

Foundation Key Passages

Transcript from David Hamilton's Video project for
the SourceView Reader

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Note for transcript use:

The blue text was used for editing purposes, and should all be gone, but if it is there, compare with video.

The use of red text is to draw attention to scriptures used. While checked for use in the video project, it would be best to confirm when used for the written projects coming. The spoken may have altered a word or added a comment ...and sometimes only selections were used out of a large passage.

The use of green text is to highlight the need to take extra care to find exact spelling or wording, especially quotes used and words in Hebrew. Also any questions on correct wording.

Foundational Passages

God Is Infinite and Personal

1	An Incomparably Great Creator	Gen 1:1
2	An Astoundingly Infinite God	1Ti 1:17
3	An Amazingly Personal God	Isa 57:15
4	An Extraordinarily Relational Trinity	2Co 13:14
5	God Is Holy	Lev 11:44-45
6	God Is Love	1Jn 4:7-8,16b
7	Giving Mercy Justly	Exo 34:6-7
8	A Covenant-Making and Covenant-Keeping God	Gen 15:7-21
9	Jesus: Fully God and Fully Human	Joh 1:14,16-18
10	Jesus and His Redemptive Sacrifice	Rom 5:6-8
11	Jesus is Alive Forever!	Rev 1:18
12	God's Spirit Makes All the Difference	Eze 36:26-27

Man Is Finite and Personal

13	Individuals Created as Finite Personal Beings	Gen 1:26-27
14	Humans Are All Equally Valuable	Gal 3:28
15	Humans Have Fallen	Rom 3:23
16	Individuals Can Be Redeemed	Joh 3:16-19
17	Nations Created to Reflect His Character	Act 17:24-28a
18	The Good News of the Kingdom	Mar 1:1
19	Lord of All or Not at All	Zec 14:9
20	Societies Can Be Transformed	2Pe 3:13
21	Pursuits Prioritized	Mat 6:31-33
22	Be Salt and Light	Mat 5:13-16
23	Pray for Change	Joh 14:12-14
24	Focus on Hope	Hab.2:14

Truth Is Constant and Knowable

25	God Loves to Reveal	Psa 111:2-4
26	God's Revelation Transforms Individuals	2Co 5:17
27	God's Revelation Transforms Nations	2Ch 34:15
28	Ten ... Two ... One ...	Exo 20:1-17
29	Nature - God's Visible Word	Rom 1:19-20
30	Scripture - God's Written Word	2Ti 3:16-17
31	Jesus - God's Living Word	Joh 14:6a
32	Transformed by the Truth	Rom 12:1-2
33	Standing for the Truth	2Co 10:3-5
34	Apply Truth Wisely	Jam 3:13-18

Choices Are Significant and Have Consequences

35	God's Heart Broken over Sin	Gen 6:5-6
36	Personal Consequences of Sin:	Eze 18:1-32
37	Corporate Consequences of Sin	Gen 11:4b-9
38	God Abandoned; Worthless Substitutes	Jer 2:13
39	Fear God	Job 28:28
40	Love God	Deu 6:4-5
41	Love Neighbor	Lev 19:18
42	The Lord's Prayer	Mat 6:9-13
43	The Golden Rule	Mat 7:12

Called to Be Change-Makers with God

44	God's Forever Dream	1Ti 2:3-6a
45	Jesus, our Foundational Cornerstone	Isa 28:16-17a
46	Every Individual Redeemed	Mar 16:15

47	Every Society Transformed	Mat 28:18-20
48	Our Works Based on His Work	Php 2:5-11
49	Doing it Together with Him	Joh 15:1-17
50	Don't Accept the Status Quo!	1Ch 4:9-10
51	Domains of Authority; Spheres of Influence	2Co 10:13-14a
52	Do All for the Glory of God!	1Co 10:31

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FOUNDATIONS KEY PASSAGES Introduction

The 52 passages that are included in this set of foundational scriptures give the basic biblical foundations for every area of life. Some of you will want to read those passages that are related to your particular vocation, be it government or business or education. But everyone needs to read these 52 passages because they apply to every sphere. You can take these 52 and add to the 52 of your personal interest, have 104 as the foundation for really getting God's heart for how to move forward in being a change agent for the kingdom of God.

Now, these, these 52 statements are really based upon five main concepts. These were originally inspired (they've been expanded upon since) by Francis Schaffer. And they summarize, really the main heart of what is distinctly biblical - Judeo-Christian, beginning with the Original Testament and being completed in the New Testament.

These five thoughts are: one, God is infinite and personal. Two, human beings are finite and personal. Three, truth is constant and knowable. Four, our choices are significant and have consequences. And five, we're called to be change makers with God.

These five ideas, these five thoughts are unique to the biblical faith. And they're everywhere in scriptures, are understood or presumed they're the presuppositions, but all of them are explicitly stated in several key passages. And that's what we're gonna be looking at.

These five statements are really what underpin the whole of scriptures. They give expression to the very basic thoughts that govern the universe from God's foundation's point of view. They support, frame, define and clarify everything else that we are to read and understand in the scriptures. So taking time to understand these is really, really vital.

Now, the first segment that we're gonna look at is God is infinite and personal. In this first segment, there are 12 passages. Only the God of the Bible is both infinite and personal. It's really important to get that. There's no other God in all of human experience, in all of human history and all the different philosophies and "isms" that have been created by man that does that. Some gods that are created by human beings are infinite but impersonal. Or they're personal, but they're finite. They're all counterfeits. They can't get everything that the scriptures describe about our God. The worst counterfeits are both finite and impersonal, like worshiping crystals or dolphins. It's a, these things are really important to understand because not every person who uses the term "God" is referring to the same thing.

Who is God? What do we understand by that word? What is he like? What are his attributes or His characteristics? What makes him distinct from other understandings of God? So when we understand this, we understand God's being infinite and personal. He made us in his image. We're not infinite like he is, but he's made us with the qualities of a person, with intellect and will and emotions. Those things which allow for relationship. And so he is made us miniature copies, minute replicas that can share in some of God's attributes, the personal ones, but not in other ones, the infinite ones. And when we see this, we can understand that in some ways we are like God and other ways we're definitely not like him. We understand our place in the universe, that He as Creator has included us and his purposes.

SECTION INTRO

This first segment is about God. He is infinite and personal. There'll be 12 passages that unpack this more fully. But let me say this at this moment, only the God in the Bible is both infinite and personal. That can't be said of any other god. Man-made gods or gods of other "isms" are sometimes infinite but impersonal, or if they're personal, they're finite. And some -

the worst ones, because they're the least developed counterfeits - are neither infinite nor personal.

We are not like God in his infinite attributes, but we've been made by God in his image to be like him with regard to his personal attributes. This gives us a point of both awe at the wonder of this God who's other than us, and of relational delight as he's created us in order to be able to receive his love and respond to it in fellowship with him and with one another.

Number One: An Incomparably, Great Creator

comes from **Genesis 1:1**. the first words of the Bible **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth**. The first thing God wanted us to know about himself is that he's a creator. He's an innovator. He does new things. He makes new things. His creativity knows no bounds. His creativity far exceeds human creativity. We say someone is creative when they take that which already exists and rearranges it in a fresh way. But God's creativity goes far beyond that. God creates something out of nothing. And what results is both beautiful and functional. It meets every standard of aesthetics and pragmatics. In other words, when God makes it, it is good, something that is, a phrase that is often repeated in Genesis one.

At three different points in the creation account, we are told that God creates. The Hebrew word for creates is **Barra**. The first time we were told that God **Baras** is here in **Genesis 1:1**. The emphasis is that he made that which is out of that which was not. He created matter out of nothing. He made atoms and molecules, the inanimate building blocks of creation from scratch. The second time God **baras** is at the beginning of day five in Genesis 1:21. But for the first time he makes animate life. Again, something out of nothing. There had been no animated life before. Everything was chemistry and physics up to that point. The third time is on the second half of the day six in **Genesis, 1:27**. Three times in this verse, we're told that God **Baraz** as He makes the first human couple in the image of God. In summary, the unique creative act of God is highlighted three times in the story of creation. When the inanimate world is formed when an animal life is made and when human life is created.

The latter creations all share elements in common with that which was made previously, but they each represent additional something out of nothing. A new breakthrough of innovation, never before created it. These are the three climaxes of the creative process: Matter. Life. And finally, human life made in the image of God, designed for loving relationships and in which eternity has been planted. **Ecclesiastes 3:11 says he put eternity in their hearts**.

There's another Hebrew verb that is used in the creation story which describes God's creative activity. It is the word **H__** and is used nine times in the initial creation story, Genesis one and two. Unlike **Barara**, which speaks of creating something new out of nothing. **H__** speaks of fashioning something new out of something which already exists. It's the kind of creation we always do. This kind of creating we as humans are usually able to do, but of course, God does it on a much grander scale. Having **BARR** the material from the immaterial, we are told that he then proceeded to **H__** it into the heavens, the sun and the moon; having **Barrat** life from inanimate creation He proceeded to **H__** every animal species. This is Genesis 1:21 and 1:25.

The one who makes something from nothing then proceeds to work creatively with that, which is to innovate even more. The amazing thing about this creative God is that he **BARR** us in his own image so that we could become co-creators with him. God is Creator not only of individual human beings, but also corporate expressions of humanity. He's the author of families and tribes and nations. And for this reason, he cares for every sphere of corporate life in every community, culture or country. He invites us to work with him in co-creating and implementing his kingdom principles into the societal spheres of family, science and business, government,

religion, education, media communication, and celebration, arts, entertainment and sports. How can you collaborate with his Spirit to innovate new kingdom expressions in the place of your vocation?

Number Two: An Astonishingly Infinite God

1 Timothy 1:17. All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen.

The God of the Bible is like no one else. He is in the class all by himself. We are finite. We have limited capabilities, but the infinite God is not like us. His capabilities are not limited as ours are. With our finite capacities we cannot fully describe his infinite capacities. God is greater than we can understand, we read in Job 36:26. For he is not, not only greater than any human being Job 33:12, he is greater than all other gods Exodus, 18:11

In an attempt to describe God's indescribable greatness, we can affirm with the scripture that God is uncreated, no ontological limitations. He is Spirit, no physical limitations. He is eternal, no time limitations. He is omni-present, no space limitations. He is omnipotent, He has no power limitations. And omniscient, no knowledge limitations. Indeed, God is so great that the heavens even the highest heavens cannot contain him. Literally in Hebrew, the heavens of the heavens - who knows what that is, but it's much bigger than we can imagine. And it's not big enough to contain God. We read this in 1 Kings 8:27.

When we glimpse even the smallest sliver of his astounding limitless capacities, we're stirred to stand in awe and worship in amazement. Who can compare with him? As Moses sang, the Israelites were miraculously delivered from Egypt Who is like you among the gods, O Lord, glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders. Exodus 15:11.

How big is your God? How capable is he? Stop! Don't simply give the pat answer you learned by rote. Don't give the right theological thing that you learned in Sunday school. Instead consider the reality of your day to day walk. How big is your God amidst the practicalities of your life? When you face life's major challenges in your family, in your good business in your vocation, get really honest. When life is tough, which is bigger, your problems or your God?

In life, it's easy to be absorbed with our problems so much that they block out everything else, even the greatness of God. The sun is trillions of times bigger than the coins in our pockets. But even if we hold a small coin right in front of our eyes, that little piece of metal can totally block out the sun. And you can say, I, there is no sun. I have this problem. There is no God.

You can use so absorbed with that pressing need right in front of you, that everything else fades from your view and reality gets absorbed into just a small fraction of what is genuinely real. When we talk about God's greatness it's not getting the right theological answers. It's understanding your experiential reality. You can either focus on your problems until they become overwhelmingly great in your eyes, or you can focus on God's greatness and see the challenges of life diminish and put in the right full perspective. Much smaller. These coins are much smaller than the sun. One will always be greater than the other. You either have great problems or you have a great God.

David understood this. Before he became king his life was at risk. He lived constantly on the run from a variety of life threatening dangers. On one occasion, he escaped Saul and took refuge in Philistine territory. It seemed that he was safe with king Achish until some enemy military leaders advised he be killed on the spot. With nowhere else to run David feigned insanity. You can read about this in 1 Samuel 21. Amidst his life threatening circumstances, he penned a skillfully written acrostic poem that shows that he's not insane if he can do every line

with the next letter of the alphabet. And he says in this poem, in what we know as **Psalms 34, come let us tell the Lord of his greatness. Let us exalt his name together.**

Literally David exhorted those who are with him in that difficult situation to magnify the Lord. That means to make God bigger, not like a magnifying glass when you're looking at it at ants on the ground, and they're really small, but they seem big. It's that God is really, really big, but he often seems small to us.

When we magnify the Lord, we allow God to become bigger than the problems, bigger than the danger, bigger than the adversity. This is no mere exercise in positive thinking or an attempt to intentional self delusion. It is a spiritual discipline to see things as they really are. When life's challenges are great, God is greater still. As the Psalmist says, **I know that the Lord is great and that our Lord is greater than all gods Psalm 135.**

What are the challenges you face in your vocation, in your sphere, where your living? Can you see God and his greatness at work in you and through you to face life's challenges?

Number three: An Amazingly Personal God

Isaiah 57:15. We read this **The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, The Holy One says this, I live in the high and holy place, with those whose spirits are contrite and humbled, I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.**

This passage highlights the fact that God is both infinite and personal. This is remarkable. For a survey of the world's religions, both great and small, reveals that for some God is personal, but finite. For others, he's infinite, but impersonal. And for the rest, he's both finite and impersonal. Only the God of the Bible is both infinite and personal. Every true statement about him must make God both more great and more intimate at the same time. If the statement makes God both more capable and more relational, both more powerful and more imminent, both more majestic and more approachable, then it is very likely a statement that matches with biblical truth. Indeed, the scriptures say that God is so great that even the highest heavens cannot contain him. **1 King's 8:27.** And yet he lives as we look into this passage with those whose spirits are contrite, right and humble, **Isaiah 57:15.**

So what does it mean that God is personal? This adjective is not used in the possessive sense that which belongs to me or to you. He's not personal in the sense that he is my God or he is your God. He is personal in the sense that he possesses those attributes which make him a person, those qualities that enable him to have loving relationships with other personal beings. He is personal because he lives and loves relationally. Relationship is the essence of who God is. Several capacities are needed for living beings to live in loving relationship with other living beings. These include the capacity of intellect and emotion and choice among other things. Without intellect, it's impossible to communicate. And without communication, we can't have loving relationships. Communication is the foundation of relationships. When we communicate well, relationships flourish. On the other hand, miscommunication can undermine relationships. No wonder the Bible speaks of God's communication capacity more than any other attribute.

Without emotions we can't appreciate love. We have all gotten into trouble when we've let our emotions get better of us and have followed our emotional outbursts rather than exercise in self-control. And yet imagine how colorless our relational world would be without our emotions. How boring and dull if we reacted the same, whether or not we were being hugged or slapped. Emotions are designed to add sparkle to our relationships, motivating us towards healthy, loving dynamics.

And without choice, love would be meaningless. We treasure a loving act done by someone else for us because we know they could have done otherwise. It is the voluntariness of their act, that gracious self-sacrificing expression of their will, that we value so highly. Love is essentially a choice. Jesus underscores the voluntary nature of this action when he says, **no one takes my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily for I have the authority to lay it down when I want to, and also to take it up again, John 10:18**, This is true love. This is genuine relationship.

It is for this reason that God created us in his image with will, intellect and emotion so that we could receive love and respond with love. Without these attributes, it is not possible to have relationships. Therefore God created us with these personal attributes in order to include us in the circle of divine love that already existed among the three persons of the Godhead - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He designed us for love. As we seek to display his purposes on earth, we need to imitate him and do all that we do out of a motivation of love.

Keep discovering. Look through the scriptures. Find this passage that speaks of God's multifaceted intellect - that God thinks, imagines, plans, reasons, analyzes, remembers. Find the stories that tell of God's emotions, his joy, his delight, his contentment, his grief, his pain, his hope, his disappointment. Search the Word to see descriptions of God's will, how and what he chooses, and the voluntary nature of his self-sacrificing love. God is truly amazing. Amazingly infinite and amazingly personal.

Number four: Extraordinarily Relational Trinity

2 Corinthians 13:14. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

It's impossible for the finite to adequately be able to describe the infinite. How can we describe the existence of the triune Godhead? The language of metaphors come to our aid. Imagine having crossed a big river a year or so ago, and today you're going at that same place. Is it the same river? Well, the answer, yes would be a correct answer because same name, same location, same bed, same banks. But at the same time, the answer no would be an appropriate answer, because all the water that you saw a year ago, not a drop of that is in the river that you're looking at that day. Everything about that river has changed, all the particulars. It's both the same and different.

Any metaphor is inadequate. People have tried many metaphors to describe the Trinity, but they reflect a very important reality. Our world - which is a thumbprint of God's creativity gives evidence of the designer that wonderful, intelligent, capable, loving designer/creator - show that everywhere in creation, unity and diversity are intertwined as the fabric of life. Some religions only have diversity of gods- polytheism with absolutely no unity. Their world is fragmented. Other religions have a rigid monotheism that allows for no expression of diversity. And it's very hard to have a different opinion and that kind of a cultural context. But the Bible speaks of this God from the very beginning, hinting at unity and diversity.

In the first chapters of Genesis during the story of creation, the name of God is that is used again and again is **Elohim**. That is Hebrew for the plural of El. Oim is like "s" in English is the plural. So El means God - rock, fortress, strength, power, and Elohim means all those same things in the plural gods -rocks, strengths, fortresses, powers. And because the verbs align with the nouns in a very particular way in Hebrew, unlike our English language, where the verbs don't change, but more similar to most other languages, Greek, German, French, Spanish, Latin, the nouns, and the verbs match up. So a plural noun has a plural verb and a singular

now has a singular verb. But in this particular instance, the noun is **elem** is plural. And the verb “created” is singular. It is a, the only time this happens in the Hebrew language is with this name of God. And it's just hints of a plurality in the Godhead while a unity in their action. They're so one in character and purpose and activity that they're indistinguishable as separate persons. And yet there's something more than just a solitary oneness that's going on. It's a multiple oneness.

The Original Testament hints at God's diversity while emphasizing God's unity. Not only do we see these passages where **elem** in the plural and the verb in the singular are often used, but even in the creation story God said let us make men in our own image. It's as if there's a conversation going on with the Godhead, and this is significant. Because some people have accused God of creating us because he had some needs, some lack. He wanted people who would love him and appreciate him.

But if we understand that Father and Son and Holy Spirit have loved each other from before the creation of the world, as Jesus, prays in **John 17**, with the love that you loved me before the creation of the world, he's aware of this pre-creation existent relational reality, then God had no lack. He didn't create us out of need. He created us to bless us, to include us in a circle of love. It is absolutely amazing.

Now, this hint in the Original Testament only becomes clarified in the New Testament. We see it first at Jesus' baptism, which is recorded in all four gospels. And you see that Jesus is present in body. The Holy Spirit descends upon him as a dove. And you hear the voice of the Father saying, this is my beloved son and whom I'm well pleased. We understand that the persons within this unique God, this one true God are Three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

So multiple times throughout the New Testament, we read of this triune God, as this becomes clearer through the advent of Jesus and his incarnation and his life in our midst. First of all, it resolves the issues of unity and diversity, that philosophical issues that challenge us in the 21st century. But also it gives us this confidence of this amazing God, who's committed to relationally loving us. He didn't create us out of need, but in order to bless us, by inviting us into this circle of his divine love. Imagine what would life be like without this model of relationship?

If we understand God's Trinitarian reality, we understand that relationship is the foundational reality in the universe. Before there was any matter, before there was anything else existed, love already existed. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And they invite us to be a part of that wonderful community that they've had from the beginning of time. What a privilege.

Number five: God is Holy.

Leviticus 11:44-45 For I am the Lord your God. You must consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am holy. So do not defile yourselves with any of these small animals that scurry along the ground. For I, the Lord, am the one who brought you up from the land of Egypt, that I might be your God. Therefore, you must be holy because I am holy.

Holy is a moral attribute of God's character. And in Hebrew, holy means to be set apart.

My toothbrush is holy. You go like, “Holy? How can you say that?” It's set apart. Believe me, I'm not gonna lend you my toothbrush. You can't brush your teeth with my toothbrush. It's set apart for me. And even though it's mine, I only use it for brushing my teeth. I don't use it for brushing my hair or for brushing my shoes when they need a good cleaning. It's set apart for a particular person and particular function. That's the idea of holiness in Hebrew.

And God, when it says, we're holy, we usually think of it being righteous and just, that's correct. As he's set apart, he's distant from sin. He's distant from evil. He's distant from corruption. So he's set apart. But there's so much more than just righteousness involved in this word "holy".

When I was a child, I grew up in Bolivia, in the high Andes mountains. And I remember a Sunday School teacher who loved to tell stories from the book of Revelation. And she loved to quote [Revelation 4:8](#), where you have 24 elders and these amazing living creatures of that, you know, four of them with six wings, and they've got eyes inside the wings and outside the wings. And she thought this was absolutely amazing, I thought it was really scary and creepy, you know, I was eight years old, like, ah, what's this like? And she said, these were the most, those eyes represent understanding and insight. And they were the most intelligent beings in the universe. And they sang a song that said like this, holy, holy, holy Lord, God, who is and was and who is to come.

And they sang that song, those were all the words, day and night, forever and ever, unceasingly. And I thought, how boring, if they're so intelligent, how can they have such a short song with such a limited vocabulary? What is this? And I couldn't understand why this was so amazing. I thought, how did they do this? I mean, this sounds monotonous and repetitious. Did they just sing it? And then start over again? It's kind of like when I was a child, they had just developed a cassette recorder and you could to play the rewind and play it again. Was that the idea?

Years later, I had the privilege of visiting the tower of London and seeing the crown jewels. And in the crown jewels of this, the British empire, there are some amazing diadems and scepters and crowns.

So there's this amazing scepter and on the top of it there's this one diamond, it's just thousands of facets. And it's just extraordinary. And you know, so on this gold sector of this and the whole handle has rubies and emeralds and, all these other precious gems. And, and it was under a bright light and it was twisting in this showcase with black velvet behind it and bright light shining on it. And this diamond just sparkled. And you could see all colors of pinks and golds and silvers and magenta and purples. And it was just gorgeous. I never seen anything like. It took my breath away.

So when I came to the gift shop, I said, I'm gonna buy a postcard of this and, and take this and send it to my friends. And when I looked through the postcards, I found one, but oh, no, it wasn't something I wanted to buy because, but the experience was something moving and dynamic that was always changing and gave me a fresh color, fresh glint of beauty at every second. But the postcard was fixed and rigid and static. And still. It was lifeless.

Going home that day from the tower of London, I remembered my Sunday school teacher and Revelation 4:8. So they're never singing the same song twice. There's no boredom. There's no monotony in heaven. This holy God has continuously revealing himself. And every time they cast their crowns before the throne and they take their place on their seat again, and they put their crowns on their throne, they look up to the one who's sitting on The Throne and they have a new revelation of who He is. And basically the word holy would be like, wow. Awesome! Incredible! Amazing! Unfathomable! There's no one else like you!

It is like they're, even though they've been walking in growing revelation of this wondrous God, for as long as we could possibly imagine they're still discovering more of his riches, plumbing new depths of his love, greater revelations of his kindness, his creativity, his wisdom, his justice, and they are astonished again and again, in ever increasing measure.

He is, sometimes we think of holiness as everything you shouldn't do. Holiness is described as beautiful many times in the scriptures. And our God is beautiful. He's one of a kind. Everything about him is attractive. He is holy

Psalm, 71:19 says your righteousness of God reaches to the highest heavens. You have done such wonderful things Who can compare with you.

Oh God, holy unique, extraordinary. One of a kind

Psalm 35:10 says with every bone in my body, I will praise him. Lord, who can compare with you? Who else rescues the helpless from the strong? Who else protects the helpless and poor from those who rob them?

God says because he's holy, we who follow him need to be holy too. We need to be set apart. We need to stand out. We need to be different from the crowd. We need to do things not like everyone else is doing them. We don't follow the status quo. We follow our God. How can you be holy in your vocation today?

Number six: God is love.

1 John 4:7-8,16. Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love... And again, God is love and all who live in love live in God and God lives in them.

Love is not just a moral attribute of God's character. It's not just one attribute of many. In a sense its an overarching summary of all of God's moral attributes. Justice is an attribute of love. Mercy is an attribute of love. Self-control is an attribute of love. Kindness is an attribute of love. Patience is an attribute of love. When we say God is love, it means everything in his character, every choice he's ever made is governed by the highest standard, always seeking the wellbeing of every living being in the whole universe. No matter how big or how small.

God's holiness is an expression of love, God's wisdom, God's generosity, God's faithfulness. All of these are different expressions of love.

His limitless unconditional love is what sets him apart from all other gods. The God of the Bible is the only God that can be described as infinite, personal and always loving. Or infinite and personal and good because his love produces good for us all. His loving character is the greatest good in the universe. He is totally aware and considerate the needs of all of his creatures and all that he does is to our benefit with absolute extraordinary excellence. He knows exactly how to love us. He cares for us intimately and always does what he knows is good for all concerned. That's true love.

Number seven: Giving Mercy Justly.

Exodus 34:6-7. The Lord passed in front of Moses calling out Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I'm slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected —even children in the third and fourth generations.

This is Moses culminating revelation of who God is. And this passage is so crucial for him and his understanding of God. It becomes foundational to the whole of scriptures. It is the most quoted scripture of the Original Testament in the Original Testament. It's quoted in **Numbers 14:18, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 86:5,15; Psalm 103:8, Psalm 145:8. Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2. Nahum 1:3.** This truth that God is so loving. He's quick to show mercy. He's slow to anger. He always shows mercy in a way that's just. He leads with mercy. He will never be less than just, but he is always seeking for every opportunity to display mercy. This is extraordinarily important for us to understand about the character of God.

Now this idea of the blend of justice and mercy, we've touched on several times in these passages, when we've looked at government and other areas. But one of the surprising places we find this is right in the middle of the 10 commandments. God takes time to explain his approach to justice and mercy. After the third commandment, he makes it clear that these words are law. They're not mere suggestions. And therefore the infraction of these laws bear consequences. He states, you can read this both in **Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5: I do not leave unpunished the sins of those who hate me, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations.** Like we just read in **Exodus 34, but I lavish my love on those who love me and obey my commands. Even for a thousand generations.**

Justice will prevail, have no doubt about it. But that's not all. In order to get the full impact of these words. You have to do a little bit of math. Whereas justice reaches to three or four generations. Mercy extends to a thousand. In other words, God will be just, but he's about 250 to 333 times more desirous of being merciful. What an amazing God. We have so much more to discover about him because he's not like us.

When someone has done me wrong, my natural inclinations to exact justice not extend mercy. Certainly I don't wish mercy over justice to the tune of 250 or 333 times. But **Micah 6:8. It says, what does the Lord require of you? to love mercy, to do justice, to walk humbly with God.** I like to love justice and do mercy. I, I forgive because I know I have to. If I don't forgive, I won't be forgiven. But I really like justice when people who've done me wrong get the consequences, but that's not how God thinks. And he wants us to change us. So how do you live in your workplace, in your vocation? There are always conflicts. Do you love mercy? Do you prefer mercy over justice? How are you treating your colleagues? How are you making a difference in your vocation? How is, how are you displaying the goodness of God?

Eight: A Covenant-Making & Covenant-Keeping God.

Genesis 15:7-21. So this amazing story begins with Abraham and God, conversing within Abraham's tent. And then God invites Abraham to take him outside and they go out and they look at the skies and God says, because Abraham been complaining that he didn't have an heir. He says, look at how many stars there are. That's gonna be the number of descendants you're gonna have. Millions of upon millions, countless numbers. And Abraham believes him. But then shortly after says, well, how can I really be sure? And then God gives him instructions, which we read in the texts are. If we're not familiar with the customs of the day is preparing for a covenantal agreement. Now covenant was so much more than a contract or a promise. It meant you put your life on the line. This is what happened.

The Lord told him, bring me a three year old heifer, a three year old female goat, a three year old Ram, a turtle dove and a young pigeon. So Abraham presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and lay the halves side by side.

This is how you prepare for a covenantal meal. You cut the animal in half you put them side by side and then the partners hold hands. When you, you know, cut a cow in half, there's a lot of blood on the ground, but you, you take that blood in your hand and you hold your hands and you walk into figure eight around those two halves. When you do this, as you recite that you make vows and you basically are saying, If don't fulfill my covenant, my side of the covenant, you can do to me what we just did to this cow or to this goat, to this pigeon, You can cut me in half and leave my corpse out on the ground to be eaten by vultures.

Well, Abraham cuts the animals in half, waits for God to return; shoos vultures away, finally gets exhausted and sleeps and God shows up. And when he wakes up, he sees something extraordinary. He sees God as represented as two persons, one as a smoking fire pot and another as a flaming torch, doing the figure eight around these two halves. God is making his covenant with Abraham, but Abraham is not walking through the halves. God is doing the covenant with himself. Two persons of the Trinity are expressed there. And the symbolism is this: Abraham. If I, if I fail to keep my side of the covenant, you can kill me. Of course, God never fails. He's always faithful. And Abraham, if you fail on your side of the covenant represented by the second image there, you can still kill me. And of course Abraham would fail and his sons and family would fail. And just like you and I, we fail. We don't live up to all that God expects of us. Throughout history people have failed, and God says, I'll take the payment. I'll step in. And so what he made to promise that day with Abraham leads you to the story of Calvary, where Jesus came and gave his life to fulfill the covenant. The covenant made with Abraham and because Abraham and all of us have failed, he said, I'll pay your price. I will die so that you can live. This is a remarkable God.

As you live imitating God in this remarkable, self-sacrificing love that makes and keeps covenant. Imagine the good that will result in your vocation and in your society. May God help us live like this.

Number nine: Jesus: Fully God and Fully Human.

John 1:14,16-18. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the father full of grace and truth. Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given, for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only son who is himself, God, as an closest relationship with the father has made him known.

If we are going to see our society change, we need to recover the wonder of the incarnation. What an amazing thing God has done in becoming a human being. He's validated our life. He's given value. And he worked at a carpenter shop. He gave value to everything that he did throughout the 33 years. And just think of the cost. Now it's possible for us to imagine, here the all knowing God, the one who created all the languages at Babel, the one who inspired all the prophets in the Original Testament, the one who, who spoke the world into creation out of his great intelligence and wisdom. He was born as a baby and he didn't know a single language. You know, God wasn't pretending to be a human he wasn't play-acting - He really, truly genuinely, fully became a human being.

This is an extraordinary sacrifice. Imagine how much time you have spent acquiring the knowledge you have. Now, I speak several languages. I've gone to years of school. I keep trying to learn every day and study the word all the time. I'm always trying to learn. Imagine would you, would I, be willing to give up the little bit of knowledge, because compared to all the knowledge there is in the universe, What I know is about that much, would I give up that little smidge of knowledge and go back to zero? Have no language, know nothing about anything and in hopes that it would lead to the possibility of redemption for another. Oh, that's

too big of an ask. I don't have that capacity of love. Imagine God, imagine Jesus, the one who inspired the Word having to be nine or 10 months before he said Abba and Ama - Father, daddy and mommy and his native Aramaic. Wow.

Imagine the all powerful God who relinquished the right of his power to become a dependent child. Of all the creatures that are born on earth, the human babies are the most vulnerable. Other animals are born, and within minutes, they're on their feet and walking. Or fish is born is instantly able to swim. Wouldn't you love to be instantly able to swim? But children are so dependent and his mother was a first time mom, a teenager, living in a town that was far from where her family lived and all of her relational connections. Imagine how hard that was for her. And when she had to leave him sleeping in the crib and went out to do a shopping and he woke up and was hungry, He couldn't look around the room and think, okay, clap my fingers. I'm the God of the universe! Angels come feed me my bottle while mom's gone. He didn't do that. He was truly a human being. What an amazing thing. We often speak of the sacrifice at the cross. The sacrifice that incarnation was equally amazing and extraordinary.

Philippians 2:5-11, which we look at as the key passage number 48 a little bit later on, unpacks the wonderous thing that **being God, he did not hold onto equality with God as something to be grasped onto, but he emptied himself to become one of us**. That passage is a son most of authorities of the word think that the early church sang. Another song is found **Colossians 1:15-20**. It's also about the incarnation. Let me read that for you. **Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is Supreme overall creation, For through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else. And he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He's the beginning, Supreme of all who rise from the dead. So he is the first in everything for God in all of his fullness was pleased to live in Christ and through him, God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.**

What an amazing God.

Number 10: Jesus and His Redemptive Sacrifice.

We read from Romans 5:6-8. **You see, at just the right time when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person though for a good person, someone might possibly dare to die, but God demonstrates his own love for us in this, how we were still sinners Christ died for us.**

Just as the wonder of Christ's incarnation should inspire us to live differently in the world, so the wonder of his atonement needs to be revitalized in our hearts day after day. What kind of God is this? That he would die for us, that we might have life? That he would take to up his abode in a grave that we might take up our abode in heaven? What a remarkable God. He's come to give life. And he does that by giving his own life in our stead. You've heard hundreds of sermons on this possibly, but read the scriptures again and again, and pause and think what an amazing gift. We honor those who, who give life and service of our nations. Jesus gives life and service of every person, of every nation, for all people, for all times. There is no one like him.

Number 11: Jesus is Alive Forever

Revelation 1:18. Jesus said, I am the living one. I died, but look, I'm alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and the grave

I tell you, the incarnation is wondrous. The Atonement, his death on the cross is wondrous. But his resurrection is absolutely wondrous too. Imagine what it was like that first Easter, when the disciples all afraid, terrified that they too would be killed are huddled in the room, fearing for their lives — and who walks in? Jesus. He doesn't even open the door. I mean, this is a real person. There's not a hallucination. They touch him. They experience life with him. He sees that they're eating. He says, can I have some food? He eats bread and fish. And he's real. He's physical. And then when he leaves the room, he walks away from them and he apparently doesn't open the door again. And he goes through that wall and it's, doesn't leave the fish hanging on the inside of the wall. It's not like Casper, the friendly ghost. He is a real person with a real physical body. That is extraordinary.

Now you and I know from science that our bodies are made of molecules and atoms and that's the foundation of the cells that form our body. And molecules and atoms are in our bodies are what we call solids. But they also form liquids and gases. And we, with our solid body, regularly walk through the atmosphere; Or when we are swimming in a pool or in the ocean, we walk through or swim through water. And though our solidity is just very, very, very, very small fraction, a little more solid than the solidity of the water or the atmosphere, they part and make way for us. And we don't even think anything about it.

Well, Jesus is even more of a solid than the walls. And somehow his new physical body is so much more real and so much more amazing than our current bodies that he goes through the wall without crumbing the wall, just like you and I go through water. It moves out and forms around and replaces. This just incredible. And he's like this forever. He's always, he's always alive, forever and ever. He's living now. And his life gives us assurance that we will have life forever and ever. Death is not the end. Death is just a passageway to more life with him. When we have this perspective, with this long term perspective, it changes how we live our life here and now we should live this life to make eternity better by the way we influence and shape our colleagues, our friends, and how we employ our activities to advance God's good purposes here on earth. He's alive. Let's live in the reality of his resurrection.

Number 12: God's Spirit Makes All the Difference

Ezekiel 36:26-27. God says, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I'll put my spirit in you ...and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

God's promise here as that he comes to us to abide in us and with us. His presence is what transforms us and empowers us to be agents of transformation in the world around us. He makes a difference in us. He makes the difference through us. Let's be a people committed to make a difference.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

We have previously looked at this section, talking about God being infinite and personal. Now we're gonna look in this section and how humans are finite and personal. God is infinite

because he is uncreated. Humans are finite because we've been created by God. Both God and humans are personal because God made us in his image. We're small reproductions, miniatures if you would, of the capabilities he has so that we can receive and respond to love.

Number 13: Individuals Created as Finite Personal Beings.

Genesis 1:26-28. Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it..."

Psalms 139:13-16, which you can look at in the family's sphere as a key passage, makes it clear that we, not only were Adam and Eve made by God, but each and every one of us have been handmade by God. We are knit together by his design, within our mother's womb and because of who he is in his craftsmanship that is so extraordinary, we are beings of inestimable worth.

We're made in his image so that we could be included in his circle of love. And so that we would have a purpose on earth. We're supposed to be fruitful and multiply; we're supposed to fill earth and govern it. That doesn't mean doing only certain activities that we call spiritual or religious. It means every area of life is supposed to have the impact of human stewardship, where we care and nurture and develop all the potential of this earth to be what God intends it to be. That's our call as human beings to cooperate with God, to co-create with God, to co-labor with God and making his creation all that is intended to be.

Number 14: Humans Are All Equally Valuable.

Galatians 3:28 says there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor either male and female for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

We are valuable. You may feel less valuable than some people are more valuable than others, but we are all equally valuable. God's design makes sure that you are valuable.

Now, when we think about value, there are always several factors that determine how valuable something is. First of all, who made it. So if I'm wanting to buy a car and I'm looking at, I want get a really valuable car, I would probably pick a Mercedes-Benz over Lada just because I know who the manufacturer is. When I hear Mercedes Benz or Lexus, I think, oh, that's gonna be a good car.

But there's something else. It's not just who made it, but how was it made? Because every car company has a line. They have their top of the line, the bottom line and the middle of a line. And you can get the bottom of the line for X amount of money. And the top of the line is four or five times more that amount. So even within a Mercedes Benz, they're the more affordable and the far more expensive ones because they put more effort, more care. It's the culmination of all their engineering, all the best they've put into the top of the line. We look at the creation story we see that God makes everything good, but the very last day after he's made men and women together, he says, it's very good. He says humans are the top of the line. You look at the world, you observe a beautiful sunset. You admire animals in the Serengeti, you look at

waves crashing on the ocean. There's so many different kinds of experience around creation. You go stunned by how beautiful and amazing and valuable this world is. But God says in his word that you're the top of the line. Everything else is good. And you are part of that which was very good.

So our value is even greater, but then it's also for what is something made - not only who made it and how was it made, but for what purpose? So you could have a blacksmith that was the very best blacksmith who takes some iron, some very fine metals and starts forging things. And he could do the very best work. He might be the best craftsman, the best "who". And he might be designed the best what within a category, but he could take that metal and design a horseshoe or instruments for a surgeon to use to help restore human life. And you know, the one is gonna be more costly than the other, more valuable because the purpose for which is designed is higher and greater.

Finally, value is determined by how much people desire it, the law of supply and demand. We realize that the story from Genesis 3 onward is a story of a warfare. There's a battle going on in the cosmos over the hearts and minds of men and women, a battle between light and darkness, a battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. And there's a lot of effort being extended to win our hearts.

So whether it's looking at who made us - God, the most valuable person of the universe; how he made us - the top of the line, the culminating expectation, for what it is the highest purpose - to be able to receive and respond to the love of God and to love of neighbor, and how desired we are—that God is willing to give his own life to win the battle against the forces of darkness. We realize a very high price has been paid because we are of great value.

So as we do our work in the spheres, we need to make sure that everyone is equally valued. We value the employee that is most recently hired. We value the person who's doing the stuff behind the scenes, in a theater, not just the star who has the lead role. We value every single person. How do you live your life in your sphere, exhibiting the value that each person has?

Number 15: Humans Have Fallen.

Romans 3:23 says this **all have sinned and fall short in the glory of God.** We actually didn't need this scripture to tell us that; we just have to look at our own life and the life of those around us. We've all fallen short. We've not lived up even to our own standards, let alone God's standards. From Genesis 3 onward, we are people who are broken and live in a broken world. The original design has not been destroyed. You still have the image of God, but it has been marred. It's been damaged and it needs to be restored. And so we need to walk with gentle awareness towards one another, recognizing that we are as we are, because we've grown up in the midst of brokenness. And we have to discover what was the original design? What should we be like? What we see around us is not normative. What is normative is Genesis one and two. What is normative is Revelation 21 and 22 at the beginning and the end and all in between. We're living in this time when the usual thing which we consider the norm is abnormal reality. We were designed for more. We are broken. How can we be fixed? Well, in the next key passage, we'll talk about that.

Number 16: Individuals Can Be Redeemed.

John 3:16-19 for this is how God loved the world. He gave his one and only son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world, not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. There was no judgment against anyone who believes in him...

When we look at the world and the condition of the world around us, there are many reasons for which we should despair. But when we look to Jesus and his word, there's great reason to have hope. I want to just read two other passages. This remarkable redemption that is possible through his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection.

As we read in **1 John 1:9 if we confess our sins to him, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.** Often times only the first half of that verse is read he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins. That's wonderful. It's great to have the sense of guilt and shame wiped away, but he doesn't just forgive us of our sin and leave us there. He cleanses us from all wickedness. Imagine a world that is cleansed from all personal wickedness, a world that is cleansed from all corporate or societal wickedness. When there is no more abuse in homes, when children and women are not trafficked, when there is no war and criminality. Imagine when we're cleansed from our wickedness, all of us. That's his goal that we'd be cleansed from all wickedness. That's what we're talking about here. This is God's dream. How can we participate in that?

Matthew 1:21 is also worthy of our reflection. In this verse, Jesus' name was given, it says **you are to name him Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.** I want to, you heard me say 'from' with emphasis and that's what I want to focus on. So it doesn't just mean as a static condition. Okay. We sin, we ask forgiveness. We're forgiven. We no longer are guilty. In Greek, the prepositions are very dynamic. The idea is 'from', is like, it's something that is like, you walk out of the door of your house. You're going to the store. You're going away from the door. You're getting further and further and further away. Jesus comes to lead us in a journey that continuously distance us more and more from sin, for the brokenness that we've experienced in our human existence. And as individuals, as societies, as spheres and cultures, God wants to deliver us from sin, not just the consequences, the guilt and the shame associated with it, but the very acts of sin that our life becomes ever more distant from those things which are destructive to human relationship. Those things that are destructive to human thriving, those things that are contrary to the Kingdom of God. May God give us grace. May He cleanse us from all wickedness and may he distance us continuously more and more from our sins.

Number 17: Nations Created to Reflect His Character.

This comes from **Acts 17:24-28**. Paul is speaking on his missionary journey when he's in Athens. And he says this, **he is the God who made the world and everything in it. He himself gives life and breath through everything and he's satisfies every need. From one man He created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall and he determined their boundaries. His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though He's not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist...**

What Paul clearly states here is that God not only created individuals, but he created nations, every human being, but also every cultural of society has their roots in God. God not only created Canadians. He created Canada. And God not only wanted there to be Swiss individuals, He wanted Switzerland to exist. God not only made Ghanaians, He purposed for a people called, a nation called Ghana to exist. He sets times from them to rise and fall and determine their boundaries. God is loves both individual humanity and corporate humanity.

In the Original Testament He often sends the prophet to speak to individuals, a widow, a sick general, an evil king, but he also sends prophets to speak to corporate expressions of cities like Ninevah or Jerusalem or tribes like Judah or Dan; or nations and empires like Babylon and Assyria. In the new Testament Jesus weeps two times one time over an individual, his friend Lazarus, when he heard of his death and also over the city of Jerusalem when he approached it. He cares about the well-being of every individual and every nation. And he says here that the

reason God creates nations is for this purpose was that the nations would seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. He wants nations to encounter God, not just individuals. That means every aspect of the nation, every sphere of society, every element of the culture to encounter God, to find God, to seek after God, this is not only an individual pursuit, it is to be a corporate pursuit. And we are involved in this as we commit ourselves to see the spheres of society transform to the glory of God.

Number 18: The Good News of the Kingdom.

Mark 1:1. The very first words of this gospel says **the beginning of the good news about Jesus, the Messiah, the son of God.** And you kind of go well, of course is the beginning it's verse 1:1. It's like "once upon a time", that's how stories begin. Why do you take the time to tell us it's the beginning? We know it's the beginning. We're just starting it. Well, he's not just saying I'm starting a gospel. The language he uses is the same language that was used throughout the Roman Empire every time a new Caesar came to the throne. Edicts were written and sent throughout the empire and proclaimed in all the main squares of every city and town. And the way each new Caesar was announced was that these words: the beginning of the gospel of Augusta Caesar, son of the divine Julius Caesar.

See, Jesus was coming as the new king, a divine king. The Romans pretended that their kings were divine, but Jesus was truly divine. This was an announcement, a proclamation, a new reign, a new kingdom is being established. It's not just a salvation of individuals. It's a transformation of how everything is done in society, as we make way for the kingdom of God to break through.

You know, multiple times and in Matthew and Mark and Luke, it speaks of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It is good news to know that Jesus is coming not only to redeem the individual, but everything in society, establish His reign and rule over all areas of life. This is absolutely wonderful news. It doesn't have to look like it is now. It's going to get better as Jesus has his way in our midst. Let's cooperate with his Spirit.

Number 19: Lord of All or Lord Not at All.

Zechariah 14:9 says this: And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one Lord — his name alone will be worshiped. In God's plan there is no dichotomy. There is no secular/sacred split. King of all means all. That means nothing excluded. Jesus wants to have the sway, his leadership to shape and influence everything that happens. Everything that occurs in the human experience - in the political area, in the economic area, in families, in the churches, in education, in media/communication; in arts, entertainment and sports. If he's only Lord of a portion and we are still reigning or governing in the other elements He is really not yet Lord. it's all or nothing. So let us live our lives in such a way that Jesus can reign in every area of society.

Number 20: (Societies Can be Transformed)

this passage builds on what we saw in number 16, where we said every individual can be transformed. Humans can be transformed, but here in number 20, we say **Societies Can be Transformed.** **2 Peter 3:13 says, but in keeping with his promise, we're looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth.**

But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. God's plan is that everything will be changed. **1 Peter 2:9 says you are a chosen people. You are Royal priest, a holy nation. God's very own possession.** In **Revelation, 1:6; 5:10** that talks about priests and the kingdom. There's to be this full integration that God's

kingdom is to affect every area of life. And we are to see everything changed. There is hope, hope for individuals to be transformed, hope for our society and cultures to be transformed.

This is what the Lord's prayer is all about. The disciples ask Jesus, teach us how to pray. He says, pray like this. Our father, Lord in heaven. Your name is holy. Remember that means awesome. Incredible. One of a kind, set apart, righteous, amazing, just — all these things. May your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We're supposed to get a vision of how God's kingdom is functioning in heaven, the place where God's reign is uncontested, and take hold of that heavenly vision and pull that into present day reality. That's how Jesus teaches us to pray. If that's our prayer, that should guide our actions as well. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth here as it is in heaven. Come Lord Jesus, may you reign, may you bring transformation in every dimension of our human experience, every aspect of our society, every element of my life, every element of our life.

Number 21: Pursuits Prioritized

Matthew 6:31-33. Jesus is speaking and he says, **So do not worry saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? for the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.**

Priority one: Seek first is kingdom and his righteousness. In all areas of life both public and private, both corporate and individual. Seek his righteousness seek his kingdom, whether you're working in government or economics, whether you're a school teacher or an artist, whether whatever role you are, you're a mom, a dad, a disc jockey web designer. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

Our priorities should be notably different from those we work alongside in the various spheres. They're cashing their paychecks for food, drinking, and clothing, the stuff that Jesus recognizes that we all need — and which are priorities, they're just not the first priority. But we should be engaged vocationally with a distinctive motivation. It's not about getting the pay. It's not about meeting our needs. It's about advancing God's purposes, his dreams, bringing his kingdom and his righteousness in every dimension here across planet earth.

Number 22: Be Salt and Light.

Matthew 5:13-16. Jesus is speaking in this famous passage that we know as part of the Sermon on The Mount. **You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses saltiness, how can it be made salty again? it is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A town built on it though cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven.**

We're to be intentionally salty, intentional light. Salt, and light both transform their surrounding environment. Salt changes the flavor. It impacts your tastebuds. Light changes what you can see. It opens up your eyes. They are active change agents. What Jesus is saying you're not just to go through life passively, you are to be an active, intentional change agent doing life and work in such a way that our transformative intentions are not hidden, not in the bushel, but out in the open, not hidden. And God is glorified as a result. That's what we're about. Be salt. Be light. Be a change agent.

Number 23: Pray for Change.

John 14:12-14. Jesus is speaking. He says, very truly. I tell you whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing. And they will do even greater things than these because I'm going to a father and I will do whatever you ask him my name so that the father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it.

Jesus just began the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. We are to advance it, we are to take it further, we are to take it deeper. There are greater things that he's envisioned for us to do. Not because we're greater than Jesus, but because he has completed his mission, he's died and risen from the dead. He's at the father's right hand. And when we pray to him, he will empower us. So there's this marvelous collaboration between Jesus and us that allows us to do even greater things.

These greater things are only possible as we do them in intentional dependency and relational collaboration with God. This is what the prayer is all about. We can't do this on our own. It's only possible with God. He must be an integral part of all that we do, not a tacked on thought at the end of our human process. It's not like we make our plans and develop all of our ideas. And then at the end say, oh God, would you please bless our activities? No, no. We are to begin, sustain and complete these kingdom projects in prayer, inviting God at every stage, from the formation to the completion, to be a part, guiding and leading, instructing us, taking time to engage with him and leaning in on his empowerment. He wants to do this with us. Let us desire to do this with him.

Number 24: Focus on Hope.

Habakkuk 2:14 says for the earth will be filled- for the earth will be filled -for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters covered the sea,

You know, the character and ways of God are the things that are his glory, who he is. He is glorious. Everything about him, everything that he does, the way he does it, it's glorious. Now I live on an island. I live in Hawaii. And because I live on an island, I look out the window of my house and I see the sea every day. And maybe you don't live near the ocean, but I tell you how much of the sea is covered by water? All of it. When the water stops, when the wet stuff stops, it's no longer the sea, it's the beach.

Okay? So when he says the earth will be filled with knowledge, as the waters cover the sea, it means complete, total, comprehensive, nothing left out, nothing untouched, everything impacted. In the midst of the ups and downs, the challenges and problems of life, we need to hold onto this divine vision, this heavenly promise, this sure hope. We need to hold onto like an anchor in the storm. We are engaged in a global battle between light and darkness, between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. But we can be sure that the ultimate victory belongs to God. So let's align ourselves whole heartedly with this vision and let us live every moment of our lives in a way that advances this dream. May it come soon. And may you participate in helping make it happen.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Our next section is called: truth is constant and knowable. It contains 11 passages. These two words are really important. Constant and knowable. Constant is really key because we live in a world of relativism and cynicism, with ever- changing, unstable circumstances and God's truth is constant. There's no new truth. Sometimes there are new insights or applications or ways of contextualizing that truth. But his truth has always been true.

It's constant. It's not something we make up or we invent. It's not something we ideate. It's something we discover, and we learn as we spend time listening to him and to his revelation, it's knowable. We don't have to guess at it. God is present and he's not silent. He has spoken and he's made so much clear. And so we can take great confidence as we go into these projects that we are not living a fiction, we're building on reality.

Number 25: God Loves to Reveal

Psalm 111:2-4. I love this passage. **It says how amazing are the deeds of the Lord! All who delight in him should ponder them. Everything He does reveals his glory and majesty his righteousness never fails. He causes us to remember his wonderful works. How gracious and merciful is our Lord!**

God loves to impart knowledge. God loves to share his wisdom. He is generous. He does not hold things back. He is open-ended with the data, the statistics, the information, all that he has. He does not hold back anything from us that is needful for life. But not everyone picks up on this. You see, his truth is abundantly shared, but does not always picked up and received because it's not perceived by the casually curious. It's available for the committed inquirer, the one willing to take time to ponder. It says all who delight in him should ponder the works of God.

Another word for ponder is to meditate. And our English word 'meditate' comes from a Latin, which if we've translated, instead of transliterate, it means to ruminate. Ruminates is how cows eat and digest their food. Cows have multiple stomachs. And so they go out and eat grass and they chew on it for a while, and swallow it. And then it mixes with the gastric juices in stomach number one. And after a while, they bring it up into their mouth - That sounds disgusting, doesn't it? - But it's normal if you're a cow. I'm glad I'm not. And you chew on that again and again and again. And after awhile you swallow, it goes down into stomach number two, and that process gets repeated until the cow - it has this incredible design. It takes grass (and who likes eating grass-yuck) and turns grass into steaks. I mean, that's, that's pretty amazing, but it's this long and repeated process of chewing the same grass over and over again its called the cud after the first round. It just keeps going and going and going. If we want to know God, we want to understand his ways. We don't just walk up. These are treasures. And like most treasures you have to dig for them. They're available. They're knowable. You gotta dig. You don't find diamonds, just lying across the surface. You have to go after them.

And so we need to unpack what God has done. So he says, ponder, ponder, what? Ponder the deeds of God, the acts of God, his wonderful works. Wow.

Over the last quarter of a century, I've spent time looking at every single verb that describes an action of God. In the original language and Hebrew and Aramaic in the Original Testament and in Greek in the New Testament. And there over 700 distinct words, verbs, in the Original Testament that describe God's actions and over 500 in the New Testament, well over 1200

altogether, some of these words occurred only once. Some of them occur hundreds of times. That's thousands and thousands and thousands of times that we are told what God does.

When you read the Bible every time you see what God does or you listen to what God does - take time. Don't just glance over. Don't just rush on. Ponder. What does it mean? What does it mean? What are the implications? What does, what do his actions reveal to me about his heart? The way he thinks and feels and chooses and how he makes decisions and how does this impact me? If I'm going to be an imitator of God, a lover of God, how should I in my actions change to be aligned with him? So God loves to reveal. Do you love to discover His revelation, do you love to ponder on his acts? I'll tell you what, keep engaged with the SphereView because we're already just about ready to release a Verb-view, which is every verb that God has done. And throughout the Bible so that we can see him in all his glory and fall in love with him and understand his ways more and more and more.

Number 26: God's Revelation Transforms Individuals.

2 Corinthians 5:17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, the old is gone. The new is here,

Commitment to what God has revealed through Jesus and embracing him in our life is what transforms us. It's the key to seeing change in our lives as individuals.

Number 27: God's Revelation Transforms Nations.

This is from 2 Chronicles 34:15. In our previous passage, we looked at how God wants to transform us as individuals. But it's not just individuals. It's also nations. Both are really, really important. He wants every individual redeemed and every society transformed. Let's read this passage. He begins talking about Hilkiah, who was a high priest at the time when Josiah was king. And Josiah's PA, his personal assistant, his court secretary is named Shaphan. So now, you know the characters. And to understand what is going on, Josiah's father and grandfather, both Kings of Judah were pagan. They were idolators. They'd abandoned the ways of God. They filled the temple with idols and, and had worshiped other gods. And they were both very bad Kings. And Josiah had come to the throne at an early stage in life. And he came to a certain point of his early adulthood and he said, we need to make things right. Let's clean up the temple. Let's repair it. And he ordered Hilkiah and the other priests to put the temple back in shape. So they cleaning the temple, they were repairing it. There's been decades since anyone has invested any time in the temple there in Jerusalem. That's what leads up to this passage. And in the process Hilkiah and his people are in some backroom and some corner, and they come across an amazing discovery, something that had been lost for generations.

And Hilkiah said to Shaphan the court secretary, I have found the Book of the Law in the Lord's temple. Then Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan.

It's most scholars' understanding that what he found was the scroll of Deuteronomy. Mind you not a scroll, but THE scroll. I mean, this is the one and only. They didn't keep copies of it in synagogues. There weren't any of those at that point or in homes, no one did that. It was only in the temple and they had misplaced years earlier, Deuteronomy! If this hadn't happened on that day, we'd only have 65 books in the Bible.

Boy, this was a huge discovery and Shaphan understood it. So he took it to the king and he read it in its entirety to Josiah, who, when he heard it, realized how far they'd strayed from

God's purposes. And he broke down in repentance and wept, and he called all the leaders of society. He called the religious leaders, the political leaders, the clan and tribe and family leaders. He called the economic leaders. He called the cultural leaders. He called them and said, we must all read this together. And together they read it in the public square and together they recognized how far they strayed from God's purposes for them as a nation. And they repented. And the result was a great awakening. One of the best times in the story of the history of Israel, where they turned back to God and God's will and his ways were evidenced in every dimension of life. It was wonderful.

But it all began when they re-encountered God's word. It was no longer forgotten. It was no longer lost in some dusty, old corner of the temple. And so we too, do you know God's word? And do, do you have it hidden in some place in your life? Do you need to rediscover it and unpack the riches that are in it? This is what this whole exercise is about - to help open the doors, to whet your appetite. There are so much more in God's word than we often think about. And so if we do this in our time, we can expect in our time a great spiritual awakening, like there was in Josiah's time. And a great spiritual awakening means that every area of society is touched, because there's no secular/sacred divide. Everything that's genuinely spiritual touches every area of life, religious and beyond.

Let's discover the book.

Number 28: (Ten...Two...One)

Passage **Number 28**. An interesting title. Ten...Two... One... What are we talking about? Well, let's start by reading **Exodus 20:1-17**. What is known as the 10 Commandments. **Then God gave the people all these instructions, I am the Lord to God who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other God but me and you must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or on this or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children, the entire family is affected — even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing in love for a thousand generations of those who love me and obey my commands.**

You must not misuse the name of the Lord, your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day, no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea and everything in them; but on the seventh day, he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

Honor, your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

You must not murder.

You must not commit adultery.

You must not steal.

You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.

You must not covet the neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

The 10 commandments are found both in Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 5. And they're summarized by Jesus as two. That's why we go 10 to two as loving God and loving neighbor. And Jesus does this in [Matthew 22](#). And in [Mark 12](#) and [Luke 10](#). You can find in all three of those chapters, Jesus saying, the first commandment is to love, is loving God. And the second commandment is loving your neighbor.

And the first four of the 10 commandments are when we talk about the “loving God” part. They're the vertical love how we, how we express our affection to God

The last six commandments are how we relate to our neighbor in love. If we love them, we will honor them. We won't kill them. We won't steal things from them. We won't lie about them and et cetera.

Paul in turn takes the 10 that Jesus summarizes to loving God and loving neighbor, and he wraps it up in a singular word. And he says “love”. [Romans 13:8-10](#). He says this, let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another. For whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments say you shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder. You shall not steal. You shall not covet. And whatever other command there may be are summed up in this one command. So he says all the commands in the 10 commandments. Any other commands are summed up in this word, love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to the neighbor. The, for love is the fulfillment of the law.

10 commandments, summarized as two, summarized as one. Love is what God's called us to do.

Number 29: Nature -God's Visible Word.

This is from [Romans 1:19-20](#). This is the first of three passages, which we highlight the three main ways in which God has revealed himself to us. [Its what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen being understood from what he has been made so that people are without excuse.](#)

God's truth, truth about who he is and his character, his capacity, his attributes are visible in creation. You can always tell something about the artist by the art that artist creates. I remember looking at the painting of Jeremiah in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, it's a small painting, um, done by Rembrandt. And it's just absolutely stunning. The detail, the emotion, the vividness of the color, the shadows of and the interplay of light is remarkable. You go, how could you cultivate a skill to be so excellent? And I obviously never met Rembrandt but I thought, oh, what an extraordinary man he was.

When we look at the world, we have that same experience again and again, we see it a lovely sunset. We admire majestic snow capped peaks. We go through luscious green verdant jungles. We come into a valley filled with flowers and springtime, and we just admire the intricacy of God. You can look under a microscope and see the details of that beauty and that design, that intelligence. You can look through a telescope at the stores at the farthest reaches of the universe - amazing!

I live in Hawaii and we have some amazing telescopes on the Big Island where I live and often I go up to the visitor center to look through those. I remember one night seeing a moon rise over Saturn through the telescope. And I thought, what a great God, what a powerful God, all these things exist and move and such order and so much brilliance of beauty. There's so much to learn about God by just looking at the world around us. That's why he goes on to say we are without the excuse. Everyone has testimony that our God is good. Our God is great. Our God is an artist and he's marvelous beyond compare. Just take a look around you.

Number 30: The Scripture is God's Written Word.

This is the second of three passages that talk about how God is revealed. The first talked about creation, how his acts reveal about himself and now his written word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17. **All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training, and righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

God's truth is observable in the Bible. That's why I'm taking the time to unpack these initial thoughts on all of these passages. That's why you are taking time to listen and consider, because we can see God through his Word, we come to know him and discover his ways. It says that the word is given so that God's servants can be thoroughly equipped. Don't think of God's servants as a pastor or missionary, they're included, but it's the businessman who's doing what he's doing for the glory of God. It's the artist who's doing what she's doing for the glory of God. It is the preschool teacher who's doing what they are doing for the glory of God. It is, it is everyone who sets their heart to do what they do in a way that serves and blesses God's good and loving purposes on earth. And how do we inform ourselves? How will we get to know God's desire? Well, we read this book, the book that you're reading right now, and this is how we do it. So keep it up. Well done. Keep discovering.

Number 31: Jesus, God's Living Word.

This is, this is the third of three passages that talk about how God has revealed. He reveals through his nature - the things he's made, through his Word - the things he's spoken, but he ultimately, and most completely and perfectly reveals himself through his Son Jesus, who comes and embodies for us in a very tangible, comprehensive way what God is like. God's truth is observable in Jesus. And the passage that we're gonna look at is **John 14:6. Jesus told him, I am the way, the truth and the life ...**

This passage challenges us to think deeply. It does not allow us to think, oh Jesus, isn't he a nice guy? He was such a good moral teacher. If Jesus ...when Jesus says, I'm the way the truth and the life, it forces us to make a decision. Either he's knows he's not - He knows he's not the essence of life. He knows he's not the way to life. He knows he's not the essence of truth and he's lying. Or he's self delusional. He's insane. He's crazy. He's a lunatic. Or he is who he really says he is. And that makes him Lord. The options are three: liar, lunatic, Lord. Nice moral teacher - not an option. You either have to be all in or all against him. There's no other option. This is a disquieting statement. You can't simply put it on a shelf and say, well, I'll take some of Jesus whenever it's convenient for me and just try to ignore him the rest of the time.

You know, in the New Testament, it is clear that Jesus is God. We've already looked at some of those passages in, in previous video segments. But really the emphasis in the New Testament is not on that Jesus is God or God-like, but that God is Jesus -like. In **John 1:18 that says no one has ever seen God. But the unique one who is himself God, is near to the father's heart. He has revealed God to us.** How do we know God fully for who he is? We look at Jesus,

because when we see Jesus, we discover - ahh! that's what God is like. It's not that Jesus is like God, which he is. But that God is like Jesus. And when we get this, it changes our life. It changes how we experience life, how we do life. It changes our choices and our directions, our commitments, it changes everything. Who is Jesus? Is He a liar, a lunatic or is He your Lord?

Number 32: Transformed by The Truth.

Romans 12:1-2. Therefore I urge you brothers and sisters in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God. This is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you'll be able to test and approve that God's will is his good pleasing and perfect will. Oh my, those are good words. His will is good. It's pleasing. It's perfect. You can't improve on that. That's amazing. See, our way of thinking needs to be changed. There's a pattern of thinking in this world that Romans talked about. There are ways of thinking. There are systems of thought, there are perceived realities in our societies that need to be changed because they don't really line up with what is true.

It's not just a slight adjustment that he is calling us to. When it says be transformed by the renewing of your mind, the verb in Greek for be transformed - the verb is metamorphosis. It's that same word that we use in English to describe the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. I mean, if you just look at them side by side, you would have no idea that one is the other, just in a different stage of their life. They look totally different, but that caterpillar goes into a cocoon, spins the cocoon, stays in there for some time, and when he comes out while he is in there, there's this change. It's a through and through change. It's not a superficial darkening little peripheral things on the externals of the caterpillar, not coming out a prettier, caterpillar, a nicer caterpillar, he's becoming out totally different. Instead of crawling across the ground, he's gonna be able spread his wings and fly, a new creature. This is radical change.

And you know, we live in a wonderful time. In the last couple decades. There's been all kind of advances in, in brain science and understanding how malleable is our mind. And you aren't stuck in being the same person you've been up till now. You can change. You can have your mind renewed. You can experience metamorphosis. You can be transformed. You can become a butterfly by the work of God and his Spirit and his truth in your life.

Number 33: Standing for The Truth.

2Corinthians 10:3-5. Paul writes For though we live in the world we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish stronghold struggles. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. And we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The battle we are in is not against individuals. It is against thought patterns that are demonically inspired. This is not figurative language. It is true. There is a spiritual battle going on in the world. And that battle is being fought both in heavenly places and here on earth. It's being fought over the heart and minds of men and women. Will they serve the kingdom of darkness or will they serve the kingdom of Light? The way we win is through obedience to Christ. We take captive of every thought to make it obedient to Christ. It's obedience that wins the war.

When our every thought points us towards obey Jesus in every aspect of our life, 24/7, not just two hours when you're in church on Sunday, but when you're eating dinner with your family, when you're at work with your colleagues on Monday morning, when you're hanging out with your friends on Saturday night, whatever place you are, are you obeying Jesus? Do you, are you listening to him? Is he the one who's guiding your life?

When we obey Jesus in private, in public, in every sphere, when this happens, we are winning. The battle is being won. Our powerful weapons, which it says that we have these weapons and they're powerful include truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the the message of salvation, God's word, prayer - all of these things are described in Ephesians 6:10-20. We have powerful weapons. They're not the weapons of the world. They're not violence and guns. It's not hatred and resentment and vengeance and destruction. It's a totally different kind of war. Will you engage? Will you be a part? Will you change the world? Will you allow yourself to be changed? Will you obey Jesus? Together, let's stand for the truth. Let's live as Jesus wants us to live.

Number 34: Apply Truth Wisely.

This comes from **James 3:13-18**. who is wise in understanding among you, let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all, pure then peace, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace lead a harvest of righteousness.

What an incredible list of qualities. Wisdom occurs when truth is applied appropriately. You can be very knowledgeable and totally unwise because you're not applying the truth as it should be applied. Wisdom occurs when with we are living out truth in a way that displays God's transformative work within our lives and throughout all the things that we do.

It's good to ponder these series of qualities again, and again. If our actions don't align with them, we are not actually advancing God's kingdom. When I read this list and I try to read it frequently, it's a convicting list, because it calls me and it may call you and calls us to a higher standard. Is the way I'm engaging, is it, is it pure? Is it peace loving? Is it considerate? Is it submissive? In other words, am I listening and paying attention to others or just trying to impose my own way? Is it full of mercy and good fruit? Is it impartial and sincere?

Wow. That word sincere is an amazing one. It comes from **Latin s**__ up literally means without wax. And like, what does that mean? Well, back in the Renaissance, you know, there are some amazing sculptors and artists like Michelangelo, but not everyone was at that skill level. And so sometimes people hired a mid-level sculptor to do a piece of art for his wife and make a contract, you can get a piece of marble this size and, and this much weight from this quarry and you're gonna deliver this statue of this figure by this date and specifies all the elements in the contract. And it said, and you'll present this **s**_____ or without wax. Because what could happen in the process is the marble might crack or the sculptor might knock out a chip that he shouldn't have knocked out. And if you take bees wax and, and warm it up and make it pliable, you could fill in the cracks of a marble and you smooth it out and you don't even notice it until it gets close to fire. And then you see it looked like a perfect work, but it was a flawed work and you're just covering up. It says, is your wisdom a non covering up? Is it genuine? Is it real? Is it authentic? I mean we could unpack each of these passages, each of these words more and more, but the point is let's go back to the word. Let's allow it to provoke us to a higher way of living to consider. "My, I need more God in my life to be able to live like this." We can't imitate the world's way of doing things. We must use Jesus as our standard.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

This next section, our fourth in the biblical Christian worldview is Choices are Significant and Have Consequences. We'll look at nine different passages. Now in our society today, the significance of our choices are often downplayed. There are two main ways of what, how that is done. The two strategies that are most frequently used are moral relativism and fatalism. Moral relativism is like, well that might be good for you, but it's not good for me. That might work for you, but it doesn't work for me. And uh, really what I do just, it is just about me. It's not about you. So don't pass on to me your truths or your morals or your ethics, right? It just only affects me. And one of the realities of sin, it never just affects you. It always goes beyond.

The other lie that is often used as fatalism. Oh, what's the use? Que sera sera - whatever will be, will be. I can't really make any difference. There's always been crime. There's always been murder. There's always been economic problems. There's always been these horrible things. Who am I? What difference could I, just one person, make? What's the use? And so you give up with a passivity and a pessimism, a cynicism because everything's fixed. Everything is predetermined and that is, you end up hopeless.

In the first idea you're insignificant. And the second idea is hopeless. Neither of these ideas are biblical ideas. Let's look through these passages to see what God says about how significant our choices are.

Number 35: God's Heart Broken Over Sin.

Genesis 6:5-6. The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and He saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart.

Just 112 verses earlier in **Genesis 1:31**, God was rejoicing that everything He had made was very good. What happened? How did it go from very good to it broke his heart? We must try to capture and understand the enormous shift. The radical change that happened from **Genesis 1:31 to Genesis 6:5-6**. How drastic was that shift from God's original design that made him reconsider and reevaluate and actually repent that he had created human beings. Yes. Repent that Hebrew word for, he was sorry is **Nxxxx — —** And this verb is used 108 times. And you usually think of repentance that this is what we need to do because we sin. But repent - the word **N xxxx** means a change of mind or a change of thought or even an emotional change, a shift in how you feel about things. It's both intellectual and emotive. And it's surprisingly, almost half the time it's used in the Bible, it's used with God as the one who **XXXX** 52 of those 108 times. God is the one who repents. Not of sin, but just reconsiders and looks at what has happened. A profound, emotional shift had occurred in the heart of God. The change broke God's heart.

The language used here, the Hebrew, the same that would be used to describe a heart attack. Now I've never experienced a heart attack, but on several occasions I've had the wind knocked out of me. You know what that's like when someone punches you in the gut and you goyou, and you just, you feel like your whole system stands still. You're gasping for breath and you can't, you can't suck it in, and you're like, you're on the edge of life. It's just, everything stops. It's painful. As anguishing, it's dramatic. That's the word. God, God, who is rejoicing

Some people would discard this as a metaphor, but metaphors point to something. Things like hand - God's hand points to his power. God's eyes point to his wisdom. When it talks about

God's brokenness, it just speaks about God's brokenness, his pain, his emotional distress. God is so much more personal, so much more relational, so much more engaged with us than we often dare to think.

I remember the first day that I really paused and understood this passage. It changed me. I'd been a follower of Jesus. I had been trying to obey him as my Lord for some time, because he had saved me from situations that were messing up my life. But when I read this passage and had it unpacked that day, it hit me like never before that my sin not only hurts me or hurts my fellow human beings, my neighbor, the people I've sinned against, but my sin hurts God. It grieves him. It breaks his heart. After all the good he's done for me, I thought I, I don't want to hurt God anymore. And I determined that day that I wanted to live the rest of my life bringing joy to God's heart. I didn't want to add more pain.

Enough people, myself included have pained God's heart more than enough. You see our choices are really far more significant. They impact far beyond what we imagine. Does God really care when I lie about someone else? Does it hurt him? Does God really care when I act on lustful thoughts and do have sexual acts that denigrate someone else? Does God feel the pain? We read in the scriptures that he does. And I had never thought of that. My choices make an impact on God himself. Consider that.

So let us live our lives in such a way that we would live the rest of our lives bringing joy to His heart. If we get this understanding, we'll walk with him in a way that will transform not only us, but everything we touch.

Number 36: Personal Consequences of Sin

Ezekiel 18:1-32. I'm gonna read selections from this passage. Ezekiel is quoting God. He says, this is my rule: The person who sins is the one who will die... What? you ask. Doesn't the child pay for the parents sins? No! for if the child does what is just and right, and keeps my decrees, that child will surely live. The person who sins is the one who will die. The child will not be punished for the parent's sins, and the parent will not be punished for the child's sins. Righteous people will be rewarded for their own righteous behavior, and wicked people will be punished for their own wickedness. But if wicked people turn away from their sins and begin to obey my decrees and do what is just right, they will surely live and not die... Do you think that I like to see wicked people die? says the Sovereign Lord. Of course not! I want them to turn from their wicked ways and live... Therefore ...Repent and turn from your sins. Don't let them destroy you! Put all your rebellion behind you... I don't want you to die, says the sovereign Lord. Turn back and live!

You hear God's heart? He's a God of life, a life giving God. And he takes no pleasure in death. It's not part of his original design and God pleads with his people through his prophets. He doesn't want people to die. He wants them. He wants me. He wants you. He wants us to take life seriously, take our choices seriously and understand the consequences of our actions. This passage has parallels in **Ezekiel 33:1-20** and in **Jeremiah 18:1-11**. These three passages together form the foundational premise that inspired all the biblical prophets. Their understanding is that your choices, individual and corporate have consequences. Obey God and be blessed, disobey God and suffer the consequences. Don't forget choices do indeed have consequences. Choose life, not death.

Number 37: Corporate Consequences of Sin.

We're gonna read from **Genesis 11:4-9** But the Lord came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. Look, he said, the people are united and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them. Come let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other. And in that way, the Lord scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. That is why the city was called Babel, because that is where the Lord confused the people with different languages. In this way He scattered them all over the world.

God took seriously what was going on in Babel. He takes seriously what we do together as a people, as a culture. He considers the impact of a culture's actions and intervenes when that is detrimental to them and others around them. I think as we read this passage, we should ask ourselves this question. Are we building towers or altars? See the people of Babel built a tower to glorify themselves, to bring glory to themselves. But Abraham who's the story of Abraham starts immediately after this story, built multiple altars. We read about that in **Genesis 12** and **Genesis 13** in **Genesis 22**. And he builds altars to glorify God, to worship God.

Again, why were they building the tower? In **Genesis 11:4**, it says the Babylonians, they were saying, this will make us famous. But contrast that with what God said to Abraham, when saw that Abraham had a heart to worship him. And he said in **Genesis 12:2**, just a few verses later, I will bless you and make you famous. And you'll be blessing to others. It's not a problem with being famous, but are you advancing your own cause are you advancing God's cause and letting him promote you as is appropriate. It's an issue of the heart. Who are you serving your glory or Gods'? There are consequences for our choices.

Number 38: God Abandoned; Worthless Substitutes.

Jeremiah 2:13 for my people have done two evil things. They've abandoned me the fountain of living water. And they've dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all.

When people walk away from God and his ways, they have to find substitute systems of morality, of ethics. They have to find another way to do life, instead of doing life, as it should be done in harmony and relationship and fellowship with God. But counterfeits never work as well as the original, those systems were cracked here. They didn't hold the water. And if you building your life on a counterfeit system of thought, you'll never be able to quench the real thirst of your soul. It's not the real deal. We have to turn back to God. Don't abandon him. Don't accept a substitute. Look for the original.

Number 39: Fear God

this is among the passages that we have for all the spheres. This is foundational **Job 28:28** says this. **And this is what he says to all humanity: the fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding.** This is what he says to all humanity. It is universally applicable. If we don't get this, the rest is lost. This is what it all begins. Fear God.

Number 40: Love God.

We're going to read from Deuteronomy 6:4-5. This is the most famous and well beloved passage in the Hebrew scriptures. It's known as the **Shema**. **listen, oh, Israel. The Lord is our God and the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord, your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength.**

It's called the **Shema** because that's the first word in Hebrew **Shemas** to listen. And this is a word that requires much more breadth in English. It's not just like hearing. It's hearing with intention to apply because **Shema** can be translated both as listen and obey. Obey O Israel! The Lord, our God is the Lord alone.

So it's to hear, to obey. The old English word is heed. Listen with intensity, with intentionality, because you want to apply it. This is the heart of the Hebrew scriptures. This was written on little pieces of paper and worn on the foreheads, put by the doorposts. This was recited in the morning prayers in the evening prayers. And it really is a summary of the first four commandments of the 10 - to love God, our vertical love relationship.

Jesus quotes this and expands on it in **Mark 12:29-30**. When asked, he says **the most important commandment is this. Listen O Israel, the Lord, our God is the one and only God. And you must love the Lord, your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.** In the original, there were just three aspects of the human existence that were highlighted. Jesus adds in all your mind. That must have been shocking. Because every little Hebrew boy and girl had this memorized and to have him hear Jesus, say all your mind, we go, no, no, no, no. You quoted it wrong. But since he's the original author, he can make the edits that he wants. But I think he has this interval of about one and a half millennia. From the time we was first spoken until the time he spoke it again in his lifetime. In order to highlight the punchline, he really wants us to think about this. We need to understand that loving God is the Supreme most important thing. If you don't get this, whatever else you do goes off course.

Number 41: Love Neighbor.

Leviticus 19:18 says, **...love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.**

In our previous key passage at number 40, we were looking at the command to love God and how Jesus quoted that in **Mark 12**. Well, the next verse Jesus continues in **verse 31**. This says **the second is equally important. Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these.** Love God. Love neighbor. They go together, one and two are bundled as a unit. This "love neighbor" is the summary of the final sixth commandments of the original 10 commandments. Together these two in this passage in the previous passage are the two main things that should guide all our choices. When we love God and neighbor, society as a whole will greatly benefit. This is really important. There's no other way to bring genuine transformation, kingdom transformation to our society. And your choices, what you decide to do, in every moment of every day and every relationship is really significant. Love God. Love neighbor.

Number 42: The Lord's Prayer.

And we are reading from **Matthew 6:9-13**. **When Jesus instructs his disciples, this then is how you should pray. Our father in heaven. Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come and your**

will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

That is the prayer. You can see it has three primary elements. After worshiping and acknowledging God and thanking him for the relationship that he has adopted us into his family, and He's our father - Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name. There's no one else like you. You are unique. You stand alone. Who can begin to compare with you?

Then the first request is about purpose. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That's why we are here on earth. That's God's purpose for us. That should be our purpose for us, that we are advancing the kingdom of God.

After that it's about provision. Give us today our daily bread and also give us the forgiveness we need. Okay? We need physical stuff and we need relational stuff. Without either of those things, we can't make life.

And then it's about protection - And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. We recognize that we are praying in the midst of a battle zone and we need your help, God. We, we desperately stand in need of you.

It's about purpose, provision and protection. Now you shouldn't stop reading there. There's a important thing that follows immediately after Jesus says this. Notice and he doesn't say amen. He doesn't split it -full stop. He continues on and there's an important contractual affirmation that we pray every time we pray the Lord's prayer. We say, forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors, or forgive us our sins or forgive us our trespass, depending on the translation or version you have, as we have forgiven.

How we forgive others, impacts how God forgives us. There are consequences. In order to make sure that we don't miss this point. Jesus's next words out of his mouth right after he says puts the period at the end of verse 13 is if you forgive those to sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. Not because he doesn't want to forgive, our God delights in mercy. But if you will not forgive, it puts up a barrier, a blockage. Your resentment keeps God from forgiving you.

Look at **Matthew 18**. Jesus gives a parable of a man who owed millions and millions and millions of dollars to his master. He's a servant that no way he can possibly pay it back. And he's gonna be thrown into jail. And the master says, he says to his master, please forgive me. Have mercy. There's no way he can pay this back. And, and the master is gracious said, yes, I'll forgive you. And so he is not thrown into jail. And then he goes and finds a fellow servant who owes him a few hundred bucks and he says, pay up or else I'm gonna throw you into jail. Well, when the master hears about this, he says, how can you expect me to forgive you of millions if you're not willing to forgive hundreds?

Our choices are important. They have real consequences. Don't harbor resentment. Don't build your life around your pain, around things that people have done against you and getting revenge, getting even. That will never make a way for the kingdom of God. Forgive. Give it, receive it and be an agent of transformation. Your choice is really important.

Number 43: The Golden Rule

Matthew 7:12. Again, Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount says this. **So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you. For this sums up the law and the prophets.** That's it. That's the sum of everything, Enough said. That's the whole kit and caboodle. That's that's the whole enchilada. That's it. Now sometimes this golden rule is stated in a negative or prohibitive form.

Sometimes people say don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you. But that is just an avoidance of evil. Jesus here enjoins us to be proactive in doing good: do to others. what you want them to do to you. You want them to be kind to you? You initiate kindness towards them. You wanna be, have them be generous toward you? You be an example of generosity. You be pro-active. You be the instigator of advancing the kingdom of God by launching into the things of doing good, expressing love, demonstrating the ways of God to your neighbors. And you'll see the world begin to change around you.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Our fifth and final section in this biblical Christian world view is Called To Be Change Makers with God. We have nine passages that are gonna highlight this, and we just need to underscore that this has always been God's desire from the very beginning. In Genesis 1:28, God says be fruitful and multiply. reign over the earth. steward the earth, rule the earth, be engaged in what I want to do in this world. And God invites us to participate with him. We were never intended to do things by ourself without God and God never planned to do creation without us. It's to be a partnership. That's what we're talking about.

Number 44: God's Forever Dream.

We are reading from 1 Timothy 2:3-6. **This is good and pleases God, our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all people.**

You know, this is a really special passage. Think of a time when you had a really good intimate conversation with a very close friend, perhaps your best friend. And you were talking, and on this particular occasion, they decided to share something with you that they'd never shared before. Just kind of an intimate, longing desire of their heart. Or perhaps you wanted to share with them. And you know, you picked the time and place. You don't wanna just share your most intimate longings with just anybody. And even with your good friends, you gotta, it's gotta be the right moment. And because when you share your heart, it's risky, people could laugh, they could scoff. They could, they could ignore it. They could despise it, whatever.

So when you share your intimate dreams, it really is an expression of deep affection and love. In this passage God shares his heart very intimately. He shares with us the dream that he's had forever and is a sign of deep and trusting friendship that he's offering us.

It's a two aspects to this dream. It's first of all, it's universal. He wants all people, all people, no one's excluded. He doesn't think of anyone being left out. This is his desire that they would one be saved. And two, they would come to the knowledge of the truth. This currently, Friends, is not happening. All people aren't being saved. All people are not coming to a knowledge of the truth. So God's dream is not being fulfilled as it should be. This should cause us to wake up. This should stir us to action. If we love God, we should do all that we can to make his

dream come true. In fact, I would say that this is perhaps one of the best definitions of true love. True love is when you change your personal priorities in order to live in such a way as to make the dreams of your beloved a reality. When you do that and you make any sacrifice or pay any price and go to any effort you scale the highest mountain, you swim the the widest ocean, whatever you do in order to make your beloved's dream come true. That is a sign of true love. We really love God when we adjust our priorities to make his dreams, the priority in our life too

Number 45: Jesus, Our Foundational Cornerstone.

We're gonna read from **Isaiah 28:16-17**. And this is a prophetic word from the Lord through Isaiah, speaking a messianic prophecy, a promise of the one who would come. **Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken. I will test you with the measuring line of justice and the plumb line of righteousness...**

Now, when we get to the New Testament, this prophecy is seen as fulfilled in multiple verses, but I wanted to just read a couple of them to you. Paul writes in **Ephesians 2:20-21**. **Together we are his house built on the foundations of the apostles and the prophets and the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him becoming a holy temple for the Lord.**

And Peter writes in **1 Peter 2:4-5**. And when he concludes this passage that I'm gonna read to you, he actually quotes this verse from **Isaiah 28**. He says, **you are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priest through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offers spiritual sacrifices that please God.**

These are the two most outstanding apostles of that first generation, Peter and Paul. They both reflect on Jesus as being the cornerstone, that key architectural element, without which a building can't be built in a safe and sure way. The point is this: All the change we want to see happen in our society - we can't do it without him. If we're not building on Jesus. And if we're not building with Jesus, our building will never be firm. It says **through the mediation of Jesus Christ or our Peter finishes finishes off, through the mediation of Jesus Christ you offer spiritual sacrifices**. When it says that we offer spiritual sacrifices, it's not making a distinction between sacred and secular. All are spiritual if it's advancing the kingdom of God.

And so what he's saying is that it will, when we do this, we're going to, it is gonna require a sacrifice. We're not gonna be able to see the world change easily. It's gonna take effort. It's gonna take relinquishment of rights. It's gonna take paying a high price, a large cost. It'll be a sacrifice, but it's possible through Jesus, through his mediation, through his work in our midst. He is the one that makes this all possible. That gives us such confidence that **we can be**. It's a firm and testing stone. It's safe to build on and will never be shaken.

Number 46: Every Individual Redeemed.

Mark 16:15. Then he told them, go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. This is the first of two passages that highlight the Great Commission. The Great Commission is

Jesus' final words to his disciples and, and is often the case. We pay attention to the final words of a great human being. And Jesus, of course, is the greatest because he's not just human, but also God.

And this reflects his, his lasting purpose, the intent of God's heart. And in these two passages, we're gonna look at, we'll see that God's heart is for both personal redemption and corporate transformation. Here in Mark 16, He's focusing on an individual. We need to make sure that everyone hears the Good News. Everyone has the opportunity to repent, to believe, to follow, to make Jesus the Lord of their life. There's an urgency in this. Today there will be people who pass into eternity without knowing Jesus. Let's not extend those days. Let's hasten our work. Let's speed up our activity. Let's do all that we can. Let's make it a priority, make sure that everyone knows there's really good news. They can repent. They can be forgiven. They can discover life and meaning and value that they've never imagined before. Go and tell preach Good news. It's not bad news. It really is good. Tell everyone.

Number 47: Every Society Transformed

Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus came and told his disciples, I have been given all the authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore “going” disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all the commands I've given you. And be sure of this. I'm with you always, even to the end of the age.

This passage in Matthew 28 as the passage in Mark 16, which was in our previous key passage, reflect God's heart for us to be involved with. We're to see every individual redeemed and every society transformed. There's similarities between these two passages, but they are also significant differences.

The way I read this passage is not how it reads in any of your Bibles. This is my own adjustment, so that the English language parallels exactly the verb tenses of the Greek. In the Greek, in this passage, there are five main verbs that Jesus directs towards His disciples. Two of them are imperatives and three of them are present participles. Oh, I hated grammar in high school. Well, don't worry. A present participle in English are those words that in “ing” - running, going, seeing, and those words never form a complete sentence in and of themselves. They're always a dependent clause, they're always supporting another idea, which is the main idea. So if I said to you, we're sitting down talking, I said, going to the store yesterday, I pause. You're waiting for me to complete the idea. It's like, it's not a complete sentence and I could fill it in several different ways - I saw an accident on the street corner... I picked up a dollar bill that I found line on the ground... I saw a very cute dog. I met a friend that I had not seen in 20 years... See, there's multiple ways you could finish that sentence “going to the store...”

So in this passage, there are three verbs that are present participles. There are supporting actions. The words going, baptizing and teaching. The two commands are “disciple” and “be sure”. So let me unpack that. The main commandment is disciple all the nations. In your Bible it might say something like this, “make disciples of all the nations.” That's a good effort, but it doesn't reflect the Greek exactly. Because when you read it in English, it sounds like disciples is the result of something that you are making. But in Greek, the word “disciple” is the verb. It's the action. You are discipling. And the who you are discipling is not individuals who become followers of Jesus. That is abundantly clear in many other parts of scripture that's what we need to do. But it's not what's being said here. It says disciple. That means to shape, change, transform, mold, make different all of the nations. The four words in Greek “disciple all the nations” is a one on one correlation in English for the four words in Greek. That's a big idea.

Jesus is the first person in the history of the Greek language, which already had eight centuries of literature and included Greeks like Socrates and Aristotle and Plato and Homer and Aristophanes and so many others. And no one had ever put the word disciple and nations in a sentence like Jesus had. This was a new thought. God not only wants to see individuals redeemed, He wants to see nations, societies, cultures transformed.

And how you do that? By going. By stepping out of your world and taking active initiative to engage with them, by baptizing. Now it doesn't say water here. We usually think of water. There's water baptism in many places. But here it says to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. To baptize means to immerse, to, to cover, to marinate is actually a great translation. Baptism is just the English transliteration of **baptizo**, the Greek word.

And the Greek word **baptizo** means to immerse, to marinate. It's used for pickling. When you take a cucumber and you cook it in a certain sauce and you might use dill or you might use mustard, or you might use chili, you might do things that when you pickle something, you transform it from the inside out, you change the pH and it becomes, less alkaline and more acidic and extends the life of the vegetable. That cucumber would spoil in a few days, left on the counter of the kitchen in a hot summer day. But if you pickle it, you could leave it out for weeks and weeks and it still is edible. That's the idea of like transformation from the inside out, through one and through, and the idea of, of extending life, of eternal life. That's all wrapped up in this wonderful Greek word of **baptizo**.

In the New Testament you can be baptized in many things - in fire, in clouds, in, in the desert, in trials, in all kinds of things, oftentimes in water. But in this case, this is the pickling sauce, the thing that we're supposed to marinate the nations in if we want to see them discipled is the name, the understanding, the identity, the character, the ways of God, the Trinitarian God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Wow.

We need to know God and make Him known, teaching them to obey all the commands. Now that sounds like you would be legalistic, but no, it's not, because the commands reflect the heart, the will, the desire, the longing of the one speaking. And before a command ever becomes obligatory on the hearer, it is revelatory about the speaker. God reveals himself to us. The God of the Bible says "love your enemies". It is different than the God who says, declare jihad on your enemies. It tells us something about Him. So we are to focus on studying those commands of God that reveal his heart so that we can marinate people, pickle them, in an understanding of who God is. And we do that and we take the initiative by going to them, the result will be we'll disciple all the nations. The key action is disciple. That's the command. And these "going", "baptizing", "teaching" are how we go about doing it.

Finally, you go like, wow, that's a big task. How do we do that? Here's the next command. It's the final command: And be sure of this. The old King James said "Lo". What does that mean? This word is used multiple times in Matthew and many of the times it's not even translated. It's like a, "Hey" and it means pay attention! Wake up! Listen up! Hey, this is really important! I want to underline this! Do not let this be forgotten! Be sure of this. I'm with you always. The God who commissioned us also committed himself to us. We don't have to do this alone. We can't do this alone. We dare not try to do it alone. But he said, if you will go and you will baptize and you'll teach in order to disciple all the nations, I will be with you to the very end of the age. This is great news.

Number 48: Our Works Based on His Work

Philippians 2:5-11. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus who being in the very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

We're told that we need to imitate Jesus' remarkable, self-sacrificing love. He did not hold onto his divine prerogatives. He emptied himself. We can't begin to imagine what it means for an infinite being to empty himself, to become a finite human being. It is remarkable what he relinquished, what he gave up. We are to have this same mindset of relinquishing rights to be willing to go as low as is necessary in order that he can be exalted as high as is appropriate.

Number 49: Doing It Together With Him.

I'm gonna read from selections from John 15:1-17. I am the true grapevine. Jesus says, and my Father is the gardener... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I am them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.

But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father...

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I've told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other.

In this passage there's a word that is repeated many times and in the Greek and we don't necessarily see it as clearly any English. But 12 times a word **meno** is used. And **meno** is the word that means to abide, to remain, to be permanently associated with. And it says remain in me, I will remain in you. Remain in me. Remain in me, remain in me, remain in me. My words remain in you. Remain in my love. Remain in my love. Remain in his love. And you'll be, you'll be remain with my joy and you'll produce remaining or lasting **meno** fruit.

12 times **meno** in this passage. Two times as an imperative - a command. And seven times as a subjunctive. There I go again with grammar. Subjunctive is like expressing a wish, a desire, a longing. It's not like saying you have to buy me ice cream, but oh, I would really love to have some ice cream. Okay. It's that sense of still expressing a verb of volition, a verb of desire, but not imposing, wanting because of relational intimacy out of friendship because we're not servants. See, we're not slaves. He doesn't just command us. We know his heart. We know the

father's heart and we want to respond out of the volition, out of a loving response from our own initiative. You want this? Oh, I want this too. I'll do this for you.

You want to bear enduring fruit, lasting fruit, **Meno** fruit? You wouldn't have caught that in the English: **Meno** fruit. Then the key is this: You have to **Meno** in Jesus. You have to **meno** in his Word, you have to **meno** in His love and you have to **meno** with his joy and you have to let Jesus **meno** in you. This is the key. It's a joint effort. It's out of relationship. It's through intimacy. It's being connected to Jesus and doing life with him. This is how we become change agents in the world.

Number 50: Don't Accept the Status Quo.

1 Chronicles 4:9-10. There was a man named Jabez who was more honorable than any of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez because his birth had been so painful. [Jabez means pain in Hebrew.] He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel "Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!" And God granted him his request.

Now to get the impact of this, these two verses, you've gotta understand the context. They are smack dab in the middle of a passage that begins in 1 Chronicles 1:1 and ends in 1 Chronicles 9:44. It is the longest genealogical passage in the Bible. There are 346 verses. The other 344 verses list name after name, after name. Most verses contain 3, 5, 7, even more names. Even the Bible Greats - Abraham, Moses, David, others that you can think of. They all have to share their verse with other people. No one gets a whole verse to themselves.

Now there are hundreds and hundreds of names. Many of the names in these nine chapters are found only here. We don't read about them anywhere else in the Bible. The only thing that we know about them is they were born. They had a kid and they died. Nothing else of consequence was to be said about their life. They had a child. Period. They were just had a place in the great chain of life. Think of the opening song of the Lion King. Okay. But don't give me wrong. If one of those names, if I was sharing one of those verses with four other people, believe me, I'd be there by the Pearly Gates in heaven, welcoming you in there. I'd go "my name's in the book, my name's in the book!" Be pretty glorious, right? But there'd be very little bragging that I could actually do. Well, what did you do anyway? Like, "well, I had a son, I had a daughter. I had a kid." In the midst of all of this passage, this survey of everything from the beginning of time from Adam until the return of the exile, there are two verses that talk about one person. Every verse talking about multiple persons. And this person is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, but it's like the Holy Spirit is reviewing the whole history and said, I wanna pause on this one individual. There's something really significant here. Jabez.

Now it's gonna be costly to be a Jabez. But why was it costly? He wanted to be different. He did not accept the status quo. He wanted to be blessed by God. And he wanted his territory expanded. We don't know how many brothers he had. They're not even mentioned. But according to the law, if he was not the first born, he'd have one portion. The first born would've two and say he was one of five brothers. Then the eldest would get two portions and the other would each have four. So he'd have one sixth of the inheritance. That would be the territory. That was his. He would've said I, I, I'm not satisfied with the cultural norms, what people have accepted in my society for generation after the generation. I want God's blessing. I wanna see the fullness of God's design fulfilled in and through my life. He wanted to be different. He wanted to make a difference. And both are often costly.

Perhaps his brothers looked upon him with anger. Who do you think you are, wanting in a bigger share of the inheritance? Perhaps his neighbors looked upon him with jealousy - I wish I'd been that bold. I wish I had those blessings, But God looked upon him with pleasure. And it says this, granted him his request.

God is looking for men and women today who say, God, I don't want to do the status quo. I don't want to live according to my cultural norms. I want to see something different. I want your blessing. I want more out of this life. I want you to change me. And I want to be, make a difference in the world. I want to be a history changer. And God is looking for people who are willing to pray extravagant, bold, audacious prayers like that. And if you do it with all your heart, he will hear and he will answer. Be a Jabez.

Number 51: Domains of Authority; Spheres of Influence.

2 Corinthians 10:13-14. We however will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself as assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you. We're not going too far in our boasting as would be the case if we had not come to you. For we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.

This review of the biblical Christian Worldview on the context of, of us trying to understand how God wants to work through the seven spheres of influence in society. The seven spheres of influence intersect and overlap with the five domains of authority. Let me explain.

The seven spheres of influence are seven classrooms, which are intended to reveal the character of God and shape a people, a nation, a culture in the ways of the kingdom of God. They're all prominently discussed through the scriptures.

If you go to the SourceView app available on Apple or Android devices and download the SphereView add-on, you'll see that 26% of the Bible speaks about family issues. 27% about economic issues, 41% addresses government. 62% religion. Education is addressed at least 32%, almost a third. And media/communication 30% of the verses, and Celebration you find in 21%. You see, they overlap. There's almost not a verse in the Bible that is not speaking about one of the dimensions of these spheres of society. And we have to think in multiple, we have to think in integration and there all these tools.

You're looking at one tool in the SourceView Reader, which highlights the key passages of each of the spheres. But you can go to these other spheres on that app store or in the Google play. And you can, you can discover every verse, what spheres are being addressed. There's so many things that you can discover and learn.

Societal spheres can be divided into more categories. There can be sub spheres, some people talk about eight spheres or 12 spheres or even 15 spheres. And that's fine. They can always go in more detail and, and break it down in a more refined way. But these seven are the lowest common denominator. I'd encourage you to read on and study and learn and reflect, see how God will lead you.

Now the five domains of authority are those areas to which God has specifically delegated authority. They include the individual plus four corporate expressions that overlap and intersect with some of the spheres. Marriage, which intersects with family; church, which intersects with religion; government, which parallels government. And covenantal associations is the best way to describe and is linked primarily with economics.

Each of these are delegated authorities. When a man and a woman get married and commit themselves to life, to, to love one another for life in holy matrimony, as we're told in Genesis 2, God enters into a covenantal relationship with them. There are always three people involved. The husband, the wife and God. The church is one aspect of the religious sphere. It's the aspect that is designed by God. And it's what two or three are gathered in his name. And Jesus is there, present. And government is also delegated authority. We read that in Roman 13, that God delegates authority. This is it's an agreement between the governor and the governed, but God's involved in that process. Some are more righteous governments. Some are less. So some are decided by the people. And some are decided by the dictator who imposes his will. There were all kinds of expressions, some closer to God's design and some who twist and distort it more. And covenantal associations are all the other kind of agreements we can enter into, not just between a husband and a wife, but not just between the saved and the Redeemer or not between the governed and the governor within a culture or nation or state, but any other covenants we make that might be to form a business, to create a theatrical trope, to be able to launch this educational institution, all the commitments we make. When we say we are going to launch this LLC, this something Inc, and you make a commitment, God is there holding you to your word and making sure that these things are lived out in a way that really enhance life and serve humanity.

Number 52: Do All For The Glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

When all is said and done, this is what should guide our every action. As you read and you study and reflect on God's word, as you use this tool of the SourceView Reader and focus on the SphereView key passages, these truths have been touched upon just briefly here. Keep exploring. May these descriptions inspire you and spur you on to live your life, both privately and publicly. Do everything that you do, in whatever sphere you're called to serve, to the glory of God.