

The Road To Real Satisfaction

Trust God - Obey God - Know God

It's an amazing truth. The Living God in heaven who created us wants to speak to us personally through the Bible and through God's Spirit present in our lives.

When we face circumstances that are out of our control, the "figuring out" game begins, and we treat our lives as if God does not exist or at least doesn't have a plan for us in the middle of what we are experiencing. We play this hunting and discovery game to the point that it becomes anxiety, worry, self-pity, panic, or fear. But these are not what the Lord desires for us.

James Dobson writes, *"Our task is not to decipher exactly how all of life's pieces fit together and what it all means, but to remain faithful and obedient to Him who knows all mysteries"*.

In the Bible we read the story of Hannah. When she had trouble conceiving a child, (a great disgrace in her culture), her despair was obvious. Her disappointment, sorrow, and frustration were real. While Hannah may have initially wondered why she could not conceive, she did not dwell upon it or blame God. Instead, she took all her emotions and desires to the Lord. God spoke to her and she obeyed God's instructions on how to deal with problems: ***"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*** (Philippians 4)

When obeying God becomes a higher priority to us than unraveling His plans, we will find the peace and fulfillment we've longed for in life. By bringing our concerns to the Lord with a thankful heart, ***"the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus"*** (Phil. 4). God responds when we pray because He cares about us personally.

How do we learn to know and follow God?

- Trust God and wait peacefully for His plans to unfold.
- Learn to meditate on God's Word and then to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- Be willing to walk according to God's principles when the way is not clear and leave the consequences with God

- Be willing to accept God's discipline with thanksgiving.

Knowing God means coming to Him honestly. We must confess that we are sinners, living in isolation and self-centered ways and then invite Jesus Christ into our heart. We are only truly satisfied as we live in relationship with God through Jesus.

The most accessible tool to knowing God is knowing His Word. By reading God's life-giving words in the Bible, we will open up our heart to listen to Him. God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us interpret His Word, and He wants us to meditate on it so we can apply it to our life.

Observing the ways of God is crucial to knowing Him. God is constantly inviting us to walk with Him. God speaks and we recognize His voice much more clearly as get to know Him. We see when things match up with His character and when they don't. Our knowledge of God increases as our recognition of His love for us increases. Giving the Lord total control of our decisions, our time, our talents, and our possessions is another key to knowing God.

In order to know God, we must also understand our complete reliance upon Him. What motivated Hannah to bring her anguish to the Lord was her desperation for His intervention. She knew that God was her only source of comfort and power. As long as we try to sort things out and arrange them on our own, we'll not have much space for the new ways God wants to speak to us and offer us a new shape for living and a new set of values and practices that are healing.

Becoming interested in the things that interest God is also important in getting to know Him. In a healthy relationship both partners care about the things that matter to the other. God cares about us and all the details of our lives matter to Him. Do we know what matters to God's heart? Do we care about those things? God's Spirit wants to speak about matters that are bigger than the small little worlds of our circumstances.

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. When have I experienced a real sense of satisfaction?
2. What causes dissatisfaction in our lives?
3. What's my experience so far of this "Trust God, Obey God, Know God" journey towards satisfaction?
4. In what area can I take another step to come closer God and experience lasting satisfaction?