

DAVID'S MEN

SEEKING THE HEART OF GOD



Problem 3: Blindness

Treasure: SEE GOD

Key: Prayer

Have you ever been home and walked into a room where there was very little or no light? You may have been in that room more times that you could count. You probably feel confident that you could navigate through the room without seeing. Maybe you will feel your way around and get through the room with minimal problems; although maybe someone moved something. Can you be sure you know where everything is? Have you ever been barefoot and stubbed your toe on a piece of furniture that was moved, tripped over an object someone left on the floor, or the intensely painful...late night Lego underfoot?

Living life can be essentially the same kind of experience. We know where we are and we have a clear idea of where we want to be. Unfortunately, we have to travel from here to there. We may have a good idea where life's big furniture is supposed to be but sometimes it gets moved around. We may expect the floor to be clear but sometimes people come in and leave their junk on the floor. And the Legos in life are always waiting to get you.

Navigating a dark room is complicated and can be difficult if not dangerous. So much so that long ago many people developed different technologies that allow you to illuminate the rooms in your home. Illumination allows you to see and that is amazingly helpful and makes getting through a room much easier. Without illumination, in the room, you are essentially a blind man but with the flip of a switch, you can have your sight back.

If living life is a similar experience to navigating a dark room then what you need is something that allows you to illuminate your navigation through life. You're in luck! Your creator has provided you with just such a tool.



God doesn't want you to stumble through life and potentially get hurt. In fact, He has a plan for you and works for you to do. He wants you at your destination as much if not more than you do. He isn't going to do the navigating for you but He wants to help you so much that He provided a tool that you can use at any time and in any place.

Prayer, that's the tool that God gives you to navigate life. Now if that doesn't impress you it may be because you don't have a very high view of prayer. If your idea of prayer starts something like "God is good, God is great..." or "Now I lay me down to sleep..." then you are shining a very small penlight into a very large room. Prayer isn't a spell you cast or an incantation that calls God down from heaven to do your bidding.

Prayer is a conversation. But it's not just chatting around the water cooler with an acquaintance. This is a private conversation between you and your creator. Its like having your own personal hotline to the One who runs the entire universe. He is the source of all truth, the source of all being, and the source of all good. You not only have the privilege and honor of being able to ring the line in heaven but God Himself is eagerly waiting on the other end for your call. He has been waiting for all of eternity for each time you call Him. Each time you bow your head you are connecting to the only being in the entire universe who can call Himself "I Am"...because He is!

Like any conversation, the more you talk and listen the more you get to know the person on the other end. If you are just starting to move beyond memorized prayers to a genuine conversation it may seem like the conversation is all one way. That is because you are so used to talking to humans so you have a desire to have God communicate the same way, but He isn't human. No matter how good your prayer life is you always have lots of room to grow in understanding how God talks to us.

Have you ever had a thought pop into your head that had absolutely no reason to be there? This would be something out of the ordinary, something that stands out as not being the kind of thought you think. It could be a phrase you have never heard that jumps into your mind. Maybe a thought about something very ordinary but you feel a significance about it that you never felt before. Focus on that thing closely, if the moment quickly fades then move on, it was probably nothing. But if it stays with you and keeps your attention then there is a very good chance God is talking and you just caught a bit of it. Pray about it. Meditate on it. God will continue to allow the idea to develop in your mind.

You can also see God's replies to you in what happens around you. If you are praying for something then keep an eye on it. See how that thing works out and you might just see it work out in a way no one would have ever expected or in a direction that no one was working for. No one that you saw working on it that is. God's actions can be seen in the universe He runs. It isn't always obvious and it isn't always immediate. But He moves and it can be seen if you are looking.



2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV)

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The adversary of God hates His creation. In order to destroy you, he blinds you so that you cannot SEE GOD and live in communion and relationship with Him. By leaving you blind and in darkness you are easy to take advantage of and victimize.

John 14:9 (NIV)

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Jesus came to earth on a mission to help you to SEE GOD. He opens your eyes to those things which you were once blinded to. Instead of grasping in the dark Christ guides you to the light so that you will be able to see.

Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

When you cannot see life can be scary. The more you walk alone the more focused on yourself you become. Prayer breaks that cycle and calls in God to assist you. If you want to SEE GOD work you have to engage Him in prayer. As with anything the more you invest in something the greater the result. Things may not always work out the way you expected. Even so, given time and experience, you will learn to trust God and become confident in His willingness and ability to get involved in the things you pray about. This is why your anxiety and fear subside. You learn to have confidence in God and trust Him. In church, they would call that faith.

FRESH WIND, FRESH FIRE

The title of this month's book is “*Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God’s Spirit Invades the Heart of His People*”. In this book, Jim Cymbala recounts his journey from being a young man pressured into taking over as the pastor for a small church. He then gets “encouraged” into taking on a second small church. He is inexperienced, unsure of himself, tired, stretched thin, and broke.

Pastor Cymbala struggled with trying to keep the doors open, he was considering walking away, and finally started to become ill. That’s when God stepped in. He convinced Pastor Cymbala that prayer was going to be the key to saving and eventually growing his tiny church. A church that today we know as the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Sound familiar? That’s the same Brooklyn Tabernacle that is the home of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.



As the leader of the church, he informed his congregants that the true measure of their church will no longer be what happens in their church on Sunday morning but instead they will be measured by how active they are during the Tuesday night prayer service. Once the church committed to sincere prayer they soon learned how to engage in powerful prayer.

The book is filled with stories of people walking in off of the street, divine appointments, and power life changes. It's amazing what God will do if His people just call upon Him. But as the book points out, the prayer meeting became far more than people sitting around whispering to God. Here we see the example of a community that has learned to SEE GOD. They call out as a community of faith. Sometimes it was with boldness and sometimes it was with desperation, but God heard them and the church saw Him move among them.

PRAYER IN *FRESH WIND, FRESH FIRE*

Here are some of the ways you may see prayer in action while reading *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*:

- When you are at your lowest point and in the most desperate position, you are right where you need to be to get yourself out of God's way and engage in the kind of prayer that will let you truly SEE GOD and forever change your life.
- When we are a body of believers that are actively praying together we are functioning more like a spiritual Emergency Room than a spiritual school. We are able to SEE GOD in action in a real living and breathing way instead of simply learning about things that He did for other people.
- Prayer may be desperate and pleading, it may be silent and profound, it may also be active and energetic. People communicate in as many unique ways as there are unique people. In prayer, we can SEE GOD in how He works in the life of others.
- Prayer cannot be rushed. How meaningful is any conversation that is rushed and shallow? If you want to genuinely SEE GOD in a powerful way you need to invest in equally genuine prayer.
- Prayer not only enables us to SEE GOD on earth but it prepares us for being in a relationship with God once we are with Him in heaven. If you aren't interested in prayer now why would you want to spend eternity in communion with God?

As you read through *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* Jim Cymbala will be recounting many of his personal experiences and stories. It is likely that you will be reminded of similar situations in your life. Take time to write down any experiences in your life that come to mind. Be prepared to share them with the group.



Current Month Assignments

- Read *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* by Jim Cymbala and prepare a book summary to share with the group. We will do this for each book.
 - The summary should be one page with the following info:
 - List the big ideas.
 - List your key takeaways.
 - List how you will apply to your life now.
 - Provide a copy for each guy at the meeting.
- Complete the **Praying Word Challenge**.
 - As you read “*Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*” underline every “praying word” (pray, prays, praying, prayed, prayer, and prayers) that you find (pgs. 11 - 185).
 - Using the included Praying Word Challenge Worksheet write down the prayer word, the page (or Kindle location) you find the word on.
 - Consider the word in the context of how the author is using it. Can you see how this instance of the word relates to the treasure of SEE GOD? Write any comments or insights in the comments column.
 - During the meeting, the actual number will be revealed. The man who is closest to the correct number will be the challenge winner.
- Memorize the three scripture passages under Topical Memory Verses. Be prepared to quote topic – reference – verse – and brief context.
- Meet with one other guy in the group. This would be a great opportunity to practice saying your verses.

Topical Memory Verses

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