

How to Understand God and Receive His Light

Introduction:

1. Are there any guys in here who can boast that you have completely figured out women?
 - You may have figured out **some** things, but there are other things you have not figured out and never will figure out.
2. By the same token, you will never completely figure out God while living on this earth (Romans 11:34). To figure out God would mean that you would be on the same level as God. God would be no bigger than you.
3. But, God has revealed about Himself what we **need** to know, and it is found in His Word (Ephesians 1:9, 5:17; 1 John 5:20).
4. God gave Christ to this earth to come and live a perfect life and then die on the cross, and rise again on the third day.
5. God then gave us the apostle Paul to reveal to us what was **accomplished** through Christ's work. Paul reveals that Christ made a full and complete payment for our sins on the cross. Now we can be reconciled to God and receive the very life of God.
6. Notice what words that Christ spoke to Paul when Paul got saved on the Road to Damascus. Acts 26:16-18
7. This was the commission that God gave to Paul, and Paul began to take this message to the world. This is CrossRoads' core message. This is the message that Christ has given us to share with Daytona Beach, but not just Daytona Beach. Colossians 1:28 teaches that we have an "*every man*" ministry.
8. How do we accomplish such a daunting task? This is where we must work and partner with other people—missionaries. Paul isn't here anymore. This is our hour, our day, and our time. We must spread the good news so that every person can experience:

Spiritual eyes that understand God.

1. Have you ever explained something to someone and then said, "Do you see what I'm saying?" What do we mean? "Do you understand?"
2. God's Word does the same thing. Let me give you an example. Matthew 13:15
 - It is clear from the context that Jesus is saying, "These folks don't get it. They are spiritually blind." The word "understand" means "to put together."
 - But did you know that **every** person in his or her natural state is spiritually blind? Ephesians 4:18, 20
 - Nobody comes out of the womb with a spiritual understanding of God and Jesus Christ.
 - None of my boys came out of the womb saying, "Let me tell you about Jesus, my Savior." They came out yelling and screaming bloody murder.
3. How do we overcome our spiritual blindness? Spiritual blindness is lifted when you hear the message of Christ, learn of Christ, and then place your faith in what He has done for you. Acts 26:18

- Notice the verse says that Christ sent Paul out with the message of Christ *"To open their eyes..."* The key is at the end of the verse, *"...by faith that is in me."*
 - Your faith must rest in Christ, and Christ alone. He alone died for your sins and rose from the dead. Only through Christ can you be forgiven and reconciled to God.
 - But **first** you must admit your need. **Illustration:** When Christ walked the earth, He never healed a blind person that did not first admit his need and cry out to Him for help.
4. It is a turning point in your life when you admit that you are a sinner, admit you are spiritually blind, and admit that you need Jesus in your heart and life.
 5. When you call upon Him, the darkness and blindness is lifted, and you now have spiritual eyes to understand God. Light comes into your soul and spirit, which brings me to my next point and a key part of the core message we have been given to share with this world. Every person can experience:

Spiritual light to see God's plan.

1. Paul was sent out to take the message of Christ to people, and that message would *"turn them from darkness to light."*
2. We all know the benefits of physical light. It allows you to see where you are going. When you have spiritual light from God, you can clearly see what direction and path your life should be heading. You can see God's plan and purpose for your life.
3. Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world."* Jesus came to this earth so that you could have spiritual light, and see and understand God's plan and purpose for you.
 - God doesn't want you in darkness. John 1:4, 9
4. Satan is described as the *"the ruler of darkness."* He desires to keep you spiritually blind and spiritually in darkness. He does not want you to understand the good news of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). This is why he hates churches that have a passion for missions.
 - How do you dispel Satan's darkness and receive spiritual light? Again, let's look at the words of Christ spoken to Paul in Acts 26:18. He said, *"...by faith that is in me."*
 - The moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ, the light of Jesus shines in your heart (2 Corinthians 4:6). You now have the light of knowledge. John 12:46
5. You will never understand God's plan for you until the light of Jesus is shining in your heart.

In Conclusion:

1. What is CrossRoads all about? Here is what we are all about: We want people everywhere to know that they can have spiritual eyes that understand God, and spiritual light to see God's plan for mankind. This is why Missions is our heartbeat.

2. How do you receive these two precious gifts? It is very simple. It is all appropriated by faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9
 - You can't earn them, you can't work for them, and you can't even be good enough or religious enough to receive them.
 - But when you call upon Jesus Christ, admit your need, and receive Him into your heart and life, your eyes are opened!
 - Light comes into your soul! You enter into a relationship with God Almighty.
3. Do you have spiritual eyes that understand God? Do you have the light of heaven in you? If not, why don't you make a decision for Jesus Christ today?

Set Free From Bondage

John 8

Introduction:

1. Have you ever found yourself in bondage to somebody or something?
 - Illustration: Being stuck in an elevator at a store.
2. The word "bondage" is defined as "servitude to a controlling force or person."
3. Did you know that Satan (the devil) is the author of bondage? He specializes in it. 2 Timothy 2:26
 - He uses his power to enslave people in their own sinful tendencies, sinful lusts, carnal pleasures, and their own internal fears. John 8:34; Romans 6:17
4. Of course, Satan works undercover. He doesn't advertise it as bondage. He advertises it as fun, exciting, pleasurable, and exhilarating. He calls it "partying hard" or "getting high" or "living it up." But he ends up ensnaring you into bondage.
5. Maybe you feel as if you are in bondage today. You feel a heavy load of guilt and shame. Maybe you have an addictive habit, unresolved anger or bitterness, or maybe some sort of mental stronghold. But it has you in bondage.
6. I've got awesome news for you. You can be set free! This was part of the message that Christ commissioned Paul to proclaim to the nations. Acts 26:18
 - Christ told Paul to take the message that people don't have to wander aimlessly in the darkness and bondage of Satan. They can be turned from Satan unto God.
7. It may feel like Satan has you "down for the count," but you can be loosed and set free.
8. Every person can be set free from the bondage of Satan. This is the message that we as a church must take to the people of this world.
9. Jesus reveals how in John 8. This chapter begins with a woman who had supposedly been taken in adultery. Her accusers gathered around her and were ready to stone her.
 - Shame and death epitomized her. She was a product of Satan's bondage, but Jesus set her free!
10. Then, He explains how every person can be set free. It's very simple, but very liberating.

First, you must admit and confess your condition of bondage.

1. Jesus addressed a group of religious people. They were religious and believed in God, yet they were in bondage to Satan. Jesus makes this very clear. vs. 23, 24, 34, 41, 44
2. Here is the sad part: Most of these people were still in bondage after this encounter with Christ because they could not admit that they had a problem and needed Christ's help.

- Jesus offered to set them free, but they wouldn't even admit that they were bound (vs. 32-33). They just didn't get it (vs. 39-41). Verse 45 sums it up.
3. So many people are like this, today. Satan has them in bondage to money, possessions, their jobs, sinful lusts, addictive habits, their own pride and ego, bitterness, and unforgiveness. But yet, like these people, they think, "I'm not in bondage to any man."
 - People think, "I'm my own man. I live to please me. I'm free." They are too blind to see that they are under the power and control of Satan. They are doing Satan's will. vs. 44
 - The longer we live in denial and continue with the status quo, the deeper and stronger the bondage.
 - Remember the illustration of being stuck in an elevator? Until you're willing to admit and confess your bondage, you're not going to get help. You have to cry for help!
 4. You will never be set free from the bondage of Satan until you **want** to be set free.
 - Illustration: Blind Bartimaeus. Mark 10:47-48

Second, you must place your total faith in the great liberator, Jesus Christ.

1. Once we admit our condition of bondage, we must turn to the only One who can help us - the only One who ever defeated and conquered sin and Satan in totality, Jesus Christ.
 - He has already wrought the victory, and **His** victory can be **our** victory if we place our faith and trust in Him. (Acts 26:18 "*by faith that is in me*")
2. Satan is all about bondage; Christ is all about freedom and liberty. vs. 31, 32, 35-36
3. If you want to be set free from Satan's bondage, your faith must be in Christ.

Faith in Christ's finished work

- Jesus' sacrifice for sin on the cross is a finished and completed work, and all sufficient.
- Once you place your faith in His finished work, you are no longer a slave to sin.
- You are in Christ, and sin's power has been broken. You positionally change from Satan's family to God's family. Satan has no right of ownership or authority over you.
- Satan is a defeated foe, but he is committed to keeping you from realizing that. If he can convince you that you are just a product of your past, subject to sin, and controlled by your habits, then he can block your effectiveness as a Christian and keep you chained and bound to your sin.
- You are free in Christ, but if the devil can deceive you into believing you are not, you won't experience the freedom of your inheritance in Christ.

Faith in Christ's Word

- Jesus' words are truth, but these people wouldn't believe His words. They chose to believe the lies of Satan. vs. 31-32, 44-47
- Remember this: Freedom from spiritual bondage is not a **power** encounter; it is a **truth** encounter. This is why we must get His Word to the nations.
- Satan is a deceiver, but the truth of God's Word exposes him. His power is in the lie. But truth is a liberating agent. God's power is in the truth. Matthew 22:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- You must place your faith in, and take your stand on, the written Word of God. You don't out-shout or out-muscle Satan, you simply out-truth him. Believe, declare, and act on the truth of God's Word. This is what Christ did in the wilderness.

In Conclusion:

1. If Satan has you in bondage in any way, you don't have to stay there. You can be set free.
2. You simply must admit and confess your bondage, and then place your faith in the great liberator, Jesus Christ. Place your faith in His finished work and in His finished Word.
3. Satan doesn't want you to know that you can be set free. 2 Timothy 2:25-26

Understanding and Receiving God's Forgiveness Colossians 1

Introduction:

1. What is our core mission as a church? Why is there a church here at 1851 S. Clyde Morris Blvd?
2. Who would we look to in this dispensation of grace to find out our commission? Who in this Bible is going to lay out for us the core of what we are supposed to be doing?
3. Naturally, we would go to the apostle of the Gentiles, the apostle of the body of Christ, the apostle Paul.
4. What was Paul's commission? We discover it in Acts 26:17-18. Jesus sent Paul out so that the people of the nations may know that God is offering them forgiveness of all their sins. The reason why God sent forth Paul and sends us forth today is because:
 - Many people don't understand how desperately they need God's forgiveness.
 - Many people don't understand how they can receive God's forgiveness.
5. They may know that God forgives, but they don't know how to apply it personally in their lives. Every person in this world should have the opportunity to understand and receive God's forgiveness.
6. It is literally the difference between heaven and hell, life and death.

Why is God's forgiveness necessary in my life?

1. Have you ever had somebody do something to really offend you, but they didn't get it. They just didn't see it. They desperately needed your forgiveness, but they didn't really see that they had done anything wrong.
2. Reconciliation is not likely to occur under these circumstances. There has to be an acknowledgment and admittance that there has been an offence. The light has to turn on.
3. Look what the Bible says about these Christian people at Colosse. vs. 20-21
 - These people were alienated from God and enemies of God by wicked works.
 - Because they recognized their alienated position and had turned to Christ, they had been forgiven and reconciled to God. vs. 14
 - According to Webster's, "forgiveness" is "to pardon an offender, by which he is treated as not guilty."
4. But there are a lot of people who don't get it. They consider themselves "good people." They don't really need God's forgiveness. In their eyes they have never done anything "wicked."
 - We see our sin from a human perspective, comparing our sin to others'.
 - We don't see our sin from a holy God's perspective. For example, the first of the Ten Commandments is to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. When we love things more than God, it is not trivial, it's treason.

- If you came up short on that one, try the other nine (lying, stealing, disobeying parents, sexual sin, using God's name in vain, etc.)!
5. Do you know what God's commentary is on the human race? Romans 3:10, 23
 - That is the shoe, and if we were all honest, we would have to say that it fits.
 - My sin has alienated me from a holy God. There is a sin barrier. A person may not realize it, but it doesn't change the fact that it is there.
 - I will not have peace with God until that sin barrier is removed.
 - Forgiveness smashes the sin barrier and brings me into a relationship with God.
 6. The Bible teaches that God desires to reconcile us to Himself, but on what basis can He do this? This brings us to the next question.

Will God really forgive me?

1. You may be thinking, "Why would God forgive me for all the sinful, wicked things I've done?" There is good news!
2. God has already made provision for the forgiveness of every one of your sins.
 - Look at verse 14. This is referring to Christ's work on the cross.
 - I am an enemy of God, but the way of peace has been made through Christ's death on the cross. vs. 20-22
3. When Christ died on the cross, He was absorbing the full wrath of God against sin. Sin must always be punished and dealt with. Romans 5:8-10; 1 John 4:10
4. He took the death penalty against sin (that you and I deserve), so that God could justly forgive you and me. He died for us, in our place!
5. You see, God's forgiveness costs us nothing, but it cost Jesus His life!
 - What wonderful news! God forgives and will not hold our sins against us!
 - Christ's blood made it right and acceptable for God to do this. vs. 14
 - On what basis does God forgive us? Christ! (Not your church membership, baptism, etc.)

How do I receive God's forgiveness?

1. The Bible says that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. When He shed His blood, He made it possible for everyone in the world to be reconciled to God.
2. But we know that every person will not be reconciled. Many will end up in a place Jesus called hell. Matthew 7:13
3. Why is this? The debt for our sin has been paid, but many will fail to ever apply this payment to their sin-sick souls.
4. God has made full provision for your forgiveness through Christ. The only question is, "Will you receive Christ and the work He has done for you, or will you reject Him?"
 - The people at Colosse had received Christ and placed their faith in Him. This is why they **were** enemies of God, but **now** were reconciled. 1:4, 2:6
 - To be "in Christ" means to be in relationship with Him by faith. 1:27-18

5. Faith in Christ unites us to Christ so that **His** death becomes our death and **His** righteousness becomes our righteousness.
 - Christ becomes our punishment (which we don't have to bear) and our perfection (which we cannot perform).
6. How do you receive God's forgiveness? Simply put your total faith in what Christ has done for you. Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:26
7. This brings immediate forgiveness of all your sins and an eternal relationship with God. You have the promise of God on that!

In Conclusion:

1. Do you know that you are forgiven today? What is the difference between the forgiveness of God and the wrath of God? The difference is Jesus.
2. If you have already received this forgiveness, you have a responsibility to get this life-saving message out to others. We call this "missions."
3. It literally is the difference between life and death for so many.

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Becoming an Heir of God Galatians 3:24-4:7

Introduction:

1. The word “heir” means, “one who is entitled to possess.”
2. There have been some famous heirs in history who inherited billions of dollars from a dead family member. But, I want you to imagine for a moment being an heir of **God**.
 - The God who created the heavens and the earth (Psalm 24:1; 1 Chronicles 29:11). “He owns the hills and the tators under the hills.”
 - We learn in the New Testament that it was Jesus Christ that created everything, and that He is the center of it all (the bull’s-eye). Colossians 1:16-17
3. It was **this** Jesus that appeared to Paul from heaven, saved Him, and gave him a heavenly commission. Christ sent Paul to the nations with a glorious message. Through the finished work of Christ, their eyes could be opened. Read Acts 26:18.
4. Not only could they possess the total and complete forgiveness of all of their sins, they also would receive an “inheritance.” They would be “sanctified” (set apart) to receive this inheritance from Jesus Christ.
 - There are two sides of the coin, here. If someone offends me and I forgive him, that's great, but what if I then give him a hundred-dollar bill?
 - God not only forgave us all our sins, but made us His heirs!
5. Did you know that every person can become an heir of God? Titus 3:7; Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 4:7
6. It doesn't get any better than this! If you are an heir of God, what an inheritance! But, what exactly does it entail? If I am an heir of God, what exactly does this mean?
7. If I am an heir of God, it means:

I am part of the family of God. 4:5-7

1. This is amazing. Four times in three verses, God declares these believers to be His sons. If I say something four times in three sentences, I want to make a point.
 - Of course, “*sons*” is used in a generic sense, referring to men and women, because in the body of Christ there is no male or female. 3:28
2. Can you imagine that we are members of the royal family? We have a personal relationship with God; therefore, I can now call God, “Father.” verse 6
 - In Jewish culture, “*adoption*” (verse 5) did not speak of **entrance** into the family (that happened at birth), but rather a **position** within the family (verse 1-2). It would usually occur at a certain age in that culture.
3. What does the Christian's adoption into the family of God mean?
 - We gain **entrance** into the family by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:26

- But adoption means the Christian is also given the **position** of a full-grown adult son in the family of God. We are not under the tutelage of the law, but we are viewed as adult sons within the family.
4. This is what it means to be an heir of God. I am part of His family and possess all the rights, privileges, and blessings of a full-grown adult son within God's family.

I will live forever with God. 3:21-22, 29

1. Let's look at Galatians 3:29. We are heirs according to the promise. What promise is Paul speaking of? Look back at verses 21-22. It is the promise of **life**!
 - The Old Testament law could not impart righteousness to people (it showed us to be sinners—Romans 6:23a), therefore it could not impart **life** to people.
 - It *“hath concluded all under sin, that the promise [of life] by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”* verse 22
2. But if you are the heir of God, it means you now have the promise of eternal life! Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25; Romans 6:23b
3. If you are an heir of God, it means that God has an eternal, never-ending commitment to you. God is in it for the long haul with you. Philippians 1:6

I am indwelt by God's Spirit. 4:6

1. As adult sons, we deal directly with the Father. There are no secretaries or gatekeepers to get through. We have complete access to Him by virtue of the fact that He has placed the spirit of His Son into our hearts. Ephesians 2:18
 - The presence or absence of the Spirit is what determines whether or not a person is in the family of God. Romans 8:9-10
2. *“Abba”* is a title of affection, intimacy, and tenderness. Jesus is the only one who used this title. Mark 14:36
3. The same level of intimacy that Christ has with the Father, you and I now have by virtue of Christ's spirit that lives within us. No servant could call his master, *“father,”* but because of our standing as sons, we can call God, *“Abba, Father.”*
4. We do not have to go through another person to fellowship with God. You do not have to keep a list of rules in order to fellowship with God. We are sons; we are heirs of God, and we are indwelt by God's very Spirit.

I am justified in God's sight. 3:24

1. The word *“justified”* means, *“to render just or innocent; to pardon or clear from guilt.”* The judge justifies a person by saying, *“Not guilty.”*
2. So, if we have all sinned (and we surely have), how can God (Who is honest and just), justify us (who have done ungodly deeds)? Look back at verse 22.
 - Christ shed His blood to pay the debt of our sin. Romans 5:9
 - Christ took our place. He paid the debt of our unrighteousness. Romans 5:6

- But the obedience of Christ provides the righteousness we need to be justified in God's court. Romans 4:5
3. The moment we trust Christ, His death cancels our unrighteousness. But then He imputes to us **His** righteousness. We are now justified; we are righteous in God's eyes. Why? Because God sees the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ.
 4. We are now made fit to be heirs of God. Go back to Titus 3:7.

I received this position through faith in Jesus Christ. 3:26

1. This verse is very direct. It shoots as straight as an arrow. 3:22, 24; 2:16
2. What are the last two words of 4:7? "*Through Christ.*"
3. We are what we are (heirs of God) because God sent forth His Son. Christ has done it all. He accomplished it all through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.
4. All that is left is for us to believe; to place our total faith in Christ.
 - You cannot work for this position of being an heir of God. It comes by faith alone in Jesus Christ.
5. Are you an heir of God? You **can** know. Believe on Jesus today and become part of God's family and Christ's inheritance in the heavens for eternity.