
Week Two:

**Actively Responding
to God's Presence**

“So be sure to pay attention to what you hear. To those who are open to My teaching, more understanding will be given. But to those who are not listening, even what they think they have will be taken away from them.”

- Luke 8:18 (NLT)

Discovering the Father's Heart

Day One: In My Father's Lap



Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly and reflectively. Each day's journey builds upon the one before it, seamlessly flowing together to weave the fabric of our lives. Most days we will be left with situations that remain incomplete, issues that have yet to fully unfold. While there are occasional moments of resolution, most of the things God will teach us will develop over a span of time, with one day's questions added to the next day's process. We can learn to recognize what God is doing within us when we actively pay attention to the areas that remain tender, troubled, or unfinished. ***As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.***

Ask God where He may be moving in these things and record what stirs in your thoughts here.

As Jesus responded to people, He often asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ***What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?***

Lay all these things at His feet, choosing to quiet your mind and heart further, trusting that He IS at work in these things, even if you cannot yet see it. Ask Him to become more real to you and that His work in these things would be more evident to you. Nestle in closely now and listen expectantly as God shares His heart for you through His written Word. **Open your Bible and read Isaiah 55: 1-3 slowly.** Stop anywhere you find yourself struck by something you've read. ***Record your thoughts here:***



God's Word today is especially to the hungry heart. Is your heart hungry for something? Does it ache with emptiness? Does it long to feel fully satisfied? If so, then God's Word today can be especially powerful for you. Bring that hungry heart to the table of God's Word. Then, ***"Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things,"*** says your Father. (Psalm 81:10)

Now read it in this translation (NLT) and **insert your name** into the blanks. Spend time with it; listen to what is going on inside of you.

(vs. 1) "[_____], are you thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it's all free!"

What do you thirst for from God? _____

Actively Responding to God's Presence

Week Two



Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:14, *"But those who drink the water I will give them will never become thirsty again. In fact, the water I give them will become a spring that gushes up into perpetual life."* (God's Word Translation)

[vs. 2] "[_____], why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen and I will tell you where to get food that is good for the soul!" ***Have you wasted your time and energy resources on things that do not nourish your heart and soul? In what ways?***

We often use substitutes to try to fill our empty places. This works temporarily, but then leaves us emptier than before. ***Name here any substitutes you frequently turn to for comfort.***

In the Old Testament when God gave Moses directions for how to prepare the tabernacle He said, *"Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before Me at all times."* (Exodus 25:30 NIV) According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary, the bread represented "the fellowship and communion of God with His people." Then Jesus was tempted by satan in the desert and went without food for forty days. Yet when satan tempted Him to change stones into bread Jesus replied, *"Man does not live on bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* (Matthew 4:4 NIV) ***The food you hunger for can only be found in the nourishing presence of your Father God. Have you ever experienced a significant time with God? What do you suppose initiated that level of intimacy between you?***

[vs.3] "Come to Me [_____], with your ears wide open. Listen, for the life of your soul is at stake. I am ready to make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the mercies and unfailing love that I promised to David." ***Are the ears of your heart wide open to God? If not, why not?***



Consider Jesus' words in Luke 8:18: *"So be sure to pay attention to what you hear. To those who are open to My teaching, more understanding will be given. But to those who are not listening, even what they think they have, will be taken away from them."* (NLT) This translation does an excellent job of capturing the true meaning of Jesus' teachings in this passage. Listening means more than just hearing, it also includes the idea of intentionally paying attention and absorbing God's Word into our hearts. We hear many things every day that we don't really grasp. Jesus says, though, if we will intentionally listen and seek to apply ourselves, we will be given more understanding. As a matter of fact, in the preceding verses, Jesus also explained it like this: *"But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a*

Discovering the Father's Heart

crop." - Luke 8:15 (NIV) Are **you willing to be more intentional in listening for God and taking holding of it?**

I believe that the one thing God desires most deeply is for you to choose Him - again and again and again! **Choose Him. Right now, will you make a commitment to choose Him? Will you pledge your faithfulness and seek Him first above the other things you've used in place of Him?**

Vow to leave that yearning, aching heart unsatisfied rather than fill it with anything other than God.

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: "I am _____."
(actively responding to God's Presence)



Take Away: God wants me to learn to listen for His voice and then hold onto what He says.

Day Two: At the Teacher's Feet



Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly and reflectively. Each day's journey builds upon the one before it, seamlessly flowing together to weave the fabric of our lives. Most days we will be left with situations that remain incomplete, issues that have yet to fully unfold. While there are occasional moments of resolution, most of the things God will teach us will develop over a span of time, with one day's questions added to the next day's process. We can learn to recognize what God is doing within us when we actively pay attention to the areas that remain tender, troubled, or unfinished. ***As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.***

Actively Responding to God's Presence

Week Two

Ask God where He may be moving in these things and record what stirs in your thoughts here.

As Jesus responded to people, He often asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?"
What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?

Lay all these things at His feet, choosing to quiet your mind and heart further, trusting that He IS at work in these things, even if you cannot see it yet. Ask Him to become more real to you and that His work in these things would be more evident to you. Nestle in closely now and listen expectantly as God shares His heart for you through His written Word. The Bible is a collection of moments in time, moments that are especially important to God. Of all the billions of encounters God has had with individuals, these are the moments He most wanted



captured in print and saved throughout time for us - **for you** - to know. They tell us something very important about who He is, something He wants you to understand in a very real and very personal way. As you reflect on this story, listen to it from God's perspective. Listen as if He is right there telling you the story face-to-face, and listen as if you are hearing it for the very first time. **Please read Genesis 4:1-5 and then Hebrews 11:4.**

From God's point of view: Based on the text and everything else you know of Him, what do you think God's feelings were as this story unfolded? _____

Now, consider the individuals in the story. How would each one tell their story?

Abel might say, "I

Cain might say, "Well,

In addition to the physical offering, what does Hebrews 11:4 tell us Abel exhibited that particularly pleased God?

Discovering the Father's Heart

While at first it isn't obvious how Abel exhibited faith, I wonder if our clue is in his offering: *some firstborn of his flock*. By slaughtering his new lambs, Abel showed faith that God would bring more to take their place. Could it be that rather than taking pride in that best new flock, or anxiously protecting them, he showed faith by giving them back to the One who had given them to Him? When we have known pain, loss, and emptiness for a long time we sometimes hold on too tightly to anything that brings goodness and beauty in our lives. This gift of goodness can be a person, a possession, or maybe even a circumstance. We can demonstrate faith by gratefully acknowledging that anything good in our lives comes from God (see James 1:17). ***Name here anything you're holding too tightly. Is God asking you to entrust this into His safe keeping?***

Now read Genesis 4:6-8 and then 1 John 3:11-12. Go back and add this new information to their story and add their possible feelings or thoughts.



I am convinced that the "why" questions are the ones we like to avoid most. *Why do we feel a certain way? Why did we react so badly? Why are we holding on so stubbornly to something we know we should release?* The "why" questions move us beyond just cleaning up our act and into the realm of allowing God to change *who we really are on the inside*. ***We do the things we do because of the condition of our heart.*** God gave Cain the opportunity to share his feelings when God asked Cain why he was so angry and why so downcast. God gave Cain a chance to identify what was really wrong and then choose how he would respond. ***What pattern in your thoughts, habits or behaviors has God been identifying lately?***

In what direction are these thoughts, habits or behaviors taking you?

Now read Genesis 4:9-16. The story is now between just Cain and God. ***What emotions, thoughts and fear does Cain reveal in this passage?***



As I reflect on this story, I am struck that although Adam's family has been forced out of God's perfect presence in the Garden of Eden, He is still with them, interacting with them in a powerful and tangible way. God spoke and they heard, understood, and then responded to Him. ***God's chief desire towards man has always been that we be in open, interactive relationship with Him. With this in mind, how might this event have impacted God and what He desired in His relationship with all mankind?***

Actively Responding to God's Presence

Week Two

As you consider this story as a significant moment in God's own life, what captures your heart? _____

Cain made the conscious decision NOT to cooperate with God. He would not heed God's warnings. He let his own feelings guide him instead. How often do we dismiss God's warnings simply because we aren't sure they are from Him? How often do we rationalize these cautions within us as our own fears, insecurities, or doubts? Deep within us, God embedded a strong sense of right and wrong. (This is often referred to as the stamp of God's moral law on our hearts. Even toddlers respond when they feel mistreated.) As believers, we also have the Holy Spirit living within us who works diligently to teach us right from wrong. If you have a mind to do something, yet there is a caution in your spirit, listen to it. It might or might not be God, but rarely will we regret having cautiously made a decision rather than rashly making one. We will learn more about how to recognize the voice of God's Spirit in the weeks ahead, but for now, commit this issue to God. ***Let's learn to hear the Spirit's guidance by intentionally listening for it. Is there any area in which I am refusing to cooperate with God?***

Name here any place God is warning you to slow down and evaluate your condition.

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: "I am _____."



Take-Away: I can trust my God to lead me with His Spirit and to increasingly fill my life with His goodness.

Day Three: Just Between You and Me



Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly and reflectively. Each day's journey builds upon the one before it, seamlessly flowing together to weave the fabric of our lives. Most days we will be left with situations that remain

Discovering the Father's Heart

incomplete, issues that have yet to fully unfold. While there are occasional moments of resolution, most of the things God will teach us will develop over a span of time, with one day's questions added to the next day's process. We can learn to recognize what God is doing within us when we actively pay attention to the areas that remain tender, troubled, or unfinished. ***As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.***

Ask God where He may be moving in these things and record what stirs in your thoughts here.

As Jesus responded to people, He often asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ***What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?***

Lay all these things at His feet, choosing to quiet your mind and heart further, trusting that He IS at work in these things, even if you cannot yet see it. Ask Him to become more real to you and that His work in these things would be more evident to you. Nestle in closely now and listen expectantly as God shares His heart for you. Now please read the following:



God created you to be in relationship with Him. He created you to know Him, to hear Him, and to recognize His movement and fingerprints all around you. Sometimes I think we are far more comfortable with the belief that God knows all about us, than the belief that ***He wants us to know all about Him.*** God has given you His autobiography. He has written deeply poignant love letters to you. He is constantly at work around you. *He longs to be loved and cherished by you. He longs to bring you more fullness of life.*

Your inner transformation will be the direct result of your cooperative work with the Holy Spirit. God is a mindful parent and He will not do it all for you. Have you already discovered that? Let's put it this way, think about the Christian women around you. Can you picture a few who really stand out even in the crowd? These women have something remarkable, perhaps extraordinary about them, yet you have heard their stories and know they hurt and struggle just like you. Maybe you just can't explain what makes them different because, well, they are just beyond explanation? How about the women around you who profess to be Christians and yet, when you bump into them, they spill out some very negative stuff? In the right setting they can say all the right things and tell you what they know they *should* be doing, but those things they profess to know just aren't demonstrated in their lives... *yet!* Sadly, they haven't changed much for the better. What is the difference? Did the one group get more of Jesus than the other group? Not hardly! *Well, maybe...*

Actively Responding to God's Presence

Week Two

They didn't really get more Jesus, **but He surely got more of them!** Think of it this way; imagine a two-story house with a basement. This house even has a dark space under the basement stairs. Picture that your heart is that big, old house with the basement. The Holy Spirit moves into your heart (house) to take up residence when you accept Christ as Lord and Savior of your life. Imagine, just for the sake of the picture that within your heart there is that dark place under the stairs. I know it may feel a little sacrilegious to put the Holy Spirit in the basement under the stairs, but just bear with me for a moment.

When you first accept Christ, there is very little outward difference in who you are except that now you have a new label (Christian), a new family (other Christians and a Heavenly Father), and a new identity. You now belong to Christ. In a way, the deed to your house passes from yourself (owned by sin) to Jesus (inhabited by the Spirit). However, while your ownership and identity are different, everything else about the outward appearance of your house looks pretty much the same. This beginning phase can be short or very lengthy, depending upon how much you grow. For those individuals who accept Christ when older, their house and yard may be in obvious disrepair. For those who accepted Christ while young, their house and yard may appear to be neat and tidy. **On the inside, though, we are all the same... A horrible mess!**

The outside appearance of our house and yard is based on our external actions, easily seen and evaluated by others. Most of us can clean these up a bit by ourselves. Just tell us what needs to be done and slowly but surely, we can discard some old habits and decorate ourselves with new habits. This is evidenced in the way we relate to other people around us and the way we conduct our lives in general.

Who we are on the inside, however, can only be changed by God's Spirit. Just as we did not really create who we are on the inside, neither can we effect lasting change. God Himself is the One who gave you your personality, intellect, and your basic physique. You were molded and shaped by the emotional environment in which you grew. You could not help but soak up your environment in your formative years just like a sponge soaks up water. **You were affected by it.** You had little control over anything in your basic formation as a person. You did not pick your eye color, your height, or your family. Those things are the direct work of God through the genetics He chose for you. It was only later, as you grew older, that your own choices began to affect the direction of your spiritual growth.



To be changed at our core, the Holy Spirit must increasingly gain access and control of our whole house... not just the area under the basement stairs. Our core personality will remain the same, but even in it, the Spirit can bring wholeness and functionality in the places that were damaged. We cannot use our *own will-power* to fuel the change into newer and better people. God has placed limits on the endurance of our will-power. We are given the freedom and the responsibility of **choosing** with our own will- to *either align our will with God's will* for us or to refuse God's help and walk ourselves into a total mess. Either way, we cannot fix our mess by ourselves. **God will never allow you to be your own savior.**

So what is our part? **Our part is to pay attention and to cooperate with God's processes.** We've already looked briefly at the listening process in yesterday's study. We will visit with this more thoroughly along the way. For now let's concentrate on **cooperation.**

Discovering the Father's Heart

Cooperation, by its very nature, suggests we are *partnering with someone*, and not the one actually leading. Cooperation means **following** a leadership initiated beyond oneself. ***Our job isn't to set the agenda and the goals; our job is to listen for God's agenda and God's goals.*** Our job isn't to chart the path; our job is to respond to God's direction. ***Cooperation is actively responding to God.***

Your cooperation will be entirely dependent upon a *yes* in your spirit. Your mind might not understand it, and your heart might not yet trust it, but your spirit *says YES!* It does this despite its many doubts and fears. The *yes* doesn't even mean that you *want* to do it, but it means that ***you will do it anyway.*** While actively responding to God, you will *say no* to the things He directs you to say no to, and you will *say yes* to those things He directs you to say yes to. Remember, it's His job to plot the course... *not yours.* ***Just respond.***

Remember that two story house? ***Every time you actively respond to God, you give the Spirit a bit more room in your house.*** Never mind the yard and paint job; He'll take care of that in His good time as you actively listen and cooperate to His leading. Your primary focus should always be listening to God, with an active response that says *YES!* in whatever way He chooses to lead you. All that cooperation will eventually add up. God's work in your life is very deliberate. Remember what we learned about the incomplete nature of each day's work? Remember that it was always a process, ***even in creation,*** His work was not finished until it was finished. The same is true with you. He will ***always*** be at work within you, building on the wonderful work He has begun (Philippians 1:6). Just as God had an agenda for every day of creation, ***God also has an agenda for the various areas of your life and personality.*** He is intentional in His direction within you. He has a plan, it is thoroughly thought out. ***His plan will be deliberate even when it looks and feels like chaos to you.***

Think of it this way, whenever you clean out or rearrange a room, the entire room gets quite disorganized for a while. To create a new order, the old order must be disrupted and dismantled. The same is true of the way God goes about transforming areas of our heart. When He initiates change in a room in your heart it may look and feel pretty messy for a while. ***Slowly, but surely, God will work miracles in that room.*** The big old house that is your heart will become increasingly filled with the light of His Presence as room by room you surrender to His will for your life. The Spirit's light and presence will increasingly glow in each place until you are one of those unexplainable and extraordinary creatures that have been transformed by your creator (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). Eventually, you will become the real deal, ***an authentic work of an amazing God.*** One day, you will know better than anyone else that it was entirely God's plan, God's process, and even God's strength working in you that lightened up your whole house. You simply *said yes*, time and time again to the Holy Spirit's leading and direction in your life. ***As you actively respond to God's direction through cooperation, you will be transformed.***

What thoughts are stirring in your heart as you consider this?

Can you recognize and name here any rooms in your house that remain locked and dark?

Actively Responding to God's Presence

Week Two

Stretch your heart just a little now. How do you need to respond to and cooperate with God? _____



With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.

God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: "I am _____."



Take-Away: As I actively respond to and cooperate with God's direction, I will be transformed; my heart will be healed and I will be made whole.

Day Four: At the Teacher's Feet



Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly and reflectively. Each day's journey builds upon the one before it, seamlessly flowing together to weave the fabric of our lives. Most days we will be left with situations that remain incomplete, issues that have yet to fully unfold. While there are occasional moments of resolution, most of the things God will teach us will develop over a span of time, with one day's questions added to the next day's process. We can learn to recognize what God is doing within us when we actively pay attention to the areas that remain tender, troubled, or unfinished. ***As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.***

Ask God where He may be moving in these things and record what stirs in your thoughts here.

As Jesus responded to people, He often asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ***What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?***

Lay all these things at His feet, choosing to quiet your mind and heart further, trusting that He IS at work in these things, even if you cannot yet see it. Ask Him to become more real to you and that His work in these things would be more evident to you. Nestle in closely now



Discovering the Father's Heart

and listen expectantly as God shares His heart for you through His written Word. The Bible is a collection of moments in time, moments that are especially important to God. Of all the billions of encounters God has had with individuals, these are the moments He most wanted captured in print and saved throughout time for us - **for you** - to know. They tell us something very important about who He is, something He wants you to understand in a very real and very personal way. As you reflect on this story, listen to it from God's perspective. Listen as if He is right there telling you the story face-to-face, and listen as if you are hearing it for the very first time. **Please read Genesis 5:21-24 and then Hebrews 11:5-6.**

Consider the individuals in the story. How would each one tell their story? How did Enoch actively respond to God?

Enoch might say, "I

His family might say, "Well,

Discovering the Father's Heart

Do you think that Enoch's family ever really knew what happened to him? How might it change their understanding of these events if they did?

Is there something in your life that remains a great mystery to you? Something you cannot understand or reconcile that you would be willing to lay before God right now? Tell Him how you feel and ask Him to begin to show you how He plans to use this in your life.

What challenges and emotions did Enoch and his family likely face?

Now consider your own life and point of view. Keep in mind those issues you laid before His feet before studying today. Where might you be facing similar challenges or feelings?

What do you suppose a life looks like for a person who "walks with God"?

Do you believe that life is available to you? _____



From God's point of view: Considering God's perspective, how might this event have impacted Him and what He desired?

As you consider Enoch's story as a significant event in God's life, what captures your heart?



*"O Lord, You have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment You know where I am. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You both precede and follow me. You place Your hand of blessing on my head." (Psalm 139:1-5 NLT) **Which thought captures your attention?***

*You both precede and follow me..." **Every single thing that comes into your life must first pass through God to get to you.** Visualize that: **everything**. Nothing touches you before it passes through*

Actively Responding to God's Presence

Week Two

Him. Let that soak in. While you may not understand it, your God is carefully guarding your life. He is not simply responding to your life, He is preparing you for it, and providing for you *in the midst of it*. God will transform *all manner of hard things* if we will cooperate with Him.

Your God is ***always*** with you, processing your thoughts with you, aware of every emotion you experience, and preparing you for what is to come. He walks you through every step you take and He has provided for every possible event. He is ahead of you, behind you, and with you. ***You can begin to focus on God's all-inclusive Presence. How might this focus change your responses to each day's events?***

Compared to most of those in Enoch's generation, he lived a very short lifespan here on earth. Yet, his brief stay was recorded specifically in reference to his relationship with God. ***What qualities do you long for in your relationship with God?***

This week we have looked at two very different men's lives. Enoch cooperated with God's plans for his life; Cain did not. Enoch chose to let God have access to all the various parts of his life and he began to radiate God's Presence. How do I know? He walked with God. God walked with Enoch. ***When you spend time in open fellowship with God, it transforms you.*** Enoch was unlike his neighbors, because he chose to have a personal relationship with God. Today, many Christians simply come *to visit with God*. They *visit Him* at church and perhaps *visit Him* in a Bible study, but they have not begun *to walk with Him* in the course of their very ordinary days or their very ordinary minutes. ***If you learn to walk daily with your God, you will be different, in many wonderful ways. Different, and more like your creator.***

Stretch your heart now a little. How do you need to respond to and cooperate with God?

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: "I am _____."



Take-Away: Everything that touches my life must first pass through God before it reaches me.

Discovering the Father's Heart

Day Five: What He's Singing Over Me



Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly and reflectively. Each day's journey builds upon the one before it, seamlessly flowing together to weave the fabric of our lives. Most days we will be left with situations that remain incomplete, issues that have yet to fully unfold. While there are occasional moments of resolution, most of the things God will teach us will develop over a span of time, with one day's questions added to the next day's process. We can learn to recognize what God is doing within us when we actively pay attention to the areas that remain tender, troubled, or unfinished. ***As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.***

Ask God where He may be moving in these things and record what stirs in your thoughts here.

As Jesus responded to people, He often asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ***What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?***

Lay all these things at His feet, choosing to quiet your mind and heart further, trusting that He IS at work in these things, even if you cannot see it yet. Ask Him to become more real to you and that His work in these things would be more evident to you. Nestle in closely now and listen expectantly as



God shares His heart for you through His written Word. **Open your Bible and read Psalm 16 slowly.** Stop anywhere you find yourself struck by something you've read. ***Record your thoughts here:*** _____

Psalm 16 is a beautiful song about David's personal and intimate relationship with God. It doesn't appear that God ever showed Himself to David any more visibly than He shows Himself to us, yet David was thoroughly convinced that God was present with him. You and I have the living and active Presence of God Himself within us in the form of the Holy Spirit. There is no temple to visit because our heart is God's dwelling place. There is no priest to confess to because we confess directly to our God. There is no sacrifice left to be made for our sins because our sacrifice has been fully completed through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We have nothing prohibiting our intimacy with God except our own choices. ***You have nothing prohibiting intimacy with God except your own choices. How confident are you that God desires for you to really know Him?***



David had a different course than you and me, but he most certainly worshipped the same God, who loves all His children equally. God gave David a unique personality, distinct abilities, and different life experiences, but it was David's heart that secured the intimacy of friendship with God, as does yours. ***How hospitable is your heart to your God?***

Actively Responding to God's Presence

Week Two

Now reread Psalm 16 carefully, stopping at these check points:

(vs. 1-3) Consider first what David says in verse 2 and then verse 1. **Of what was David utterly convinced and how did he respond to it?**

(vs. 5) *“Lord, You have assigned me my portion and my cup; You have made my lot secure.” (NIV)* **David truly believed that whatever came into his life was allowed by God.** He goes so far as to suggest God chose it for him. Surely God chose to assign David the task of being Israel's king. God



chose many other things for David as well. God knew exactly what He was doing when He planted David in Jesse's household as the youngest son (was he accustomed to strife and prideful displays or what?). God purposed that David would grow up in that particular family environment. He learned to deal with people and situations as he worked as a shepherd. David became a fiercely, protective and deeply, compassionate shepherd to the helpless sheep he was assigned to lead. David grew content to be out in the elements of nature for long periods of time, alone with his sheep, thoughts, and music. In this setting, David's heart and character grew into the man God intended him to become (1 Samuel 16:11-13, 17:14-15,34-37). David took comfort in trusting that his God knew what He was doing in David's life. David believed his God was thoroughly trustworthy and loving. **How about you? Have you come to trust in God's plans for your life, even those plans you might not have chosen for yourself?**

(vs. 7-8) *“I will bless the Lord who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me. I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for He is right beside me.” (NLT)* David enjoyed contentment with God that flowed from his responsive heart. He was looking and listening for God. He expected God to be active around him. He believed that even in those quiet moments when alone with his thoughts, God was right there guiding him. **Do you think God places thoughts within you that perhaps you don't recognize as originating with Him?**

Here are three translations of (vs. 11):

“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (KJV)

“You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.” (NLT)

“You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.” (NIV)

Which phrases grab hold of your attention and what do they mean to you?

Discovering the Father's Heart



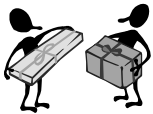
With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.

God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: "I am _____."



Take-Away: My God is guiding me even when I do not recognize His influence.



Gathering together with other believers and sharing with one another is vital for a flourishing relationship with God. Even in our study of Adam and Eve we see the dynamic that humans need other humans. ***Spend a few minutes looking back over your week's entries. As you think back on all that has happened in this last week, where do you recognize God's fingerprints, whispers, or guidance?***

What is your most significant "take-away" this week? Prayerfully consider how you can share this with someone this week.