

“In the Bosom of the Father”

Something will be the most important “thing” to you at any given moment. For Jesus, the most important “thing” was His Father, and this held true in every situation.

Whatever has the most influence in your life from moment to moment is taking a place that is reserved for God only.

God is the Ultimate in many departments, so it is doubly significant when His role of choice with you is that of Father. He is your Ultimate Father, and He chooses to relate to you as your Father. What this means to you is: above all things, what you need is the Fathering of God Almighty! You need God as your Father.

When you are not allowing the Father to be the most important “thing” in your life, then you begin to experience many of the unnecessary but common stresses such as Worry, Fear, Anxiety, Apprehension, Dread, Angst, Torment, Restlessness, Uneasiness, Dissatisfaction, or Cynicism.

Take a moment and reread the list above.

If you recognize yourself in this list, then you need to know that you are experiencing Unbelief, and this stems from not relating to the Father the way Jesus did; and what He accomplished created a way for you to live with God as your Father just as He did. The story of Jesus’ life could be summed up as, “Life With Father.” Everything He did flowed from His Father; and everything you do can flow from your Father. This really is the point of the Gospel: Jesus is the Way to the Father, and the consequences of following that gives you eternal life.

The secret is most clearly spelled out in the Gospel of John, and this key phrase describes how Jesus lived with the Father: “in the bosom of the Father.” (John 1:18) This will be our topic for the month of May. Oh! that your life will blossom with Christ in your Father!

Lesson 1

Scripture sometimes uses metaphors such as “loins” to describe our source or origins. John uses the metaphor of “bosom” to describe the place of greatest intimacy and tender care when he summarizes Jesus’ relationship with the Father in John 1:18.

In 1 Kings 3:20 (LXX which stands for the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the woman who lost her infant son came in the middle of the night to take the living son from his mother’s “bosom” and placed her dead child in the sleeping mother’s “bosom.” In 1 Kings 17:19, the mother’s son suddenly died. Elijah took the dead son from her “bosom” and placed him on his own bed. Here is the background for understanding how intimate and tender and secure is the place Jesus occupied in the Father’s heart and life. It describes the place of the most devoted care, the place of the greatest love bond.

Jesus told a story about life after death in which Lazarus was carried by angels and placed in “the bosom of Abraham.” (Luke 16:22) Here Jesus uses this word “bosom” [a word not used in our culture] to describe the greatest sense of peace, rest, blessing, and security.

Scripture Study: Begin a careful study of John 1:1-18, for John’s introduction contains the whole of his insight into the Person and meaning of Jesus Christ. These verses are so condensed that it takes days, weeks, maybe even years of meditation to explore the depths and experience the impact of these few words. *(15 minutes)*

Study John 1:1-5 as a unit.

Why do you think this is a unit? _____

John 1:1-3 leads up to the all-important statement in John 1:4. Why do you think I say this?

What is the significance of John 1:4 in the Gospel of John? (If you have no idea, then keep this in mind as you study further.) _____

What do you think is the connection between experiencing Christ as your life and your having “light” (the ability to see life as God sees it)? _____

Give some examples of “darkness” as you have experienced it in your own soul.

When you are experiencing some “darkness” in your own soul, what do you think you need to do in order to experience His life? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Pray John 1:3 and emphasize, “. . . and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” See yourself as entirely dependent upon Jesus Christ.

Release yourself into His Shepherding care.

Tell Him that you will follow Him into your day.

Tell Him that He is your life; your only life source.

Lesson 2

As you examine John's introduction, you will see that John is telling you just how qualified Jesus is to give you "the life of the ages." In doing this John will contrast Jesus with His famous advance man, John the Baptist, as well as His Old Testament forerunner, Moses. Many were, at that time, grouped around these two figures; but here is One who is God Himself!

Twenty-one times you will encounter John's phrase, "the true..." by which he is most often distinguishing Jesus as the final, the unique, the only, the ultimate expression of something God has been hinting at for a long time. Thus you will read of the "true light"; the "true worshippers"; the "true bread"; the "true food"; the "true drink"; and the "true vine." You will want to underline John's usage of this important word, "true."

As you study John's introduction, please watch how he is building to a conclusion in John 1:18, for the rest of his Gospel will be an unpacking of what he (and thus Jesus) means by living in "the bosom of the Father" so as to interpret the Father to the rest of us. Jesus' purpose is to lead you to live in this same "bosom of the Father."

Scripture Memory: Keep saying John 1:4-5 over and over to yourself. Say it out loud and then look away as you attempt to imprint these words of life upon your mind. Remember, this is just the beginning, so don't think it has to be fully accomplished today. *(5 minutes)*

Scripture Meditation: Read John 1:18 slowly, over and over. Turn each phrase "over" and search out what it might mean to you as you allow these words room inside your soul. Linger over this process this morning. Give yourself time to absorb. *(10 minutes)*

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

By faith, receive Christ Jesus this morning as your life and your ability to see clearly. Begin to pray over living in "the bosom of the Father" just as Jesus did. Wait upon Him. Be still. Give Him some room inside. Trust Him with your coming day.

Lesson 3

The “darkness” which John learned about from Jesus is a descriptive word that summarizes our experience with the most basic of all sins: Unbelief. It is your refusal to trust God as your own Father that triggers all the dark, nasty, unpleasant, murky emotions which range from Fear to Lust, from Greed to Pride, from Self-loathing to Hatred.

As you study John’s Gospel, you will be drawn more and more into living in “the bosom of the Father” so as to experience the life which causes Truth to shine in you like “light.”

Jesus said to those who had believed in Him that they needed to really stay in His words in order to discover the Truth that would of itself set them free from the “darkness.” (John 8:31-32) And, of course, Jesus fully intends for you to digest His words so that you also might enjoy more and more of having all your needs met by the Father. What an adventure!

Scripture Meditation: Check out another way of translating John 1:1-3. “When the beginning began, the Word was already there, the Word was face to face with God; and the Word was God. He [note that it is “He” and not “It”] was in the beginning with God. All things, through His instrumentality, came into being; and without Him not one thing came into being.”

(10 minutes)

Read this translation over and over, allowing the thoughts of God to enter into your being; and you will experience life.

What thoughts seem to be coming to you as you turn His eternal Words over in your mind?

Scripture Memory: Review John 1:4-5. Just keep repeating these words to yourself, and the Holy Spirit will load His eternal words onto your hard drive. *(5 minutes)*

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Quietly wait upon God, the Eternal Word, who is Life itself.

Let Him minister to you. Give Him space inside you.

Go with Him in prayer and agree with Him for the welfare of others.

Pray for your Church leaders that they, too, will be refreshed with the life of Christ!

Lesson 4

As you encounter John 1:9, you will have an opportunity to learn something about interpreting Scripture. Someone might tear this verse out of the context and conclude that every man is enlightened by Jesus Christ. Why is that not the case? This is not the message of this verse, first of all because the context contradicts this meaning. John 1:11-12 makes it clear that only those who actually “receive Him” become the children of God: i.e. become enlightened. The meaning of John 1:9 is that Jesus is the true light who, when He comes into this world, brings God’s true light into every man who receives Him for Who He really is. When interpreting Scripture, it is important to not place a weight upon a single word that it is not intended to bear. We make such subtle distinctions frequently in our everyday communications with everyone, automatically making the needed adjustments.

A second reason that this is not the intended meaning of the verse is that such an interpretation would violate so many other Scriptures. In other words, there is the larger context of Scripture that must be referenced, as well as the immediate context. The assumption is that God does not contradict Himself even though He does say some things which are mysteries and therefore difficult to understand. But still He does not contradict Himself. His reasoning is higher than ours, but ours is patterned after His so that we can usually follow His thinking.

Scripture Study: Examine John 1:10 for a major doctrine which, by the way, threads its way through John’s Gospel. Paul gives us the clearest teaching on the doctrine of Total Depravity or what condition the human race is in after the Fall; but here John, in the briefest of statements, sounds the same theme: “And the world did not know Him,” which means that people did not recognize who He was. John quotes also from John the Baptist in John 1:26 to emphasize this teaching: “Among you stands One whom you do not know (recognize).”

(10 minutes)

Why do you think John wants you to understand this doctrine?

Read John 3:19. How does this statement reinforce John’s basic stance on the condition of the human race? _____

Scripture Study: Carefully examine John 1:12-13 and answer the following questions.

(5 minutes)

Whose will gets the credit for a person believing and receiving Christ?

Why do you think this is important to John? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Can you thank your heavenly Father for causing you to believe and receive Him who is life for all the coming ages?

He chose you to be His child. Let this reality, this light, sink in and affect you.

Now raise your hands to Him who loves you and worship Him! Sing or hum or chant or declare; but use your voice to honor Him who deserves all recognition and glory.
Pray for others you know who need this type of revelation concerning who Jesus is.

Lesson 6

You will notice many Old Testament references in John's Gospel. In John 1:14, "...and dwelt among us," has more impact in the Greek, which says that the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, which makes a reference to how God came and dwelt with Israel in a tent. The Greek can be translated, "tented among us"; and then the fact that John says that, "we saw His glory" makes even more sense. He is saying that the God of the Old Testament has now come in the final form by becoming a Man so as to be truly among us in the most intimate and complete way!

Moses was never permitted to actually see God; but this "Word become flesh" is the One of a kind God who is "in the bosom of the Father." For these several reasons, He is the One who fully and completely interprets Him to us! (John 1:18)

It is this thought in John 1:18 which is the climax of the introduction, and it is this statement that defines the mission of Jesus Christ: (1) to interpret the Father to us, and (2) to bring us into living in the bosom of the Father just as He modeled it. John uses the rest of His book to spread before you many different ways of seeing Jesus live out life in the bosom of the Father and to persuade you to come live this way with and through Him.

Scripture Meditation: Mull over John 1:18 by slowly reading the words several times. Don't be in a hurry. Let the words come inside and do whatever they "want to." (15 minutes)

While I anticipate that you will grow in your personal experience of living in the bosom of the Father as you continue this study, go ahead and complete the following sentences based upon what you know now.

"My own understanding of living in the bosom of the Father is _____
_____."

"I see this applying to my life in the following ways: _____

_____."

"What I hope to learn is _____

_____."

Prayer Time: (15 – 30 minutes)

Take your place in Christ and come to your Father.

Just "Be" with Him. Draw all that you lack from Him.

Pray His will into situations that concern you personally.

Pray His will into the needs of your Church and into the lives of your lost associates.

Lesson 7

John's identity was, "I'm the one He loves." Where did he learn to do this? You might say from being with Jesus and experiencing His love; but I think John caught the way Jesus was living with His Father and learned to live in the bosom of the Father the way Jesus did.

As you begin to read through John's descriptions of how Jesus lived, intentionally look for how Jesus was doing what He was doing by means of His relationship with His Father. You will have some lights go on and hopefully begin to copy Him.

Scripture Study: Read John 1:35-51. *(15 minutes)*

Why do you think Jesus would ask them, "What do you seek?" in John 1:38?

How would you answer His question, "What do you seek?"

Why do you think Jesus gave them this particular invitation in John 1:39?

How does His reasoning apply to you today?

How do you think Jesus knew what to say to Peter in John 1:42?

In John 1:43, how do you think Jesus knew where to go?

Realizing that Jesus was modeling for you, how do you think He knew this about Nathaniel? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

By faith in Jesus, take "your place" in the bosom of the Father.

Let Him influence you.

Declare His name by telling of His greatness!

Bring a few things to your Father and then wait patiently upon Him. Give Him time to make some impressions upon your soul regarding these concerns.

Lesson 8

“Timing is everything.” So goes a popular proverb, and we all acknowledge it to explain many an event both positively and negatively; but in John’s Gospel, there is a recurring reference to the issue of timing, especially God’s timing. It first occurs in John 2:4 when Jesus feels His mother pushing Him to do something which, at first, He doesn’t “see” His Father doing. So He says, “My hour has not yet come.” Here, as in John 7:8, Jesus experiences a fairly quick change in the Father’s will and thus adjusts His timing to the Father’s.

In this same passage of John 7, Jesus says something very significant about all those who live their lives not in the bosom of the Father. “Your time is always opportune.” When something other than the Father is most important to us, then we simply make our own decisions and act upon our own timetables. This also brings with it the problems of Worry, Fear, Anxiety, Apprehension, and many other forms of “darkness.”

Jesus’ brothers were later baptized in the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:14), and then they, too, understood how to live in the bosom of the Father. They, too, learned to perceive what the Father was doing and to respond so as to live in His timing.

This is a precious part of living in the bosom of your Father: this confidence that you are living on His timetable.

Scripture Observations: Take a moment and check out how conscious Jesus was of the Father’s timetable and notice how much confidence this gave Him. In one sense, it really doesn’t matter what you are doing if you know it is in sync with your Father. He is with you in what you are doing. He is there backing you. All of this comes from living in the bosom of the Father. *(5 minutes)*

Read John 2:1-4. Are you conscious of the Father’s timing in your life? _____

Read John 7:6. What are the advantages to living the way Jesus did as it relates to your sense of time? _____

Scripture Study: Now examine John 5:19 as you learn from Jesus how it works to live in the bosom of the Father. *(10 minutes)*

What do you think Jesus is teaching you as you study this verse? _____

What role do you think the Holy Spirit plays in your ability to live in the bosom of your Father? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Ask the Holy Spirit to take you into the place with Father that Jesus modeled.

This really is what Christ came to accomplish, so you can be confident that He will come and lead you.

Now become sensitive to your Father. Yield your timetables to Him, for your will is

wrapped up with this issue. Trust Him with your timing issues.
Move confidently into your day, knowing that your Father has a plan and a perfect timing for you.

Lesson 9

The Holy Spirit plays a key role in Jesus' ability as a Man to sense and perceive the Father. John, the Gospel writer, makes sure that you, the reader, know how John the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Messiah. When he saw the Holy Spirit descend and remain upon Jesus, then he knew that this was the One who would also baptize others in the Holy Spirit. (John 1:33)

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), so even though He had accepted the limitations of Man, He had no sin nature and enjoyed full fellowship with the Father.

Why does John want you to know about Nicodemus? Because he wanted you to know that the best and most spiritual Jewish teacher needed the Holy Spirit to come give him a birth from above if he was to be able to perceive the realm of the Father: i.e. the Kingdom.

Toward the end of Jesus' ministry on earth, He began to speak about the crucial role played by the Holy Spirit, because it is the Holy Spirit who enables you to live in the bosom of your Father. And He does this by making your union with Jesus so real, for He is the way to the Father. (John 14:6)

Scripture Memory: Whether you are just memorizing John 5:19 or refreshing your memory, say this verse over and over to yourself, as it is a major insight into how Jesus lived with His Father. (*5 minutes*)

Scripture Study: Look for the role of the Holy Spirit in the following verses. (*10 minutes*)
John 3:3-8 - State what you see as John's purpose in telling you this event.

In John 4:10, what is this gift of "living water"? _____

In John 7:37-39, Jesus teaches that you may do what: _____.

When: _____. So that what may happen: _____.

In John 15:26, what does Jesus envision being the role of the Holy Spirit?

Ponder John 16:7-15. What do you think Jesus wants you to know?

Prayer Time: (*10 – 25 minutes*)

Ask Jesus to freshly fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Use His words and the faith He gave you to actively receive the Holy Spirit as if you were coming to Jesus personally to drink the Spirit from Him!

Enjoy the Father God as your very own Father just as Jesus did.

Pray for the lost. Ask God to give you souls.

Lesson 10

Another Doctrine that Jesus taught, and John wants you understand, concerns the nature of people before Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit into them. John tells us that the people God called His own (the Jews) did not recognize Jesus or respond to Him. (John 1:11) Jesus could not entrust Himself to men, because “He knew all men” and “He Himself knew what was in man.” (John 2:24-25) What He “knew” was not good. Rather, He said that: “...men loved the darkness instead of the Light, for their deeds were evil” – John 3:19.

It was because of man’s fallen nature that John the Baptist said, “Among you stands One whom you do not know.” John the Apostle is showing you how supernatural it is for men to recognize Jesus’ identity.

This ability to break through a man’s dead-to-God human nature belongs to God alone; and He sovereignly chooses men even as He explained to Nicodemus that, “The wind blows where it wishes... but [you] do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” – John 3:8.

John was humbled by God’s choice of him as was Paul. Both men felt like love slaves in response to so great a love that would choose them and break into their prison of rebellion. John must have been so impacted by Jesus’ words, “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit; and that your fruit would remain....” – John 15:16.

Scripture Study: Carefully read the following verses as you look for the Doctrine of the Depravity of Man woven into the fabric of John’s Gospel. *(15 minutes)*

John 1:11 - Why does John think this information is important for you to know?

John 1:13 - Why does John think the will of man is incapable of recognizing and receiving Jesus for Who He is? _____

John 2:24-25 - Why didn’t Jesus entrust Himself to man? _____

John 3:19 - What does this tell you about human nature? _____

The Doctrine of Man’s Depravity will keep you from becoming disappointed in yourself, for we humans have a tendency to look within, hoping to discover something that is good without having to uniquely experience God’s grace. And it is never there. When God began with all of us, we were truly set against Him and His ways in our very nature. Only God can change our nature, which is tantamount to making a vegetarian of a tiger! It is all of grace!

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Think about God choosing you and breaking into your blindness and hardness just because He wants you to be His very own child.

Worship Him for His Nature!

Honor Him by declaring some of the great things about Him!

Ask Him for the joy of helping others recognize who Jesus is.

Lesson 11

Who chooses who is about control. If man chooses God, then man is ultimately in control; but if God chooses man, then guess Who is in control? Hmmm. Think about it.

Why is this revelation important? (1) It helps us with our needed humility. (2) It helps us become more appreciative of our salvation. (3) It helps us realize how much God loves us. (4) It helps us trust Him in all things at all times. (5) It gives us hope for others we love who do not now seem to be able or willing to recognize who Jesus is. (6) If you are going to live in the bosom of the Father, it is important to know whose idea this was and to what great lengths He has gone to secure your love toward Him.

Scripture Study: Let the Son pour truth into you so that you may enjoy being a son/daughter in a manner very much as He does. (20 minutes)

John 6:44 - As you read this, what feelings come into your soul? _____

John 6:65 - As you read this, express what you feel. _____

John 10:14-16 - To whom is Jesus referring when He speaks of "His own"?

Please do not revert to an old escape mechanism by saying that God chooses those He knows will choose Him. No one chooses God unless God does something first to disarm the hostility that human nature has for the nature of God.

John 10:26 - Americans would like to invert what Jesus actually said here. What did Jesus say that cuts across the American mindset? _____

When Judas was about to complete his betrayal, Jesus said, "...I know the ones I have chosen" - John 13:18. Why would Jesus say this in the midst of a betrayal scene?

Jesus' great Prayer in John 17 expresses how it was the Father who did the choosing and the Son who was doing the saving. The Father gave certain ones to His Son, and the Son never lost a single one who was given to Him by the Father. This relationship between the Father and the Son forms the very core of our salvation, and their relationship is the pattern for our own sonship.

John 17:2 - To whom has Jesus given eternal life? _____

John 17:6 - How can you tell those God gave to Jesus? _____

John 17:8 - What are the marks of those whom God has chosen? _____

John 17:9 - For whom does Jesus pray? _____

John 17:12 - What assurance and confidence does this give you? _____

Prayer Time: (15 minutes)

Since the Father chose you, the Son has been guarding you. Respond to Him in any way

that comes to you.

Thank the Lord Jesus for opening your blind eyes.

Use your faith to abide in Him this morning.

Trust Him specifically this morning to supply you with whatever you need.

Lesson 12

What's it like to live in the bosom of the Father? It's an entirely different way to live. It doesn't come all that naturally, because our basic nature was so impacted by sin that we humans have carved out a way of approaching life without any dependence being expressed toward God.

God takes the initiative and chooses us. Then the Spirit applies the work of Christ to our specific life, and we are regenerated. It is this work of the Spirit that motivates us to be a son/daughter to the Father, and He brings us into this closeness through our faith in Jesus Christ.

What's it like to live in the bosom of the Father? It is a life lived in dependence upon Him. It is a life of believing. It is a life of drawing everything we need from God by faith. It is a life lived for His will; it is a life lived for His glory. It is a life lived in response to His initiatives. It is a life lived by receiving what He is giving to us. It is a life lived with a great sensitivity to what He is saying and doing. It is a life lived with a consciousness of the real work being done by Him who lives in you.

Scripture Study: John begins to actually show you how Jesus lived in the bosom of the Father in John 4 where he describes how Jesus interacted with the Samaritan woman at the well.

(15 minutes)

Read John 4:10. What does Jesus mean by "the gift of God"? What is this gift?

Read John 4:23. What does the Father seek? _____ How does the Father's seeking relate to Jesus' purpose? _____

How does the Father's seeking relate to your purpose? _____

Read John 4:34. What is Jesus' food? _____ As the Father's child, what will feed you? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Yield yourself to God as a true Worshipper!

Soak up His love for you this morning.

Use your faith to draw from Him the life and assurance you need today.

Praise Him as the Supplier of what you need in the midst of whatever difficulties you are experiencing.

Lesson 13

What's it like to live in the bosom of the Father? It's a life of being so thrilled with God, so confident of His Nature, that you want only His will.

The Father's will does not seem like just a requirement, for the fact that it is His will makes it alive with meaning and gives a sense of His life-force being wrapped up in it.

Living in His bosom means being so aware of being treasured by God the Father; and it is this experience which permeates His will. It is His will, which is the very path chosen by Him who is Love itself.

If you did not read the introduction to yesterday's devotional, please go back and read it. Let this question begin to operate in your mind: What's it like to live in the bosom of the Father?

Scripture Study: Reread John 4:32-34. *(10 minutes)*

What food was Jesus eating? _____

How do you experience the Father's will "feeding" you? _____

What is your experience of feeding on God's will that is not understood by those who are not following Christ? _____

How do you experience God's will defining your work? _____

Do you think that this way of living is realistic for you, or do you think it is only for the superstars? _____

Read John 4:36. When what you choose, decide, do, say, etc., flows from your relationship with God as your Father, you begin to "receive wages and gather fruit for eternal life."

What does this mean to you? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Since you know the Father seeks for you to worship Him in accordance with what is true and by the work of the Spirit in you, why not spend some time giving Him your love, respect, and admiration, not to mention your will!

Sing or declare His Faithfulness to you over every difficulty that threatens your peace this morning.

Pray for the fresh revelation of Him to everyone in your Church!

Ask God to use your Church to reveal Christ to many who will respond.

Lesson 14

What's it like to live in the bosom of the Father? It is right at the heart of meeting your love need.

Doctrine is so important because it is Truth stated clearly so that you may use it in order to rightly experience God. Error, misunderstanding, ignorance, and wrong beliefs constantly war against us all in order to prevent us from experiencing, first-hand for ourselves, how much God loves us.

All Christians believe that God loves them, and probably all Christians have at least tasted His love; but living in the bosom of the Father involves a continual sense of receiving the Love which He so freely extends. This is your greatest need: to be actually receiving His love into your soul; and Jesus models it as He lives in the bosom of the Father.

Scripture Study: Refresh yourself with John 5:19-20, as these are verses you will want to log into your memory bank if you have not already done so. *(10 minutes)*

Focus on John 5:20 first. Notice how the Son explains the whole basis of His doing whatever He sees His Father doing. What is it that defines His relationship with God the Father? _____

So, when the devil whispered lies about the Father to Jesus, what was it that made His choices the right ones? _____

You are often tempted to doubt the Father's love for you as well as His wisdom in defining how you should live. What should you do to meet this great need that you have for love?

This is a "thought question," so don't just parrot something. Express what you really think is true. _____

Scripture Study: Pursue this topic of experiencing God's love by examining John 15:9-10. *(10 minutes)*

Finish this sentence: "Jesus fully intends for me to _____."

Why does Jesus see the Commandments as the way to experience the Father's love?

Have you struggled with not seeing the Commandments this way? _____
What is the difference between how Jesus sees His Father's Commands and how you have often viewed them? _____

So, what is the Savior teaching you now about the Father that is crucial to helping you live in the bosom of the Father? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

You are one with your Savior, Jesus. Come to the Father through Him this morning.

Use your "Child-of-God" card to come be His child.

Bring Him your problems and then leave them in His hands.

Believe that Christ is living in you so that you can go into your day with full assurance that His presence will be with you today.

Lesson 15

Your relationship with God as your own Father will define your life. This is very much what it's like to live in the bosom of the Father. It is simply this: He becomes the most important "thing" to you.

Jesus is always your link to God. In Him and Him only can you experience Life.

What does Scripture mean by "Life"? It is the experience of the Life that emanates from God Himself. This is why John opens his Gospel with the proclamation of Jesus being the eternal God who participated in creating everything. He is the Source of the Life force which causes every plant, animal, or human to live. The adjective "eternal" is often linked with the word "Life" because this Life is the Life of God that has no end, but rather continues throughout the coming ages.

In the Garden of Eden, there was the Tree of Life that represented the access Adam and Eve had to partake of the Life of God and all the delights that accompanied that. Sin cut them off from experiencing the joy, peace, and sufficiency of God that comes from sharing in His Life.

As you become dependent upon experiencing Christ as your Life, as you find yourself unable to carry on without the sense of Him supplying, you are living in the bosom of the Father! Remember, this is designed for children, so it's simple.

Scripture Study: There is a humility, an emptiness, an inability expressed by Jesus which we do not expect. In fact, I think we sometimes have a hard time believing that Jesus was as helpless as He stated. But as you explore His living in the bosom of the Father, you will discover that it was His willingness to be completely dependent upon His Father that was His secret. *(15 minutes)*

Reread John 5:19-20. Where do you see Jesus' dependence upon His Father? _____
_____ How might you live more in dependence upon God as your Father? _____

Read John 5:30. There is great humility and faith expressed here, and these two qualities are keys to living in the bosom of the Father.

When Jesus said He could do nothing on His own initiative, do you think He was passive? _____ What do you think He was describing? _____

Not seeking your own will is certainly a major key to living in the bosom of the Father. To succeed here you must certainly believe _____.

How can you tell when your will is blocking your ability to live in the bosom of the Father? _____

The surrender of your will in faith-dependence upon God is called "Relinquishment." It comes when what God says, thinks, and wills is the most important "thing" to you. It is also living in the bosom of the Father, so this way of living begins to attract you

powerfully, and this is a mark of His grace. When you value this way of living, you have begun the journey. Welcome to the journey.

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Tell your Lord Jesus that you want to live in the bosom of the Father with Him!

Surrender to Him your will and ask for His grace to live a surrendered life.

Worship Him for His Beauty and Glory!

Count Him faithful to perform His promises to you.

Lesson 16

Jesus lived in the joy of being nurtured and cared for by His Father! He derived His joy from being with His Father, and He spoke of “His joy” as a consequence. He made it clear that He wanted you to have “His joy” also. (John 15:11) This is right at the core of what it means to live in the bosom of the Father, for in Heaven it is God Himself who is the sole source of Joy!

Imagine living without being driven by the “need” to promote yourself. Experiencing the Father, knowing the Father, being with the Father, having God become the chief influence upon your life...these are all associated with living in the bosom of the Father; and the result is a desire to bring glory to God rather than to yourself! Oh, now we are living! Now your faith begins to come to a new level, and this is very much the life that Jesus was carving out for you to have.

Scripture Study: Read John 5:44 carefully, for in it you will discover one of the great secrets to faith. *(15 minutes)*

How can you spot your desire to promote yourself as a block to your ability to live in faith dependence upon God? _____

What might you do to grow in your ability to desire God’s glory as opposed to your own? _____

Rewrite John 5:44 using your own words. Don’t worry about being so exact that you resort to almost copying the verse. Branch out and express God’s thoughts in terms of your own life experiences. _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Bow before God and confess your desire to forsake your obsession with your own glory. Repent of it.

Ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your heart to become aware of the Father God’s glory.

Ponder the Greatness of God Almighty.

Ask the Holy Spirit for His help (He is the Helper) to actively seek God’s glory.

Lesson 17

Martin Luther authored the famous book, The Bondage of the Will, which made such an impact that I would say this little book changed history! Christians today know little of this teaching, but those who do rejoice to learn that it is the will of man that robs us of so much freedom and happiness.

The Cross is required to free us at the points of bondage which we experience with regard to our wills; but it is tasting the freedom and the joy of Christ that motivates us to exercise our faith and take our stubborn wills to the Cross where we can (by faith) die with Him and experience the power of His resurrection, freeing us to love, to hope, to rejoice, to believe, to wait, to care! Oh, what a joy!

One reason we sometimes find it difficult to live in the bosom of the Father lies in our problematic wills. Our natural way of living silently says, “My will be done”; and this is a recipe for failure and misery.

The joy and comfort of living in the bosom of the Father motivates us to trade our will for His; and how beautifully Jesus modeled this for us. His daily demeanor was an advertisement for living in the bosom of the Father. He radiated a type of confidence that only comes from being with God; and this made His way of life so attractive. This is why people felt drawn to Him.

Scripture Meditation: Note that Jesus was not afraid of His Father’s will. Why not? Because He trusted His Father’s nature; and He lived close enough to Him that He was daily refreshed with His presence. This washes away our fears of His will that lie right at the core of the Curse. Read John 5:19-20 over and over slowly, allowing the words to come inside and do what God’s words want to do. Just soak up His words; they will do the rest. (*5 minutes*)

Scripture Study: Reread John 5:30. (*10 minutes*)

Say John 5:30 out loud (even if it’s to yourself), and make His words your own confession.

As you say these words, how does it make you feel? _____

Can you trust God to work in you this yieldedness so that your will is relinquished to Him?

Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father but through Me,” so come to the Father this morning through your faith in your Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now surrender to Him your will. He is very capable, and you are not.

Bring to Him all the things that are eating on you: your worries, your fears, and the things that are making you angry.

Leave all these things with Him, and go into your day with His love flowing into you.

Lesson 18

Whatever brings you joy broadcasts strongly. Your joy shouts, “This is what gives me pleasure and happiness. This is what I love. This is what I treasure. This is my joy!” Your joy is the most effective proclamation of the Gospel if it’s your fellowship and intimacy with Him that causes your joy.

You may say, “But isn’t there also sorrow and pain in following Jesus?” The answer is, “Yes, truly; but there is also a joy which bubbles up from within and sustains us even in great difficulties.” Paul was a Disciple who suffered frequently and intensely, but he was always speaking of having joy along with the suffering. Only those who taste and see that the Lord is good experience this and therefore understand how the two can co-exist.

Duty is good. We can’t depend upon our feelings to always be there to help do what is right; but duty alone will not give us the joy that is so essential to our spiritual and emotional immune system.

And how are we to have this joy?

Scripture Study: Prepare for a feast as you examine John 15:11. *(5 minutes)*

What joy does Jesus speak about you having? _____

What do you think is the source of His joy? _____

If it is His joy which is to be in you, then you can experience this joy when _____

Jesus promises that His joy will be enough to keep you full. What do you think?

Scripture Study: Now let us work backward and discover how to constantly live in a joy that is His. Start with John 15:11 again. *(10 minutes)*

The NAS says, “These things I have spoken to you,” and the NIV says, “I have told you this”; and in both there follows the “so that” which should spark your interest greatly!

Jesus has just told you some things that have the purpose and result of giving you His joy!

The question now remains: what has Jesus just been saying? What are “these things” which are to insure that you have His joy? Please go to work answering this question. [Give the short version today.]

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

If Jesus wants you to have His joy this morning, why not come to Him and actually receive it?

Look back to your answer to what are “these things” and then begin to pray your way

through your answer.

Own His joy. Receive His joy. Possess His joy.

Pray for your Church leaders this morning to become refreshed with His joy so that they may radiate what is truly valuable: Jesus Christ Himself!

Lesson 19

The Apostle John spent many chapters whetting our appetite for the ability to live in the bosom of the Father before He closed the deal by taking us to the part of the Master's teaching that explains how to do it.

Jesus was always one-with-the-Father but He chose to use this privilege by abiding in Him. In other words, He utilized His position with the Father in order to stay connected. He took advantage of His relationship so as to enjoy the closeness and soak up His Father's love and life-giving impartations.

Let's compare it to marriage. The covenant creates the oneness-bond that freely grants both the privilege of intimate access; but not every married person "abides" in that relationship. To "abide in" means to access the relationship, and in Jesus' case, it was spiritual in nature. Faith is involved. Realizing is involved. To use the old word, "Reckoning" is involved.

Every Christian has this "oneness-with-Christ" which grants him/her complete access to His "oneness-with-the-Father." But "abide in Him" means to exercise your faith that it is true. He is yours. He is one with you. You are in Him. He is in you. As you believe this and count on this, you begin to experience His life flowing into you. This is what it means to "abide in the Vine." And this is the secret of living in the bosom of the Father.

Scripture Meditation: Slowly read and re-read John 15:1-11. Allow me to make two comments on the English text found in verses 2 and 3. "He takes away" can be better translated, "He lifts up"; for the vine-dresser would lift up the drooping vine where it lays upon the ground and cannot bear fruit. He then lifts it up and re-ties it to the wire and thus He does for the Christian whose life is wilting. Now, if there is no fruit whatsoever, then the person is not a Christian and is removed as in verse 6. In verse 3, "You are already clean" can be translated, "You are already pruned"; and the meaning should become clear. *(10 minutes)*

Journal: Meditate on these verses and write down your thoughts, if you will find this helpful. *(10 minutes total)*

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Use your faith now and abide in Christ.

Tell your Savior that you really can do nothing apart from Him. He already knows it, but He likes to hear you say it.
Draw His life into your soul.
Pray His life flow into the situations that have been concerning you.

Lesson 20

If, for any reason, you did not complete yesterday's lesson, please go back and check it out. In fact, a review is good even if you did read it.

How did Jesus accomplish His works? He tells us in John 14:10c: "The Father abiding in Me does His works." Can you hear Paul's, "Christ in me, the hope of glory"? (Colossians 1:27) Paul obviously got it. The question is: have you "got it"?

The secret to grace is Christ living in you and becoming so confident of this that you really rely upon Him living in you. As you read the writings of Paul, you can't help but be impressed with how much Paul lived this way. In other words, Paul was abiding in the Vine; and through this, he was living in the bosom of the Father. He was experiencing in Christ what Jesus was experiencing in His Father. This is how we experience coming to the Father through Himself as He told us in John 14:6.

Scripture Meditation: Read John 14:10 slowly, over and over, until it sinks below the surface and begins to seep into your soul. (*5 minutes*)

Scripture Reflection: Reference John 14:10 and respond to the following. (*10 minutes*)
How did this abiding in the Father take pressure off Jesus? _____

Why do you think Jesus began teaching this toward His last days with His disciples?

Read John 6:28-29. Does this speak to you in a fresh way now? _____
If so, how? _____

Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

Come to your Father this morning through your union with Jesus Christ.

Draw His will from Him so that it replaces your old stubborn will.

Surrender your anger and your fear this morning to Him.

Now trust Him in every area where you have been struggling.

Lesson 21

As you abide in Christ and live in the bosom of the Father, you will begin to learn that He gives things to you. Instead of fighting yourself and others for things, you begin to learn that it is your Father's good pleasure to give things to you; and this is a radically different way to live.

John uses the word "give" 76 times. This is a heavy concentration of usage, which means that this fact really registered with John. It made a great impression upon him as he hopes it will you.

Jesus was not passive. The Greek word for "take" also means "receive," for they are twin concepts. Jesus took or received what the Father was giving to Him; and this is how He wants you to live. When you are confident that God is good and is committed to loving you, then you can actively live in dependence upon Him and confidently take from Him what He is giving to you. This glorifies God!

Scripture Study: John the Apostle introduces the way God works as the Giver by picking up something he heard John the Baptist say: Read John 3:27. (*5 minutes*)

How do you think John the Baptist might have learned this? _____

How do you think it affected the way John the Baptist made his decisions? I assure you that this one revelation set John apart from other men, and so it will affect your life if you really get it. _____

Scripture Study: In the following verses, note how Jesus lived in this revelation. (*10 minutes*)

Read John 3:35. God hasn't given all things into your hands, but do you think He wants you to live by this same principle? _____

Look at John 4:10. Jesus gives this "living water."

Look at John 5:22. Why do you think God was working this way with Jesus?

Look at John 5:26. What else was the Father giving to Jesus?

John 5:27 - What else did Jesus receive? _____

Please read Matthew 28:18 to get the full force of this.

Now look at John 5:36, and you will see more clearly why it is the Father abiding in Him that brought the works.

Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

God wants to change the way you view Him, and He wants to give you things which will accomplish His works. Talk to Him about this.

Come to Him and receive by faith these things: the life, the wisdom, the favor, the attitude, and the authority He wishes to give you so that He can fulfill His purpose through you.

Thank Him for working with you this way.
Submit yourself to Him as a learner in this new way of living.

Lesson 22

Listen to Jesus model a way of life for you: “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing....” - John 6:39. Think about it for a moment.

Imagine living in this confidence. Imagine having such confidence in God and in His ability to give to you in such a way that it will not be lost. This comes from abiding in the Vine and thus from living in the bosom of the Father.

The man who is confident in his God has confidence that He is giving things, people, resources, authority, ability, grace, circumstances, and providences into your hands for His glory; and because of that you can have the confidence that you will not lose it!

This doesn't mean that your faith will not be tested. It doesn't mean that hard things will never happen to you. It does mean, however, just what Jesus confessed: that God is giving to every child of God things of which he can be so confident. It means that this confidence is not pride. It is not cocky to believe this. It is a great confidence in Who is giving things into your hands. It isn't about your being worthy; it's about His purposes!

Scripture Meditation: Slowly read and re-read John 6:39 until it begins to sink into your inner man. (*5 minutes*)

Scripture Reflections: (*10 minutes*)

Read John 6:27-29. The real works that you will accomplish in this life will come by your _____.

Read John 6:32-33. Your experience with Christ has come because _____.

You received Christ; but you didn't work for Him. What's the difference?

Read John 14:16. How did you receive “another Helper”? _____

Another Scripture Thought: Think about 2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV): “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through Him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God!”

Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

The will of God trumped your human will (John 1:13) so that you would receive His Son!

Receive from Him the courage to dare to do the things He puts into your heart!

Receive from Him great answers to prayers!

Receive from Him great confidence in Him!

Lesson 23

Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.” Think about these words once more. Jesus was feeding off of His Father’s will. He was experiencing joy, life, peace, and a sense of well-being as He received the Father’s Will into His own will.

Many Christians struggle with a fear that the Father’s Will will scare them. Are you one who is tentative about feasting upon God’s will because there is deep down fear that His Will might overwhelm you, or require from you more than you can do? The truth is that too many of His children harbor such apprehensions and thus they find themselves in the lifestyle of “the older brother” in Jesus’ parable: they are unable to attend the party!

If you struggle with such a subterranean fear, bring it into the light at once, and allow the Holy Spirit to apply the life of Christ to you. It is the Father’s Will which feeds you and nourishes you and sustains you.

Inducing fear about the Father’s Will is the oldest trick in Satan’s bag. Don’t let him get away with it in your life. Freedom comes into your soul as you feed upon the Father’s Will as one of His beloved children.

Scripture Meditation: Read John 4:34 very slowly, over and over, chewing His words so as to digest them. (*5 minutes*)

Scripture Study: Think through John 4:34 by answering the following questions. (*10 minutes*)

Think of Jesus saying these words to you. Why would He say this to His children?

What are your struggles or fears in this area? _____

What do you think the Holy Spirit is saying to you about your feeding upon your Father’s Will? _____

Prayer Time: (*15 – 30 minutes*)

You are one with Jesus Christ, so come now to the Father God through Him and feed upon His Will.

By faith receive His Will into your mind, into your soul, into your body!

Use your faith in His love and faithfulness to believe His Will into your situations.

Draw your life and strength from Him this morning, and allow Him to sustain you for everything you will encounter today.

Lesson 25

Something is always going to be influencing the way you interpret what you are experiencing, and your freedom depends upon that influence being God!

You are meant to live in freedom, and you are meant to live in the bosom of the Father through your union with Christ. If you can be distracted or persuaded so as to live anywhere else, then you will lose the joy of knowing His love and care being directly transmitted into your soul.

Every work, every accomplishment of Jesus came out of His living in the bosom of the Father, and His mission was to continually convey to others the true nature of God as the Father even as He Himself was tasting the joy of His nearness.

This is also your life's mission: to make Him known to others. The Fall of Man is all about humans believing lies about God; and only those who live in the bosom of the Father are able to communicate and explain Him to others. This defines your life's work, regardless of what you do for a living.

Scripture Study: Read John 1:18 and answer the questions. *(10 minutes)*

What was Jesus' life mission as stated in this verse? _____

What was the power behind Jesus' works? _____

How might you apply His pattern to your life? _____

Scripture Study: Read John 6:27-29 and John 14:10. *(5 minutes)*

How did Jesus do the things He did? _____

How does He want you to apply these truths to your life? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Bring your difficulty in trusting Christ for your ability to cope with life to God as a sin to be confessed and repented of.

Ask for the blood of Christ to cleanse your conscience from the sin of Unbelief.

Determine to know nothing today but Christ and Him crucified, no matter what fears might

intrude into your soul.

Rejoice in Christ as your Mighty Savior who has defeated Satan on your behalf!

Lesson 26

The great secret to having confidence is the sense of being “Sent” by the Lord to do what you do; having the deep-seated conviction that you are doing something for His Glory and not for your need to achieve, succeed, etc.

Many long to be self-confident, but that is a fool’s errand.

You will be a confident person in direct proportion to your awareness of being “Sent” by the Lord to your family, to your job, to your duties, to your opportunities. When you have been abiding in Christ, when you have been living in the bosom of the Father (for they are synonyms), you will share Christ’s sense of being “Sent” into whatever God has for you, and thus you will have confidence.

I do, however, want to caution us with regard to anger, because there are times when someone is so sure that he is right and represents God that he justifies anger or some other attitude that does not rightly interpret God to others.

As we give ourselves to seeking His honor, we will find ourselves growing in faith, boldness, and confidence. You are then living by faith that He will provide, He will back you up and, whatever happens, He will be with you.

Scripture Study: Read John 1:6. *(15 minutes)*

What evidence do you have that John the Baptist was a confident man?

Do you remember when John faltered in his confidence? Read Matthew 11:2-6. What was it that caused this bold man to lose his confidence? _____

How does this apply to your life? _____

Read John 5:23. Can you see how the Father backs us up, as He is the One who Sends us?

John uses the word “sent” 43 times and the word “send” 6 times in his Gospel, which indicates that this concept is very important.

Scripture Study: Read John 6:41-44 carefully. *(10 minutes)*

If I say that Jesus is speaking to men who are not living in the bosom of the Father, why do you think that I would draw this conclusion? _____

Why is your faith hindered when you are more aware of how others are pleased with you than how God is pleased with you? _____

Read Romans 4:20. What lesson does Abraham have to teach you about living for the glory of God as opposed to living for your own self? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Begin this morning by giving God the honor and glory He deserves through your worship of Him!

Abide in the Lord this morning. This means that you take your place as one who is one with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Receive Him as your Life-Source in every area where you feel needy.

Feed upon the Father's Will by taking His Will into your soul as your greatest good.

Lesson 29

Your place is living in the bosom of the Father.

Your access is your union with Christ, your Savior.

Your mission is to make the Father known.

You will have some conflicts with and rejections from your culture and society because you seek His Will and His glory. In fact, you should consider it rather odd if you do not experience some occasions of being ostracized or penalized by the hostile world system.

Your assignment is to exhibit faith and love while living in the midst of those who do not recognize Christ for who He is. This is involved in interpreting God to others.

Scripture Study: Contemplate John 16:1-2. *(10 minutes)*

The NASV begins with, "These things," while the NIV translates this as, "All this." I prefer the NASV, "stumbling," to the NIV, "astray." Either way, why does Jesus say He is telling you "These things"? _____

What does Jesus mean by "These things" or "All this"? _____

Why do you think Jesus told them they could expect to be outcasts from some groups?

How do you think "These things" will keep you from stumbling in your own life?

Scripture Study: Now go on to John 16:33, but begin putting this one in your memory bank so that you can collect "interest" on it later. *(5 minutes)*

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Read John 16:7 before the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to come fill you afresh this morning.

As the Holy Spirit ministers the life of Christ to you, draw close to your heavenly Father in order to be with Him.

Stay, remain, abide, and hang out with Him for a few moments. Just let Him take whatever initiatives He chooses.

Worship before Him.

Lesson 30

Jesus has such a great Joy. He has Joy because He always was living in the bosom of the Father. He has Joy because He finished the Father's work in bringing Him worshippers. And He has Joy in sharing His Joy with you! He well knows the power of His Joy to deal with the many onslaughts which come against your soul. He knows all the whispers you hear which come to steal your faith and confidence. His Joy is fully available to you, and it is the strong stuff!

Jesus is full of confidence about your life; but nevertheless, He takes the devil seriously. He well knows that you are living in a dangerous world. In fact, His Joy is designed to equip you to overcome all that tries to intimidate you.

Remember, He is the One who is Sending you into the world. This is why He logs onto Heaven's Website for all eternity, His great high priestly prayer for you.

Scripture Study: Read the entire chapter of John 17, and receive it as His personal prayer being prayed over you this morning. *(15 minutes)*

What is the burden on His heart for you this morning? _____

What evil does He see you facing? _____

What mission do you see Jesus express which applies to your life? _____

How important do you think it is that Jesus is even now praying for you?

What really strikes you in this passage that speaks to your life? _____

Prayer Time: *(15 – 30 minutes)*

Raise your hands in surrender to your Father's call upon your life.

Join your Savior in expressing your love to God your Father.

Intercede for the portion of the world to which He has assigned you.

Take His Joy into your soul this day as part of your daily bread.