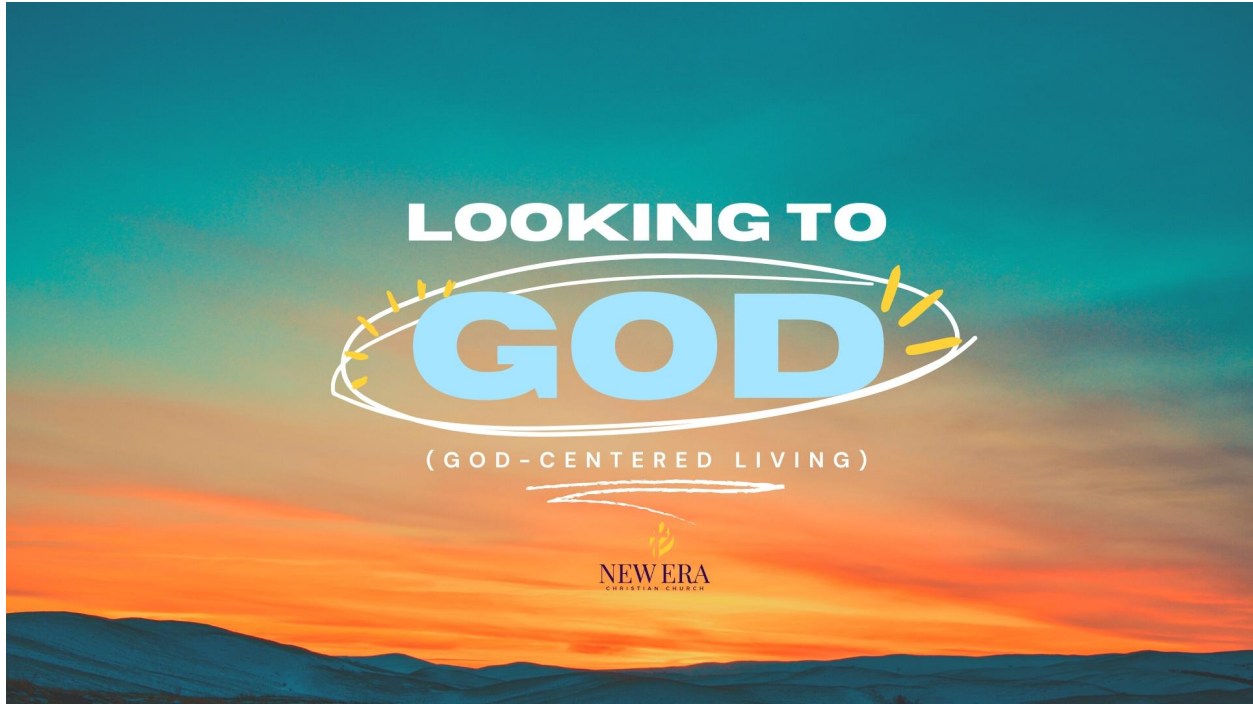




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Introduction:

Part of the Book of Genesis is the record of God accomplishing His purposes through Abraham. It is not the record of Abraham's walk with God. Can you see the difference in focus? The focus of the Bible is God. The essence of sin is a shift from God-centeredness to self-centeredness. The essence of salvation is denying self instead of affirming self. We must deny ourselves and return to God-centeredness in our lives. Then God has us in a place where He will accomplish His eternal purposes through us.

1. Do you have a hard time denying Self?

- To know and do God's will, you must deny self and return to a God-centered life.

A Self-Centered Life

- Is focused on self
- Is proud of self and self's accomplishments
- Is self-confident
- Depends on self and abilities
- Affirms self
- Seeks to be acceptable to the world and its ways
- Looks at circumstances from a human perspective
- Chooses selfish and worldly living

A God-Centered Life

- Places confidence in God
- Depends on God and His ability and provision
- Focuses on God and His activity
- Is humble before God
- Denies self
- Seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness
- Seeks God's perspective in every circumstance
- Chooses holy and godly living

2. In each of biblical examples, write **G** before the one that illustrates God-centeredness. Write an **S** before the one that illustrates self-centeredness.

___ God placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful, bountiful garden. He told them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve saw that the fruit was pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom, so she ate it (**Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-7**).

___ Potiphar's wife daily begged Joseph to go to bed with her. He told her he could not do such a wicked thing and sin against God. When she tried to force him, he fled the room and went to prison rather than yield to temptation (**Gen. 39**).

God promised to give the land of Canaan to Israel. Moses sent 12 men into the promised land to explore it and to bring back a report. The land was bountiful, but the people living there appeared to be giants (**Num. 13-14**).

___ Ten of the spies said, "We can't attack the people because they are stronger than we are (**13:31**).

___ Joshua and Caleb said, "If the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land. Don't be afraid of the people of the land" (**14:8-9**).

3. What's the trap of Self-centeredness?

Self-centeredness is a subtle trap because it makes sense from a human perspective. Like King Asa, you can avoid it at one time and fall into its trap at another. God-centeredness requires the daily death of self and submission to God ([John 12:23-25](#)).

4. GOD'S PURPOSES, NOT OUR PLANS

To live a God-centered life, you must focus on God's purposes, not your own plans. You must seek to view situations from God's perspective rather than from your own human outlook. When God starts to do something in the world, He takes the initiative to reveal His will to people. Throughout history, God, in His wisdom, has chosen to involve His people in accomplishing His purposes.

[\(JOHN 12:23-25\)](#) Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Answer the following questions:

6. What was God about to do when He asked Noah to build an ark ([Gen. 6:5-14](#))?

[\(Genesis 6:6–14\)](#) ⁶The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Noah and the Flood

⁹This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.

¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹²God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

7. What was God about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah when He came to Abraham ([Gen. 18:16-21; 19:13](#))?

(Genesis 18:16–21)

Abraham Pleads for Sodom

¹⁶ When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

²⁰ Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous

²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.”

(Genesis 19:13) because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”

8. What was God about to do when He came to Gideon (Judg. 6:11-16)?

(Judges 6:11–16) The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”

¹³ “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”

¹⁴ The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”

¹⁵ “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

¹⁶ The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”

9. What was God about to do when He came to Saul (later called Paul) on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-16)?

e. Why is it more important to know what God is planning to do than to focus on your plans?

Answer:

- ❖ God was about to destroy the world with a devastating flood when He approached Noah.
- ❖ When God prepared to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, He told Abraham.
- ❖ God came to Gideon when He was about to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Midianites.
- ❖ God encountered Saul when He wanted to carry the gospel to the Gentiles around the known world. Without a doubt the most important factor in each situation was what God was about to do.

10. How do you determine what you want to do for God?

Let's use Noah as an example. What about his plans to serve God? They would not make much sense in light of the coming destruction, would they? Noah was not calling God in to help him accomplish what he was dreaming of doing for God. God never asks people to dream up something to do for Him. We do not sit down and brainstorm what we want to do for God and then call God in to help us accomplish our plans. The pattern in Scripture is that we submit ourselves to God. Then we wait until God shows us what He is about to do, or we watch to see what God is already doing around us. Then we join Him.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- To know and do God's will, I must deny self and return to a God-centered life.
- I must focus my life on God's purposes, not on my own plans.
- I must seek to see from God's perspective rather than from my own distorted human outlook.
- I must wait until God shows me what He is about to do through me.
- I will watch to see what God is doing around me and join Him.