

The Talmid



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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THE SCOPE OF EVANGELISTIC PRAYER

We are to offer those prayers “on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority” ([1 Timothy 2:1-2](#)).

[1 Timothy 2:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,
² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

As we discovered previously, our prayers are all too often narrowly confined to personal needs and wants and rarely extend beyond those of our immediate circle of friends and family. In sharp contrast, however, Paul calls for evangelistic prayer “on behalf of all men.” There is no place for

selfishness or exclusivity. We are not to try to limit either the Gospel call or our evangelistic prayers to the elect. After all, we have no means of knowing who the elect are *until* they respond to the Gospel call.

Moreover, we are told that God desires all to be saved ([1 Timothy 2:4](#)).

[1 Timothy 2:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather delights when sinners turn from their evil ways and live ([Ezekiel 33:11](#)).

[Ezekiel 33:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"

So prayer for the salvation of the lost is perfectly consistent with the heart of God. He has commanded all men to repent ([Acts 17:30](#)).

[Acts 17:30 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁰ "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,

We must pray that they will do so, and that they will embrace the salvation offered to all ([Titus 2:11](#)).

Titus 2:11 (NASB)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

Out of the universal group of “**all men**,” Paul specifically singles out some who might otherwise be neglected in evangelistic prayer: “**kings and all who are in authority**.” Because ancient (and modern) rulers are so often tyrannical, and even disrespectful of the Lord and His people, they are targets of bitterness and animosity. They are also remote, not part of the everyday lives of believers. Hence there is a tendency to be indifferent toward them.

To neglect them is a serious sin because of the authority and responsibility leaders have. Paul’s injunction here calls for the Ephesian assembly to pray for the emperor, who at that time was the cruel and vicious blasphemer, Nero. Although he was a vile, debauched persecutor of the faith, they were still to pray for his redemption. For the sake of their eternal souls, we should pray that all “**kings and all who are in authority**” would repent of their sins and believe the Gospel.

Paul does not command us to pray for the removal from office of evil rulers, or those with whom we disagree politically. We are to be loyal and submissive to our government (**Romans 13:1–5**; **1 Peter 2:17**).

Romans 13:1-5 (NASB)

¹ Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

² Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

³ For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

⁴ for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

⁵ Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection,

not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake.

1 Peter 2:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

If the church today took the effort it spends on political maneuvering and lobbying and poured that energy into intercessory prayer, we might see a profound impact on our nation. We all too often forget that “**the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses**” (**2 Corinthians 10:4**). The key to changing a nation is the salvation of sinners, and that calls for faithful prayer.

THE BENEFIT OF EVANGELISTIC PRAYER

The benefit to praying for the lost is actually quite profound: “**in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity**” (**1 Timothy 2:2**).

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NASB)

¹ First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

Prayer for those in authority will create societal conditions favorable for the church’s evangelistic efforts. First of all, when believers are committed to praying for all their leaders, it removes any thought of rebellion or resistance against them. Instead, the people of Christ are turned into peacemakers, not reactionaries. As Paul wrote to Titus,

Titus 3:1-3 (NASB)

¹ Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

² to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

³ For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

There Paul again calls the believers to tranquility

and submissiveness to the pagan or apostate governments over them. We can do so because we understand that they are sinners like we used to be, incapable of righteousness.

When believers begin to pray unceasingly for the lost, especially their troublesome leaders, unbelievers begin to see Christians as virtuous, peace loving, compassionate, and transcendent, seeking after their welfare. Once unsaved people realize we pose no threat to society, it is easier for us to be treated as welcome friends. And as more come to saving faith through the prayers of Christians, the favorable conditions for the church could increase.

The Absence of Disturbance

The church that is obedient to this mandate will “lead a tranquil and quiet life.” The Greek words translated “tranquil” and “quiet” are rare adjectives. The former, appearing only here in the New Testament, refers to the absence of outside disturbances. The latter, appearing only here and in [1 Peter 3:4](#), refers to the absence of internal disturbances.

[1 Peter 3:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

When the church manifests its love and goodness toward all and pours itself into compassionate, concerned prayer for the lost, it will lessen the hostility that may exist toward it. As a result, the saints may enjoy freedom from both internal and external disturbances.

The church, while remaining uncompromising in its commitment to the truth, is not to be the agitator and disrupter of the national life. That is the clear teaching of Scripture. If we are persecuted, it must be for Christ’s sake, for the sake of righteous living (cf. [1 Peter 2:13–23](#)).

In [1 Thessalonians 4:11](#), Paul commanded the Thessalonian believers “to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands.” Christians are to be known for their quiet demeanor, not for making disturbances. Unbelievers should see us as quiet, loyal, diligent, virtuous people. Although we may hate the

evil world system that is the enemy of God, we are not to see those in it as our personal enemies. They are captives of the real enemy, the devil (cf. [2 Timothy 2:24–26](#)). **They are not our enemies, they are our mission field.**

[2 Timothy 2:24-26 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴ The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,
²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,
²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

The Presence of Holiness

To promote a “tranquil and quiet life,” believers must pursue “godliness and dignity.” “Godliness” translates *eusebeia*, a common word in the Pastoral Epistles. It carries the idea of reverence toward God. Believers should live for the majesty, holiness, love, and glory of God.

Semnotēs, translated “dignity,” could be translated “moral earnestness.” “Godliness” can refer to a proper attitude, “dignity” to proper behavior. Thus believers are to be marked by a commitment to morality; holy motives must result in holy behavior. Both contribute to the tranquility and quietness of our lives.

That is not to say, however, that the Christian life will be free of problems. “Indeed,” Paul writes in [2 Timothy 3:12](#), “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” The Christian life is a war against Satan and the forces of evil. Paul himself was beaten and imprisoned for his faith. His point in this passage, however, is that if we incur animosity and suffer persecution, it is to be for nothing other than our godly attitude and behavior. We must not provoke negative responses by being a disruptive force in society.

Continued in next edition...

CORAM DEO (Before the face of God)

PREPARING TO HEAR FROM GOD

Listening to God

Read [Psalm 46:1-10](#)

One of the most important lessons in life that you and I can learn is how to listen to God. In our complex and hectic lives, nothing is more urgent, nothing more necessary, and nothing more rewarding than hearing what God has to say to us—both as bodies of believers and as individual people.

If you are going to develop a relationship with another person, you have to converse with that person in some manner. That means both talking and listening. Most of us do better with the talking part.

Please listen to Charles Stanley's testimony about prayer and the aspect of listening: "In my ministry, there was a time when I was too occupied doing the Lord's work to pay close attention to God's voice. I was preaching six times a week, taping two television programs, traveling across the nation, writing a book, pastoring the church, and administrating a large church staff and broadcast ministry (among other daily duties). In the midst of it all, I spent time talking to God, very often about the needs that I was facing in my personal life and ministry, but not much time listening to God. I ended up in the hospital for a week and out of circulation for three months."

The net result for all of us if we don't learn how to listen to God is that we can make unwise and, ultimately, very costly mistakes.

You may ask, "**Does God really speak to us today?**" The Bible assures us that He does. The book of Hebrews opens this way: "**God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds**" ([Hebrews 1:1-2](#)).

Our God is not a speechless God. Our God is alive and active in our world. He speaks! Furthermore, He doesn't speak to us in veiled terms, riddles, or mysteries. He speaks to us plainly. The goal of any communicator is not to speak well but to be heard. God speaks in a way that we can hear Him, receive His message clearly, and understand with precision what He wants us to do.

A Highly Personal Word

God not only speaks in general and absolute terms to all people, but He speaks to each one of us personally. We can hardly comprehend that possibility with our finite minds. God is an infinite God, and He is capable of communicating with each one of us, right where we are—in the midst of our current circumstances or crises—in very personal, direct, and explicit terms.

This may be the most important concept you can ever grasp in learning how to listen to God. When God speaks, He is speaking to you. Everything in the Bible applies to your life in some way. Every message or communication that is based on the Word of God has truth embedded within it that is for you. There is no such thing as a chapter in the Bible, a sermon based on God's Word, or a book that expounds and explains God's Word that is not for you. Each of us must take God's Word personally!

Personal Does Not Mean Exclusive

This is not to say that God has an exclusive word for a person. God doesn't deal in secrets. He won't reveal truth to one person and deny it to another. Be on guard if you hear somebody say, "God told me something, but He told me I can't tell anybody else," or "God had a word that's just for me and not for you." God doesn't play favorites. He doesn't speak to one child and totally ignore His other children. His word of correction to you may be so personal that you don't want to share it with other people, but ultimately, God's word of correction is an absolute that applies to all people. The same goes for God's promises, provisions, and insights.

Always Important

God doesn't speak frivolously. He doesn't joke around. God means what He says. He will do what He

says. God is serious about His relationship with you. He doesn't speak to you in idle terms. He expects you to respond to His voice, heed His Word, and act on it.

Can you remember last Sunday's sermon? Can you recall what you read in God's Word yesterday? You'll be able to remember if you were listening for what God had to say to you and if you take seriously the idea that God intends for you to do something in response to His Word.

God speaks for your benefit. He desires for you to listen to Him and then respond to His words. Sometimes He will challenge you to change your thinking or to release certain feelings and opinions that you have been harboring. Sometimes He will command you to change certain aspects of your behavior. Sometimes He desires to encourage you so that you might live your life with greater joy and strength. Always, however, God's Word is for your transformation. It is intended to change you in some way.

Approach God's Word seriously. Listening to God is not a casual pastime or a let's-try-it-and-see-if-you-like-it activity. Listening to God is the most important thing you can do in your life for your eternal sake.



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Hebrews 11 – Overview

Part 4

In this study we will begin by looking at the second truth found in [Hebrews 11:3](#) where it states that “**by faith**” the believer “**understands**” some foundational truths for their life. What the believer cannot see is much more important than what he can see. What is invisible is actually the supreme reality. Throughout the three studies so far on [Hebrews 11](#), we have stated that the greater a believer's knowledge of God and His Word, the greater will be their capacity to actually believe God and to trust Him during the difficult and trying periods of their life. The simple fact that we own a Bible is a very serious matter. It is a very dangerous matter to personally trivialize God's Word. [Hebrews 12:25](#) states,

²⁵See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,

The person who has no personal hunger to really know God will actually become indifferent to what God wants to do in their life. It must be appreciated that God will **not** reveal Himself to those who do not have a deep

desire to know Him. [Hebrews 11:6](#) is crystal clear that God rewards the believer who diligently seeks Him.

“But without faith *it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

The more earnestly and diligently that believers exert themselves in seeking God, then the more of God’s favor will rest on their life. The word “seek” literally means to seek out, but it further carries the idea to seek out diligently and earnestly. It is similar to the truth found in the Parable of the Lost Coin, or the Parable of the Lost Sheep. The problem in the modern church is that many believers seem to only believe God superficially and artificially. The depth of their belief is shallow, trivial, insignificant, and ultimately inconsequential to their life or to others. The spiritual impact of their life on the lives of others is not even minimal. It should be obvious that the deeper someone believes something, the more they will act on what they believe. People rarely commit themselves to those things that they do not deeply believe, and that is exactly why so many Christians are not committed to Christ. For the most part, the uncommitted believer does not like what biblical faith actually requires of them. It requires effort, struggle, study, hard work, diligence, endurance, deep commitment, and prayer. Biblical faith is never cheap.

Now, in [Hebrews 11:3](#), the writer states that there is something significant that believers “**understand**”. In relation to God it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things. The word “**understand**” is “*metanoēō*”. It is actually a word that is often used in reference to repentance where a person has a change of mind. In the context of [Hebrews 11:3](#), it means to perceive with the mind and to apprehend. It is more than just “seeing” something physically and believing it, but rather it represents that which the individual has pondered and thought about and has become intellectually convinced of in his mind. It means that the person has exercised their mind and come to comprehend something that they previously did not understand. Certainly, this is not to leave out the work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life to bring them to this

place, but at the same time we cannot live the Christian life in cerebral vacuum. We must think and we must think intelligently and with purpose. This word refers to an inward perception and acceptance of something versus just “seeing” something with our eyes. Obviously, there are things that we physically see, and they should have a significant impact on our lives. For instance, [Romans 1:20](#) talking about the creation, says,

²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

In reality, what the author is stating in [Hebrews 11:3](#) should be very easy to understand. It is the idea that even though we were not present to see God’s actual creation, we can see what He created. His attributes are invisible to us, but the results of those attributes are very clear and discernible. We can visibly see what God created. If you go to a large city and ride downtown among all of the very large buildings, you know that those buildings which have been meticulously designed had to have a designer. If you look at the creation, it is immediately evident that there had to be a Creator. The intricacy of design that the universe displays could not be a mere cosmic accident from which chaos produced perfection.

The origin of the universe has always posed a monumental problem for both philosophers and scientists. If an individual does not want to believe in a Creator God and accept His Word on how everything originated, then by default they have to develop ideas that help support their philosophical and scientific positions. The numbers of theories that have been developed are more numerous than can be imagined – but none of them have brought the philosopher or the scientist to God or to the truth. There was the nebula theory, then the tidal theory, then the steady-state theory, then the super dense theory or the Big Bang theory. We have evolution which answers nothing. It goes from cosmic slime to amoeba to man. It is a theory that means absolutely nothing. It should be clear that what God did in the creation is beyond the realm of scientific investigation, but it is not beyond our knowing. Why? It is because we can visibly see the product of God’s amazing handiwork. We can visibly see what God has created. [Hebrews 11:3](#) says that we “**understand**”, we comprehend, we realize, we grasp, we see.

The difficult part for me as a Christian is how difficult it seems to be for Christians to come to a consensus on the issue of creation. Just to delineate how much divergence of Christian opinion there is on the subject of God creating the universe out of nothing, the following is a listing of the major Christian “theories” on the subject. There is the concordist theory, the day-age theory, the gap theory, the literary framework theory, the macro-evolution theory, the mature creationism theory, the micro-evolution theory, the neo-catastrophism theory, the old-earth theory, the pictorial-day theory, the progressive creationism theory, the theistic evolution theory, the twenty four hour day theory, and the young earth theory. I wonder what is wrong with [Genesis 1:1](#) which says,

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Certainly in an overview study of Hebrews, there is no intent to investigate all of the various biblical theories related to creation that have been purported over the years, but simply to state that a believer’s faith in God by its very nature is founded on that which he cannot see. It is fundamental to the Christian faith that we believe in a God who is there, but not a God who can be seen.

The third truth that we want to look at is found in those verses in [Hebrews 11](#) where it states that what the Old Testament believers accomplished was “**by faith**”. The principle that is clearly seen throughout [Hebrews 11](#) is that if a person truly believes in God, then there will be evidence of that in the way that they live. In [Hebrews 11:7](#), Noah is a perfect example of this,

⁷By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Probably one of the great practical acts of faith given in Scripture was when Noah cut down the first gopher tree for wood to make the ark. Biblical faith is always identified by what the believer does. In

v7, the words “**divinely warned**” carry with it the idea of being instructed. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says that it means to give Divine admonition, instruction, and revelation. It is the idea of giving specific instructions to someone so that they can accomplish a particular task. What is important to understand from the technical meaning of the word is that it was Noah’s willingness to receive God’s instruction that saved both him and his family. In Noah’s day, he was the exception. [Genesis 6:8-9](#) says,

**⁸But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.
⁹This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.**

In the story of Noah, the correlation between walking with God and being divinely instructed cannot be missed. [Hebrews 11:7](#) uses the phrase “**being divinely warned of things not yet seen**”. It is not really obvious as to how God actually forewarned Noah. [Genesis 6:13](#) simply says,

¹³And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

In the following verses in [Genesis 6](#), God continued to give Noah specific instructions on how to build the ark. It simply is not clear as to “how” God actually spoke to Noah, but in whatever way He spoke to Noah, it was clear to Noah what God wanted him to do. In reality, it is no different for the believer. God gives a word for our life in some way. It may be through reading the Word of God. It may be during a time of intimate prayer. It may be through a message that we hear or an encouragement from a friend. What is important to appreciate is that God speaks to every believer and He is always clear in what He says. What God was asking Noah to do was extremely demanding and was no small task. He had absolutely nothing to go on but a simple word from God. He had never seen rain and certainly had no idea what a flood was.

The boat that God asked Noah to build was 1 ½ times the length of a football field and was four stories high. Naval engineers have determined that the dimensions and shapes of the ark form the most stable ship design

known to man. Obviously, it was not designed for maneuverability, but for stability so that it could best protect those who were on the inside of the ark. The truth that we need to glean from this simple Old Testament story is that if we are willing to follow God's instructions, then like Noah it will provide God's protection for our life.

[Hebrews 11:7](#) says that after God had spoken to him that Noah was "**moved with godly fear**". The word that God had spoken to Noah moved him and was something that deeply impacted his life. He was a man who obviously thought it important to treat the Word of God with deep respect and reverence. What God had asked Noah to do was very difficult and became a source of unending ridicule and derision towards both him and his family. He spent 120 long years living out his faith without one evidence of success. [2 Peter 2:5](#) says that he was a "**preacher of righteousness**" and he preached for 120 years without one convert. Noah is a lesson in perseverance and faithfulness under very difficult circumstances. He is a lesson in having a clear word from God and doing exactly what God says. What happened in Noah's life was threefold and serves as a model for what should happen in every believer's life. First, Noah received God's instruction for his life. For the normal Christian life this comes from reading, meditating, and listening to God's Word.

Secondly, Noah was moved in his heart by what he had heard. It is critical that believers allow the Word of God to have an impact on their life. Just listening to a Sunday message each week will not bring about the spiritual results that you may really desire for your life. At some point in every believer's life they have to choose to allow the Word of God and its specific truths to have an impact and an influence on their decisions and how they will order their life.

Thirdly, Noah chose to obey what God had clearly instructed him to do. The bottom line of biblical faith is always being obedient to the Word of God. In one of the previous studies, we made the point that faith is "volitional". I.e., we choose to obey God, we choose to believe God, and we choose to follow through on what God has said. There is no biblical substitute for obedience. God holds every believer accountable for what they know and for

what they do with what they know. A genuine believer cannot claim to have faith in God, but then continually disregard His Word. There is always a price to pay to trust God, but there is a much greater price to pay for not trusting God. God has never promised to shelter the believer. At times He may grant deliverance as He deems it appropriate, but at other times He may only grant endurance and perseverance. What is ultimately important is not that the believer knows what God has planned for his life, but that he simply trusts Him and leaves the future in His hands.

For those who are parents, [Hebrews 11:7](#) says that Noah "**prepared an ark for the saving of his household**". Noah's faith was not transferrable, but it certainly had an impact on his family. I have met some fathers from whom you could not catch a cold – absolutely nothing contagious about their faith in God whatsoever. They are indifferent, unresponsive, uninterested, and unconcerned. Everything else in life takes priority over the things of God, and in the process they lose their families and their children die without Christ. Just contrast someone like Lot with Noah and the negative influence that he had on his family. When Lot spoke to his children about God's impending judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, they literally just laughed at him. [Genesis 19:14](#) says,

¹⁴So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

Here was a man who had absolutely no impact on his children whatsoever. The issue is never about what things are like now, but what things will be like later. The next day after he warned his sons, they were dead! His wife disobeyed God and died instantly. His daughters had an incestuous relationship with him when he was drunk and gave birth to two great enemies of Israel – the Ammonites and the Moabites. Lot compromising his faith in God destroyed his entire family – and so will yours. Someone who is walking with God has a much greater opportunity to win his loved ones to Christ than the person who is not. It should be readily apparent that the more that a person's heart, mind, and will are influenced by God and His Word, the more of an influence that they will have on others.

ENDNOTES

¹MacArthur, 293.

²Grudem, 310.


³Vine's, 23.

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