

**We have just seen the fulfillment of Jesus Resurrection which guarantees our Resurrection ...That is the highlight of the Gospels...and the highlight of Jesus ministry on earth ...however for Jesus to be faithful to the end of his call ...he had to start call...there was a beginning to the ministry...and it started at his baptism...know this one will never be obedient to bear the cross in the hard times if you cannot bear the cross in the easier times...**

*LK 6: 40 A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.*

**...lets see what we can learn from what Jesus went through immediately after his Baptism...Jesus at the beginning...**

**The temptations of Jesus in the desert probably reveals his human side as much as any other gospel story. Though scripture says he was "like us in all things except sin", we tend to see Jesus unlike us: a miracle worker, an assured teacher, a master of circumstances, someone above it all.**

**But today we will look at him in the desert, weary, vulnerable, struggling for footing in a dangerous land. Was much of his life really like that? Yes for he was fully human**

*Isaiah 53: 2 My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. 3 He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.*

***But that is not His Father's perspective***

*LK 3:21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened<sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "**You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.**" .....*

- **The Father states Jesus is his son, he is loved and in him well pleased...and he was filled with the Holy Spirit! connected to God!**
- **So when he went from high to low and he does it quickly..he knew who he was..who he belonged too.....and God was with him in both high and low...**

- The Father states Jesus his son, he is loved and in him well pleased...
- We might expect that after being introduced through his baptism, Jesus would plunge immediately into public teaching, healing, etc.
- But before he could do this, God led him into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan in the wilderness...**beware when you are in the good place...danger is about...the enemy lurks...** Continual vigilance is always necessary

*LK 4:1 Then Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where he was tempted by the devil for forty days.....Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.*

- **so Jesus is led into the Desert...alone...we are often most vulnerable to temptation when alone...so Jesus dealt with his alone...**
- he had been in the desert 40 days without food...tired and hungry...also makes us vulnerable to temptation...
- it seems the odds were intentionally stacked against Jesus...just like sometimes it feels that way to us...
- 40 days of fasting...

**Jesus did not have a bionic digestive system that could fast 40 days before he felt some hunger pangs. It means that after 40 days he began to **be racked by starvation pains—his digestive system began to digest live tissue.****

**Evidently God the Father had instructed Jesus not to eat until further notice. hold that picture as we answer an important question... Why was it necessary for Jesus to be tempted? There are actually many biblical answers to this question--but I want to focus on the reasons most applicable to you and me.**

- **First what is temptation?** the word "temptation" refers to the inducement to commit an act which appeals to an individual. It is used to describe acts with negative connotations and tends to lead a person to [regret](#) such actions, for various reasons: spiritual, legal, social, relational, psychological (including feeling [guilt](#) and shame), health, economic, etc.

- Temptation begins in the mind by enticing us to believe certain thoughts to be true...when in reality they are lies...

*JAS 1:13 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. <sup>14</sup> Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. <sup>15</sup> These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.*

- **first of all... temptation Sells itself to our desires, and We're All Buying...The thing about temptation is we never discourage it completely...we often like to hear it out!**
- **Like any good con, temptation relies on sleight of hand. Temptation works by demanding that we imagine the worst possible outcome in the situation we are currently experiencing and project that outcome into the future which we cannot see... so we better do something about it...now, cause God isnt doing anything about it.**
- **the temptation seeks to find a place to settle in my mind... a place where I kind of agree with it as a viable solution...**
- **for example ... yeah I am all alone...God doesn't even care... or yeah It is so hard 40 days no carbs...whatever "it" is...I need some kind of relief...choose your favorite it ...it's been so long...**
- **why keep doing this...it's not going to work anyway...So....Giving up or giving in...is an adequate option...at least for right now. My business is nobody else's business...I am tired, God's way is not getting me anywhere**
- **I am justified in doing it my way because....He, she, them, they did such and such...and always remember to throw in the word ...first...**
- **why is this happening to me? as if No one has faced the situation you're in before...**
- **or you have extenuating circumstances that no one else can understand nor even appreciate...**
- **No one can identify with what you are going through..you have been good reward yourself with some sin the enemy always wants us to**

identify ...with being stolen, losing out, taking to long...where is God ...why me! from...future fears,

- **Temptation offers ways out.. God work is to show us how to overcome the temptationws say on course, grow in strength, become what and who he desires us to be in our generation.**

*1CO 10: 13 The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

- **and right are the start of Jesus ministry we are given tactics to overcome temptation...remember it is incremental if you cannot stand up under small temptations you will never conquer the big ones...**

**\*\*\*\*\*While the specifics of Jesus' temptations are very different from ours, we will see that the root temptations are exactly the same. Two things to know:**

1. **Because the real battle is with with Satan the author of temptation, it was fitting for Jesus to start by facing him. he is a thief to steal our identity, destroy our lives**
2. **Jesus had to be tempted so he could be a source of help for us when we are tempted**

*HEB 2: 18 Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.*

- **Empathy with the sinner in His trial does not depend on the experience of sin...but **on the experience of overcoming the temptation**...and the suffering involved in resisting the temptation to sin.**

**The full force of a temptation and the power of it as attractiveness is only experienced by those who resist ...not by the one who gives in.**

- **That is why Jesus capacity to sympathize with those who fall to temptation is so complete...**
- **He was tempted in every way...but resisted it completely and got victory over it...He knows the full power that temptation can wield...and also how to overcome them...**

- we must be vigilant...never think you have sin whooped

**First temptation is always is an attack on identity...**

- Let me share something with you...Temptation is relative...depends on how great the suffering...little suffering little temptation...

*Luke 4:1 Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ....He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where he was tempted.....*

- the Holy Spirit led him to the place of tempting! But he was not the author of the temptation
- **The power of temptation depends not upon the sin involved...but upon the advantage connected to it in regards to our circumstances... little advantage...little temptation...**
- Sin is simply the attempt to fill a need...outside the will of God... what was the temptation and how did he overcome it?

*<sup>3</sup> Then the devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.”*

- he attacked his identity...calling into question his position and relationship with God the Father...wanted him to identify with something else... his mortality, his hunger, both real but not worth compromise
- mediate circumstance and a way to relieve it...perceived need

*LK 4: 4 But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone.’*

- **Jesus secure in his identity to the father...does not let the thought that he is not the son of God find any place to settle.....**
- Jesus answered people lives are not lived by meeting temporal needs alone...that is only part of life...there is a greater life to be lived...it is in obedience to God! is not determined by human needs alone , but identity...

- if your living out your true identity you have no time to live out your false identity. if I live out my honorable identity I have no time to live out my shameful identity...
- so Gods word becomes his way of life...Scripture says...so I do!

## **2)Satan operates from this perspective... Everyone has their price... to leave God...**

*LK 4: 5 Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 “I will give you the **glory** of these kingdoms and **authority** over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please. 7 I will give it all to you if you will worship me.”*

- if you give up that identify with God and identify with me.. i will make you famous... powerful, wealthy, I will meet all your wants... to tempt Jesus he offered what he thought would work... if you are the Son of God so world power ought to tempt him!
- you and meet...far less temptation works...
- and suffering is often the opportunity for a successful temptation to in *draw one away from God*

*JOB 1: 6 One day the members of the heavenly court came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. 7 “Where have you come from?” the LORD asked Satan. Satan answered the LORD, “I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that’s going on.” 8 Then the LORD asked Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil.”*

*9 Satan replied to the LORD, “Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. 10 You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! 11 But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!” 12 “All right, you may test him,” the LORD said to Satan.*

*“Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don’t harm him physically.” So Satan left the LORD’s presence.*

the only reason people stay with God is if he takes care of care of them to their liking...crash their lives and expectations...they will leave in a heartbeat...

- **the devil has a lot of experience..** Heck look at Adam and Eve...they had everything...could do everything..with only one prohibition...and I got them to leave you...
- **I can get Jesus too...and I can get you!**
- **the enemy always wants us to identify ...with what has been being stolen from us or taken from us ..equating that with God's love and care of us...when good happens he loves us when bad happens he either does not love us or is punishing us**
- what does this misidentification cause in us? fear...rejection, pain, anger grief...which leads to self protection...we are defensive, angry, anxious, hurt jealous envious...we look to self comfort...numb..escape lose faith...
- That is what Adam and Eve did...they ate the fruit... out of fear...which produces guilt and shame...death...
- Jesus returned their position gave them back honor, told them not to fear, covered their guilt...made them connect to him again.

**3)His other strategy ...distort the word of God...you actually can determine how God should act...**

*LK 4: 9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! <sup>10</sup> For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect and guard you. <sup>11</sup> And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’*

- *If you are the son of God...God has to protect you...nothing bad can happen to you... even if you do self destructive things...see his word say it...because you are his son he won't let anything bad happen to you....*
- *seescripture says it*

- *so go ahead and throw yourself off the temple...he will catch you and you will not even stub your toe!*
- *for God's highest goal is your comfort in the world and protection from bad things in the world...he lives to serve you we hear it all the time...if God was good why does he allow evil in the world...or I would never follow a God who allows such evil...God is loving so he accepts all behavior even that which he forbids, he doesn't really forbid it...*
- *The truth ...his will be done not mine! and angels will guard you to accomplish God's will*
- *the context of that scripture Satan quoted is*

*Psalm 91: 9 If you make the LORD your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, <sup>10</sup> no evil will conquer you....*

- **you will be attacked but not conquered...**

*Jesus responds...*

*LK 4: 12 Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'*

- **you don't test God! He tests you! he is the shot caller not me...**
- **My job is to trust him...in his sovereign will that is good...that's what we are to eat...survive on more than anything else...**

*John 4:34 Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.*

- **his will is my food! His will is found in his word! and I am sold out to finishing the work of why I am here**

*LK 4: 13 When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.*

*when he was in need again... maybe you are in need?*

**know this we have help always available to stand up under the temptation...**

*HEB 4:14*

<sup>4</sup>So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. <sup>15</sup>This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup>So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.



- Tempted to make choices out of fear, to run, tempted to isolate,
- Tempted to make choice out of anxiety, tempted to rage
- Tempted to love money...tempted to all the ism's
- Tempted sexually, tempted to hate, to despair, to hurt his enemies
- Tempted to be unforgiving, bitter revengeful
- Tempted to quit, tempted to lose hope,
- Tempted In every way just as we are...but always chose the right response....
- So what does he do...Get a big head, Gloat ...condemn us of weaker character.... NO

But beseeches us to approach his throne of Grace...His throne made out of Grace...(undeserved favor)

Not shaking or with fear of rejection ...but with confidence...confident he will help in our time of need...

Promising us we will receive mercy and help...when our time of need is present.

*end*

*John 10: <sup>10</sup> The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.*

### 3. Jesus had to be tempted so he could be a source of help for us when we are tempted

*HEB 2: 18* Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

- Empathy with the sinner in His trial does not depend on the experience of sin...but **on the experience of overcoming the temptation**...and the suffering involved in resisting the temptation to sin.

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- That is why Jesus capacity to sympathize with those who fall to temptation is so complete...
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- **what does that identity cause in us...self protection...we are defensive, angry, anxious, ...**
- **So in order to help us he must therefore be tested to show us the way out**

- While the specifics of Jesus' temptations are very different from ours, we will see that the root temptations are exactly the same.

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- 40 days of fasting...

Jesus did not have a bionic digestive system that could fast 40 days before he felt some hunger pangs. It means that after 40 days he began to be racked by starvation pains—his digestive system began to digest live tissue.

Evidently God the Father had instructed Jesus not to eat until further notice. Read 4:3 (“Since you are the Son of God . . .”).

Satan tried to place doubt in the mind of Jesus with the words "If you are the Son of God." Luke shows that the devil came at the end of Jesus' fast.

That's what God says you are...but you do not look like his son to me...  
The Trap is sprung...

- The danger of this temptation was not in making bread. Jesus was not under a prohibition from miraculously creating food.
- On two occasions Jesus used his power to create bread for a multitude of people (see Mark 6:35-44, Mark 8:1-21)
- The real peril lay in Satan's proposed reason for creating bread. That reason being "If you are the Son of God." Satan was challenging Christ's credentials.
- This temptation (like all temptations) implicitly slanders God (diabollos):

- The root temptation is: **“God doesn’t care about your needs—so you’d better take matters into your own hands!”**

This is the significance of Jesus’ reply (read 4:4).

Jesus’s response...

- points out that trusting God’s Word is a higher priority than any other need—because only in this way will our needs be properly met.

*Jesus is quoting from Deut. 8:3. ...the Israelites after 40 years in the desert...*

*DT 8:1 Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. <sup>2</sup> Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup> He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*

@@@@

he opposite side of Shame is honor guilt is innocent fear is power  
if your living out your true identity you have no time to live out your false  
identity. if I live out my honorable identity I have no time to live out my  
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**And Jesus had to be tempted so he could be a source of help for us when we are tempted**

*HEB 2: 18 18* Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

- Let me share something with you...Temptation is relative...depends on how great the suffering...little suffering little temptation
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- **what does that identity cause in us...self protection...we are defensive, angry, anxious, ...lose the identity...the action with change...**

- **That is what Adam and Eve did...they ate the fruit... out of fear...which produces guilt and shame...death...Jesus returned their honor, told them not to fear, covered their guilt...made them innocent again....but death came**

*HEB 4:*<sup>14</sup> So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. <sup>15</sup> This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

The full force of a temptation and the power of it as attractiveness is only experienced by those who resist ...not by the one who gives in.

- That is why Jesus capacity to sympathize with those who fall to temptation is so complete...
- He was tempted in every way...but resisted it completely and got victory over it...He knows the full power that temptation can wield...
- **how did he resist...always clung to his identity as the son of God...not just a human in need...**
- And he also knows how to overcome it...
- *he attacked his identity...calling into question his position and relationship with God the Father..wanted him to identify with something else... his mortality, his hunger, his immediate perceived need*

*LK 4:*<sup>4</sup> But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.

- *Jesus answered his life is not determined by need alone , but identity... so Gods word*

*LK 4:*<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. <sup>6</sup> "I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup> I will give it all to you if you will worship me."

*if you identify you self with me....you will receive all you need..worship is all about identify...what you worship is what you identify most with...*

*LK 4:*<sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'"

- *Jesus said this is who you are to identify with beyond any other identity, and whom you are to serve...at whatever cost*

**We need to understand something about how Satan operates...**

Satan operates from this perspective...

- Everyone has their price... to leave God...

*LK 4:* <sup>9</sup> Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! <sup>10</sup> For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you.' <sup>11</sup> And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'

*If you are the son of God... God has to protect you... nothing bad can happen to you... because you are his son he wont let anythgn bad happen to you....so go ahead and throw yourself off the temple... he will catch you and you will not even stub your toe!*

*LK 4:12* <sup>12</sup> Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.

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John 4:34 Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.

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Why was it necessary for Jesus to be tempted by Satan?

There are actually many biblical answers to this question--but I want to focus on the reason most applicable to you and me.

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John 10: <sup>10</sup> The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

- **the enemy always wants us to identify ...with being stolen from...mortality fears, and we will lose something...**
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- And he also knows how to overcome it...

**When were practicing truth telling everything in our life changes...when we speak in truth to God our relationship with God changes our relationship**

*John 8:31* Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. <sup>32</sup> And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

**We only truly believe what we are prepared to put into practice.**

*John 1:12* Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

- Verse 12 has been rightly seen as one of the greatest verses in all of the New Testament for it tells us how to be saved.



**A Simple Step—Receiving ...**The way of salvation begins with a simple step: “To all who received him.”

- **The word “receive” means to welcome a visitor into your home.** It’s what happens when someone knocks at your door and you open the door and invite them to come in.
- **To “receive” Christ means to welcome him as an honored guest and to have him make you his home.**

**A Wonderful Result—Child of God**

- **“He gave the right to become children of God.”** The word “right” means “honor” or “privilege.”
- **The moment you receive Christ into your life, God gives you the honor of becoming a member of his family.**
- **God only gives the privilege of being his children to those who by personal faith receive Jesus as the God who became flesh to save us...**

**Verse 13 explains how this takes place... we become God’s children. There are three “nots” and one “but”—and all four are important.**

**A. Not of natural descent.** You aren’t a Christian just because your parents were Christians And you won’t get brownie points with God just because you come from a good family and have a fine education. ... Your family background doesn’t count when it comes to salvation.

**B. Nor of human decision.** Literally this reads “not of the will,” meaning there is nothing you can do to save yourself—so don’t bother trying.

**C. Or of a husband’s will.** Literally it is “not of the will of a man,” meaning pedigree... No man is big enough to swing open the pearly gates on your behalf.

**D. But born of God.** Here is the heart of the gospel. Salvation is of the Lord. It’s a free gift—totally free and totally of grace. you receive it!! It’s not a cooperative venture where you do your part and God does his.

**But someone may object, “Don’t I have a part to play in salvation?” Sure you have a part. Your part is to be hopelessly lost in sin and God’s part is to save you. That way God alone gets the credit. Salvation is a work of God from first to last.**

**becomes more intense....If I want to know what God is doing in my life, I must speak in truth...God will only speak to you in truth...that means I have to live and speak in truth....it does not mean I am sinless...it simply means I speak the truth...that is the real me...the one who is truthful...for that is the real me ....Real Person**

**I really am fearful, I am really sad...it is not speaking from the mind...but from the heart...if I speak from my mind especially as a Christian I know I am supposed to be content...but the heart know the truth I am not...**

**The heart receives the information...about myself...the mind conjurors is the organizer and processor...**

***Matthew 22:37* Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”**

- **The heart mentioned first...then should my innermost being...then mind...the processing faculty...**
- **The enemy wants you to live from your mind...for it is the rational part...and usually wrong...this is called the false self... the mind basis of operation is to process everything it receives presently...the information... and process it through everything it experiences from the past...it is rational...**
- **The heart see everything anew...it is fresh...the heart want to explore, create, is adventurous...to rise up and try new...and the mind shuts it down...this is what happened in the past...nope!**
- **Being Real is the first step to being your True self....**
- **the True self is what God says you are...what God claims as your identity!**

*the problem is we live by the False self... the false self is the lying self...the deceptive self...it is where the enemy wants us to live... the False self is the dream killer... is the creative destroyer, is the hope derailer*

**we generally live between the real self and the false self...you want your life to change live in the True self!**

*1CO 10:* <sup>12</sup>If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. <sup>13</sup>The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

- Sympathy with the sinner in His trial does not depend on the experience of sin...but on the experience of overcoming the temptation
  - So in order to help us he must therefore be tested before his father can use him...

**One of the ways Jesus helps us is by exposing how Satan tempts us.** While the specifics of Jesus' temptations are very different from ours, we will see that the root temptations are exactly the same.

Not only this--Jesus' temptations also correspond to the kinds of temptations we face in different stages of spiritual development. Let me show you what I mean . . .

### **We need to understand something about how Satan operates...**

Satan operates from this perspective...

- Every man has his price... to leave God...

*JOB 1:1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. <sup>2</sup> He had seven sons and three daughters, <sup>3</sup> and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.*

*JOB 1:4 His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. <sup>5</sup> When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.*

*JOB 1:6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. <sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"*

*Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."*

*JOB 1:8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."*

*JOB 1:9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. <sup>10</sup> "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. <sup>11</sup> But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."*

- Every man can be bought away from God..
- the only reason people stay with God is if he takes care of their physical needs...
- **remove that and their gone...**

**Heck look at Adam and Eve...they had everything...could do everything..with only one prohibition...and I got them to leave you...**

### **I can get Jesus too...**

*LK 4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.*

*LK 4:3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."*

*LK 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.' "*

### **“Turn these stones into bread”**

The word "wilderness" refers to deserted areas in the unpopulated wilds of Palestine. It is often translated as "desert." Mark indicates Jesus was "with the wild beasts," presumably isolated from the distractions of humanity (Mark 1:13).

Now lets understand Temptation from God’s perspective...

4. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the Desert...

5. From God’s perspective ... temptation is not brought by Him for he tempts no one...

JAS 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

6. so the temptation is not meant to make us sin...it is meant to enable us to conquer sin...

7. it is not meant to make us bad but to make us good...

so Jesus is led into the Desert...alone...we are often most vulnerable to temptation when alone...so Jesus dealt with his alone...

- he had been in the desert 40 days without food...tired and hungry...also makes us vulnerable to temptation...
- it seems the odds were intentionally stacked against Jesus...just like sometimes it feels that way to us...
- 40 days of fasting...

Jesus did not have a bionic digestive system that could fast 40 days before he felt some hunger pangs. It means that after 40 days he began to **be racked by starvation pains—his digestive system began to digest live tissue.**

Evidently God the Father had instructed Jesus not to eat until further notice. Read 4:3 (“Since you are the Son of God . . .”).

Satan tried to place doubt in the mind of Jesus with the words "If you are the Son of God." Luke shows that the devil came at the end of Jesus' fast.

That’s what God says you are...but you do not look like his son to me...

The Trap is sprung...

- The danger of this temptation was not in making bread. Jesus was not under a prohibition from miraculously creating food.
- On two occasions Jesus used his power to create bread for a multitude of people (see Mark 6:35-44, Mark 8:1-21)
- **The real peril lay in Satan's proposed reason for creating bread. That reason being "If you are the Son of God." Satan was challenging Christ's credentials.**
- This temptation (like all temptations) implicitly slanders God (diabollos):
- **The root temptation is: “God doesn’t care about your needs—so you’d better take matters into your own hands!”**

This is the significance of Jesus’ reply (read 4:4).

Jesus’s response...

- points out that trusting God’s Word is a higher priority than any other need—because only in this way will our needs be properly met.

*Jesus is quoting from Deut. 8:3. ...the Israelites after 40 years in the desert...*

*DT 8:1 Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. <sup>2</sup> Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup> He humbled you, causing you to hunger*

*and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. <sup>5</sup> Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.*

The context of this situation has significant parallels to Jesus' (see Ex. 16:1ff). The nation of Israel was also in the midst of a wilderness because they were following God's will for them. No sooner did they begin to get hungry than they desired to "go back to Egypt." This was their way of taking matters into their own hands to meet their needs.

But that is not how the Israelites initially handled their hunger... after 75 days in the desert...

*EX 16:1 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."*

*EX 16:4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. <sup>5</sup> On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."*

*EX 16:6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, <sup>7</sup> and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" <sup>8</sup> Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."*

- They got out of Egypt slavery...but getting Egypt ...slavery thinking... out of them was going to take much longer...
- This is the most basic form of temptation, one to which we should all be able to relate.

- We are very needy creatures.
- We need physical sustenance, relational closeness, significance through accomplishment, security, etc.
- God, who created us with these needs, calls us to a love-trust relationship with him in which we rely on his Word to define our needs and tell us how God will meet them.
- Satan tells you this is madness, and urges you to meet your needs and make your life work independently from God. Can you recognize this temptation in your own life?
- This is Satan's main tactic to distract you from ever coming to Christ. He just keeps drawing attention to your circumstances your many needs— or your trying times and dishing up different ways for you to meet them without entrusting yourself to God.
- This is also Satan's main tactic for de-railing Christians from growing in Christ.
- When you come to Christ, God experientially shows you his love. But before long, he “kicks you out of the cradle” by allowing you to experience need.
- This is so that your faith will grow as you trust God's Word and then experience his provision. But many young Christians instead decide to “go back to Egypt” by meeting their needs in the old ways.
- Tragically, many true Christians never get out of spiritual babyhood because of this.

Hungry I come to you...

\*\*\*\*\*

Sometimes we have to be led to the wilderness...to reconnect with God

All of natural life has an ebb and flow, a rhythm we feel in the seasons, in the passage of time, in the sunrise and sunset, in the bloom of the flower, the hatching of the fledgling, the rise and fall of the tides, the phases of the moon, birth and death, and the wafting of the breezes, winter blizzards, and spring zephyrs. Modern culture has artificially interrupted the rhythm, replacing it with electric lights, artificial environments, and concrete jungles.

Spiritual disciplines, when practiced faithfully, restore the inner self to connection with nature's rhythm, which of course, is really God's heartbeat.

The Heart of a Champion      Realizing Ultimate Wholeness    3/28/04

It is not what lies Behind  
 It is not what lies Ahead  
 But what lies within... The heart ...which determines success

And God knows this... And any good coach knows this...and any minister worth his salt knows this...

It doesn't matter how great or not great a start you had, much you know or don't know, how big you are, or how good you look...you must have Heart

When I speak of heart I mean the willingness/ the mind set to do whatever it takes to finish strong... to not quit...

Private Ryan clip..

The Lieutenant mortally wounded yet fights on with the only thing he can...his pistol..

That is the kind of man I want by my side...a man with heart



- When I call a police man to help ...I want a man with a heart to protect...not iffy... somewhat committed
- If my home is on fire...I want a Fireman who is committed ...with heart to put out the fire... not more concerned with getting soot on his clothes
- If someone comes into my home and tries to hurt my family...I will kill him...period
- Heart separates those who do from those who don't

This is the kind of Person God looks for..

*2 Chron.16:9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.*

That is what He found in David..

*ISA 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

I see the same thing in people...

- Married couples who have no heart to fight for their marriage...
- Oh, they have the ring on, go home to the same place at night...but not have the heart to do whatever it takes to make the marriage work...to win in marriage...so live in miserable failing marriages

Christians...they have the bible, sometimes even go to church...but no heart to make it their life... so live defeated lives...

Parents...they have children...but no heart or passion to become influential people in the lives of their children...no heart

To live a life of wholeness... you can't just say you want it...you must have a heart to do it...period...it just doesn't happen...and it isn't easy!

God gives us the tools...

*2PE 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given*

*us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

But we have to have the heart...

The Lord said this about the Israelites...

Deut 5:27 Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey."

DT 5:28 The LORD heard you when you spoke to me and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good. <sup>29</sup> Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

- Moses last speech to Israelites before entering the land of Canaan
- Has just given them the ten commandments
- They said they would follow and do whatever the Lord said.

**The Lord responds that what they said was Good...but they had no heart to do it!!!**

They were not sold out...so they would not carry through when the going got tough...

That is what heart is all about ...

- ***Hanging in there when the there becomes tough to hang onto...***
- Having the heart to keep going when your:
  - Heart is broken
  - When your heart is attacked...heart attack
  - When you find yourself with a divided heart
  - When a place in your heart is hard... hard hearted
  - When your heart is weak...weak heart
  - When your heart is faint...faint hearted
  - When your heart is stubborn...stubborn hearted
  - When your heart is closed...closed heart
  - When your heart is corrupted...corrupt heart
  - When you just plain lose heart...

You see were all veterans in the war of disappointment and pain...

- And that is what separates those with heart from those who become passive observers ...
- The opposite of heart is Passivity...

- And nothing tempts people to shrink back like pain and disappointment in life.
- Or their Christian walk, their marriage, parenting, job loss tragedy, money problems, failure
- And that becomes the difference... a person with heart experiences the same ups and downs of life like everyone else... He or she fights on... keeps going and
- Finds in their weakness God's strength... that is why Paul could say

<sup>2</sup> Cor 12:8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

So often, we as special needs parents are told that we were chosen because we are somehow stronger than other parents. But this is what I'm here to tell you: we weren't always this way. We aren't special needs parents because we are strong, we are strong because we are special needs parents. And these parents I know, these freaking warrior mamas and daddies, they deserve the credit for doing what it takes day in and day out to build that strength.

These are parents who dropped their careers and learned to make it, even if it meant completely readjusting their life to new financial means. They learned terms, and medications, and even medical procedures for their kids. They power through the lifting and the bodily fluids and the sleepless nights. They have higher instances of physical and mental illness, and sky high divorce rates. They build entire businesses to employ their child when others will not. They sit through meeting after meeting to make sure their child's needs are met. Even the most conserved, quiet ones have probably yelled at someone, somewhere who was denying their child those rights. They keep track of appointments, refills, and supplies. They have slept in hospital recliners, rode in the back of ambulances, and cried in waiting rooms after their child was rolled away for surgery.

We don't tell bodybuilders that they are such because God made them strong enough. We don't tell doctors that they are such because God gave them the knowledge.

**Strength is BUILT. Knowledge is ACQUIRED. Endurance is LEARNED. how you handle now...makes for your future....**

The world wants your best ... God wants YOU!

You are worth so much to God that he wants to forgive you of all your wrongs so that you can be with him... always in a love relationship separated from all wrong doing against him.

## By perseverance the snail Reached the Ark Hebrews 12:1

*HEB 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

*Whatever is not motivated by love will not result in love*

*JN 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and **the truth will set you free.**"*

- The key is holding on to his teaching....
  - Then the truth will become clear, and you will be set free from the lies you believe... (for a lie is the opposite of the truth.)
  - Think of a combination lock...there are thousands of combination which you can try to use to open the lock...but there is only one true combination.
  - And the true combination is only worthwhile if you hold on...(remember it).
  - To use it one time and forget it avails you one time usefulness.

Or as James the Lord's half brother puts it...

*JAS 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.*

Our identity gives rise to the way we think about ourselves...the way we think about ourselves governs our behavior. Notices that Paul does not command us to behave a certain way in order to become something were not. Rather he commands us to remember who we already are in Christ and to think and live accordingly.

We don't tell doctors that they are such because God gave them the knowledge.

Strength is BUILT. Knowledge is ACQUIRED. Endurance is LEARNED. ***"I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions."*** –Stephen Covey

- It was in his weakness, he learned to depend on Jesus
- It was in his weaknesses, he learned to trust God methods
- It was when his weakness were exposed...that he was then able to become strong:
- Paul healed many but could do nothing for himself...He learned to trust God in that physical weakness
- Paul was a genius and even saw heaven...but his trust was in God...not his knowledge
- Paul never forgot he was a murderer and a sinner...but still had the Heart to do what God told him too..

*1CO 15:9 For **I am the least** of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But **by the grace of God** I am what I am, and his*

*grace to me was not without effect. **No, I worked harder** than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

Two things Paul relied on...

1. God's Grace...his help
2. Pauls's working hard...he had heart

As I said we all start out veterans of life's disappointments and pain...but those with God's grace and a heart to do it...achieve much...

David called by God because of His heart... <sup>1SA 13:13</sup> "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. <sup>14</sup> But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his **own heart** and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

- A heart in line with God's
- Then all hell breaks loose in David life
- Chased by Saul for ten years in the desert..
- But he had a heart to trust and follow God...

We all struggle with stuff...sometimes it is what lies ahead as in David's case and sometimes it is what lies behind as with the men, that joined David..

*<sup>1SA 22:1</sup> David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. <sup>2</sup> All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.*

- David running for His life and others join him too
- They had all lost money
- They had all lost homes
- They had all lost reputation
- They had all lost relationships
- They had all experienced failure
- And some had lost hope

These were just the people that God's looks for...because they all had one thing...Heart and in fact out of this bunch came the mighty men of God...

*<sup>2SA 23:8</sup> These are the names of David's **mighty men**:*

*Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.*

Go to verse 11

*2SA 23:11 Next to him was **Shammah** son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them. <sup>12</sup> But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.*

*Of the 400 men, 37 became might men of the 37 3 stood out in particular  
I want ot mention two specifically...*

*Josheb-Bassheboth and Shammah*

Josheb-Bassheboth means shame

- How would you like to be given that name
- We don't know much about his past, but his name speaks volumes of his past.
- Perhaps his family lived in shame...were prejudiced against, poverty stricken
- But it is not where you come from it is the heart...
- David a man after God's won heart accepted him
- A man with heart can identify others with heart
- Josheb is the kind of man I want...made a stand and killed 800 enemy
- It wasn't what was behind him...It was what was in him...

And Shammah whose name means waste...

- Had the heart to protect a bean field when every one else ran away...
- And single handedly killed all the marauders.

**A man with heart isn't destroyed by adversity he is strengthened... whether it is from his past...in the midst of it now ...or will experience it in the future...**

- When you feel small and insignificant
- When the words of critics crush
- When disappointment seems to define you...

You must have heart to know that God does not see you that way>>>>

That you are significant

That you are not overlooked

That you are a powerful warrior...warrioress!

Those weaknesses are exposed so change can take place...Why to increase Capability...

David's was given the Throne of Israel and his reign lasted 450 years. But he did not do it alone...he had men of heart with him

Well Jesus Christ the son of David has been given a throne that will last forever...and he is looking for people with heart to promote his kingdom in this Generation...just as he has done in every previous generation...and will after us until he returns to take possession of this earth.

Do you have the Heart...I am not talking only about salvation...I am talking about the Heart to follow Jesus anywhere and in everything...  
He is looking for his mighty men in this church...If the Lord were to look in here what kind of heart would he find in you and me.

When I die I want to be remembered as a man with heart...A heart to follow Jesus...not perfect...for it will never be...but I want to be known as David was...

*Acts 13:22 After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'*

What does that mean?

It means whatever God has for me to do I want to do it with all my heart...Having a heart to do it...

- For example I want you to be able to say of me...he pastored this church with his Heart
- When I die, I want my children, grandchildren and if the Lord carries My great grandchildren to take my t-shirts out of my drawer in my bureau and be able to smell my smell and say they knew me...I had heart for them...I truly was a daddy to them a Papa to the grand kids...because I had a heart for it. And they were glad I was their Dad and Papa.
- When I pass on I want Therese, to know I loved her ...not only in words...but that I layed my life down for her...Not because I had too...but because I had a heart to do it...

I want the same words on the epitaph of my life that David had on His..

*AC 13:36 "For when David had served God's **purpose** in his own **generation**, he fell asleep;*

I pray that God gives me the heart...

And if you would like me to pray for the same kind of heart for you...please come forward...during the worship music..

Right now right where God has you...

It is not what's behind you what's ahead of you but what is in you...

Jesus is looking for people with Heart today...

*Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was **lost**.*"

**@@@@@**

**Your talent is God's gifts to you, how you use them is your gift to God**

**Walking with Jesus is a journey whose destination lies somewhere beyond the horizon.**

**Even when we think we've arrived, we haven't. Even when we think, "Aha! I've made it at last," life suddenly changes and we take a sharp bend in the road. But the journey itself ought to be enjoyed.**

**Knowing God's will is a journey, not a destination, and along the way we will sometimes be quite confused. And sometimes we will be flat wrong about what God really wants for us. The bottom line is not being "right" or "wrong" about God's will, If you are willing to follow him, he will lead you exactly where he wants you to go. There is nothing controversial about that statement. All Christians would agree with it.**

**As I ponder our own personal future, I see some things clearly while other things are a mystery to me. Then I remember what Job said.**

*Job 23:8 "But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him.*

*<sup>9</sup> When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.<sup>10</sup> But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.*

- **He knows the way that I take even when I don't.**
- **He knows the way that I take even when I can't see clearly.**
- **He knows the way that I take even when I get lost.**

**Looking back, we find it easy to count our blessings and to see the hand of the Lord moving on our behalf. So much has happened that we did not expect, but as they say on the street, "It's all good."**

**The problem comes at the next level—the level of practical application. We know God guides His children, but how does that divine guidance work out in the nitty-gritty details?** At precisely this point we need to be very clear in our thinking. There is much misinformation, much poor teaching, so much faulty theology when we come to the "how-to" of God's guidance. As a result many Christians continually make wrong turns, go down dead-end streets, and end up in spiritual cul-de-sacs because they don't understand what God has said about the way he guides His children.

**In order to help us understand the biblical perspective, I'm going to share as we start our study two wrong ideas about God's guidance and a biblical answer for each one. Each of these myths, though popular, can be devastating to believers.**



### **Myth #1: God wants you to know the future**

It is the mistake of assuming the end from the beginning. Because God has led us one step in a particular direction, we assume the destination is certain. Let's be clear on this one point. It is rarely God's will for you to know your personal future.

Psalm 119:105 paints a clear picture of how we discover the will of God:

*Psa 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."*

- The picture here is not of a blazing light that illuminates an entire room. It is a picture of a man in total darkness walking along a trail sometimes a dangerous trail. There is no moon in the sky. Darkness clings to him.
- **His only light comes from the lantern in his hand. As he holds the lantern, it illuminates the step right in front of him.**
- When he takes that step, the light moves forward one more step. The light is bright enough to illuminate the path in front and the next step...

Let's face the truth—we want to know the future. At least we think we do. We want to know what is going to happen next year, so we can be ready in advance. But God won't play that game with us.

Does he know what will happen tomorrow? Yes, he does; but he's not telling anyone else about it. Or to put it in familiar terms, does God have a blueprint for your life? Yes, he does; but I don't know any way you can get a copy.

**God wants to teach us to trust him step by step. He leads one step at a time, so we will trust him moment by moment.**

- **God expects us to use the tools he has given us in decision making...**
- **His word, wisdom of people, our wisdom gained through experiences, our talents, hopes and dreams...**

### **Myth #2: God wants you to have 100 percent certainty before you make a decision**

- Many people believe they must be 100 percent certain of God's will before they make a decision. I can understand their thinking. After all, if you are facing a life-changing decision—a potential marriage, a cross-country move, a new career, which college to attend, whether or not to begin chemotherapy—you'd like to know in advance beyond any doubt that you are doing what God wants you to do.
- **There are two problems with this point of view.** First, sometimes we think we know God's will with 100 percent certainty only to find out later that we were mistaken.
- The other problem—which is more common for most believers—is that in our search for certainty about God's will, we end up paralyzed by an inability to make up our minds. Some decisions are so important they can't be left to chance. As the popular saying goes, "When in doubt, don't." If you aren't sure about the new job, don't

take it; don't make the move, don't say yes, don't make any decision with less than total certainty.

- We see this principle illustrated in Acts 16. Paul had been in what was considered **Asia minor** composed today by Iraq, Syria, Israel. Asia minor is composed today by Turkey
- Acts 16:9<sup>9</sup> During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." <sup>10</sup> After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.
- **But when the apostle Paul saw in a vision the man from Macedonia, Heeding the man's plea to "come over to Macedonia," Paul altered his plans.** sailed across the Aegean Sea toward modern day Europe and came to Philippi
- When they got there, they stayed for a while in Philippi can't get anything going....so they go down to a river and meet a woman named Lydia. But what about "the man"? He was nowhere to be found.
- not much later...Later on Paul and Silas were arrested, stripped, flogged, and thrown in jail. That night during an earthquake, they led their jailer to Christ, then baptized him and his whole family.
- The next morning Paul and Silas were released and escorted out of the city by the town leaders, who were glad to see them go.

It's a strange story. **In many ways it appears that Paul failed in Philippi.**

This was not Where is the great church he came to establish? Paul did what he felt he was being led in toward and it would accomplish his mission of starting a church.. It was definitely not what he expected!

Many times you won't have 100 percent certainty; but when the moment comes to decide, you must make the best decision you can, trusting God for the results.

Sometimes you'll know more, sometimes less; but living by faith means taking the next step anyway. **And It was in Macedonia where the evangelization of the Western world began.**

**Listen...When God leads it is usually unique to that individual.** Moses had no precedent for a burning bush experience. He couldn't say, "Oh, this is my burning bush experience. His experience was unique, because God wants our experience with Him and His voice, to be personal to us.

If Moses had been alive today, he might have been tempted to write a book, "**My**

**Burning Bush Experience And How You Can Have One, Too!"** Everyone would be reading it and looking for their "burning bush" experience.

- But we mustn't get hung up on imitating the experiences of people mentioned in the Bible, but instead learn that God did speak then and He still desires to speak today... and he gives us wisdom and freedom to choose to live our lives in a way that is a blessing to others...and fits with the way we have been made...
- so before we move on lets quickly review how the principles God gave us in making decisions...

### **Principles of decision making ...The way of wisdom**

1. When God commands we must obey
2. Where there is no command God gives us freedom and responsibility to choose
3. Where there is no command God gives us wisdom to choose
4. We should plan humbly, remembering that God is the final sovereign determiner of every plan
5. Circumstances define the context of the decision and must be weighed with wisdom, not read to find God's individual will
6. "Open doors" are not God's commands but God given opportunities to be evaluated by wisdom
7. When we have chosen what is moral and wise, we must trust the Sovereign God to work all details together for good, even though he does not reveal his sovereign plan ahead of time.

we have studied the first five ..today the last two...

Which takes us to principle number 6 ... Open Doors...

6. "Open doors" are not God's commands but God given opportunities to be evaluated by wisdom

### **The open door not taken...**

*2CO 2: 12 Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, <sup>13</sup> I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.*

**Paul went to Troas and found an open door...they wanted him to stay ...and build a church...**

- 1) But he would not for he was concerned for Titus...who had gone to Corinth with a letter and Paul was awaiting his response...
- 2) So he went to look for him...although the door was opened ...he used wisdom to determine his steps...
- 3) Same goes for closed doors...may mean a timing issue...

#### 4) He possibly came back later some Bible scholars believe...

**The open door taken...** Paul had a plan yet took into account his circumstances...and actually makes a decision that would make his life harder...but his ministry more fruitful...

*1CO 16: 5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. 6 Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.*

- I will stay longer in Ephesus...there is much effective work...but there is much coming against it...
- I will stay to make sure it is not stopped... **Wisdom is key... even though it will be harder on me!**

7. When we have chosen what is moral and wise, we must trust the Sovereign God to work all details together for good, even though he does not reveal his sovereign plan ahead of time.

**When all is said and done... it is pretty simple... follow Jesus ... choose wisely how to live, bless others... and then rest in the promises of God:**

*EPH 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (or dream or think or plan), according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

**the word imagine means dream...**

**\*\*\*\*\*A dream is a picture or vision of you or your life not as it is, not as it has been but as it was meant to be... It is not an event is a transformation...In us...our decisions have the power to transform our lives...**

*Isaiah 54:1 “Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child, burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,”*  
says the Lord.

*2 “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.*

- **So You can hold far more than you evr thought possible...many of us have been like this barren woman!**
- **...Imagine big....and do big things because we have a big God who is able to do far more abundantly than we are able to ask...or imagine...or think...**

**So Whether you are a new follower of Jesus or have followed him for 40 years , whether you are in a tough stretch or basking on the mountaintop God is continuing to work in us and through us...he only asks the we be willing to let him...**

**We can and should have a dream for what God has yet to do both in us and through us...**

**the beauty of the way of wisdom is that God's refusal to tell us what to do in every situation is actually for our benefit.**

- **it causes us to embrace challenge**
- **to stretch beyond where we are currently ...**
- **it matures us, causes us to grow...increases our capacity and expands our lives!**
- **turns us into men and women who make a difference in our generation!**
- **moving us toward becoming the person God created us to be...**
- **we get to grow up in the faith...rejoice you are growing up in the faith...**

*We see this in the next incident recorded in the Gospel of Luke ...which further illuminates the will of God...*

*LK 10:25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*LK 10:26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

*LK 10:27 He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' ; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "*

*LK 10:28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live"*

All of the Bible (it's rules, regulations, limitations, expectations, threats of punishment, promises of redemption...ALLLLL of it--from the book of contents to the book of maps) is summed up like this:

Love God with every single fiber of your thoughts, emotions and personality. And, love other people JUST LIKE THAT.

the truest point: love shows. Great love shows more.

**So....my advice and theology these days as time goes on I know a part more....love God...love people....then, do what you want...the way of wisdom.. That is what life is about...**

*1CO 10:23 "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is constructive.<sup>24</sup> Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.*

- **If it Benefits, builds, and is Good for others it's good for you...wisdom**                      End

**We can and should have a dream for what God has yet to do both in us and through us...discover what you can do that blesses others ...you will never work again ...but you will labor...it will be a labor of love**

5. Circumstances define the context of the decision and must be weighed with wisdom, not read to find God's individual will

**Circumstances must be taken into consideration when making decisions**

- **The problem with circumstances is determining the message they send... Jesus' disciples thought that blindness was caused by sin... they misread the circumstance...**

*JN 9:1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

*JN 9:3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*

- They thought this man was being punished...they just didn't know who to blame..
- **Jesus said no one was to blame...God allowed it as part of his plan...which makes me think ...what a strong person he chose to bear this blindness his whole life ...up to this one day.... which Jesus had planned to change his life him see and the hearts of many witnesses as their hearts would see!**

**Or...Jesus disciples judging this circumstance wrongly**

*LK 13:1 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? <sup>3</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them--do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."*

1. **General opinion erred in thinking that those whom Pilate killed and 18 who were killed in an accident under a tower were worse sinners than others ...**
2. **Jesus corrected them...do not make your decisions only on circumstances..... that is not what finally kills man...sin is...you repent or turn from what is killing you...or you will perish too.**
3. **And...Job's friends gave him nine chapters worth of advice based on his circumstances that his circumstances were a punishment... and they were wrong for nine chapters**
4. **Sometimes circumstances can be read correctly ... even though they make life harder though more fruitful**
  - **Paul had a plan yet took into account his circumstances...and actually makes a decision that would make his life harder...but his ministry more fruitful...**

*1CO 16:5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you--for I will be going through Macedonia. <sup>6</sup> Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. <sup>7</sup> I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. <sup>8</sup> But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, <sup>9</sup> because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.*

- **I will stay longer in Ephesus...there is much effective work...but there is much coming against it...I will stay to make sure it is not stopped...**

**And...Job's friends gave him nine chapters worth of advice based on his circumstances that his circumstances were a punishment... and they were wrong for nine chapters**

*EST 4:12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, <sup>13</sup> he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. <sup>14</sup> For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. **And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"***

*EST 4:15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: <sup>16</sup> "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. **And if I perish, I perish."***

1. Ethnic cleansing of Jews...by Persia and Media... was about to take place orchestrated by a leader named Hamen...
2. Esther married to King Xerxes, but withheld her ethnicity from him
3. Until such a time as this...

Wisdom is key in interpreting our circumstances...to stay or go...step out or stay put... to get right even though good things are happening...to stay put even though it hard things are happening...

- Wisdom is key in interpreting our circumstances...to stay or go...step out or stay put...
- Wisdom also leaves room that we could be misreading the circumstances...
- the important truth is that circumstance will come and go...and must be considered...but our God has promised:

*Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

end

@@@@@



- Scripture does not use the term disilluminated, or cognitive dissonance but there are many examples of people in scripture whose symptoms attitudes and feelings parallel ours....that gives me some hope and definitely comfort!
- Solomon the writer of Ecclesiastes and described as the wisest man who ever lived... certainly fits the description... exhausted and disilluminated...

*ECC 2: 15 Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity.<sup>16</sup> For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool!*

- I can do everything right like a wise person would...and it can all go wrong as if I was being a fool the whole time.....

**I am so disappointed...**

*ECC 2: 22 What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? <sup>23</sup> For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity*

- He thought his labor would produce fulfilling and amazing things.... Come to find out All My labor has been exhausting...
- and I don't even sleep anymore...Haven't got what I hoped...disilluminated

**And how about Elijah when exhausted and disilluminated after a powerful time of victory in ministry made these statements... ..**

*1KI 19: 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."*

**Here Is a guy who destroyed four hundred false prophets for God!!!... and apparently no one really cared, not even God ...it gained him no popularity... it actually did the opposite and put him on the Kings most wanted list**

- I thought the outcome would be different...completely disilluminated..... as he finds himself in the desert... saying I have had enough...take me out...
- and a little motive has shown thru...A little bit of pride revealed..."I'm no better than my ancestors" which translated means...I thought I was better!
- Forty days into his disilluminament...a lot of self talk has been taking place... he comes to this conclusion... God you don't even care!

*1KI 19: 9 There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."*

**I have been a good prophet... totally sold out for you...**

- **not like your people...who not only reject you they kill your prophets...**
- **apparently you don't appreciate me, and they don't appreciate me, and no one helps me.... in fact they even are trying to kill me...**
- **I am the only one who works hard for you...I am all alone... what a waste of time and energy...all for nothing. Now that's a major funk!**
- **I am completely disillusioned...I have certainly not received the results I worked so hard for...**

and what about Job...

*JOB 1: There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. 2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3 He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. 4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed<sup>[a]</sup> God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.*

- **and boom he loses it all...so much for righteous living... including ten children...I can't even begin to grasp that kind of pain...**
- **but Job did something that I admit I have sinned in....in all his losses he did not say God did him wrong....**

*JOB 1: 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. 22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.*

- He greatly grieved....and realized...he has little control...naked I came...naked I leave...all the coverings, hopes, dreams...end
- The Lord is the one who gives and also has the power to take away...regardless his name is still the Blessed name...
- **He worshipped and did not sin...by rejecting God...as being wrong in his ways**
- **I believe that also...but my feelings don't necessarily agree...**

And Jesus speaking in the synagogue in Capernaum said...

*John 6: 54* Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

- **You must take all of me into you life...I am your food and drink...**

<sup>60</sup> When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" <sup>61</sup> But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?"

- **Is it part me and part you? You receive from me what agrees with you? and reject that which does not? Does that sound better to you?**
- **And the answer is yes for many..**

<sup>66</sup> After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

- **and of course John the Baptist...the greatest Old Testament prophet in the estimation of Jesus...after he is imprisoned by King Herod and soon to be executed...**

*Matt 11:1* When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. <sup>2</sup> Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples<sup>3</sup> and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers<sup>[a]</sup> are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

**The truth is we all really live in troubled times...is there really any other type of times?.. for it often seems like we are either trials , coming out of a trial or heading toward a trial...**

**But the truth is we are not always in troubled times... and neither were these former greats!**

**They all flourished in their lives and ministires at one time...so how were they able to maintain their Faith in the troubled times?**

**By maintining it in the not troubled times...for it is in the non troubled times that we learn how to handle the trouble times...**

*How you may ask does that happen? It happens this way...Faith living must be practiced in the calm and stable times...but is demonstrated in the turbulent times...*

*Jer 12: 5 "If you have raced with men on foot, and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses? And if in a safe land you are so trusting, what will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?"*

**In other words if one cannot run the race of faith well in the everyday living with people and in the safe land...**

**how will you be able to keep faith when you must run with the horses in life...when you are stretched to the extreme of fatigue, overwhelmed...when Life is rife with hurt, loss, disappointment, betrayal, pain, unexpected trouble and tragedy?**

- **Stable faith people can be counted on when the going is rough.. for they could be counted on when the going was easy**
- **Stability in Faith is not about what you say or even what you start...it is revealed by how you handle crisis**
- **People stable in their faith keep moving in the face of major obstacles because they have learned to keep moving in the face of small obstacles**
- **People stable in their Faith have learned to adapt and overcome what seem like insurmountable setbacks because they have learned to adapt and overcome normal setbacks..**
- **People stable in their faith maintain their convictions in tragedy because they have learned to keep their convictions in prosperity....**

**That is how you win the victory of Faith...keep your eye on the Prize!**

**James 1:12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood **the** test he will receive **the** crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

**Revelation 2:10**

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the **crown** of life

**The crown of life is given only to those who love Jesus...and this love is demonstrated through steadfast faith in him under trial or troubled times!**

**The crown of thorns precedes the crown of life!**

**May your whole lives be characterized by steadfast faith practiced in the good times and demonstrated in the troubled times...remember we win!! The crown of life goes to victors!!**

end