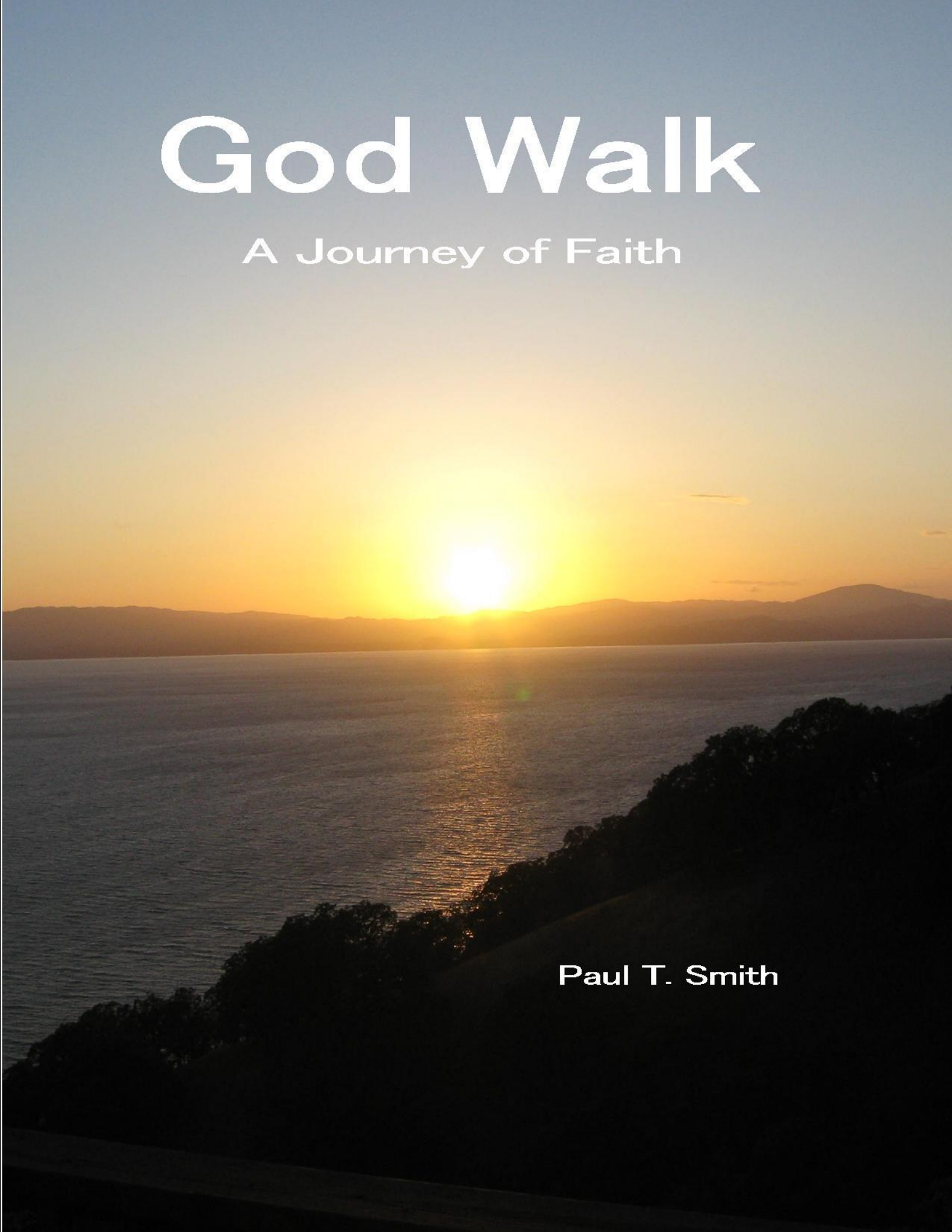
God Walk
A Journey of Faith
Paul T. Smith

Chapter One:

Part One - Realizing Where You Are

There are three parts to this book. The first part is “Realizing Where You Are” and is about discovering your condition. The second part is “Cleaning Out The Well” and is about what you do when you discover your condition. The third part is “Keeping The Well Clean” and is about how to maintain the freedom you have found in your walk of faith.

Most of us have concluded that life is one long journey. As with any journey there must be a starting point and a destination. Sometimes we will use a map to help reach our destination and sometimes we will just rely upon landmarks along the way to guide us. There have been times for most of us when we thought we knew where we were in relation to where we were going and discovered down the road that we had been going the wrong direction. That also happens in the journey of life.

It seems that all of us are in the process of trying to find ourselves and figure out how we fit into the greater scheme of things as we make this journey. It has occurred to me that the only way people can find themselves is if they realize where there are. You can't get to where you want to be unless you first find out where you are so that you can plot a course to get there.

Most of us have a pretty good idea of where we want to go and a very poor idea of where we are. As a result we find ourselves frustrated because we never seem to be able to find the magic formula that picks us up from our immediate miserable circumstances and sets us down in the luxury of where we want to be.

This lesson is about realizing where you are and what you have to do about that to get to where you want to be.

As we begin our God Walk, one of the first things we need to realize is that God's plan for us is restoration.

Jesus came to "Preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release the oppressed" (Luke 4:18-19). That was his purpose for being on earth. God created man to be in harmonious relationship with himself and the rest of creation, but man broke that relationship. The result of that broken relationship is poverty, disease and oppression. Jesus came to restore mankind to harmonious relationship and to remedy the effects of having a broken relationship with God.

If we are still poor, blind, in a behavioral prison or oppressed we have not yet realized God's fullness for us. Accepting Christ in faith and repentance is the beginning of restoration. It appears that many people have begun the process of being reconciled to God and being restored in relationship to him but they have not moved into the renewal that was made available in Jesus Christ.

God's plan for each one of us is that we would be prosperous, successful and that our lives would be abundantly full. If we live with less than that we need to find out why.

One verse that reveals God’s plan for us is Joshua 1:8, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Here God is telling Joshua, and by extension, anyone who will consistently apply the principles he gives, that he will give success and prosperity. That is his desire.

God wants you and I to be successful in all that we do and he gives us a pattern to follow to reach that success. The core of what he was saying is to keep the law in our daily lives; continue to study it and meditate upon it because it holds the secret to success and prosperity.

God has revealed that his plan for each one of us is success, prosperity and health. If you are in poverty you are either on assignment (if that's the case, quit complaining about your poverty) or living far below what God has planned for you. Success is no accident. It comes as the result of consistently applying principles that have been proven to work.

In Joshua 1:8 God instructed Joshua as to the value of his revealed will. God told him to continue speaking his word and to meditate upon those life principles both day and night. There are several principles revealed in this instruction.

First, there is value to repetition. The likelihood of remembering something increases with repetition. The more times we repeat something the more likely we are to remember it. Repetition embeds information into our memory.

The second principle introduced in this instruction is that meditation engrafts information to our psyche. We will look at this a little deeper further in these lessons but for now just remember that consistently meditating upon a godly principle or idea will draw us into living out that principle or idea as it is engrafted into our psyche.

The principle of engrafting is similar to the process that is practiced in agriculture. A tree that bears one type of apple can be adapted to produce another type of apple by cutting off a branch and attaching a branch from a different variety to the place where the other branch was cut off. This is called a graph and when the process has been completed the tree then produces a different kind of apple.

When we meditate upon God's revealed will his Spirit in us will draw us toward behavior that is consistent with his will. This is both a natural law and a spiritual law.

Just a note: Almighty God, who instituted these eternal principles, is not going to shake the universe and make exception for us just because we "speak the truth" if we are not "living the truth." You and Jesus don't have your own thing going. If your relationship is not according to God's revealed plan you are deluded and are under the influence of the one whose purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. Many today are under the illusion that God understands their circumstances, therefore he will excuse their behavior. That is a mistake and will end in disaster.

Jesus was addressing this very issue when he said, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life… to the full" John 10:7-10.

First Jesus said that he was the "gate" to the place of safety. Then he reminded us that there have been many imitators that make empty promises to get us into the safe place, but they are all thieves and liars. They are just after what you have to give them.

Every behavior in your life that separates you from the blessing that God has intended for you was born in the idea that you could provide for yourself better than God could. God is offering peace, blessing and prosperity, and these blessings cannot be obtained by taking another path.

Do not be deceived, the devil's plan for you is "to steal, kill and destroy" (John 10:10a). He will try every trick he can to convince you that going his way will give you what you really want. Many young people, disillusioned with the hypocrisy of the adult role models around them, have succumbed to the offer of sexual fulfillment, ecstatic highs and life as a never-ending party – only to find out in the end that the price for this party was their very life, and too often their very soul.

That is just the opposite of God's plan for your life. Jesus said that he had come "That they [you and I] may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10b). God planned from the beginning to give you a full and abundant life. But, just as in all of his creation, the abundant life is based upon eternal principles. As we walk with God he opens the doors of heaven for us; as we walk away from him he withdraws his blessing and abundance from us.

Jesus is the gate. It is through him that we gain entrance to safety and find his blessings released into our lives.

The problem that Jesus has as the shepherd is that we are sheep that do not come easily into the fold. We have our own ideas and our own way. Inevitably our way leads to disaster.

Do you remember the story that Jesus told about the prodigal son? This young man thought he could do better by taking his inheritance early and going out to the world to enjoy life. He spent all of his money on partying. The day came when he was broke and couldn't even buy a meal. The only work he could find was feeding the hogs on a hog farm.

This was his bottom. He was raised in a culture that considered hogs unclean and they were not even allowed to touch them. Now here he was, in the hog pen sharing slop with the pigs. Then Jesus said, "*when he came to himself…*" When he finally realized what his lifestyle had caused he remembered his father treated his servants better than he was treated.

The prodigal ran home and found his father waiting for him. It should be noted that the father did not visit the hog pen to bring food to his son. He didn't track the boy down and put money in his pocket. No, he waited

for his son to "*come to himself*" and come home. If the father had gone running after the wayward son making compromises it would have been unfair to the son who did not leave. To continue feeding a lifestyle that was contrary to all that the family stood for would have been wrong.

The point is this: The father did not compromise his principles because of his love for his wayward son. He continued to love and hope until his son came home where he could once again enjoy the abundance that was in his father's house.

God faces a similar problem today as the father in the story of the prodigal. He loves his wayward children and he desires to bless them, but he cannot break his own laws in doing so. He cannot step across the line that he drew himself.

David discovered a principle that demonstrates this truth. He wrote in Psalm 66:18, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." As long as he harbored and cherished his sin he was cut off from the blessing of God.

In another passage David talks about what it was like having sin in his life and not confessing to God while all the time he was presenting himself as a man of God. He writes, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer"(Psalm 32:3-4). When we are not honest with ourselves and God about what is going on inside us he will not listen to us.

David learned the hard way that God not only sees our behavior but he also knows the intent of our heart. Even when our behavior is all right, if our heart is wrong, God still withholds his blessing from us. Again David writes in Psalm 44:21, "Would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of our hearts?" Everyone else is watching the show we put on to hide the stuff we have inside us while the only one who can really make a difference already knows and is waiting for us to come clean with him.

Sin is common to all of us. Apostle Paul wrote, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). None of us have escaped sins grasp. Whether we have sinned openly for all to see, or secretly behind closed doors; God has seen and knows exactly what we have done. Our sins may be hidden from man, but God reads our heart and knows what things lay hidden there. God cannot come to our rescue as long as there is un-repented sin in our hearts.

Notes On Your God Walk – A Journey of Faith

Chapter One Work Book:

Part One - Realize Where You Are

Main Idea: God wants to restore us, but he can't do that until we realize where we are in life.

Practice This: Find scriptures that answer needs in your life and meditate upon them

Most of us start out life with a bunch of hopes, dreams and ambitions. Along the way many of us get sidetracked and loose our sense of direction. We still know what we want, we still have dreams and ambitions, but we don't seem to know how to get to them. We become confused, lost, and like Jesus observed a group of people we are like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36).

It has occurred to me that the only way a person can find themselves is if they realize where there are. You can't get to where you want to be unless you first find out where you are so that you can plot a course to get there.

Most of us have a pretty good idea of where we want to go and a very poor idea of where we are. As a result we find ourselves frustrated because we never seem to be able to find the magic formula that picks us up from our immediate miserable circumstances and sets us down in the luxury of where we want to be.

1. Describe a time when you thought you knew where you were but found out that you were somewhere else.

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2. What does this statement mean to you: *"You can't get to where you want to be unless you first find out where you are."*

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As we begin our God Walk, one of the first things we need to realize is that God's plan for us is restoration.

3. What is God’s greatest desire for us?

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4. How does Luke 4:18-19 demonstrate God’s love for us?

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5. What is God's plan for us relative to success and prosperity?

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One verse that reveals God’s plan for us is Joshua 1:8, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Here God is telling Joshua, and by extension, anyone who will consistently apply the principles he gives, that he will give success and prosperity. That is his desire.

6. When God said to Joshua, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth," (Joshua 1:8) what did he mean and how can we fulfill that command today?

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7. God was telling Joshua to keep the Law in his mind and heart. How was he to do that?

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8. What is an effective way of meditating?

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9. How is the meaning of the word "engraft"?

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10. How does the word “engraft” relate to meditation?

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11. What happens when we meditate upon God’s revealed will?

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Many today are under the illusion that God understands their circumstances, therefore he will excuse their behavior. That is a mistake and will end in disaster.

Jesus was addressing this very issue when he said, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full” John 10:7-10.

12. What is the devil's plan for our life? (John 1:10)

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13. How does the devil accomplish his goal?

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14. What is God's plan for our life?

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15. How does God accomplish his goal?

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16. What did Jesus mean by saying that he was the gate?

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17. Is there another gate to go through?

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18. What happens to us when we try to find another way?

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19. One of God's biggest problems is getting us sheep through the gate his way; what happens when we try to get into the fold our way?

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This was his bottom. He was raised in a culture that considered hogs unclean and they were not even allowed to touch them. Now here he was, in the hog pen sharing slop with the pigs. Then Jesus said, "*when he came to himself*…" When he finally realized what his lifestyle had caused he remembered his father treated his servants better than he was treated.

20. Jesus tells the story about a wayward son. What happened to him when he chose his own way?

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21. Where was the prodigal son when he came to himself?

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22. How does this part of the story relate to your life?

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23. What was the father's attitude about the prodigal son while he was away and when he returned home?

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24. How does the father's attitude relate to God's attitude toward us?

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God faces a similar problem today as the father in the story of the prodigal. He loves his wayward children and he desires to bless them, but he cannot break his own laws in doing so. He cannot step across the line that he drew himself.

David discovered a principle that demonstrates this truth. He wrote in Psalm 66:18, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." As long as he harbored and cherished his sin he was cut off from the blessing of God.

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25. What is the main obstacle that prevents God's plan from being completed in our life?

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26. Explain what meant in Psalm 66:18.

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27. How does this passage relate to your life?

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28. What was David describing in Psalm 32:3-4?

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29. What does God know about us? (Psalm 44:19)

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What was happening while we were not being honest with God? (Psalm 66)

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30. What is the solution to this problem of hidden sin, secret sin, and willful sin?

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Notes On Your God Walk – A Journey of Faith

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