

Obedience, Prayer, and Proclaiming the Word

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1389

INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

Nothing is more important in the life of a believer than being involved in the process of spiritual maturity. It would be tragic for a Christian to remain in a state of infancy all his earthly life. Yet that happens in many cases. Churches are filled with people who never grow spiritually. Many of them fight the same battles and lose repeatedly. They aren't strengthened; they don't seem to gain any resources. Since they don't ascend the ladder of spiritual progression, they don't have a sense of victory and usefulness to God. That is the tragedy of retarded spiritual growth. So it is important that we understand the principles of Scripture that point us in the direction of spiritual maturity.

The master key to spiritual growth is glorifying God. Living to God's glory is living a life that manifests God and Christ in our lives. If we are not living to the glory of God, then we are living to the glory of self or Satan. In either of the latter two conditions, we don't grow. Only as we live to the glory of God do we grow. A key verse is 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory...." In other words, we ascend one level of glory at a time as we gaze at God's glory and become more and more like Jesus Christ. The focus of the Christian life is to know God and glorify Him. Paul's desire was, "That I may know Him..." (Phil. 3:10). If the believer is to grow, he must focus on the glory of the Lord. When he loses himself in that, he will begin to grow.

Glorifying God means several things. First, we glorify God by...

I. CONFESSING JESUS AS LORD

Philippians 2:11 says, "...that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." We will grow only as we glorify the Lord--moving from one level of glory to the next, and proceeding from being babies to young men and spiritual fathers. That means we must confess Jesus as Lord. You cannot live to the glory of God unless you are a believer. The purpose of becoming a Christian is not primarily to keep you out of hell and allow you to experience blessing, but to allow you to live to the glory of God. That is why He made you.

Everything that God made gives Him glory. The heavens declare the glory of God; the beasts of the field gives Him glory; and the angels glorify God. But it is amazing how humans resist giving glory to God. Romans 1:21 says, "...when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God...." The terrible legacy of human sinfulness is that man doesn't give God glory; thus he never progresses spiritually.

But when we invite Christ into our lives--acknowledge Him as Savior and Master--then the process of spiritual growth begins.

How do we grow spiritually once we are saved? We begin by...

II. AIMING OUR LIVES AT GLORIFYING HIM

First Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Eating and drinking are mundane, yet they are to be done to the glory of God. As you do everything to the glory of God, you will feel the power of the Spirit of God moving you along the path of maturity.

We have also shared some other principles. We glorify God by...

III. CONFESSING SIN

IV. TRUSTING IN HIM

V. BEARING FRUIT

VI. PRAISING HIM

A constant, steady pace of growth occurs in our lives as we give God glory. That is synonymous with walking in the Spirit, obeying the Word of God, and letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. As we are abandoned to God, yielded to the Spirit, and submissive to the Word, we give God glory.

A seventh way in which we glorify God is by...

VII. LOVING HIM ENOUGH TO OBEY HIM

A. The Walk of Obedience

If I could simplify the Christian life to one word, it would be obedience. I don't just mean external obedience; I mean the spirit of obedience. A little girl defiantly continued to stand after her father had told her many times to sit down. Finally he said, "Sit down or I'll spank you." So she sat down. But then she looked up at her father and said, "I'm sitting down but I'm standing up in my heart." That is the not the kind of obedience I am referring to--obeying outwardly but disobeying in the heart. I am not referring to a crushing legalism, but a spirit of obedience. The believer should have a willingness to obey.

1. CHRIST'S CONFRONTATION

In John 21 Jesus confronted Peter in order to affirm him in the ministry. He also spoke to Peter about his love. Glorifying God means that you love Him enough to obey Him.

a. The Prerequisite of Peter's Obedience

1) The Question

John 21:15 says, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah...." Jesus called Peter by his old name because he was acting like his old self. Jesus had caught him in the midst of disobedience. He had told him to wait for Him, but he went fishing instead. Then Jesus said, "...lovest thou Me more than these?..." (v. 15b). Jesus used the greatest word for love in the Greek--agapao. Jesus was saying, "Do you really love Me Peter? Do you totally love Me? Am I the epitome of your affections?" When Jesus said, "more than these" some people think that He was referring to the nets, boats, and the life of fishing, which was a love of Peter's. Other people think that He was referring to the other disciples--did Peter love Jesus more than the other disciples loved Him? Peter had said that he would never forsake Jesus even if the others did (Mt. 26:33).

2) The Answer

Verse 15 continues, "...He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee...." Peter didn't use agapao; He used phileo. Peter said, "I like You a lot." He didn't want to say, "Lord, I really love You," because Jesus would have said, "If you loved Me, then you would keep My commandments" (Jn. 14:15). Peter couldn't claim that kind of love because he didn't give any evidence of it. Peter was like the man who wrote this to his sweetheart: "I would cross the burning sand or swim the English Channel to be near you. And if it doesn't rain tonight I'm coming over." Peter had been caught in an act of disobedience.

3) The Command

Verse 15 continues, "...He saith unto him, Feed My lambs." Jesus wanted Peter to be a pastor, preach the Word, and help build the Kingdom. He accepted Peter at the level of his love. John 21:16-17 says, "He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou Me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love [like] Thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest Thou [do you like] Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou [do you like] Me? And he said unto him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love [like] Thee...." Jesus cannot use anyone who doesn't love Him. Living to Christ's glory means loving Him. Maybe your love isn't all that it could be; maybe it isn't agapao--supreme love. But if it is good solid phileo, Christ will use you. He will take you where you are and build you from there. He wanted Peter to minister, but He knew there was a prerequisite--Peter had to love Him enough to obey Him.

b. The Prophecy of Peter's Obedience

John 21:18-19 says, "Verily, verily. I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst where thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou wouldest not. This spoke He, signifying by what death he should glorify God...." Jesus was saying, "Peter, do you really love Me? You are going to die for Me. If you continue in My service and feed My sheep and My lambs, it will cost you your life."

c. The Proof of Peter's Obedience

In verse 19 Jesus says, "...Follow Me." It would be one thing to follow the Lord if He said, "Follow Me and you'll be successful. You'll have health, wealth, and happiness." That's what the cults promise. And today much of so-called Christianity is promising the same thing. But Jesus didn't say that to Peter. He said, "Peter, if you love Me, follow Me."

John 21:20-22 says, "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved [John], following; who also leaned on His breast at supper.... Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?..."

Jesus was saying, "If he lives till the second coming, that's none of your business." As a result of that statement, a rumor started that John was going to live till the second coming. So John had to write verse 23 to correct that rumor. Jesus said that if he lived till the second coming, that was none of Peter's business. In verse 22 Jesus says again, "...Follow thou Me." Jesus used the emphatic pronoun. He was saying, "Quit turning around and asking questions that are none of your business! Follow Me!"

2. PETER'S COMMITMENT

a. In His Actions

In Acts 2:14-47, Peter preached a fantastic sermon in Jerusalem and three thousand people were saved. In Acts 3:1-8, he healed a lame man in the Temple, and the man jumped up and danced through the temple praising God. In Acts 4:5-21 he confronted the Sanhedrin and said, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (v. 12). In verse 19 he and John said, "...Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Peter was the shining light in the early church.

b. In His Writing

Peter wrote two Epistles and expressed the tremendous joy in his heart for being called into the service of the Lord. In 2 Peter 1:14-15 he said, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shown me. Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance." Peter wanted to serve Christ until he died.

B. The Willingness of Obedience

Peter loved Jesus enough to die for Him, and that glorifies God. A principle of spiritual maturity is that you glorify God when you love Him enough to obey Him, even when that's difficult. God is glorified in the willingness that we have to make a sacrifice for His sake. You'll grow as you willingly obey Him no matter what it costs. When you are not willing to take steps unless they meet your conditions, then you are retarding your spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is an abandonment to the will of God. Every time you obey the Lord, you grow; every time you disobey, you retard your growth.

Another way that we glorify God is by...

VIII. PRAYING

Prayer is a vital element in spiritual growth because we glorify God by our prayers.

A. The Promise of Answered Prayer

John 14:13 says, "And whatever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do..." That great promise is repeated in verse 14, "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." Why does God answer prayer?

1. THE PURPOSE OF GOD

People say, "God answers prayer in order to give us what we want. He has to--He made a promise." Those reasons are true in a sense, but the real reason God answers prayer is given in verse 13, "...that the Father may be glorified in the Son." God answers prayer for His sake, not yours. He benefits by putting Himself on display. I don't think we truly understand that. Some of us are reluctant

to pray because we are not too sure that God is going to answer. But He will because He wants to put Himself on display. When I pray I glorify God because I give Him the opportunity to work. And in that work He manifests Himself and receives glory. Prayer is a vital element in spiritual growth because you will not grow unless you interact with God and see His power on display. That will increase your faith.

2. THE PANIC OF THE DISCIPLES

In the context of verse 13, the disciples were greatly distressed because Jesus had told them He was leaving. In John 14:3 He told them, "...if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself..." They were fearful because they had put all their trust in Jesus being present with them. With Him gone, where would their resources come from? When they had needed tax money, Jesus took some coins out of the mouth of a fish (Mt. 17:27). When they became hungry He created bread and fish (Mt. 14:19-21). When they didn't have a place to lay their head, He comforted them and they stayed together in the hills of Galilee or in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was their beloved friend, and their spiritual, theological, and economic resource. He was their future as well as their present. But now that He was leaving they were panicked. But He said, "Don't worry. Even though I am going, you will still have a resource. Whatever you need and ask for in My name, I will do. I don't have to be here." What a great promise!

B. The Prerequisite of Answered Prayer

1. THE MISCONCEPTION

Praying in Jesus' name is more than a formula. Some people think that at the end of every prayer you have to say, "...in Jesus name, Amen." That is supposed to bind God. And they say that if you don't say, "...in Jesus' name," then the prayer doesn't get through to God. But prayer isn't a matter of little formulas.

2. THE MEANING

a. Pray According to God's Will

What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name? The name of God or the name of Christ embodies all that God and Christ are. God's name is, "...I AM THAT I AM..." (Ex. 3:14). So Jesus was saying, "When you ask consistently with who I am and what My will is, I will do it." It is praying in accord with His will. You ought to guide your prayers along that line if you want to grow spiritually and see God on display. Then your faith will increase. Instead of saying, "...in Jesus' name, Amen," at the end of your prayer, say, "I pray this because I believe it to be Your will."

1) In the Wrong Manner

The next time you pray, "Lord, I'd like to have a new car. I don't like the one I've got," add this at the end, "And this I ask because I believe this is the will of..." No. You would have a hard time asking for that. That is like the little boy who prayed, "God bless mommy and God bless daddy." And then he shouted, "God, I would like a new bicycle!" His mother said, "God isn't deaf." He said, "I know, but grandma's in the next room and she's hard of hearing." We try to con God--force His hand--by binding Him with a misconstrued idea of what His promises mean.

2) In the Right Manner

To pray in His name limits our prayers. For example, I should pray, "God, I pray that a dear brother who is ill may grow spiritually, see a new vision of You, and have his heart enriched in the midst of his trial. This I ask because I believe it to be the will of Jesus Christ." That is the kind of thing you can ask God for because it is consistent with who He is and what you know His will to be.

b. Pray in the Spirit

Praying in the Spirit is not falling over, and talking in some foreign language or ecstatic tongue; it is

praying consistently with the will of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God prays in the life of the believer. Romans 8:26 says, "...we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The Spirit prays for us in a nonverbal language to the Father. His prayers are always answered because He knows the mind of the Father. By praying in the Spirit, I'm lining my prayers up with the will of the Spirit and Christ. And the best place to find His will is in the Word of God. Start to pray according to His will.

C. The Praise of Answered Prayer

When you pray according to God's will, He will answer your prayer that He may be glorified. He might do it even if you didn't pray for it because it was His will to do it anyway. But then you wouldn't have had the opportunity to see Him do it, and thus you wouldn't have given Him glory.

1. AN ILLUSTRATION

If someone came to a prayer meeting and said, "I had the most wonderful thing happen: The lady with whom I've been sharing Christ and praying for all these years, opened her heart and invited Jesus Christ to come in. I'm so thrilled! She is now a believer, and is here with us tonight. Thank you for praying for her for these last few months." Immediately when that happens, someone usually says, "Praise the Lord!" And many peoples' faces would be full of smiles. Those would be the people who were praying for her. But there would also be some people staring, totally indifferent to what was happening. Why? They weren't involved. The reason for praying is not to force God's hand, but to be in on what God is doing so you can praise Him.

A Spiral Prayer List

There was a man in our church named Frank. One day he said to me, "John, I would like to pray for you, but I don't know what to pray for. Would you give me three requests?" I agreed. Then he did something I thought was a little unusual. He opened up a little spiral notebook and wrote down each of my requests. About two weeks later he approached me and said, "John, I would like to check on those three requests." So he flipped back a few pages to where he had written them down and asked me what had happened in each case. We talked for about ten minutes as I related what had happened. And he wrote all of that in another column. So he had a request on one side and an answer on the other. I had an occasion to visit him in his home one time before he moved. I noticed that he had thirteen of those spiral notebooks already filled and he was working on number fourteen! Now there was someone who had seen God on display! Frank was letting God display His power in his life by observing what God was doing.

2. THE ISSUE

The primary issue in prayer is not obtaining what you want, but allowing God to display His glory. If I receive what I want residually, that's great. Most important is that I receive what I need. However, sometimes what I need is not what I want. The purpose of prayer is to allow God to display Himself. If you are going to grow spiritually, then you need to experience through prayer a display of God's power. The more you pray, and the more faithful you are, the faster your spiritual growth will take place. As God does great and mighty things, there will be an increase of your confidence in His power and an increase in your spiritual maturity.

Another way we glorify God is by...

IX. PROCLAIMING THE WORD

A. The Passages

1. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1 -- "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified...." The Word of the Lord is the expression of God--He is synonymous with His Word. In the Old Testament, God revealed His Word Himself; in the New Testament He did so through the living Christ. God is glorified when His Word is proclaimed.

2. GALATIANS 1:22-24 -- In regard to his conversion and subsequent ministry, the Apostle Paul said, "...the churches of Judaea...had heard only, He who persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." The churches had heard that Saul of Tarsus, who once persecuted the faith, was now preaching the faith. Verse 24 says, "And they glorified God in me." They did that because the Word was being proclaimed. You glorify God when you proclaim His Word because you acknowledge that it is the truth. It is a life- giving, life-changing, life-transforming, and life-sustaining Word. It is more powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. When you proclaim the Word of God as the absolute source of truth, you are honoring God because you are holding it up as the standard.

3. ACTS 13:48-49 -- "And when the Gentiles heard this [the message of everlasting life], they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."

B. The Process

1. TAKING IT IN

There is no spiritual growth without the intake of God's Word. You can't grow without food. Feeding should be a daily process. You don't go to church on Sunday, take in your message, and hope it holds you until the next week any more than you eat dinner on Sunday and say, "Lord, that was a wonderful Sunday dinner. We pray that it will hold us until next Sunday." You need to eat Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and so on. The same thing is true spiritually. There must be a daily feeding on the Word of God.

2. GIVING IT OUT

There is greater glory in giving out the Word than there is in feeding; as you proclaim the Word, you cement it in your life. In that case the statement, "The more you give away, the more you keep," is true. I have found that the things I teach I remember; the things I read but never pass on I forget.

C. The Priority

The servant of God is to give high priority to proclaiming the Word of God. When you are silent about His Word, you will retard your spiritual growth.

1. SATURATION SYMBOLIZED

In Deuteronomy 6:7-9 God told the people of Israel that they should talk about His law "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." The Word should fill your heart and mind so that whenever you open your mouth, you talk about it.

2. SATURATION REALIZED

Trumbull was a great soul winner. When I was a student in seminary, I read his book about how

Jesus won men. He said that the thing that made the difference in his life was when he made a vow to God to give him the strength to introduce Jesus as the topic of conversation at every opportunity. And he kept that vow through his life. Every time he opened his mouth, he talked about Jesus. He saturated himself with God's Word.

I have spent so many years studying and preaching the Bible that I would probably recite Bible verses or preach a sermon if you woke me in the middle of the night! I dream about spiritual things. That is the context of my thinking. I thank God for that. He is gracious to me because He could have put me some place where I wouldn't of had the luxury of studying the Bible all the time. When any Bible teacher teaches the Word, he needs to saturate himself with it. You can't just write notes and fire off a sermon; the Bible has to become a part of you so that it controls your life. As you proclaim it your life glorifies God.

Balaam's ass spoke the Word of God, and that glorified God (Num. 22:28-30). Cyrus (the King of Persia) spoke the Word of the Lord, and God was glorified (Ez. 1:2). Evil Caiaphas, the high priest, spoke the Word of God, and God was glorified (Jn. 11:49-52). When God's Word is uttered it glorifies Him, but more so when it flows out of the life of a believer. You cannot grow spiritually if you are not speaking the Word of God. We must make the Bible a high priority in our lives.

D. The Purpose

1. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 -- "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What is the goal of spiritual maturity? To be perfect. All Scripture provides doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness in order that the man of God may be perfect. That is how the Word of God works in your heart. And it never works as well in your life as when you are teaching, preaching, or sharing it with somebody else. That is when it truly takes root in your heart.

2. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 -- "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The phrase "rightly dividing" literally means, "cutting it straight." Paul was a tentmaker. He made his tents by cutting patterns out of goatskin. No one goat was big enough for a tent, so the skins had to be sewn together. If the individual pieces weren't cut correctly, the pattern didn't match. So Paul was saying that unless you are careful with the individual parts of Scripture, it all won't come together.

We are to be students of the Word, filling our hearts with it. And as we proclaim it, we are to hope that "the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified..." (2 Thess. 3:1).

We glorify God by proclaiming His Word to believers and unbelievers-- to those who will hear and those who will not. As we proclaim His Word, we are to pray, praise Him, and aim our lives at His purposes and His will. As we love Him enough to obey no matter what the cost, we will be progressing toward Christlikeness. The Christian life is a progression towards glorifying God. It is a deceptive progression because the longer I live, the more failures I see in my life. People say, "The more you grow, the easier it will become." No, it doesn't get easier. The more you know, the more you discover your limitations. So you are ever pressing toward the mark, never having a sense of attaining that mark. In your heart you long for the day when you will be like Him, for then you will see Him as He is (1 Jn. 3:2).

One more way we glorify God is by...

X. BRINGING OTHERS TO HIM

That is a natural outgrowth of proclaiming the Word.

A. Declaring the Commitment

In 2 Corinthians, Paul wrote to the Corinthians because he was deeply concerned for them. In 1 Corinthians he had rebuked them in some very harsh terms for their many failures, and 2 Corinthians was an explanation of his reasons for writing 1 Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians 4:15 he says, "For all things are for your sakes...." What were all the things he had done for them? Verse 8 says, "We are troubled on every side...." Verse 9 says that he was persecuted. Verse 10 says, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus...." Paul was always having to face death for the ministry, and it was all done for their sake. Paul was totally committed to the needs of others.

B. Doubling the Potential

What was Paul's purpose? Verse 15 says, "...that the abundant grace [saving grace] might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." Why did Paul go into hostile towns knowing he would be persecuted? Why did he confront people? He wanted people to know the abundance of saving grace so that they might thank God. Paul wanted to add more voices to the thanksgiving choir. He wanted others to glorify God. Probably the greatest element of glorifying God is winning somebody else to Christ because you double the potential. If I can glorify God and then win someone else to Christ, then that individual has the potential to glorify God too. So God is glorified when we bring others to Him.

Some people say, "Spiritual growth belongs to the spiritual giants." I have read *Imitation of Christ* by the fifteenth century saint Thomas a` Kempis. I have read about mystics who knelt and prayed for eight to ten hours and wore out holes in the wood floors. I have read about Robert Murray McChesney, who would stand at his pulpit and great floods of tears would soil the pages of his Bible and stain the wood of his pulpit. I have read *Power Through Prayer* by E. M. Bounds. He was so consumed with prayer that he would spend hour upon hour in prayer. And I would think, "It's useless! I will never reach that level." But God uses each of us in different ways. Spiritual growth is not some mystical thing for someone who is in some other spiritual plane. Spiritual growth is very simple. It is a matter of obedience, loving the Lord, praying, praising, believing, confessing sin, proclaiming the Word, bearing fruit, and winning people to Christ. It is that simple. Those are the elements you need in your life in order to mature. And the sooner you focus on those simple basics the sooner you are going to see the Spirit of God changing you into the image of Christ, from one level of glory to the next level of glory.

Focusing on the Facts

1. If you are not living to God's glory, whose glory are you living to?
2. What is the terrible legacy of human sinfulness?
3. What are some of the synonyms of glorifying God?
4. What one word can be used to describe the Christian life?

5. Why did Jesus confront Peter in John 21?
6. Explain the reason for the use of two different Greek words for love in John 21:15-17. Why did Jesus use both words at different times? Why did Peter use the word he did?
7. What did Jesus tell Peter would be the end result if he followed Him? (see Jn. 21:18-19)
8. In what ways did Peter manifest his obedience to Christ after the confrontation of John 21?
9. Why does God answer prayer? What effect does answered prayer have on the believer's spiritual growth? (see Jn. 14:13)
10. What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name?
11. What does praying in the Spirit mean? How does the Spirit pray for the believer? (see Rom. 8:26)
12. How does your prayer life effect your spiritual growth?
13. Why is God glorified when Christians proclaim His Word?
14. Why is it important for you to proclaim God's Word in addition to feeding on it?
15. Why is important for any teacher of God's Word to saturate himself with it?
16. What is the goal of spiritual maturity? (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
17. In what way can spiritual growth be considered a deceptive progression?
18. Why did Paul enter into hostile towns knowing that he might be persecuted? (see 2 Cor. 4:15)

Pondering the Principles

1. How willing are you to do anything to obey Christ? Give examples of difficult sacrifices you had to make in order to be obedient to Him. What sacrifices did you make? What sacrifices did you not make? Are there any difficult decisions presently facing you? Based on this lesson, what should your decision be? Make the commitment to obey Christ no matter how difficult the sacrifice.
2. Make a list of the different kinds of things you pray for. How many of those things would you still be able to pray for if you asked for them according to God's will? What are some of the things you should be praying for that you are not presently? Make sure that your prayers align with God's will.

3. Do you maintain a prayer list? If not, start one now. Choose any format you desire, only be sure to allow a section for requests and a section for answers to those requests. Be sure to make entries regularly, and constantly review what God has done.

4. Are you saturating your life with God's Word, or do you just merely read it from time to time? When you read or study God's Word, are you content to learn from it only, or do you share what you have learned with others? In order to truly make God's Word alive in your life, you need to be sharing it with others. And to do that you need to be studying it on a regular basis. Decide what time of each day you could devote to regular Bible reading and study. Allow yourself enough time each day (at least a half an hour). Most important, make the commitment to do that each day.

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