

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them."*
(Matthew 18:19,20)



SECTION 1 - LESSON 8

A HEBRAIC PERSPECTIVE

The Hebraic Stream Versus The Judaizing Stream

Hebraic Logic

Representing Our Father's Care Through Action

Humility As You Serve Others

The Sacred Nature Of All Of Life



Restoration Ministries International

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

www.Restorationministries.org

Section 1 Lesson 8

A Hebraic Perspective:

The Hebraic Stream Versus The Judaizing Stream

Hebraic Logic

Representing Our Father's Care Through Action

Humility As You Serve Others

The Sacred Nature Of All Of Life

A Hebraic Perspective:

The Hebraic Stream Versus The Judaizing Stream

“When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it.

Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands” (Deuteronomy 24:19)

Let's anchor what we mean by a “Hebraic perspective” by discussing for a moment the HEBRAIC stream of Judaism. Following the footsteps of their Hebrew ancestor Abraham, the Hebraic stream chose to relate to God through their LOVE FOR HIM. And BECAUSE of that love, they obeyed His commands.

An example of the **Hebraic Stream** compared to the **Judaizing Stream** may clarify the difference. As you read, discern which stream *you* are following.

Say you were walking through Israel five hundred years before the coming of Jesus. You encounter a farmer who's just finished harvesting his vineyard, and you see that he didn't go back over the vines again for more grapes. You ask him, “Why didn't you go back over your vines one more time?” He replies, “Because the Law commands me not to.” This is the **rule-keeping** reply of the

Judaizing Stream.

You go a little further and meet another farmer who's just finished harvesting his vineyard. You ask him the same question. This farmer joyfully replies, “It's because of MY LOVE for my heavenly Father. And because HE loves the poor and the alien, I don't glean my vineyard a second time. That way there will be enough for them.” That's the **love-based** answer of the Hebraic Stream.



The crucial distinction between the two streams is this:

- The *Hebraic Stream* is based on motive, **WHY** you serve God and others. The Hebraic foundations and living by them are *vertically-focused*, initiated by asking yourself, “Why am I doing this?”
- The *Judaizing Stream* focuses on **WHAT** you do. The emphasis is *horizontally-focused*. You keep religious rules and participate in activity without questioning “Why”. Hellenism builds on the Judaizing Stream by emphasizing *what* without *why*.

The motive of love-grounded obedient trust is God's priority.

- "...for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts" (1 Chronicles 28:9).
- "All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD" (Proverbs 16:2).

The same criterion applies to the followers of Jesus today. *God scrutinizes your heart and searches your motives.* He isn't as interested in *what* you do as *why* you do it.

You may not realize the profound effect that motive has on your relationship with our Lord. Many prayers don't get answered by our Father because self-gratification was your incentive: "*You pray and don't receive, because you pray with the wrong motive, that of wanting to indulge your own desires*" (James 4:3,CJB).

As we share different facets of the Hebraic perspective, examine your own life motives. Remember, our Father is looking for your motive to align with His heart and His Word.

With motive in mind, please answer these questions.

- *Why* are you a Christian?
- *Why* do you fellowship where you do, as you do, with whom you do?
- *Why* are you married, single, divorced?

Are your answers acceptable to God?

A Hebraic Perspective: *Hebraic Logic*

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8).

We can't stress enough how strongly Western thought has been influenced by Hellenism. The method by which most of us have been educated involves steps that begin with a premise and lead up to a conclusion. Each step is linked to the next in some sort of rational order until you discover the answer or conclusion. Technically, this process is called "**syllogistic reasoning**". It's the manner by which Europeans and Americans are taught to acquire information.

The western education system depends on this type of reasoning. All subject matter is organized into tidy boxes, called "subjects". The syllogistic style works well if all you want to do is add to a person's factual knowledge. The focus is on knowledge dissemination and acquisition. Rarely is your *way of life* impacted by what you learn. Your brain cells are filled but your heart doesn't change.

This same teaching style predominates Christendom. And sadly, so many believe this is the *only way* to make biblical truth known. The problem with this type of reasoning is that it draws no one closer to understanding God and applying His Word — the goal *He* desires. People are *unable* through reasoning to translate their faith into a way of life.

Over the centuries, syllogistic reasoning has resulted in multitudes of books penned by theologians as they attempt to *define* God and His Word. Piecing together a lot of *seemingly* related scrip-

tures, they've organized the Bible into a *logical*, teachable format.

Western theology's syllogistic style of dealing with the Bible meets the Greek-conditioned analytical mind of Western man. *Logical* creeds are manufactured to be systematically taught, verse upon verse, similar to a mathematical equation.

Hellenist reasoning especially appeals to right-handed men who rely on the their logical left side of the brain. Information that uses syllogistic logic is readily understood by right-handed men. In this manner, even an intimate value such as love can be discussed but never become a character quality of the heart. Men feel they *know about* love, but they are unable to *live it*.

Our Creator designed males and females very differently regarding their mind's function. Perhaps that's one of the reasons He declared that "*it is not good for man to be alone*." He intended for men and women to be interdependent in their need for the other's input.

Research indicates that women are able to simultaneously access both sides of their brain. The two hemispheres of a man's brain, however, are connected by a smaller corpus callosum. Therefore they dominate on either their logical left side or affective, emotional right side.

Since the majority of men are right-handed, dependence on syllogistic logic reigns. Most of the theological topics that we westerners have been taught have emanated from an intellectual framework that brings about little if any life transformation.

Consider the German society of the last century. Because of Martin Luther's influence they were the most biblically knowledgeable culture of their time. Yet,

sylogistically-learned Bible knowledge didn't keep them from initiating two World Wars and untold atrocities against humanity.

Unhindered by the influence of Hellenism, the Hebraic Stream relied on input from both hemispheres. They were not reluctant to use their affective side from which a man understands love, compassion and mercy — the tender side of God.

Unlike Hellenized Christians of today, our Hebraic ancestors in the faith relied on what we term "**Hebraic logic**". From the Hebraic approach, each thought or idea can stand alone; they don't necessarily fit together *sequentially*. Any matter that concerned God and the manner in which He revealed Himself as recorded in Scripture was not confined to a systematic, organized format.

Our Hebraic ancestors in the faith realized that some questions were unexplainable. There existed matters about God for which they had no answers; nor did they believe that God required them to. Their trust in His Sovereignty enabled them to live at peace with their Lord without having to define everything.

From the Hebraic point of view God is full of irreconcilable antitheses:

- A focus on the temporal as well as the eternal;
- A simultaneous love and fear of God;
- The nearness of God yet His transcendence.

A few examples from Scripture illustrate man's inability to box God in to a predictable cause/effect framework:

- Jesus is called the **Prince of Peace** in Isaiah 9:6; but He tells us, "*Do not suppose*

that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, **but a sword**" (Matthew 10:34). We *don't have* to grapple with the seeming inconsistency.

- In Jeremiah 23:2 God chastises the leaders of Israel, "**Because you have scattered My flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done.**" Yet in the very next verse God says, "**I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture**" (Jeremiah 23:3). So who drove them out? Reconciliation of the two statements isn't necessary from the Hebraic viewpoint.

- We're told in 1 Chronicles 21:1 that "**Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.**" Yet we then read that "**the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He incited David against them, saying, "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah"**" (2 Samuel 24:1). A contradiction? Not at all from the Hebraic understanding!

The Bible was seen through the lens of Hebraic logic by those to whom it was first given. This reality is important for us in the West to grasp! The Bible can only be truly understood for application by relying on Hebraic logic — God "outside the box". For right-handed men, this means breaking free from Hellenism and its dependence on syllogistic logic.

Developing a Hebraic understanding could happen if right-handed men would truly listen to their wives' perspective. As humbling as it is to men, a woman's mind can more readily grasp Hebraic logic than a man's brain can. That difference has certainly stood out

during seminars we've conducted on the Hebraic foundations!

When we'd request feedback from those in attendance after an hour or two, all the women understood what we'd been sharing but few of the men could. The men were trying to organize our presentation into categorized, syllogistic boxes. If the material we discussed seemed at all contradictory to the syllogistic mental predisposition, the men would short circuit. Or, in computer lingo, they'd "crash".

No man who studies the Hebraic foundations on his own can be changed unless his wife helps him *or* he participates through discussion with two or three other people. When two or three come to agreement in scriptural matters, they're promised the special presence of Jesus in their midst (see Matthew 18:20).

As part of God's great design, around the age of 50 the frontal lobe of a man's brain begins to shrink. This enables him to think more affectively rather than systematically. The input that the right side of his brain previously suppressed now are magnified in his thought processes. Love, compassion and mercy take greater precedence.

This is why the shepherds of the earliest church were older, wiser men who could fully represent the Father's heart for His children.

Let's recap this one more time:

To the Hebraic mind the seeming discrepancies in God's Word didn't have to be explained. The basis to this view was:

**"Let God be God,
and let me find out *my responsibilities*
in relationship to Him."**

The God of all the universe defies rational explanation. Yet there are more books

in Christian bookstores today that try to define God than those that exhort us to walk in the responsibilities His Word so clearly requires of us!

Paul emphasized the unknowable mystery of God and marveled,

*Oh, the **depth** of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How **unsearchable** His judgments, and His paths **beyond tracing out!** Who has known the mind of the Lord?* (Romans 11:33-34).

The God of the Hebrew Bible is the Creator of all that is, and His standards are absolutes. Punishment as well as reward were concepts well understood by the Hebraic Stream who put their trust in Jesus.

God was fully capable of using the wicked as instruments of punishment against His disobedient people (see Habakkuk 1) — and then punishing those wicked agents Himself! You don't need to understand God, nor must you suppress your questions either.

Our Father perceives your innermost heart. Putting on a brave face and confronting your tragedies with a half-hearted "It's OK, God..." is hypocritical. He doesn't expect you to either justify or vindicate Him for His ways. A life of ongoing obedient trust instead calls you to constantly ask yourself in each circumstance:

"Am I trying to determine from my own reasoning what is "good" and what is "evil"?"

Or, can I instead seek to determine my Lord's will and live in accordance with that?"

The Jesus of Hebraic society two millennia ago would probably not be accepted by most theologians in modern

America. His teachings were intended for man to *live by*, not to ponder or neatly organize.

Your "salt" and "light" had to permeate not only your own life but *all your relationships* and *your society at large*.

There would have been no doubt to others as to where you stood as a follower of the risen Messiah! The differences made in you through the Holy Spirit would most certainly set you apart in purpose and lifestyle from those who were content with obligatory religious practice.

The Hebraic teaching style was *by example*, bringing the truth of Scripture into real-life application. Rabbis of the Hebraic Stream first role-modeled what they taught. From their *way of life* they trained their disciples to walk in obedient trust according the Word of God.

Hellenism

- Quest to define God
- Quantities of knowledge neatly organized, but little or no change in lifestyle
- Fruit equals what you know

Hebraic

- God is feared, loved and worshiped without being fully understood
- Life-to-life role modeling from teacher to disciple
- Fruit equals how you live

How comfortable are you with *not* understanding God or the reasons for the difficulties you face in life?

Do you view your Christian walk as segmented from other parts of your life such as work, school, recreation, home? Yes or No? How many who interact with you in the different arenas of your life would truly describe you as a *follower of Jesus*?

Ask those close to you in the faith to evaluate the depth of your affective side — your love, compassion and sympathy. Do they describe you as someone who is always trying to *learn more*? or, as a person who is earnestly endeavoring to *reflect Jesus* to others?

**A Hebraic Perspective:
Representing Our Father's
Care Through Action**

As Jesus ministered among the poor, the sick and the needy, He was doing so as His Father's representative. We've already noted that our God deeply cares for the poor and the underprivileged (see Deuteronomy 24:19). James reminds us of the responsibility we have as His people to both meet the needs of the neediest and to walk continually in His holiness ourselves:

*The religious observance that God the Father considers pure and faultless is this: to **care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being contaminated by the world** (James 1:27,CJB).*

Jesus's care that translated into merciful response also reflected the nature of a

Hebraic Stream teacher (rabbi). Unlike the arrogant elders and leaders of the Judaizing Stream, the rabbi of the Hebraic Stream was a man who *related* to the heart of God.

The Hebraic rabbi walked with a biblical shepherd's concern for the defenseless and those in need, representing God through deed as well as word (see Luke 15:4-7). Out of his sacrificial lifestyle of concern for others his teaching flowed.

First the lifestyle, then the teaching. You can see how Hebraic logic and the influence of the affective side of the brain made this lifestyle possible. How he chose to live flowed out of his *heart*, not his brain's evaluation.

In Luke chapter 10, Jesus commends the Hebraic lifestyle when He answers the expert in the law about the greatest commandment. Our Lord cites the parable of the the Good Samaritan and concludes by asking a question: "*Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?*" *The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.'* Jesus told him, '*Go and do likewise*'" (Luke 10:36,37).

When Jesus was questioned by John's disciples if He was truly the long-awaited Messiah, He replied, "*The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor*" (Matthew 11:5). For the Hebraic Stream the true Messiah would be recognized as He fulfilled signs prophesied centuries earlier — signs that evidenced an affective, active concern for the needy.

In ancient Jerusalem and throughout Israel, young men often attached themselves to a particular *rabbi*, literally *my* teacher, because of certain strengths in his character and his distinctive life that

brought glory to God.

The disciples of that rabbi were absolutely devoted to him, inhaling not only his every word, but the *manner* in which he taught. Every act of that rabbi became a role model trait that was emulated by his students. If a rabbi performed acts of mercy, his disciples then followed his example, *learning by doing*.

Because the influence of the teacher was so profound, his *character* was far more important than the *content* of his teachings. The hypocrisy that Jesus criticized in the Pharisees and scribes was an affront to both God and man. Jesus warned His disciples about the discrepancy between their actions and their words:

*So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. **But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach*** (Matthew 23:3).

Hebraic-influenced leaders in Newer Testament faith communities emphasized the importance of a man's life choices: *"Remember your leaders, those who spoke God's message to you. Reflect on the **results of their way of life, and imitate their trust*** (Hebrews 13:7). We would say today that their walk better match their talk!

Any effective teacher of God's Word must be true to the nature of the Hebraic teacher.

First, his lifestyle must demonstrate responsive action that reflects our Father's concern for the poor and needy.

Second, those whom he would disciple must have close intimate access so that he can effectively role model a godly way of life for them.

[For more on the interconnectedness between Hebraic leaders and their flock, see our book [Pastoring By Elders](#)].

This certainly isn't the discipling pattern of contemporary western Christianity! The religious teaching pattern practiced today was adapted from the Greek pagan priesthood. Their priest/teachers relied on Hellenist reasoning and *lectured at* them from behind pulpits and altars that separated them from the common people.

Hebrew is an action language. Unlike English or Greek which stresses the noun or subject, Hebrew emphasizes the verb, or the action. In the Hebrew Bible, the faith of those who trusted God could be seen through what they did. James interconnects this Hebraic truth that unites trust with response:

*What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but **has no deeds**? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.***

*But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and **I will show you my faith by what I do.***

James wasn't drawing conclusions from fantasies or imaginings of his own design. He was apperceiving truth from the Hebrew Scripture that his readers would immediately recognize.

*You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not **our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did** when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that **his faith and his actions***

were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend.

You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

The Hebraic foundations for cementing a *faith that leads to action* is so vital that we'll continue James's instruction:

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead (James 2:14-26).

We have here two ends of the social spectrum in Israel's history: a revered patriarch and a once-despised prostitute. Yet both are esteemed because they *trusted* God in such a way that *obedience* was their only response to His command!

Recall some recent instances in which you were made aware of the tangible needs of someone. How did you respond? What was the most difficult sacrifice you've ever been called on to make on behalf of someone else?

Now be honest: Was the "religion" that you displayed in that instance *pure and faultless as unto God*, or did you enjoy the acclaim of men for responding as you did?

A Hebraic Perspective: Humility As You Serve Others

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3,4).

Jesus is the epitome of humility as He carried out His Father's will. A poignant parable presented to "*some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else*" illustrated the kind of humility that's acceptable to the Father:

*"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and **prayed about himself**: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get."*

'But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

*‘I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home **justified before God**. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and **he who humbles himself will be exalted**’” (Luke 18:10-14).*

Because Hebraic thought was founded on the *motive of one’s heart* and on *trust that led to action*, Jesus could teach as He did about the Final Judgment. A person’s *enactment* of his trust in Jesus determined if he was truly in God’s sheepfold.

As He spoke of the separation of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus concluded, “**Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me**” (v. 40). The earliest followers of Jesus clearly understood *responsive action* as the vital criterion for everyone at the Final Judgment.

The entire nature of a person who claims to follow Jesus is seen in his care for those who can never pay him back.

To do the *work* of salvation was to humbly bring healing, relief and victory to those weighed down by the debilitating difficulties of the here and now. It truly requires humility of heart for a person to earnestly and lovingly look to the interest of others.

In his first epistle, John conveys the *way of life* of a humble person. Both attitude and action are the means for someone who is truly humble to revealing his trust in Jesus:

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to **lay down our lives** for our brothers. If anyone has **material possessions** and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not*

*love with words or tongue but **with actions and in truth*** (1 John 3:16-18).

True humility grows as your dependence on God increases. God created you as a physical being with distinct material needs. Your Father in heaven wants you to humbly depend on Him in faith to provide for those needs. He may allow you to work to earn money, but you also must keep in mind that *He* has furnished your job, your strength, and the food itself for which you labor. That realization should serve as a reminder to keep pride at bay!

*You may say to yourself, ‘**My power and the strength of my hands** have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, **for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth**, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today” (Deuteronomy 8:17,18).*

Our Hebraic forefathers in the faith knew that it was *within the home* that humility and concern for others is learned. Home is the first place in which you learn to humbly interact and participate with others. Your first encounter with having to set aside your own personal desires for the sake of others is learned in your home among your family members.

The intimacy of parental training comes across clearly as Solomon shares wisdom with his own child: “*Listen, my son, to your **father’s instruction** and do not forsake your **mother’s teaching**” (Proverbs 1:8).*

Until the early 1900’s “education” was defined as *the relationship of a mother with her children*. It didn’t have the academic, schoolhouse connotation as it

does today. Education once carried with it the Hebraic relational understanding of the influence a mother has on her children in their motivation and awareness of the world around them. A mother is God's tool to teach her children self-sacrifice and concern for others.

How does a child learn to look to the interests of others? It's certainly not genetic! One answer is as simple as sharing a family meal. In that common framework you learn to live by the command that *"sums up the Law and the Prophets,"* that is, *"In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you"* (Matthew 7:12).

As people interrupt their eating to pass food to each other, they are learning to serve. Setting the table and clearing and washing the dishes are other opportunities that even the youngest can take part in.

Household and yard chores are another way in which a child begins to see his life in service to others. This foundation that looks to the interest of others helps guard his heart from later being enticed by the allure and prestige of the world's system.

At the retreat center we served the meals family-style to encourage interaction and helpfulness. Most retreats began with dinner on Friday evening. One men's retreat in particular stands out.

The participants had come for the first time. When they sat down for supper, we were dumfounded that no one even passed the food around to the others. Each man reached across the big table to take his own portion from the serving dishes as though he were alone, disregarding the other dozen empty

plates and the presence of people who could have helped him reach!

On another occasion during a clergy retreat from a particular denomination, we placed the coffee pots near the table where people could get up and help themselves.

While the superintendent of the denomination was at the pot getting coffee for himself, he commented to Mike that he had difficulty getting his clergy to follow through on things that he needed them to do. Mike asked him, "What are you doing right now?" He replied, "Getting coffee." Mike directed his attention back to the table where the men were sitting, and from which he had just gotten up. "How many empty cups are there?"

Awareness dawned, and instead of filling his own cup, he took the pot back to the table and filled the empty cups of everyone else. *"Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves... I am among you as one who serves"* (Luke 22:26,27).

Humble care and concern for others epitomize the nature of Jesus in you. These character qualities must be practiced in the training ground of your home until they truly become facets of your transforming nature.

Think about the pain Paul must have felt as he continued his letter to the Philippians, *"For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ"* (2:21). He must have wondered with sorrow if these believers had clung to their fleshly desires and resisted the work of the Spirit in this area of their lives.

Were you raised in a home in which you were trained to serve others? Yes or No?

How would you describe yourself when it comes to humbly looking to the interests of others?

Ask a few people close to you in the faith to describe the depth of your humility and servanthood. What evidence can they give for their evaluation?

A Hebraic Perspective: *The Sacred Nature Of All Of Life*

“In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight”
(Proverbs 3:6)

The Hebraic stream viewed *all of life* as God’s dominion. The Lord wasn’t relegated to the spiritual domain alone; He made His presence felt in all aspects of life. Therefore all of life’s pursuits were “sacred”. If you were doing anything in God’s will, that activity was sacred.

A person’s job was considered just as “holy” as the time spent studying God’s Word. There was no division of sacred and secular as Hellenism later introduced. God created the whole world and declared it “good”. Even though sin had entered the world, He never retracted His words concerning that which He had created! As a result of God’s evaluation of all of creation as good, the Hebraic Stream were continually aware of God in their daily routine.

How often do *you* greet each new day with thanks to God for the ability to get out of bed, for having a job, for being able to brush your teeth?

All of the circumstances of your life, whether pleasant or painful, come not by chance or fate, but are allowed through the sovereignty of God. How many today could honestly say from their hearts these words of the prophet Habakkuk?

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior” (Habakkuk 3:17,18).

Yes, *even suffering* is orchestrated by our Lord for our spiritual growth: “*So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good*” (1 Peter 4:19). God yearns for a humble people who gratefully acknowledge His presence throughout the day and rest in their dependence upon Him.

Today’s Christian culture tends to compartmentalize the different aspects of life into distinct categories: work, play, religion, education, political, family. Some categories are framed as “sacred” and others “profane”.

Boxing off the spiritual from the secular is a mindset that emanates straight from Hellenism. Monks who isolated themselves from the pollution of the common pursuits of work and pleasure were exalted. Any perceived indulgence of the flesh, whether marital intimacy or physical labor or even joyful family experiences, were looked down on as “unspiritual”.

Unconsciously or otherwise, this misperception has infused the idea of many Christians regarding their religious practice. That's how God has so often become confined to a one-or-two hour block of "holy" time on Sunday morning, and the rest of their lives can blend with values of the world.

(In a later lesson when we discuss the influence of Hellenism, we'll deal with this topic more fully.

How aware are you of God in your daily life? A little? or a lot? During the past two days, describe in detail when you were conscious of God.

Ask those close to you to evaluate you as someone who is *grateful* in their life circumstances versus being a *grumbler*. How did you respond to their appraisal?

Is the level of holiness you exhibit in corporate worship the same as the level you maintain in the privacy of your home? What activities do you participate in that would not at all match "what Jesus would do"?
