

A Sure Foundation

The beliefs that we build our lives on

SEEING GOD

MONTH 5

WEEK 1

READ:

1 John

2 John

3 John

There are many things that we can **do** to improve our relationship with God, just as there is in any relationship. God has given us His living words in the form of the Bible that we might know Him better. He has given us the avenue of prayer in order to communicate with Him. He has given us indication of His Presence all around us. But the first thing that I think we need to recognize is that God gave us a need and desire for Him when He created us as spiritual beings in His image. Yes, we have physical bodies, and live in a physical world. But at the same time, right now, we are spiritual beings created in God's image and living in the spiritual realm. We are unique among God's creation, created for more than meets the eye. We aren't just trapped in the physical world waiting until we get to heaven for our spiritual life to become the reality. The spiritual reality of God and our spiritual selves in communion with Him is a reality right here and now....if we can open our eyes to see it.

Worship means to love, admire or respect someone greatly and treat as divine. Obviously God is the only worthy object of our worship, but I am continually amazed at how we insist on limiting our expression of worship to certain times and places. Realizing that we are spiritual beings living in the context of a body, a world, and a universe created by the object of our worship seems to command to me that worship is something to be **lived**, and not merely visited. Our awareness of, and therefore relationship with God has been categorized in a way that separates "normal" life from all things spiritual, when the truth is that there is nothing about us that is unspiritual. We cannot choose to be mere mortals even if we wanted to. From that first breath of God's Spirit into Adam our super "natural", everlasting life was clenched. Therefore, the first step of worshipping God is to practice **seeing** Him, and enjoying Him, in all of life.

WEEK 1 SEEING GOD - alert to His presence

- 1, 2, and 3 John

WEEK 2 THE BIBLE - it's purpose, history, and authority

- Heb. 1-5 and Psalm 119

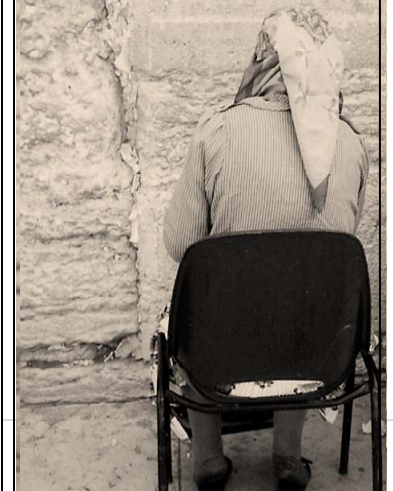
WEEK 3 PRAYER - a constancy of dialogue with God

- Heb. 6-9 and James

WEEK 4 WORSHIP - as a way of life

- Heb. 10-13 and Psalm 95-98

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. For our God is a consuming fire."
Hebrews 12:28,29



THIN PLACES

According to Celtic tradition, thin places are those special magical places where two worlds join so closely, and the boundary between them is so thin, that beings can cross from one to the other. Thus leprechauns, fairies, demons and humans can enter and experience each other's worlds. Even those who would scoff at such foolish notions are taken with the idea of a parallel universe and unseen dimensions. Like is so often the case, there is spiritual truth behind the legends and imaginations of man that recognize this sporadic special access of the earth-bound soul to the realm of the divine.

The Bible records many incidents of thin places. Surely the Garden of Eden was a thin place where Adam and Eve enjoyed a closeness with God. Losing access to that thin place must have been devastating. Enoch walked so closely with God that he disappeared from this realm. Jacob had an encounter in a thin place where he saw a stairway connecting heaven and earth. After God had spoken with him, Jacob exclaimed **“Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”** (Gen.28:16,17) He recognized that he was in a thin place, one that he had not noticed before. Elijah purposefully journeyed to the thin place where he would depart from this realm into the spiritual one via a whirlwind and fiery chariot. In 2 Kings 6:17 Elisha asked God to open his servant's eyes that he might be reassured with the mighty presence of the army in the spiritual realm. God had a “doorway” between realms constructed as the holy of holies and surrounded by the extravagantly furnished Temple. Isaiah must have been in a thin place when he listened in on God's conversation, and Ezekiel and Daniel saw through thin places into spiritual plans. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the transfiguration where Moses and Elijah, now of the spiritual realm and Jesus, still of the earthly realm, all gathered at a thin place on a mountain. This was soon after Jesus had promised the disciples that some of them would see the kingdom of God before they died.

What all of this makes me wonder is: how close are we at any given moment to a thin place? Is it a rare and magical place, or is it right here at hand merely waiting for us to become aware of it, and even perhaps to enter it? There are thin places in my world. Some of them I can count on and look forward to visiting, like the towering mountain at my favorite campground where I always feel a little closer to God. Other thin places catch me by surprise and make me wonder how many I miss because I'm simply not looking. Teresa of Avila does not use the term thin place, but she does describe an ever increasing intimacy with God where eventually all of life becomes a thin place and we are perfectly one with God. The wall between us thins until there is none. Brother Lawrence writes about practicing God's presence in even the most mundane of activities like washing dishes. Do you think of your kitchen sink as a thin place? That in turn reminds me that as Christians, with the presence of Christ within us and God's very Spirit dwelling in us, each and every one of us has become a thin place! We are God's holy temple, the dwelling of the holy of holies. Wherever we go is a thin place. Do we see it? Do we show it? Imagine what should be happening when all these thin places gather together in one place! What extraordinary sights there are to see!

Describe your last encounter with a thin place: _____

WALKING IN LIGHT 1 John 1 and 2

John wants the reader to share in the same fellowship with the Father and Son that he has. He relates this fellowship to walking in the light. If we walk in the light, who else do we have fellowship with? _____

How can we know that we are in fellowship with Him? _____

How can you tell those who are living in the light? _____

Who is John writing to? _____

Who is an antichrist? _____

What is the challenge of remaining in the Son and Father? _____

CHILDREN OF GOD 1 John 3-6

I love that line in 1 John 3:2 “what we will be has not yet been made known.” What promise and hope that holds! It makes me think of how as parents we look at our infant, or toddler, or teenager and wonder what they will become. We try to train them to be grateful, respectful, responsible, etc., but really the best thing we can do is set an example before them. Our heavenly Father has set an example for us of lavish love. He has adopted us as His children, and we are full heirs of not only an inheritance in heaven, but of His love and His ways. The more we are around Him, the more the family resemblance becomes noticeable. His ways become our ways.

How does the way we behave show whose child we are? _____

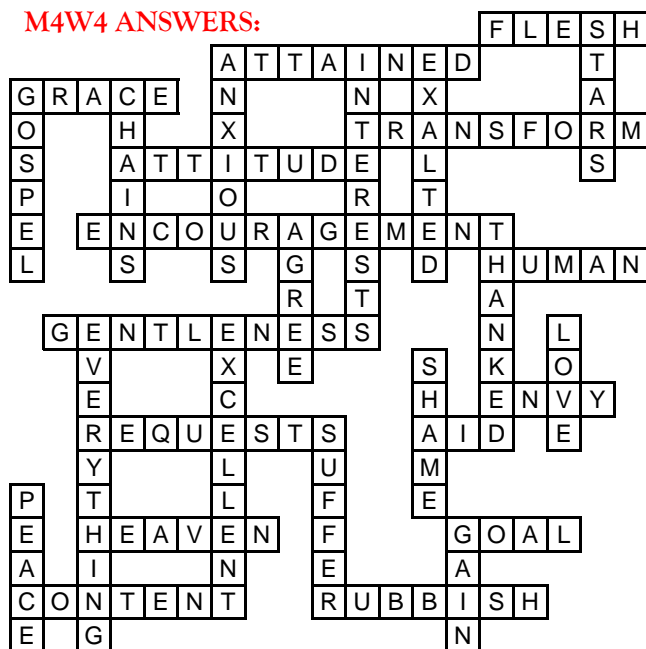
How are we to treat our siblings in Christ? _____

What is the sin that leads to death? _____

TRUTH 1 John 4:1-6

How do we know what is true? There are so many people out there saying things that sound so good. When everyone around us seems to buy into it, we can begin to get confused. John says, “Here is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.” Is that the only truth that matters? _____

M4W4 ANSWERS:



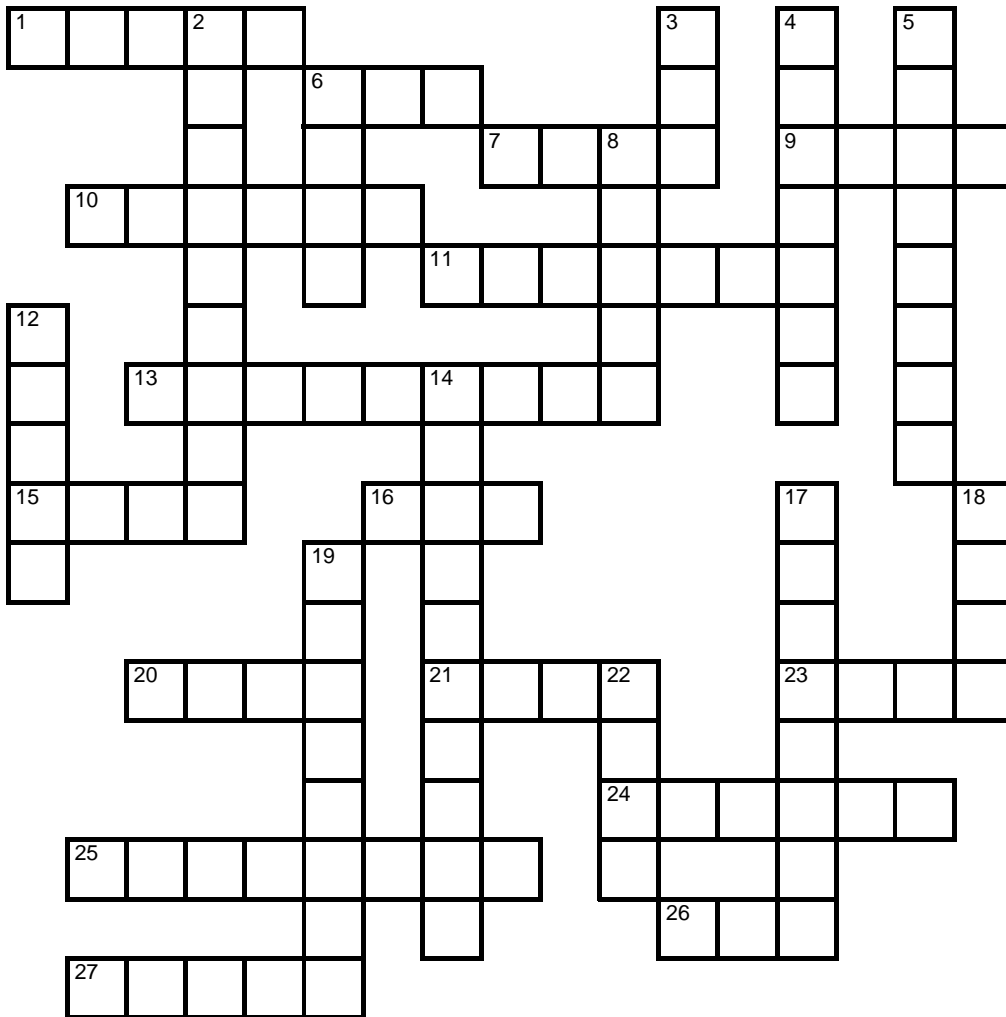
SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Desiring God by John Piper
- The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence
- The Interior Castle by Teresa of Avila
- Satisfy Your Soul by Dr. Bruce Demarest
- The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer
- Everything is Spiritual DVD by Rob Bell



PUZZLE PAGE

1, 2, and 3 John



Down

2. God's is greater
1 Jn. 5:9
3. God hears what we _____
1 Jn. 5:14
4. God's command
1 Jn. 3:23
5. comes from the world
1 Jn. 2:16
6. imitate this 3 Jn. 11
8. God is 1 Jn. 1:5
12. Jesus Christ came by water and _____
1 Jn. 5:6
14. a malicious gossip
3 Jn. 9-10
17. we are _____ of God
1 Jn. 3:1
18. if you have the Son you have this
1 Jn. 5:12
19. not in fellowship with God 1 Jn. 1:6
22. don't _____ what you have worked for
2 Jn. 8

Across

1. anyone who does not love remains in this 1 Jn. 3:14
6. where love comes from 1 Jn. 4:7
7. do this as Jesus did 1 Jn. 2:6
9. one who says "I love God" but hates his brother 1 Jn. 4:20
10. love with this 1 Jn. 3:18
11. what God is faithful to do with our sins 1 Jn. 1:9
13. we will be this before Him 1 Jn. 2:28
15. we know God if we do this 1 Jn. 2:3
16. from having children walking in the truth 2 Jn. 4
20. there is none of this in love 1 Jn. 4:18
21. those who do this have not seen God 3 Jn. 11
23. what we should do to one another 1 Jn. 3:11
24. shows that He lives in us 1 Jn. 3:24
25. anyone who hates his brother 1 Jn. 3:15
26. we do not know Him if we continue to do this
1 Jn. 3:6
27. what we should lay down for our brothers 1 Jn. 3:16



For comments or questions, contact me at kayannausheran@hotmail.com or for more studies visit my website at thelightedjourney.com