

Lesson 22

Trusting Changeless Truths About God: To Build Upon the Rock

One of the greatest truths about Biblical Counseling & Discipleship is that we are dealing with a Changeless God who has written down His Powerful & Life Changing truths for us that can be unleashed in our lives and the lives of those that we counsel.

God wants us to have great confidence in His Faithfulness, and the reliability of His Word. The more we understand His character clearly reflected in His Word, the more confidence we can have as we go through life. Then what we have experienced as truth, we can share, teach, and train others to follow. Last week we started on God's Standards for Life (Lesson 22) with the first lesson:

EXHIBITING THE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST = THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (APRIL 16)

Principle 100: The key to **fruitfulness** in your life is to fear (have reverence for) God (Psalm 111:10, 145:19; Proverbs 1:7, 3:8, 9:10, 14:27, 19:23; Ecclesiastes 8:12-13, 12:13-14) and consistently keep His commandments in every aspect of your life (be a doer of the Word) (based on Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 11:26-28; Matthew 7:24-27; John 14:21, 23; 15:10-11; James 1:25; 1 John 3:22).

Page 403: In every relationship and in every situation, you are to **exhibit the character of Jesus Christ** through your obedience to God's Word (based on Matthew 5:13-16; John 15:1-10; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; Colossians 2:6-7; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 1:2-10).

This week we are looking at the second element of this lesson, which is:

TRUSTING CHANGELESS TRUTHS ABOUT GOD (APRIL 23)

Principle 99: God's standards are the same for all individuals, in all cultures, and at all age levels, regardless of personality or background (based on 2 Chronicles 19:7; Proverbs 20:11; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 1:16, 2:2-11, 3:21-30; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 2 Timothy 3:14-15).

Therefore, no "double standard" exists for adults, children, the rich, the poor, nationalities, different occupations, either gender, or any other distinction.

Principle 101: God's plans for you are for your benefit (based on Psalm 145:17; Jeremiah 29:11-13; Romans 8:28) and have as their goal your maturity in Christ (based on Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). If you keep God's commandments, He will bless you; if you do not keep them, He will judge you with a view to discipline (Deuteronomy 11:8-9, 13-17, 26-28; Psalm 32:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32; Hebrews 12:5-11; James 1:22-25).

Principle 102: God's standards are not burdensome (Matthew 11:28-30) for **He will strengthen, uphold, and keep you from stumbling as you walk in His way**, cooperating with the change He is accomplishing in your life (based on Joshua 1:8-9; Psalm 103:1-5, 121:1-8; Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 40:29-31; Matthew 28:18-20; John 6:37; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 2:6-7; 2 Peter 1:10; Jude 1:24-25).

God methods for unleashing His power into our lives is always the same:

Principle 103: Put off the deeds of darkness; put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for fleshly lusts (Romans 13:12-14). Put on the full armor of God to withstand the schemes of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Next week, Lord willing, we will see the final element of God's Standards for Life and that is when we cover:

UNDERSTANDING THE THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING (APRIL 30)

But tonight we need to plunge into what may be the most useful of all of our lessons for our own lives and the lives of everyone we share life with. This element of learning to Trust Changeless Truths about God is what gives us stability through every season, struggle, and situation of life. Changeless Truths help us build our lives on the Rock. Jesus teaches us the answer to:

HOW DO WE _____ ON THE ROCK?

The life "built upon the rock" (Mt. 7:24-29) as Jesus laid out in His longest public teaching about the life of His true followers, is our starting place. Here is what Christ offered to them, and still to us each day: *A life that is anchored, and built upon changeless truths about God.* Turn there to Matthew 7 with me and listen to the confidence for living in any situation that Christ's words can unleash into any life that believes and follows Him. This is what we are to be asking Him to do in our lives each day:

Matthew 7:24-27 (NKJV) "Therefore **whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them**, I will liken him to a wise man who **built his house on**

the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 “But everyone who **hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them**, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Jesus says that we have two choices: hear and obey or hear and neglect.

Jesus says that the result is security or disaster in storms.

Jesus says salvation keeps us through the storms, it doesn't prevent them.

God is the Rock. We are invited to have our life anchored by truth about God. This question is actually a piece of a much larger doctrine that deals with the whole realm of the Word of God and Attributes of God. Jesus came to reveal the Father to us. Jesus is the doorway to all that God has promised and revealed. Here are some of the most foundational of those truths about God that make for a very sure foundation:

First, His **Eternity:** (that God is seeing everything at once vividly past, present, future);

Second, His **Unchangeableness:** (that God is unchanging in His perfections, purposes, and promises);

Third, His **Wisdom:** (that God chooses best goals and means to those goals);

Fourth, His **Omniscience:** (that God is knowing Himself and all things actual and possible);

Finally, His desire for us to stay in touch through the **Doctrine of Prayer:** (our personal communication with God), which teaches us among other things that “Prayer changes the way God acts”.

When believers are confused or untaught about the attributes of God, it leads to instability, and needless fears: so we need to dive in and know what His Word says. What are the key attributes that have to do with these Changeless Truths about God?

UNLEASHING SOME _____ DOCTRINES INTO DAILY LIFE

Lesson one: Unleash the truth of His _____
(that God is seeing everything at once vividly past, present, future); God's eternity may be

defined as follows: *God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.*¹

This attribute is explained in these Scriptures: Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 57:15; Rev. 1:8.

How do we apply that attribute of God for building on the “Rock”?

_____ **to God** like you would to the air traffic controllers or the control tower: God sees everything at all times and wants to advise us from that perspective on every event we will discuss and surrender to His control.

Think about what He says in Proverbs 3:5-6.

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to...”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

_____ **God** that since He knows everything, there is no other source of help, comfort, or guidance that can compare to Him. God has already worked out the best map for our life and just wants us to invite Him to become our “Guide”.

Stop and read Psalm 16:11 and accept His offer to be your personal guide.

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to...”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

Lesson two: Unleash the truth of His _____ (that God is unchanging in His perfections, purposes, and promises); We can define the unchangeableness of God as follows: *God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.* This attribute of God is also called God’s *immutability*.

This attribute is explained in these Scriptures: Deut. 32:4; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:10-12, 13:8.

How do we apply that attribute of God for building on the “Rock”?

God has Already _____ the best advice: His Word is a reflection of His unchanging nature. We don’t need to wait for the newest book, an updated system or technique.

Thoughtfully read and ponder Psalm 119:98-99.

¹ All definitions are quoted from: Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (p. 168). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to....”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

Trust God enough to _____ His unchanging advice. This act of faith opens more and more understanding of how to live.

Carefully read and ponder Hebrews 5:12-14.

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to....”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

Lesson three: Unleash the truth of His _____ (that God chooses best goals and means to those goals); *God’s wisdom means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals.* This definition goes beyond the idea of God knowing all things and specifies that God’s decisions about what he will do are always wise decisions: that is, they always will bring about the best results (from God’s ultimate perspective), and they will bring about those results through the best possible means.

This attribute is explained in these Scriptures: Romans 11:33, 16:27.

How do we apply that attribute of God for building on the “Rock”?

Learn to _____ God’s perspective on life’s events.

We need to God’s perspective instead of merely our human point of view.

Remember how Joseph looked at life through the lens of God’s plan in His life?

Read carefully those words in Genesis 50:15-20.

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to....”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

Trust God’s _____ as perfect. David at the end of a long, colorful, and quite painful life: declares his immense love for God. Then David says God’s way is BEST!

Think about what David is saying in Psalm 18:1-3.

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to....”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

Lesson four: Unleash the truth of His _____ (God is knowing Himself and all things actual and possible). God’s knowledge may be defined as follows: *God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal*

act. Based on that complete knowledge God has sent His Word to change or sanctify us (John 17:17) so that we can be more useful to Him.

This attribute is explained in these Scriptures: Heb. 4:13; 1 John 3:20

How do we apply that attribute of God for building on the “Rock”?

_____ **to be Sanctified.** Sanctification is the way God shapes us to be useful. We need to think more about being useful for Him, His plans, and His glory. Job is a good example of an unusual way God wanted to use him.

Read about what God was doing with him in Job 23:10-14

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to...”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

_____ **for Grace.** Paul was faced with struggles, pains, and life-impacting problems. He had to learn that God is always aware of all our struggles and actually has big plans for them.

Read again Paul’s lesson in God’s sufficiency in 2 Cor. 12:7-10.

My personal application prayer: “Lord, help me to...”; or “Lord, I want to by Your grace...”

Lesson five: Unleash the powerful truths of the **Doctrine of** _____ (our personal communication with God), which teaches us, among other things, that “Prayer changes the way God acts”. *Prayer is personal communication with God.*

This amazing doctrine is portrayed in these Scriptures: James 4:2; Luke 11:9-10; Ex. 32:9-14.

God _____ **Us To Pray.** In prayer God allows us as creatures to be involved in activities that are eternally important. When we pray, the work of the kingdom is advanced. In this way, prayer gives us opportunity to be involved in a significant way in the work of the kingdom and thus gives expression to our greatness as creatures made in God’s image. If we were really convinced that prayer changes the way God acts, and that God does bring about remarkable changes in the world in response to prayer, as Scripture repeatedly teaches that he does, then we would pray much more than we do. If we pray little, it is probably because we do not really believe that prayer accomplishes much at all.

Prayer _____ **the Way God Acts.** James tells us, “You do not have, because you do not ask” (James 4:2). He implies that failure to ask deprives us of what God would otherwise have given to us. We pray, and God responds. Jesus

also says, “Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Luke 11:9–10). He makes a clear connection between seeking things from God and receiving them. When we ask, God responds.

Our _____ Matter. Augustine’s statement also says that we have “self-determination.” *This is simply affirming that our choices really do determine what will happen.* It is not as if events occur *regardless* of what we decide or do, but rather that they occur *because of* what we decide and do. No attempt is made in this statement to define the sense in which we are “free” or “not free,” but that is not the really important issue: for us, it is important that we think, choose, and act, and that these thoughts, choices, and actions are real and actually have eternal significance. If God knows all our thoughts, words, and actions long before they occur, then there must be some sense in which our choices are not absolutely free.

Prayer is _____. If we were really convinced that prayer changes the way God acts, and that God does bring about remarkable changes in the world in response to prayer, as Scripture repeatedly teaches that he does, then we would pray much more than we do. If we pray little, it is probably because we do not really believe that prayer accomplishes much at all.²

DISCUSSION TIME

First, go back and find all the places that you noted in the lesson as it was taught tonight. Share briefly around the table what truths, elements, or facet of God's Word that impacted you.

Second, pick one of those areas that stirred your heart in some way and explain what you would like the Lord to do in your life with that truth: in the form of a prayer request. Something like:

I'd like any of you who will, to pray for me that the Lord will start changing me in this area; or that the Lord will strengthen me, or that the Lord will start...

Third, with the time left, go back to lessons one through five and read them again and look up and discuss the Scripture passage for application.

Finally, on your own this week, go back to those personal application prayers and do as many as you have time to do. Also, remember to pray for your fellow classmates and the areas they shared tonight.

² All definitions are quoted from: Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (p. 168). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT: PONDER THE LIFELONG BLESSINGS OF TRUSTING IN THE LORD PROV. 3:5-6

From cover to cover God's Word consistently contrasts the two pathways of life.

TWO PATHS

Today as men we need to reaffirm our commitment to God's Path.

In the New Testament Jesus talked about the "broad road" to destruction and the "narrow pathway" that leads to life (Mt. 7:13-14). In the Old Testament the description of the two pathways is no less visually graphic. Listen to Proverbs 4:14-19 (NKJV):

Do not enter the **path of the wicked**, and do not walk in the way of evil.

¹⁵ Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on.

¹⁶ For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; and their sleep is taken away unless they make *someone* fall.

¹⁷ For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

¹⁸ But the **path of the just** *is* like the shining sun that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

¹⁹ The way of the wicked *is* like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

So there again is God's summary of life. Each day people walk His path of light that is shining brighter and brighter, headed to the perfect day of being like Him, with Him, and home at last. Or, they walk that other path, it is evil, wicked, violent, dark, and makes them stumble.

STAYING ON GOD'S PATH

For us as followers of God, that shining pathway began at salvation. In Proverbs that pathway is most beautifully laid out in one of the simplest and most beloved verses in the Bible. Here it is, can you say it with me?

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV) Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

This verse summarizes the Godward Life we as believers are to have. Each phrase describes one element of a godly walk.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart = this life starts with the clinging, trusting, believing faith, that leads to a personal relationship with God. **TRUST is first.**

Lean not on your own understanding = Turning away from self and towards God in surrender, consecration, and self-denial. **TURN is next.**

In all your ways acknowledge Him = Focusing every dimension of my life towards walking in the Spirit by praying without ceasing. **FOCUS is a choice.**

He shall direct your paths = Waiting for, and following God through life. **FOLLOW is the goal.**

What does it mean to “Trust in the Lord”?

Proverbs 3:5 Trust [Hebrew word *batach* (Strong’s # 982) means literally “cling to”] the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

This word has the sense of casting one's total future upon God as a little child and trusting Him for everything. This word is most often translated to trust or to have confidence in someone-usually God.

This word translated *trust* occurs over one hundred times in the Old Testament, and is actually the Old Testament word, for the New Testament word: *believe*.

Bringing it up into New Testament terminology makes it the same as what Paul said to the Philippian jailor, “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved**” (Acts 16:31). It is the Old Testament way of saying the same thing.

SALVATION IS WHEN WE JUST BELIEVE GOD

Salvation is when we just believe God. It simply means that we lean on God. We can do nothing else but lock our arms around God and hold on. We trust in the LORD with all our heart—our total personality and every fiber of our being. That is what He is saying. But now listen how Paul links together that moment of salvation with all the rest of our spiritual lives:

Colossians 2:6 (NKJV) As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

So what keeps us on that pathway of God? How do we go through life on that brighter and brighter pathway that leads us to the perfect day? By making some affirmations in our hearts and clinging to them as they represent the truths about God that saved us.

Just as we clung to the truth of God's Word and met the Lord by faith; so we continue to cling to truths about God and continue to follow the Lord by faith. Here are four truths that come when we "trust in the Lord with all our heart":

GOD OWNS MY LIFE & HE IS GOOD.

Unbelievers can't rest in the promise of Proverbs 3:5-6 because it starts with believing in the Lord, and they don't. God in His Sovereignty rules over all, and can overrule in any human life. Lost people are empowered by the god of this world (Eph. 2:1-3). But God never violates any human's freedom, He just works His purposes through the lives of even those who won't obey Him as we see in many Biblical examples (Rom. 9:14-18). Only believers can desire, understand, and obey God's will.

TRUSTING IN HIS GOODNESS

The Psalms frequently affirm that "the LORD is good" (Ps. 100:5) or exclaim, "O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good" (Pss. 106:1; 107:1; et al.). David encourages us, "O taste and see that the LORD is good!" (Ps. 34:8).

Scripture tells us that God does only good things for his children. We read, "No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11). And in the same context in which Paul assures us that "in everything God works for good with those who love him" (Rom. 8:28), he also says, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" (Rom. 8:32). Much more than an earthly father, our heavenly Father will "give good things to those who ask him" (Matt. 7:11), and even his discipline is a manifestation of his love and is for our good (Heb. 12:10). This knowledge of God's great goodness should encourage us to "give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess. 5:18).

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR MY LIFE & HE IS WISE.

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (Prov. 19:21, NIV). God who did not spare His Son to purchase us, also offers to us His perfect plan. Since we are purchased by God, He also has designed a plan for us since we were designed for "good works" (Eph. 2:10).

TRUSTING IN HIS WISDOM

God's wisdom means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals.

God's wisdom is also shown in our individual lives. "We know that God works all things together for good for those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Here Paul affirms that God does work wisely in all the things that come into our lives, and that through all these things he advances us toward the goal of conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). It should be our great confidence and a source of peace day by day to know that God causes all things to move us toward the ultimate goal he has for our lives, namely, that we might be like Christ and thereby bring glory to him. Such confidence enabled Paul to accept his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7) as something that, though painful, God in his wisdom had chosen not to remove (2 Cor. 12:8-10).

Every day of our lives, we may quiet our discouragement with the comfort that comes from the knowledge of God's infinite wisdom: if we are his children, we can know that he is working wisely in our lives, even today, to bring us into greater conformity into the image of Christ.

GOD'S PLANS ARE BEST & HE IS POWERFUL.

How could a holy God will for His children anything less than His best, and how could a loving God plan anything that would harm us? We have no reason to fear the will of God, because His plans come from His heart. "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations" (Ps. 33:11, NKJV). Unless we see the will of God as the expression of the love of God, we'll resist it stubbornly, or do it grudgingly, instead of enjoying it. Faith in God's love and wisdom will transform our attitude and make the will of God nourishment instead of punishment (John 4:34).

Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB) For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

TRUSTING IN HIS OMNIPOTENCE

God's omnipotence means that God is able to do all his holy will. The word *omnipotence* is derived from two Latin words, *omni* "all," and *potens* "powerful," and means "all-powerful."

This power is frequently mentioned in Scripture. God is "The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!" (Ps. 24:8). Jeremiah says to God, "*nothing* is too hard for you" (Jer. 32:17).

Paul says that God is “able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20), and God is called the “Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8), a term (Gk. παντοκράτωρ, G4120) that suggests the possession of all power and authority. Furthermore, the angel Gabriel says to Mary, “With God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37), and Jesus says, “With God *all things are possible*” (Matt. 19:26).³

GOD WANTS ME TO WAIT FOR HIS PLANS & HE IS RIGHT HERE

It’s through “faith and patience” that we receive what God promises (Heb. 6:12, 15), and it’s as dangerous to run ahead of the Lord as it is to stubbornly lag behind. “It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way” (Prov. 19:2, NIV). “Be not like the horse or like the mule” (Ps. 32:9). The horse rushes ahead and the mule won’t budge, and both attitudes are wrong. Even the great Apostle Paul didn’t always know exactly the way God was guiding, and he had to pause in his work and wait for divine direction (Acts 16:6–10). Our times are in His hand (Ps. 31:15), and the Father is always on schedule (John 11:6–10).

God is present in every part of space with his whole being. When the Bible speaks of God’s presence, it usually means his presence to bless, and it is only normal for our own speech to conform to this biblical usage. Herman Bavinck, in *The Doctrine of God* quotes a beautiful paragraph illustrating the practical application of the doctrine of God’s omnipresence:

When you wish to do something evil, you retire from the public into your house where no enemy may see you; from those places of your house which are open and visible to the eyes of men you remove yourself into your room; even in your room you fear some witness from another quarter; you retire into your heart, there you meditate: but God is more inward than your heart. Wherever, therefore, you shall have fled, there God is. From yourself, whither will you flee? Will you not follow yourself wherever you shall flee? But since there is One more inward even than yourself, there is no place where you may flee from God. There is no place at all whither you may flee. Will you flee from Him? Flee unto Him.²⁰

³ These lessons are quoted from: Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (pp. 216–217). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

²⁰ Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God* p. 164. The citation is reproduced in the book with no indication of its source.