

WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE BY FAITH

LEADER'S GUIDE

***A STUDY THAT SEEKS TO CULTIVATE AN INCREASING FAITH
IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER***

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WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE BY FAITH

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WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE BY FAITH**LEADER'S GUIDE****ORIENTATION**

[Have everyone turn to pages **4-5**, "A Snapshot of the Course."]

Let's begin with the "Objective" of this course, found at the top of the page. *What It Means to Live by Faith* is

A STUDY THAT SEEKS TO CULTIVATE AN INCREASING FAITH IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

This "Snapshot of the Course" is intended to *orient* us to the direction this study will take.

On pages **6-7** we will begin with a personal testimony by the author, "Has God Ever Said 'No' to You?" This account of what took place early in his Christian life explains the trouble a believer might face if he does not have a clear understanding of the life of faith to which he is called.

The course then seeks to explain the three basic elements of faith: Faith always has an *object*. Faith always has *content*. And faith always has an *amount* (pages **8-24**).

We are then directed to where the content of our faith is found (page **25**).

The major part of our study (pages **26-45**) will be devoted to answering the question, "Since I am to trust God, what exactly can I expect from Him?" We will learn what we can trust God to *be* (pages **26-28**), what we can trust God to *do* (pages **29-36**), and what we can trust God to *do in and through us*" (pages **37-47**).

We will then discuss what we *should* do when we do not know what to do (pages **48-52**) ... and (just as important) what we should *not do* when we do not know what to do (pages **53-57**).

Our study will conclude with a discussion on how to strengthen our faith (pages **58-61**).

The appendix of this course, "God's Assured Promises to the New Testament Church" (pages **64-140**) is only a *sample* of promises covering (1) the Word of God, (2) the Church's Future, (3) the Father's Relationship with the Church, (4) the Son's Relationship with the Church, (5) the Holy Spirit's Relationship with the Church, (6) the Church's Spiritual Blessings, (7) the Church's Response to Sin, (8) the Church's Spiritual Life, and (9) Spiritual Warfare. (This is not a complete list of the promises given to us.)

Finally, on pages **141-150**, you are given (ahead of time) a list of questions we will discuss as a group.

- ? Does anyone have any comments, questions, or clarifications about where we are going and how we plan to get there?

HAS GOD EVER SAID "NO" TO YOU?

[Have 2-3 read this section: pages 6-7.]

[Be sure footnotes 1-2 are also read, page 7.]

This testimony concerns the author's pursuit of a career requiring a certain degree.

- ? If you had been one of those he asked *to pray with him for his acceptance into that study program*, can you think of any advice you would have given him?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

THE ELEMENTS OF FAITH

[Have 1-2 read this section: pages 8-9.]

Let's start with the basics. We read that faith always has three essential elements.

- ? What are they? [*An object. Content. An amount.*]

Just to make sure we have a clear understanding of these elements before continuing:

- ? What is the *object* of one's faith? [*The object of one's faith is the person or thing he is trusting.*]
- ? What is the *content* of one's faith? [*The content of one's faith is what he is trusting the object of his faith to do.*]
- ? What is the *amount* of one's faith? [*The amount of one's faith is the level of trust he has in the object of his faith.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

The Object of Faith

[Have several read this section: pages **10-14**.]

[Be sure footnote **4** (page **10**) and footnotes **5** and **6** (page **12**) are read as they come up.]

? What *should* be the Object of a believer's faith? [*God*]

Gifted individuals ... programs and strategies ... materials and resources ... time ... money ... strength ... education ... experience ... all these have been given to us to *use*. And God expects us to do so.

Your reading, however, made a distinction between *using* these gifts versus *trusting* in them. We are to depend upon God, not God's gifts, to carry out His will. Only the Spirit of God has the power to make an eternal impact in the souls of men and women. Nothing "earthly" or man-generated can do that.

? How then can we keep this balance between using God's resources to the fullest (as faithful stewards of Christ) without placing our faith in them? [*Through **prayer** we should confess (often) our own inability to carry out God's will; and we should declare (often) our complete dependence upon Him to supply us with everything we need to advance His Name and cause: His skill, His wisdom, and His power. Only then can our best efforts (our "five loaves and two fish") be **used** to have an eternal impact in the lives of others to the glory of His Name.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

The Content of Faith

[Have several read this section: pages **15-20**.]

[Have someone read footnote **7**, page **15**.]

- ? What *should* be the content of a believer's faith? [*the unchanging character and perfect will of God*]
- ? What does it mean to "present one's requests placed upon an opened palm rather than held within a clenched fist"? [*What we request should be tempered with the attitude, "This may not be best for me and, if not, please take it away from me. I want Your will to be done, not mine."*]

[Summarize their answers.]

[Have someone read footnote **8**, pages **19-20**.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

The Amount of Faith

[Have 1 or 2 read this section: pages **21-22**.]

[Have someone read footnote **9**, page **22**.]

- ? What is the least amount of faith a believer needs to benefit from the promises of God? [*"a mustard seed amount"*]
- ? If a small amount of faith is all a believer needs to benefit from God's promises, what advantages does a *strong* faith have over a weak faith? (Why should we want to strengthen our faith?) [*The stronger our faith, the more composed we will be in our conduct and the more confident we will be in our decisions.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR

[Have someone read this section: pages **23-24**.]

- ? Before we move into new material, was there any information from this entire section, "The Elements of Faith" (pages 8-22), that you would like to review?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHERE THE CONTENT OF OUR FAITH IS FOUND

[Have someone read this section: page **25**.]

[As he comes to each footnote in the reading, have the same person read that footnote (**10, 11, 12, 13**), page **25**.]

It was said that the will of God is revealed in the Word of God.

- ? Why is the Word of God a more reliable authority for faith and practice than the *thoughts* or *feelings* that cross your mind? *[Its writings are inspired by the Spirit of God while my thoughts and feelings fluctuate, depending on my circumstances, mindset, and experiences.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Why is the Word of God a more reliable authority for faith and practice than the teachings of your local church or denomination? *[the teachings found within local churches / denominations – even the sincerest – are fallible. To discern if those teachings are correct or not, one must compare them with the whole counsel of God.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE CAN TRUST GOD TO BE

The Unchanging Character of God

[Have 2 or 3 read this section: pages **26-28**.]

In today's material we were encouraged to "*dismiss those thoughts* (that 'God has let us down') and stand firm, trusting Him to be what His Word insists that He is."

? How does one "dismiss a thought"? [*By replacing it with another thought, namely, a truth from God's Word. Only by God's power through prayer will we be able to do this.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE CAN TRUST GOD TO DO

The Assured Promises of God

[Have several read this section: pages **29-32**.]

It was said in your reading, "Waiting for God to do what He said He would do sometimes involves long-term patience." But the time spent waiting should not be considered time wasted. We should make the most of that priceless gift.

- ? What are some things we can do to live productive lives while "waiting on the Lord"?
 [(1) Continue to faithfully spend time in God's Word and prayer (in fellowship with the Lord). (2) Be active in serving Christ. (3) Be diligent in obedience. (4) Be attentive to our daily responsibilities.]

[Summarize their answers.]

[Have someone read footnote **15**, page **32**]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE CAN TRUST GOD TO DO

The Unfailing Prophecies of God

[Have several read this section: pages **33-36**.]

God's blueprint for the future has not been fully revealed. Therefore, we are limited in what we *can* know. Nevertheless, we are responsible to pursue an understanding of those portions of His prophetic plan that have been shown to us. This understanding is only possible by the clarifying ministry of the Holy Spirit. We must trust Him to help us "connect the dots" of Biblical prophecy (as much as possible). This, of course, demands much prayer.

Two reasons were given explaining why God wants us to know His will for the future.

One reason is "to motivate the believer to prepare himself to bow before God." In 1st Corinthians 3:8-15 and 4:5, we are told that every believer faces an evaluation at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Our knowledge of this judgment will motivate us to prepare for this event.

- ? When we bow before Christ for this face-to-Face judgment, what will *not* be the subject of conversation? [*Our sins.*]

[Have someone read footnote **17**, page **35**.]

? What *will* be the subject of conversation? [*Our stewardship.*]

[Have someone read footnote **18**, page **35**.]

A second reason to study prophecy is “to fortify and reassure us as we face adversity.” Your reading mentioned three adversaries from which you will, one day in the future, be *fully and forever delivered*. (These can be found toward the bottom of page 36.)

? What are these three opponents? [*persecutions from a hostile world, temptations from your flesh, and oppressions from the demonic realm*]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE CAN TRUST GOD TO DO IN AND THROUGH US

[Have 1 or 2 read this section: page **37**.]

? What are some ways God has given His people to participate with Him in the fulfillment of His will? [*One example is evangelism, allowing us to take part with God in His deliverance of the lost from eternal death.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

[Have someone read footnote **19**, page **37**.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE CAN TRUST GOD TO DO IN AND THROUGH US

As We Strengthen the Church of God

[Have several read this section: pages **38-39**.]

The twelve apostles were entrusted with several different kinds of ministries to perform: to cast out demons, to heal every kind of disease and sickness, to preach the good news of the kingdom, to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers (Matthew 11), and on two occasions to feed thousands of people (Matthew 14 and 15). Later, they would be entrusted with the Great Commission (Matthew 28). These were ordinary men given extraordinary things to do. And they were given a few resources – if any at all (five barley loaves and two fish) – to use.

We, too, have been given several diverse ministries to perform: to share the Gospel with the lost, to pray, to use our spiritual gifts, to give financial and material resources to those in need, to fight our spiritual enemies with our spiritual battle gear, to name a few. We, too, are ordinary individuals. And we, too, are expected to do something extraordinary: *to have an eternal impact in the lives of those who need to know Christ as Savior and in the lives of our churches.*

As with the apostles, if we are going to have *an eternal impact* in the lives of others, something more is needed (in addition to personnel and resources) to carry out these supernatural responsibilities. And without it, we will fail as God's stewards.

? What is it? [*We must trust God to provide us with everything we need to carry out His will.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE CAN TRUST GOD TO DO IN AND THROUGH US

As We Radiate the Righteousness of God

[Have several read this section: pages **40-43**.]

- ? What is God's moral will for your life? [*sanctification, being set apart from sin unto righteousness, being conformed to Christ Jesus*]

Concerning this will, it was said that we all have a problem. His will is impossible for us to obey. Because of our sinful nature, we are too weak. It usually takes some failures in our lives before we can accept the reality of our weakness. So, if someone has failed morally in the past, he has a golden opportunity to grow in Christlikeness.

- ? Why is that? [*Now he knows that he does not have the motivation or power to obey God's will in his own strength and, therefore, he must depend upon the power of God to do so.*]

- ? Can you think of any promises in the Bible that assure us of God's sanctifying work? [*Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:28-29.*]

[Have two people read Philippians 1:6 and Romans 8:28-29.]

FOR I AM CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING, THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL PERFECT IT UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST JESUS. (PHILIPPIANS 1:6)

AND WE KNOW THAT GOD CAUSES ALL THINGS TO WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. FOR THOSE WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BECOME CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, SO THAT HE WOULD BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN (ROMANS 8:28-29)

God's moral will has been fully revealed in His Word. Perhaps a contemporary situation would help support that. According to the Scriptures, a used car salesman is to tell the car buyer not only everything that is right with the car but also everything that is wrong with the car.

[Have someone read Proverb 20:23.]

DIFFERING WEIGHTS ARE AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD, AND A FALSE SCALE IS NOT GOOD. (PROVERB 20:23)

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT WE CAN TRUST GOD TO DO IN AND THROUGH US

As We Apply the Wisdom of God

I would like to ask for one or two volunteers for this part of our study. Think back to when you were faced with making a major decision.

- ? Would some of you be willing to tell us what decision you were facing and then walk us through the process you used? It may be that your testimony will help someone else work through a decision they are facing now.

[Have several read this section: pages **44-47**.]

We read that 100% of God's wise principles have been revealed in His Word. Let us consider what is meant by this term "wise principles." Although the following caution was given by our Lord when He challenged any future disciples to first "count the cost," we can still learn how to make wise decisions regarding two specific areas of life: finance and war.

First, we are told how to determine *the price range within which we should stay* as we consider the construction (or the purchase) of a structure of some sort (a house, an office building, etc.), whether paying with cash or via a loan:

[Have someone read Luke 14:28-30.]

FOR WHICH ONE OF YOU, WHEN HE WANTS TO BUILD A TOWER, DOES NOT FIRST SIT DOWN AND CALCULATE THE COST TO SEE IF HE HAS ENOUGH TO COMPLETE IT? OTHERWISE, WHEN HE HAS LAID A FOUNDATION AND IS NOT ABLE TO FINISH, ALL WHO OBSERVE IT BEGIN TO RIDICULE HIM, SAYING, "THIS MAN BEGAN TO BUILD AND WAS NOT ABLE TO FINISH." (LUKE 14:28-30)

We also know from the Scriptures what a government should consider before it declares war on another nation.

[Have someone read Luke 14:31-32.]

OR WHAT KING, WHEN HE SETS OUT TO MEET ANOTHER KING IN BATTLE, WILL NOT FIRST SIT DOWN AND CONSIDER WHETHER HE IS STRONG ENOUGH WITH TEN THOUSAND MEN TO ENCOUNTER THE ONE COMING AGAINST HIM WITH TWENTY THOUSAND? OR ELSE, WHILE THE OTHER IS STILL FAR AWAY, HE SENDS A DELEGATION AND ASKS FOR TERMS OF PEACE. (LUKE 14:31-32)

These are not moral commands but, rather, wise principles by which we should live.

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(1) Humbly submit to God's will in advance

[Have someone read this section: page 48.]

Some Christians are skeptical about the goodness of God's will. They may even fear His plan. They do not *want* to pray, "Thy will be done" because He might change their own plans.

? What is the root problem here? What causes a believer to retreat from submitting his will to the will of God?

[A low view of God. The underlying problem of this skepticism / fear is unbelief, an unwillingness to trust the God of the Bible. He does not believe that God knows what is best for him.]

[A high view of self. He is confident that he knows what is in his own best interest and can, by his own efforts, obtain what he wants out of life.]

[A love for the world. He suspects that God's will may call upon Him to sacrifice the ease and convenience this world promises to give him. For the mere possibility of temporal pleasures, he does not want to give up the benefits he thinks this world offers.]

? Why does this problem exist?

[Ignorance of God's character. Perhaps he has not had time to grow in his knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. (He is a new convert.) As a result, he has not yet become acquainted with God's goodness, love, and wisdom. It is hard for a person to trust Someone he does not know.]

[Ignorance of his own inability. It often takes some failures before one stops trusting in his own judgment. "Please don't do my will. Please do Your will" becomes easier to say with each fall.]

[Lacking an eternal perspective. Because of life's distractions, he has spent little time in God's Word. This makes "dying to self" difficult when one's heart is not impassioned toward the priceless value of Christ's riches and glory.]

[Conclusion: It is impossible for one's faith to be strong apart from the Word of God.]

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(2) Do not be hasty in your decision

[Have someone read this section: page 49.]

? What can be lost if we rush into a decision? *[In our attempt to have this decision settled, we end up with something less-than-best.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(3) Bathe your search in prayer

[Have someone read this section: page 49.]

When the specifics of God's will have not been revealed to us, we were told in this section to "pray for (His) wisdom and guidance up front."

- ? Why do we believe God *can* give us wisdom and guidance? What has been revealed to us in the Scriptures that assures us that He has this ability to do so? *[God can give us wisdom because we know from His Word that He is wise. He can give us guidance because we know from the Bible that He is all-knowing and sovereign. If we have no other content to cling to, we can rely upon His character as our "anchor" during this search.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(4) Search for God's wisdom from the Scriptures

[Have someone read this section: page 49.]

Let's say you were thinking about starting your own business. So, you decide to search the Scriptures to discover what It says about business partners, cost of operation, going into debt, craftsmanship, work ethic, and such matters.

- ? How do you "search the Scriptures" to discover the wisdom God offers you about this topic? *[(1) Use the verse references in a Concordance to trace where that topic is addressed in the Bible. Then record everything you learn from those verses about that subject. (2) Consult a Christian businessman who knows the Scriptures well and who has experience in such endeavors.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(5) Seek guidance from counselors

[Have someone read this section: page 50.]

? Do you think there is ever a time to consult a lost person for advice? *[A lost person can still have knowledge about a subject; he can still learn from his experiences; he could still have been humbled from his experiences and, therefore, not hold someone in contempt; he can be trusted with sensitive information; and he can still tell us what we need to hear even though he knows it is not what we want to hear. Nevertheless, we still need to compare his advice with God's counsel as found in the Scriptures.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(6) In view of your personal situation, decide which choice is best for you

[Have someone read this section: page 50-51.]

We read, "Once we have done our research, it would be wise to set it aside for a time. Further insights may come."

? Why do you think putting aside your decision for a time might be difficult to do? *[It may be difficult because you want this decision to be over. Impatience can lead to foolish behavior.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(7) Ask yourself the question, "Which of these options, if any, do I *want* to do?"

[Have someone read this section: page 51.]

- ? If you agree that this *should* be a consideration, why do you think so? But if you do *not* agree that this should be a consideration, why not?

[Yes, it should: God has given us these abilities and interests. To set them aside would be to forfeit our use of these motivating resources to participate with Him in the accomplishment of His will. It would not be good stewardship.]

*[No, it should not: We are called to do what God wants us to do, not what **we** want to do: Moses did not want to do what God called him to do.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(8) Make the decision, then take steps to accomplish it

[Have someone read this section: page 51.]

All the steps we have taken so far have been to prepare us for this one. Each was necessary; but now it is time to “make the decision” and move forward. For some, it is this step that often causes the most distress.

- ? Why is that? What is it about this step that makes it so difficult for some? *[Up to now, we have not had to make any commitment, just preparation. This step tends to shut all the doors that, up to now, have still been open, leaving only one way to go. Perhaps a sense of finality causes us to hesitate (or even become paralyzed). Nevertheless, this is part of living by faith, trusting God to guide us.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

(9) While waiting, make the most of where you are and what you have

[Have someone read this section: page 51.]

- ? Why do you think the Lord has us “wait upon Him” at times? *[To grow in our ability to trust His timing. In not giving us what we want at once, having to wait cultivates self-control of our flesh.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO**Conclusion**

[Have someone read this section: pages **52-50**.]

WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO**Do Not Expect Various Miracles of Communication**

[Have 1 or 2 read this section: pages **53-54**.]

Even thoughts that cross our minds cannot be trusted as being "the will of God." (Unbelievers also have "thoughts that cross their minds.") That is not to say these ideas should automatically be rejected since some of our thoughts are good and wise. Others, however, are unbiblical and foolish.

- ? How do you know which of your thoughts are worth pursuing as you seek God's will?
[One should always consult the Scriptures (and / or get counsel from those who are well-versed in God's Word) to compare these ideas with God's Truth. God will never lead His people to do something contrary to the clear teaching of His Word.]

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO**Do Not Put Out a Fleece**

[Have 1 or 2 read this section: pages **54-55**.]

- ? Can you think of any negative consequences in putting out a fleece? *[We are forcing God's hand: We are limiting His course for our lives to the options we know about. We may be foolishly rushing into a situation because we wanted an answer right now, resulting in a less-than-best outcome.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

[Have someone read footnote **20**, page **55**.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT *NOT* TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

But If You Insist on Following Gideon's Example ...

[Have someone read this section: page **55-56**.]

- ? What did you think of this section?

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

WHAT *NOT* TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

Do Not View a Sense of Immediate Peace as a Confirmation of God's Will

[Have someone read this section: page **56**.]

It was said that "following one's heart can lead to disaster. Only the will of God can bring *lasting* peace."

It *is* possible for a person to realize (through the counsel of God's Word or God's people) that what he thought would bring him satisfaction and fulfillment is not God's will. Yet, that awareness does not remove the *desire* from his heart.

? Now what? What can he do to remove this deceptive desire from his heart? *[He must replace it with a desire he or she knows to be God's will. This may require help from others. And it will require both prayer and time.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT *NOT* TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

Conclusion

[Have someone read this section: page **56-57**.]

HOW TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH IN GOD

By Reading (Hearing) the Word of God

[Have several read this section: pages **58-60**.]

Through our study of the Scriptures, we come to know the *character of God*. He, of course, is the *Object* of our Faith. The better we know *Him*, the more trustworthy He becomes *to us*.

? _____, do you have a favorite verse of Scripture? Would you be willing to read (or quote) that passage to the group?

[Have him do so.]

? _____, what does that verse teach you about God's *character*?

[Have someone read footnote **21**, page **59**.]

Through our study of the Scriptures, we also come to know the *will of God*. His will, of course, is the *content* of our faith. The better we know His will, the better we will know what to trust Him *for*.

? _____, do you have a favorite verse of Scripture? Would you be willing to read (or quote) that passage to the group?

[Have him do so.]

? _____, what does that verse teach you about God's *will*?

[Summarize his answer.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

HOW TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH IN GOD

By Remembering the Works of God

[Have several read this section: pages **60-61**.]

The level of one's spiritual maturity is directly proportionate to his level of faith. It is impossible to have one inch of faith ... and have one foot of spiritual maturity. This is true for the life of the individual believer as well as the life of a local church. If you wish to know the *level of faith* a church has, take a good look at their *level of spiritual maturity*.

? Since faith can be strengthened "by remembering the works of God," what could a *local church* do to cultivate faith in the lives of its people? [*give opportunities for personal testimonies*]

[Summarize their answers.]

? How has God used *worldly people* to strengthen your faith? [*our endurance in the face of adversity has strengthened us in our faith*]

[Summarize their answers.]

? In view of this principle, what can *you* do to cultivate your own faith?

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think and answer.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHAT IT MEANS TO "LIVE BY FAITH"

[Have someone read the top portion: page **62**.]

Something Worth Noting

[Have someone read this section: pages **62-63**.]

GOD'S ASSURED PROMISES TO THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

[For the next several weeks, have your group discuss *all* the promises under the category "VIII. REGARDING THE CHURCH'S SPIRITUAL LIFE," pages **118-137**.]

[Take one category at a time (for example, "A. *An Abundant Life*," see pages **118-120**).]

[Take one heading at a time (for example, "97. *God will bless the one who trusts in Christ for salvation with a multitude of priceless, eternal riches*," see page **118**).]

[Have a student read the 1st promise (for example, "THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, 'WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.' (ROMANS 10:11)," plus its explanation [within the brackets].]

[Next, have another student read the 2nd promise (for example, "JUST AS IT IS WRITTEN, 'BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING' (ROMANS 9:33)," plus its explanations [within the brackets].]

[Continue these readings until *all* the verses under that one heading (**97**) have been read.]

If someone were involved in a conflict with one of his co-workers and did not know what to do, he would find assurance in the promise of God's help from James 1:2-5:

CONSIDER IT ALL JOY, MY BRETHREN, WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS, KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES ENDURANCE. AND LET ENDURANCE HAVE ITS PERFECT RESULT, SO THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE, LACKING IN NOTHING. BUT IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, WHO GIVES TO ALL GENEROUSLY AND WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO HIM.

Within this passage God promises to give His abundant wisdom to the one who is struggling to know what to do in this situation.

? Concerning what we just read, can you think of any *situation in life* these promises would address? And if we were to claim – by faith – these assurances of God, an attitude of triumph – instead of defeat – would be the result?

[After the discussion of that heading (“**97. God will bless**”) is finished, continue with the next heading (“**98. The One who trusts in Christ for salvation**”), completing other headings as time allows.]

[At the end of your discussion of “VIII. REGARDING THE CHURCH’S SPIRITUAL LIFE” (pages **118-137**), you may want to ask the group if they wish to continue discussing the others promises in this appendix (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, IX) as you have been doing.