

## THREE BASIC ASPECTS OF

# THE WAYS OF GOD

- Each of us can expect that God's major dealings with us will be in harmony with His basic ways. He wants us to know these ways so we can properly respond to the events He brings into our lives.

BIRTH OF A VISION	DEATH OF THE VISION	SUPERNATURAL FULFILLMENT OF THE ORIGINAL VISION
Each one of us has special purposes for being here. God wants to reveal them to us. ILLUSTRATIONS:	The expectations God gives are powerful motivations to continue during discouragement.	He usually fulfills our expectations in ways that we never would have thought.
<b>ABRAHAM</b> had a vision of being the father of a great nation.	<b>SARAH</b> was barren and became too old to have children.	<b>GOD</b> gave Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age who became the father of a great nation.
<b>JOSEPH</b> had a vision that he would be a great leader and that many would bow down to him.	<b>JOSEPH'S BROTHERS</b> sold him to some merchants and he became a slave. Later he was falsely accused and condemned to spend his years in prison.	<b>GOD</b> allowed Joseph to interpret the dreams of the butler and baker and later the king, whereupon, he was made a ruler in the land.
<b>MOSES</b> had a vision of leading his people out of the bondage of Egypt.	<b>PHARAOH</b> as well as his own people drove Moses out of Egypt after his first attempt to relieve their bondage.	<b>GOD</b> gave Moses signs and wonders to convince Pharaoh and his people that God was speaking through him to lead the nation to Canaan.
<b>THE DISCIPLES</b> of Jesus Christ had a vision of establishing and being an important part of the Kingdom of God.	<b>JESUS</b> was killed by the very ones He came to save, and the disciples saw Him buried in a tomb.	<b>GOD</b> raised Jesus from the dead, and great miracles were performed by the disciples until the Gospel had spread through all the world.
<b>A GRAIN OF WHEAT</b> has a "vision" of reproducing itself and many more grains of wheat.	<b>THE GRAIN</b> dies and rots in the ground.	<b>A HARVEST</b> springs up out of the very process of "death" in the ground.

# THE NEED FOR THE DEATH OF A VISION

- God said of His own people, "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart, and have not known my ways." Psalm 95:10.

When we begin to understand His ways, we see the great value in going through the Death of a Vision.

BIRTH OF A VISION	DEATH OF A VISION	FULFILLMENT OF A VISION
<p><u>FAITH</u></p> <p>"Visualizing what God intends to do in my life."</p>	<p><u>HOPE</u></p> <p>"Anticipating and expecting God to work out His revealed will in my life even when it doesn't seem possible."</p>	<p><u>LOVE</u></p> <p>"The motivation to reproduce Christ's character in others as He has done in me."</p>

## A. GOD'S "BUILDING PROGRAM" DURING THE DEATH OF A VISION:

Since God is far more concerned with our becoming like Jesus Christ in character than He is with our doing good works to further His kingdom, He needs this time of "waiting" to accomplish character building.

The "vision" provides the motivation not to become discouraged. This time of "death" and character building prepares us for a greater ministry when He does fulfill the vision.

Notice the qualities that are sure to be developed during this time: **Patience**, in waiting God's time; **Faith**, in knowing what He will do; **Meekness**, in yielding personal rights; **Self-control**, in not running ahead of God, and many, many others.

## B. SATAN'S "BUILDING PROGRAM" DURING THE DEATH OF A VISION:

Satan's purpose is to destroy God's work in our lives and also as much of the potential for achieving God's work as he can. To do this during this time he comes as an "angel of light" to deceive as many as possible. II Corinthians 11:14.

He prompts us to try in our own energy and wisdom to fulfill the original vision. He doesn't want us to learn God's qualities, and whenever we follow his leading - conflict results.

A classic example is Abraham trying to fulfill God's promise of a great nation by having a son by Hagar. Conflict has resulted ever since between their descendants.

# DEFINING GOD'S PURPOSE IN LIFE

• God's ultimate purpose for each one of us is that we become more and more like His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, His purpose is that we reproduce His life in the lives of those around us.  
 Paul traveled as in birth that those with whom he worked would have Christ formed in them. Galatians 4:19

## A. GOD'S PURPOSE: SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Whatever our vocation in life may be, our primary life goal should be that of Colossians 1:28: "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect (or mature) in Christ Jesus."

## B. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BRING EVERY MAN TO HIS FULL MATURITY?

It means building the principles of God's Word into a person's life so that he is equipped to understand and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit in knowing how to respond to any situation with Christ-like attitudes.

## C. HOW DOES GOD PREPARE US TO ACCOMPLISH THIS?

He allows problems, irritations, and responsibilities to come into our lives so that we are motivated to search out His Word and develop the full potential which He put within our lives.

<b>SPIRIT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God has given to us certain spiritual aptitudes, abilities and capacities.</li> </ul>
<b>SOUL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He has also given to us mental, emotional and volitional aptitudes, abilities and capacities.</li> </ul>
<b>BODY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We also have been given physical aptitudes, abilities and capacities.</li> </ul>

- God knows that, left to ourselves, many of us would only develop a small portion of the aptitudes, abilities and capacities which He has put within us.

To the degree that we didn't develop the rest, we would experience boredom in our lives.

Therefore, in order to direct and motivate us in developing the rest, God chooses to bring into our lives certain problems, irritations and responsibilities.

# ***BASIC INSIGHTS ON KNOWING GOD'S WILL***

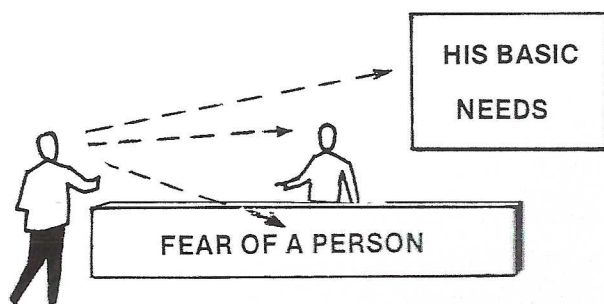
## **1. GOD'S WILL INVOLVES PEOPLE**

God so loved a world of people that He gave His Son... It is all too easy for us to become more concerned about things and organizations than people. If this happens we will miss the real joy of knowing God's will.

## **2. KNOWING BASIC NEEDS REMOVES FEAR OF PEOPLE**

Many people have a fear of talking to other people. There is a way, however, of overcoming this fear. If we were walking down a neighborhood street and happened to see a gathering of people sitting in the front room of one of the homes, we would probably experience a certain fear about the idea of intruding in their gathering.

If, however, we saw that the roof of their home was on fire, we would overcome our fear. We would be sure that the message we had to give them was one which they needed to hear. We would also be quite confident that they would immediately recognize the importance of our message.



"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness . . .

There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear."  
1 John 4:17,18

## **3. GOD HAS A SPECIAL CONCERN FOR CHRISTIANS**

It is quite easy for us to become discouraged with the spiritual immaturity of some Christians and decide that we will not bother with them but instead will concentrate on reaching those who have never heard the Gospel.

It is important for us to proclaim the Gospel to those who have never heard. But when there are already Christians in an area, it is also important to bring them up to their full maturity in Christ. If we don't do this, their immaturity will cause others to stumble, and we won't know how to solve similar immaturity in those we lead to Christ.

This is one reason we are to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10

In determining God's will for our lives, one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is: "How can I help the Christians around me to mature and by so doing, beautify the body of Christ?"

#### 4. WE ARE TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REPUTATION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

When one member of the body of Christ sins or displays spiritual immaturity, the reputation of Christ is damaged and the whole body of Christ then suffers. When David sinned with Bathsheba, Nathan the Prophet stated: “. . .by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme . . .” II Samuel 12:14.

Because of this, we are to “exhort one another daily...lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Hebrews 3:13 Just as the corpuscles in our blood surround a wound in the skin and die in order to stop the infection from spreading, so we are to “lay down our lives for the brethren.” I John 3:16

#### 5. THREE TYPES OF CHRISTIANS EXIST IN MOST CHURCH GROUPS

When I had the privilege of working directly with many churches and youth groups, I could always expect to find three types of Christians: those who were cold, those who were spiritually hot, and those who were in between.

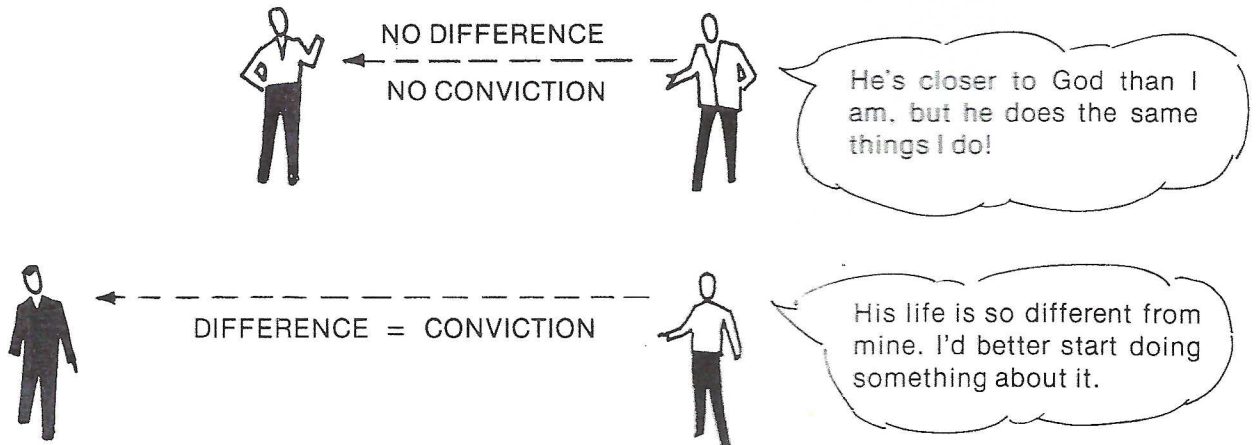
I soon learned why the in-between or “lukewarm” Christians are so nauseating to God.



“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would rather that you were cold or hot.

“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:15-17



“If my people, which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” II Chronicles 7:14

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.” I Peter 4:17

## **6. GOD'S WILL INVOLVES LEADING THOSE FOR WHOM WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

When we determine which individuals are under our spiritual care and purpose to give ourselves to the high calling of leading them to spiritual maturity, we have established the basis for a fulfilling ministry in our lives. Then, as God allows us to experience death to our natural inclinations and discover His way of responding to life situations, we are "able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." II Corinthians 1:4

## **7. WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO DEEPEN OUR MESSAGE. GOD IS RESPONSIBLE TO BROADEN OUR MINISTRY.**

We are prone to be concerned with how many people we are reaching with the Gospel. But God is concerned that we bring those we reach to spiritual maturity. "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Colossians 1:28 Those who become mature are then able to reproduce the life and character of Christ in others as well.

If we love Christ, we are to show it by keeping His commandments and feeding His sheep. John 14:15; John 21:15-17 Sheep reproduce sheep as the shepherd feeds them.

## **8. GOD'S WILL INVOLVES THE "MESSAGE" WE DEVELOP MORE THAN THE "JOB" WE ARE DOING**

As each one of us dies to natural inclinations which are contrary to the Word of God, and as we experience the life of Christ by applying the principles of His Word to our daily lives, we build a "life message."

God desires that each one of us become a "living epistle." II Corinthians 3:2 As we do, we experience more and more joy. Proverbs 15:23

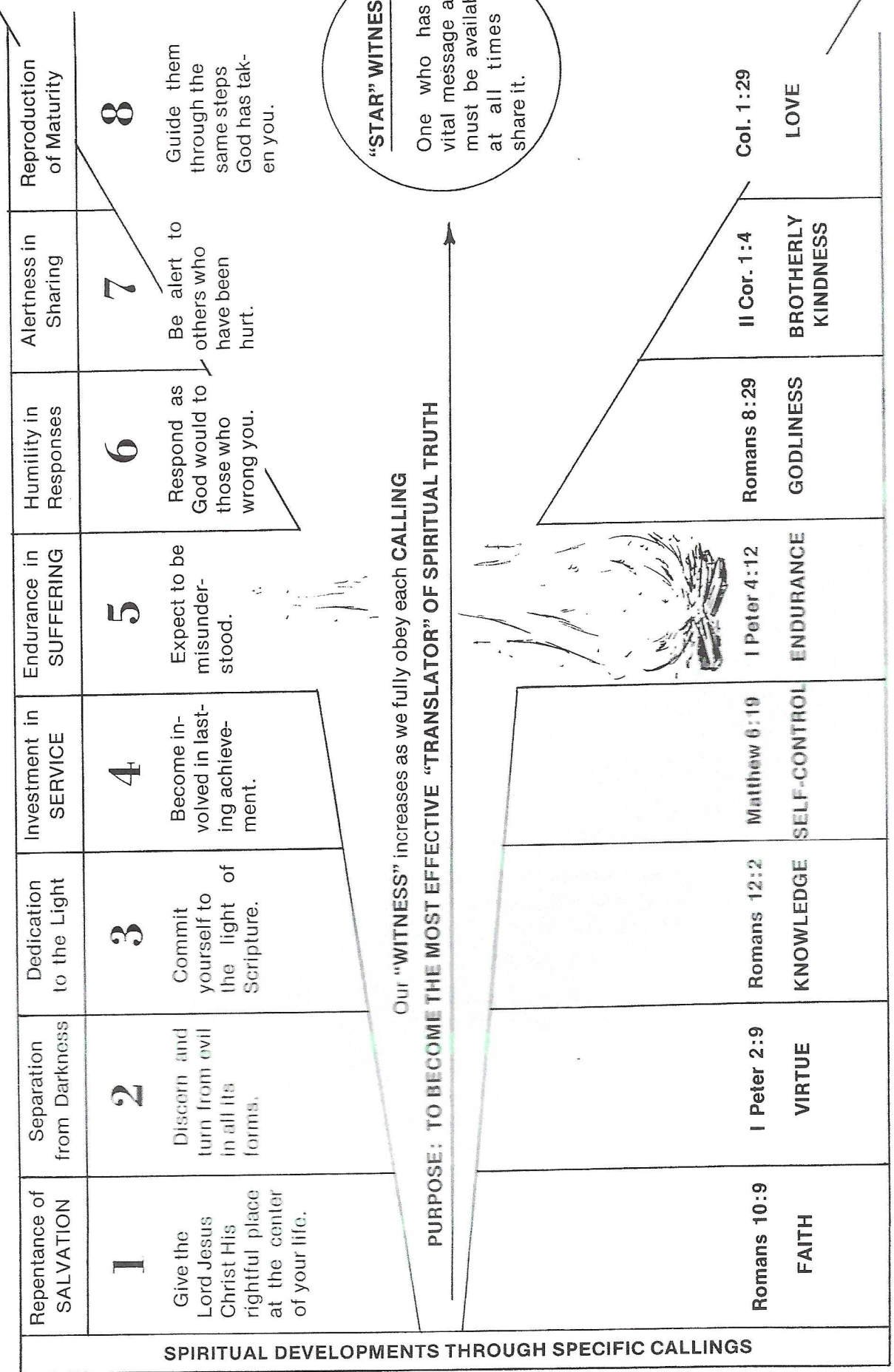
God has chosen us and ordained us that we should go and bring forth fruit and that our fruit should remain. John 15:16

## **9. ACHIEVING SPIRITUAL MATURITY INVOLVES RESPONDING TO EIGHT CALLINGS**

In II Peter 1:4 we learn that there are "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Then we are given eight specific "callings" and told to give all diligence in following them.

# DISCOVERING PURPOSE THROUGH 8 CALLINGS



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH SPECIFIC CALLINGS