

Psalm 5:3 We will be heard and replied to

Psalm 33:20 He is our help and shield

Psalm 37:34 He will exalt us in due time

Psalm 38:15 He will answer us

Psalm 40:31 He will renew our strength

Active Waiting

Waiting on the Lord is **not a passive, inactive time** but rather a time in which you should:

- **Pray** with a passion to **know God**, His **purposes**, His **ways**
- **Watch** your **circumstances** and ask God to help you **discern** what they mean
- **Share** with other believers and **listen** to what God says **through them**
- **Continue doing** the last thing God told you to do
- **Ask God** if there is something you're **not doing** that He **already told you to do**
⇒ In waiting, you **shift** the **responsibility** of the outcome **to God** – right where it belongs!

Read Matthew 7:7-8 and fill in the blanks below to complete the acronym for what Jesus says we should be doing **when we don't know what to do:**

A sk _____

S eek _____

K nock _____

⇒ And what does Jesus promise will be the result? _____
_____ **We will receive, find and the door will be opened!** _____