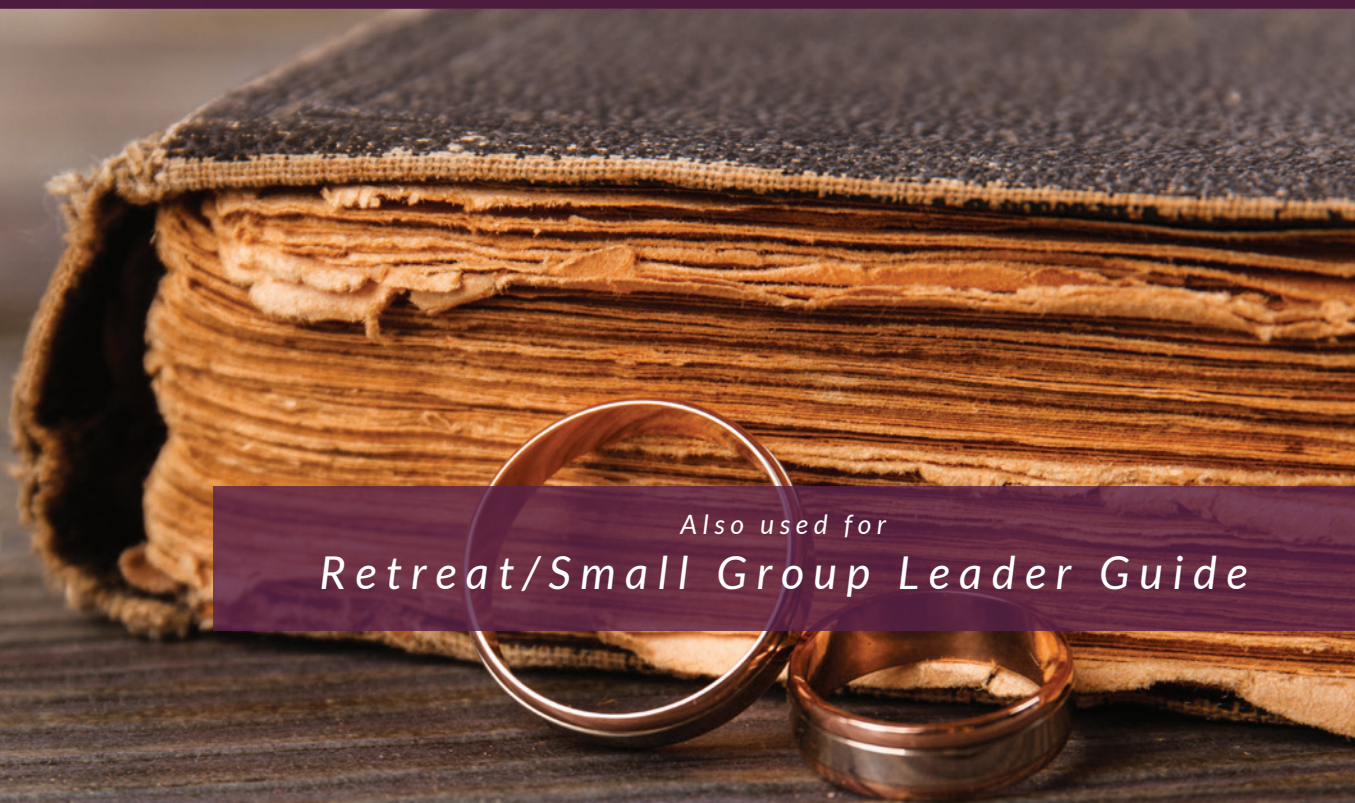




BLESSINGS OF UNITY
COURSE WORKBOOK



Also used for
Retreat/Small Group Leader Guide

THE BLESSINGS OF UNITY

Retreat Leader Guide

WORKBOOK

RICHARD T. CASE



Dedication

To my wife, Linda, who is committed to and keeps our marriage on track to pursue unity in everything, as she knows that when we dwell in unity with the Spirit “There God commands Blessings”—and as we have learned this, it has proven to be true—as we work through every issue, every decision, every adversity to Unity, we discover God’s will and God’s covenant answers that are Best and None Better—every time, all the time. Together we make this a priority in our marriage—to walk in Unity together as we hear God’s voice in giving direction and promises. What a joy and a privilege to have a mate who believes this, lives it out every day, and encourages me to live it out every day.

Our life is truly exceptional; and we have continually been on one grand adventure, step by step—in Christ!

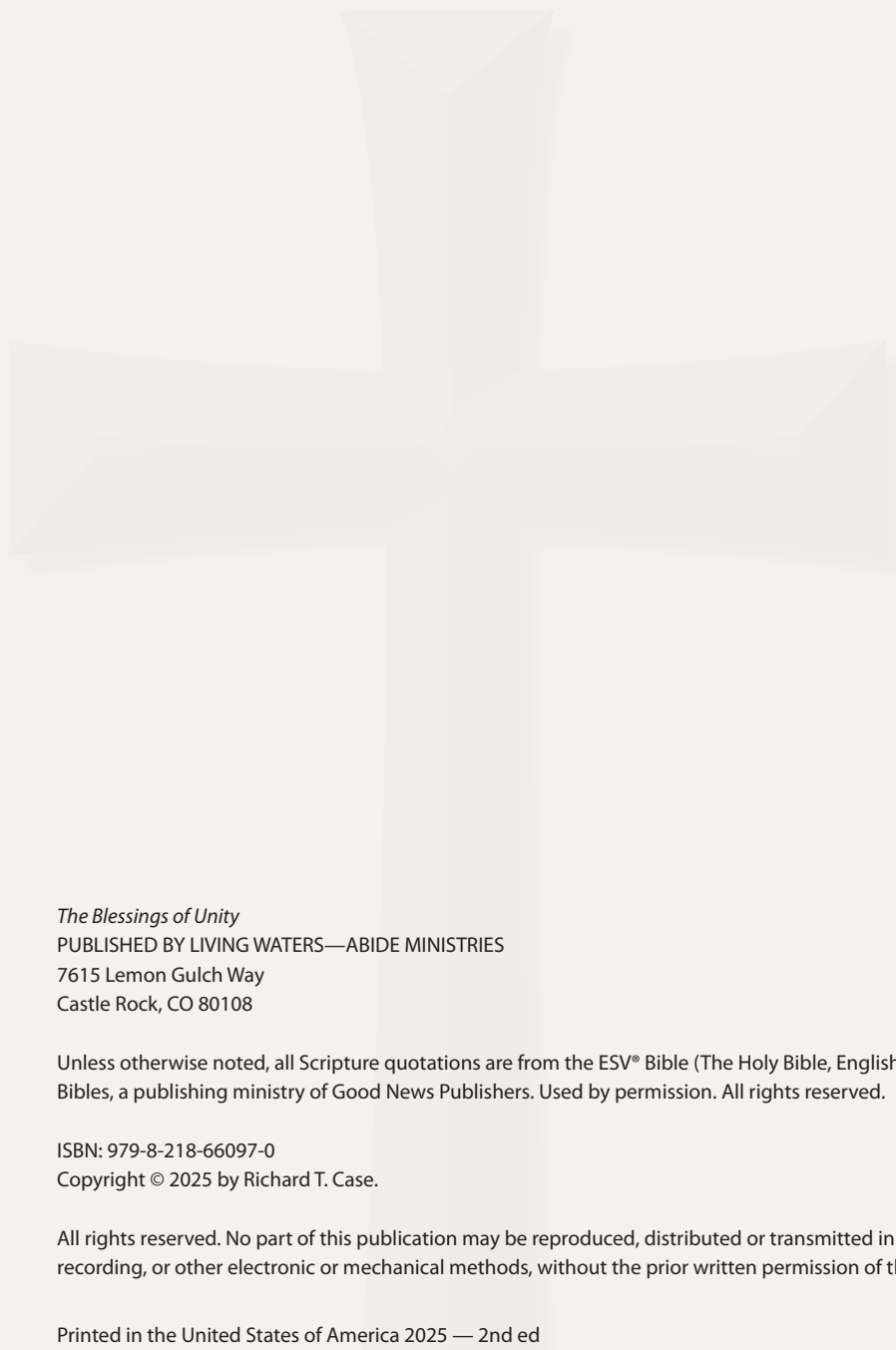
We together also wish to honor our family who have all learned to also live in Unity and receive God’s best. We as a family get to see God at work, and how wonderful it is to experience this process of life together. They are all such inspiration.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all of the leaders of our Ministry: **Abide Ministries**. These leaders have also learned to go to Unity and receive grand answers for their lives. They freely share and give away what we ourselves experience. Their dedication and faithfulness have meant so much to the growth of the ministry and to Linda and I; It has produced endless testimonies and encouraging stories of transformation and lives being effected through what they “walk out” themselves and what they in turn give away as what we have termed “faithful sheep dogs”. Together as a leadership team we have walked alongside one another and always assist each other in going to Unity of the Spirit.

These leaders are:

Jake & Mary Beckel
Heath & Rebecca Cardie
Rich & Janet Cocchiaro
Larry & Sherry Collet
Scott & Kristen Cornell
David & Melissa Dunkel
Tom & Susanne Ewing
Rick & Kelly Ferris
Joel & Christina Gunn
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Rick & Nancy Hoover
Jeff & Angela Lemond
Don & Rachelle Light
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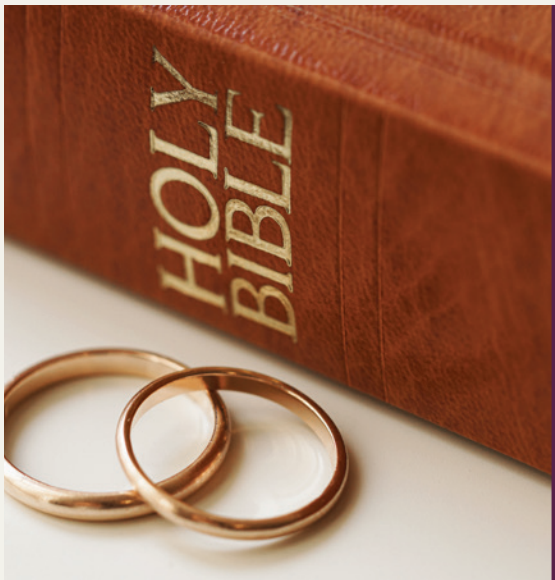
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LESSON 1

THE CAUSES OF DISCORD/DIVISION; THE BLESSINGS OF UNITY



“God says how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity. For it is there that the Lord commands blessing.”

Welcome to Abide Ministries’ course: *The Blessings of Unity*—God’s best for our marriages and relationships with our family, friends, and groups. In this study, we will process discord, discuss how we handle disagreement, and then cover how we make decisions together to dialogue with God and receive His will—based upon the gift of unity.

Read Psalm 133:

When Brothers Dwell in Unity
A Song of Ascents. Of David.

133 Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!^[a]

² It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!

³ It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

God says how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity. For it is there that the Lord commands blessing. That is the premise of receiving His wonderful, blessed will. If we get there—to unity—God commands blessing. This course will show us how to get there!

To provide personal context for how this works, begin by writing down all the issues, the conflicts, and the decisions for which you are seeking God’s will. You will apply these truths to your personal life issues.

If you’d like to know more about
Abide Ministries,
please see our pages
at the back of the workbook

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Once your list is complete, take a moment to rate where you and your spouse, or if you are single, your personal life processes are regarding where you believe you are on important items of unity. Please note that this is only between you, God, and your spouse, if married. It is not to be shared amongst the group.

If you are married and both of you rate an item low, what does that mean? It means that is an area that God wishes you to grow in together so you can fully enjoy the life He has planned for you. What does it mean if one of you rates it high and the other one rates it low? It means that you haven't really discussed the matter and thus are not addressing it at all. One of you thinks everything is fine, that you are doing well in that area, and things should continue to operate the way they have been thus far. The other party, however, does not agree, but has not expressed their opinion. They operate as if everything is fine but it really is not. Coming together in unity is not about pointing fingers or giving instruction to your partner. Rather, we are to learn to share openly so that we show each other that we care. We are to spend time together to process and grow in this important aspect of life.

DIVISION AND DISCORD:

In order to learn how to go to unity, we must first understand division and discord, which is a spiritual issue.

Read Genesis 2:15–17:

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat^[a] of it you shall surely die."

This took place before the fall of man. God said that everything in the garden was good—exceptional, fantastic, superb. He also told Adam that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die. Our choices carry consequences. This is a result of the free will God gave us when He created us in His image. He gave us the opportunity to choose. If He hadn't, we would just be robotic, and there would be no real love. Let's see what happened:

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Read Genesis 3:1–7:

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You^[a] shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,^[b] she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

The enemy came and his scheming began. He asked what God really said to them. In doing this, he immediately introduced doubt. Are you sure you heard this correctly? Eve responded and told the serpent that God said they should not eat from the tree, but also added that God said that they should not touch it. But God did not say this. She did confirm that God said they would surely die though. Then Satan tells her that they surely will not die. This was another attempt to drive doubt and lead them not to follow God’s truth—essentially rejecting that truth.

Using deceit, he challenged the importance of God’s truth and what was best for them. *Did God really say that? You know that isn’t true, right?* At that moment, we know that they fell. But, in looking at the whole scene, what was the real issue? What did they fail to do? They failed to check back in with God. They had an opportunity to go to God with their privilege of communion and community and ask, *God, we don’t know what this all means. Could You help us understand what dying means?*

Interesting enough, God had likely given these instructions years prior. Had they ever questioned what they meant? No, they never asked. They simply did not eat of the tree during this time, even though they didn’t understand the consequence of it. Did God want them to be in the dark, not fully understanding

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the consequences of eating from that particular tree? No. It is an invitation He extends to each of us. Do you have a heart to understand and pursue your curiosity? If so, He is always there to walk with us into truth.

So, Satan tells them not to worry about any consequences, as what God said was not true. *Don't you want to go to the better place and be just like God?* How did they respond? They ate of the tree and fell and thus were introduced into the life of mankind and what we call the sin nature. The sin nature is when—instead of being perfect with the Holy Spirit, with God—they went to the self, to the flesh, to self-centeredness. Sin nature is being separated from God. So, when they ate of the tree, they became separated from God and died. But what exactly died? Their spiritual connectivity to God, which was in perfection. They became imperfect, which set up the need to be born again. How well can someone fulfill the requirement of perfection when operating in the sin nature? They can't. And because it can't be done, everybody is separated from God.

Thankfully, there is a remedy though, which is to be born again. What happens when you are born again? The Holy Spirit re-enters. Is it the same as Adam and Eve before the fall? No, because you still have the sin nature. As believers, yes, we have the Holy Spirit. We are born again and have the life back, but we are to be led by the Spirit instead of self. This is a daily activity, a daily choice, all the while the enemy is still active in trying to deceive us.

Read John 10:10:

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

The thief, the enemy has come to do what? Steal, kill, and destroy. The nature of life is now to steal, kill, and destroy. This is called entropy. Everything left alone is going to destruction, to separation, to discord, and division. Satan is working to thwart you from being able to follow God's will. He is doing this through division and promoting self-centeredness. When is this happening? All the time.

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Read Luke 4:4–8:

⁴ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”

⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.”

Satan states that the authority of the world has been given to him, and his authority is kill, steal, and destroy. Who delivered this authority to him? Adam and Eve. Why? Because God had given them authority over the earth. Through their disobedience, when they died, they worshipped Satan and gave authority to him. This is why the world is so full of trouble. Jesus even said that in the world you’re going to have what? Trouble. How come? Because the world is under the authority of the enemy.

Our role, however, is to take it back. How do we go about taking it back? By going to unity and discovering His will—His amazing truth. We are called to understand something important. The kingdom of the authority of the world has been given over to Satan. If Christ didn’t experience real temptation, He would have responded differently. He would have called Satan out on the lie. Instead, He acknowledged that Satan did, in fact, have it to give to Him, but still chose not to take the shortcut and worship him.

Read 1 John 5:18–20:

¹⁸ We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

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John says that 60 years after the resurrection, the whole world lay under the “sway” of the evil one. This is the same word as authority—the power of the world lies under the control of Satan.

In Matthew 28, however, Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on Earth has been given to me.” How do we reconcile this? If Jesus has been given all authority, how does Satan still have the authority? What Jesus is saying is that *in the Kingdom* all authority has been given to Him. This authority is far superior to the authority of the enemy.

In Ephesians 2, Paul says Satan still has authority over the world. If Satan has authority over the world, then we continue to be subject to the consequences of that, which are to kill, steal, and destroy. Christ says that He has all the authority in His Kingdom, which is superior to the kingdom of the world. Where would you like to be? In His Kingdom. For it is in His Kingdom that unity takes us to discover His will, which is superior to the world. We can overcome if we have a heart to live in His Kingdom and follow His will.

Let’s look at how the enemy attempts to exercise his authority in the world.

Read Proverbs 6:16–19:

- ¹⁶ There are six things that the LORD hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:
¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.

These verses provide a list of things that are an abomination to God. What is an abomination? It is something that God hates. He detests it—is angry and unhappy about it. One of the significant ones that He detests is sowing discord. What does *discord* mean? Division. Strife. Contention. It is simply the opposite of unity. When you are not pursuing unity, even if it just due to neglect, by definition, you are in discord. This is detestable to God. God says that it is critical for all couples and single believers to learn to go to unity. If you live in discord, you are an abomination to Him and you will not discover His will. Let’s look at what causes this.

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Read Romans 8:5–8:

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

What is the difference between the flesh being led by the flesh, instead of being led by the Spirit? It is living in self-will where you determine the path versus God's will where He determines the path. It is rather simple. We can be driven by self—the sin nature, which is our default—or be committed to follow Him. If we seek our own will, which is what most believers do, there are three consequences:

- Death. In following self, you kill your connection with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. You kill the connection to the power of the Holy Spirit and revert back to the same separation Adam and Eve experienced. You have separated yourself from God, from the power of God, and from discovering His will. This does not mean you have changed your eternal destiny, but it does mean that you are not operating with the power of God to go to unity.
- Enmity against God. Who are you working against? God? How is that going to work out? It is not. You already live in the world and are subject to the consequences of kill, steal, and destroy, but now God is adding to that with the purpose of inviting you to come back to the Kingdom and be led by the Holy Spirit.
- He cannot be pleased. It is not possible to please Him if you are not pursuing His will. He wants to give you life and give it to you abundantly, but the only way He can give it to you is if you are in unity with His will. If that is not the case, you can't please Him and He can't deliver it to you.

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Read Galatians 5:19–21:

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy,^[a] drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do^[b] such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The Spirit and the flesh fight each other. What are they fighting for? They are fighting for who we follow. The Spirit invites us to come with Him and follow God's will. If you are in the flesh, you are choosing your own will. God's will and your will can't coexist. Either you are following the Spirit or you are following the flesh. By default, if you are not following the Spirit, you are automatically following the flesh. When you operate in the flesh, you cannot please Him. And in doing so, you cannot inherit the Kingdom.

How do you know when you live in the Kingdom? You will know by being with Him—following the Spirit. How do you follow the Spirit? By following the King, surrendering your will to the King, and walking in the Kingdom where the power exists. If you go to unity with the Spirit, you get to experience the power of the Kingdom and abundant life.

Read James 4:1–4:

Warning Against Worldliness

4 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions^[a] are at war within you?^[b] ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ⁴ You adulterous people!^[c] Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

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If you are in the flesh, you are at enmity against God. If you are not asking for His will, you are in the flesh—and have put to death the Spirit. When you are at enmity against God, you cannot please Him. You make decisions on your own without seeking God's will at all. There are other times when you ask God to bless your will. *God, would you have my spouse agree with me? God, please change that person's mind so that I get my way. God, would you please deliver this my way?* But what you are really doing is telling God what you want and asking Him to bless your will. So, either you are not asking God for His will—which is what happens most of the time, or you are asking amiss as you want God to fulfill your will.

Read James 4:11:

¹¹ Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.^[a] The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

How do you judge each other? In particular, how do spouses judge each other? By deciding up front that the other is wrong while you are right. This is judgment. It is establishing that your judgment on the issue or decision is how you are going to go. You become the judge before you process it. You have already decided that you are right. And since you are right, your partner is either wrong or you simply don't care. You are just going to do what you want to do. This is particularly true for the one who has the most power in the relationship.

If you judge by thinking you are right and they are not, what do you then spend your time doing? Trying to convince them, persuade them to do what you want. There is no time spent processing or trying to understanding feelings, or the other party's thoughts. But what if the other party opposes you and believes they are right? They, in turn, try to persuade you to agree with them. What is this called? Arguing. It is conflict, fighting. Both parties have determined that their solution is best so you fight trying to persuade each other why.

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In a couple, what generally happens is that one will wear out the other. Exhausted by all of it, the other caves in to keep the peace. They know they won't win anyway, so they might as well give in and avoid conflict. Have you discovered God's will? No. Because you have decided that you are the judge, you have moved into a place where you are at enmity against God and are under the consequences of the world.

Read James 5:9:

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

If you have decided you are right, as you serve as judge, then you are coming under judgement. When you elevate yourself to judge, you come under judgement, and there is a consequence to that.

Read Galatians 5:1–4:

Christ Has Set Us Free

5 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

² Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. ³ I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ⁴ You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified^[a] by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

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When you set up a rule, you are saying that you are right, you are serving as judge, and are asking everybody to follow that. In doing that, you are obligated to be perfect and follow the entire law. You are to return to the requirement of being holy since you became the judge. How well can you achieve perfection? You cannot. It is not possible. Because it is not possible, there are two consequences:

- You will be severed from the relationship with God—disconnected and again have no power.
- You will fall away from Grace—no longer receiving the favor of God, the abundant life, or the Covenant.

What is the reason for these consequences? Because you are obligated to be perfect. You've gone from living under the relationship of the Kingdom back into the world where you are now required to be as you were before you had a relationship. You are obligated to keep the entire law, which you have zero ability to do. You have severed your relationship, and you have fallen from the ability for God to deliver grace. Why? Because you are no longer with Him, and He cannot provide what He promises—favor, abundant life, and the Covenant.

Read Genesis 13:6–7:

⁶so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, ⁷and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.

Why did they have trouble? Essentially because they had too much stuff. They were both being blessed greatly but argued over the lack of space for all of their possessions. They went to strife over this, bickering that the other should move. *"I want you to move so I can have more room for my stuff."* While the other said, *"Wait a minute, you move because I've got more stuff than you."* They basically argued over the abundance of their blessings.

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In the same way, we tend to argue over our stuff because our focus is on the bounty instead of the blessing. What would God have wanted them to do? Go to unity by seeking His will. *God, what would You say about this? We are both being blessed, but we are having some space issues here because of the bounty. What would You have us do?* God would have told them how to resolve their issues but instead, they decided on their own what to do. This ultimately caused strife toward each other when they were both being blessed.

Unfortunately, even out of the blessings of life, we can experience strife—which leads to discord and disunity. There are significant consequences to discord and disunity. God can't deliver His will, which is favor, because it can only be delivered in His Kingdom. When you turn from God and walk back into the world, you are subject to the kill, steal, and destroy of the enemy—which already is trouble. In addition, God can't overcome that trouble because you are not in the Kingdom. You are in the world because you are not seeking His will. Unity is about seeking God's will to receive His abundant life, His best.

Let's look at the blessings of unity:

Read Ecclesiastes 4: 9–12:

⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! ¹¹Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? ¹²And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

There is strength in being together in unity. When one of you is struggling, the other party is to bring you back into the place of the Kingdom, to seek God's will. If you are having difficulty, let them come alongside you to help you. A three-cord strand cannot be cut. Who is the third cord? The Holy Spirit. It is walking together with the Holy Spirit. It is relying on His strength to bring you back to His place of blessing. You are there for each other, being each other's best cheerleader.

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When my wife, Linda, is struggling, I don't say, "Get with it and stop struggling!" Rather, "Let me help you get back into the spiritual life of God. Let's go seek God's will together," as we believe He will resolve the struggle. For Him to deliver His promised blessing, we both have to be in His Kingdom pursuing His will together.

Linda received a picture of this:

I am at one end of a long table, and Rich is at the other end, and we are just shoving food in our mouths—trying to solve our situations, but we are not satisfied at all. Then we see Jesus standing in the center of that long table, and we both get up, and we both sit on the opposite side of the table with Him in front of us, and He says to us, "This is what I want you to eat today." Grapes. "This is what I want you to eat today." Cake. Instead of us figuring things out on our own based upon our own desires, we receive from Him what He gives us from the gorgeous feast table. It is better to be on the same side of the table before Christ and not on opposite sides on our own. Rather, we are to be on the same side, the same team—for each other with a heart to go to unity. Two are better than one.

Read Genesis 2:24–25:

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

In a relationship, what are the two to become? One. The word *one* means harmony. Unity. It means to live in unity, live in harmony. It means to come together on all things. Does it imply that they become the same personality? No. Does it imply that they can't disagree? No. Disagreement is natural. As a matter of fact, it is healthy. God says to have a heart to live in unity and seek His will as a couple. It seems that in the Christian church, we have lost the essence of unity, that it is not really that important. But God says it is critical because that is the wonderful way He brings us to experience His grand will—for us to live there, stay there, and be committed to it.

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Read 2 Chronicles 5:11–14:

¹¹ And when the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, without regard to their divisions, ¹² and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters; ¹³ and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD,

“For he is good,

for his steadfast love endures forever,”

the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, ¹⁴ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

Being in unity with God was overwhelming. When they became one, they understood that His mercy endures forever. The word *mercy* means Covenant loyalty. May His Covenant endure forever as we come to oneness. God says He can deliver the Covenant. When you go to unity, you will experience His glory. It was so powerful that when the priests became one, they couldn't even speak. It was so overwhelming. That is what God wants to reveal to us: When you get to unity, His glory, His Covenant will be so overwhelming, it will make you speechless. You will be so excited that you can barely express the joy, the wonder of it.

It is hard to describe this because we live in a world of trouble, but when we start to live in unity, we will experience this glory, and we will get excited about it, and we will see how grand life is going to be—even in a world of trouble. Does it mean that you are going to be absent of trouble? No. This passage says they started in a state of division, but they came together by working through their divisions to get to unity. When they came together in one voice, praising and seeking God's will, it was glorious. There is a major benefit to unity—life is not just better, it is spectacular. Living in God's will is spectacular, and it is there that He commands blessing. As this realization comes, what will our response be? To learn to live there. Why wouldn't we?

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This is not the prosperity gospel. Rather, it is all feeding into a spectacular life. Yes, it could be financial, but it's the joy of the relationship. It is the joy of God at work. It is the supernatural. It is having relationships that thrive. It is all the aspect of the fullness of the Covenant that is spectacular. With this in mind, you must ask yourself this key question: Do you have a heart to come? Do you have the heart to come experience through unity that God will resolve the messes, the difficulties, the troubles of your life? You can be guaranteed of this because this is God's nature and promise. Your response is to follow God and seek His will through unity, to have a heart to learn to experience this. We invite everyone who is struggling but has a heart to learn this, to try it for 30 days. God will show you in your real life that this is true, and you will learn to trust that it is always true.

Read Acts 2:40–47:

⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe^[a] came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

This took place right at Pentecost. Three thousand people came to receive Christ, and they started meeting in homes. They started sharing the truth of the Christian life and experienced the key to the abundant life by becoming of "one accord." They were taught by the disciples to go together as a couple, as close friends, as close small group and pursue God's will in oneness. When they did this, they experienced the supernatural—miraculous things that were personal. Real situations in life got resolved. God answered them in a supernatural way, and they

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were in awe of that supernatural work. As a result, God was adding people daily because others wanted to come to experience this as well. They could see the difference. They knew it was real. *Yes, I saw what happened to you. Is that possible for me?* How did they respond? *Absolutely, come on and learn this and see that this is real. We receive it by being of one accord.*

They were taught that as they go to unity, go to harmony, they will discover God's will. The supernatural happens because He is supernatural, miraculous. People recognized that miraculous things were happening every day. The spectacular was happening every day. Were they living in a world of trouble? Yes. But was God resolving that? Yes. In unity, they demonstrated that this was the way the church was supposed to be functioning.

Read Colossians 2:2–3:

² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

In Christ is hidden all wisdom and understanding. What do you need wisdom and understanding for? For everything, for every situation. How do you receive this wisdom and understanding? You receive it by walking in His will, step by step by step in every aspect of your real life. This isn't theology. This is about receiving wisdom about the things that matter to you—decisions, issues, troubles, adversity, the world that we are in. Each of us has a sequence of those, but if you live in oneness, you will receive it. When do you receive the wisdom? When you are in the Kingdom—going to unity with God, to experience His will. This is where you will receive the wisdom for God to deliver to you the spectacular. It is not that complicated, so why is the typical Christian not living that way? Because we have not been taught about unity—to walk by the Spirit; hearing God's voice. Instead of defaulting to the flesh and being self-centered, you are led by the Spirit into unity where He commands blessing. We are to learn to live in the Kingdom where God can overcome the world and deliver to us the spectacular.

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“... if we follow the Spirit and live in the Kingdom, God says He will deliver to you the abundant life and can resolve all your issues.”

In Lesson 1 we learned the beauty of unity. It is there that God commands blessing. When we operate in the world and self-centeredness that causes us to seek our own will, this translates into living in a world where we are going to have trouble and things aren't going to work well. However, if we follow the Spirit and live in the Kingdom, God says He will deliver to you the abundant life and can resolve all your issues. How does this happen? By going to unity with Him and seeking His will.

So, how do we do this?

Read Ephesians 4:1–6:

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

In these verses, Paul urges us to work really, really hard to keep unity. Unity of what? Of the Spirit. As we look at unity, it is not an agreement between only two of us. It is not negotiating to a satisfactory solution to only two of us. It is not each party giving a little here and a little there to come to agreement. Rather, it is unity together with the Spirit. God says He will get us to unity 100% of the time, all the time. This is why God can resolve all your issues.

How can He get you both to unity every time, all the time? It is because there is only one Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who is in my wife, Linda, is the same Holy Spirit who is in me. He can't

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tell us two different things. This is why God said it is not a negotiation, but rather continually seeking unity with Him until it is confirmed that you got there. This is to lead you to that place where you have confirmation.

When we first learned this, I was coming from a place where I was always exercising my judgment—I am right and you are wrong. I spent my energy persuading Linda why I was right until she just caved. This was much easier for her as we just skipped the arguing part. She'd give in to do whatever I wanted to do. This didn't work out too well, as I made a lot of mistakes—particularly with financial things that did not turn out as planned. This caused tremendous burden and lots of stress.

During these discussions when I thought I was right, Linda would tell me if she didn't feel good about the decisions. However, if she couldn't come up with a reason why she didn't feel good about it, I'd move forward with what I wanted to do. My heels were dug in and I used my judgment that I was right. As we reviewed in Lesson 1, I took on the role as judge and caused us lots of trouble because I wasn't pursuing the unity of the Spirit, and I wasn't respecting that her Spirit was telling her that this wasn't right yet. It is not about negotiation or settling or compromising. It is about unity of the Spirit. It is Linda being able to say whether or not she feels confirmed about the matter.

What are we supposed to do when we have yet to reach unity with the Spirit? We keep going. We keep going until we both are confirmed with the Spirit. I respect when Linda says she doesn't feel comfortable about something. It is not a problem as it just means we need to keep going, continuing to process together.

Consider this story: I like driving fast. One of my friends had a Ferrari, and I got to drive it out on the freeway, and we had a great time with it. It's a race car, remember, and is operated by paddles on the steering wheel, not by using your feet. The speed is instantaneous. Within four seconds you're going 140 miles an hour. Behind that wheel, I had the time of my life. When I got home, I told Linda that I must have a Ferrari. Linda asked, "Can we afford it?" I told her that if we sell our car and get a used one, it is about the same price. She said that would be ok. I was thrilled that we were in unity, so, I started looking for a Ferrari. God, however, asked me what I was doing. I told Him that Linda said it was okay. He said, "Did you check in with Me?" Uh, no, sorry, I forgot that part of unity. So, I asked Him, "What do you have to say about that?" He said, "What do you really like?" I told him that I like going fast. He said, "I tell you what, I can deliver that to you because you have lots of friends with Ferraris. Drive theirs. It will be a lot cheaper, and you can experience what you really value without actually buying something. Even though you two agreed with what you defined as unity, it wasn't an agreement with the Holy Spirit."

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This story illustrates that even though two of you can agree on something, God says, “Are you checking in with Me and listening to what I have to say? My will is far better than your will.”

Read Philippians 2:1–6:

Christ’s Example of Humility

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,^[a] ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,^[b]

We are called to live in harmony, live in unity, live in agreement. We are not to do anything with conceit. What is the definition of conceit? Selfishness. You want your way, and you are going to persuade others to do things your way. In these verses, it also says to look out not only for your own interests, but for the interests of others. If the verses said to always look out only for the interest of others, what would you do? You would never bother sharing your own opinions. Whatever the other party wanted, you would willingly do as a reflection of your willingness to not be conceited. The Christian culture has adopted this—just do what the other person wants. Isn’t that holy? God says it is not holy because you are forsaking the process of going to unity. If you operate this way, you cannot get to unity—especially since you have bypassed processing together to get to the unity of the Spirit. Rather, He says that while you are honoring and respecting the other’s views and opinions, you also bring to the process what you think to be true. This means you maintain your integrity with what you think, feel, and believe while you consider the other party’s position of truth.

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From there, the question to be asked is: Are you in unity with the Spirit. You will know it if you are or if you are not; and if you are not, then don't cave. Rather, maintain your integrity with your truth. If Linda and I disagree, one of three things will happen to take us to unity:

1. Linda, what Rich is really understanding here is My will. I need you to see that.
2. Rich, what Linda is seeing here is My will. I need you to see that.
3. Neither one of you is understanding My will yet. There are more things to understand, or perhaps the timing isn't right yet. Keep going. There's more for you to discover.

There are times when He purposely withholds giving confirmation of unity because if He did so prematurely, we would believe we know God's will when we actually do not, and then we act on what we think is right. His role is to confirm or not confirm that we are in unity. We seek this because we know and believe that His will is best and none better.

For a couple, is it normal to disagree? Of course. We have different personalities, different perspectives. It is natural to disagree because of our normal differences. But God says that if you have a heart to go to unity, He will work on both of you until you get to the same place. You need your spouse to maintain integrity and hold their position until one of three things happens.

1. He directs traffic.
2. He purposely leads you to confirmation.
3. He doesn't.

To illustrate, there was a couple that was learning about unity when looking for a house to buy. They lived in a high-rise in downtown Chicago, and they had little children. They believed they were supposed to move to the suburbs into a house with a yard and neighborhood community. They started looking at houses, but week after week, they were unable to come to an agreement on any of the houses they looked at. He didn't like it. She didn't like it. They didn't like it. After almost six months of doing this, they phoned us to say, "This unity stuff does not work."

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We helped them see that it was working and that the lack of unity was God's way of directing them to His perfect will, which included the timing that is so critical. You might not know what it is, but keep with it. They kept with it. Two weeks later, he received an incredible promotion that would take his family to Saint Louis, Missouri. Had they decided to compromise on getting a house, he wouldn't have been able to take that job. He and his family would have been stuck in Chicago with a house that would be difficult to sell. God prevented that from happening because He knew it was just a little bit longer. They went to Saint Louis, where they found, in unity with the Holy Spirit, a grand house with a much smaller price tag. They came to unity with God and received His will, which is best and none better—always.

Together, we are to create a culture of seeking and staying with the process until we get to unity. We both are to have a heart to do what? Maintain our integrity, respect the other, and stay with it until we get to unity with God, seeking and receiving His will. Once you experience it, you will know how exciting this is and will want to do it over and over again. This leads to experiencing God's amazing work—supernatural, miraculous things—in all of our personal situations where He gives us the best as there is none better.

Read 2 Corinthians 13:11–14:

Final Greetings

¹¹ Finally, brothers,^[a] rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another,^[b] agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints greet you.

¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We are to become one mind—in harmony, in agreement. God will give you shalom and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in shalom, His favor. He says He will give you great favor if you have a heart to go. Paul wrote, "My prayer is that you go there and experience God's favor. Pray that for each other." Let's go there. Let's have a heart to go there. Why would we not? God's going to provide the favor. Help each other go there and stay there.

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Read Ephesians 5:1–21:

Walk in Love

⁵ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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This is the last statement before the discussion about wives and husbands. Verse 21 says to submit to each other. We are all to submit to each other to do what? To seek God's will. To receive His will, we are to walk in love, in the light, and in wisdom. Our heart for each other is to always walk in the Kingdom. But to be in the Kingdom, what must we do? Surrender our will to the King. We do this by:

1. Walking in love—receive His love, His desire to give us favor, and experience His love as we then love others, which is walking with others in God's Kingdom.
2. Walking in the light—go to truth and prove out God's will. Seek God's will because God's will is resident in the truth. God has a truth about the life, the favor that He is giving you as it relates to your personal circumstances. He knows the answer. Walk into it and stay in the light.
3. Walking in wisdom—by seeking His will. God says He will provide this wisdom to be able to walk step by step into His wonderful will.

The verses in Ephesians say to seek His will. Submit to each other to seek His will. He goes on to say, wives should surrender to that process, being led by their husband. Husbands are to lead the process and facilitate that, and encourage each other to do what? To stay in the Kingdom, surrender to His will, and pursue it through denying self. Walk in love; walk in light; walk in wisdom. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Do not quench it because it will take you away from receiving His will. Quenching is a result of being self-centered. When you choose your will over His, you quench the work of the Spirit that will bring you to unity to receive His will. You are no longer working with your partner to receive God's will. Thus, your decisions and actions are done in the flesh, done in the world, not in the Kingdom, and not in sync with God's will. Unity is the principle of being filled with the Holy Spirit to receive His will.

Read Galatians 5:16; 22–25:

Keep in Step with the Spirit

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

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God says that if you are going to follow His will, you have to pursue the Holy Spirit—be led by the Holy Spirit. As you are led by the Holy Spirit, He will communicate His will to you, which He will do in unity—which is where you will get confirmation. In order to do that though, you have to put to death the flesh by surrendering your will to His. It is truly seeking His will, not yours. It is having a heart to truly seek His will. Why should His will be sought? Because it is the best and none better. When we seek His will, we will enjoy the fruit of the Spirit and grow in our spiritual character. This leads us to enjoy the life that God gives us. He then tells us something wonderful about this:

Read Colossians 3:12–17:

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

We live in the Kingdom by surrendering our will—in love—together. He says we are to let peace rule our life. The word rule in this context means umpire. What does an umpire do? An umpire determines what is allowed and what is not allowed, if something is right or wrong, if it is fair or foul, if there was a touchdown or not. The umpire is there to uphold all of the rules to ensure the game is played properly.

How does this relate to us? What are we to do? We are to let peace umpire our life. The Holy Spirit is within each of us, but if we haven't discovered His will, He won't give us peace—rather He will trouble you, and it will be clear that you are not there yet, you are not confirmed yet. It's a spiritual dynamic that is to be practiced and trusted. It is really simple.

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When Linda and I are seeking God's will, we process together. If we think we understand God's will, I will ask Linda if she is confirmed in her Spirit. It is simply a yes or no answer. What is this answer based upon? It is based upon the truth of what is understood—what she is receiving from the Holy Spirit. If her answer is a yes, it is an absolute yes. If it is not an absolute yes, the answer is therefore, no or not yet. There may be the possibility that one of us is still operating in the flesh, which would be why we are unable to reach unity in the Spirit. Does it matter if one of us is still operating in the flesh? No—as long as there is still the desire to seek God's will—a heart to keep going.

There is no need to evaluate whether you or your partner are in the Spirit because it does not matter. To clarify, it does not matter as long as you both have a heart to go to truth and be confirmed in the Spirit with His will. God will get you there. There is no need to fret about it or judge where your partner is in the Spirit, just continue to process until you are confirmed. If you and your partner are not willing to continue until you get to unity, you will experience the consequences of that.

Consider this simple example. We were buying a new car. This particular car was one year old and less expensive because of the depreciation, but we still received the warranty. We bought the car from a dealer, after we both had confirmation about the purchase. We also added aftermarket upgrades to the car, which required the dealer to keep it for three days. On the fourth day, I called the dealership and asked if the car was ready to be picked up. I was told they were still working on it. After another two days, I called again, and was told they were waiting for a part and it would be another few days. A week later, they delivered it to our house. I happened to be out of town, but Linda was there with the check.

When the car arrived, she looked around the car and noticed that the emblem was all scratched up, there was discoloration on the door, and the color of one of the other doors did not match the rest of the car. She stated to the gentlemen who delivered the car that something was not right about this car. They were hesitant to respond and seemed to be agreeing that something was not right. She called me and said that she did not want to get this car because something was not right, and she didn't feel good about it. As I have learned unity, I have learned to respect when she does not have unity in the Spirit. I have learned that this is the Spirit trying to guide us. In this situation, however, I disregarded her unsettled feelings and told her to give him the check. How bad could it be?

Linda gave him the check, just as I had asked, while I completely violated everything we had been living out. She said she didn't feel good about the purchase of the car, and I overruled it out of convenience. What happened next?

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She took the car through a car wash and was splashed with water on the back of her head. Dirty water. It had gone from the trunk all the way up to the front. She then took the car to the Ford dealership, showed them what happened, and stated that something was not right. They said they could not find anything wrong. As she was leaving the dealership, the front bumper fell off the car. This dealer—not the one from which we bought the car—took a closer look and said there were things wrong with the car. Linda could see holes under where the bumper was. They told her to take the car to a body shop to have them take a look. So, she immediately went to a body shop where she learned that there were new parts everywhere—new battery, engine parts, radiator, doors, trim, etc. Almost everything had been replaced. They even showed Linda the barcodes of the new parts that were still on the parts. They suggested that it looked like the car had fallen off the lift when they were working on it and was basically destroyed.

When I returned, I called the original dealer who sold us the car, and said that I have proof that something happened to this car, and it was not in the same condition as when we purchased it. They didn't care and were not going to do anything about it. Thankfully, in Colorado, there is a government agency where dealer fraud and not fulfilling obligations can be reported. The first thing they did was look up the records of repair because every repair has to be recorded—by law. They said there was no record of this repair. They had scrubbed it and done it dishonestly “under the table.” I wasn't able to prove it by the repair records, but I still could prove it by all the new parts and things that did not match.

I decided to pursue a lawsuit against them because what they did was not right. An attorney friend agreed and prepared to file a suit—pro bono. I was determined to set this straight and started gathering the information I would need to prove my case. I was stopped in my tracks when God asked me what I was doing. I tried to explain that I was going to set this situation straight when He asked, “Did you ask Me?” Uh-oh. He continued, “Yes, you could win the case, but it is going to take time and effort that you do not have—plus, there are other more important things ahead. I tried to prevent you from receiving this car through unity, but you overruled it in the flesh. Just get your wife a new car.” I tried to argue that it was going to cost me a lot of money, but God reminded me that when Linda said she didn't feel good about the car, He was trying to guide us to the best and prevent us from making mistakes like this. Pay attention to the unity of the Spirit. Peace is the way to function as you receive spiritual confirmation. It will be well with you.

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Read Romans 8:9–17; 26–32:

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus^[a] from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Heirs with Christ

¹² So then, brothers,^[b] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons^[c] of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because^[a] the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^[b] for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

God’s Everlasting Love

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be^[c] against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

If God is for us, who can be against us? Us. Who can be against God’s will? Us—individually and collectively. Remember, when you go to the flesh, the self, and you exit the Kingdom, you are at enmity against Him. He is for you, but you thwart

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His will. Why does this happen? Because you are not seeking His will. You are the only one who really prevents it. Since He is for you, why don't you stay where He can fulfill all that He has for you—in the Kingdom? It is really simple: You must deny self. Do not get stuck in a position where you feel obligated to live in the self. Living in the self is our default if we do not choose to be led by the Spirit.

The church typically says it is normal to struggle and fail, but Paul says the opposite. You are not supposed to live that way, but rather it is normal to live by being led by the Spirit. If He is leading, what should you be doing? Following and seeking His will—being led. The Holy Spirit intercedes according to God's will. His job is to get you to understand and receive His will. All we are to do is to walk with Him, knowing that all things work together for good.

Are you going to have trouble? Yes. Are you absent of trouble? No. But all things can work together for good—which is the benefit for you that God will deliver. He makes all things work for good. If you walk with Him and are led by the Spirit, by surrendering your will to His, you will allow Him to make all things work together for good because He has the power to fulfill it—He is superior to your circumstances. The only one who causes you to remain in the trouble is you. Why is this so? Because you are not with Him, and if that is the case, He cannot give it to you.

Read Ephesians 4:15–16; 25–32:

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

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We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit. What grieves the Holy Spirit is speaking unwholesome words. What are unwholesome words when trying to process God's will? "I want what I want and I don't care what you want." Why does this grieve the Spirit? Because this is a clear indication that you are not seeking His will. He can't deliver His will if you are not seeking it. Trying to persuade each other of what you want is not seeking Him. In fact, it is what grieves Him. He has it available to you, but He can't give it to you.

Instead of pursuing our own agenda, we are to speak the truth in love. What truth are we to speak? What we know at the moment to be true. *Your* truth about the situation—how you feel and think and see it. This is all you can speak. Is it the full truth yet? No. You will only discover the full truth when you get to unity and discover God's will. As He leads you into *His* truth—you must first speak *your* truth. What do you think, feel, and believe about the issue? What do you understand about it? What does your spouse or partner think, feel, and believe? They, too, are to speak their truth. From there, both parties need to confirm that they heard correctly and understand the other's truth. Did you get it right? Sometimes you do, but most of the time not everything is heard and understood. It is not uncommon to read something into it, skip it entirely, or miss something important.

Linda and I structure this discussion into two pieces. The first piece is to understand where we are on the issue, and what we know about it at the moment. We try to understand the issue at hand, the decision at hand, or the conflict at hand. We don't jump to solutions. If we first jump to solutions—as we are prone to do—there are two things that usually happen. First, you argue over proposed solutions before you even understand the issue. You end up debating the solution because you want one thing while your partner wants something different. The second is the tendency to presume the solution or make a judgment about the presumption—"Let's go with this," or "This will never work." In doing this, we just accept the inevitable and do not move forward into pursuing God's will. You haven't gotten to unity yet. You haven't even thought about the process yet.

It is far better to seek to understand where each of you are and ask God for the next step. He will lead you. First, talk about your truth. What do you think is true? What is real? How do you process that? Both parties need to hold onto their truth until you both see the answer. After you get to understanding, you can work on solutions and come to agreement regarding the next step toward the solution. This all takes a heart to hear God speak His will, His truth to us.

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Read 1 Kings 3:5–9:

⁵ At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.”⁶ And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.”⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.⁸ And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.⁹ Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

God asked Solomon what he would like. Solomon told God that of all the things, he wanted God to give him an understanding mind. In Hebrew, this means that he asked for God to give him a heart to hear His voice—essentially, for God to give him a hearing heart. He needed discernment, and God was the only one who could deliver it to him. He was unable to logically look at things alone and needed to listen to what God had to say so he could be led into God’s answer, even when it didn’t seem to make sense. He knew God’s will is best and none better. He asked for a hearing heart so that he could take that step and follow Him.

Read Proverbs 8:32–35:

³² “And now, O sons, listen to me:
blessed are those who keep my ways.
³³ Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it.
³⁴ Blessed is the one who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.
³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains favor from the Lord,

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We are to enter into a process of listening. Remember, we are seeking what He has to say. If we listen to what He has to say, He will start saying things. Watch for what happens next. He will do things—reveal things—by observation. Receive and observe what happens as God reveals important truths. And then wait...

What are we waiting for? We must wait to know His will—to get to unity. Don't act until unity is reached. Keep waiting, listening, and watching.

Read Luke 11:2; 5–13:

² And he said to them, "When you pray, say:
"Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.

⁵ And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence^[a] he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for [b] a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

We are to pray for His Kingdom to come, His will to be done. We are to live in the Kingdom, which is not automatic just because you are a believer. How do you live in the Kingdom?

By surrendering your will to the King. You are to seek His will as you live in the Kingdom, for it is there that you will hear His voice. This is the reason a hearing heart is needed.

What is key to successfully living in the Kingdom? Persistence. The story is not about beating God's door down until He gives in, but rather persisting until you hear His voice and you understand and receive His will. Persist. Stay with it. We tend to give up too quickly, before agreement is reached. *Let's just do this, or Isn't*

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this a good idea? We don't give it the attention it needs to get to unity. You haven't gotten to unity because you haven't taken the time to persist until you receive it. God says to ask, seek, and knock. Ask for His will, seek His truth, do your due diligence—the things that you need to do to understand until you get the truth. With each specific opportunity—He will either open the door or close it. He will provide clarity that is a joy to follow.

Further, God promises to give us His Spirit. His Spirit knows exactly what we seek and is called to lead us to His answers. He is not going to bait and switch it. We are to trust what we receive. We do not need to guess or wonder if what we are receiving is from Him. He does not want us to wonder, but instead, believe and trust that He is leading.

Read Acts 15:1–6:

The Jerusalem Council

15 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."² And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.³ So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers.^[a]⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.⁵ But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."

⁶ The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.

Is it okay to disagree? Sure. In this case, it was a sharp disagreement. The Jews argued that when you receive Christ, you also need to be circumcised. Why did they believe this? Because circumcision is a sign of the Covenant. Jews understand this truth, and even a messianic Jew today understands salvation better than Gentiles. As we receive Christ, we are stepping into the Covenant. It is not just a ticket to heaven. The Covenant means to be blessed in order to be a blessing. Since the sign of the Covenant is circumcision, everyone needs to add this to the salvation experience.

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Paul and Barnabus disagreed. They believed that the Covenant is true, but with Christ, it is the circumcision of the heart which he writes about in Colossians 2:11–15. It is not an external mark but an internal mark of the heart. While they were in disagreement—strong disagreement, in fact—in that moment they were not seeking God’s will. As we have discussed, it is important to hold integrity on what you believe to be true until God shows everyone His answer—reveals His will. They knew they could not solve this disagreement, so they decided to go to the elders for help in understanding God’s will on the issue.

It is important to note that as they made their way to the elders, they experienced great joy. The disagreement did not ruin their day, their evening, or their week. A disagreement need not steal your joy. As a couple, can you live in disagreement? Sure. It is okay to be in disagreement. It just means that you don’t know what God’s will is yet. Although, we do know that His will is the best and none better. You are not adversaries. You are both seeking His will, and there is no need to let the disagreement ruin your day, night, or week.

Read verse six again. What does it say? Let’s go do what? Let’s consider the matter—just keep processing. God will get us the answer. Do not fret. It is okay to disagree. Just as Paul, Barnabus, and the Jews needed help, so may we.

Read Proverbs 11:14; 15:22:

¹⁴ Where there is no guidance, a people falls,
but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

²² Without counsel plans fail,
but with many advisers they succeed.

When needed, it is good to bring in counselors or advisers. There are two types of advisers. One is a spiritual adviser. This is not asking your friends for their advice because if they advise you in the flesh, you will receive fleshly, worldly answers, not spiritual answers. Not to mention that as you ask others for their opinions, you get different answers and become more confused than when you started. This is what happens when you get worldly answers, not godly answers.

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A spiritual adviser will walk with you to find God's will. Together, you will seek God's will. The spiritual adviser will ask you what God is saying to you. Do you understand what God is saying? If not, they will help you understand it because they also have the Holy Spirit. They can join you in the confirmation process, confirming if you are going in the right direction or if you need to continue processing.

There was a couple who was renting a house. Their landlord sold the house and told the couple they had to leave in 90 days. As they looked for another place to live, they believed that God's will was for them to buy a house. They looked and looked but found nothing. Three weeks before the 90 days was up, I received a phone call from the couple. They explained that they were at a house that was okay, but they were not in unity. Given their tight deadline, they needed to get this resolved. The husband thought they should just buy the house because it would solve their timing issue, but the wife did not like it or all of the issues it had. There was nothing spectacular about it, and she did not think it was God's will. She did not feel good about it. They were not in unity.

I reminded them that God wanted to deliver to them the spectacular, and this wasn't it. Because they were not in unity with the Spirit, the answer was no. I confirmed that the answer was no, and told them not to take this house. With their three-week deadline looming, they had to get something right away so I told them to consider that perhaps God was telling them that there may be an interim time where they were to rent before they bought.

They considered that—just as the apostles and the elders considered the matter—and they heard God say *rent*. The next day, the husband went to work and told a friend that he was looking for a rental. The friend knew a woman who wanted to rent her house. They called her and explained their situation, that they didn't want to get into a long lease situation as they wanted to buy a house. She agreed and only asked that they give her a month's notice when they planned to leave. They moved in and two months later, I received another call from them. They found a spectacular, unbelievably fantastic house to buy. They were both confirmed in the Spirit and were at peace. God used me as a spiritual adviser to walk with them to discover His will. We are all called to walk with Him and experience the wonderful provision and privilege.

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The second adviser would be an expert who possesses information and understanding that we simply do not. Currently, in our ministry, we need an accounting firm to tell us specifics about how things are supposed to run in order to meet all the new guidelines. I could pray all day long asking God how to proceed, but sometimes He just tells me to get someone who knows what they are doing and trust them. When I am given this direction, I get the very, very best. In this scenario, it does not matter if they are a believer or a non-believer. I just need them to be an expert at what they do. God says to hire that person and pay him to give you independent advice. He has no vested interest in the outcome and can offer expert advice without bias. Do not be afraid to use a spiritual adviser or a technical adviser—as they just might lead you to receive God’s will.

Read John 8:28–32:

²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” ³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

The Truth Will Set You Free

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

He promises that He will lead you to the truth. If you abide in Him and His Word, He promises to lead you to the truth, where you will be set free. This freedom is where we discover and live out His will—which is best and none better. He will give you the answers you seek. You will get things resolved, and the resolution will be spectacular. Why would you not pursue the truth and stay with Him to do it?

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We are to have a heart to seek God's will, and respect each other's truth, understanding, and spiritual process. We need each other to speak their truth as we process.

1. What do each of you understand about it?
2. Seek a solution together, processing until you receive God's solution.

Ask, seek, and knock. Stay with it. God knows what He is doing. He will not bait and switch you. Follow Him and He will give you the best and none better.



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HOW DO WE WORK THROUGH DISAGREEMENTS— DEEPEN UNITY WITH GOD



“God gives us the wonderful process of coming to unity with our spouse, our friends, our inner circle.”

In the first two lessons, we’ve covered the issue of self, which is an issue of the enemy who wants to thwart God’s will. God’s will is best and none better, and God wants to deliver His will to us. He wants to deliver the Covenant: blessed to be a blessing. He makes all things work together for good. He resolves all of your issues. God gives us the wonderful process of coming to unity with our spouse, our friends, our inner circle. We know that the enemy is trying to drag each of us away from that, away from the Kingdom and into flesh by doing our own will.

A key issue to consider: Are you willing to surrender your will to live in the Kingdom where He can deliver His will by taking us to unity to confirm His will. When we walk in love, walk in the light, walk in wisdom, we seek His will with a heart to hear. This happens by speaking the truth—your own truth—and processing the truth until you see God’s truth. It will then be confirmed by the Holy Spirit as you are being led by the Holy Spirit. Let’s go deeper now into the practical aspects of going to unity.

Read James 1:5–8:

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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If you lack wisdom, what are you supposed to do? Ask for it. When do you lack wisdom? All the time, about every possible thing. God is not there for only the big issues, while you try to handle the small ones yourself. Where would you draw the line on that? Who decides the size of the issue? Remember, God is the vinedresser who wants to guide you into all issues and decisions. You don't know what He knows. You don't know what is to come or what the future holds. You don't even know what is around the corner. What might look good to you may not be so good around the corner. In essence, we are only looking at the first 10 feet of a 100-mile path. Even though you might choose a path that looks pretty good, God knows what is ahead and whether or not that path is going to cause you trouble. If you have a heart to seek Him and receive His wisdom, He will prevent you from heading the wrong direction. He promises that if you seek His will, He will give it to us generously. The word *generously* means with great clarity. God will show you exactly what to do and how to move forward. All you have to do is ask Him.

There is only one condition that must be met when making a request to God: You must believe He will give you the requested wisdom—that He will give you the answer you ask for. You don't have to believe what He says, but you have to believe that He will say it. He will get you the answer in a way that you can understand it. When you ask for wisdom, but actually never expect to hear God's answer, He can't give it to you because you are being double-minded. What constitutes being double-minded? Seeking God's will but not really believing that He is going to tell you. This disbelief leads to questioning whether or not you are hearing from God or if it is you providing answers. You do not trust that God is getting you the answer. This is double-minded, which leads to instability in all your ways. If that is how you approach it, He will not bother telling you because you will never get it anyway. You will be filtering everything through your own intellect. You must believe that He will speak to you in a way that you can receive it.

When our two little grandsons were 10 and seven years old, they could ask me the very same question, to which I would give an answer. The 10-year-old understood it, while the seven-year-old had no idea what I meant. It didn't make any sense to him. Do I respond by telling him to shape up, he'll be smarter in three years? No. I rephrase it in a way that he could understand it. God says that the burden is on Him, not on you. It makes no difference what your experience level is with this, what your spiritual maturity is, or your education, or your intellect, etc. He will get it to you in a way that you understand it. All you have to do is ask.

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Read 1 Kings 10:1–3:

The Queen of Sheba

10 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. ² She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. ³ And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her.

The Queen of Sheba represents us, while Solomon represents God, as all of Solomon's wisdom comes from God. What did Sheba bring? What did she say to him? What did she ask him?

She went to Solomon and asked him all of her hard questions. She asked him every difficult question she had. She was bright, and as the leader of her country, she had achieved great success, which was also evident by her wealth. But there were some things that she did not really understand. This led her to Solomon where she came armed with all her hard, difficult questions. She came to him as she needed wisdom.

Upon hearing all of her questions, what did Solomon do? He answered every single one of them. All of her hard questions received answers because she knew who to go to and had a willing heart to hear the answers. God says that if you ask Him, if you go to Him, He will answer every tricky question you've got. A hard question is one for which we do not know the answer. It is usually complicated or involves too many variables, or based upon your initial ideas, there is no solution as nothing is going to work. A hard question is tricky and difficult, but God says to bring it to Him. Bring all of the hard questions to Him. He will answer each one. He will reveal the answers—just listen with a heart to receive.

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Prior to Covid, I was working with a real estate commercial office building developer. The economy, if you remember back then, looked spectacular. Nothing on the horizon indicated that there was going to be an economic problem at all. He'd sold a building, had millions of dollars, and believed that he should reinvest in a new building. In the past, that would be normal. As he was preparing to invest in his next commercial real estate office building, I asked him if he checked in with God? He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Did you ask God if that is His will?" I explained that he didn't know what awaited around the corner and that it would be good to go ask. I did not think there was a problem, I just know the truth of seeking God's wisdom on everything. He asked me how he would understand what God said, and I told him to just go ask and see what He says. I also told him to include his spouse to go to unity. He brought his hard question to God and later came back to me and said he didn't know what was going on, but he didn't feel comfortable. Something was not right. He didn't feel good about this. His wife didn't feel good about it either, but they did not have any reason to feel the way they did. I told him to keep asking, keep seeking, keep pursuing it until you can confirm it. Remember, if you are hearing this, He is not baiting and switching on you, so pursue it further until you get confirmation.

Later, when he came back again, he told me that he and his wife were confirmed. They were not supposed to invest in that particular building. Even though they had no idea why, they trusted the answer. Two months later, Covid hit and destroyed the office market since everybody stopped going to the office. Even after Covid restrictions were lifted, many workers never returned to the office. They learned the value and attractiveness of working remotely. Because of this new reality, companies with office space began shrinking their space because there was no need for that much office space anymore. A new paradigm had developed. People work from home much of the time, and when they come to the office, they can gather as they wish and share space. For example, in New York City today, there are 100 million square feet of empty office space. What would it be like if he built a new building? He'd have a project that may have caused him to lose all his equity.

God knows more than you and He calls you to go to unity with your spouse or your inner circle to receive His wisdom, His will—which will be best and none better. In this situation, his spouse had no logical reason not to proceed, other than a spiritual sense of not feeling good about the situation. They stayed with it until they reached confirmation—unity with the Spirit. God says to ask Him all your hard questions, and He will get you the answer. There is a privilege to that.

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Read Hebrews 10:19–25; 35–11:3:

The Full Assurance of Faith

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers,^[c] since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For,

“Yet a little while,
and the coming one will come and will not delay;
³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith,
and if he shrinks back,
my soul has no pleasure in him.”

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

By Faith

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

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We are called to be bold and go where? To the throne room, in the Holy of Holies. Why is this a privilege? Christ opened up this privilege at the cross. He broke open the veil so that we all have direct and equal access. The Holy of Holies was located in the temple. The temple was structured so that there was a court of Gentiles (even a Gentile who wanted to worship could go to the temple), a court of women, a court of men, a court of priests, and then the Holy of Holies. Who could go into the Holy of Holies? Only the high priest. There was no seat there because it wasn't finished. It was only year to year of making sacrifices and opening the opportunity for people to converse with God. Because the priest was the only one who could go in, they tied a rope around his legs so that if he fell down or got sick or died, they could pull him out. When Christ was on the cross, just before he died for us, He said, "It is finished." All is fulfilled. All is done once and for all. He took on the burden of sin so that we could have free access to God. He removed the requirement for perfection, and now people could receive Him as their Lord and Savior, have relationship with Him and abide with Him.

What happened next? The veil was ripped from top to bottom—80 feet high, eight inches thick. It couldn't have been man doing it. God did it, and with that said that access to Him was now opened up. Everybody was given free access to Him. Why would you waste the opportunity to boldly come in and dialogue with Him—to receive wisdom and understand His will. Who could now enter the Holy of Holies? Everybody was now equally welcome to come. It was no longer limited to spiritual people or the pastors or the educated. Everyone could come and stay in the Kingdom.

When you are there, in His Kingdom, you are seeking His will. As you come, come with an authentic heart. Talk about your desires, your thoughts, your concerns, your struggles, your doubt—all your hard questions—with boldness and confidence. March right into the privilege He offers. Don't throw away that privilege. He will pay you, reward you to come into His Kingdom. The reward He gives you is His will, which is best and none better. It will be well worth it.

He also says that after you have done His will, you will receive what? You will receive the promise. "After you've done My will, you will receive the promise." He instructs us on the steps we are to take and then He promises that He will provide the answers needed. He will fulfill what He promises. Our part is to follow His instruction so we stay on the path to be in the right place, with the right people, at the right time for God to fulfill His supernatural work as promised.

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Read Malachi 3:16–18:

(We discovered this truth on one of our retreats in France.)

The Book of Remembrance

¹⁶Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. ¹⁷“They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

As we talk to each other—you and your spouse, you and your friends, you and your inner circle—God listens. This is what we discover when we talk. Our conversation is prayer because the Holy Spirit is conversing with us while we converse with each other. It is not going off to pray alone—certainly we do pray alone since we converse with God personally all the time—but discussing things together is prayer as God is listening and responding. We are to continue asking each other about our thoughts and acknowledge what is understood. What is God trying to show us as we talk it through? As you talk it through, God listens and gives insight, wisdom, and clarity, as well as thoughts and ideas. As we process it together, particularly when we have these tough, difficult situations, God provides creative thoughts and discernment.

I had a business situation where the party I was dealing with was kind of prideful and arrogant and had power over us. A partner and I asked each other how we could overcome this. We tried to get there, but they were getting more difficult and the situation was getting more and more complicated. We didn't know what to do. As we talked about this, along with my son who joined us in the conversation, we received the thought that maybe we should join in on what they were doing and go that direction instead of pursuing opposition. We all agreed and actually felt confirmed that that could be it. We ended up doing the complete opposite of what we were thinking. It didn't make any sense, but God said to go that direction instead of the other. That solved the issue. It was remarkable and miraculous—supernatural. As we talked about it, and kept talking about it, we received His answer.

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This is why we should never be afraid to talk about the truth. We want to know the truth, so we need to keep processing to get to the truth. We should not try to jump to a conclusion or try to find a solution on our own because God will give us the solution. He promises this because He is listening. Let's look at the conditions to receiving His answers as we process.

Read 1 John 5:14–15:

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

He says that if you pray according to His will, He will hear you. If you pray according to His will, what is required of you? To hear and receive His will. He does not say that you must pray according to His will, but He will never tell you. That would be a hopeless situation. Rather, if you pray according to His will, He will let you know His will. You will get there. If you pray according to His will, He will hear you. What is He listening for? He listens to determine if you know His will. Are you there yet? Do you believe it? Are you understanding His will with clarity? Do you believe it? He's waiting, listening to hear if you are there or not, if you need to keep going farther. Diligently stay in the ask, seek, and knock mode. He will listen until you know His will. When you have received His will, He will confirm it so you are certain. Where His will is known and confirmed is where He commands His blessing. It is where He will deliver it to you.

Read John 15:7–8:

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

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If you abide in Him, you abide in the relationship. You walk with Him, and are led by the Spirit 24/7. You walk in the Kingdom with a heart to surrender your will to His. If you abide in Him and His Words abide in you, circumstances will change. And by this, the Father is glorified. Hallelujah! If you abide in Him and His words abide in you, He will fulfil your wishes, and you will glorify the Father. You can't glorify yourself because you know it had nothing to do with you. You just received it. He fulfills the promise of the Rhema word.

Read John 14:12–14:

¹²“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me^[a] anything in my name, I will do it.

We are called to do greater works. He's not talking about magnitude. Can you do better than the resurrection? Probably not. It is not about doing something more magnificent. It is literally about doing a greater number of works. It is really simple. We can all do greater numbers. How is this possible? It can happen with all believers because He is within us—resident within us. At that time, it was just the 12 disciples. Now, it is everybody who has the Holy Spirit. By definition, we can all do the supernatural. If you pray with His authority, you can fulfill it. Praying in His authority prevents us from naming it and claiming it ourselves. You don't get to claim that you are going to do it because it is a promise in the Scriptures. You don't have that privilege. It has to be under His authority.

Consider how it works in a company. I am the president of mergers and acquisition for a company that Jake Beckley and I founded. We have an investor and a board of directors. There are lots of things I'd like to do such as acquiring a company, for example. Do I have the ability, the right, the wherewithal to do this? No, not until the board agrees. Once the board agrees, I can sign off on it with the authority and resources of the company. That authority is transferred to me to sign and complete the acquisition. Knowing that the promises of the Bible are true, and available to me as He so gives me His authority—the question that should always be asked is: “What do You have to say about this?”

We did a retreat during a time when there was a disease caused by a virus called SARS, which was a precursor to Covid. It was highly contagious, and people got really sick. If anyone was in the vicinity of somebody infected, they were going to get it. On Friday night, we started with a dinner. Keep in mind this was

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an abiding retreat consisting of people who didn't even know why they were there, other than hearing through someone else's experience that if they learned to abide, life would get better and difficulties of life would get resolved. We all noticed that the woman sitting next to Linda was sick—really sick. I knew, and so did everyone else around the table, that she had SARS. They were all nervous that they were going to get it, too. I could have gotten up and said, "Well, I claim in the name of Christ that you are healed," but I didn't because I don't have that privilege to take that authority on my own. I had to ask first: "Father, what do You have to say about this?" He told me to get up and go heal her—that He would heal her.

After a lengthy time of instruction, I had previously learned about healing so I was willing to do it. I got up and said, "Okay, everybody, I know that you are struggling with what is going on right here." I looked down at the lady and said, "And I know you are really sick, and you probably have SARS. Everybody else is afraid since you are contagious, but God said He is going to heal you and nobody is going to get it." I then asked everyone to join me to lay hands on her. It was the funniest thing—Linda and I laid hands on her, but nobody else would touch her. They put their hands on my shoulder. They were willing to touch me, but were not willing to touch her. Together, we prayed in the name of Christ. He was going to heal this woman of SARS, and nobody else was going to get it. We believed it. We spoke it and prayed that it would be fulfilled. Then I told her to go to bed and get a good night's sleep. We were going to continue with our retreat and that tomorrow she would be healed.

Everybody around the table was thinking: What did we just come to? What is this stuff? They were nervous about what I had just done, and they were nervous because they were all thinking—despite what I had just said—that they were all going to get sick. They stayed for the Friday night session—which was good—but it was tense. The next morning at breakfast, the woman walked out. Not only was she healthy, but she was glowing. Literally glowing. Everybody noticed that she was completely healed. That weekend, God showed them the supernatural. They were amazed, and they rejoiced at this personal experience.

The main thing that needs to be emphasized is the fact that I asked God first what He wanted before I acted. Do I believe in healing? Yes. Can I just claim it? No. Did I ask Him? Yes. On this occasion, He said yes, that He would heal her. However, He could have said there is more to know, or no, not now, send her home, or everyone needs to leave. It is not presuming any answer—it is just seeking His will. Based upon His will, be obedient and join Him in the greater work, as He so speaks. If you pray according to His authority, you can exercise it.

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Read 1 Corinthians 14:1–5:

Prophecy and Tongues

14 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³ On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

One of the aspects of the body is to prophesy. Prophecy is two things. One is called forthtelling, which is truth telling, speaking truth into a situation. It is sharing your understanding of the situation and offering something additional to consider. It is asking if they would be willing to receive this truth, a prophetic truth. The other thing is foretelling. This is telling of something ahead to which God is asking you to pay attention. Something is up that you need to receive.

I am helping disciple an executive who received a potential new job opportunity. If he accepts the job, it will require him to move to a new place, but he and his wife felt it might be worthy of pursuing. When the company decided to go with another candidate, they figured that was the end of it. When he and I spoke after the decision, I said, "Wait a minute, do you recognize that God just said something to you that you need to pay attention to?" Confused, he asked, "What?" I told him, "You were interested in that job and were willing to move from your home to a new area for that job. While it didn't work out, God is saying there is something in this that you need to pay attention to." So, prophetically, I just said, "The truth is that something happened, and you need to pay attention. You and your wife need to process this. Why were you interested in that job? Why were you willing to move? Pay attention."

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I served as a prophet, and all I did was point out that there was something they needed to pursue. They, in turn, discussed together why they were excited about the potential job and move. They processed it because they understood that God had something for them to understand. There is joy in walking with Him as God speaks to you. We are all called to allow the prophetic to be spoken to us—not as someone saying: “You should...” but rather, here is truth or a pay attention to what God is asking you to consider.

This is the heart of a prophet and also the one receiving the word from the prophet. As we do consider what God is saying, we will hear the truth from Him. We trust the confirmation process, which includes us, by definition. We are not to dismiss the prophetic, but enjoy processing as God brings direction to us and then confirmation with our spouse, our friends, our inner circle.

Read Matthew 18:18–20:

¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed^[a] in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

When you gather in His name, how do you go about doing this? By seeking His will with another (spouse, friend, inner circle). In the Kingdom, we seek His wisdom, knowing He will provide it. As we seek this together, we spend the processing time (as described previously) to come to unity. Remember, unity is with the Holy Spirit. He says that we will discover His will, and will confirm His will as we pray it. He will then perform it as it shall be done. In this, He will give each of us great power, which includes the authority to bind off the enemy and to release (loose) the power of the supernatural.

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As you consider the time required in this whole process, the processing together to get to unity, takes time and energy. Are we there yet? Do we have confirmation? Not yet. Then keep going. Do we now have confirmation? Not yet. Keep going. The only way you won't discover His will would be what? If you don't put the time in. If you don't pursue it, you either make a decision or let whatever happens, happen. To experience God's will, though, we are called to spend time together processing and talking about it until you get confirmation from each other that you agree. How long might that take? A while. Step by step by step, it is a path, not a destination. We are not seeking Him just to get us the final answer or resolve our issue as we passively go to fatalism, but rather to walk together with God as we discover His will and enjoy the relationship. It is His joy to be in relationship with us. He purposefully does not tell us all of the answers we seek, because if He did, we would not stick around. It would be, "Thanks, see you later." God set it up this way so that we not only receive His answers, but also walk with Him in ask, seek, and knock mode to discover it. There is joy in talking to each other and seeing how beautiful the process is. When we gather together to get to His will, He, too, is there to get you to unity. When confirmed there, He will command blessing.

Read Acts 12:5–19:

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Peter Is Rescued

⁶ Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. ⁷ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. ⁸ And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." ⁹ And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. ¹¹ When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

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¹² When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. ¹³ And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴ Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. ¹⁵ They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" ¹⁶ But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. ¹⁷ But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers."^[a] Then he departed and went to another place.

¹⁸ Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. ¹⁹ And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there.

This is a great story. Peter winds up in prison and the church gathers to pray that he be released. "Father, would you release him from prison?" Their desire, their wish was that God would release Peter from prison. Peter, on the other hand, prayed, "Father, what are you going to do about this problem?" God sent an angel and released Peter from prison. The angel guided him through all the roadblocks and freed him. Peter then went to the house where the church was gathered to pray for him. A girl sees him, but doesn't let him in. Instead, she went to the group and told them that Peter was there. What was their response? They couldn't believe it.

Consider this: The group prayed for Peter to be released, so why would they respond that way? Why wouldn't they believe that Peter had been released and was standing outside their door? Because they prayed for a wish with no confidence that their prayer would be answered. They had no expectation that their prayer would be answered and it was quite a shock when it was. They argued that it wasn't really him but an angel, or a vision of him, or his resurrected body, which meant he was already dead. This couldn't be him and was definitely not the answer to their prayer. What was the mistake they made? They did not really pray together, asking God for a word, or what He had to say about the situation. They did not seek His will. They did not expect to hear His will, since they did not ask. Even when their prayer was answered, they did not believe it.

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Do you see the difference in prayer that goes to unity and wishful thinking? Our typical Christian prayer is: *“God, would you...”* and then we proceed to tell Him what to do, how to do it, and how fast to do it. God doesn’t need us to tell Him, He knows far more than we do. He knows what is around the corner, so ask Him first—and believe that He will answer and get you to unity. So, back up a step, and seek His will until you get to confirmation and unity.

Read 1 Samuel 23:1–13:

David Saves the City of Keilah

23 Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors.”² Therefore David inquired of the LORD, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the LORD said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah.”³ But David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?”⁴ Then David inquired of the LORD again. And the Lord answered him, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.”⁵ And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

⁶When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand.⁷ Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.”⁸ And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.⁹ David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.”¹⁰ Then David said, “O LORD, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account.¹¹ Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will come down.”¹² Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will surrender you.”¹³ Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition.

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David was anointed to be king. Saul was trying to kill him because he realized David was going to replace him and he did not want that to happen. He decided to eliminate the threat of David replacing him by killing him. In this pursuit, he chased him all over the territory of Israel. David wound up in a cave all by himself and was upset. He called out to God, "I thought you said that I would be king and here I am all alone, no prospect of being king. Nothing makes sense. Why is this happening?" His discouragement can be found in Psalm 142. The good news is that He was talking to God in relationship. God tells David that it was still coming, not to worry, and continue to be obedient to His steps. He was going to provide David's family for fellowship. He was going to send a group of men who didn't know a thing about war or being a warrior and were at the bottom of society. David was to train those men and be faithful to His instruction.

His family found him in the cave and provided fellowship. The least of society found him in the cave and David began training these men. He started with 400 men, which grew to 600. Because Saul was still coming after David—and now them—they were also hiding in caves. David discovered that a nearby town in Israel was getting attacked by the Philistines. David went to God and began the real process of prayer.

"God, what do You have to say about this?" This is important to note: David sought God to speak and did not presume anything. He did not tell God that he was going to go take care of this, or tell God that it was a good idea and ask God to protect him. Rather, he asked God, *"What do You have to say?"* God told him to go and protect the city being attacked. He then went to his men and told them they were going to battle in this town against the Philistines. How did his men respond? They did not agree. They thought it was a mistake. They feared being injured or killed. They did not feel good about David's plan.

Given their response, what options did David have?

1. We are going anyway. I heard from God, and we are going.
2. Agree with them and not go. Instead of following God's plan, just stay in the caves where they felt protected.

Instead of going either way, what did David do? He went back to God to get confirmation. Does God mind confirming what His plan or His instructions? No. When Linda and I are processing, we do not stop the process because we have differences of opinions. We do not need to make judgment about fears or concerns. We just need to ask if the other is confirmed? If the answer is "No," that

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just means that we need to keep going—keep going back to God together. If we are seeking God's will, then who is in Linda? The Holy Spirit. Who is in me? The Holy Spirit. We will get there. We will get to unity, so do not fret and do not stop processing. God will confirm it.

In this situation, God said to all of the men who sought Him, "Yes, go down and fight for Keilah—I will deliver you." Everybody heard it. So, with the confirmation, they confidently went and saved Keilah. Though they previously lived in caves that were filthy dirty and awful, saving Keilah allowed them to move into a real town, sleep in actual beds, have access to real food, and enjoy fellowship. They were able to return to living life again. As far as they were concerned, this was a good place, where they were able to enjoy the fruit of their efforts. Hallelujah!

Unfortunately, though, it wasn't long before Saul discovered that they were in Keilah—which happened to be a town surrounded by mountains with a single gate in and out. Saul thought this was the break he needed and mounted a large contingent to go fight and kill David and his men in this town. This would be an easy battle to win. Saul believed that God was delivering David to him. Because he believed that, what did Saul fail to do? He didn't ask God. Rather, he used false spiritual weaponry and used God as rationale for what he wanted to do.

This way of thinking needs to be handled carefully. Many people use the words, "God said..." when they are actually being driven by their self-centeredness. They attribute it to the authority of God because it is a convenient way to proceed with their own selfish desires.

Consider this example: I was discipling another executive who was divorced and dating. He called me up and said, "God told me I am supposed to go and buy a house with this woman I am dating." Uh, what? He was adamant, "God said I am supposed to go buy a house with the woman I am dating." I asked him if he had confirmed that with God, to which he responded, "Yes." I told him that I could not confirm that in my spirit. In fact, I didn't even need to go pray about it. Why? How did I know?

The Word of God is really clear about this, and I *know* the Word of God. God does not speak what is already clearly stated as a truth that we are called to receive. Now, I did not respond by telling him that he shouldn't do it or that God says not to do it. I simply told him that I could not confirm it. I advised him to go process it further with God, and I gave him some scriptures to review. My role is prophet, not judge, nor to take on the burden of his choices. Rather, it is to be a messenger of truth and invite him to go further since he was not in unity with me.

The executive pursued it with integrity, came back, and told me that God told him he was not supposed to buy a house with this woman after all. I was not at all surprised. God had confirmed His will in unity with both of them.

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We do not have to fret about any of this. If someone uses the “God card” to justify what they want to do, offer to pursue it together with God. Stay with it and respect when one or the other is unable to confirm it. At some point, unity will be reached and God will provide confirmation.

Back in Keilah, David and his men enjoyed living in this town, but with Saul coming after them, there were problematic and potentially negative outcomes. What were David’s options at this point? They wanted to enjoy the fruit of their labor in a place that God already had given them victory, so even though Saul was coming to kill him, he might have assumed that God would deliver them. God delivered him before, so, of course He would take care of him now, right? He had been delivered from Goliath. He gave us victory over the stronger Philistines. Of course, God would take care of them. Besides, they really liked it there, and they wanted to stay. It would be fine. Wouldn’t it?

What did David do? He checked in with God. He knew something about walking with God. There was always new information, and he needed to know what his next move needed to be. “God, Saul is coming after me. Father, what do You have to say? Is Saul really coming?” Only God knew the answer. He might have told David that Saul wasn’t on his way and that they could stay in the town of Keilah. Unfortunately, though, that is not what happened. God told David that Saul was coming.

David then asked God if the men of Keilah, whom he had just saved, would hand him over to Saul. God told him they would and that David had to leave. This was His will. Even though David and his men preferred to stay, and God could easily defeat Saul and his army, it was not the right time. He instructed David to go back to the caves, and David obeyed. He asked, he heard, he received, and he followed God’s will. David continued to ask God what He had to say.

David desired to confirm His will and never presume anything, even when it seemed logical to presume it. That is the key. It is continually asking God, “Now what?” Keep checking in. Keep processing. Something to note is that because David left, the men of Keilah never had an opportunity to hand him over. How did God know they would hand David over to Saul? Because He knows the future, which is an important characteristic of His beautiful sovereignty. God can play out things in a sense of what we now can see technically, called virtual reality. Whatever decision you make, God can see the consequence of that decision. He can see around the corner. He knows what will happen based upon our choices. He can also reveal to us decisions that we are not to make. If we follow His instruction, this potentially negative consequence will never happen. We will never experience it. It just won’t happen. Why? Because God told us what to do and this prevented the potential negative consequence. We never went down the wrong

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path. David's obedience actually kept the men of Keilah from sinning against the anointed future king. If they had handed him over, they would have brought judgment on themselves. So, by David leaving, he actually saved them again. There are multiple layers and far more going on than we could even imagine. God knows all this, every layer, every detail and orchestrates all of it. It is always about having a heart to follow, checking in with God, and following His instruction.

Linda and I have such a story. We lived in Colorado, and I worked as a consultant. I had clients in Chicago and Colorado so I would spend three weeks at home in Colorado, and one week in Chicago staying in hotel rooms. Linda and I were praying one day, and God told both of us, "I want you to go to Chicago and buy a condo. You can have your clients pay what they would normally pay, and that would cover the cost of the condo. You will have your stuff there, you won't have to travel back and forth with luggage, and you will enjoy Chicago more." This is also where Linda and I grew up and dated as high school sweethearts.

While on one of my weekly trips to Chicago, Linda and I attended a church that was on the verge of collapse as the previous pastor left under suspicion of adultery. The elders of the church knew I was an ordained minister who started a big church in Colorado and had helped another church by stepping in to a similar situation. They asked us to step in as a part-time senior pastor. We prayed about it, and God said, "Yes," so we flipped our schedule and spent three weeks in Chicago and one week in Colorado. We followed God's will, and He preserved that church.

When we completed that assignment, God said that His will was for me to go back to Colorado to disciple my wife, our kids, and our grandkids and go to Chicago one week per month and enjoy the beautiful condo that we had bought. The condo was located on the 33rd floor near the Lincoln Park Zoo, along the lake. It was nestled in the southeast corner of the building overlooking the lake and downtown Chicago. It was a remodel that we gutted and opened up all the windows and all the rooms. It was grand and spectacular. We had it for about eight years, and during that whole time, our kids and grandkids visited a lot. We made so many great memories in that place.

Every year in January, I spend time with God, praying about the year and any prophetic insight that God may speak. I simply ask God what He has to say. One January, He told me to sell the condo, so I went to Linda and told her what God said. She told me that God did not tell her that. She didn't hear any such thing. When I asked her what she thought, she said, "No, I don't want to. There are too many grand memories there. This does not make sense. We have so many great memories, and I want to continue making more memories in this great place that everyone enjoys. I don't want to do it." Okay.

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I then asked her one question: “Are you neutral?” Remember, if you are neutral, that means you surrender your will to God. Are you neutral? “No.” If they are not neutral, it is okay. There’s no need to lash out and ask what is wrong with them. Rather, just ask them to take the time they need to get to neutrality. Before you can go anywhere toward receiving His will, both parties have to be neutral to God’s will.

We understand that many times, we start out not being neutral. Why? Because we want what we want, which is our will. Take the time needed to get to neutral before God. As we process together, both of us need to be willing to go to neutral and let the answer be something different. It took a couple weeks of spending time with Him, talking about it, explaining, and journaling why Linda didn’t want to sell the condo, and then coming to a place of neutrality because she does know that His will is best and none better. She really did want His will, but He was going to have to work in her heart to release that desire to keep it. He did. I never bothered her that whole time. I knew she had a heart to surrender her will, and that she would let me know when her heart was neutral. When she had reached neutrality, together we asked God what He had to say about us selling the condo. Remember, He does not mind confirming, and He will confirm. He again said to sell the condo. It was His will. It was not a logical thing. It was a heart thing.

With both of us being confirmed, with confidence we then put the condo up for sale in April. We sold it July 7, 2008—right before the crash. Had we not sold it, we’d probably still own it, had all kinds of cash flow problems, and we would have lost a lot of equity with it. God knows more than us. All we did was just listen, process, confirm, reconfirm, and stay in unity until we got there. And when we got there, God said, we had been obedient to His will and He would deliver the promise. It is such a beautiful thing, so as you consider unity, stay with it, stay with it, stay with it. Use the privilege of the opportunity to stay in neutrality. And once you get confirmation, go forward with great confidence.

We trust that you’ve had a great time in this course. We pray that will you practice it, and stay with it, and learn the beauty of unity, the privilege of unity, and the life of unity where God delivers the grand, super-abundant life. While this life is not absent of trouble, these are the tools to overcome the trouble.

If you have questions or issues to process, email us at www.abideministries.com. We would be happy to assist you and provide input. May we all learn to live in unity, for there He commands blessing.



History of **Abide Ministries**



In the 1990s, Rich and Linda Case received a call from God to dig into what it means to truly live in the Spirit.

In the 1990s, Rich and Linda Case received a call from God to dig into what it means to truly live in the Spirit. They had been believers for most of their lives and regularly attended church and Bible studies, but began to realize that, despite knowing the Bible intellectually, their personal experiences seemed disconnected from the promises and truths found in scripture. As they then learned these essential truths through their abiding and hearing God's voice – and began to see the grand life play out in their lives God called them to give that knowledge away. In 2001, God initiated the ABIDE ministry at a retreat with friends in Austria, and through their personal experience of this abiding life, their friends noticed the change in their lives and inquired if Rich and Linda could host a similar retreat the following year. This was repeated three years in a row, and then God called them to host weekend retreats in their home in Colorado.

Through the formal development of the truths revealed by God with Abiding and additional electives, they founded All for Jesus – Living Waters Ministries, now Abide Ministries – and have seen it grow exponentially since then, with 24+ retreat leaders all over the world, 29 online courses, eight books on various aspects of living life with Christ, and a daily podcast. Rich and Linda have also worked with various churches to strengthening them with the truths of an abiding life in Christ, and seeing Christ bring reconciliation and new vision to desperate situations.

Their heart is to bring the truths and promises of God to as many people as possible, showing everyone that when you abide in Christ and seek Him daily, your life can be completely and utterly transformed – enabling you to experience the grand life promised by God.



Vision

At our core, we believe in walking along God's path and connecting to the vine (abiding). As we walk in unity with others and understand God's Word as the truth, we are sure to experience His promised grand life and thus, willingly accept God's will as our chosen path.



Mission

1. Live out and invite everyone to experience the grand, spectacular, abundant life by hearing God's voice.
2. Share God's majesty, a close relationship with us as he yearns for our restoration.
3. God is majestic, grand and pure goodness, so that we can experience His nature in real life.
4. Communicate to everyone, irrespective of their condition, that all are meant to experience God's Divine Life (grand, majestic), by receiving His personal plan for us.
5. God delivers this life for us in a SUPERNATURAL way, transcending human comprehension, and thus, becoming normal in our life.
6. Teach that personal truths are revealed to us by God, grounded on His word – the embodiment of Truth.
7. Recognize that abiding in Christ changes our life in tangible, real ways, and is not just learning about or studying this life.
8. Teach that as we abide in Christ, we learn to understand and amp; follow God's will for our lives, as He leads us personally into His grand, Divine plan for us. His personal plan calls us into His bigger story with our best interest at heart (blessed to bless others).

Statement of Non-Profit Status

Abide Ministries is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that has been fully funded by our founders, leaders and retreat participants since its inception.

Tax-ID number: 27-1731819

Testimonies

“If I’m not abiding, I feel like I’m dying. Abiding is living...It’s powerful to know that you have God’s perspective on something.”



Steve

“This was the first time that I understood what people meant by God’s living Word. And I’ve been a Christian for a lot of years, but this was the first time it really came alive for me and I really could experience that.”



Dan

“It doesn’t matter where you are at in your walk. If you just got saved yesterday or if you’ve been a 20+ year believer like i have, learning how to hear God’s voice and learning His will is just as important in day one as it is in day 3,426. You wanna hear God’s will and this course has helped me hear Him more clearly.”



Bob

“Abiding turned out to be the most transformational thing I’ve ever had since salvation in my Christian walk and in our marriage, and it’s just been amazing. God has a path for us and He is there and He’s showing it to us.”



Heath

“Before, in my quiet time, it was more of a checklist thing for me to do in the morning, and, honestly, some mornings it was the thing that went if I was busy, and some days it didn’t even happen. Now, it’s become so personal to me and the time flies by in the morning and God speaks so directly to me and I just never felt that way on a daily basis before. That has been life-altering for me.”



Rebecca

“I heard about people living in peace, I heard about people living in joy, and realizing all kinds of things around them are happening. And then we realize, wait a minute, we’re there, we have peace beyond understanding.”



Brad

Giving to the Ministry

Have you experienced abundant blessing from your time with Abide Ministries?

Pay it forward by donating at abideministries.com/donate and help us support others in learning how to seek Christ and abide in Him! We appreciate your desire to help us share the Abundant Life with the rest of the world.



Learn More at abideministries.com

Podcast

Escape the chaos and uncertainty of the world with our podcast, ***“Come and See, Finding Truth in a World of Chaos,”*** available on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, and Spotify.



CHANNEL



PLAYLIST PAGE



Tune in five days a week as our hosts, Rich Case and Kathy Rocconi, dive into the scriptures and discuss what it looks like to live an abiding life with Christ. Join us as we seek God’s truth in a world of turmoil and darkness.

Online Courses



Abide Ministries online courses uncover life-changing biblical truths, with practical application and wisdom. Our courses are joyful and life-giving and are perfect for small groups as well as individuals.

Each course has an accompanying workbook. Join us as we learn about biblical topics like Hearing God's Voice, Discerning God's Will, the Covenant, Living in Forgiveness, Living in the Kingdom of God, Living in the Supernatural, Christ, Clutter and the Calendar, Living the Grand Life, and many, many more.



COURSES

Abide Retreats



Learn more at
abideministries.com

Do you have friends or a small group that you would like to experience what you just experienced?

Would you be interested in attending another retreat, which we call electives to go deeper in your walk with God?

See the various options on our website.
The topics for retreats and courses are the same.

RETREATS



COURSES



STORE

