

## God and My Resources

Key Passages: Matthew 4:3-4, Luke 11:9-13 Hebrews 12:3-11

### I AM WHAT I BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

- (1) Week #1 – (Divine Truth) Because I believe God is unique in majesty, holiness, grace, and passion, I am overwhelmed, undone, forgiven, and available (Isaiah 6)
- (2) Week #2 (Creation Truth) Because God is the Universe's brilliant, omnipotent Creator, I believe I am not only made in His image, but invited into the glory of a personal, eternal relationship with Him. (Genesis 1:26-27)
- (3) Week #3 (Restoration Truth) Because I understand sin ruins God's creation, I believe I can only be restored to wholeness in God through brokenness before God. (Luke 18:9-14)
- (4) Week #4 (Rescue Truth) Because God has purposed to rescue humanity, I believe I have a Savior who has destroyed the enemy, released my fear, and ushered me into God's life. (Genesis 3:15-16)
- (5) Week #5 (Re-Creation Truth) Because God is a passionate Father, I believe I am being re-created into the very likeness of God's Son through the power of God's Spirit. (Romans 8:29-30)
- (6) Week #6 (Family Truth) Because God is a relational Father, I believe I am in His dynamic family of disciples who grow and act together to defeat the gates of Hell until the Master returns. (Matthew 16:18)

### ----- PRAYER -----

We saw it last Sunday night here in our gymnasium. And it is confirmed by virtually every psychologist and sociologist who have researched and studied the data. I quote Dr. Gail Gross:

While almost any man can father a child, there is so much more to the important role of being dad in a child's life. Studies show that if your child's father is affectionate, supportive, and involved, he can contribute greatly to your child's cognitive, language, and social development, as well as academic achievement, a strong inner core resource, sense of well-being, good self-esteem, and authenticity.

- ✓ Your child's primary relationship with his/her father can affect all of your child's relationships from birth to death, including those with friends, lovers, and spouses. Those early patterns of interaction with father are the very patterns that will be projected forward into all relationships...forever more: not only your child's intrinsic idea of who he/she is as he/she relates to others, but also, the range of what your child considers acceptable and loving.
- ✓ It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of dad.
  - Girls who have good relationships with their fathers tend to do better in math.
  - Boys who have actively involved fathers tend to have better grades and perform better on achievement tests. And well-bonded boys develop securely with a stable and sustained sense of self.
- ✓ Who we are and who we are to be, we are becoming, and fathers are central to that outcome.

Quite frankly, I'm often amazed at young fathers. So many of you young dads are "rock stars" in my estimation. I mean, you get it. You are so committed to your bride, and to your kids. My son in Austin, TX is one of your number, and he amazes me. He has such an inner passion to love his children's mother, and to love his children. He's always so alert to shepherding his kids, protecting and guiding his kids, providing for his kids...and they have unflinching confidence that their dad will

provide for them what they need. He's three times the father that I ever was.

**Dr. Gross is right:** you (dads!) are central to who your kids are, who they are to be, and who they are becoming. Kids become what they believe about and experience from their dads. Just like I am and I am becoming what I believe about God, my Heavenly Father.

So...let me ask you this. ***Are you confident in God, your heavenly Father's provision for your life?*** Quite frankly, if you have been born (again) into God's family by faith, and God himself is your heavenly Father, you have every right and reason to say the following:

***I believe My Father's PROVISION for me ABUNDANTLY overflows (cf. Psalm 23) supplying, empowering, and guiding my life.***

Give me a few minutes this morning to underscore this truth from Scripture. First, you and I in God's family have the incredible SUPPLY of

**I. My Father's WORD: God's Word is an abundant, key provision**  
(Matthew 4:3-4, cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Matthew 4:1-4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" "

In the known chronology of our Lord's life, this remarkable turn-of-events happened *right after* he was publicly baptized by John the Baptizer, which both openly identified him as God's beloved Son and christened him with the power of the Spirit of God to do what His Father had sent him to do. How remarkable is it – then! – that he is immediately attacked (in the will of God) by Satan.

You read these verses and immediately questions explode in your thinking:

- What is the beloved SON OF GOD doing in in the barren, hot, desolate Judean wilderness?
- Why would the Holy Spirit lead him there?
- Why is He alone? Without any physical provision/sustenance? With each passing day becoming more and more depleted?

Medical consultant John Anderson recalls:

*The longest fast of which I have a record was one undertaken by Mahatma Ghandi. It lasted 21 days, at the end of which, despite spending almost all the time lying on a bed, he had wasted away substantially, and could barely whisper.<sup>i</sup>*

Jesus of Nazareth was *very* human, *completely* human. While he must have had access to

water--and while long-term fasting can have great benefits—NOT if you are isolated and alone south<sup>ii</sup>

of where John was baptizing. When Matthew writes, "he was hungry," what he means is, "He was wasted."

It is in these moments of extensive physical depletion that the Prowling Lion (cf. 1 Peter 5:8) pounces, using his favorite tool. The tool of *doubt*.

*"Hey, Jesus...IF you are the Son of God (and given where you are and what is happening to you, it seems you should be calling that into question!). But IF you are...why not prove it to yourself, and to me--and to anyone who will hear about our meeting out here—COMMAND THESE STONES TO BECOME LOAVES OF BREAD. To satisfy your need, and to re-confirm that you are God's special Son, there can't be anything wrong with turning a few of these lifeless, white rocks into warm, hunger-satisfying bread!*

*"Hey Jesus – you need bread to stay alive, and YOU have the RIGHT and POWER to do what YOU need to do...especially when your Father's Spirit has led you into this awful place."*

The tool of doubt; the opportunity to solve your own situation; the power of temptation.

And Jesus does what? Perhaps the last thing in the world that would come to our minds. Rather than doing the obvious thing, rather than doing the expected, and independent thing, HE FRAMES HIS SITUATION WITH SCRIPTURE. He faces his tempter and says, **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"** (Matt 4:4).

Is he out of his mind? Didn't His Father give him a brain? Good grief! When you're hungry, you eat! When you're depleted, you go and get what you need! What is his problem?

Please let this settle into the deepest life-defining parts of your heart. Our leader, our Savior, our example, our mentor, our Lord, our Pioneer says this:

*My life is not primarily sustained by satisfying the cravings of my stomach, nor the needs of my body, even when it is crying out to be satisfied. My life is primarily found by listening to, getting my directions from, and obeying every word that comes out of the mouth of God my Father. That's how you TRULY live.*

In other words, Jesus declares, "My Father's Word IS my abundant provision for life." Have you discovered this for your own life? That what you/I truly need is the daily bread of God's word? A 2<sup>nd</sup> episode from Jesus' life: you and I in God's family have the incredible PERSON and POWER of

## **II. My Father's SPIRIT: God the Holy Spirit is an abundant, key provision** (Luke 11:9-13, cf. Ephesians 3:14-20)

11:1-13 Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.

<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread,  
<sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive  
everyone who is indebted to us.  
And lead us not into temptation.”

<sup>5</sup> And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; <sup>7</sup> and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

<sup>9</sup> And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup> What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; <sup>12</sup> or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Last Tuesday morning, before we prayed for you, our staff spent some time in this passage together. One of the questions we used to understand this was, "So how would Jesus' instruction here *change* your prayer life?" The disciples were asking Jesus to teach them to pray, so how would their praying be different, or shaped, by Jesus' instruction?"<sup>iii</sup> A number of outstanding truths surfaced in our discussion, including these:

#1 Look – **your FATHER is eager to give you good gifts!** (vss.11-12) *God's not as ornery or inconvenienced or tight-fisted as that "LEAVE ME ALONE" neighbor you might have. He's a GOOD FATHER.*

#2 So...**GO AFTER IT!** (vss.9-10) Ask persistently, seek relentlessly, knock repeatedly. *Ask God's name to be considered "holy" in your sphere of influence. Beg God to express His kingdom more in our world. Ask him for what you need each day. Seek his forgiveness every day, and let it remind you to forgive others as a habit of life. ASK...SEEK...KNOCK!!! Put some energy in your prayer life!*

#3 Notice WHAT GIFT the Father is eager to GIVE! (vs.13) "How much more will the heavenly Father give the HOLY SPIRIT to those who ask him!?"

The outcome of "the Lord's Prayer" is NOT simply to clap your hands and say, "Well, now I've said the words Jesus said I should say in prayer." No, the outcome is your Father giving to Jesus' disciples THE HOLY SPIRIT. Some of you might say, "Wait a minute. I'm a Christian. I already have the Holy Spirit." That is true. As God's child, the Holy Spirit has already taken up residence inside of you. But perhaps the question is – "OK, you have the Holy Spirit...but does the Holy Spirit have you?" Every day, as a result of your asking, seeking, knocking in prayer, does the Spirit of God

have control of you? Does your Father give you a fresh expression of the Spirit in your living? [LIFE

QUESTION: Is the Spirit flowing through you?]

It's a bit dark, but 50 years ago, A.W. Tozer offered this warning:<sup>iv</sup>

*“If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.”*

No wonder Paul said to the disciples in the Ephesian church, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). We can't afford to live without the full, active resource of the Person of the Holy Spirit flowing in our parenting, our daily working, in our relationships, in handling the every day opportunities that God creates for us each day. We need the abundant provision of our Father's Word, and our Father's Spirit. And (quickly) let me add you and I in God's family have the GUIDING hand of

### **III. My Father's DISCIPLINE: God's discipline is an abundant, key provision** (Hebrews 12:3-11, cf. Deuteronomy 8:5, Prov. 3:11-12)

<sup>12:1-11</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to [FIX YOUR EYES ON] Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

<sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup> In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup> And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

**“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
nor be weary when reprovved by him.**

**<sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and  
chastises every son whom he receives.”**

<sup>7</sup> It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup> If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

<sup>10</sup> For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup> For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

There is no doubt that there are times, stretches in our lives, when it gets rough. The truth is your Heavenly Father designs it to be rough at times. That's what this passage says. We forget

<sup>12:5</sup> the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

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In *NAVY SEALS: Their Untold Story*, you can find this fascinating explanation.

*Today, basic and advanced training for a Navy SEAL takes close to a full year. Another 18 months of training with a SEAL team is not normal before a new SEAL makes his first operational deployment. Of all special operations ground combat components, Navy SEAL Training is the longest and arguably the most difficult.*

*[The attrition rate is high.] Historically, five good men have to begin the process in order to get one qualified, deployable Navy SEAL. The physical characteristics of those who make it and those who don't are strikingly similar. Those who successfully complete BUD/S<sup>v</sup> training seem to stand higher in terms of leadership, self-confidence, self-discipline, self-esteem, and intelligence. They also come from families who have high expectations of their sons.*

*Training is long, rigorous, and painful. Yet, until there is a test for heart, or some way to measure who will and will not quit under stress, there will always be a Hell Week and the physical, mental, and emotional crucible that is BUD/S training.*

*"Most SEALS, I think, maximize their God given ability," explained Tom McGrath, former commander of SEAL Team Four. "Quitting is very, very selected against. Our training is spent in the water, cold water, and you can quit any time. I mean it's absolutely easy to quit, but it is irreversible."... Training is literally a life-and-death matter.<sup>vi</sup>*

I think I can detect what some of you are thinking. "Hey David, I'm no Navy SEAL. I don't want my life to be difficult. I mean, I don't take my spiritual preparation, my spiritual training and readiness, that seriously. " Really? Why not? Your Father does. IF His word is true, then His *discipline* is one of the key, abundant provisions in your life and in my life. Yes...it can be rough. To become like Christ Jesus, we may need to be in the wilderness while full of His Spirit. My Father's passion is that I share His holiness. My Father's passion is that the 'peaceable fruit of righteousness' take over in my life, my heart, my outlook, my perspective, my character.

### CONCLUSION – best practices...

***I what I believe about My Father's PROVISION for me ABUNDANTLY overflows (cf. Psalm 23)***

***Supplying His WORD – every day the bread of His word, His every word.***

***Empowering with His SPIRIT – through persistant prayer my life with His Spirit, and***

***Guiding by His DISCIPLINE – daily disciplining my life that you/I are spiritually in shape, prepared, to express His life and character.***

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.quora.com/What-happens-with-the-human-body-and-mind-after-40-days-fast-alone-in-an-isolated-place>

<sup>ii</sup> south-east of Jerusalem, west of the Dead Sea.

<sup>iii</sup> If you're in a CCC Connect Group, using this study guide, you'll ask and answer that question together with others when you meet this week.

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/robertcrosby/2012/05/a-w-tozer-on-the-holy-spirit-todays-church/>

<sup>v</sup> BUD/S stands for Basic Underwater Demolition/SEALS training

<sup>vi</sup> Dick Couch and William Doyle, *Navy Seals: Their Untold Story* (William Morrow/HarperCollins, 2014), 68-69.