

# DAY 2

# Jesus Is Your Model

JESUS WATCHED TO SEE WHERE THE FATHER WAS AT WORK AND JOINED HIM.



Look to see what God says and how He works in the Scriptures. Make your decisions and evaluate your experiences based on biblical truths.

Malachi 3:6  
"I the LORD do not change."

During this course and throughout your life, you will have times when you want to respond to situations based on your own experiences or your own wisdom. Such an approach will get you in trouble. This should be your guideline: always go to the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of your situation to you. Look to see what God says and how He works in the Scriptures. Make your decisions and evaluate your experiences based on biblical truths.

When you study the Scriptures, do not base your decision on one isolated verse or story. Look to see how God generally works throughout the Scriptures. When you learn how God has consistently related to people throughout history, you can expect Him to work in a similar way with you. Your experience is valid only as it is confirmed in the Scriptures. I never deny anyone's personal experience. I always reserve the right, however, to interpret it according to what I understand from Scripture. At times individuals get upset with me and say, "I don't care what you say. I've experienced this." I kindly respond, "I do not deny your experience, but I question your interpretation of what happened because it is contrary to what I see in God's Word." Our experiences cannot be our guide. Every event in your life must be understood and interpreted by the Scriptures, for the God revealed in Scripture does not change (see **Mal. 3:6**).

## 1 Mark the following statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- a. I can trust my experiences as an effective way to know and follow God.
- b. I should always evaluate my experiences based on the truths I find in God's Word.
- c. I may get a distorted understanding of God if I do not check my experiences against the truths of Scripture.
- d. I can trust God to work in my life similarly to ways I see Him working throughout the Scriptures.

Statements b, c, and d are true. The first statement is false because your experiences must be interpreted in light of the Scriptures. Experience alone is not a trustworthy guide. You must be cautious about isolating a single event from the context of Scripture. Instead, observe the way God works throughout the Bible. You will never go wrong if, under the Holy Spirit's instruction, you let the Bible be your guide.

## The Bible Is Your Guide

Christians are becoming more and more unfamiliar with the Bible as a guide for their daily living. Consequently, they turn to worldly solutions, programs, and methods that appear to be answers to spiritual problems. I use God's Word as a guide to what I should do. Some people say, "Henry, that is not practical." They want me to disregard the Bible and to rely on the world's ways or on personal experience. But as a Christian disciple, I cannot abandon the guidance I find in the Bible. The Bible is my guide for how to relate to God and how to live my life.

How do you let God's Word become your guide? When I seek God's direction, I insist on following the directives I see in His Word. Yesterday's lesson is an example. Does God call people to follow Him without giving them all the details in advance? We know He called Abram to follow that way. Is that pattern consistent in the Scriptures?

**2 Read the following Scriptures about Jesus' call for people to follow Him. Write what Jesus told these people to do.**

Matthew 4:18-20: \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 4:21-22: \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 9:9: \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 9:1-20: \_\_\_\_\_

In some cases God gave more details than in others. We will look at Moses' call and discover God gave him a bigger picture of the assignment than He usually revealed. In every case, however, the individual had to stay close to God for His daily guidance. For Moses and the children of Israel, God led through a cloud by day and fire by night. For Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, and Saul, God disclosed little detail about their assignments. He basically said, "Follow Me, and I will show you."

## What Is God's Will?

When people seek to know and do God's will, many ask the question, What is God's will for my life? One of my seminary professors, Gaines S. Dobbins, used to say, "If you ask the wrong question, you will get the wrong answer." Sometimes we assume every question is legitimate. However, when we ask the wrong question, we may find an answer but remain disoriented to God and His activity. Always check to see whether you have asked the right question before you pursue the answer.

What is God's will for my life? *is not* the right question. I think the proper question is, What is God's will? Once I know God's will, then I can adjust my life to Him. In other words, what is it God is purposing to accomplish where I am? Once I know what God is doing, then I know what I need to do. The focus needs to be on *God*, not on *my life!*

When I want to learn how to know and do God's will, I can find no better model than Jesus' life. During His approximately 33 years on earth, He perfectly completed every assignment the Father gave Him. He never failed to do the will of the Father. He never sinned. Would you like to understand how Jesus came to know and do His Father's will?

**3 Read John 5:17,19-20 in the margin and answer the questions.**

- Who is always at work? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much can the Son do by Himself? \_\_\_\_\_
- What does the Son do? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why does the Father show the Son what He is doing? \_\_\_\_\_

Some people read these verses and have difficulty understanding that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human. Our minds can't fully grasp the truth that Jesus and the Father are one (John 15:9). We will look at their oneness more later. But make no mistake. Jesus is God and He lived on earth in human flesh. In these verses Jesus clearly states how He knew what to do. Jesus watched to see where His Father was at work and joined Him. Jesus' approach to knowing and doing His Father's will can be outlined like this:



The proper question is, What is God's will?

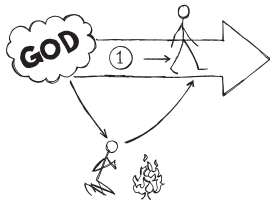
John 5:17,19-20

<sup>17</sup>"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working. <sup>19</sup>I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these."



Watch to see where God is working and join Him!

REALITY 1



GOD'S WORK

**Jesus' Example**

1. The Father has been working right up until now.
2. Now the Father has Me working.
3. I do nothing on My own initiative.
4. I watch to see what the Father is doing.
5. I do what I see the Father doing.
6. The Father loves Me.
7. He shows Me everything He is doing.

This model applies to your life personally and also to your church. It is not a step-by-step approach for knowing and doing God's will. It describes a love relationship through which God accomplishes His purposes. I sum it up this way: watch to see where God is working and join Him!

**God Is Always at Work Around You**

Right now God is working all around you, as well as in your life. One of the greatest tragedies among God's people is that, although they deeply long to experience God, they are encountering Him day after day but do not recognize Him. By the end of this course, you will have learned many ways to clearly identify God's activity in and around your life. The Holy Spirit and God's Word will instruct you and will help you know when and where God is working. Once you know where He is active, you will adjust your life to join Him in His activity.

You will experience God accomplishing His purposes through your life. When you enter this kind of intimate love relationship with God, you will know and do His will and experience Him in ways you have never known before. You cannot achieve this by following a spiritual formula. Only God can bring you into this kind of relationship.

- 4 Turn to the diagram inside the back cover of this book. Read all seven of the realities of experiencing God. Personalize the first statement and write it below, using *me* instead of *you*.**

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Later this week we will take a closer look at these seven truths.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

The Bible is my guide for faith and practice.

The right question is, What is God's will?

Watch to see where God is working and join Him.

God is always at work around me.

**Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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