

CE 
FORUM



**SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE**

ENTRUST - NEXT GENERATION

**SLI ENTRUST 495
YEAR 2**



CEO FORUM

DISCIPLING BUSINESS LEADERS OF INFLUENCE

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THE CEO FORUM

MISSION

To engage, encourage, and disciple CEOs and Senior Executives and their families as Christ-following leaders who advance the Kingdom of God.

PURPOSE

Discipling Business Leaders of Influence

VISION

Transformed Executives, Transformed World

WELCOME TO THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Dear Spiritual Leadership Institute Next Generation Participants,

Thank you for committing to participate in the Spiritual Leadership Institute (SLI) Next Generation Core Class. Our prayer for you is that by walking through this Core Class, you will be sharpened into an even more effective leader and grow in your walk with Christ in all areas of life. This SLI Next Generation Class is part of CEO Forum's ENTRUST Initiative, an impact project of the CEO Forum designed to disciple high-performing next generation business leaders. Our prayer is that God would use this three-year experience to develop you into a spiritual leader of influence who advances the Kingdom of God, in both your personal and professional lives.

The heartbeat of the SLI Core Class curriculum is this: your primary calling as a Christ-follower is to abide in Christ. When you abide in Christ, transformation – by the power of the Holy Spirit – will occur. When transformation occurs, you recognize what God is doing in your life and in the lives of others. What a privilege and a blessing it is to be joining Him in this Kingdom work as a spiritual leader of influence. A spiritual leader of influence is a trusted agent of the Lord: one who understands, who is willing to follow, and can communicate the message of the heart and mind of God, who seeks to represent Christ in word and action so that His Kingdom will be expediently advanced.

One of the primary works of service to God and to others is service through your business. As work is a place where you likely spend over 60% of your waking hours, it is divinely designed by God, for us to be a vital piece in accomplishing His purposes. He accomplishes His work in the world by equipping you with talents, skills, and abilities that He expects to be utilized in service to others and service to Him. This work is also a spiritual formation practice where God is using the people, experiences, and workplace challenges to continually mold you into the image of Christ.

Therefore, we rejoice that you are stepping into this formative experience as SLI Next Generation Core Class students. May you aim to grow in the fullness of Christ together, and may God bless you on this journey through the SLI Core Class.



Dr. Rick Lytle
President and CEO, CEO Forum

SLI CORE CLASS SYLLABUS

Year 1: Called by God

Content Overview

- **Session 1:** Experiencing God's Great Salvation
- **Session 2:** God Versus The World
- **Session 3:** Learning to Recognize God's Activity Around You

Learning Objectives

- Understand the critical requirements to live out a God-centered life.
- Understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, both outwardly and inwardly.
- Be able to define God's great plan of salvation and understand its impact for your life.
- Clearly describe the role of the Word and of the Holy Spirit as it pertains to hearing from God.
- Discern the personal costs and benefits of a more intimate relationship with God.

Year 2: Conformed by God

Content Overview

- **Session 1:** Created to be Conformed to the Likeness of Christ
- **Session 2:** Conforming Our Will
- **Session 3:** Conforming Our Choices

Learning Objectives

- Understand how God has equipped you to make choices that honor Him.
- Understand the expectations God has for your decision-making process.
- Implement the truth of "to whom much is given, much is expected" in your stewardship.
- Define the role that prayer and the counsel of others has played in making God-honoring choices.

Year 3: Commissioned by God

Content Overview

- **Session 1:** The Source of Our Assignments
- **Session 2:** The Power for and Impact of Our Assignments
- **Session 3:** The Reward – Becoming a Spiritual Leader of Influence
- **Graduation:** Thesis Presentation "My Life as a Spiritual Leader of Influence in the Marketplace"

Learning Objectives

- Understand your calling from God from Scripture.
- Understand the call God has placed on your life and how He has communicated that to you.
- Understand the necessary needs for you to be able to respond to God's calling.
- Describe your personal calling for today and for your next assignment from God.
- Understand the importance of finishing strong and the impact it has on a believer's life.
- Evaluate where your life is now and understand how to finish strong.

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SLI CLASS PREP CHECKLIST



2 Months Before Class

- RSVP For Class
- Book Your Hotel Room
- Schedule Your Flights



1 Month Before Class

- Review Previous Class Materials (Curriculum, Case Study, Notes)
- Complete Assignments (If Applicable)
- Hotel Booking Deadline (Approximately 1 Month Before Class)



1 Week Before Class

- Preview Upcoming Class Materials (Curriculum and Agenda)
- Review Prayer Requests
- Pack For Class (Business Casual Attire, SLI Journal, SLI Curriculum, Bible, Pen)



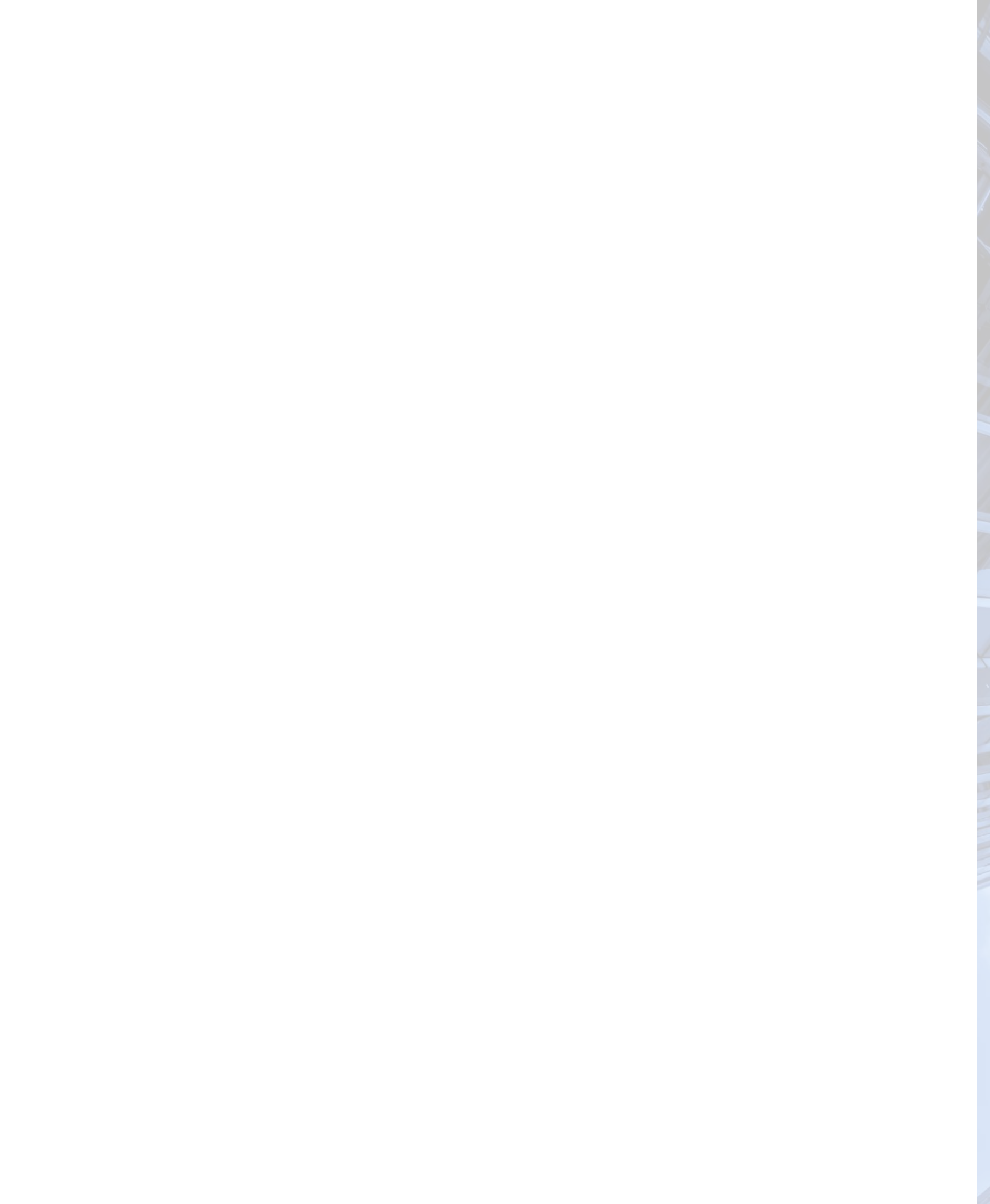
After Class

- Plan your Discipleship Conversations
- Review Prayer Requests
- Review Post-Class Information on Cohort Page

Your Cohort Page

This is the home base for current dates, materials, and all event details. Please save for future reference.





YEAR 2
CONFORMED BY GOD...BECOMING

(Romans 8:28-29)

SESSION 1
CREATED TO BE CONFORMED TO THE
LIKENESS OF CHRIST—CHARACTER
TRANSFORMATION

(John 6:38; Philippians 2:13)



HOUR 1: THE NECESSITY FOR TRANSFORMATION (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20)



Key Question: *Why do you so desperately need for Christ to transform you?*

“And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:28-29)

- I. God’s original design for your life with Him on earth: exceptional living – exceptionally good.
 - A. God created the world and everything in it and declared it was “good”
(Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25).
 - B. God created humanity in His own image and declared it was “very good” **(Genesis 1:26, 31).**
 - C. God designed marriage between man and wife to be the most satisfying human relationship
(Genesis 2:18-25).
 - D. God chose to have intimate, regular fellowship with His creatures **(Genesis 3:8-9).**
- II. Consequences of the fall on God’s original design: destruction, alienation, suffering, death.
 - A. Contrary to Scripture, the world (ever since the Enlightenment), has viewed people as fundamentally good. Philosophers such as Rousseau argued that people were basically good, but government and world systems are evil and they pressure people to do evil things
(Genesis 3:14-19).
 - B. The Bible claims that the result of humanity’s sin was extensive and devastating.
 1. Guilt and shame **(Genesis 3:7).**
 2. Alienation and separation from God **(Genesis 3:10, 23-24).**
 3. Work became toilsome, unpleasant **(Genesis 3:17-19).**
 4. Suffering and pain **(Genesis 3:13-16).**
 5. Marital strife **(Genesis 3:16).**
 6. Death **(Genesis 3:19; 4:8).**
 - C. Humanity’s sin led to devastating spiritual issues.
 1. “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one” **(Romans 3:10-12).**
 2. “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish... Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries...” **(Galatians 5:17, 19-21).**
 3. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it”
(Jeremiah 17:9)?

4. “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death” **(Romans 7:14-24)?**

D. Humanity cannot change itself! It needs help. Desperately! Once you become a Christian, you instantly become a child of God. However, becoming Christ-like takes time!

Summary: Your thinking is generally diametrically opposed to God’s thinking. Your heart and mind are not in sync with God’s. Your fundamental nature is sinful and selfish. If left unchecked, you would regularly make choices that are harmful to others and dishonoring to God. At your best, the decisions you make and the actions you take tend to be based on immediate circumstances, logic, practicality, short-term results and outward behavior. You miss the realm of the spirit, the invisible and ultimate reality. You often are unable to discern your true motives. Unless God does a radical transformation within you, you cannot live in a way that pleases and glorifies God.

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 2: YOUR ROLE IN TRANSFORMATION: ABIDING—SURRENDER/OBEDIENCE

(II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20)



Key Question: *What role do you play in the transformation process?*

- I. Two opposing viewpoints:
 - A. Calvinists claim that you are totally depraved and unable to do anything to save yourself or to consecrate yourself. Anything you do is through the enabling of the Holy Spirit who must do the work on your behalf. Even the faith you place in God is given to you by God.
 - B. Armenians believe that God gave people a free will and you can choose to follow Christ and to surrender your will to God.
- II. The Testimony of Scripture. What does the Bible command you to do?
 - A. You must **put off** the sinful habits and practices you formerly practiced as unbelievers: “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (**Colossians 3:8-10**).
 - B. You must **present** each area of your life in submission to Christ. You cannot *remain* what you are and become more like Christ. “Therefore, don’t let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (**Romans 6:12-13**).
 - C. You must **put to death** any sinful impulses in your life. Although you have been born again, you still inhabit bodies of flesh that are attracted to the world’s enticements, values and attitudes. “Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry” (**Colossians 3:5**).
 - D. You must daily **put off** the old man and put on the new man: “That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (**Ephesians 4:22-24**).
 - E. **Abide** in Christ so you can produce spiritual fruit. “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (**John 15:4**).
 - F. You must **examine** every area of your life to ensure you are fully yielded to Christ. “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified” (**II Corinthians 13:5**).
- III. Questions from these verses:
 - A. How can you “put off” or “put to death” sinful behaviors and attitudes?
 - B. If you have habits and attitudes deeply ingrained in you, can you ever be truly set free from them?

- C. Can you do these things without the enabling, convicting and empowerment of the Holy Spirit?
- D. What has been the most difficult challenge you have faced as you have sought to be transformed into Christ's likeness?

Summary: Life transformation is a divine work. Nevertheless, God invites you to join Him in His work in your life. You do not sit passively while God does everything. If that were the case, every Christian would be equally consecrated! Clearly you play a role in God's transformative work in your life. Hopefully you are eager to be "all in" with God's work in your life!

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 3: YOUR ROLE IN TRANSFORMATION—PRAYER (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20)



Key Question: *What role does prayer play in your transformation?*

- I. There are numerous hindrances to your prayer life. These include:
 - A. Unbelief (**Matthew 13:58**)
 - B. Sin (**Proverbs 15:29**)
 - C. Unforgiveness (**Matthew 6:12**)
 - D. Mistreating your spouse (**I Peter 3:7**)
 - E. Not depending on the Holy Spirit to guide you in praying (**Romans 8:26**)
 - F. Doubt (**James 1:6-8**)
 - G. Selfishness (**James 4:3-4**)
 - H. Lack of perseverance (**Matthew 7:7**)
- II. The true nature of prayer...dialoguing and communion with God.
 - A. Prayer is entering into a two-way conversation with Almighty God. It is a time to both express to your Creator what is on your heart, as well as learning God's will (**Acts 10:9**).
 - B. Prayer allows you to intercede for others and to join in God's redemptive activity (**Exodus 32:11-14, 31-35; Ezekiel 22:30-31**).
 - C. You must approach prayer boldly and with faith, expecting God to answer your request (**Hebrews 4:16; 11:6**).
 - D. Prayer brings joy (**John 16:24**). "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified."
- III. Different reasons for prayer:
 - A. To know God's thoughts (**Jeremiah 33:3**).
 - B. To surrender to God's will (**Matthew 26:36-44**).
 - C. To ask for wisdom (**James 1:5**).
 - D. To ask for healing (**James 5:14-15**).
 - E. To seek God's guidance for an important decision (**Luke 6:12**).
 - F. To request God's provision (**Matthew 6:11**).
 - G. To request forgiveness (**Matthew 6:12**).
 - H. To request deliverance (**Matthew 6:13**).
- IV. Meditation in prayer involves:
 - A. Holding on to a promise of God until it becomes a reality in your life (**Psalms 1:2-3**).

- B. Praying without ceasing until you see the answer to your prayers (**Luke 2:25-35**).
 - C. Praying until you clearly understand and accept God's will (**Matthew 26:36-44**).
 - D. Watching so you recognize God's activity as you pray (**Matthew 26:38, 40, 41**).
 - E. Praying until you become like the One you are praying to (**II Corinthians 3:18**).
- V. Prayer in accordance with God's will:
- A. Praying according to God's will means wholly surrendering your will to God (**Matthew 26:39, 42, 44**).
 - B. Asking in Jesus' name means praying according to Jesus' character (**John 14:14**).
 - 1. Asking in Jesus' name requires that you know what is on Jesus' heart and what He values (**I Samuel 2:35**).
 - 2. Asking in Jesus' name means emptying yourself of your own desires and asking for things Jesus intends to do.
 - C. You can be tempted to ask of God out of selfish desires (**Matthew 20:20-22**).
 - D. Praying according to God's will means you accept not only what God intends to do but *when* and *how* He plans to work as well (**Matthew 16:21-23**).

Summary: Prayer is essential for believers to grow in their relationship with God. It is the life-line between you and your Creator and Lord. Because it is so important, your enemy will do everything possible to distract and discourage you from prayer. You must continually nurture, practice, and discipline yourself in the area of prayer so that you continually know what is on the heart and mind of God and you have aligned your life to His purposes.

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

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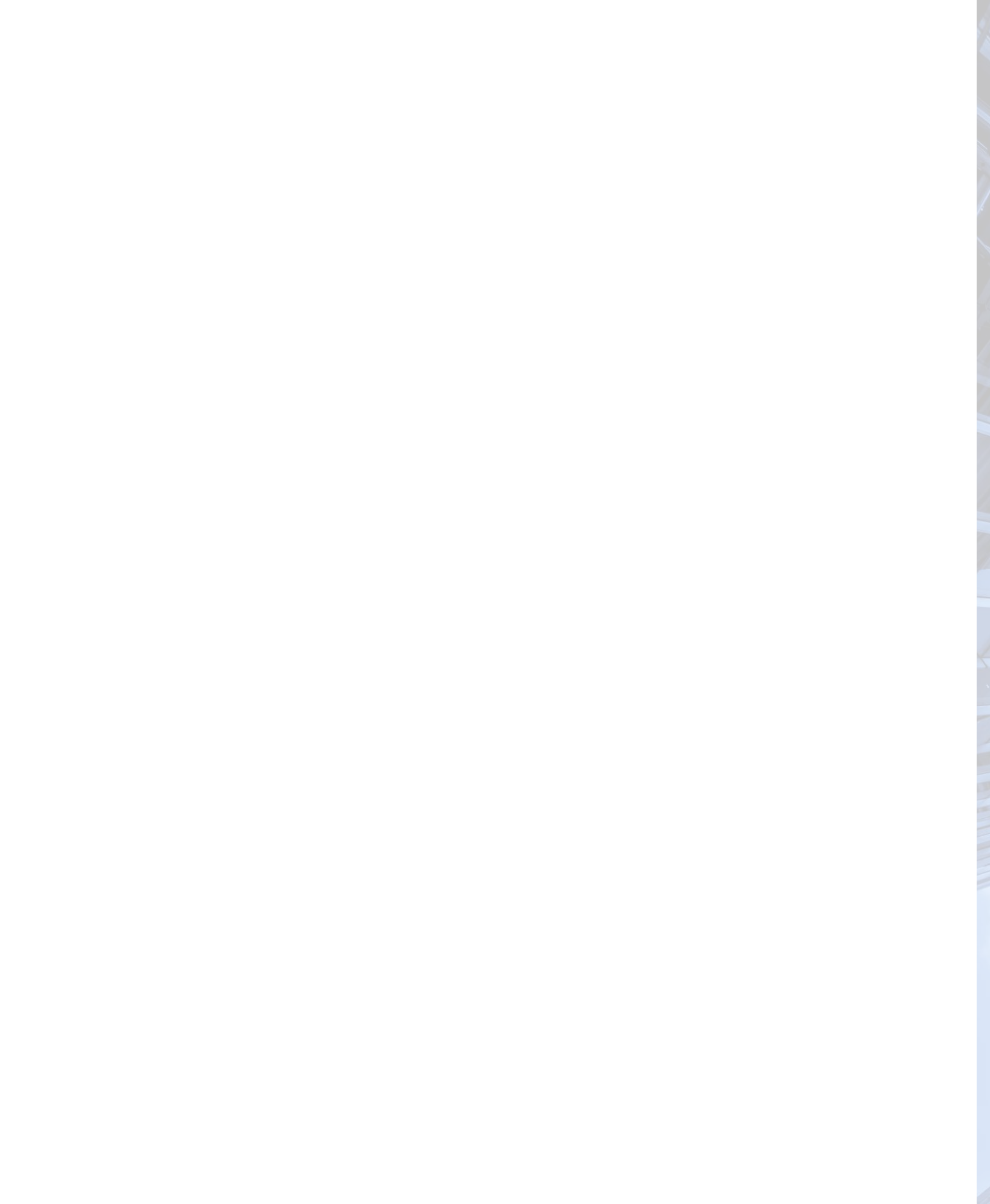
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YEAR 2
CONFORMED BY GOD...BECOMING

(Romans 8:28-29)

SESSION 2
CONFORMING OUR WILL

(John 6:38; Philippians 2:13)

HOUR 1: KNOWING GOD'S WILL

(John 6:38; Philippians 2:13)



Key Question: *Does God have a will for you and is it knowable by you or is it a mystery?*

- I. God's will is knowable.
 - A. The key question you should ask is not, "What is God's will for my life?" but "What is God's will?" When you know God's will, then you can better understand how God wants to involve you in it.
 - B. Even Jesus did not seek to undertake His own activity but sought to understand what His Father was doing and then joined Him (**John 5:19-20, 30**).
 - C. God is constantly working to accomplish His redemptive purposes (**Isaiah 46:9-11**). These plans are much broader and affect eternity much more significantly than merely giving you success at your business or helping you achieve your personal goals.
 - D. God has both a general will as well as a specific will. He has placed His general will in Scripture. God's general will applies to all Christians at all times. You do not need a specific revelation from God to know He wants you to do them. For example, Jesus commanded His disciples to love their enemies. You do not need to pray each time to determine if God wants you to act lovingly toward someone who opposes you. That has already been settled. Examples of God's general will:
 1. You are to love God with all of your heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself (**Matthew 22:37**).
 2. You must take the Gospel to every person and nation on earth (**Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15**).
 3. If you are estranged from a fellow Christian, you must be reconciled (**Matthew 5:24**).
 4. You must be generous (**Matthew 5:42**).
 5. You are to love your enemies (**Matthew 5:44**).
 6. You are to be perfect, or spiritually mature (**Matthew 5:48**).
 7. Seeking the advancement of God's Kingdom ought to be the priority of your life before any other pursuit (**Matthew 6:33**).
 8. You are to deny yourself and take up your cross (**Matthew 16:24-25**).
 9. You are not to grow weary in doing good (**Galatians 6:9-10**).
 10. You must never be ashamed to confess your faith in Christ before other people (**Luke 12:8-9**).

11. You should never allow an unwholesome word to proceed out of your mouth **(Ephesians 4:29)**.
- E. God will guide you to know His specific will through Scripture, prayer, fellow believers, and circumstances in your life.
 1. Throughout Scripture, God guided people specifically:
 - a. Noah **(Genesis 6:13-22)**
 - b. Abraham **(Genesis 12:1-3)**
 - c. Moses **(Exodus 3:7-22)**
 - d. David **(2 Samuel 5:17-25)**
 - e. Paul **(Acts 16:6-10)**
 2. God invites you to seek His guidance **(Jeremiah 33:3)**.
 3. The Holy Spirit will guide you in the same way Jesus guided His twelve disciples **(John 16:7, 13-15)**.
 4. The Holy Spirit will primarily use Scripture, prayer, other believers and circumstances to guide you into His will.

Summary: God expects you to be faithful in what you already know of His will. If you are not even keeping God's basic commands, then there is no need to determine other specifics God wants you to do **(Matthew 25:21)**.

- A. When seeking to know God's will, always begin with what He has already clearly stated in Scripture.
- B. Whatever specifics God may have for your life, they will not contradict what He has already said in the Bible.
- C. God wants you to know His will more than you do! Listen to His voice and then immediately obey whatever you hear Him say!

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 2: SURRENDERING TO GOD'S WILL



Key Question: *How do you learn to surrender to God's will?*

- I. Learning to surrender to God's will:
 - A. Daily seek to know what is on God's heart (**Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 6:10**).
 - B. Keep your heart uncluttered with selfish goals and desires so you can quickly embrace God's will (**Matthew 13:1-9**).
 - C. Cultivate a heart that lives in a posture of agreement with God even before you know what God's will is (**John 1:39**).
 - D. Keep in mind that God's ways and thoughts are not like yours. God's will does not always have to make sense to you before you can obey it (**Matthew 17:24-27; Luke 1:18, 34**).
 - E. Delight yourself in the Lord so His will becomes your delight (**Psalms 37:4**).
 - F. Let God's glory be the driving force in your life (**Psalms 115:1**).
 - G. Seek God's Kingdom first, before any other pursuit (**John 3:20; 6:33**).
 - H. Daily deny yourself (**Matthew 16:24**).
- II. Stumbling blocks to obeying God's will:
 - A. Despite the fact God wants you to know His will, sin makes you self-centered and self-confident (**I Kings 11:1-10**).
 - B. Sin causes you to value human reasoning and diminish your dependency upon God's guidance (**I Corinthians 1:18-25**).
 - C. You don't actively seek it (**Isaiah 7:10-17**).
 - D. You assume your thinking is God's thinking (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).
 - E. You make decisions by developing a list of pros and cons.
 - F. You judge by outward appearances (**I Samuel 16:7**).
 - G. You make decisions based on worldly values (i.e. what pays the most money; is in the nicest location; is most prestigious; closest to your home town...). Beware of making choices that are motivated by pride (**Genesis 13:8-13**)!
 - H. You make decisions based on what your friends, family and colleagues think you should do.
 - I. You assume God will bless whatever you decide (as long as it is moral!).
 - J. You settle for good instead of God's best (**II Kings 13:14-19**).

III. Living a life of absolute surrender.

- A. Before you were born of the Spirit you were in bondage to sin. Once you are born again, you become a slave to righteousness (**Romans 6:17-18**).
- B. The life you live as a believer is one that is so totally surrendered to Christ that He lives His life through you (**Galatians 2:20**).
- C. Paul described himself as a “bondservant” of Christ (**Philippians 1:1**). A bondservant willingly surrendered his freedom to his master for the remainder of his life.
- D. Paul claimed that for him, “to live is Christ” (**Philippians 1:21**). Paul lived a radically Christ-focused life.

Summary: To learn to agree with God’s will you need to continually be honest about what competes with His will in your life. You demonstrate your agreement by your choices and actions. It is easy to pretend to hide behind the excuse of ignorance – “I don’t know what God’s will is”. The better question to wrestle with is – “Is my relationship with God maturing to the point where I can be honest with Him about struggles with trust and fears that hold me back from walking in the truth?” (i.e. agreeing with His will.)

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 3: ALIGNING YOUR WILL WITH GOD'S WILL



Key Question: *How can you tell if you are in God's will?*

I. How you know you are in God's will...the evidence...the masquerades.

The Evidence:

- A. Your life brings God glory (**Isaiah 42:6-9; Jeremiah 9:23-24**).
- B. You experience God's power in your life equipping you to carry out His will (**Philippians 3:10**).
- C. You will experience God guiding you (**Isaiah 30:21**).
- D. You will receive God's blessing (**Deuteronomy 30:11-20**).
- E. God will give you expanding responsibility in His Kingdom (**Matthew 25:21**).
- F. God will give you victory (**Deuteronomy 28:7**).
- G. God will bless your family (**Proverbs 3:33**).
- H. Your life will be characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy (**Galatians 5:16, 22-23**).

II. How can you tell if you are not in God's will?

The Evidence:

- A. You may experience defeat (**Deuteronomy 28:25**).
- B. You may experience confusion (**Deuteronomy 28:28**).
- C. Your marriage and family may suffer (**Deuteronomy 28:30, 54**).
- D. You may experience loss (**Deuteronomy 28:31**).
- E. You may experience prolonged illness (**Deuteronomy 28:61**).
- F. You may experience fear (**Deuteronomy 28:66**).
- G. God will not bless your efforts (**Deuteronomy 28:15-19**).

III. Remaining in God's will...the challenges...the role of obedience.

- A. Obedience to God is done one day at a time (**Exodus 13:21-22**).
- B. Because you were in God's will yesterday does not necessarily mean you are in His will today (**Matthew 16:13-18, 21-23**).
 - 1. Your heart can gradually shift away from God so you no longer desire to do His will (**I Kings 11:1-13**).

2. Your heart can become hardened where you are no longer sensitive to God's prompting (**Hosea 10:12**).
3. Pride can creep into your heart so you choose to retake control of your life from God (**Proverbs 3:7; 29:23**).
4. You can become enamored with human thinking and no longer seek God's wisdom and guidance (**Proverbs 12:15**).
5. You can be tempted to steal God's glory in your life (**Isaiah 42:8; Acts 12:20-24**).

IV. Finding joy and peace in God's will...circumstances are not to rob you.

- A. Being in God's will does not necessarily mean you will be free from adversity. Jesus was absolutely obedient, yet He underwent a brutal crucifixion (**Luke 22:42**).
- B. It is in your weakness that you experience God's strength (**II Corinthians 12:7-10**).
- C. God will give you the power to glorify Him in every situation (**Acts 4:29-31**).
- D. Opposition from others may not indicate you are out of God's will, but rather in the center of it (**Matthew 5:11-12**).
- E. Jesus promised that when you abide in Him, His joy will fill you to overflowing (**John 15:11**).
- F. God's peace can guard your heart so that even the most difficult circumstances cannot cause you to fear or worry (**Philippians 4:6-7**).
- G. God's presence in your life gives you confidence in every situation (**Isaiah 41:10; Romans 8:31**).

V. God's will and the pursuit of profit and success.

- A. God intends for righteous people to prosper (**Psalms 1:3**).
- B. Wisdom brings riches and honor (**Proverbs 8:18; 13:4; 21:5; 24:30-34**).
- C. God expects His people to be diligent in their work (**Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4; 12:24, 27; 13:4; 21:5; 24:30-34**).
- D. Those who excel in their work will receive honor (**Proverbs 22:29**).
- E. God blesses you so you can be a blessing to others (**Genesis 12:1-3**).
- F. You are to be wise stewards of what God places in your hands (**Proverbs 28:27**).
- G. When you commit your way to the Lord, He brings your plans to pass (**Psalms 37:5**).
- H. God instructs you to store up treasures in heaven (**Matthew 6:19**).
- I. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (**I Timothy 6:10**).
- J. You are to honor God with your possessions (**Proverbs 3:9-10**).

- K. God raises people up in their careers to have a regional, national, or global impact (Joseph, Daniel, Esther).

Summary: CEOs know in business that decisions are important. Every decision has consequences – both short and long term. Likewise, decisions CEOs make – whether personal or professional – impact the lives of others beyond the CEOs themselves. One needs to look at the fruit (the outcome) of one’s decisions – is it lasting and beneficial? Just as CEOs want their decisions to reflect accurately and positively on their company, they should likewise seek for their decisions to reflect accurately and positively on God.

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

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YEAR 2
CONFORMED BY GOD...BECOMING

(Romans 8:28-29)

SESSION 3
CONFORMING OUR CHOICES

(Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

HOUR 1: MAKING GOD-HONORING CHOICES STEMS FROM YOUR WALK WITH GOD (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

Key Question: *How do your choices affect and reflect your relationship with God?*

- I. Your choices must be made out of your abiding relationship with Christ.
 - A. Your abiding relationship *with* God always takes priority over your doing *for* God (**Matthew 10:1**).
 - B. Christ made it extremely clear that apart from Him we can do *nothing* (**John 15:5**).
 - C. Only when you make choices out of your walk with Christ can you be certain your decisions are being made in God's will (**Luke 9:51-56**).
 - D. Making God-honoring decisions does not come naturally to you. To think like God requires that you spend time with Him learning what He values, where He focuses, and how He acts.
 - E. Abiding in Christ means to:
 1. Constantly keep your focus on Him.
 2. Constantly commune with Him.
 3. Rely upon His strength and wisdom for everything you do.
 4. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings in your life.
 5. Allow Christ the absolute freedom to live out His life in you in any way He chooses.
- II. You must seek God's wisdom for your decisions with a pure heart.
 - A. Scripture instructs you to ask God for wisdom and He will give it (**James 1:5**).
 - B. The key is to seek wisdom with humility and a pure heart (**I Kings 3:4**).
- III. You must make decisions based on biblical truths and principles (**Psalms 119:105**).
 - A. Your decisions reflect the degree to which you know and value God's word (**John 14:15**).
 - B. Meditating upon God's word and leading accordingly results in success (**Joshua 1:8**).
 - C. God's truth is not too difficult for you to grasp and understand (**Deuteronomy 30:11-14**).
 - D. You must cultivate your heart so you are responsive to God's truth when you hear it (**Matthew 13:1-23**).
- IV. Your choices reflect the degree to which your character has been transformed.
 - A. Your life is the sum of the choices you have made (**Matthew 7:7**).

- B. Your choices are driven by your character. If you are a selfish person, you will make selfish choices. CEOs who choose to commit immoral and illegal acts were not made immoral by their position. Their choices merely reflect what was already in their character (**Matthew 26:14-16**).
- C. Being in a Christian environment does not mean you have Christian character. (Judas walked with Jesus for around three years. He heard Him teach, saw Him perform miracles, and received His loving attention, yet his character was fundamentally unaltered. Judas proved that we can identify with Jesus and yet choose to remain unchanged.)
- D. The transformation process will often be subtle so you are unaware it is happening. For example, you may begin to act more patiently and graciously toward your family members. (You may not even be aware you are doing this, but they will notice!)
- E. A good exercise is to conduct a personal audit of the choices you have made in the last month. Ask yourself: Did these decisions honor Christ? Were they based on biblical truths? Were they made out of my relationship with Christ? Then compare these decisions to the kind of choices you made a year earlier. Do you notice any difference?

Summary: In business, leaders are required to make decisions daily knowing those decisions affect the company and their progress as a leader. Similarly, the choices you make concerning how you live your life, how you treat others, and how you use your mind and body impact your relationship with God and the development of Christ-like character within you. Choices based on truth deepen your walk and your maturity. Choices based on falsehood wound that relationship and hinder God's transforming work in your life.

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**HOUR 2: MAKING GOD-HONORING CHOICES REQUIRES
FOCUSING ON GOD'S NATURE**
(Deuteronomy 30:15-20)



Key Question: *How does the nature of God enable you to make God-honoring choices?*

NOTE: Because the quality of your life is determined by the degree to which you abide in Christ, understanding God's nature is crucial. God's nature deeply affects your character and actions as you abide in Him.

- I. God's sovereignty:
 - A. Christ is not your consultant. He is the Lord of the universe (**Philippians 2:9-11**)!
 - B. You must make your life choices in the context of Christ's lordship over your life (**Colossians 1:18**).
 - C. God is not a deistic god! He wants to be actively involved in exercising His lordship over your daily living (**Isaiah 30:21**). This includes your decisions about: marriage partner, career path, job offer, child-rearing issues, church involvement, spending your discretionary time and money.
- II. God's glory:
 - A. God will not share His glory with anyone.
 - 1. "I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images" (**Isaiah 42:8**).
 - 2. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Your name give glory" (**Psalms 115:1**).
 - B. Jesus did not seek His own glory but the glory of His heavenly Father (**John 8:50**). Your decisions must be driven by what would bring God the most glory.
 - C. God may humble those who do not properly give Him the glory He deserves (**Acts 12:23**). Choose wisely!
- III. God's power:
 - A. God's power dwarfs that of any nation or world leader (**Psalms 2:1-4; Isaiah 40:10-31**).
 - B. Your understanding of God's power will determine how you obey Him and how you conduct yourself (**Job 40:6-42:3**).
 - C. God's infinite power is available to every believer (**Ephesians 1:17-23**).
- IV. God's love and compassion:
 - A. God's fundamental nature is love (**I John 4:7-8**). Everything God does or says is an expression of perfect love.

B. God is full of compassion (**Psalm 86:15; Lamentations 3:22**). God will guide you to make decisions that reflect His love for others.

C. How you worry about things reflects your view of God's love and compassion for you (**Luke 10:40**).

V. God's goodness:

A. God's goodness means that everything He does is good and is devoid of evil or selfish motives (**Matthew 19:17**).

B. Your decision-making ought to reflect God's goodness.

1. The way you treat your spouse ought to reflect God's goodness.

2. The way you treat your children should reflect God's goodness.

3. The way you treat colleagues, employees, and customers ought to reflect God's goodness.

VI. God's faithfulness:

A. God is faithful (**1 Thessalonians 5:24**). He never changes. You can count on Him to act consistently (**Malachi 3:6**).

B. God expects your decisions to reflect His faithfulness.

1. You should reflect God's faithfulness to your spouse.

2. You should reflect God's faithfulness to your children.

3. You should reflect God's faithfulness to your staff.

VII. God's forgiveness:

A. God is always ready to forgive (**Psalm 86:5; 103:3**).

B. If you ask God to forgive you daily, He will forgive you each time (**Matthew 6:12**). God expects you to forgive others with the same readiness and grace with which He forgives you (**Matthew 6:14; 18:21-35**).

1. You are to forgive your spouse as God forgives you.

2. You are to forgive your children as God forgives you.

3. You are to forgive people at work as God forgives you. (Is this feasible in the marketplace?)

VIII. God's holiness:

A. God is holy which means He is devoid of evil. His character is pure, absolutely set apart from what is common and ordinary (**Leviticus 19:2**).

B. God expects His people to be holy (**Leviticus 19:2; I Peter 2:9-10**).

1. How does your relationship with your wife and children reflect God's holiness?
2. How does your personal conduct reflect God's holiness?
3. How does your conduct at work reflect God's holiness?

Summary: Decisions you make do not come out of thin air. They are rooted in your thought life and your character. God's nature sets the standard for your decisions and your conduct. As you study the character of God in Scripture, you see the blueprint for your own character development. Anything less than total Christ-likeness is dishonoring to God.

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HOUR 3: MAKING GOD-HONORING CHOICES HAS SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)



Key Question: *What are the implications for the choices you make?*

- I. Your personal decisions can bring God glory.
 - A. Choose to maintain integrity (**Psalm 7:8; 26:1-2**).
 - B. Choose to flee from immorality (**Genesis 39:12**).
 - C. Choose to avoid looking at evil (**Psalm 101:3**).
 - D. Choose to place your trust in God rather than in people (**Psalm 20:7**).
 - E. Choose not to take shortcuts (**Matthew 4**).
 - F. Choose to walk by faith (**Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 11:6**).
 - G. Choose to be honest (**Proverbs 8:7; 13:5**).
 - H. Choose godly speech (**Proverbs 8:8; Ephesians 4:29**).
 - I. Choose to forgive (**Matthew 5:38-48**).
 - J. Choose humility (**Proverbs 16:18; Philippians 2:5-8**).
- II. Your choices concerning your marriage can bring God glory.
 - A. Choose to not be unequally yoked (**II Corinthians 6:14**).
 - B. Choose marriage as a lifetime commitment (**Matthew 19:4-9; Malachi 2:16**).
 - C. Actively treat your marriage partner as your most precious human relationship (**Matthew 19:4-6**).
 - D. Choose to remain absolutely faithful to your spouse in mind and body (**Job 31:1; Matthew 5:27-30**).
 - E. Choose to take practical steps to safeguard your marriage.
 - F. Avoid every appearance of evil (**I Thessalonians 5:22**).
 - G. Avoid compromising situations with people of the opposite sex (**I Thessalonians 4:3-8; I Corinthians 6:18-20**).
 - H. Abstain from off-color humor and discussions (**Ephesians 4:29**).
 - I. Heed concerns of your spouse (**I Peter 3:7**).
 - J. Always speak to your spouse in a Godly manner (**Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6**).

- K. Choose to lay your life down for your spouse (**Ephesians 5:25-27**).
- L. Strive to help your spouse achieve everything God intends (**Ephesians 5:26-27**).
- M. Choose not to be bitter toward your spouse (**Ephesians 4:26; Colossians 3:19**).
- N. Seek to be on God's agenda in your spouse's life (**John 5:19-20; I Peter 3:7**).

III. Choices related to your children can bring God glory.

- A. Choose to diligently teach your children to observe God's commandments (**Deuteronomy 6:4-9**).
- B. Choose for you and your family to serve the Lord (**Joshua 24:15**).
- C. Choose to bless your children (**Genesis 12:2-3; 27:1-29; 49:1-27**).
- D. Choose to not provoke your children (**Ephesians 5:4**).
- E. Choose to live in a way that inspires honor from your children (**Ephesians 5:2**).
- F. Choose to be on God's agenda for your children rather than your own (**Genesis 27:5-13; John 5:19-20**).
- G. Choose to create a home of joy (**John 17:13**).
- H. Choose to be on God's agenda for your grandchildren (**Psalms 78:5-8; Isaiah 59:21**).

IV. Choices concerning your work life bring glory to God.

- A. Seek and respond to God's specific purpose for your current job and position (**Genesis 50:20; Esther 4:14**).
- B. Choose to bless those you work with (**II Chronicles 2:11**).
- C. Choose to bless people with your words (**Proverbs 10:21; Ephesians 4:29**).
- D. Choose to hate evil, pride, and arrogance (**Proverbs 8:13**).
- E. Choose to not withhold good from others when it is in your power to give it (**Proverbs 3:27-28**).
- F. Choose to practice mercy (**Proverbs 11:17**).
- G. Choose to always be diligent in your work (**Proverbs 13:4**).
- H. Choose to honor your employees (**Proverbs 14:31**).
- I. Choose to be a calming influence in times of crisis (**Jeremiah 29**).
- J. Choose to have pity on those who are poor or who have few resources (**Proverbs 19:17**).

- K. Choose to always condemn evil, no matter how awkward or inconvenient **(Proverbs 24:24-25)**.
- L. Choose to seek the physical and spiritual good of your employees **(Luke 7:1-10; Acts 10:24-33)**.
- V. Choices concerning community, church, and ministry can glorify God.
 - A. Choose to bless the city and region you reside in **(Proverbs 11:10)**.
 - B. Choose to bless your church **(Acts 4:34-37)**.
 - C. Choose to bless your nation **(Proverbs 14:34)**.
- VI. Your choices reflect what you truly believe about God.
 - A. Your choices reflect whether or not you believe you will one day give an account to God for your actions **(Romans 14:10-12; II Corinthians 5:10)**.
 - B. Your choices reveal whether you believe that God knows everything you do, say and think **(Matthew 12:36; Psalm 94:11)**.
 - C. Your choices reflect whether you believe your God can supply all of your needs **(Philippians 4:13)**.
 - D. Your choices reflect your belief that Christ can carry your load for you **(Matthew 11:28-30)**.
 - E. Your choices reflect what you believe about the word of God **(Hebrews 4:12)**.

Summary: Your decisions have enormous consequences! God has blessed you with free will. A mature person acknowledges and owns this responsibility. Your choices belong to you. No one can make them for you, yet others will feel their consequences. In every decision you make, you have the opportunity to glorify God and to bless others, so you must choose wisely.

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

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