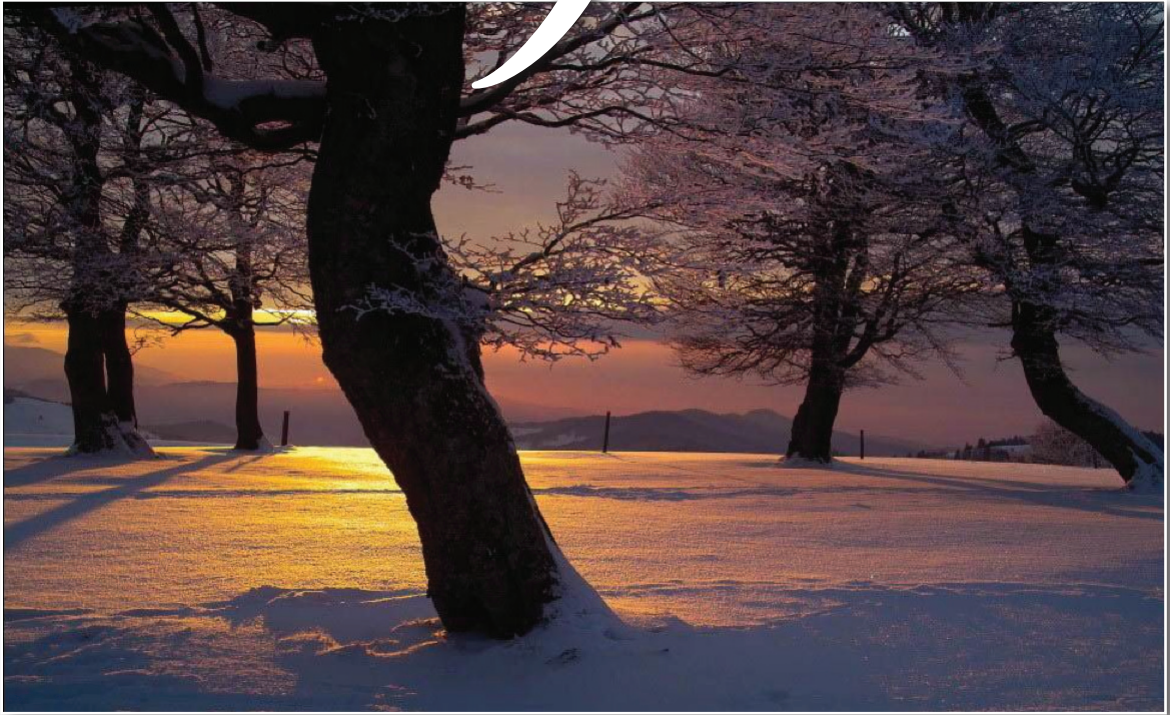


Deeper



Finding and applying Truth!

From your friends at fourthstream.com.



The Living God has given us several effective ways to connect with Him.

*We find Him in **what He has made**.*

There is so much to learn in the macro and micro **sciences**.
I am made breathless by what I see in nature. The sheer immensity.
The incredible complexity.

*We find Him in **what He has spoken**.*

The **Word of God** tells us one seamless story of His Story.
The Bible is His inexhaustible love letter to the human race.

*We find Him as He works **in our hearts** to reveal Himself.*

The Holy Spirit searches the earth for awakening hearts.
Men and women who are opening the door to faith.

Every approach to meditating will be cumbersome on some level.

I have tried to give you a series of **tools** that can easily be
adapted to your own style.

Use these pages as keys to help you unlock your own
journey in God's revelation of Himself.

ENJOY!

This is all about Going Deeper!

Each exercise and video are meant to develop one or more skills for meditating deeply into the Scriptures. The videos are noted in this workbook and each exercise should be carefully thought through as you sift these ideas and settle on your own style for a “critical reading” of each passage.

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Probably one of the most famous, poignant, and moving quotes regarding truth is found in John 18.

“Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorian, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?”

Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?”

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”

Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” - John 18.33-38

In this straightforward interaction we encounter the essence of the human dilemma. Just as the earth quaked when Adam and Eve absorbed the words “you will surely NOT die,” so all humanity is stung with spiritual death by our rejection of truth. Truth in nature. Truth in God’s Law. And truth in His Living Word, Jesus of Nazareth.

And according to Jesus, if we believe His words, we are free indeed!

- Dave Nadler

Who will set us free?

In Paul's letter to the Romans he casts an ironclad argument in legal terms. There is no doubt. Mankind is a prisoner to self-will through our rejection of truth.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that **they are without excuse.**

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Romans 1.18-25

Our dilemma is cruel and complex. His solution is clear and has far-reaching implications.

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

John 8.31-32

Do you want to be free?

A WAY OF SEEING

From Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's A Scandal in Bohemia/Sherlock Holmes

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings: of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder, of his clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

One night—it was on the twentieth of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

“Wedlock suits you,” he remarked. “I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you.”

“Seven!” I answered.

“Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness.”

“Then, how do you know?”

"I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?"

"My dear Holmes," said I, "this is too much. You would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess, but as I have changed my clothes I can't imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice, but there, again, I fail to see how you work it out."

He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long, nervous hands together.

"It is simplicity itself," said he; "my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slitting specimen of the London slavey. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the right side of his top-hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull, indeed, if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession."

I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction. "When I hear you give your reasons," I remarked, "the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours."

"Quite so," he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear."

What does this excerpt illustrate about meditation?

What can you take away that can help you as you learn to meditate on the Scriptures?



*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God
as a workman who does not need to be ashamed,
accurately handling the word of truth.
- 2 Timothy 2:15*

Deeper

Is there truth in the world?

How may I know this truth?

How do I become truly free?

How may I become able to “cut straight lines” with truth?

Watch the DEEPER INTRO #1 video now.

I recommend you bring several tools whenever you are trying to read your bible for the purpose of meditating and extracting principles which can guide your personal world view.

Come with **expectation** that the Holy Spirit will teach you, a **pen** and a **high-lighter** to assist you in identifying what you observe in a passage, and a **willingness** to develop and expand your skills.

TOWARD A DEEPER WORLD VIEW

Our world view is shaped in huge ways by our families, our life experiences, and the choices we make during our lives. We become who we are because we are forged by these shaping influences. This is our **FORMATION** as a person - what God would call our soul.

When we encounter Jesus, faith is introduced into the mix of who we have been as well as who we will become. This encounter with God is Kingdom in nature, and while religion may be a part of this equation, it is the work of the King through His Good Spirit Who begins in us the process of **TRANSFORMATION**. He plants the seed of faith and literally begins to “enlarge” it!

The depth and quality of this spiritual “kingdom transformation” now rests upon decisions I am making. It is as if I have been brought back to the place on the path where Adam and Eve turned aside. Now I have a new Father - now I am a new creation - old things are passing away - I am becoming new.



This newfound life is bathed in Light. I am now free to choose **DEDICATION** to my Creator. Through Christ I can now “walk in the garden” with my Father. Now (by faith) I choose to sift my world view through what He has revealed in the scriptures. Rather than making my new faith an “add on” to my life, I begin the process of submitting my world view, my entire life and being - to my King. It is time for the King to claim His Kingdom. It is time for Him to overtake my heart!

It takes years for this process - even if I get the big picture and cooperate with the Spirit. And because God does not conscript obedience (without faith it is impossible to please Him) each of my many life choices can be ones of either dedication or disdain for His words and ways. The choices are mine

This is where His Word comes in. It is our tool to know God more deeply. If our faith is going to enlarge, our knowledge must move forward. And for our knowledge to grow, our friendship relationship must be of high value to us. Conversation concerning the following skills can help unlock the door to a true friendship with God!

Contextualizing Truth

Genesis 2:15-17

Deuteronomy 30:19,20

Hebrews 4:12,13

1 Peter 1:22-25

Watch the DEEPER #2 video now

All of God's words have a context. If we can **ENCOUNTER** His words we can begin to make use of them in the part of us that is our soul. If we can **EXPOSE** the original message of each passage we can watch the scriptures come alive as we read them. If we can open our hearts to this message of truth and friendship with God - we can experience an **ENLIGHTENING** of mind, heart, and soul.

Of course, it is the Holy Spirit within us Who discloses the Truth of God's Son to us!

Read John 16.13-16.

What part does the Spirit play in Jesus' relationship with His friends?

Let's take a quick run through the A to Z of what God says about Truth. Think about each passage and ask the question, "what does this teach me about truth?"

Read Genesis 2.15-17. Truth?

Read Deuteronomy 30.19-20. Truth?

Read Hebrews 4.12,13. Truth?

Read 1 Peter 19.22-25. Truth?

Read Revelation 19.11-13. Truth?

Do you believe that truth has a context?

Do you believe that God has spoken to us through nature, through His words to His chosen people (the Hebrews), and through Jesus His Son?

What are your personal struggles with truth?

What are your personal connections to truth?

meditate

baqar

to inquire, seek: care for, concerned,
inquire, make inquiry

hagah

to moan, growl, utter, speak, muse

siach

to muse, complain, talk

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF MEDITATION

There are three Hebrew words which are translated “meditate.” (above) They are found primarily in the Psalms.

When it comes to God’s truth it appears I am to “**make inquiry**” with my mind and the intentions of my heart, then **ruminate** and chew on the truth that is before me, and finally **personally process** and speak with God about the things which sit well with me - as well as anything which fires complaint in my heart.

It has been my experience that if each of these critical steps is embraced as we read the bible, the wealth of spiritual information in this seamless, woven Story will begin to become quite **evident** - and quite **relevant** to our lives.

Of course, it makes a big difference when you have a deep desire to connect with God.
I break this meditating process down into three steps:

good questions

Encounter the Word

What is here?

Expose the Meaning

What did it mean then?

Enlighten Your Heart

What does it mean to me?

I would like to investigate each step together, taking care to be very practical about their implementation. If you stick with me through this quest, you will come out the other end much more equipped as a critical reader of the Word of God.

Because you will know better what to look for, you will find yourself much more interested in what you are reading!

WHAT, ME MEDITATE?!

At this point it would be good to ask yourself the question “do I want to invest time and energy to learn how to go deeper in the scriptures?” If your answer is yes you have made an excellent choice that will serve you well in your quest to become a man or woman of God.

“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. - Joshua 1:8

Every hour you invest in this experience will yield huge treasures for your heart. The Word of God is the only eternal thing in the world. It is literally the breath of our Creator, and gives us courage to live a substantive life of faith.

My definition of meditating:

My desire to meditate in order to know God through unlocking His Word:

The following excercises and principles can help you make meditating on the Scriptures a fluid and meaningful experience for years to come!

EXERCISE ONE: SETTING CONTEXT

Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

*The next several pages break down Proverbs 16 into sections, and the accompanying videos will guide you as you apply these skills to your own study. You will want to follow along with each page of this workbook as you listen. This is “hands on” so feel free to experiment and find your own style. *Enjoy your discovery process!**

Watch the DEEPER #3 video now as your engage exercise one.



*The key to finding
substance is to ask
good questions!*

A LOOK AT A BOOK

It is always advantageous to overview the section or book in which a passage is located. As you encountered earlier in our God Story Portal, the Eight Great Epochs contained overviews for each of the books of the so-called Old Testament. The Deeper Series will give you a chance to consider such overviews for all 66 books in more detail.

Notice that **Proverbs** has **three main messages regarding wisdom**. This is one way to see the flow of the entire book. The handwritten notes under the overview display another way to outline Proverbs. Either way, chapter 16 falls into the category of intense, serious advice - and claims to be the Voice of wisdom. (You will need to read chapters 7-9 for more clues into who She is!)

Such a "big picture" should be consulted whenever possible to set the context for every passage. The entire bible is the God Story. Each part of the God Story - whether "old" or "new," prophet or letter, each is woven into the greater story. All scripture should interpret itself. This should keep all "teachers" subject to the authority of the scriptures - if we are indeed noble-minded men and women!

What do you think will be the benefit of in-depth examination of a chapter of Proverbs? Take the time to note each of the passages listed within the overview chart below in your bible. What do you learn about the book of Proverbs and the placement of chapter 16 in the document?

A look @ a book: Proverbs

PROVERBS **Wisdom Above**

Wisdom to be Acquired	Wisdom is Superior	Wisdom's Voice
1:20-25,32,33	3:1-12	10:1; 29:7-9
1	2-9	10-31

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. 1:7

*1-6 Dear Son
7-9 Two Women
10-18 Two Ways
19-24 Serious Advice
25-31 Advice of kings*

encounter the reference

What is here?

- good questions: observed and asked
- word pictures and metaphors
- repeated words and phrases
- related entities and ideas
- transitional word: time, location, etc.
- conjunctives, contrasts, comparisons

TOOL #1

Critical reading skills help answer the question “what is here?”

If I am to understand any passage in the scriptures I must be willing and able to **ask questions**. By extending my inquiry through questions as I mediate and study, I expand the borders of my heart and mind. Every verse should literally evoke a minimum of 20 good questions - plenty of fuel for the experience of meditation.

The bible is filled with **word pictures and metaphors** to help create or recreate context. If I am to “rise up on wings of eagles” I would do well to follow this picture into wingspan, kind, home, flight, eyesight, and habits of the bird in order to capture the nuances of the teaching that lies before us. What does the metaphor or word picture amplify that helps explain the context?

Repeated words and phrases are worth noting within a book or passage from the bible. Each can indicate the main point of a passage, as literal argument or spiritual principle. Ten mentions of the word KING in the space of five verses can be a strong indicator of what God is trying to get across in a passage.

Related entities and ideas can help establish the flow of an entire chapter or even a complete bible book. A discussion of wisdom as a woman in one chapter and then a conversation about “an excellent wife” twenty chapters later can accentuate the goal of a teaching.

Transitional words such as “in the boat:” and “on the shore” can do much to amplify the movement of the characters in a passage. The location where something occurs is sometimes very revealing.

Conjunctives, contrasts, and comparisons hold principles up to scrutiny by setting elements side by side. A foolish man and a wise man are quickly comparable when held up to the clarity of the Word of God. The word but, and, or therefore can indicate a critical transition in an argument or encounter. A contrast brings out differences. A comparison accentuates similarities.

Each of these tools allows us to move beyond reading, to critical reading, to meditating!

EXERCISE ONE: ENCOUNTERING THE REFERENCE

Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

Proverbs 16.1-6

The plans of the heart belong to man, ?

But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

3068. Yhvh (i.e. Yehovah or Yahveh)
the proper name of the God of Israel

1 Co 4:5

All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the **LORD** weighs the motives.

Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.

The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,

Even the wicked for the day of evil.

Proverbs 16.5-7 James 4:6

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD;

Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

3374. yirah, rom 3372a; a fear: awesome,
extreme reverence(5).

By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for,

And by the **fear** of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,

He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. *Relationships*

Proverbs 16.8-11 Proverbs 30:9

Better is a little with righteousness, than great income with injustice.

The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

A just balance and scales belong to the LORD;

All the weights of the bag are His concern. ?

*What do my plans have
to do with my tongue?*

critical reading & good questions

What is here?

- Who: principle and involved characters?
What: is the immediate issue?
is the extended issue?
are His purposes?
When: time of day and year
Where: location and location changes
Why: what precipitates it?
(practically and spiritually)

TOOL #2

Crucial questions that help gather information and “set the context.”

Tool #1 overviews specific **critical reading** questions. This next bank of questions (tool #2) transitions us into the arena of **exposing meaning**.

WHO

It is critical for us to put ourselves in the shoes of each of the characters in a passage. Even those who seem to be “on the sidelines” may give us insight into the circumstance before us. Who is the focus of attention and why have they been singled out? What part does each person play in the teaching or drama that is before us? With which character can I most identify?

WHAT

What are the conditions that brought about this circumstance? What is in play? At risk? What are the possible outcomes or conclusions? What could possibly be the greater purpose involved?

WHEN

When did this occur? How does it related to the events which precede or follow it? Are there any special circumstances that impact the timing of the situation?

WHERE

Where does this occur? Why this city? Why not in Jerusalem? Why in the wilderness? Why in this town?

WHY

What purposes are behind this situation? Why does it occur in the passage where it does? Why is each person involved necessary to the story or teaching?

This second bank of questions gathers information to answer the question “what did this situation mean to the original recipients/participants?”

EXERCIZE ONE: ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

Proverbs 16.1-6

The plans of the heart belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.
All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.
Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.
The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,
Even the wicked for the day of evil.

WHO?

One who fears.
One who is proud.

WHAT?

This is how we
build strong lives!

Proverbs 16.5-7

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD;
Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.
By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for,
And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.
When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

WHAT?

This is how we
escape evil!

Proverbs 16.8-11

Better is a little with righteousness, than great income with injustice.
The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.
A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.
A just balance and scales belong to the LORD;
All the weights of the bag are His concern.

WHAT?

It is a heart issue.

WHY?

All things are being
weighed by God.

expose the meaning

What did it mean to them?

- identify the participants/audience
- investigate the unknowns
- think through the context
- what is the point of the teaching?
- what is the point of the situation?

TOOL #3

Crucial questions that help gather information and “paint the picture” and EXPOSE THE MEANING.

Tool #3 moves us to the next level of meditating. When we paint a picture of “what did it mean” to those who were experiencing the teaching or the circumstance of any given passage, we begin to **see a situation come alive.**

Who were the persons in the story? Who was listening to the teaching or the story as it was told? What role does each character play as the situation unfolds?

Which elements of the passage are unknown to me? What questions need to be answered in order for me to understand how each character should and will respond?

How do I recreate what each person was experiencing within their senses? What details would each see? What sounds would be heard? What smells? What tastes? How would he or she feel at each point in the encounter?

What is the point of what is being explained or experienced in the situation? What is the immediate purpose? The greater principle? The application to those inside and outside of the passage?

Why is the situation useful to God’s purposes in presenting timeless teaching and examples?

These are all questions which can help us “expose the meaning” of whatever we are studying in any part of the scriptures!

EXERCIZE ONE: ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

Proverbs 16.1-6

The plans of the heart belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

WHO?

Young children, teens. Those reflecting upon their lives

All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.
Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.
The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,
Even the wicked for the day of evil.

Proverbs 16.5-7

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD;
Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

WHY?

Are such strong words used here. What is the big deal?

By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for,
And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

WHO?

I have never thought about the name Lord God Almighty before.

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

What does this feel like? Look like?

Proverbs 16.8-11

UNKNOWN

I don't know what righteousness means.

Better is a little with righteousness, than great income with injustice.

The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

A just balance and scales belong to the LORD;

All the weights of the bag are His concern.

? What in the world does this mean?

What do Kings have to do with living in America?

MAIN POINTS - My world view:

God wants me to pay attention to my heart.

God wants me to reject pride.

I am free to make plans - and submit them to God's direction!

THIS IS HOW
I ESCAPE EVIL!!
pride is the evil

enlighten my heart

What does it mean to me?

- Woven connections
Torah - Living Torah - My life?
- Emerging realizations
Sifting my world-view decisions
- Spiritual connections
How does this help me know God?
How does this help me help others?
How does this help me know myself?

TOOL #4

Here are several funnels to help me process stories and principles into world view guideposts for how I live my life.

Tool #4 brings us to an exciting part of meditating - especially if we have done some of the hard work of [Encountering](#) the reference and [Exposing](#) the meaning (Tools 1-3). Now we ask questions that relate to our personal spiritual lives. We have laid a [foundation](#) to ask the question “what does it mean to me?” Now it is time to [Enlighten](#) our hearts and continue the process of shaping our personal world views.

Woven Connections

One unknown truth about the scriptures is that there really is no such thing as so-called “old” and “new” testaments. There is only ONE testament! The Law given through Moses was called [Torah](#). The Ten Commandments are the core of God’s Law. They were given to the Jews to reveal who God is, and to give them a pathway to freedom. [Jesus is the Living Torah](#). He fulfilled every requirement of the Law by giving Himself and His blood so that we could find life. As we begin to understand His plan in Messiah (Jesus) we begin to make connections with His plans for our personal lives.

Emerging Realizations

As I begin to understand how and what God has spoken through His Word a new paradigm begins to emerge. Now I have a grid through which I can sift my personal beliefs and values. As I understand His eternal principles (the grass withers, the flower fades - but the Word of the Lord lives forever) I have empirical standards on which to build my life. Wow!

Spiritual Connections

Now I can complete the meditating loop. I have taken the time to observe what is occurring in a passage. I have put myself in the shoes of the original characters and extracted principles which were important to the context of their lives. Now I can ask the two questions most applicable to my life: How does this passage help me to know God? How does it help me to help others?

EXERCIZE ONE: EXPOSING THE MEANING

Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

Let's complete Proverbs 16 as we listen to the next video. Use Dave's ideas and examples to come up with a strategy and style of your own. Make your observations as you go - and use your high lighter and pen - there are no right and wrong answers!

Watch the DEEPER #4 video now as you engage exercise one.

Proverbs 16.12-15

It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts,
For a throne is established on righteousness.
Righteous lips are the delight of kings,
And he who speaks right is loved.
The fury of a king is like messengers of death,
But a wise man will appease it.
In the light of a king's face is life,
And his favor is like a cloud with the spring rain.

Proverbs 16.16-22

How much better it is to get wisdom than gold!
And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.
The highway of the upright is to depart from evil;
He who watches his way preserves his life.
Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.
He who gives attention to the word will find good,
And blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
The wise in heart will be called understanding,
And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.
Understanding is a fountain of life to one who has it,
But the discipline of fools is folly.

Proverbs 16.23-25

The heart of the wise instructs his mouth
And adds persuasiveness to his lips.
Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 16.25-28

There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.
A worker's appetite works for him, for his hunger urges him on.
A worthless man digs up evil, while his words are like scorching fire.
A perverse man spreads strife,
And a slanderer separates intimate friends.

Proverbs 16.29-33

A man of violence entices his neighbor
And leads him in a way that is not good.
He who winks his eyes does so to devise perverse things;
He who compresses his lips brings evil to pass.
A gray head is a crown of glory;
It is found in the way of righteousness.
He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.
The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

My conclusions as I have studied Proverbs 16:

That Proverbs 15 sets up Proverbs 16. Once again I have to be careful of "chapter" markings.

My tongue and how I use it are a reflection of what is inside of me. And the "works" of my tongue belong to God.

A TEACHERS LOOK @ PROVERBS 16 <i>Works of my Tongue are Yours!</i>		
<i>Plans of the heart are mine.</i>	Proverbs 15:33	
<i>- Self-deception comes naturally</i>	FEAR = HUMILITY = HONOR	<i>Answer of my tongue is Yours.</i>
<i>- I must give my works to God</i>	16:9 His Direction	<i>- He assesses motives</i>
<i>- I do this by humbling myself (or paying dearly - 16:8)</i>	16:11 His Justice	<i>- When we fear Him we find Lovingkindness & truth</i>
	16:25 His Choice	
	16:32 His Way	<i>James 3:1-11</i>

If I want to be spiritual I can't trust my old heart - my old nature.

God works on a motive level - often we are much more surface (shallow?).

If I am going to find honor from Someone who matters, I will need to FEAR my Creator and find the WAY of humility - and not pride.

My tongue is very powerful - I can give words of strength or words that kill life (James 3:1-11). This is my choice - a very important choice in God's reality.

The rewards of fearing the Lord in this world are great - but especially in the world to come!

TOOL #5

The Holy Spirit to guide me into the Truth.

It is easy to underestimate the role of the Spirit in unlocking my heart to the Word of God. I would recommend asking God to use His Spirit to guide you every time you open the scriptures. What have you got to lose!? Remember, when we meditate we are carrying on a conversation between our soul and our Father's heart. No moment should be wasted!

It seems we should be able to start anywhere in the story and tell The Story.
It seems we should be able to do the same in our own story.

My Story:

Where DID He intersect your life?

Where IS He currently intersecting your life and in your expanding faith?

God is not a one-time encounter - He is a woven story.

We are addressing critical bible reading skills:

- We are learning process discipline and how to make strong observations.
- We are attempting to determine impact upon the principle characters.
- We are sifting our personal world view through our Creator's grid of truth.

We have applied principles to Proverbs 16.

Now we will:

Investigate a gospel account: [John 8](#)

Look deeply into a psalm: [Psalm 63](#)

Contextualize a small book or a section of a book: [Colossians](#)

Pour over an involved teaching: [Romans 8](#)

View a parallel prophecy from two prophets: [Ezekiel 1/Revelation 4](#)

We will talk deeply about:

[Encountering a reference](#) - what was happening with these characters?

[Expose meaning](#) - what did this situation mean to each person present?

[Enlighten our heart](#) - what does it have to do with my life of faith?

How does the Holy Spirit help? He wants us to know the Father. He reveals the Father to us. He opens our mind, heart, and soul to be able to process truth.

EXERCISE TWO: JOHN 8

We now move to another kind of literature in the scriptures: applying our study skills to the teaching of Jesus. All of this occurs in the context of a woman caught in adultery and a confrontation in the temple treasury as the religious leaders attempt to entrap the Son of God. Good luck with that Pharisees!



The woman caught in adultery provides some excellent opportunity to understand the mission of Jesus as well as His relationship with the religious leaders.

It also is an intense teaching about the relationship between Jesus, the Jews, and Abraham, father of faith of all true Jews.

Dave refers to the diagram of the temple to the left to give you a feel for the location of the temple treasury, the court of the women, and the teaching environment where Jesus began to teach at 12 years old (amazing) and continued to do selectively until the point of His death. This is the very place where He will return to "Zion" when He comes in His glory!

EXERCISE TWO: JOHN 8 -“Adulterous Woman”

As we enter into this next skill-developing exercise remember we are trying to find our own keys and style to unlock the depth of various kinds of biblical literature. Review the five tools before you launch into John 8 (pages 15, 17, 19, 21, 24). Apply them as you listen and watch this passage come alive!

Watch the DEEPER #5 video now as your engage exercise two.

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and the Pharisees *brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, they *said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.

“Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?” They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.

But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”

She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”

EXERCIZE TWO: JOHN 8 - "I am the Light of the world"

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

"You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. "But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true.

"I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me." So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also." These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"

And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.

So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

EXERCIZE TWO: JOHN 8 - "Abraham is our father"

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.

"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

"I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus *said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. "You are doing the deeds of your father."

They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

"Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

“But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. “Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? “He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”

The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. “But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ “Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?”

Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Summarize what you feel are your top ten observations from John 8.

What do you feel are your five favorite verses from John 8.

What do you feel are your best five ideas for chapter titles from John 8.

Paint a picture of the primary characters in John 8. How do you think each character felt? What role did each person play in the events of the chapter?

List five principles from John 8 you feel you could use to shape your world view.

EXCERCISE THREE: Flying solo on Psalm 63.

Take one more look at the **five tools** before you jump in - and refrain from listening to the next video until you have completed your observations. We want critical reading to become second nature! I have identified the word pictures in Psalm 63 (I just can't help myself - the Psalms are full of them). Happy hunting!

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly;
My **soul thirsts** for You, my **flesh yearns** for You,
In a **dry and weary land** where there is no water.

Thus I have seen You in **the sanctuary**,
to see Your power and Your glory.
Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,
my lips will praise You.
So I will bless You as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.

My soul is satisfied as with **marrow and fatness**,
And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.
When I remember You on my bed,
I meditate on You in the night watches,
For You have been my help,
And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy.

My soul clings to You;
Your right hand upholds me.
But those who seek my life to destroy it,
Will go into the depths of the earth.
They will be delivered over to the power of the sword;
They will be a prey for foxes.
But the king will rejoice in God;
Everyone who swears by Him will glory,
For the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped.

Watch the DEEPER #6 video now as you complete Psalm 63.

Summarize what you feel are your top ten observations from Psalm 63.

What and why would you choose your two favorite verses from Psalm 63?

What do you feel are your best two ideas for chapter titles from Psalm 63?

List five principles from Psalm you feel you could use to shape your world view.



The Student, the Fish, and Agassiz

(This bit of experience with a great teacher is an excellent example of right method - digging directly into the subject itself instead of into books about the subject of study. Its application to Bible study is obvious.)

It was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz, and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. he asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterwards proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter I replied that while I wished to be well grounded in all departments of zoology, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

"When do you wish to begin?" he asked. "Now," I replied.

This seemed to please him, and with an energetic "Very well," he reached from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

"Take this fish," said he, "and look at it; we call it a Haemulon; by and by I will ask you what you have seen".

With that he left me, but in a moment returned with explicit instructions as to the care of the object entrusted to me.

I was to keep the fish before me in a tin tray, and occasionally moisten the surface with alcohol from the jar, always taking care to replace the stopper tightly. Those were not the days of ground glass stoppers and elegantly shaped exhibition jars. All the old students will recall the huge, neckless glass bottles with their leaky, wax-be-smearred corks, half-eaten by insects and begrimed with cellar dust. Entomology was a cleaner science than ichthyology, but the example of the professor who had unhesitatingly plunged to the bottom of the jar to produce the fish was infectious; and though this alcohol had "a very ancient and fishlike smell" I really dared not show any aversion within these sacred precincts, and treated the alcohol as though it were pure water. Still I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. My friends at home, too, were annoyed when they discovered that no amount of eau de cologne would drown the perfume which haunted me like a shadow.

In ten minutes, I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor, who, however, left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, my specimen was dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate it from a fainting-fit, and looked with anxiety for a return of a normal, sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed, an hour, another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around; looked it in the face -- ghastly; from

behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three-quarters view—just as ghastly. I was in despair; at an early hour I concluded that lunch was necessary; so with infinite relief, the fish was carefully replaced in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation again looked at it. I might not use a magnifying glass, instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish; it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my fingers down its throat to see how sharp its teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me—I would draw the fish; and now with surprise I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.

“That is right,” he said, “a pencil is one of the best eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet and your bottle corked.”

With these encouraging words he added — “Well, what is it like?” He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me: the fringed gill-arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips, and lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fin, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body. When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then with an air of disappointment.

“You have not looked very carefully. Why,” he continued more earnestly, “you haven’t seen one of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plain before your eyes as the fish itself. Look again, look again!” and he left me to my misery.

I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish? But now I set myself to the task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, until I saw how just the professor’s criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly, and when, towards its close, the professor inquired, “Do you see it yet?”

“No,” I replied. “I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before.”

“That is next best,” said he earnestly, “but I won’t hear you now; put away your fish and go home. Perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you before you look at the fish.”

This was disconcerting. Not only must I think of my fish all night, studying, without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be, but also, without reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had bad memory; so I walked home by Charles River in a distracted state, with my two perplexities.

The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring. Here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw.

“Do you perhaps mean,” I asked, “that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired

organs?"

His thoroughly pleased, "Of course, of course!" repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he had discoursed most happily and enthusiastically -- as he always did upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

"Oh, look at your fish!" he said, and left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour, he returned and heard my new catalogue.

"That is good, that is good!" he repeated, "but that is not all; go on." And so for three long days, he placed that fish before my eyes, forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. "Look, look, look," was his repeated injunction.

The fourth day a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblance and differences between the two. Another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves. The odor had become a pleasant perfume, and even now, the sight of an old, six-inch, worm eaten cork brings fragrant memories.

The whole group of Haemulons was thus brought into review; and whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, preparation and examination of the boney framework, or the description of the various parts. Agassiz's training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them. "Facts are stupid things," he would say, "until brought into connection with some general law".

At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects. But what I gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

"No man is fit to be a naturalist," said he, "who does not know how to take care of specimens." This was the best entomological lesson I ever had -- a lesson whose influence has extended to the details of every subsequent study; a legacy the professor has left to me, as he left it to many others, of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part.

A year afterwards, some of us were amusing ourselves with chalking outlandish beasts upon the blackboard. We drew prancing star-fishes, frogs in mortal combat, hydro-headed worms, stately crawfishes, standing on their tails, bearing aloft umbrellas, and grotesque fishes, with gaping mouths and staring eyes. The professor came in shortly after, and was as much amused as any at our experiments. He looked at the fishes.

"Haemulons, every one of them" he said, "Mr. _____ drew them."
True, and to this day, if I attempt a fish, I can draw nothing but Haemulons.

From Appendix American Poems, Houghton, Osgood & Company, 1880
From Class Notes: Dr. Howard G. Hendricks, Dallas Theological Seminary

THE DEEPER JOURNEY

We have looked at several kinds of Bible literature and applied a number of skill-builders to help us get more from the scriptures as we read.

We have learned about:

ENCOUNTERING A REFERENCE

and how to take the time and have a plan.

EXPOSING THE MEANING OF A PASSAGE

and how to put yourself in the shoes of the original characters and observers of the story.

ENLIGHTENING YOUR HEART

and how to draw solid correlations to your own growing life of faith.

We build these skills so that Bible study can contribute to our CONNECTION with our Creator through His Son Jesus Christ.

Your final exercise in this introduction is to methodically and carefully apply what you have learned to a manageable “letter” that Paul wrote to the early Christ-followers in the city of Colossae.

Once you have completed your self-study on this letter, the entire Bible will be an unfolding God Story for you!

Follow the study guide and apply your newfound skills to each section of the book of Colossians, and watch the Word of God come to life!

Don't forget - the Holy Spirit is the One Who meets you and enlightens your heart as you read and meditate. Ask Him to help illuminate the Word as you unlock each section of the God Story!

Let's unlock the book of Colossians.

ENJOY!

Watch the DEEPER #7 video now as you tackle the book of Colossians.

COLOSSIANS



Fourthstream.com



Welcome to the Book of Colossians!

To begin your study of Colossians, meditate upon the contents of the book reflected in the overview chart below. Use these verses as guideposts to unlock the message of Colossians. How do each of the four sections reflect the theme of Christ's Headship? We have chosen 1:17,18 as key verses for this book. Investigate each one and determine how they relate to the overview and theme of Colossians. An understanding of Christ's headship over all things is critical to understanding the ultimate purposes of God. God clearly establishes the pre-eminence of the Son. He is the reason and the effective reason for all that is good and gracious from God to men!

COLOSSIANS Christ's Headship

Christ the focus of our faith...

In His Pre-eminence

1:10

1

In Our Persistence

Holding Fast...2:19,20

Setting my mind...3:2

Conducting affairs...4:7,8

2

3

4

"That He Himself might come to have firstplace in everything." 1:17,18

Open Your Heart as You Read!

The book of Philippians gave us clear insight that Christ alone can motivate us to a life filled with the true joy of living. Colossians gives us more depth on why this is true. It is the Father's good pleasure for all of the fullness to dwell in His Son, and that the summing up of all things would revolve around Him alone! What are your indications that Christ is becoming number one in your life? In what ways does His pre-eminence in all things impact your lifestyle? Are you persistent in the things that God considers truly important? Would you consider yourself reasonably submitted to God's will (above your own will)?

THE AUTHOR OF COLOSSIANS

Paul - even though it seems he never visited Colossae (2:1). On his third missionary journey he spent three years at Ephesus which was located just 120 miles from Colossae. Apparently Epaphras was converted there and sent back to Colossae and he evangelized the area where Colossae is located (4:12-13). In 62 A.D. Epaphras came to Rome to report a vicious error which was creeping into the churches. He was not able to answer the heresy so he sought Paul's help. This letter is Paul's answer to Epaphras' concern.

DATE

62-63 A.D.

HISTORY

Ephesians focuses on the Body - Colossians on the Head of the Body. Paul's purpose is to demonstrate that Christ is supreme in everything and over everyone. He is totally sufficient for the needs of the world. Paul shows that Christ preceded all things, designed all things, and holds all things together. In short, "Christ is all, and in all" (3:11). And that means He wants to be in ALL we say, do or think.

It is quite possible Paul wrote the books of Ephesians and Colossians about the same time. Notice the many striking similarities: Both letters were delivered by the same "postman," Tychicus; both were written from prison; the salutations are similar; the structures of the books are remarkably alike; and there is a striking correspondence between pairs of verses:

EPHESIANS

1:7

1:15-17

1:18

1:19-20

1:21-23

COLOSSIANS

1:14

1:3-4

1:27

2:12

1:16-19

Why Study the book of Colossians?

1. Christ's headship tells us that Jesus will come to have first place in everything (1:18). As you study this book it would be good to ask yourself the question, "Is Christ merely present or prominent in my life OR is He pre-eminent?"

2. The reason for Christ's Headship is seen in the essence of who He is for all the fullness of God dwells in Him (1:19). A study of this book can't help but give us a greater appreciation and adoration of the incomparable Christ whom we serve. Nothing and no one can compare with Him!



Colossians Chapter Chart

A Bread of Life Bible Study Guide. Copyright 1990.

Questions	Chapter	Title	Verse
Why is Christ the head of the body? Why is the Father's good pleasure centered upon Him? What did Paul's prayer for the Colossians include? What is love in the Spirit (vs 8)? What was Paul's goal for the Colossians?	1		
How is someone's heart knit to that of another? What was the problem that was apparently taking the Colossians captive? What was the prize being referred to in 18? What was becoming these believer's focus, and what was it meant to be?	2		
What does being thankful have to do with Paul's teaching on unity? What were they to put aside in order to be free to put on? What was to be the guiding principle to all of these believer's relationships, including those within the family?	3		
What did the salt of verse 6 accomplish? What did Paul desire to be prayed for himself? What kind of communication and relationship did Paul have with the people who are mentioned here?	4		

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Someone once said "If Christ be not valued above all, he is not valued at all." This was a living reality for the Colossians. Christ-followers have the unique opportunity to place Christ pre-eminent NOW, long before the world will be judged by our King. It doesn't take much imagination to catch the impact of this value between the King and His subjects.

The enthroning of the Christ will be a joyous occasion for the devoted members of His kingdom. What an incredible opportunity we have to choose to glorify God while we live in this imperfect, distracted environment

FIXING OUR EYES

The book of Colossians clearly defines the pre-eminence of Christ in all things (1:16-19) because He has created all things and all things were created for Him (1:16), He alone holds all things together (1:17), and as the Head of the body He will come to have first place in everything (1:18) and over everyone.

For the Christ-follower this reconciling will indeed happen as God has spoken (Philippians 2:9-11) and this future reality has huge implications for us now. If He will have first place in the consummation of all things, why shouldn't that first place of honor be in our hearts right now!?

Hebrews 12:2 instructs us to "fix our eyes upon Jesus" and in so doing give Him first place now. This fixing of the eyes is exemplified by the example of Christ who fixed His eyes upon the Father. Meditate on each phrase listed from the following passage from the book of Hebrews and ask yourself the question "How can this help me fix my eyes?"

The example of Christ...

How it can help me...

(vs 1)	<p>The witnesses surrounding us</p> <p>Laying aside every encumbrance</p> <p>Running with endurance</p>	
(vs. 2)	<p>The author and perfecter...</p> <p>Endured the cross for joy</p> <p>Sat down at the right hand of God</p>	
(vs. 3)	<p>Endured hostility</p> <p>Don't lose heart</p>	
(vs. 4)	<p>Strive against sin</p>	
(vs. 4-11)	<p>Accept discipline</p>	
(vs. 12-14)	<p>Have care for others</p>	

How can these passages help me to fix my eyes upon Jesus?

SETTING OUR MINDS

The mind of a man is a powerful thing. In our minds we can balance perceptions, conceptualize our morality, live out our dreams (and nightmares), and plan our steps. Responses to our circumstances and relationships are processed in our mind and mold our conscience - and make us what we are.

The Scriptures speak often of the concept of "setting our minds on things above." The proper use of the mind can deeply influence the heart, which in turn determines our attitudes toward God and our actions toward others. The following study helps us to capture this concept. Look up these passages and record what each one teaches you about setting your mind!

Passage: What does it teach me about setting my mind!

Romans	8:6,7,27	
Philippians	1:27 2:2,3 3:4 4:8	
Ephesians	2:3 4:17,23	
Colossians	1:21 2:18 3:2	
1 Timothy	6:5	
Hebrews	10:16	
2 Peter	1:15 3:1	

1 Corinthians 2:16 makes it clear that we have the mind of Christ. What are the implications of this statement?

May the Lord bless our minds and hearts through a full knowledge of the truth, and may we passionately set our minds on things above!



PRISONER OF THE LORD

The Apostle Paul carried on a great and extensive missionary ministry to both Jews and Gentiles. It is chronicled for us in the Book of Acts. His letters to the various churches he founded give added insight into Paul the man, as well as the further development and progress of the gospel of Jesus.

Paul's writings make use of many potent literary images which helped his readers understand his message. One especially vivid phrase describes Paul as a bond-servant or slave (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Galatians 1:10) of Jesus Christ. Another one similar to it has Paul labeling himself a prisoner of Christ Jesus (Philemon 9; Ephesians 3:1; 4:1). These terms have a very broad background and great depth of meaning. So what did they mean to Paul and how should they be understood for our mutual edification and growth today?

A careful reading of the above-mentioned passages as well as the Book of Acts reveals several important facets regarding these terms and their present-day application. First, they have to do with our conversion from sin, self, and Satan to belong to God our Father. Paul's conversion was not necessarily typical; but, in outcome, it was no different than anyone else who has been born by the Spirit of God. Paul was taken away or delivered from one master and placed in chosen slavery to another. The Bible describes this process as being "purchased" or redeemed by God. No longer do we belong to ourselves, no longer do we have to be slaves of sin, no longer are we captivated by Satan, but now we belong to God. We have been bought with a price and have a new Master. We now follow the highest possible calling: that of a bond servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ.

For Paul, being a prisoner and bond-servant was directly related to carrying the gospel wherever God directed him. It was his consuming burden and his ever-present joy. In the process of preaching the gospel, he started many churches, as scores of people throughout Asia became believers in the same Christ whom Paul served. For each new believer the calling was the same. As prisoners and bond-servants, they were to carry the gospel message wherever and whenever they had opportunity. God gave fruitfulness to the message and the church continued to grow until the world had been confronted by this marvelous message of hope which "turned the world upside down."

For we who are alive in the present age, our position and calling are still the same. You and I do not belong to ourselves, but are possessed by God to serve Him (1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Romans 6:15-23). The practical result should be clearly seen in our relationships here on earth as we begin to obey our new Master. Here again, under the Spirit's leading, Paul writes to the Galatian church that we should "serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13). He takes this one step further by saying that "while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Christians belong to no one but God. Our only obligation in life is to please God through heartfelt worship and obedient actions. We must demonstrate the love of God in Christ Jesus through our speaking and living. Those who know Christ and desire to follow Him in this way will "ensure salvation" for themselves and for those who hear them (1 Timothy 4:16). This defines maturity in Christ for us. It is the goal of the Church. This is the call of the bond-servant!

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Make a specific list of ways that you can choose to "enslave yourself" to Christ. Use the passages listed above to form your list. Do you consider yourself a bond-servant of Christ? Why or why not?

As you have applied your skills and worked through the letter to the Colossians:

What are the interesting **observations** you have made as you took the time and followed a plan?

What contextual **conclusions** did you come to as you put yourself in the shoes of the author, the hearers, and the original audience?

What personal **applications** have you taken from the letter to the Colossians that you can make a part of your world-view concerning God, mankind, and yourself?

What do you feel **you have taken** from this Deeper experience?

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