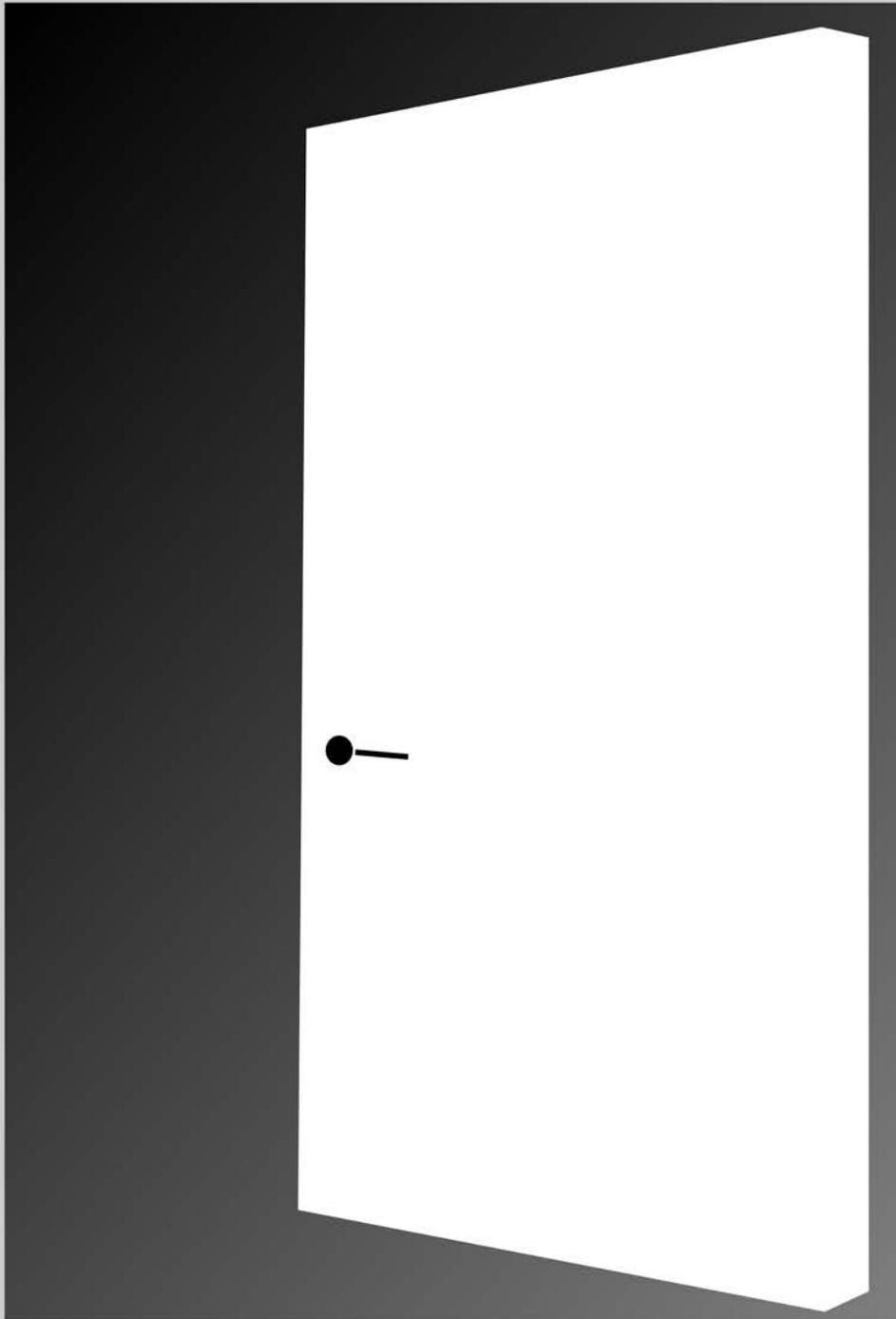
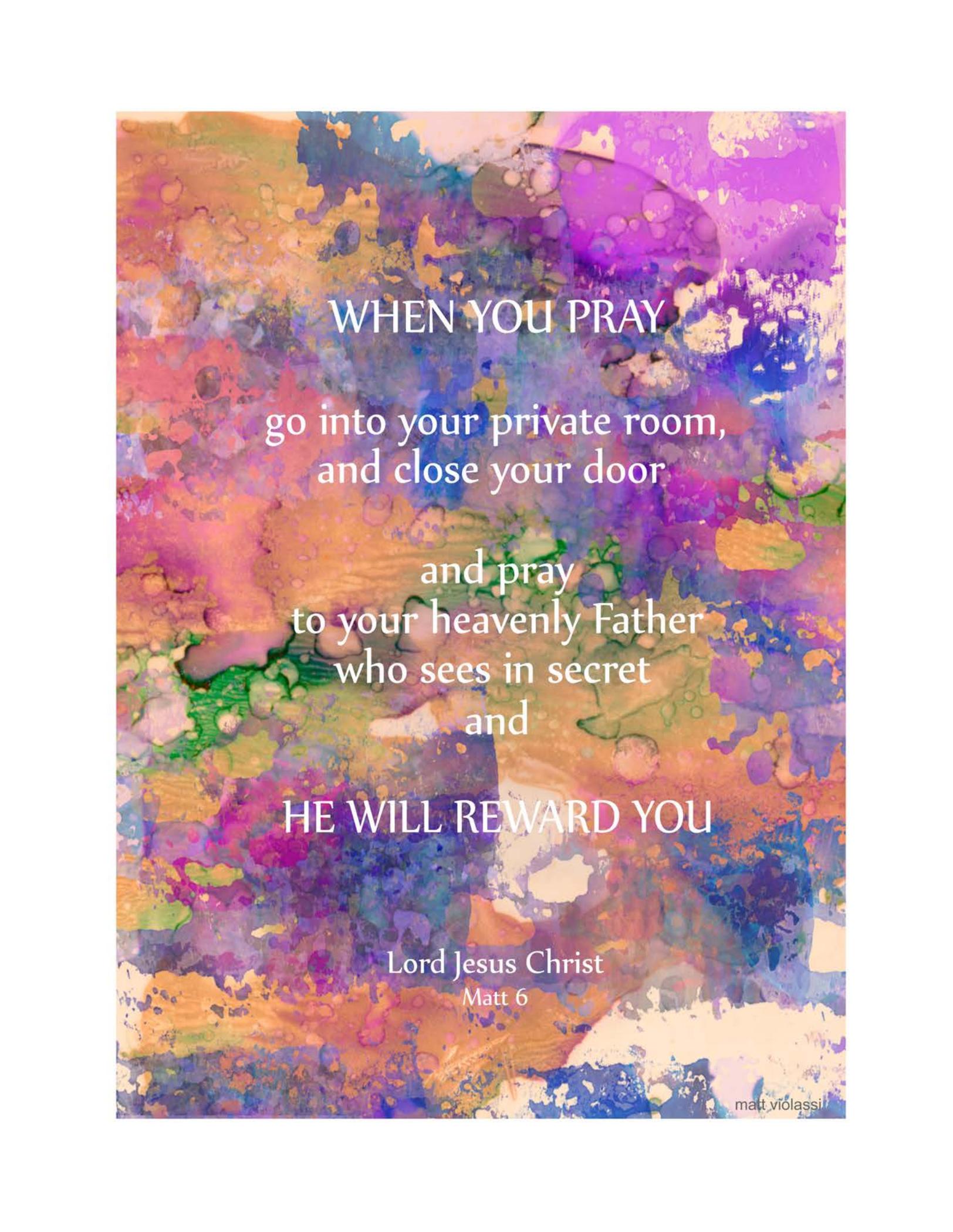


WHEN YOU PRAY

TOOL 1



Matt Violassi



WHEN YOU PRAY

go into your private room,
and close your door

and pray
to your heavenly Father
who sees in secret
and

HE WILL REWARD YOU

Lord Jesus Christ
Matt 6

TOOL 1 - GOOD THINGS TO DO IN OUR PRIVATE GOD-TIMES

"When you pray, go into your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father"

- Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:6)

1. **SEEK and FIND GOD and then TALK TO HIM ABOUT STUFF.** There are many things we can do in our personal, private God-times. I believe the thing that brings God the most joy and pleases Him the most (in the context of an obedient lifestyle) is for people to: (1) Seek Him, (2) Find Him, and then (3) Talk to Him about stuff. **This was never intended to be a one-time experience:**

And God made man, "that they would SEEK God, if perhaps they might GROPE for Him and FIND Him, though He is not far from each one of us." (Acts 17:26-7)

Can you imagine being absorbed in any or every kind of Christian activity, but neglecting this one?

2. **PRAYERFULLY READ and STUDY THE BIBLE.**

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me." (John 14:21)

Jesus defined the kind of person who loves Him: *the person who knows and does His commands.* We want to be known in heaven as a person who loves God - so, we need to find, study, memorize, and do His commands. It is wise to concentrate on the "red letters" (Bibles that contain Jesus's words that are printed in red.) We also find **God's promises** and **knowledge about God** while prayerfully reading the Bible. God frequently will communicate specific things to us to do or to believe while we are prayerfully reading the Bible. (*Prayerfully reading* the Bible is more powerful than just *reading* the Bible)

3. **PRAY-THROUGH THE 7 TOPICS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.** The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray; the "Lord's Prayer" was His answer. The Lord's Prayer contains an outline of the things He wants us to learn to dialogue with Him about. It is wise to pray about the things *He thinks* we should pray about:

- **Our Father who art in heaven.** Praying and meditating about how God is our Father and we are his children. I am a child of God? Wow. I can go talk to my Father, the Maker of the Universe? Wow.
- **Hallowed be thy name.** May His name be honored as it should be in our lives and in the lives of others around us. The results from human effort without prayer are many times minimal.
- **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** Lord, what do you want accomplished today? In my life? Around me? How would this be done/run in heaven? More can be accomplished in prayer than by human endeavor and effort. Through the Holy Spirit, our prayers can stop wars, stop famines, change lives. . .
- **Give us this day our daily bread.** Jesus taught to include this request when we prayed. We can lack provisions because we neglect to ask for them. He has linked provision with relationship.
- **Forgive us our trespasses.** (sins). It is wise to have self-examination time every day. We need to get "reality checks" from God. We need to repent from our sins every day and get clean and stay clean. The human heart perpetually thinks it is okay, and it is okay with God. It is wise to ask and *make sure* we are okay with God.
- **Lead us not into temptation.** We need to pray that the Lord will lead us every day, and that He will lead us away from temptation. We need to make sure we are doing *our* best, however, to stay away from temptations.
- **Deliver us from evil.** We probably walk alongside the brink of disaster more than we realize. Praying to ask God to deliver us from all the evil around us, in all its various forms and manifestations, is wise.

4. **THANK and PRAISE GOD for A WHILE: Tool 2.** Cultivating a Thankful Heart - Entering into a Spirit of Thanksgiving. God likes us to come to Him with a thankful heart,

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise." (Psalm 100:4)

Being a thankful person is a quality that is very important to God. More important than thanking Him for the fact that most of us enjoy more luxuries and live at a higher standard of living than the riches kings of history, God wants us to be thankful for our **salvation**. Jesus told His disciples to rejoice foremost over their salvation as opposed to the fleeting thrills of Kingdom exploits (Luke 10:20). In His mind, we should be thankful for this over all other things. We can enter a "wow" state of thanksgiving that can carry us more highly above the trials and troubles of the day. It can also keep us from the dangerous sin and mindset of grumbling and complaining, which brings unwanted disciplines from heaven (1 Cor. 10). The Israelites got seriously "whacked" with some very serious disciplines from God for participating in grumbling and complaining. The New Testament warns us to not make the kinds of mistakes they did. We don't want to have to rely on calamities and mission trips to make us thankful and to help us fulfill the commandment, **"Always give thanks for all things."** (Ephes. 5:20).

5. **REVIEW OBEDIENCE LIST: Tool 3.** Can you imagine having a son or daughter that you would periodically find studying a list of all the things you want them to do? No more needless reminding and nagging! No more needing to administer disciplines that could have easily been avoided. What a complete pleasure they would be, and what a joy to be around!

Have you every heard of a child like this? *We can be this kind of child to God!* That is what this tool is all about.

6. **PRAY AWAY ANXIETIES AND FEARS.**

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life." - Jesus (Matt 6:25)
"So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." - Jesus (Matt 10:28)

These are **commands** out of *concern and care for us!* It is wise to pray worries and fears away. God does not want us walking around bummed out, so He commands us to not be fearful or depressed. Every command is a promise in reverse. If He gives us a command not to worry, He gives us the power and strength to not worry. It is wise to "find" God and unload our stuff everyday. It is hard to be "otherly" and think about other people's problems when our own hearts are bogged-down with anxieties and fears. It is wise to daily unload our fears and troubles to God. Oftentimes, we need to "pray-through" issues and problems to find God's perspective on them, or to find *God's solutions to them*. This takes time. Many times God allows trials in our lives that are normally not needed to drive us closer to Him. Why lead a lifestyle that needs a whip and rod for discipline all the time?

7. **PRAY OVER OUR FLOCKS.** God gives us people to take care of: spouses, children, employees, family members, church folks, congregations, etc. The biggest thing we can ever do for those people God has given us to take care of - is to pray for them. Prayer is the most powerful thing. **God will do things for others through our prayers, that He would otherwise not do if we had not asked.** Praying for them gets us thinking about them. Praying for them postures us to get God's perspective and heart for them - and helps us direct actions and words toward them that are supernaturally energized. A 3-minute heart-to-heart conversation with a person can be way-more powerful than a 3-day canoe trip that contains little or no meaningful heart-to-heart communication.

8. PRAY FOR ALL AUTHORITIES AND ALL MEN. - We are supposed to pray for "all who are in authority" and "on behalf of all men" (1Tim. 2:1-2). Bosses, the president, cabinet, congress, world leaders, sheriffs, army, generals, governors, mayors, city councils, business leaders, FBI and CIA guys, spiritual leaders, etc. There is a blessing and reward and promise for doing this:

"so that we may lead a tranquil and quite life in all godliness and dignity." (1Tim. 2:2)

We are also suppose to be on the alert praying for *all the saints*. (Eph. 6:18)

9. SEEK TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. The Bible says we are to "get filled" with the Spirit:

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but *be filled with the Spirit.*" (Ephes. 5:18)

This is not a one-time experience:

"The disciples were *continually filled with Joy and the Holy Spirit.*" (Act 13:52)

God will help us and lead us in getting filled with the Spirit as often as *we want to*. We just need to see our need and then start asking and seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Finding God, and then asking and seeking to be filled with the Spirit, is a wise place to start. It is a lot easier being a Christian - and accomplishing all that being a Christian entails - if we are filled with the Holy Spirit versus being spiritually dry, dead, or empty. It is wise to try to get filled with the Holy Spirit *everyday*.

10. RENEW OUR EMOTIONAL LOVE FOR GOD. Obedience TELLS God and speaks to God loud and clear - "I LOVE YOU!"

Jesus said, **"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."** (John 14:15)

So, **OBEDIENCE means I LOVE YOU** to God. **Obedience = I love God.** But, it is also wise and good to *emotionally love God* too. It is hard to obey God if we have become emotionally detached from Him, just as it would be hard to love and serve a spouse if we have become emotionally detached from them. As we "love on" God, by telling him we love Him over and over again in a somewhat repetitive way, we begin to feel His love for us. This allows us to fall emotionally in love with God all over again. *Renewing our emotional love for God empowers us to love Him through action and obedience.* We don't need music playing to do this.

11. MAKE A PRAYER LIST: Tool 4. This is a list of the things we are asking God for. Reviewing this list reminds us of what to keep asking and trusting God for. Reviewing our list of answered prayers elevates our faith and trust in Him.

12. REVIEW OUR ULTIMATE DAY FOR GOD: Tool 5. This is a list of things we personally would do to give God our ultimate day, with the attitude that we only had a few months to live. How much daily prayer? Bible reading? Evangelism? Making amends? Fasting? Giving? Review this list to help prioritize these activities.

13. RELOAD / REVIEW / RE-EXPERIENCE OUR LIFE VERSES: Tool 6.

14. INTERCESSION / PRAY IN THE SPIRIT FOR AWHILE. Cry out to God for others, world events, our cities, etc. Jesus lives now - today - to make intercession for the saints. (Hebrews 7:25) We can join Him in this "flow." Jesus spoke in Hebrew and Aramaic. The languages of Germanic peoples gave rise to the English language. The English language has undergone extensive changes over the years, and even Old English is unintelligible to us nowadays. Jesus prays now. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us now (Rom 8:26). They both live inside of us now. It is somewhat ludicrous to think They pray in Modern English! We can get in more touch with Them if we want to.

15. ASK GOD OUR LIFE'S QUESTIONS. He is not offended, nor does He mind. Many times He enjoys these questions - just as an earthly father enjoys answering questions to his children. Many times it is a sign of an honest and truth-seeking heart - which He also likes.

Many times, asking and seeking answers to our questions is actually the pathway to our continued spiritual growth, and the major pathway to our better knowing and trusting God.

Like questions concerning the loss of a loved one, or enduring a lengthy sickness or infirmity, or financial hardship. It is not wise to let unanswered questions or lack of closure obstruct us from getting-up and serving God everyday (Rather than living in a state of fog and chaos for years). We cannot get-up and serve a loving Father - whom we really don't trust and believe is a good and loving Father - because of unanswered questions or lack of supernatural closure. Let us attack our questions - rather than living in darkened *no-man's land* for years or decades.

Often perhaps, we can be fearful or intimidated to question our doctrine and/or our church leaders - and carry this mindset over to our relationship with God. Not good. It is wise to be aware of our questions - deep or small - and to be seeking answers to them.

Sometimes the answers come "in time." Because of their complexity, some answers take time to be explained. (Like teaching calculus to a kindergartner.)

However, many times we CAN obtain quick supernatural understanding, revelation, and answers to our questions. It is wise *to expect* to receive quick understanding, but we should always be testing it and discerning wisdom, **"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy."** (James 3:17) Understanding from God will not break these rules.

Sometimes God will not give us answers to our questions, because the answers or understanding will only bring us into more misery and pain - pain that He does not want us to experience, **"Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain."** (Eccles 1:18)

Some deep things God will not reveal to man. (Deut 29:29)

16. THE LORD'S TOP 1-2 PRIORITIES FOR ME TODAY. These priorities could be a general mindset to possess, particular things to do or accomplish, or be about getting-with-a certain person or people, etc. - something to overall concentrate-on or be focused-on **TODAY. THIS ACTIVITY IS TREMENDOUSLY POWERFUL.** By asking this simple question "What are your top priorities for Me today, Lord?," we align our whole day (and life) around God and His top Kingdom purposes. Asking God what His one or two top priorities for us to concentrate on **TODAY** and accomplish **TODAY** - really moves God - and cultivates a closer friendship and intimacy with Him.