



Ambitious Faith-Part 4
Ardently Seeking a Deeper Relationship with God
Pastor Mike Fabarez

Well I like to eat. Is that obvious? You like it too though, don't you? Good burrito, some guacamole, some taquitos perhaps, lets venture out, maybe some tamales. Yeah, its good isn't it? There's nothing really for our bodies better than fueling up, especially when you are hungry on the thing that God designed our bodies to consume. Paul said the stomach for food, food for the stomach. And that didn't take a Bible verse to figure out; we figured that out as little babies. It's the perfect thing, and nothing feels more satisfying than when we're famished to engage in a great meal. Jesus knew that his first century audience understood that as well. That's why in John chapter 6, he made this analogy. John 6: Jesus is there with a crowd that he had just fed. They had been fed previously in his ministry, they had followed him, they wanted to be fed again, and if you remember it was because he'd been teaching all day, they didn't have anything to eat. The disciples said, you'd better send them home, they didn't have any food. And Jesus ends up providing for them miraculously and much like in the Cana miracle when Jesus makes bread and fish, I'm sure it was the best tasting bread and fish they'd ever had. They were greatly satisfied with the meal. And so they go looking for Jesus in the bottom of chapter 6 of John. And in verse number 23 and 24, you can see how they're scurrying around to find Christ. And it says in verse 25, when they found him, they said, when did you get here? Its like, we've been looking for you, where are you? And Jesus looks right through their we want to hear from you, Rabbi, and he says, I tell you the truth, you are looking for me not because you saw the miraculous signs, which always point to something revelatory, something that God was doing. It wasn't that they were interested in something that God was pointing to here, its that you ate the loaves and you had your fill. You had a great free lunch and you want another one, and so that's really why you are looking for me. But if you really want to go searching for something, if you want to expend your energy trying something, he says in verse 27, don't work for food, but spoils. I mean you ought to work for food that endures to eternal life. Which the son of man will give you, by the way, when him, the father has placed his seal of approval. And they said, well, what must we do to do the works that God requires? And Jesus said, this is the work that you've got to do, here it is, God's work is this, to believe or trust, that's our theme from Hebrews 11, to trust in the one he has sent. So they said, well, you know they are back to the food here, what miraculous sign are you going to do? What are you going to give us so we can believe and trust in you? What are you going to do, you know I've got an idea, back in the old days, in the desert, they brought manna out of the sky and you know, manna from heaven that would be great. Jesus said, I tell you the truth, its not Moses who's given you bread from heaven, really its my father who gives you the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven, that's him, and gives life to the world. Sir, they said, and I don't know if they are getting serious now, or still trying to end around this discussion, but they said well, give us this bread. And Jesus declares you want to know the bread that God gives that satisfies to eternal life, here it is, he says, I'm the bread of life. He who comes to me, now we know what that's all about, its about trusting him, verse 29, he says, will never go hungry. And he who trusts or believes in me will never be thirsty. I mean they were hungry for a meal and Jesus says, yeah, stomach for food, food for stomach and all of that, but really what you've been made for, what your soul has been made for, what you as a person has been made for,



he says, to connect and trust and interface with the living God. And God is giving you the son, for you as the focal point of your trust, for you to put your trust in him. And you know if you do that, if you come to me, if you trust in me, he says, you'll be satisfied, and it will be a kind of satisfaction that's unlike food, you won't need to repeat this, you will just be able to bask and enjoy and deepen this relationship with me and it will satisfy. We talk a lot about this, particularly in the book of Hebrews; we've seen it reoccurring in the book that God is reminding us that he's made us for himself. And as Agustin said, in our hearts we're going to be restless until we find our rest and our contentment and our fulfillment in him. And so we say, throughout the book of Hebrews, as we've been studying, this really needs to be our priority. I mean there's a lot of things that jockey for attention in our lives, there's a lot of things calling for us to invest in. And I know we've got to live in the world, and we've got to pay our taxes, and we've got to provide for our families and all of that, but the bottom line is, God says your supreme interest in life ought to be getting to know the God who created you. I mean that's the best and most fulfilling and gratifying endeavor. It's the kind of thing that the psalmist said, if you would just taste and see that the Lord is good, you'll get a taste for this, and you'll want this, and this will be the passion of your life. Or as Asaph said, in Psalm 73, you'll get to the place where you realize there's no other desire here that matters. There will be nothing on earth that you desire more than knowing God. Problem in the modern church is that a lot of people think that getting into the Christian life is all that Christianity is about. Its about getting in the family of God, its about getting your ticket to heaven, its about being adopted. And all that's good and fine, but Jesus said in John 17, really eternal life is not just about getting in, its about knowing the only true God. And Jesus Christ who the father has sent, that's really what the Christian life is all about. I'm all for getting in, its good to be adopted in the family, I want to make sure I've got my ticket to get out of hell, that's important. But God says, you really want to know what should consume us? It's an unending pursuit of knowing God. And the more we do it, the more we'll find it satisfying, and the more satisfaction and gratification we derive from this, the more were going to see this is what we're made for, this is what its all about. We've been studying in Hebrews and we've gotten into chapter 11, we've already had a few weeks on chapter 11, we've seen one person through this long list of Old Testament examples, and we saw Able giving his best to God. Well the second person that's named in Hebrews 11 that we reach this morning is an example of someone not just giving his best to God, but using his life and his priorities to seek God with all of his heart. The second person on the list is a guy named Enoch, and when we think of Enoch, if you know your Old Testament, you usually think of the supernatural way he left this planet. And people always kind of fixate on that, but the writer of Hebrews wants us to know that all of that was predicated on something that his life was all about. It was all about knowing God. As a matter of fact, we'll see that his translation from this earth was based on his priorities in life. So if you have your Bibles, lets turn to Hebrews chapter 11, and let us understand that if you are looking for a motivation, a template, an example to follow, as it relates to making God and your pursuit of your relationship with God, the template of your life, then here's Enoch. We don't know much about him, but what we know about him is what we need to fuel us into going a few levels deeper in our knowledge and our relationship with God. Hebrews chapter 11, begin in verse number 5, where again, the theme of the chapter, faith, trust in God is how Enoch really was taken from this life. By faith Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death, he could not be found because God had taken him away. Now that's what he's known for, but notice this, bottom of verse 5, for before he was taken, he was commended as

one who pleased God. That's what he was known for. And if you want to know what that's about, its about a life of earnestly seeking God. Next verse, without faith this trust that he had, its impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those, here's the key phrase that summarizes Enoch's life, those who earnestly seek him. Why was Enoch a person that pleased God? Because his life was all about an earnest, passionate, ardent desire to know his God. Take a look at the historic record of it in Genesis chapter 5. Because what we've just read is really the New Testament inspired commentary on the account in Genesis 5. So lets get the original description of Enoch's life. Genesis chapter 5, you first see the name Enoch in chapter 5, verse number 18. We find out that he's got a dad named Jared, who had lived 162 years and he became the father of Enoch. If you're thinking, wow, that's kind of old to have a kid; kind of old to really do anything isn't it, 165, what's going on here? Just remember all this comes before chapter 6. In chapter 6, 7, and 8 of Genesis is a pivotal point. It's the flood. This is the anti-deluvian world, we call it, before the flood world, and before the flood it was a really different place. And one of the things, without any comment here, is that people lived a long time. People speculate about it, but certainly we had an earth that was a little bit different before this cataclysmic destruction of the world as we knew it. It was much more conducive apparently to a long biological life, and everybody's living it seems like a ho-hum thing, 800 to 900 years, no big thing. So he's having a kid at 162, and don't picture the guy on Good Morning America all wrinkly at a 101 or 110, or whatever they are. They are living in a different world, this guy probably looked like a 27 year old, and he has a kid named Enoch. Verse 19, after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years, so he's got a lot of life left in him, and he had other son's and daughters, altogether Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. I would think so. Verse 21, when Enoch had lived 65 years, now he's getting to it right away, apparently, at least based upon his father's example, he becomes the father of a guy named Methuselah, ever heard of him? Methuselah, he's known to be the longest living guy, but you know, really not by much. They weren't going wow, you're really old, he was the oldest one recorded in the anti-deluvian world, but nevertheless, Enoch is his dad. So now we've got a point of reference. Now this is an interesting phrase, verse 22, circle this word, after, and after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years, and had other sons and daughters. Something happened there. He has a kid, a lot of things happen when we have our first kid, but something happened with him that re-directed his life from doing whatever he was doing, the Bible makes the contrast, it may be subtle here, but it's a contrast that all the Rabbi's had picked up on. Matter of fact, he's known as this man of faith, because of Hebrews 11, but extra biblical writings usually call Enoch the man of repentance, because something happened here when he has this kid, and his life is redirected and begins walking with God. He walked with God 300 year, had other sons and daughters. Verse 23, altogether Enoch lived 365 years, Enoch walked with God and then was no more because God took him away. Now if you read that, and you really didn't have the sense of what we're seeing now in Hebrews 11, you might think, I don't know that could just be a euphemism for death, its not. Clearly they understood this both pre New Testament and New Testament times that this guy was supernaturally sucked off the planet like that little canister at the bank drive-through, right? He just left the planet that way. (sucking noise) Off he went. That, according to Hebrews chapter 11, though it's sensational, its really not the point of Enoch's life. The point of Enoch's life is here's a guy who walked with God. Now that's an analogy of what Hebrews defines as a life that pleases God, and a life that pleases God is a life of faith that earnestly seeks God. So, here we have, little



that we know about him, something happened at age 65, redirected his life, he had a kid and now he walks with God. He is walking with God as a man who seems to be intimate with God, seeking God, earnestly for 300 years, and then he had this supernatural translation at the end of his life, and the only other guy in that club is Elijah, right? The guy who gets to leave the planet without death. Everybody else is a different story, but Enoch and Elijah, at least as recorded in the Bible, leaving the planet. So those are the three things we know about him. If Enoch is going to be a template for you and I to redirect our priorities and say, God needs to be a bigger priority, my relationship with God needs to be the focus of something I cultivate from day to day, then I think we should ask the question, why is it that we need examples like this and why is it that everybody isn't like Enoch? And the reason is, when it comes to cultivating a relationship with God, there's several barriers. Three primary barriers that Enoch's life illustrates. So what I want to do, if you've found your worksheet, is open that up, and I want to talk about when it comes to cultivating or ardently developing or deepening a relationship with God, I want to talk quickly about understanding the problems. Number 1: We need to understand the problem. And the Problem comes in 3 categories. You chart lovers, this is just for you, we have a chart. Enoch's life, we know three basic things about his life, and all of those address conquering the three problems or three barriers, if you will, that stand between us having intimate, close fellowship with God. So the chart looks something like this: the problems, the effects and the solution. And thankfully, Enoch dealt with all three of these problems with a biblical divine solution. Problem number 1: Enoch, just like us, the reason that he had to conquer this first level problem was because he, like us, we're born as sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, that's how Lewis put it in the Chronicles of Narnia. And the problem with that is, we are children of people that have been banished from God's presence. He had a sinful heritage just like we do. He wasn't born walking with God, that's my point. And if that's a struggle for some of you, or you grew up with this doctrine of original sin and you didn't quite understand it, your homework assignment is to go home and study Romans chapter 5 versus 12 to the end of the chapter. And starting at verse number 12, we get a very clear explanation that when God banished Adam and Eve from his presence, the progeny of Adam and Eve, all the descendents of Adam and Eve were born in that state of separation from God. That was a necessary consequence of them being excluded from God's personal presence. Everybody born was born outside of a relationship with God. Their not, like a lot of people think today, children being born innocent, or in relationship with God, and then they have to sin at some mysterious age of accountability to get cast out of God's presence. No, everybody's born outside of a relationship with God, everybody is. We're in a world that sees the effects of God, and God may be doing things for us and our children, but we're all born out side of fellowship with God. That's the problem of Adam and Eve's sin that has been merited or impeded to his descendents. Now, Enoch, like us, was born in that condition. As David put it in Psalm 51, I was conceived in sin, I was sinful from birth. If you have young kids, hopefully I don't need to tell you that. We observe that, we see that, kids are not born in a state of fellowship exemplifying the virtues of godliness. They are born in a state of alienation, we have to train them, teach them to come to a place of connecting with their maker. The problem with being born as a son of Adam or a daughter of Eve, and being alienated from God is that the effect of that sinful heritage is that we have a problem of divine separation. To put it in a more active way, instead of a passive way, it is a divine hostility, the Bible says. That I am by nature born into a world, and because of my sinful heritage, I am at odds with God. And really to put it really frank, some of you might remember a sermon I did

called saved from God, the problem is that we have this built in hostility that God has, its like the animal kingdom, you know watching the National Geographic, there's a natural hostility between a Holy and righteous God and sinful people. And that is a problem that needs to be fixed if we're ever going to live in a place of fellowship with God and blessing. We need to have that problem solved. And that is solved, at least from our perspective, by coming to God on his terms. He's got to pay for it which we're going to look at at the end of our service. The payment was the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. But from our perspective, I need to respond to his call. And his call is for me to do two things in scripture. Two parts of one response. And those are the words in scripture we see over and over again, if you want to get right with God, there are two words that come at us over and over again. What are they? The first one starts with an R, repent. You have to repent of your sins. And the next one is you have to put your faith or your trust in Christ. We call it turning and trusting, you've got to do that. And if you do that, if God works that in your heart, then you have what we often call salvation. And those would be three good words to put in that last box. How does God solve that problem? From our perspective he gives us the call to repent and put our trust in him, specifically from a New Testament perspective, in his son, the Lamb of God, and then we will be saved. Another word for being saved or salvation is the word in scripture, reconciliation. Which is why, by the way, at the end of chapter 5 of Romans, we see that word show up. Because if we're alienated at birth, we need Christ to then bring us back to God. Not that we were with God as little children, no. The last time we as humans were with God was in the garden in Genesis 3. We lost that fellowship every successive generation now has to make peace with God. And they have that opportunity, by God's grace, if they would repent of their sins, put their trust in God's provision, and then we are reconciled to God. So, did that ever happen for Enoch? Genesis chapter 5, what we know, and it may seem a little subtle and implied, but we have Enoch, no description of his life prior to, just that he's a dude that has a kid at 65. But after that, the Bible says, he walked with God. 2 Corinthians 5:15, I quote it all the time. But we are called to live for him who died for us and rose again. Enoch had no interest in living for the one who would provide for his salvation. He had no interest in living for God apparently. He was one though, that after age 65 was known as a man of repentance, who walked in peace with God. He had a turning point. And I would hope that when it comes to our problem of not knowing God, that we could open up the mic and you could stand up here and say, yeah, I could testify to a time in my life, hopefully it wasn't 65, maybe it was 25, maybe it was 35, maybe it was 15, where you say yeah, I wasn't walking with God, but then I came to the place of repentance and faith, God saved me, and I began to walk with God. That solves the problem of divine separation. You can then say, because I'm a Christian, I am reconciled to God. The barrier of hostility that exists between a holy God and sinful people for me was solved on the day I put my trust in Christ. How long does that take? It takes a moment. It takes a moment when God works in my heart real biblical repentance and faith. That solves the problem of divine separation. Now Enoch had that thing wired. When could he look for that, age 65, I got right with God. Okay, how about you, when did you get right with God? Hopefully you can say I know a date when that happened. There was a year in my life, there was a change in my life, I got right with God. So since that time, since you got right with God, I can look at a time in my life, I was 18 when I got right with God, here's the thing, I never since that time ever sinned again and I was in perfect fellowship with God forever my whole life, right? Just like you. Is that how it worked for you? No, it didn't work that way for me either. Because just because we're reconciled to God, doesn't give us perfect fellowship with

God, does it? There's a lot of other problems that take place. The second layer of problem, I'll call it this, is our sinful acts. While our Christian life I hope mitigates the sin in our life, and while I'd say there's a whole lot less sin than there used to be, I can point to consistently, and the more I get to know God and read his word, the more I see it everyday, I see that I am not walking in perfect fellowship with God. I still sin. John writes to his audience and he says in chapter 1 verse 8, if you say that you are without sin, you're a liar and the truth is not in you, right? And he says we, he's including himself in that, John the Apostle, at the end of his life is still saying, I still sin. And you still sin, not in the same degree I hope not with the same frequency, but we still have the problem of sinful acts. Now this may be controversial to you, I'll try to show you in scripture where this is clearly taught, but I want to say if we continue to sin in our Christian life, which all of us do, you're guilty of it, and I'm guilty of it, it creates another problem, okay? We may have been reconciled to God spiritually, I may have my account clean before God, but when I sin, there's a problem. Lets put it down this way in the next box, it creates a problem of relational distance. Now I know that's an analogy, it represents something. But there's an analogy and maybe we can get our minds on it because that's the way the scripture likes to speak it in terms of the distance. Now, when I sin, I don't get kicked out of the family, but it causes problems in my fellowship and relationship with God. Let me show you an example. Turn with me to the book of James. James chapter 4. In James chapter 4, its interesting, although there's a lot of people that I think miss the point of this text, that it is all set in verbiage that relates to a covenantal relationship. In this case, the relationship of marriage. And he begins to talk to people who are, I believe here, contextually, they are followers of Christ, they have been adopted into God's family. But they, like us, have fallen into sin. They do things that are wrong, they've got their priorities messed up, they transgress God's commandments. And then here, James says, in chapter four verse number 4, he calls them adulteresses. You can't be an adulteress unless you're married, would you agree with that? And it's the same thing here, you cannot be cheating on God in this way, in this context, unless I have a covenantal relationship with God. The people in James chapter 4, verse number 4 are called adulteresses because in their life, there is sin that contradicts or denies in some episodic way, their commitment to God. So their called adulteresses. And he says, don't you people recognize that friendship with the world is hatred toward God, or literally hostility toward God. In other words, if there's a little bit of sell out to the world. And we're not just talking about I've got friends that are non-Christian. I'm talking about my life is now absorbing the principles, priorities and the sinful pleasures of this world, and I know God says I shouldn't do it, but I'm kind of taken in that, and I'm doing it anyway. It creates this big thing over here; friendship with the world creates this big thing called hostility or hatred toward God. And that's going to cause some strain in the relationship. He goes on to say this, he says anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world, becomes an enemy of God. Now that becomes something that people stumble over. How can that be? Remember the context, adulteresses. I have this commitment to God, I say I'm a Christian, but then I engaged in sin. And now that creates this hostility, it creates this enmity between me and God. There's a problem there. He says, or, and you Greek students know, verse number 5 is a notoriously thorny Greek grammatical sentence, but I think the NIV has it right here, read verse 5 with me. He says, or do you think that scripture says without reason, put a capital S on this, that the Spirit that he caused to live in us, I'm not talking about my spirit, I think we're talking here about the Holy Spirit, that he's caused to live in us, envies intensely. Now back to James 4, doesn't that now make sense? I mean why would I be causing envy in my own spirit? We're not talking

about that. We're talking about the Holy Spirit, because I'm committed to Jesus, I'm a part of his family, when I sin, its creating this all of a sudden now the Holy Spirit is envious. It wants me. It wants, as Paul said, this pure devotion to Christ. It wants me to be focused, but sin is getting in the way. The good news is, he gives us more grace. Verse number 6, that's why the scripture says, in other words, there's going to be a solution for this, God opposes the proud, the prideful are people that justify, rationalize, try to sweep their sin under the carpet, I'm not talking about that. You want to fix the problem; he will give grace to the humble. He'll fix us if we just humble ourselves. Verse 7, submit ourselves then to God, resist the devil, he'll flee from you. Now here's the relational distance, verse number 8, if you would just close this relational distance if you would come near to God, he'll come near to you. He'll close that gap. Wash your hands, here's what you have to do, get sin out of your life. Confess your sin, repent of your sin, purify your hearts, you double minded. You can only be called double minded, we're not talking about lost pagans here, we're talking about people that are saying, I'm committed to Christ, but I still kind of like this sin and kind of engage in this sin. And God says, no, when you do that, envy, spirit envy. There's this adultery, the double mindedness. What do you do? Humble yourself, repent of your sin, wash your hands, purify your heart, grieve mourn and wail, change your laughter to mourning. They are out carousing with the world and he says, stop laughing, start looking at your sin seriously. Turn your joy to gloom, humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. And that's one example with very harsh words. And I picked that one because it's got the most dramatic terminology in it. We could look all over the New Testament and find the same principles. And the point is this, when you and I sin, it creates relational distance. The good news is, God says he can fix that, it can be repaired, we can draw near to God and God will draw near to us. We can, we already quoted 1 John 1:8. You memorized 1 John 1:9 though, right? Remember he says without sin we are kidding ourselves, the truth is not in us. We're not sinless. Then he says this, next verse, do you know verse 9? If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins, cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He wants to fix this. And the point is, our sinful behavior, our compromise, our engagement in idolatry, if I can use that word and you know what I'm talking about, that other things become supreme priorities and loves in our lives, if we would just humble ourselves, God will close the gap. And if we can get out of the ditch faster, if we can stay out of the ditch more often, if we can stay on this path of increasing sanctification, we can grow in intimacy with God. We can have a tight and close relationship with God. Matter of fact, those are some words we can put in the last box. Put this in the solution box, seeking, pleasing, or to use the words of Enoch chapter 5, walking with God, that's the solution. That's staying out of the sinful ditches. That's making sure that my accounts with God are short. That's making sure that when I'm tempted to sin, I'm developing some kind of love and devotion to God that keeps me from being lured down that path as often. I'm now focusing more and more on the goal of being tight and intimate with God. Which means, saying no to sin, fighting these battles of temptation in my life, connecting with God with a tighter more ardent intimacy. Now lets sort these out with theological words. The first level barrier, we fix that with what we call justification. The second level problem we fix with something that's a process called sanctification. Is this all making sense now? We get right with God, close the barrier, reconciliation, we get justified before God. Now we're on a path of sanctification, getting increasingly closer and closer to God. Now Enoch had a lot more time than you and I have. How long did he walk with God? 300 years. The point was though, he was doing pretty good, 300 years he was cultivating a deeper and deeper more

intimate relationship with God. He was known for that, he was earnestly seeking God that entire time. But, he still had a problem. And you and I will still have a problem. Even if we walk with God for 30 years, and we're getting more and more in tune with him, we're walking in step with his spirit, being sanctified to a degree we've never been sanctified to before, we're really feeling like we're connecting with God, we know God, we're walking in step with God, temptation is not that big of a deal anymore, we're really just forging a strong relationship with God, you still will not have perfect fellowship with God. You've still got a problem, and the problem is you're still here. We call it this, third box; there is a problem of our sinful existence, or our sinful bodies. The Bible calls it in the New Testament, our flesh. We live in a fallen body; we're encased in something that cannot have fellowship with a holy God. As 1 Corinthians 15 says, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And what he's talking about there is not the resurrected flesh and blood of Christ, or ones like him, we're talking about the flesh and blood that we have now. This humanity that is bent to sin, because remember in the garden when they were kicked out of his presence? The other thing that happened was their bodies were cursed. Not only was the ground cursed, their bodies were cursed. And in that cursing of their bodies, not only was it now subject to a biological corruption, it was also now subject to a moral corruption. So where our bodies, if they're left to their own devices, do their own thing, they want to do things that are contrary to what God asks us to do. Does your body work that way? Right? Think about it, you don't want to nod at me, but I know its true. Jot it down, Galatians chapter 5, lets look this one up. There's so many passages here I'd love to show you, but lets look at just this one at least. Just know that I'm not making this up. Galatians 5:16; I say, Paul says, to the Galatian churches, so I say, live by the spirit, and you will not gratify, now the NIV translates this, the desires of the sinful nature, you've got that in your translation? The word is sarcoic (sp?) flesh. Your fallen human encasement. It's got desires, and if you live by the spirit, you're not going to gratify the desires of your flesh. Verse 17; for the flesh, same word, desires what is contrary to the spirit and the spirit what is contrary to the flesh. My body, in its fallen state, wants to do things that do not line up with God's principles. Your body works that way too? Okay, you're still not nodding at me, but I know its true, you and I are wired in our flesh to do the wrong thing. That's why in the New Testament, over and over again, Paul says we need to marshal the members of our body to do the righteous thing. Our spirit needs to be in control of our flesh. And so he says here, matter of fact, bottom of verse number 17; the problem is you cant do what you want. Its not if it feels good do it, or just cut loose and do what you want. You can't live that way. Christianity cannot cohabitate with that principle. We have to be in a constant battle, as long as we are in the encasement of our fallen flesh. That's why; by the way, in Romans chapter 8, Paul was looking forward to the great consummation of the Christian hope and the last level of that, he calls it, the redemption of the body. That's what he's waiting for. Can't wait for the redemption of the body. I have been reconciled to God, I'm growing in sanctification, but there's one more level, the redemption of the body. What does our body do that creates, well you could say it creates more second level problems, it does when you get into it. But even if you mastered a lot of your bodily impulses, and you say no, I'm marshaling the members of my body to live righteously. As long as you are in that body, there's another barrier. That's the middle box on the bottom line, let's fill that one in. The effect of that, I'll call it this, is personal distance. Personal distance. 1 Corinthians 15; flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. You cannot be in God's presence with that body, it is wired wrong, it is laced and laden with sin. It cannot be in a place where you and God have perfect

fellowship. Therefore your Christian life, no matter how sanctified you are, still has one last barrier. That's why the hope of the Christian life is not just worded this way, the redemption of the body. It's more often worded this way in scripture, that we will see him one day face to face. 1 John 3 says, what we are, or what we will be hasn't yet been realized. One day we're going to see him face to face. Why is that such a big deal? Why isn't now just on kind of a fully experiencing all of the blessings of Christianity now? Because you are still encased in your sinful flesh. And you need to, if you're going to have perfect fellowship with God, get this thing changed. It needs to be changed out. As a matter of fact, this may sound really really morbid, but last box on the chart; you want to solve this problem, here's God's solution to the problem, its called death. Does that sound morbid? Are you afraid we're gong to pass out Kool Aid next? What do you mean? That's solving a relational problem with God, I hate to put it that way, but that's the solution. You remember in the garden that God in his grace, shut down access to the garden and put the cherubim there with their flashing sword, and here's the rationale, so they will not stretch out their hand and reach out to eat the fruit from the tree of life and live forever. God was saying, I don't want them in this cursed and fallen state, to live forever in that state. Death, believe it or not, is the thing that God does in his grace to free us from fallen humanity. And now, if we're redeemed, give us an opportunity to be in a new reality with a new body, it's called the resurrection, where now I can live with God in his presence without fallen flesh. Without being encased in fallen humanity. Are you tracking with all of that, that was a lot of theology, did you get it? The bottom line is, I need to die. And in that reality, it would be better. Does that sound biblical? What did Paul say in Philippians chapter 1? For me to live is Christ and to die is a real drag and a bummer. Is that what he says? For me to live is Christ and to die is gain, I don't know which one to choose, I don't know, should I just die or should I keep living on? Why the big deal here? Why are you struggling with that? Is death a bad thing? Well death is a bad thing because it's a result of sin, but for the Christian, I have one last barrier to get through. And that is, I can't have perfect fellowship with God in my fallen state of humanity. I have a personal distance. I see through a glass dimly, but then face to face. What I will be hasn't yet been realized, but one day I'll see him face to face. I am at a personal distance with God. Some people object, they write me emails, they write me letters, that's wrong, don't talk about a long distance relationship with God. I had a pastor tell me, well you know what? It's like heaven now. No, its not. Is this like heaven now to you? I'm not thinking it is, right? Come on pastor, wake up, it aint heaven now. And one of the reasons is, I am personally away from God in this body. I'm not making this up. Turn to one last passage that relates to the chart. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse number 4; I know this also has a lot of shifting analogies here, but try to follow it. Verse number 4; for a while we live in this tent, now that's an analogy. You say, I don't live in a tent. Yeah, the analolgy here is that the tent is your body. While we live in this tent, be groan and burden because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling. What is that? 1 Corinthians 15 talked all about it, its called a resurrected body, that will be our heavenly dwelling. I don't want to be disembodied, I don't want to be unclothed, but you know as long as I'm in this tent, I'm kind of looking forward to the permanent body, the permanent dwelling. Now let's finish verse 4; this drives it home, this is the language, the exact language of 1 Corinthians 15. So that what is mortal, may be swallowed up by life. I need to exchange the mortal for immortality. I need to go from a fallen body to a body now that is created in the likeness of Christ resurrected. Verse 5; now it is God who has made us for this very purpose, that's the whole point. And he's given us the Sprit as a deposit guaranteeing

what is to come. That's why we're saved in hope, right? We're not there yet. Verse 6; therefore, we're confident and we know that as long as we're at home in the body, this tent, this clothing, this mortality, he says, we are, underline this, away from the Lord. Are we away from the Lord? Well the Lord, he lives in my heart. Well, really, you know you've got the Spirit in your heart and that's true, and in your life he's prompting you and convicting you and shaping you, guiding you and all that. But the bottom line is, you are not face to face with God. You are away from the Lord. And that's why, verse 7, we've got to live by faith, not by sight, because we're not face to face with the Lord. Verse 8; we are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. You see that? That's Philippians chapter 1. That, some may say, well that's kind of a morbid death wish. But in reality, for those of you that understand what this is all about, we recognize that the closer we get with God in this path of sanctification, after we've been justified, we long for the last one. If you want a biblical word for that, it's the theological word, glorification. Are you tracking with this? Justification, that solves barrier one. Sanctification, that progressively solves barrier two. Glorification, that's the biblical word for solving the last barrier. Now your saying, I'm not big on the death thing, okay? I can appreciate that, its better to die, but I don't want to do that. You know what? I don't prefer to do it either. That's why that Christians have always kind of hoped they're in that last generation that 1 Thessalonians 4 talks about. Because in the last generation, the Bible says, that when the trumpet sounds, we who remain and are alive, will be harpadzo, caught up together with him in the clouds. Now think about that. That's a weird thing, that's like that tube at the drive-through bank teller window (sucking sound). And some people say that's a very unbiblical thing, caught up together, what kind of foolishness is that, there's no precedent for that. There is a precedent for that, his name is Enoch, right? Oooh. And then he's got a guy, another guy in his club, what's his name? Elijah, right? He got sucked up too, off the planet. They went looking for him and couldn't find him, because God took him. That's why they couldn't find him, he got taken up, translated, this is the prototype of the rapture. I'm not trying to draw the line, and the Bible's not drawing the line, but when you say there's no precedent for the rapture, sure there is. Here is a guy who gets changed. Even the Greek language, you Greek scholars can look at that and see it. In Hebrews chapter 11, verse 5, the word is sometimes translated to be metamorphized, to be changed. He was caught up, he was taken up, he was translated, he was moved from one state to another state. Paul says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 15; we will not all sleep, that's a euphemism for death, we will not all die, but we will all be changed, right? We have to have a new body to be in fellowship with God. So there's three things. There's death, which then is a gap for those who die, because they leave their bodies behind, they live in God's presence spiritually, their software is there, their hardware is in the ground. Then one day, the trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will rise first, the hardware will be reassembled and those people will get their bodies back and we who remain and are alive, at that point we hear the trumpets, we get caught up, harpadzo, into heaven, we get to be with God and meet him in the sky. That's called the rapture. And Enoch is a picture of that. That will be the ultimate, final barrier taken away. Justification, sanctification, glorification. Enoch illustrates all three of those. He turned to God at 65 years old, he was justified. He walked with God in a process for 300 years, sanctification. And then one day, because he was seeking God earnestly, God said I'm going to do something that I'm going to do thousands of years from now with a bunch of people, but I'm just going to try it out, you know? Off he goes; Enoch gets raptured off the planet. That's a great picture isn't it, of our hope? Now, what are we left with? I'm already a Christian,

Pastor Mike, I've repented of my sins and put my trust in God and you say you're not passing out Kool aid at the end of the service, so we can't deal with the third barrier, right? And you can't, by the way, don't go kill yourself, that would be wrong, let me make that really clear. All we can deal with is the middle level. That's what Enoch becomes for us, is a motivation to deal with the second level barrier. Okay, I put it this way; we need to conquer the current challenge. And the current challenge for us, I hope most of us, is not justification, because hopefully I'm speaking to mostly Christians here today, and we're not going to go out and kill ourselves, so we're not going to deal with the last barrier. God says we ought to remain on in the flesh to follow the example of Paul in Philippians chapter 1, because that means fruitful labor for us, we've got work to do, so don't kill yourself. So what's the middle challenge? Then let's work on sanctification. And in that regard, Enoch provides us a great example. Take a look at it again, Hebrews chapter 11, verses 5 and 6; by faith Enoch was taken from this life, didn't experience death, we can't really deal with that, nothing we can do about it, God's going to do that for us if we're part of the last generation, or he's going to connect us through death and resurrection, so we can't deal with that, God's going to deal with that. For before he was taken, that's the process of sanctification, he was commended as one who pleased God. That's what I want to do. If I'm going to follow the example and conquer the challenge of Enoch, if I'm going to be like Enoch, if I want to do the things that he did, and grow in my relationship with God, then I've got to be one that pleases God. What does that involve? Faith, right? Verse 5; first two words. Verse 6; without faith I can't please him. I've got to have faith. I've got to have a bolstered and growing confidence and trust in God. Because I can't even please God without that. Anyone who comes to him, first of all, fundamentally, you've got to believe that he's there. And secondly, you've got to believe and trust that he rewards those who, here it comes, earnestly seek him. Let's start with that one, letter A on your outline. You and I need faith, bolstered confidence to really seek him. And by that, add whatever adjective you want, to earnestly, ardently seek him. We need to be people who are trying and moving into a deeper level of devotion with God. If we're going to be like Enoch, we need more faith to do that. We need to have that bolstered confidence to say it's all about following God, and I need God, more faith to make that happen. Turn to Psalms. Psalm 73. If you don't know Psalm 73, it's a great psalm by a guy named Asaph, David didn't write all the Psalms, a guy named Asaph wrote this one. And if you're ever bummed out about the injustices of life, that's a homework assignment, just start at the beginning of this psalm and travel emotionally, cogitate your way from the beginning to the end of this psalm, it's a great attitude adjustment. But when he gets to the end, without reference to context of all of his feelings and his emotional roller coaster, the end of the story is this for Asaph. Look at verse number 23; Psalm 73, verse 23. When it comes to him coming to his senses, here's what he says. Yet, I know this, no matter what's going on in the world, no matter what craziness is out there, I am always with you. That's a good place for us to start. You cannot have a growing, deepening, seeking after God kind of life if you don't have that mental discipline to know I'm always in God's presence. One of the books I put on the back is an old classic by a guy named brother Lawrence, who wrote about practicing the presence of God, have you ever read that old classic book? And he says, whether I'm peeling potatoes, or whatever I'm doing, I ought to have my mind, as Tosier said, I put two Tosier books in there for you too I think, about my mind always coming back to settling on my relationship with God. I live in the presence of God, I am always with you. And then you want to talk about the analogy of walking with God, look at the next phrase, in verse 23. You hold me by my right hand; you picture this pedestrian illustration here?

I'm walking and God is holding my hand. We need the faith to do that, to reach out to God to always know I live in his presence. God, I need to seek you, I need to hold your hand throughout my day, that's how you uphold me. Verse 24; you guide me with your council. I'm checking out your word, I'm opening your Bible in the mornings. And afterwards, my hope is pinned on this, like 1 John chapter 3, I'm hoping in the glorification level, the fact that you're going to take me into glory. There will be a closer relationship at the end of this life with you. And then he says, whom have I in heaven but you. When it comes down to my priorities, it's all about you. Earth, by comparison, he says, has nothing I desire besides you. Does that sound like a godly standard to put up in your life? Can you imagine having that kind of Asaph relationship to say, God, that's where I'm at. Really, nothing on earth is of interest to me but you. Now we have to live in the world, I understand that, we've got jobs to go to, we've got stuff to do, we've got to go shopping, we've got to feed the kids, I get it. But the Bible says, that when we really learning to walk by a kind of faith that says, God I want to seek you, you're the primary reason I live. We get to the place where we say every other interest pales by comparison. We say God, there's nothing else really, earth really has no bread to satisfy like when I really ingest and connect with you. That's what it's about. And in our hearts, I want to get there, don't you? God, besides you there's nothing on earth that I want, there's no desires, there's no idolatry fighting for my attention. Idolatry, by the way, don't picture the guy with the little incense burning, bowing down and hugging a gold idol, that's just an expression of ancient idolatry. Idolatry is simply exalting any priority in your life above the priority of seeking God. Do you recognize that? That is idolatry. And that's why in the New Testament when a lot of people were bowing down to golden images, he says, guard yourselves. Guard yourselves from idols. We've got to make sure that our one consuming priority is knowing God. And when we taste and see that God is good, we realize there is nothing better to do with our time, or our minds, or our efforts, than trying to cultivate a deeper and more intimate relationship with God. Verse 26; hey everything could go wrong here, which was the context of this psalm. I mean everything seemed to be going wrong for this guy. My flesh, my heart may fail, but you know what, God is the strength of my heart, and he is my portion, my allotment forever. Now look at the spatial analogies here, those who are far from you will perish, you destroy all who are unfaithful to you, they don't trust you. Verse 28; but as for me, look at the resolve here, underline this phrase of relational space here, it is good to be near God. That is the heart's desire of someone who's bolstering a faith that says I want to make God, and seeking him my primary priority and objective of life. It is good to be near God. And then look at this resolve. I've made the sovereign Lord my refuge. My kids have their little hide-out. They go to their little hide-out in the afternoon. That's the place they want to go back to, it's the place they go and they re-group. And the psalmist here, Asaph, says we've made God that for us. Our minds keep going back there, it's the place we go, we find refuge, we find repose, we find strength, we find energy, we go back to God. I've made the sovereign Lord my refuge, I will tell of all your deeds. I'm so stoked about the growth and the sustenance I find in my relationship with God, I'm talking about it all the time. Here's some diagnostics on the level of our faith, and Asaph says it well, it would be a great section to memorize. Verses 27 to 28, faith to really seek him. We could preach a whole series of sermons on that, but suffice it just to say, yeah, we need that. And then we need to know if we're going to seek God here, we are still in that last barrier we are not going to conquer until we die, so I've got to have the kind of faith that sees this, secondly, as a distant kind of thing, a long distance relationship if you will. And I get people that deny this, but it's a reality, as long as I am in this

body, I am away from the Lord. That's just a fact. So my faith needs to be the kind that can look across the horizon, and can bridge the distance that now exists. I don't see him face to face. You can sing all of your songs about he walks with me, he talks with me and all that, and you know all that's great, and its poetic language, but you and I do not walk and talk with God. His Spirit convicts us, his Spirit may guide us and give us council, his word may be a lamp to our feet, but I can't wait to see him face to face. Then I'll have the realization of my Christian life. And until then, I've got to have the kind of faith that knows my life is somewhere else. Is that a New Testament theme you've heard before? What does Paul say in Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 through 4? We ought to set our minds on things above, not on things on the earth. What does Paul say to the Philippians? Our citizenship, its not on the earth, its in heaven. I went on this Israel trip with you guys, we traveled the other side of the planet for 10 days and everyone was having a great time, especially those that brought their family, but you know, I enjoyed it, it was great to spend time with you guys, but my family was thousands of miles away on the other side of the planet. So in my heart, I would see something and smile and think man, oh my son would really like this, and my wife would love that piece of art and it would be great if my daughter were here to experience this. But you know what, they weren't there, so in many ways I was with you guys physically there in Jerusalem and Galilee and all over the middle east, but my heart was here, why? Because in Orange County, that's where the four most important human beings in my life were. You know my wife and my 4 year old, and my 8 year old and my 10 year old, and so everyday what was I doing? I was filtering everything through the fact that my family is on the other side of the planet. And that's why I couldn't wait to rush to the phone to call them at night, which was hard to coordinate the times and everything with the other side of the planet. That's where I was, and that's where my heart was. And that's what the Bible says you ought to be down here. Your heart and your mind ought to be fixed in another place. Your great hope and the culmination of everything that you desire is there, its not here. And you ought to live with that sense that my faith stretches beyond the horizon, that I am, in a real sense, I am heavenly minded. And when we're heavenly minded, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, then we start to be some earthly good. But until then, we're just a drone in the planet, going around just trying to be happy. And the bottom line is, our happiness and our hope is over there. And the Bible says, we need to have the kind of faith that Enoch had to walk with God even when he didn't see him face to face. And the reward for his walking with God was what? He got to see him face to face, right? The tube at the bank drive-through, (sucking noise), he gets to go up and be with him. And the bottom line is, that's why in chapter 11 of Hebrews verse number 6 it says; He rewards those who seek him. And the ultimate payoff for Enoch was he got to stand in his presence. His hearts desire was fulfilled. And I know a lot of us, we hope for the return of Christ, but we do it when our lives are going terrible, right? Oh I can't wait, I've got that meeting next Tuesday, I hope Christ comes back on Monday. That's how most of us are, right? Yeah, and you know what? Its not just a relief valve, it shouldn't be when we see bad days on the horizon, we want to go home, we should have as a growing kind of faith in our life, to cry out with the early church in that little Aramaic phrase, maranatha, come quickly Lord, we want to be with you. That is our hope. The Bible says when we fix our hope on that, we purify ourselves. The synergistic relationship between sanctification and hoping for glorification is all over the Bible. Start putting your hope in the return of Christ. That's what its all about. And the Bible says we need that kind of faith to bridge the distance. 1 Peter chapter 1 would be worth jotting down, verses 8 and 9; Peter tells his audience it's great, you guys are cultivating a love for a

person you've never seen. Remember that verse? Though you've not seen him you love him. He says, though you don't see him now, you trust in him, and because of that growing trust, you are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. We need to have faith to bridge the distance. And I know a lot of us, I certainly have fallen in to this pattern of wrong thinking, I think you know, Enoch, I kind of picture him on a flannel graph. He's got this nice beard, and a glowing smile, you know he's kind of walking with a bird on his shoulder and everything is cool and it's rosie because its bible times, and in bible times, everything's cool, everything's conducive to godliness in bible times, right? No. And I know we think our world's a lot worse than theirs, but you know who Enoch's great grandson was? You know him, Noah. You know what the Bible says about the days of Noah? Jesus kept saying, the last days are going to be like the days of Noah. And the days of Noah were all about what? Church on every corner, everybody was doing great, everybody loved God, right? Christian music on every station. What was the days of Noah about? Here's what the Bible says, every thought and inclination of man's heart was continually evil. Which means that all of the recreational outlets, everything on the "radio" of the ancient world, all the entertainment, all the books, all the magazines, everything that was going on, all the discussions at the city gates was always continually compromising and evil. It was sinful. Enoch died only 69 years before Noah was born and he was his great grandson. Now the world did not go to hell in 69 years. Enoch surely lived in a day, walking progressively with God in a world that was progressively getting worse. How bad was it? Jesus said it was really bad. This was a bad situation. God's commentary in Genesis 6, everybody's heart always evil; it said it grieved God's heart that he even made man. Think about that. This is not a force, this is not a creed, this is a person grieving over the loss of fellowship with his creation. Only two people, anti-deluvian, before the flood, that were commended as righteous people, only two people in scripture. Noah and his great grandfather, Enoch. Enoch was a righteous man when the world was about as unrighteous as it gets. And you think the world's bad today? I guarantee you if you compare our day to that day, though there may be some comparisons; he had to have a faith, third on your list, letter C; to buck the culture. He was not going to get any help from his world, none. I know we think, well you know what, I'd love to seek God more often, but our world it's just not really conducive for that. Neither was Enoch's. Enoch sought God in a world that didn't. Enoch sought God, as we'll see next week, much like in his great grandson's day, he sought God in a day that mocked seeking God. Does that sound familiar? And I guarantee you it was a lot worse. Their church services were a lot more sparse than ours are. There wasn't many people sitting around going, let's talk about your fellowship with God, and your walking with God. Didn't happen. This guy was on his own, and he was seeking God when it wasn't popular. One last passage, 2 Timothy chapter 3. Its important to recognize this because we live in a day that's a lot like that, perhaps not as bad, but its getting there. Because the Bible promises in 2 Timothy 3, things are moving from bad to worse. It's not getting better, contra the post millennial among us. He says this, as a matter of fact, about the last days, which I know stretch from the days of the New Testament to now, but they're getting worse. He says it goes from bad to worse. But he says this, verse 1, mark this, there will be terrible times in the last days. Which again, I'm sure was just like Enoch's day. But let's see this list; any of it may apply to our culture. People will be lovers of themselves, hmm let's see, any of that going on? Nah, not today. Anyone lovers of themselves? You know it is so bad in our culture when we are to love ourselves, that even in the church; pastors are standing on platforms today telling people that they've got to learn to love themselves. We've got no problem with that, as a matter of fact the

Bible says that'll be part of the terrible times of the last days. People are obsessed with loving themselves, you're wired to love yourself. That's the foundation of sin, right? God wants me to love you more than I love myself, he wants me to love him so much that Luke 14 says, sometimes it looks like I'm hating myself. That's our day. People are putting cloaks of religion around that. Lovers of money, hmmm, anybody doing that in our day? Nah, nope don't think so. Yeah, maybe, yeah I think so. Didn't get as many laughs, because its infiltrated our hearts too, hasn't it? We just want the stuff, man, we just want the stuff. Open up the magazine, ooh that would be nice, ooh, I like, ooh, I want more of that. Boastful, proud and abusive. There's a nice trio. I was watching TV they interviewed this modern entertainer, this musician, if you can call it music, and they were there being interviewed and I thought, there's three words that characterize the interview that I just saw, its boastful, proud, and abusive. And yet what we do for them, we roll out the red carpets, we have guys chase them with cameras because we want their pictures and we put them on the front of magazines, these are our heroes we love these people, we want to be like them, show us their crib, we want to go check out their house. We celebrate the boastful, proud and abusive among us. They're our heroes today. God hates it. He hates it when the world is lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents. Any of that going on? Ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self control, we could be here all day, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, now underline this last phrase, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Now we've already said if we're going to conquer this middle layer of sanctification, we've go to be willing as Galatians 5 says, to not do what we want. Because our flesh is going to be programmed to do what God tells us not to do. To be drawn away from God, and we're going to say we're committed to drawing near to God. That's going to create a problem. And the Bible says people just give in, do whatever you want to do. No churches then right? Verse number 5, don't miss this; having a form of godliness, but denying its power. See this? Oh, there are churches, we've just kind of redefined what church is all about. Oh, you know its okay. What kind of power are we talking about? Is it some charismatic license here? No, we're talking about the power to transform lives. Taking the list from verse 2 to verse 4 and changing those into people that love God and honor others above themselves. That's the power of the Christian Gospel, to change our lives and our behavior. Well the people like that, he says, have nothing to do with them. Timothy, you're going to have to be counter-cultural, you're going to have to buck your culture. Drop down to verse 10, he now gives a positive example which is the apostle Paul, he says, you however, you know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love and my endurance. Which by the way, didn't get a nice round of applause from the world, verse 11, it brought on persecutions and sufferings, all kind of things have happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the persecutions I endured, and yet you know, God was good. He rescued me from all of them. But in fact, everyone, Timothy, who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted. There's going to be a cost to this, if I tell you this morning, seek God with all your heart, cultivate a deeper relationship with God, you are going to encounter problems. The world is not only not going to help you; they are going to oppose you in that. They are going to insult you, you think they did that to Enoch? The Bible says he was one of the very few, prior to the days of the flood that were seeking hard after God. Yeah, we're going to have to buck the culture. Verse 13; while evil men and impostors they go from bad to worse, it gets worse, deceiving and being deceived, do we have any of those in our day? Absolutely. Wise, infiltrating, all kinds of deception. Verse 14; but as for you, I love what Paul says to Timothy here,



continue in what you have learned, go deeper, cultivate a deeper more intimate relationship with God. And you've become convinced of it because you know those from whom you've learned it. And how from infancy you've known the, here's the key, the focal point becomes the word of God, you've known the Holy Scriptures. You've known that book, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, all scripture, is inspired, is God breathed, it's useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. What does that do for us? It makes the man or woman of God thoroughly equipped to do the right thing, to do every good work. Isn't it interesting how it always gets back to the text of the Bible? You want to grow in your relationship with God; you've got to spend less time with your eyeballs on the Wall Street Journal, and more time with your eyeballs on the pages of Galatians, and Ephesians, and Philippians and Colossians. Do you see the difference? We've got to reach in the morning, not for the remote to watch the news, we've got to reach for our Bibles and say this is the word of God, the is the lamp for my feet, the light for my path. This is the thing that is going to give me the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet as Dr. Kaiser came last week, and off the record, not here on the platform, he sat there and lamented the fact that as he goes from church to church, from state to state and shares the word of God with people, he says its amazing how many people don't even carry their Bibles to church anymore. How many pastors don't even open the word of God anymore. And I'm saying to myself, here is the world we live in. Jesus said, am I even going to find faith on the earth when I return? Things will go from bad to worse, but our focus needs to be on knowing God, and I'm always going to bring us back to the word of God. Going to buck the culture, even the church culture unfortunately to conquer this current challenge. Please don't confuse what I've said this morning about seeking God. There is a distinction between justification and sanctification. Do you understand that difference? Seeking God does not make us a Christian. Seeking God is what we do when we become a Christian. We seek God to the point of salvation, yes, we need to learn about the Gospel, but once we put our trust in Christ, now we begin a relationship with God, so that we might know him better. Its not just about being adopted into the family, it's about getting to know our heavenly father. And Jesus said, John 17, that's what eternal life is all about. That they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one that you have sent. Jesus said it's about them through the power of the Holy Spirit, knowing the Father, and knowing the Son. That's what the Christian life is about. Let's get at it this week. Let's make this our top priority. Nothing could be better for your soul. Stomach for food, food for stomach, your life for knowing God, and knowing God for your life.