



FRESH START

You are beginning life's most satisfying adventure – your walk with God! As you start this adventure, here's what God says to you:

Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be —you get a fresh start, your slate's wiped clean. Psalm 32:11 (MSG)

When you make a commitment of your life to Jesus, not only is your "slate wiped clean", you also get a "fresh start" – a new lease on life. This class is designed to help you have a good start to your fresh start. During these weeks together you'll discover and begin to unwrap ten gifts that God gives you:

F ORGIVENESS	– Accepting God's Grace
R ELATIONSHIP	– Worshipping
E NCOURAGEMENT	– Handling Failure
S CRIPTURE	– Understanding God's Word
H ELP	– Following God's Guidance
S HAPE	– Being You
T OGETHERNESS	– Living in Community
A UTHORITY	– Serving Others
R ECOGNITION	– Being Baptized
T ESTIMONY	– Telling Your Story

This session: Help – Following God's Guidance

So, what now? You have given your life to Jesus and now you must "LIVE like a Christian." How do you even do that?!

The great news is, that God never intended for you to do this alone. Moreover, God is much more interested in a friendship with you, than in you obeying all the rules.

God yearns to be there for you, help and guide you, talk things through with you. God wants to partner with you in everything you do! In your friendships, your marriage, parenting, business, your dreams for the future, your struggles with addiction or habits.

Why? Because He adores you and wants to spend time with you in an intimate friendship.

So, how do you partner with God? HOW does He help and guide us when we can't even see or hear Him?

*I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will **help** you and always be with you. John 14:16 (CEV)*

So, Holy Spirit is always there for us. He is with us and He is inside us. Still, although He is always there, He is a gentleman. He won't ever force his help or guidance on us. Holy Spirit always waits for us to approach Him. God wants us to seek Him.

You will call upon Me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:12-13 (NKJV)

There are 4 ways in which Christians can get help for daily living

1. Understand that our guidance comes from God.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. **Seek His will** in all you do, and He will direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)*

2. Guidance also comes from God's Word.

Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105 (NLT)

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

Isn't that amazing! We actually have a hard-copy guidebook for life, that is useful and relevant, even in today's modern world.

3. Guidance comes from God's Spirit.

*When the Spirit of truth comes, He will **guide** you into all truth. John 16:13 (NLT)*

Holy Spirit is with and inside each of us the instant we become His.

4. Guidance comes from godly counsel.

This is great! God's will and intention are for us to also find guidance in godly friendships and mentorships. As we said in the beginning, God never intended for us to get saved and then just plough on all by ourselves. He wants us to, not only talk things through and walk it out with Him but also with godly people we trust.

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure. Proverbs 11:14 (NIV)

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)

What do I need to KNOW when trying to follow God's guidance? There are 3 things

1. God cares about the details of my life.

The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Psalm 37:23 (NLT)

The word gets even more specific.

Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. Matthew 6:31-32 (CEV)

To me, this is the most wonderful thing about God's nature! He cares about every little detail of my life! God is concerned about what we drink and what we eat. God is far more interested in what's happening in your life than you might think.

2. God wants me to be specific.

When you are looking for guidance from God ask a specific question.

"God, what do You think about me expanding the business to another province? What is the next step? What should I do here?" Or "Why is my teenager so quiet this past week? What can I do besides praying? How should I do it?" Over twenty times in the New Testament, God says "Ask." God wants you to ask for advice about your relationships, your career, your health, your finances...

He is eager and waiting to answer you. ...So ASK.
He is interested in the details.

*If you want to know what God wants you to do, **ask Him**, and He will gladly tell you.... James 1:5a (LB)*

3. God wants to answer.

James 1 says (God) is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him; He will not resent it. But when you ask Him, be sure that you really expect Him to tell you.... James 1:5b-6 (LB)

God is not a father or friend who wants to play cat-and-mouse with us. I have found that God is more willing to talk to us than we are willing to listen to Him. I want you to try something with me.

On the count of three, breathe out, completely exhale...ready, 1, 2, 3. Hold it...hold it...hold it... Now, breathe in. We need both, don't we?

Breathing out is our prayer, our talking to God, asking God for what's on our hearts.

Breathing in is our listening to God. Just like we need to both breathe out and breathe in, we need to talk to God and listen to God.

We talked about what we need to know when we ask God's guidance. Now, what do I need to DO to follow God's guidance?

In this section we will unpack these verses in Habakkuk 2:1-2: I will climb my watchtower and WAIT to see what the Lord will tell me to say, and what answer He will give to my complaint. The Lord gave me this answer: "Write down clearly on tablets what I reveal to you, so that it can be read at a glance."

Habakkuk 2:1-2 (TEV)

These verses give us 5 great keys that will help us hear from God.

KEY NR 1: WITHDRAW

*I will **climb my watchtower**....*

This expression in Hebrew means **I'm going to get alone**

I'm going to get alone, go off by myself, get rid of external distractions so that I can hear God speak. Find a quiet place alone, and...that can be difficult at times, especially for parents of preschoolers.

Susanna Wesley was the mother of 18 children. Two of her sons, Charles and John, shaped England in their day. Charles Wesley wrote several hundred songs. John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist denomination. Both men had a profound effect on the world and the work of God in the world. With 18 kids, how did Susanna Wesley ever find a quiet place to pray? This was her solution...Every afternoon she would sit in her living room and pull her apron up over her head. The children knew that when mother was in her rocking chair with her apron up over her head she was not to be disturbed. Where there's a will there's a way!

With 18 kids, if she could find a way to get alone with God, do you think you can? Sure!

Find a place where you can be quiet, get alone with God and listen.

One of the reasons why you don't hear God speak to you more is because you are surrounded by noise. Your music is always on, the TV, your phone is never out of reach, - you're surrounded by noise. So you can't hear the still small voice of God.

Remember, He's a gentleman. He is not going to bellow out guidance, you need to seek Him.
Get alone.

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Luke 5:16 (NIV)

Jesus led a very active life, yet despite that, it says He often withdrew. He made it a habit. If Jesus needed to do it, we do too. We need to get away from the distractions.

If that is all that was needed for you to hear God it would be easy, right? But after you get in a quiet spot, then you need to quiet yourself – your mind and emotions. And that leads us to the second thing.

KEY NR 2 to help us hear God: WAIT

This is completely contrary to our fast-paced, don't-delay lifestyles. Waiting is sometimes a really good thing. Not necessarily easy, but good.

*I will ...**wait**... Habakkuk 2*
This means: be still

It means don't move, stay put, don't run around – be still. God speaks to the person who takes the time to listen. The one reason many of us don't hear God is that we are just too busy.

"God, I've got 30 seconds for you. Ready...Set...Go!"

*Be **still** and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10 (NIV)*

*I **wait** quietly before God, for my hope is in Him. Psalm 62:5 (NLT)*

KEY NR 3 to help us hear God: WATCH

*I will **climb my watchtower** and **WAIT** to **see** what the Lord will tell me to say...*

An important key to listening to God is to understand that God's voice is often visual. God often wants to speak through a mental picture. There are hundreds of examples in the Bible where people were praying and God gave those people a mental picture or vision. It is all through scripture. It is one of the primary ways God contacts people – through impressions in your mind. He gives you a mental picture, image, or vision inside your head.

Remember: Whenever you have an impression it needs to be tested:

Does it agree with the Bible?

Does it make me more like Jesus?

Is it consistent with how God shaped me?
Do I sense God's peace about it?

Jesus said, "**Watch** and pray..." Matthew 26:41 (NIV)

There is a visual element to prayer. And if you will grasp it, it will open up a whole new area of your life, in relationship to Jesus.

*I pray...that the **eyes of your heart** may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you....* Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)

Wait! I thought my eyes were in my head! He is not talking about physical eyes. He is talking about spiritual eyes...spiritual senses. When you were born physically you got a set of physical senses. Hear, taste, touch, smell, feel. When you were born spiritually you got a set of spiritual senses: spiritual eyes, spiritual ears. We hear and see God with our spiritual eyes and ears.

KEY NR 4 to help us hear God: Write

Write down clearly...

Write out your prayers as you think them. Buy a notebook as you are praying. Write out your prayer while you are praying it. It is called journaling. Many great Christians in history have journaled. They wrote down their prayers, what they wanted to say to God. And then they would wait. When they felt directed by God they would write what God said back to them.

If you want an example of journaling, there is a whole book on it...It's called Psalms, the longest book in the Bible. In almost every one of David's Psalms, he starts with a question. God, Why are my enemies prospering when I'm trying to live for You? And then he waits, watches, and writes down God's answer.

Journaling gives your body something to do while you're praying. Journaling keeps you focused. Your mind won't wander when you're writing down what you're trying to think about.

Another benefit of journaling is that it allows you to remember what you have said to God and what God has said back to you. To me, it has always been so meaningful and precious to page back in past journals and be reminded of what God revealed to me at certain times in my life.

We have learned four keys to hear from God so far. They are: withdraw, watch, wait, and write.

KEY NR 5 to help us hear God: WORSHIP

Oh Lord, now I've heard Your report, and I **worship** You in awe....Habakkuk 3:2 (LB)

He says, now that you have spoken to me God, I want to express my love to You. When God responds, we want to love Him even more and draw closer to Him.

Worship is key in our full relationship with God.

It is almost too good to be true, that our loving Father in heaven is just waiting for us to come to Him with anything and everything. Seek Him with your whole heart, talk to Him, wait for Him.

You won't be disappointed.

In our next session:

SHAPE

– Being You

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