

From the Inside Out

Fairview, Pennsylvania Ladies' Retreat
March 11–13, 2016

*“... for it is God who is at work in you,
both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” Phi 3:13*

Class One: Glory

The glory of the Lord should shine in us—from the inside out!

Opening Story

Sabina Wurmbrand “God’s Beauty Parlor”

Now I told you that being gathered there under the bed, we read the Bible. We had among us a young Christian lady. She knew by heart whole chapters from the Old Testament, but she also knew chapters 6 & 7 from the book of Acts. And so we were under the bed and we read Acts chapter 6 about how Stephen, how he stands before his enemies and his enemies looked at Stephen and they saw that his face was beautiful, so beautiful like the face of an angel ... It is written there that Stephen was full with the Holy Spirit and with the wisdom from God. And when you are full with the wisdom of God and with the Holy Spirit, no wonder that his face was beautiful like the face of an angel.

And while we finished this chapter and we started to speak about Stephen, we had among us, we were Christians altogether, but we had among us a lady, one of the richest ladies of Romania. She was not a Christian. She was in prison because her husband had been the political leader of the country. So she listened with us about all these things; about Stephen. Then she said, “I wonder about you the Christians, you seem to be intelligent women, but how could you believe that Stephen, standing before his enemies knowing that he would be put to death. How could you believe it that his face could be so beautiful? In what beauty parlor could he have been in order to have a face like the face of an angel in such a crisis, in such critical moments when he was before death?”

A Christian lady answered, “I am sorry for you. You do not know Jesus, the Son of God. But whenever Jesus comes in a heart, he never comes alone; He always comes with all His richness. He comes with His angels. He comes with the glory of heaven and so when you open your heart and Jesus comes in your heart to be your Lord and Savior, He brings His beauty. And so Stephen could be so beautiful like an angel.”

And while we spoke at once the door opened, the Communist guard came directly to the place where we were gathered under the bed took us out all, gave a hard beating to everyone; and bleeding he threw us back in the prison cell. But we the Christians, we knew what price we had to pay to read the Bible and to pray. But we were afraid for this lady who was not a Christian, how will she react and what would she say.

And while we were thinking about these things, the first one who came to speak with me was this rich, rich lady who now was poor and hungry, her face smeared with blood and tears. She said, “Now I know the very fact that the Communists are persecuting the Christians, the very fact that they have beaten us only because we would speak about Jesus, this very fact for me is the best proof, that your God is God indeed. And your Jesus will also be my Jesus, my Savior. And she did not know that now her face smeared with blood and with tears, shone and was beautiful like the face of an angel.”

When we believe in Jesus Christ, the glory of God indwells us through the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This glory transforms a very vanilla life into something very radiant—and even supernatural. This marvelous glory should be nourished and cherished by you and me; and unveiled in the sight of others so that they might behold the character of God living within us. **The glory of God is to shine in us—from the inside out!**

1. Glory Defined

The Hebrew word for “glory” is *kabod*, meaning “honor, splendor, abundance.” The Greek word for “glory” is *doxa*, meaning “honor, praise, and worship.” Glory is the visible manifestation of God’s character; and to glorify God is to enhance the character and reputation of God through our thoughts, words, and actions.

2. Building the Tabernacle—Willing Hearts and Working Hands

In the Book of Exodus, God gave Moses instruction on how to build the tabernacle—a place where Israel would worship the Lord, **and the glory of the Lord would dwell among His people** (Exo 25:1–9).

- The Lord commanded the people to give an offering of their gold, silver, jewels, fine cloth, wood, oils, and incense for the building of the tabernacle and its furniture (Exo 35:4–9).
- The wealth they gave came from the spoils of their slavery in Egypt (Exo 12:35–36).
- Even though this was a command from God, it was not forced upon the people. They were only to give if they had a “*willing heart*.” The people had the choice of whether or not they wanted to participate in building the house where the glory of the Lord would dwell (Exo 25:2; 35:5).
- The children of Israel responded so well to this command from God that Moses had to ask them to stop giving! They gave “*sufficient, and more than enough for all the work*” (Exo 36:7), and so were “*restrained from bringing any more*” (Exo 36:6).
- Upon completion, the tabernacle became the dwelling place of the glory of the Lord. His glory was seen as a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. The glory of the Lord led the children of Israel through the wilderness and was a witness to the surrounding nations (Exo 40:34–38).

Conclusion: The children of Israel considered their earthly riches as nothing compared to their desire to accommodate the glory of the Lord! Thus, they obeyed the will of the Lord.

3. The Tabernacle: A Picture of Christ

- The Brazen Altar: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God
- The Laver of Cleansing: daily cleansing
- The Bread of the Presence: Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life
- The Golden Lampstand: Jesus Christ, the Light of the World
- The Altar of Incense: Jesus Christ, a sweet smelling aroma to God
- The Holy of Holies: Jesus Christ, the manifest glory of God

4. Rebuilding the Temple: Unwilling Hearts and Lazy Hands

In the Book of Haggai, Israel has been brought back from captivity into the land of Israel to rebuild the temple after its destruction by the Babylonians. The book of Haggai fits chronologically between Ezra chapters 4 and 5.

- The children of Israel have returned to their land after being in captivity for seventy years. God has brought them back for the specific purpose of rebuilding the temple.
- Because of opposition, the children of Israel deny that it is the time to rebuild the temple (Hag 1:1–2; Ezr 4:1–5:17).
- Instead, they put their time, effort, and wealth into building their own houses. Their desires are focused on self—rather than God, on the physical—rather than the spiritual (Hag 1:3–4).
- Because the people have chosen to be spiritually lean, God disciplines them with physical and economic leanness. We reap what we sow (Hag 1:5–11; Gal 6:7–8).
- Four times in this short book, the Lord says to Israel, “*Consider your ways*” (Hag 1:5, 1:7; 2:15, 2:18).

Conclusion: The Jews of Haggai’s day considered their earthly riches as first priority over spiritual things. Thus, they disregarded the will of the Lord.

The pattern we see in Israel is often seen in the life of a believer. When a person first comes to Christ, they are excited about their new-found faith and eager to serve Him with a willing heart. They have a great desire to know God’s presence in their life, and to behold His glory. After some time, the newness wears off, the passion cools, and they find themselves—once again—putting the cares and pleasures of the world above spiritual priorities.

The same is true with churches that begin with a hunger to preach Christ and then turn, after time, into a social club or a business—leaving the powerful Word of God outside the door. This seems to be the condition of much of the Church in America today.

5. The Glory of the Lord Today

- The Old Testament background helps us understand the indwelling ministry of God in the Church Age. The glory of the Lord no longer dwells in the Old Testament tabernacle but in the souls of all those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior (2Co 4:6; Col 1:27).
- 1Co 3:16–17, “*you are [the] temple of God.*” This is a plural “*you.*” referring to the Body of Christ—the Church. Collectively, believers are the “*temple of God.*”
- 1Co 6:18–20, “*your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you.*” This is a singular “*you.*” Each individual believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit.
- Each believer is also indwelt by God the Father and God the Son (Joh 17:21).
- Let’s consider the magnificence of being indwelt by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Theophanies: In the Bible, there are at least eight theophanies, or appearances of God. The theophanies in Scripture give us a small glimpse into the awesomeness of God and His glory:

Eze 1:1–28
Exo 19:16–20, Exo 19:24–25; Exo 20:1–21
Eze 10:1–22
Isa 6:1–8
Dan 7:9–27
Rev 1:9–18
Rev 4:1–11
Rev 19:11–16

a. Indwelling of God the Father (Joh 17:21)

- Consider His glory as seen in Rev 4:1–11; Eze 1:1–28.
- This is the God that indwells you and me! This is the glory that lives in our heart.

b. Indwelling of God the Son (Joh 17:21)

- Consider His glory as seen in Rev 1:9–18.
- Consider His humility as seen in Phi 2:6–8.
- Consider His sacrifice as seen in the incarnation and crucifixion (Joh 1:14).
- This is the God that indwells you and me! This is the glory that lives in our heart.

c. Indwelling of God the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9–11; John 14; Jam 4:5; 2Ti 1:14).

- Consider the abundance of His ministry to us (Joh 7:37–39).
- This is the Spirit that indwells you and me!

Conclusion: Our inner man is to be a pillar of glory that unveils God to those around us!

Closing Story

We began with the story of Sabina Wurmbrand in a Romanian prison, where the glory of God dwelt in the hearts and on the faces of persecuted Christians. When Sabina shared this story with Christians in America, she closed her message by telling her audience that, in prison, they had rewritten the words to a popular children's song. It was rewritten to go like this:

*“Jesus loves me, this I know, for their faces tell me so.
Little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Their faces tell me so!”*

And then she closed her message with these words:

May God bless every one of you. May God fill your hearts with His glory in order that your faces and your life should witness to all those around you that Jesus, the Son of God, loves you and loves all those who trust Him as Savior and Lord.

Ladies, this is my prayer for you and for me. Amen.

We are here to display to a dying and dark world the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ. Let that glory shine—from the inside out!

Class Two: The Laver of Cleansing—Purity

What's on the inside will come out!

Introduction

Cleanliness is a luxury. We enjoy so many luxuries in this life. Among them is the luxury of cleanliness. Cleanliness in our soul is a spiritual luxury that only believers can enjoy.

Laver of Cleansing

At the entrance to the Holy Place stood a Laver of Cleansing. Throughout the day, the priests who ministered would repeatedly wash their hands and feet in this laver. Outside the tent of meeting was the world, with its lusts; its battles and betrayals. Inside the tent of meeting was peace and purity. This pictures the need of daily cleansing in our soul so that our walk and worship will be acceptable in God's sight.

- In the Church Age, we are also repeatedly told by God to walk in purity of heart, because what is on the inside, does comes out!

Consider these New Testament exhortations for purity of heart:

1. Jam 4:8, *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."*

In the book of James, the believers were being rebuked for being:

- hearers of the Word and not doers,
- showing partiality,
- living without fruitful works in their life,
- sins of the tongue, and
- quarreling.
- James gives the solution in Jam 4:8.

2. Mat 23:27–28, *"... So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."*
3. Mat 15:8, *"THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME."*
4. 1Pe 1:22, *"Since you have in obedience to truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart."*

- There is an extensive and verbally visual passage on this principle of purity of heart found in Eph 4:22–5:18. It is important to note that this passage is sandwiched in between Paul's teaching on spiritual growth (Eph 4:11–16) and the command to be filled by means of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18).

1. The process of purity is given in Eph 4:22–24:

- **“lay aside the old self”**—in Greek, this means “to cast off” (not laying close at hand, but putting far from you). This is a very strong action verb; it is in the Aorist Present Infinitive, which indicates we produce the action with the result that it comes back to benefit us.
- **“be renewed”**—this means “to renovate, to reform” and is in the Present Passive, meaning the subject is being acted upon, that is, God does the cleansing and the renewing.
- **“in the spirit of your mind”**—by your new, spiritual nature
- **“and put on the new self”**—“to array, to clothe, sense of sinking into a fresh, clean garment.” Again, this is a strong action verb in the Aorist Present Infinitive. We produce the action with the result that it comes back to benefit us.
- **“new [man]”**—this new man doesn’t have to be created again, but it does have to be put back on, put back in a place of power and control in your life.

2. Eph 4:25 begins with *“therefore”*—because of what Paul has just taught, we should do what follows. This verse begins a long string of commands that illustrate what it looks like in our life to *“cast off”* the old and *“put on”* the new. The string of commands ends with the command to *“be filled with the Spirit”* in Eph 5:18.

These commands show a stark contrast between the corrupt nature of the old man and the God-like nature of the new man. They show a stark contrast between living like the unbeliever and living as a regenerate person who is a new creature in Christ and indwelt by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One grieves the Holy Spirit, while the other gives place for the Holy Spirit to fill us with His fruit, for His glory.

Consider these contrasts:

- **Lay aside** lies, falsehood/**put on** speaking of truth (Eph 4:25).
- **Lay aside** anger/**put on** righteous indignation (Eph 4:26).
If there is justification for anger, see that it is without sin. Otherwise, you are “renting Satan a room” in the house of your soul (Eph 4:27).
- **Lay aside** stealing/**put on** labor in order to share with those in need (Eph 4:28).
- **Lay aside** unwholesome words, i.e., words that are detrimental to the well-being of another/**put on** words that edify according to the needs of the person and the moment (Eph 4:29).

Col 4:6, *“Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”*

- Eph 4:30, *“and do not grieve the Holy Spirit.”* Sin in our inner person grieves the Holy Spirit. The Greek likens it to the grief that a mother feels at the loss of her child. (As a mother has plans for her child to be productive and have a

good future, those hopes are lost at the loss of a child. So the Holy Spirit grieves because His hope for productivity in this life, and future reward is lost when we continue in sin.) As we will see in Eph 5:18, this is the opposite of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

- **Lay aside** *“bitterness ... wrath ... anger ... clamor ... slander ... all malice,”* (Eph 4:31)/**put on** the imitation of Christ through kindness, tender-heartedness, love, and a forgiving spirit (Eph 4:32–5:2).

The cluster of sin in verse 31 stems from the root of bitterness in a person’s soul. Remember, what is on the inside, will come out and manifest itself to the world. Wrath, anger (lasting resentment) clamor, slander, and malice are the fruit of bitterness of soul.

Bitterness

- Danger for a woman
- Sometimes, life sucks. People hurt us, abuse us, or betray us. Circumstances disappoint us. Dreams fade and hopes are crushed. This is always a test of what we will become on the inside. We sometimes like to nurse a soul-wound and hold it dear in our heart. We know the thoughts are wrong, but we just want to indulge the pain for a little while.
- Heb 12:15, *“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.”*
 - Root of bitterness. The longer you nourish the anger or bitterness, the deeper the root becomes. Time allows it to grow; and the more it grows, the harder it is to eradicate it from your mind.
 - Bitterness not dealt with will cause troubles in relationships. It will defile others—usually those you are closest to
 - God’s grace allows us a path of healing on the inside.
- Job 5:18, *“For He [the Lord] inflicts pain [allows it, like in the life of Job], and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.”*
- The Lord has allowed the infliction of pain in my life, and yours. But, His hand has also healed. The problem that remains is my memory. At times, things in life trigger my thoughts, and I remember the pain. My soul suffers as if the pain were new and present. I allow a root of bitterness to have a fresh start.
- Consider Jacob (Genesis 22). He wrestled with the Lord, and the Lord inflicted pain. His hip was put out of socket. But, out of that wrestling and pain came a blessing from God. Jacob was renamed from *“Jacob”* (meaning “cheater, or con man”) to *“Israel”* (meaning “God prevails”). Jacob learned something that day about the character of God and the liberality of His grace.
- But, Jacob still limped, even after the encounter. It’s easy to look at Jacob’s life and say, “he should dwell not on the limp, but on God’s grace and blessing.” This should be the same for you and me!

- When we recall and remember hurts in our life, we should once again cast off the old and put on the new. Our thoughts should dwell on the hand of healing—not the infliction of pain.
- Remember, that to glorify God means “to enhance His character and reputation.” Jesus told Peter to forgive 70x7 (Mat 18:21–22). The only other place in Scripture that number is used is in the Old Testament when God shows His long-suffering attitude to Israel. To show forgiveness and kindness to others in the face of their fault is to let the glory of God flow from the inside out. Ladies, let the glory of God show up in your marriages, in your relationships with others at home, at church, and in the world.
 - **Lay aside** “immorality ... impurity ... greed ... filthiness and silly talk, or course jesting” (Eph 5:3–5)/**put on** a thankful heart.

Here is another cluster of sins that refer to the longing of our soul to fulfill earthly desires outside of God. We are so conditioned by life in America to find pleasure in physical things: food, fashion, music, entertainment, etc. Instead, the solution is to find pleasure and fulfillment in spiritual things, resulting in thankfulness toward God for all He has done for us in Christ.

Immorality

- We live in a very immoral country and culture. We see it all around us.
- 1Pe 2:11, “*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.*”
 - “*Beloved,*” because of who we are in Christ.
 - “*aliens and strangers*”—we are in the world, but not of the world. We have a means of being delivered out of the immoral and futile way of life that the world is enslaved to.
 - “*abstain*”—stay as far away from as possible. Again, the more we entertain a thought pattern the harder it is to get rid of.
 - “*which wage war against the soul*”—Don’t be a wounded warrior in the spiritual realm.
 - Eph 5:5–7 warns us of the divine discipline and loss of reward that comes when we do not follow the “lay-aside/put-on” commands in our life.
 - Verses 15–20 continue the contrast between the old man and the new man:
 - Do not walk in darkness, but walk as children of light. Do not participate in deeds of darkness—rather expose them.
 - Do not walk as unwise, but walk in the wisdom of God.
 - Do not waste time, but redeem it.
 - Do not be drunk with wine, but “*be filled with [by means of] the Spirit*” (Eph 5:18).

- The chapter then finishes with a passage on marriage. If a man is going to love his wife as Christ loves the Church, he will need to be consistent in the “lay-aside/put-on” process. If a woman is going to respect her husband as she respects Jesus Christ, she will need to be consistent in the “lay-aside/put-on” process. (If time, go to Pro 12:4.)
3. This principle is illustrated in the relationship between David and Michal (2Sa 6:12–23).
- Michal once loved David, and even acted to save his life from her father Saul (1Sa 18:20–21; 1 Samuel 19).
 - 2Sa 6:14, the “*linen ephod*”—this was a simple linen garment that the priests wore—not his usual kingly attire.
 - 2Sa 6:14–15, all of Israel was celebrating in like-manner as David.
 - 2Sa 6:16, “*she despised him in her heart*” (emphasis added). Her sin, like all sin, began in her heart. Because it was not “put off” quickly, it came from the inside out through verbal accusations, shame, and blame.
 - 2Sa 6:23, her bitterness of soul defiled David and ruined her marriage.

Closing

What is on the inside will come out. Michal should have cast off the old and put on the new, and so should we.

Class Three: The Table of His Presence—God’s Word

God’s Word sustains the inner soul.

Introduction

In the Garden of the Lord

The Word of God came unto me,
Sitting alone among the multitudes;
And my blind eyes were touched by light.
And there was laid upon my lips a flame of fire.

I laugh and shout for life is good,
Though my feet are set in silent ways.
In merry mood, I leave the crowd
To walk in my garden. Ever as I walk,
I gather fruits and flowers in my hands.
And with joyful heart, I bless the sun
That kindles all the place with radiant life.

I run with playful winds that blow the scent
Of rose and jasmine in eddying whirls.
At last I come where tall lilies grow,
Lifting their faces like white saints to God.
While the lilies pray, I kneel upon the ground;
I have strayed into the holy temple of the Lord.

~ Helen Keller, 1880

Though Helen was born deaf, mute, and blind, the sword of God’s Word was able to penetrate her soul, bringing light to blind eyes and a fiery message to dumb lips. In the midst of silence and darkness, she communed in the glory of the Lord, even as that glory indwelt her needy soul. In this, she found joy.

Bread of the Presence

Inside the Holy Place stood a table with bread. Every week, fine flour would be baked into 12 loaves, which were then placed in two rows on the table. These loaves were food for the priests who ministered in the Holy Place. In the Church Age, we are now a kingdom of priests, and each one of us, an individual priest before God. Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, and we have daily access to Him in His Word—the Bible. Jesus Himself said, “*MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD*” (Mat 4:4).

The Value of God's Word in our Life

1. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path"* (Psa 119:105).
2. *"Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You"* (Psa 119:11).
3. *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ"* (Rom 10:17).
4. *"Be diligent [study] to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth"* (2Ti 2:15).
5. *"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2Pe 3:18).
6. *"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart"* (Heb 4:12, compare with Joh 2:25, *"He Himself knew what was in man."*).
7. Look at 2Pe 1:2–4:
 - Grace and peace come with knowing Jesus Christ as Savior. It is multiplied (increased) to us in knowing and applying (Greek, *epignosis*, "full knowledge") His Word (2Pe 1:2).
 - His Word gives us everything we need to live a life of godliness—a life that reflects His glory.
 - By knowledge and application of His Word, we escape the corruption of the world and partake of His divine nature.

James tells us:

"Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

(Here again, we have a put-off and put-on principle: put off the filthy soul, and put on humility and a receptive heart.)

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does" (Jam 1:21–25).

The forgetful hearer is the one who looks at his face in the mirror of God's Word and forgets he is a new creature in Christ. He walks away unchanged by God's Word; he is deluded and returns to his filthiness and wickedness.

The effectual hearer is the man who looks into the mirror of God's Word and remembers that he is a new creature in Christ. He walks away changed on the inside and, therefore, changes how he acts on the outside. He is a doer of God's Word; he has humility of soul, and is blessed.

- When James speaks of “saving our soul,” it is in reference to daily life—not eternal salvation.
- He sets forth a three-step process to blessing:
 1. Receive, Jam 1:21
 2. Reflect, Jam 1:23–25
 3. Respond, Jam 1:22

Conclusion

The Word of God in our soul gives us wisdom and power to live victoriously in the world around us. If we starve our soul, the strength of God’s glory will fade in its beauty and power. If we feed our soul, the glory of God will grow and flourish. Therefore, a daily portion of God’s Word (food for our soul) is critical for living an inside-out life.

Sources of God’s Word

- Bible Classes
- Daily Reading
- Devotions
- Memorization
- Audio Messages
- Songs, think on the words and the message

These sources of God’s Word are all readily available to those of us living in the United States of America. However, the one thing that is not always readily available to us is TIME! Especially if you are a young mother raising a house full of children, or a woman balancing career and family. Your time is dominated (in a good way) by the needs of those around you and the demands of daily life. This sometimes brings about discouragement in our walk with the Lord. He understands! Remember that He said of Mary “*she has done what she could*” (Mar 14:8). Apply this principle in your seeking after God’s Word. Don’t fall into guilt over your limitations, but do be proactive in accessing His Word when you can. (Lighten up on yourself or toughen up on yourself—only you can determine.)

When we don’t have time for daily devotions, Bible reading, and study, what can we do to maintain spiritual growth, focus, and strength? The first and most important step is to CONNECT mentally and spiritually to what you have already learned and treasured in your soul. It’s not always a matter of needing more of God’s Word, but a matter of reflecting on what you already have of God’s Word.

- **Object Lessons.** The world around us declares the design and glory of God. Jesus regularly taught the disciples a Bible class from the world that surrounded them. For example, the sunrise, the vine, the branches, the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, the fig tree, and so forth. The physical earth is here to teach us spiritual principles. As you go through your day, CONNECT mentally and spiritually with what the world around you teaches. It will bring your mind to God. Be a good student of the world around you!

- **Teaching Others**

- Deu 6:4–9. In speaking of God, His Word, and His works to our children, we, too, connect to the principles and truths. Be a good teacher of the world around you!
- Tit 2:3–5. Life is more than learning. It is applying and ministering to others. In teaching younger women, through our words and through our life, we honor God's Word!

- **Meditation**

- Meditation defined. Meditation is the Hebrew word *hagah*, meaning “to ponder, to commune, to murmur, to talk with oneself.”
- Psa 1:1–6. This psalm speaks of the man who is like a tree planted by the streams of water. He bears fruit in season, his leaves do not wither, and in whatever he does he prospers. This man finds “*delight ... in the law of the LORD, and in His law He meditates day and night*” (Psa 1:2, emphasis added). His meditation is the water that makes the tree grow and bear fruit.
- Psa 4:4, “*Tremble, and do not sin; meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still*” (emphasis added). This is a psalm of David written during a time of distress. He recognizes the fearful trembling that comes with dangers in life, yet does not let that fear be turned to sin. The stillness in his heart comes from meditating on God. His confidence before God gives him courage before men.
- Psalm 63. This is another psalm of David that is brimming over with words that describe a soul hungry to know God and His glory. This longing is expressed in the words: “*seek ... thirsts ... yearns ... seen [behold] ... remember ... meditate ... sing [and] clings.*” (God does not force-feed us!)
This is a psalm of David when he was in the wilderness being pursued by Saul. At this time, he is comforted and strengthened by “remembering” and “meditating.”
- Meditation is only found in one verse in the New Testament: Phi 4:8.
“*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, [let your mind] dwell [meditate, NKJV] on these things.*”
The word meditate is *logizomai*, meaning “to consider, to account, to meditate on.” In other words, CONNECT spiritually with the precious Word of God so that there might be the peace of God in your soul/
- If you were to meditate only on Joh 3:16, how many Bible classes could you teach yourself just by thinking through that verse and recalling what you know about God? About His love? About His giving grace? About His only begotten Son? About faith? About salvation and eternal life?

Psalm 119 is an acrostic psalm that is full of love for God’s Word. The author (the Jewish rabbis believe it to be Ezra’s father) wrote this psalm during a time of captivity, severe testing, distress, and abuse. During this time, he communed with God’s Word through meditation on the Word of God that he had stored in his inner man. Eight times in the psalm, he refers to meditating on the Word of God.

Notice that the author meditates according to the spiritual need of the moment. In battle, a warrior shoots a specific arrow to hit a precise target—resulting in victory. In our spiritual battles, we must learn to use specific promises and principles of Scripture to meet particular trials and temptations—resulting in spiritual victory. The Scripture comes from the inside—within our soul—and meets the target out in the world.

1. Psa 119:15. Meditation for Obedience (emphasis added)

*“I will **meditate** on Thy precepts
And regard Your ways.
I shall delight (intimate caressing) in Your statutes;
I shall not forget Your word.”*

- When you are in a time of temptation, what verses could you meditate on to deliver you?
 - ◆ 2Pe 2:9; 1Co 10:13; Luk 11:4; Heb 4:15–16; Joh 14:15
- Can you think of a Bible story that illustrates being delivered from temptation? Could meditating on that story encourage you in a time of temptation?
 - ◆ Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. He relied on His recall of Scripture to meet each temptation.
 - ◆ Others might include Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to bow in front of the idol or Joseph refusing to get sexually involved with another man’s wife.

2. Psa 119:23. Meditation for Peace (emphasis added)

*“Even though princes sit and talk against me,
Your servant **meditates** on Your statutes.”*

- When you are in a time of unrest, fear, or attack, what verses could you meditate on to bring peace to your soul?
 - ◆ Isa 41:10; Isa 26:3; Psa 4:8; Psalm 23
- Can you think of a Bible story that shows a believer resting in peace while being wrongfully attacked, accused, or persecuted? Could meditating on that story give you peace in a time of unrest?
 - ◆ Peter awaiting execution in prison, yet sleeping peacefully through the night (Act 12:2–6)
 - ◆ Daniel in the lion’s den (Daniel 6)

3. **Psa 119:25–28. Meditation for Strength in Suffering** (emphasis added)

*“My soul cleaves to the dust;
Revive me according to Your word.
I have told of my ways, and You have answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.
Make me understand the way of Your precepts,
So I will **meditate** on Your wonders.
My soul weeps because of grief;
Strengthen me according to Your word.”*

- When you are in a time of discouragement, suffering, or pain, what verse could you meditate on to give you strength and bring perspective to your suffering?
 - ◆ Heb 12:1-3, Jas 1:2, 12, Rom 8:28
- Can you think of a Bible Story that illustrates strength and perspective in time of suffering? Could meditating on that story give you strength in a time of suffering?
 - ◆ The arrest, betrayal, torture, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
 - ◆ Stephen continued to give witness to the message of the Gospel in the midst of “gnashing teeth” leading to martyrdom (Act 7:56–60).
 - ◆ Job in Job chapters 1 and 2—especially Job 1:21 and Job 2:10

4. **Psa 119:47–48. Meditation for Worship** (emphasis added)

*“I shall delight in Your commandments,
Which I love.
And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments,
Which I love;
And I will **meditate** on Your statutes.”*

- When you just want to let loose and praise and worship God, what verses could you meditate on to bring depth and content to your worship?
 - ◆ Psa 99:9; Rom 12:1
- Can you think of a Bible story that illustrates the joy of worship, even in the midst of trial? Could meditating on that story encourage you to let loose and worship regardless of your circumstances?
 - ◆ Paul and Barnabas in prison, singing praises to God (Acts 16)

5. **Psa 119:78–79. Meditation for Ministry** (emphasis added)

*“May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie;
But I shall **meditate** on Your precepts.
May those who fear You turn to me,
Even those who know Your testimonies.”*

- When you have the opportunity to minister to others, what verses could you meditate on to serve with the patience and love of Jesus Christ?
 - ◆ 2Co 5:14–16; Rom 5:5; Heb 6:10

- Can you think of a Bible story that illustrates ministering to others with the love of Christ? Could meditating on that story encourage you in the trials that sometimes accompany ministering to others?
 - ◆ Throughout the book of Acts, Paul was repeatedly maligned and persecuted, yet he continued to minister with the love of Christ and the desire to bring others into the family of God.

6. Psa 119:97–100. Meditation for Wisdom (emphasis added)

*“Oh, how I love Your law!
It is my **meditation** all the day.
Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,
For they are ever mine.
I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my **meditation**.
I understand more than the aged,
Because I have observed Your precepts.”*

- When there are important decisions to make in your life, or you need wisdom for one reason or another, what verses could you meditate on to give you wisdom?
 - ◆ Pro 3:5–6; Jam 1:5–6; Mat 7:7
- Can you think of a Bible story that illustrates a believer going to God or His Word in need of wisdom? Could meditating on that story encourage you in a time of decision making?
 - ◆ David at Ziklag (1Sa 30:8); Esther before the king (Est 4:13–17)

7. Psa 119:147–149. Meditation for Help (emphasis added)

*“I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I wait for Your words.
My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may **meditate** on Your word.
Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your ordinances.”*

- When you are in a time of physical or spiritual need, what verses could you meditate on to assure your soul of God’s help?
 - ◆ Psa 46:1; Heb 4:15–16; Heb 13:5–6
- Can you think of a Bible story that shows a believer going to God for help in a time of need, and God faithfully providing that need? Could meditating on that story encourage you in a time of need?
 - ◆ Hannah praying for a son (1 Samuel 1)

Consider these quotes on the need for meditation:

When you cease from labor, fill up your time in reading, meditation, and prayer; and while your hands are laboring, let your heart be employed, as much as possible, in divine thoughts.

~ David Brainerd

It is not hasty reading, but seriously meditating upon holy and heavenly truths that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching on the flowers that gathers the honey, but her abiding for a time upon them, and drawing out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most on divine truth, that will prove the choicest, wisest, strongest Christian.

~ Joseph Hall

Meditation is the soul's perspective glass, whereby, in her long removes, she discerneth God, as if He were nearer at hand.

~ Owen Felthem

The amount of time we spend with Jesus—meditating on His Word and His majesty, seeking His face—establishes our fruitfulness in the kingdom.

~ Charles Stanley

Question:

Can you think of times and moments in your daily routine that could be better used by investing them in meditation on God's Word?

These would be times that we are now just letting our mind wander, or filling our thoughts with the worries of this life, our busy schedule, what we are going to wear, etc. But, if we make a decision to do it, these times could be dedicated to meditation.

A few examples might be: while nursing the baby, cleaning the house, going on a walk or run, driving home from dropping off the kids, watering the garden, or lying awake at night.

Remember the story of Sabina Wurmbrand in prison. The only Bible she had was what was stored in her heart. Her meditation of stored Scripture was what sustained her during the worst of trials.

From God's Beauty Parlor

We could not come with our Bibles as our beloved Indian brethren did, but Christians gathered in their hearts the word of God.

The Communists have taken everything away from us everything; our beloved ones, our children. They put some on the streets without father, without mother. We did not know any thing about them. But they could not take away what we had gathered in our hearts. A little bit of faith, a little bit of hope, and a little bit from the word of God. And we had seen there in Communist Prison, how one word from the word of God taken out from the heart of a Christian and given to some prisoner in despair; one word from the word of God has brought new light and new hope. Lives were saved from this our richness. You have the Bible dear sisters. Just thank God for having the Bible. Read it, study it and treasure the word of God and gather it in your heart. You can need it very soon. We have seen the greatest richness that we could ever have gathered was the word of God and it gave life to those in despair.

Conclusion

If you have a Bible in your hand, you have the potential of living a rich and fruitful life. If you have the Bible in your soul, you are the richest of all God's children!

Class Four: The Golden Lampstand—Light of the World

Does the love of Christ compel you?

The Golden Lampstand

In the Holy Place of the Tabernacle was a Golden Lampstand. The lamp was to be tended by the priests so that its light never went out. The lampstand was to give forth light day and night (Exo 27:20–21). The lampstand was the only source of light in the Holy Place and so points us directly to Christ as “*the light of the world*” (Joh 8:12). Jesus also calls His Church, and those who are individually members of it “*the light of the world,*” not because of our own doing, but because of Him who indwells us (Mat 5:14).

In Scripture, light is a picture of fellowship (1Jo 1:7). The Greek word for “*fellowship*” is *koinonia*, which means “joint participation” or “partnership.” This word is translated in Scripture as “fellowship,” “contribution,” “participation,” and “sharing.” Our fellowship, the richness of our love relationship with the Son of God, should never go out, should never grow cold, should never glow dim.

In the next lesson, we will talk about our mission as believers, our call to share in the commission of Christ. But motivation is so important in the Christian life because without love, we are but a clanging symbol: doing, working, serving, going, but without love, it is nothing!

As women, we are responsive creatures. God has designed the soul of a man to be a leader and the soul of a woman to be a responder. In this fellowship between Christ and me, He is the leader, the initiator, the husband in the relationship. The more I understand and respond to His love, the more pure and true my inner self and my service will be.

Song of Solomon

Background

- The author is Solomon. This is the best of his 1,005 songs (1Ki 4:32).
- It is a song about the love affair between Solomon and the Shulammite woman. Though Solomon had many wives and concubines, his love for this woman was the strongest and most pure of all.
- By way of application, it is a picture of Christ and His love for each and every one of us!

Solomon’s Love for the Woman—Christ’s Love for Me

1. **His love is personal and intimate** (Sos 1:9–10; 2:2).
 - Solomon likens the woman to “*my mare,*” among the 15,000 horses that he owned, and like a lily among the thorns.

- Compare with Rom 8:31–39; Eph 3:14–19. Christ loves each one of us as if there were only one of us. Though we are one of many, our relationship is personal and intimate.
2. **His eyes see the rarity of her beauty** (Sos 1:15; 2:10, 13; 4:1–6).
- Solomon speaks of her beauty in this verse calling her “*my darling,*” “my beautiful one.” He expounds on the intimate details of her beauty.
 - Christ sees beauty in us, especially when we live in submission and obedience to His calling in our life. Compare Psa 45:10–11 (a psalm about our spiritual marriage-union with Christ the King) with 1Pe 3:3–5. He knows the intimate details of our soul, our inner desires, fears, our thoughts, and longings. His Word is a love letter written to our souls, expounding on the depth of His love for us.
3. **His love invites her to live in newness of life** (Sos 2:10–13).
- Springtime is upon the land and Solomon desires to share the joy and beauty of it with the Shulammite woman.
 - Compare with Isa 61:1–3. Jesus Christ replaces our pains and sorrows with gladness and praise. In Him, we are a new creature, with a new heart, a new song, a new purpose for living, and a new eternal destiny. Behold, He makes all things new!
4. **He longs for conversation, the sound of her voice** (Sos 2:14).
- Solomon never tires of hearing the sweet sound of her voice.
 - Compare with Heb 4:16; Isa 56:7; 1Th 5:17. Jesus Christ welcomes us to His throne of grace and desires **unceasing** conversation with His Bride through prayer.
5. **He realizes the perfection of her beauty** (Sos 4:7).
- Solomon finds absolutely no flaw or blemish in the Shulammite woman. In Sos 5:2, he calls her “*my perfect one.*”
 - Compare with 2Co 5:21; Rom 3:21–23; 1Co 1:30–31. When we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are imputed with the righteousness of Christ. As God sees the perfection of His Son, Christ sees the perfection of His Bride. We are “His perfect one.”
6. **He invites her to share his life’s journey with him** (Sos 4:8).
- He knows the journey he must follow but doesn't want to face it alone.
 - Christ invites us to “*follow [Him]*” daily. He has a perfect plan and purpose for our life. The Shulammite woman had to answer her lover’s invitation, and so do we. She had a choice, we have a choice, and that choice should be made every day (Luk 9:23).

God is the Faithful Partner in this Love Relationship (1Co 1:9; Isa 54:5–6, 2Ti 2:13)

Take these passages to heart—to your heart. You may be seeking a young man to spend the rest of your life with. Seek first to develop a love-relationship with Jesus Christ so that you have a heart of love—the love of Christ—to share with that young man when he comes.

You may have been hurt, betrayed, or even deserted by a man who promised to love you “‘til death do you part.” That can leave a woman hard-hearted. Let the love of Christ penetrate, heal, and make you new. His love, and only His love, is faithful and true! Through life, our heart will either be conformed to the heart of Satan (a hard, proud, and hateful heart) or to the heart of Christ (a soft, humble, and loving heart).

The Shulammitte’s Response to Solomon’s Love/Our Response to the Love of Christ (1Jo 4:19)

1. **She considers the treasure of His love** (Sos 1:2–3).
 - The Shulammitte woman considers Solomon’s love to be intoxicating, and better than fine wine. She wants more of it!
 - Psa 37:4, “*Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart*” is fulfilled in time and eternity.
2. **She gains self-esteem from being the object of his love** (Sos 1:5–7; 2:1).
 - The Shulammitte woman allows Solomon’s heart to be her mirror.
 - The Word of God is a love letter from Jesus Christ to me. By faith, I should see myself as He describes me in that love letter: forgiven, cleansed, a new person in Christ, beloved, and precious in His sight. Our self-esteem does not come from the world; it comes from Jesus Christ.
3. **She holds his memory close in the dark hours of the night** (Sos 1:12–13).
 - This is a very romantic declaration by the Shulammitte woman. Solomon is to her like a fragrance that lies between her breasts through the night, always with her, always refreshing her.
 - The sacrifice of Christ on the cross for you and me is said to be “*a fragrant aroma,*” one that we should hold near and dear to our heart at all times (Eph 5:2). Forget not “*the joy of [y]our salvation*” (Psa 51:12). He is with us—always!
4. **She finds pleasure in his presence** (Sos 2:3–6).
 - When the Shulammitte woman is in the presence of Solomon, she enjoyed physical and emotional pleasure and protection.
 - Like Mary, we should choose “*the good part [dish]*” of fellowship with Jesus Christ. We should consider being in His presence the greatest of all pleasures (Luk 10:42).

- The love of Jesus on this earth gives us a little taste of the eternal pleasure that awaits us (Psa 16:11).

5. **She declares mutual ownership between her and her lover** (Sos 2:16; 6:3; 7:10).

- The Shulammitte woman considers their love relationship a joint ownership of body and soul.
- We have been bought out of the slave market of sin by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1Co 6:17–20) (“*bought*” in the Greek is *agorazo*, meaning “to buy at the market place”). He owns us—body, soul, and spirit (1Co 2:22–23).
- By right of ownership, we become part of the great mission of Christ to the world (Joh 17:15–26).

6. **When they are separated, she longs for his quick return** (Sos 8:14).

- The Shulammitte woman longs to hear his voice and so begs him to return quickly.
- One day, Christ will come in the clouds with the shout of the trumpet and the voice of the archangel to bring His Bride to an eternal union with Him, “*and so we shall always be with the Lord*” (1Th 4:15–17). “[He is] *coming quickly ... Come, Lord Jesus*” (Rev 22:20).

2 Corinthians 5:14–20

- The power of love—compelled by the love of Christ (2Co 5:15).
- The person of love—recognizing every man as one Christ died for (2Co 5:16–18).
- The proclamation of love—be reconciled to God (2Co 5:18–21).

I recently heard a quote by a philosopher who said, “**I cannot know what I am to do until I know what story or stories I am a part of.**”

As believers—born into the Royal Family of God—we know what story we are a part of. We are a central figure in the greatest love story ever known to man. This story is summed up in the words of Jesus, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life*” (Joh 3:16).

We are to live the story, and share the story.

Class Five: Altar of Incense—Ministry

Let's take the glory of God on tour!

The glory of God is not meant to be contained, but displayed in every home, village, city, and nation of this earth. As God's children live from the inside out, as we manifest the character of God in our day-to-day lives, we take the glory of God on tour.

The Altar of Incense

Exo 30:6–8—the golden Altar of Incense sat in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening, the same time that the daily burnt offerings were made. The incense was to be left burning continually throughout the day and night as a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

The incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance. God wanted His dwelling to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him on a regular basis. The picture of prayers wafting up to Heaven like incense is captured in David's psalm:

*“May my prayer be counted [set before] as incense before You;
the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering [sacrifice].” Psa 141:2*

The Altar of Incense also points us to the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Eph 5:1–2 says *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”*

- This verse speaks of His sacrificial love—even to the point of death.
- This verse encourages us to walk in that same sacrificial love.

2Co 2:14–16 says, *“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?”*

1. **Our life is to be a sweet smelling aroma to God.**
2. **Our life can be infused with this sweet aroma of sacrifice because Christ won the victory for us on the cross.** We live, breathe, and serve in the victory of Christ! This means it doesn't depend on us! Paul was not adequate, and we are not adequate. As a matter of fact, He rejoices in using the inadequate. See 1Co 1:26–29.

3. **God “leads us in His triumph in Christ.”** Paul is making a historical reference to the Roman Military Triumphal Procession. This was one of the grandest spectacles of ancient times. When a conquering general won a complete and decisive victory, he then returned to his city with a victory procession. The richest spoils of war—gold, silver, coins, artwork, elaborate clothing—were all displayed for the citizens to see. The temples were open, and the altars burned incense to commemorate the event. At such times, the fragrant aroma of victory filled the air.

Christ is our conquering General—our Victor—and we are soldiers walking in His victory and displaying His spoils.

Note. In Proverbs 31, the words used for “*excellent wife*” are the Hebrew words *Eshet Chayil*. *Chayil* means “honor, valor, excellence.” This is the same word used for David’s mighty men! We are warrior maidens living for the Kingdom of God! We are not only a part of the greatest love story ever told, but we are soldiers fighting in the greatest spiritual battle the world has ever known! Armor up!

4. **We are the aroma of Christ to the world—both to the believing and the unbelieving.**

2 Corinthians 3

Paul is going to set forth a contrast between the ministry of the law and the ministry of the Spirit:

1. **2Co 3:1–3.** As ministers of God’s story, we minister to the hearts of men and women. The heart of my husband is not a tablet of stone; it is a heart of flesh. The heart of my child is not a tablet of stone; it is a heart of flesh—young, soft, impressionable. The heart of my neighbor, friend, etc.
2. **2Co 3:4–6.** Our adequacy is from God. If we attempt to minister to the hearts of others in our own strength and wisdom, we injure; but in the power of the Spirit, we give life because He is life!
 - See Joh 7:37–39: This river of God’s Spirit is a never-ending resource of life to us.
3. **2Co 3:7–11.** This ministry of the Spirit comes with great glory—glory that far outweighs the ministry of the law.
4. **2Co 3:12–13.** Recognizing the glory of the message brings boldness to our ministry.
 - “*Therefore having such a hope*”—this hope is the assurance that the story we are a part of, the message that we carry, is one of great, great glory!
 - Moses’ face was veiled. But in this age of grace, this age of the New Covenant, the glorious message of the Gospel should be clear, open, unveiled, and spoken with boldness.
 - See Isa 6:1–9: This is a theophany in which Isaiah sees the holiness and glory of God. Because of what he sees, he is commissioned and compelled to go forth with boldness and take the message of God’s holiness to the nation. We must see this glory by faith, compelling us to go forth with boldness and take the message of the gospel to a lost and dying world.

5. 2Co 3:17–4:1

- The law condemned, but in the Spirit there is liberty (Gal 4:7; Rom 8:15).
- “*But we all*” (Christians) (in contrast to Moses who had a veil on his face) have an unveiled face that can behold the mirror of God’s Word.
- “*from glory to glory*”—that word is full of glory and transforms us into His glory.
- Paul’s conclusion: if we are recipients and messengers of this ministry, we will not lose heart!

Let’s do EVERYTHING we can to unveil the glory of God to this world, and to be to our Father, a sweet smelling aroma of Jesus.

Class Six: The Relationship between Glory and Suffering—the Holy of Holies

The Holy of Holies was a small cube at the end of the Tabernacle where the glory of the Lord dwelt as smoke by day and fire by night. In the Holy of Holies sat the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat, representing the failure of man and the mercy of God.

Because the glory of the Lord filled the Holy of Holies, entrance to it was limited to the high priest on the Day of Atonement. There was a heavy veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. When Christ died on the cross, that veil was ripped from the top to the bottom signifying the way into the Holy of Holies—access to God’s glory and God’s throne—is open to all.

We often sing about giving the glory to God. We ask in our prayers to give the glory to God. When we are complimented in our Christian life, we often respond with, “well, it’s not me, give God the glory!” And then we enter into a suffering situation, and we fall apart. Yet, as we will see today, suffering is one of the greatest ways to glorify our gracious and merciful God.

Satan wants to throw suffering into our life, because he knows it is one of the easiest ways to make a Christian lose heart. (Example: Job) The heavenly Father allows suffering in our life, because He knows it is one of the greatest opportunities we have in life to display both temporal and eternal glory.

1Pe 2:19–25. Christ is an example of how to suffer in faith.

1Co 4:10-16. Paul is an example of how to suffer in faith.

In **Joh 12:23** Jesus said, *“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”*

- This statement was made only days before Jesus entered the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus would certainly be glorified after the resurrection, but consider what series of events would take place before that glorification:
 - ◆ His betrayal,
 - ◆ arrest, being denied by His friends,
 - ◆ beaten, stripped, mocked,
 - ◆ scourged, crown of thorns,
 - ◆ though innocent condemned to death by His countrymen,
 - ◆ carrying the cross,
 - ◆ the pounding of the nails into His hands and feet,
 - ◆ the crucifixion, and
 - ◆ above all the suffering of spiritual death for the sins of the world

It was as if He was facing a deep valley of suffering, yet He looked beyond that valley to the mountain of glory.

- What do you think was more prominent in the mind of Jesus, the suffering He would endure for a time, or the glory He would attain for all of eternity?
- Compare **Joh 12:23** with **Luk 9:51**:

“When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem.” Here, again, the attention is focused on the ascension, while the crucifixion is not even mentioned.

Consider these other passages about the suffering of Jesus Christ:

Luk 24:26

- *“Was it not necessary for the Christ to **suffer** these things and to enter into His **glory**?”* Absolutely, Yes! The suffering was the prerequisite of His eternal glory.

1Pe 1:11

- *“seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the **sufferings** of Christ and the **glories** to follow.”*

In the verses above, do you see the relationship between the temporal suffering of Jesus Christ, and His eternal glory? Could that same relationship between glory and suffering exist for you and me? Let’s see.

In the verses below, note the words **suffer**, **suffering**, or some other word that indicates a form of suffering, existing in relationship with the word **glory**:

Rom 8:1

- *“For I consider that the **sufferings** of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** that is to be revealed to us.”*

2Co 4:17–18

- *“For **momentary, light affliction** is producing for us an **eternal weight of glory** far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

2Ti 2:10

- *“For this reason I **endure all things** for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it **eternal glory**.”*
- The Apostle Paul wrote these three verses. What kind of suffering did he endure for the glory of God?
See 2Co 1:8; 2Co 11:24–28; 2Co 12:7.

- What was his attitude to that suffering? (See 2Co 12:7–10.) These verses make it clear that Paul accepted, boasted, and even took pleasure in His suffering.

1Pe 1:6–7

- *“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been **distressed by various trials** [the words “various trials” means diverse or varied things that test our faith], that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and **glory and honor** at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

1Pet 4:12–13

- *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the **fiery ordeal** among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of **His glory** you may rejoice with exultation.”*

1Pe 4:15–16

- *“Make sure that none of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone **suffers as a Christian**, he is not to be ashamed, but it is to **glorify God** in this name.”*

1Pet 5:10-

- *“After you have **suffered** for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His **eternal glory** in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”*
- Peter wrote these four verses to believers who were living as “scattered aliens” (1Pe 1:1). They were dispersed to foreign lands because of their faith. What kind of “various trials” do you think they may have endured?
- Do these verses and principles change your perspective on any of the trials and sufferings you are currently enduring?
- You may want to take a moment to read *The Darkling Thrush*:

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-gray,
 And Winter’s dregs made desolate
 The weakening eye of day.
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
 Like strings of broken lyres,
 And all mankind that haunted night
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy, good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

~ **Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)**

2Co 4:6–11

1. Christ indwells our heart to give the knowledge of the glory of God to the world (verse 6).
2. This treasure—the glory of God—is contained within an earthen vessel, our heart, soul, or inner person. Paul recognizes the sufferings he endures are a breaking of the earthly vessel, so that the heavenly glory may shine through.
3. In the dying of self, the living of Jesus is more evident (Luk 9:24).
4. This principle encourages Paul in his trials and sufferings.

2Co 4:16–18

1. This passage contains three opposites:
 - Affliction is the opposite of glory.
 - Light is the opposite of weighty (remember the word “glory” in the Old Testament means “weighty”).
 - Momentary is the opposite of eternal.

2. Paul takes encouragement (does not lose heart in his outer trials).
 - From knowing his suffering will lead to eternal glory
 - From knowing his suffering is light compared to the heaviness of glory.
 - From knowing his suffering is but for a short time compared to the eternal length of glory.
 - Can you take encouragement from these principles as well?

How to manifest the glory of God in suffering:

1. Praise Him (Rom 4:20; Act 16:23–25).
2. Receive His healing (Isa 61:1–3).
3. Let it draw you closer to God (Psa 119:67; Job 42:5–6).
4. Grow spiritually from the suffering (Jam 1:2–4).
5. Recognize suffering as an opportunity to fellowship with Christ (Phi 1:29; 3:7–11; 1Pe 4:13–14).
6. Use your suffering as an opportunity to witness (Acts 16; 2Ti 2:10, Phi 1:12–14).
7. Use the fruit of your suffering to minister to others in like situations (2Co 1:3–4).
8. Suffer in faith (1Pe 2:19–23) for the gaining of eternal reward (Jam 1:12).

We do not know what valley of suffering lies ahead of us, but we do know that if we cross that valley in faith and in the victory of Jesus Christ, there is an eternal mountaintop of glory awaiting each and every one of us.

Closing

Rev 4:9–11. Let's serve, suffer, and sacrifice so that on that day we have crowns to lay at His feet.

Rev 5:12–14. Let's live our life today, as if we're prostrated before our Jesus, to manifest to the world the glory within us.

Let's live our life—from the inside out!

Class Seven: The Quiet Soul

Opening

Psalm 131

*“Surely I have composed and quieted my soul;
like a weaned child rests against his mother.”* Psa 131:2

As you know, a nursing child is not at rest when he smells or senses his mother’s milk at her breast. Instead, they are disturbed, even frantic. But when a child is weaned, he is able to rest on the breast of the mother because he has lost the attachment. He is at peace and quiet on the mother’s breast. When we are weaned from the things of this world, we are able to rest in the arms of our heavenly Father.

In verse 2, David says:

1. *“Surely”*—this word indicates a volitional decision on David’s part to rest on God. A quiet soul is the result of a volitional choice.
2. *“I have composed and quieted”*—*“composed”* means “to level, to adjust, to counterbalance.” The world around us is anything but quiet and composed, but David adjusts to what is outside by leveling his soul on the inside. *“Quieted”* means “to be struck dumb, to make silent.”

In this Psalm, there are three decisions that David makes to bring about his weaned soul:

1. He humbles himself.

- Verse 1a, *“O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty ...”*
- Pride is the opposite of faith. Hab 2:4, *“Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.”*
- If anyone had a right to be proud, it would be David.
- He was often accused of being full of pride: by Saul, by his brothers, and by Michal. Yet, we know that David was a humble man.
- Oftentimes, we are disturbed in our soul because we “think higher of ourselves than we ought to think”: I deserve more, I am better than this, this shouldn’t happen to me, I shouldn’t be treated like this, etc.
These thoughts are arrogant, reflect the pride of Satan, and result in an agitated soul.
- Solution for this is found in 1Pe 5:6–7.

2. He sets boundaries for his life.

- Verse 1b, *“Nor do I involve myself in great matters.”* The word *“involve”* means “to meddle with.”

- Even David, the next king of Israel, did not “meddle” in matters beyond his understanding or influence. As women, what form does meddling take in our lives?
 - desire for news (juicy tidbits) that doesn’t concern us: gossip
 - attempts to fix problems that aren’t ours to fix
 - matchmaking
- Live within your 6 sq. ft.
- As women, in what areas do we commonly try to go beyond our God-given boundaries and meddle in or worry over the affairs of others? These areas will be addressed for us when we move to the New Testament:
 - Marriage
 - Relationships
 - Church
 - National and world events

3. **To have a quiet soul, trust God with all the situations and circumstances of your life.**

- Verse 3, “*O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forever more.*”
- The word “*hope*” is the Hebrew word *yachal*, meaning “to trust in extreme pain.”
- We don’t know the circumstances of David’s life at this time. Perhaps it was after he was anointed as king. There was a 10-year period of time where he was being hunted by Saul in the wilderness. This would have been a time of extreme pain, yet, he made a choice to “quiet his own soul” in the midst of this pain.
- Is there a situation like that in your life?
- Can you, too, trust the Lord and have a quiet soul in whatever situation is causing you extreme pain?
- We are commanded in Scripture to “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Psa 46:10, NKJV). Look at the context in the Psalm. Look at the context of this in verses Psa 131:1–3.
- When Moses stood on the edge of the Red Sea, with waves before him and the armies of Egypt behind him, he said to the people of Israel, “*Stand by [be still] and see the deliverance of the LORD*” (Exo 14:13). Notice that “*stand by*” is present tense, “*the deliverance*” is future tense—in between is resting and waiting.
- Think about your “lot in life.” Are you enduring it, or are you content with it? David is not enduring, but being content. This is not so much dealing within your soul with an outward situation, but your inward situation—your lot in life.

Now let’s look at the quiet soul in the New Testament. The word in the Greek New Testament for “quiet” soul is *haysukios*. This word means “to keep still, to refrain from meddling, to hold on to peace, to stay within one’s place in life, to be undisturbed, to desist from bustle.”

1. First use of the word is found in 1Th 4:9–12.
 - “*excel still more*”—never be content with where we are in our spiritual life. There is always more to attain.
 - “*to lead a quiet life*” should be an ambition, a goal of our Christian life. In order to attain a goal, we must strive for it moment-by-moment.

- “*attend to your own business*”—if we strive and attain a “quiet soul,” it becomes a testimony and witness to the unbelieving world.
2. 2Th 3:10–13
 - Look at the principle of these verses. If you are taking care of your own life and striving for maturity in your own Christian life, you don’t have time to “meddle” in the lives and affairs of others.
 - Notice the repetition of warning against “meddling.”
 3. 1Ti 2:1–4 (the context of a quiet soul in national affairs)
 - Paul starts out in verse 1 exhorting us to pray for “*all men*” and those in authority, that our nation might be brought to a “*quiet life*.”
 - Prayer is the only valid way to “meddle” in the affairs of others.
 - Instead of cursing or judging others, even those in authority, let’s keep the quiet soul and go to God in prayer.
 - *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was living during the time of the Civil War, had just lost his wife to a random household fire, and his son had been severely injured in battle. His conclusion: Jesus Christ will right all the wrongs—in His time and in His way.
 - Rev 19:11–16, this is the Judge who will set it all straight: “*KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*”
 4. 1Ti 2:9–14 (the application of a quiet spirit in Church life)
 - Here the “quiet soul” is going to relate specifically to the woman in Scripture.
 - Verse 11, the quietness is not being quiet in mouth, but quiet in soul.
 - In the context of a Church, we, as women, should be content with the role that we play within a Church body. Celebrate your God-given feminine role!
 5. 1Pe 3:1–5 (the context of a quiet spirit in marriage)
 - Let your beauty be the hidden person of the heart. “*Gentle*” means “meek, humble.” The quiet spirit is undisturbed, content, living within the boundaries of our life.
 - The quiet spirit is played out in marriage by submission.
 - This quiet spirit is “*precious in the sight of God.*” As women, we all desire to be precious, special.
 - This should catapult our desire and ambition to attain that “*quiet spirit*” because of its value in God’s eyes.
 - Verse 6, Sarah is given as an example of a quiet spirit.
 - Women of the Old Testament were tough, strong, brave, and courageous women of faith. At the same time, they were full of grace and beauty.

Sarai/Sarah

- Genesis 11, Sarai’s quiet soul. In verses 30–32, she is taken from her homeland to a place she did not know. Since God uses her as an example, she must have done this with a quiet spirit.

- Gen 12:1–3: God promises Abram (and by association Sarah) land, seed, and blessing. Who does the land, seed, and blessing depend on? Abram? No. Sarai? No. God? **Yes!** This is an unconditional covenant.
- Gen 12:4–5: She goes forth with a quiet spirit.
- Abram betrays her by going down to Egypt and allowing her to be taken into the harem of Pharaoh. It appears that Abram does not have a quiet spirit, not willing to trust God in the famine; but apparently Sarai has maintained her quiet spirit.
- In verse 17, “*the LORD struck Pharaoh*” because of Sarai. She prayed! Meddle with the situation through prayer. God protected her. In the Hebrew, verse 17 implies that the Lord struck Pharaoh because of “the word” or “the prayer” of Sarai.
- Ten years later, in Gen 16:1–4, Sarai is still barren and her spirit begins to become disturbed. Unrest enters her soul, and she fails to trust God with her situation. She meddled in God’s business and suggested that Abram go into Hagar.
- Gen 16:5: She blames Abram. She treated Hagar harshly. No quiet spirit here. All because she failed to “wait” on the Lord. What are you waiting on God to do? Keep waiting, keep trusting, keep waiting, keep trusting. He is faithful.
- Sarai loses the quiet soul and loses her ability to encourage and uplift others. When we forfeit contentment in our soul, our words betray the condition of our soul.
- See Pro 19:13b; 15:1; 17:14, 27; 21:9
- James, “*the tongue ...*” (Jam 3:1–8)

Closing

Tauler was a German theologian born in 1300. He possessed vast head knowledge of God, but was probably very shallow in terms of a daily intimate personal relationship.

One day he met a peasant and greeted him by saying, “God give you a good day, my friend.”

The peasant answered briskly, “I thank God I never have a bad day.”

Tauler was astonished but finally said, “God give you a happy life, my friend.”

The peasant replied composedly, “I thank God I am never unhappy.”

“NEVER UNHAPPY!” cried Tauler bewildered, “What do you mean?”

“Well,” came the reply, “When it is sunshine, I thank God. When it rains, I thank God. When I have plenty, I thank God. When I am hungry, I thank God, and since God’s will is my will, and whatever pleases God pleases me, why should I say that I am unhappy when I am not?”

Tauler looked at him with awe. “WHO ARE YOU?” he asked. “I am a king,” said the peasant.

“A king?” Tauler asked, “WHERE IS YOUR KINGDOM?” The peasant smiled and answered, “In my heart.”

This is a quiet soul—a soul living in adverse conditions, yet recognizing that through the indwelling of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, there is a kingdom living within his heart.

Is there a kingdom within your heart? Then, let’s face this world around us—from the power and glory of that kingdom that lives within us!