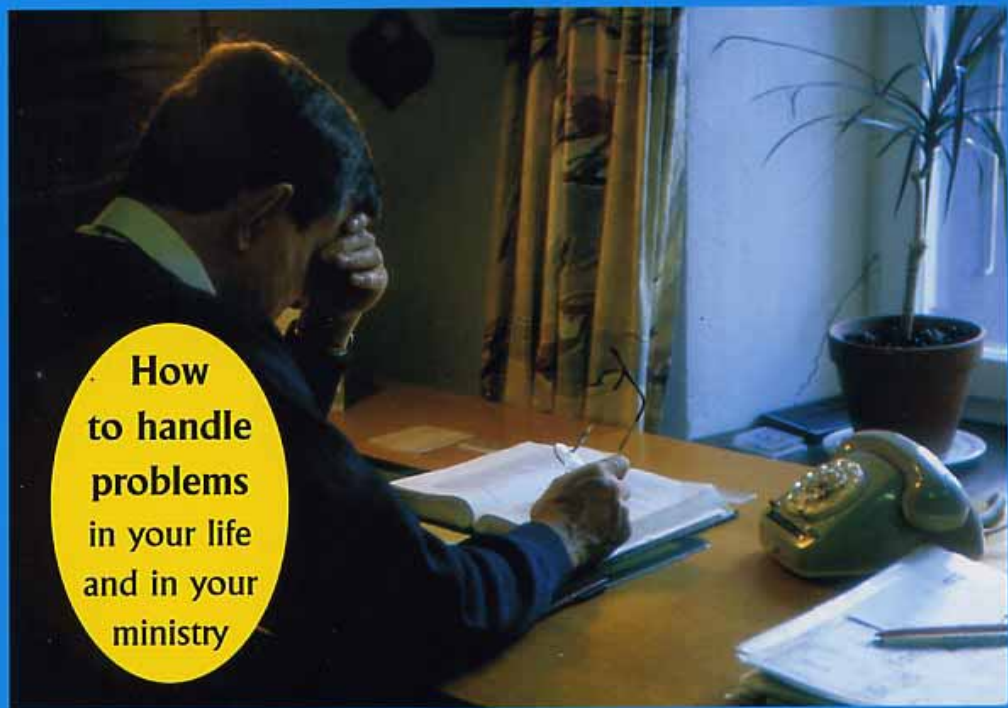


and God's  
Solution

# The Problems of a Children's Worker

How  
to handle  
problems  
in your life  
and in your  
ministry



*Sam Doherty*

# The Problems of a Children's Worker and God's Solution

A manual to help those who evangelize children  
to handle the problems they face in their lives  
and ministries

*By*

*Sam Doherty*

A series of devotional manuals for children's workers

*"The Problems of a Children's Worker - and God's Solution"*

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*"God's Word for God's Workers Vol 1"*

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## **FOREWORD**

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Sam Doherty has given most of his Christian life to teaching children God's Word and training others to do the same. He has now laid aside that ministry to record many of the lessons he learned serving with Child Evangelism Fellowship. His desire is that children's workers worldwide will benefit.

As I've had opportunity to work with Sam, my life has been impacted by his deep burden for children. God has used him greatly in training and ministering to those who are taking the Gospel to lost boys and girls.

Having dealt with problems of many kinds during his service to the Lord, Sam is able to teach from experience what David expressed in Psalm 37, "But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord, He is their strength in time of trouble." He firmly believes that by taking our eyes off ourselves, and concentrating on the attributes of God, we are not only able to better analyze problems we face, but to deal with them as well.

As you read this book, you'll be challenged to view yourself differently as you look to God in every situation. You'll perceive your circumstances in a new way as you ponder who God is and you'll very likely become different as you answer the challenges in these chapters.

Read this book with a prayerful heart. Ask God to help you to know Him as you never have before. Then focus on His greatness in the midst of life's challenges.

*Reese R. Kauffman, President  
Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc.*

## INTRODUCTION

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My wife and I have been in the work of Child Evangelism Fellowship for almost 45 years. Several months after our conversion in late 1949 God laid a burden on our hearts for children and their salvation. We were sure that God wanted us to bring the Gospel to children—especially the unreached children. Soon after that we heard about Child Evangelism Fellowship, an organisation which had as its goal to reach such children, and we knew that this was the organisation we should work with.

We had, therefore, the privilege of starting the work of Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) in Ireland and of being the National Directors there for the fourteen years which followed. It pleased God to bless the work and it grew. Today it is one of the strongest CEF organisations in the world.

In 1964 we were invited to become Regional Directors of CEF for the whole of Europe. As we prayed about this invitation we believed that God spoke to us through Joshua chapter 1 verses 12–18 and especially through verses 14 and 15.

“Your wives, your little ones and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you (to us this was Ireland) on this side of the Jordan (to us this was the Irish Sea); but ye shall pass before (or lead) your brethren (to us the CEF workers in Europe—on the other side of “the Jordan”) . . . **and help them.** Until the Lord have given your brethren rest as He hath given you and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them.”

On the basis of God’s Word and His command to us, we accepted the invitation, and were European CEF Directors for 29 years (1964–1993). During that time God blessed the work in a very special and unique way. The number of full-time workers grew from 45 to around 375, and many new and exciting developments took place.

We have now handed over the leadership of European CEF to our successors, Roy and Ruth Harrison. We continue in CEF work full-time but are able to engage more and more in direct ministries such as preaching, teaching and, especially, writing.

Our goal today remains the same. We want **to help CEF workers**, especially the younger ones, in their lives and ministries, and we feel we can best accomplish this goal by writing books like this one. This

book is the first in a series of more than 40 books, each of which will, God willing, deal with one aspect of the life or ministry of a worker among children.

I want to emphasize that I myself am personally responsible for the contents of this book and all the other books. They are not **official CEF publications**.

In this book I want to share something which I wish someone had shared with me away back, many years ago, when I first came into the work. Because no one did this, I had to learn these things for myself during my many years in CEF work and leadership. I have not completely learned them yet. But I am endeavouring to do so.

What I am going to share with you has been a greater help to me, in my Christian life and service, than anything else I have heard or learned throughout these last 45 years (apart from the wonderful truth of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ). I want to share these things in writing with as many children's workers and teachers as possible—around the world.

I pray that what I write will be as great a help and blessing to you as it has been to me. I should emphasise that the problems I write about, and the solution which God gives to them, are not peculiar to those who minister to children. They apply, I believe, to all believers and to all Christian workers.

Also the problems I deal with are only some of the problems a children's worker faces—even though they are the most critical and most important ones. There are other problems encountered when actually speaking to, and working with children, which will be dealt with in later books.

I would like to express appreciation to the Christian Fellowship Church in Evansville, and to two families in that church, for their generous gifts which have helped make it possible to print this book, and distribute it free of charge to CEF workers worldwide.

## Chapter 1: The Problems We Face

---

**W**e all have problems of some kind; and many of these can be very serious:

- personal problems
- work problems
- financial problems
- family problems
- people problems
- health problems
- problems with ourselves and our self image
- problems with circumstances
- problems with the future
- problems with discouragement and disappointment
- problems with lack of success
- problems with our leaders

The list is endless. But as you read through what I have outlined, I am sure that you can identify some problem which has been giving you real trouble and which you may not know how to handle.

One worker has a recurring health problem which hinders him from doing all he would like to do. Another worker doesn't have enough finance coming in to meet her needs.

One worker has relationship problems with a co-worker. Another worker finds it difficult to work with, and follow, the direction of her leader.

One worker has had a difficult year with several Good News Clubs closing and several committee members leaving. Another is very concerned that so few children have come to Christ.

One worker is worried about her future. Another is upset because of discouragement from her family members.

Some of these problems are very major and could easily debilitate a worker's life, witness and ministry:

- the unexpected death of a loved one



- the birth of a mentally and/or physically challenged child
- the rejection of the Gospel by a loved one
- a nervous breakdown
- the diagnosis of a cancer
- a serious car accident

These are a reality and they can occur in the lives of the most spiritual and devoted of Christian workers. Problems abound! And even if you don't have any problems in your life and ministry at present, rest assured that you will have.

### *What Are the Causes of Our Problems?*

- Some of these problems are self inflicted.
- Some are the result of other people's actions.
- Some are a direct consequence of the work we are doing.
- Some are due to attacks from the evil one.
- Some seem to have no known cause or explanation.

But the questions we all face are:

- How can I handle these problems?
- How can I have victory over them?
- How can I have peace in the midst of them?

Is there an answer? I believe there is. But it is God's answer we are looking for. Not man's answer. We need to find the biblical answer and put it into operation. I trust we will identify and understand that answer as we read and meditate on the pages which follow.

### *For Further Thought and Reflection*

Make a list of the problems which face you at present. Be honest and candid with yourself. Before reading the chapters which follow, take time, just now, to pray and ask God to show you clearly how to handle these problems.

## Chapter 2: The Answers We Try

---

**W**hen a problem comes we don't usually remain passive and inactive. We try to solve it. We don't want to have problems such as I outlined in the first chapter. So we look for a solution—and we act upon it.

Some of these solutions can be very helpful, and should not necessarily be neglected. However, they can be wrong if they become substitutes for that solution which God especially wants us to see, understand and put into practice.

- We talk to people about our problems and we listen to their suggestions.
- We go to hear preachers, or listen to cassettes, which we feel would be a help to us.
- We look for books which deal with the problems and read them eagerly.
- We try different plans which might bring victory—and follow the two, three or four steps involved.
- We pray of course, like Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 v8, asking God that He will take the problem away.

However, it is very often the case that after trying one or more of these solutions the problem is still there—as big as ever; and we feel as helpless as ever to deal with it.

Then there are other reactions or “solutions” which we sometimes attempt, and they are not at all helpful. Indeed they are invariably harmful.

- We worry and worry about the problem and sometimes make ourselves sick.
- We become bitter and rebellious. Why should this happen to me?
- We try to manipulate people or circumstances so as to change the situation.
- We blame and criticise other people or, in some cases, ourselves.

- We decide to resign from the ministry to which God has called us, and attempt to run away from the problem. This, however, usually results in other problems.
- We go into another ministry which seems more attractive and with fewer problems. The grass looks greener on the other side of the fence until we get there.

We need to see that we have a greater problem than any of those we have mentioned so far. Indeed that problem is the basic problem and it is **that** which makes it difficult for us to solve the other problem(s). I believe that if we can find the answer to **that** problem we will have the answer to all our problems!

Our main problem is that we ourselves are so self centred and egotistical. All of us are so often like this—even after we have trusted Jesus Christ as our Saviour. We continually look at ourselves, our problems, our difficulties, our work, our future and our health. Our focus is upon ourselves, and we see everything through the filter of our egocentricity. This is even true, often, when we pray. Think of how frequently we use the words “me,” “my,” “we,” “us” and “ours” when we pray. It is so easy to become focused upon ourselves and **our** needs. Even many of the books we read—and most of today’s Christian best sellers—focus upon us and how we can achieve success in **our** lives, service and family situations.

The strange thing is that the more we focus upon ourselves and our problems, the greater these problems seem to become, and the more difficult it is to find a solution to them.

Why? Because our thoughts and attention are focused in the wrong direction. They are focused upon ourselves rather than upon God.

Before we go any further please stop and ask yourself the question—is this true? Are you looking at your problems from **your** point of view? Are you egocentric in your thinking, planning—and even in your praying?

I confess that this has been true in my life and ministry for many years and that this has been the way I have usually reacted to difficulties and problems. I also confess that my egocentricity has not led to a solution. Consequently, I have, for years, been looking for God’s solution. I believe that I have found that solution and I have been trying, as best I can, to put it into practice. **And it works!**

*For Further Thought and Reflection*

As you reflect on these last weeks, and the problems you have faced, are you aware of how egocentric you have been in your thinking, in your planning and even in your praying. How often have you used the words “I,” “me,” “my,” “we,” “us” and “ours?” Are you really aware of this basic and most serious problem—as you approach your other problems?

## Chapter 3: The Solution God Gives

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**T**hese next two chapters are the core and heart of our book; and I would encourage you to read them very carefully and prayerfully.

I will start with a simple but very true statement: What we are, how we pray, how we worship, how we evangelize, how we live, and how we handle our problems—all depend on our concept or understanding of God.

- & How we see Him. (Not literally with our eyes, of course; but through our understanding as we study His Word.)
- & How well we know Him.
- & How consistently we focus on Him.

Dr. Tozer made the following statements in his book *The Knowledge of the Holy*.

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. (Page 9)

The most portentous fact about any man is what he in his deep heart sees God to be like. (Page 9)

A right conception of God is basic to practical Christian living. It is to worship what the foundation is to the temple. (Page 10)

The concept of majesty has all but disappeared from the human race. The focal point of man's interest is now himself. Humanism in its various forms has displaced theology as the key to the understanding of life. (Page 123)

The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems. (Page 10)

It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the most High God and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity. (Page 10)

When I first read statements like these, and especially the last one, my reaction was one of disbelief. What I understood Dr. Tozer

to be saying was that our greatest problem today is that so many of us as Christians do not really know what God is like. I asked myself the question—could this be true? Could this be true of me?

As I thought about it and as I looked at myself, I eventually came to the conclusion that what Dr. Tozer said was true—absolutely true! The basic problems we all have are:

- & We don't really know as much about God as we should.
- & We don't really know Him as we should.
- & We don't focus upon Him as we should. We focus upon ourselves, our problems and upon other people—but not on God.

Dr. J.I. Packer in his excellent book “Knowing God” has made similar statements. He writes:

Ignorance of God—ignorance both of His ways and of the practice of communion with Him—lies at the root of much of the church's weakness today. (Page 6)

It was Charles Spurgeon in his early days as a Baptist pastor in London who said:

I believe that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man as a devout earnest continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity. (Quote from pages 13 and 14 of *Knowing God*)

Think back again to chapters 1 and 2. What do I do when a problem comes into my life or ministry? Almost invariably I pity myself; or I blame somebody for the problem; or I talk to people about it; or I scheme and plan to find an answer; and in the process I worry and feel miserable.

Is this true of you also? When I have a problem I do pray and turn to God—but often as a last resort and only after I have reacted in some of the other ways I have mentioned.

My basic problem is, I repeat, that I am egocentric and that I so often focus upon myself. God wants me to reverse all of this. He wants me to change my philosophy and my way of thinking. He wants me in every situation to focus upon Him as my first reaction

and not as a final resort. This change of thinking will need much time, patience and effort. It does not happen overnight. But I need to make a start—**today**.

As I focus more and more on Him, He will do one of two things. Either He will remove the problem or, more often, He will give me strength to handle it.

At first glance, it seems paradoxical. The more I think about, worry about, and even pray about my problems—the bigger they usually become and the less able I am to handle them. But the less I think about and the less I focus on my problems and the more I centre and focus my thoughts upon God—the less my problems become, or I become more able to handle them.

It does not seem to make sense (from a human point of view). But this is **God's solution**. How does this all work—from a practical point of view? We will deal with this in our next chapter.

### *For Further Thought and Reflection*

Read again the statements made by Dr. Tozer on Page 9. What is your reaction to these statements? Do you really see a need in your own life to know more about God—and to know Him better? Have you learned to focus on Him rather than on your problems or on other people? Do you really want to do this—no matter what it involves or costs?

However, before reading any further, it is necessary for each of us to stop and ask ourselves a number of vital and important questions.

- & Do I clearly understand that Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins on the cross? (1 Corinthians 15v3)
- & Have I turned from my sin and my sinful ways? (Acts 26v20)
- & Have I trusted Jesus Christ as my own personal Lord and Saviour? (Acts 16v31)
- & Do I know that my sins are eternally forgiven? (Acts 13 v38 and 39)
- & Am I aware that I am a new creation in Christ Jesus? (2 Corinthians 5v17)

The contents of this book will be irrelevant to any reader who has not taken the initial step of trusting Jesus Christ as his Saviour and, therefore, has not begun to know Him.

## Chapter 4: The Teaching the Bible Outlines

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**W**e said in Chapter 3 that God wants us to do three things:

1. To see Him (with our understanding) more clearly and as He really is
2. To know Him more and more personally
3. To focus upon Him in every situation

These three steps are, I believe, in chronological order. My first responsibility is to have a clear and correct concept and understanding of God and what He is like. Then, secondly, on the basis of what I have seen and learned, I need to come to know Him more intimately. Then, thirdly, I am in a position, especially when problems come, to focus on the One whom I now see more clearly and know more intimately.

Let us look at a number of Bible verses, passages and examples which will explain and emphasize what we have outlined thus far. These will show us how important and how necessary it is for us to know more about God and to get to know Him better.

### *The General Teaching of Scripture*

In John 17 v3 the Lord Jesus prays to His Father, “This is life eternal, **that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ**, whom thou hast sent.” The first result of knowing God (through Jesus Christ) is eternal life.

We read in Jeremiah 9 v23 and 24, “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this—that **he understandeth and knoweth me.**” Knowing God is the most important goal God has set before us and needs to be our top priority.

The great desire of Moses was to know God. He prayed in Exodus 33 v13, “Now therefore I pray Thee—if I have found grace in Thy sight, **show me now thy way, that I may know Thee.**” And



again he prayed in Exodus 33 v18, "I beseech Thee **show me** Thy glory."

David had the same desire and he repeats it often in the Psalms. He prays in Psalm 63 v1, "Oh God thou art my God; early will I **seek Thee**. My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." He prays similarly in Psalm 27 v4 and Psalm 42 v1-2.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3 v8, "I count all things but loss for **the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord**" and in verse 10, "**that I might know Him** and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings."

### *The Specific Teaching of the Lord Jesus*

As the Lord Jesus ministered to His disciples and prepared them for the difficult ministry which lay ahead of them, He encouraged them and He commanded them—in Matthew 6 v25-34—not to worry. He knew they would face many problems; and He was concerned that they would have the right reaction to those problems. Worry would be the wrong reaction. Indeed it would be—**sin!** He commanded them not to worry:

- ↗ about what they would eat and drink (verses 25, 31)
- ↗ about what they would wear (verses 25, 28-31)
- ↗ about their height and appearance (verse 27—King James Version)
- ↗ about the length of their lives (verse 27—NIV)
- ↗ about tomorrow (verse 34)

He also gave them a reason why they should not worry. He taught two simple truths about God: and it was upon the basis of these two truths that He told them not to worry.

1. In verse 26 He says, "**Your Heavenly Father feedeth them** (the birds). Are ye not much better than they?" In other words, you have a Heavenly Father **who cares for you**.
2. In verse 32 He says, "**Your Heavenly Father knoweth** that ye have need of all these things." In other words, you have a Heavenly Father **who knows all your needs**.

Therefore—**why worry?** Get your eyes on your Heavenly Father.

### *The Witness of Joseph*

Joseph was one of the finest and most godly people in the Old Testament. Yet he encountered problem after problem:

- He was despised and criticized by his brothers
- He was thrown into a pit, and sold into slavery
- He was tempted by his master's wife
- He was thrown into prison on a false and trumped-up charge
- He was forgotten by the one he had helped and who had promised to facilitate his release

Because of his many problems Joseph had every reason to become bitter, disillusioned and miserable. Instead we find that, even with all these problems, he seemed so calm, so unruffled, so sweet, so much at peace—and when the opportunity for revenge presented itself—so forgiving. What is the explanation? Joseph gives us the answer himself:

Genesis 45 v5, “**God did send me.**”

Genesis 45 v7, “**God sent me before you.**”

Genesis 45 v8, “It was not you that sent me hither **but God.**”

Genesis 50v20, “Ye thought evil against me; but **God meant it unto good** to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

Joseph had a clear concept and understanding of God—as He really is. He had come to understand that He is the sovereign God who is in control of everyone and everything. Now he had his eyes upon God. Not the circumstances; not the problems; not those who had hurt him; but upon God Himself—the sovereign and all wise God. And the result was—**peace and contentment**. He had learned one of the greatest theological truths that anyone can learn. Everything that happens to us has one of two explanations:

1. either **God sent** it—just as He sent the storm and the fish to deal with a disobedient Jonah (Jonah chapter 1)

or

2. **God allowed** it—just as he allowed Satan to attack His faithful servant Job (Job chapters 1 and 2)

If there is a third explanation—God would not be sovereign and in control.

With the same truth in mind, Paul wrote in Romans 8 v28, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” As we understand these things we will, like Joseph, become better—and not bitter.

### *The Witness of Isaiah*

Isaiah outlines in Isaiah chapter 6 how God had called him into his ministry as a prophet to his own people. God's call comes in verses 8 and 9:

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send; and who will go for us?’ Then said I, ‘Here am I; send me.’ And He said, ‘Go and tell this people.’

But **before** God called Isaiah into this ministry, He wanted Isaiah to see Him more clearly and to know Him more intimately. So in verse 1 we read “In the year that King Uzziah died **I saw also the Lord . . .**” It was as if God was saying to Isaiah, “I am going to call you into my service; I am going to ordain you as a prophet. But you are not ready yet. First of all I want you to see me, and to know me. Then you will be ready—ready for anything!”

The same applies to you and me. God wants us to evangelize children. But, first of all, and most important of all, He wants us to see Him (as He is portrayed in His Word) and to know Him. Then we will be ready for our ministry—and the problems which it brings. God revealed three truths about Himself to Isaiah at this time:

1. His Sovereignty—“I saw also the Lord **sitting upon a throne** high and lifted up and His train filled the temple” (verse 1).
2. His Holiness—“And one cried unto another and said, ‘**Holy, holy, holy** is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory” (verse 3).
3. His Power—“And the posts of the door **moved** at the voice of Him that cried and the house was **filled** with smoke” (verse 4).

Isaiah never forgot what he saw that day. These truths come out time and time again throughout the whole book of Isaiah; and they were to stand him in good stead when he faced the problems God warned him about in verses 9 and 10. God told him that the people would not listen to him and would not respond to his message. At a time like this, and in the midst of problems like these, Isaiah would need to see God over and over again, and to focus his thoughts and his mind upon His sovereign, holy and powerful God.

Perhaps Isaiah was thinking of what he had seen in chapter 6 when he wrote in Isaiah 26 v3 and 4, “Thou wilt keep him in **perfect peace** whose mind is **stayed on Thee** (whose mind is fixed)—because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” The more I focus and fix my mind and thoughts upon God, the more I will enjoy His peace.

### *The Witness of Daniel*

In Daniel 11 v32 we read, “The people that do **know their God** shall be strong and do exploits” or as another translation puts it “shall stand firm and take action.” The first consequence of knowing God is related to “defence” and the second to “attack.” Knowing God helps us in both these areas of our lives and ministries.

- The more I know God the stronger I will be and the more able to withstand all that would hinder me in my life and ministry.
- The more I know God the better equipped I will be to work for God and to be busy and active in His service.

How true both of these consequences were in the life of the person who wrote them.

### *Conclusion*

The more you and I see God as He really is, the more we know Him and the more we focus on Him—the more peace we will have, the better we will be able to handle and deal with all our problems and the less we will worry.

*For Futher Thought and Reflection*

Are you a worrier? You know that worry is a sin (Matthew 6 v25, 31, 34), that it does not achieve anything (Matthew 6 v27), that it demonstrates a lack of faith (Matthew 6 v30) and that it is a bad testimony (Matthew 6 v32)—and yet you still worry and worry and worry.

Meditate upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 6 v26 and 32: “Keep your eyes on your Heavenly Father and not the problem. Then you will have the strength and desire not to worry.”

## Chapter 5: The Goals We Must Have

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**W**hat then—in the light of the previous chapters—should be our goals concerning God?

### *We Need to See God as He Really Is*

It is obviously not possible for us today to see God with our eyes in the way that Moses, Isaiah or Ezekiel did. Therefore, when I say we need to see God (both here and in the chapters which follow) I am referring to the mental concept or understanding of God which He wants us to have.

It should also be obvious that we human beings and creatures cannot **fully** understand nor see with absolute clarity our God and Creator. He is so far above us and beyond us. But it should be our goal continually to grow in our understanding of the Godhead.

How can we see God and better understand Him? God has revealed Himself in His Word—the Bible. God has given us the Bible for three reasons:

1. To show us what He is like.
2. To show us what we are like.
3. To show us how we can become what God wants us to be through salvation and sanctification.

The main purpose of the Bible is to reveal to us what God is really like and to help us have a correct concept and understanding of God. Therefore the primary purpose in our study of the Bible is to learn what God is like. A correct concept of God is the foundation of all that follows. Also, and for the same reason, the first purpose in our teaching of the Bible to children should be to show them what God is like.

If Dr. Tozer is correct in his book *The Knowledge of the Holy* (and I believe he is) then the greatest problem in our churches today is that so many Christians do not really know what God is like!

You and I can solve this problem for ourselves by studying the Word of God and by asking ourselves the question—“What does this verse (or passage) teach me about God?”

When we read the Bible we often do so in a self-centred way. We look for a promise to help us through that day, or through a problem we face. We look for a verse which will encourage us and help us to keep going. Such promises and encouragements are there and we are thankful for them. But our main purpose in reading the Bible should not be to find something for ourselves. It is to find out something about God. It may be an "old" truth which comes back to us with freshness; it may be a new truth we haven't seen before; it may be a truth we need to see and understand more clearly. But that is what we are looking for—to see and understand God as He really is.

One of the greatest joys in my own life—and one of the most wonderful helps for my service—was when I saw, about 15 years ago, and really for the first time, that God was truly and absolutely sovereign. As a full-time Christian worker, and as a leader in a Mission, I had always believed in the sovereignty of God—in a theoretical way. If anyone had questioned me, I would have assured them of my belief in this great truth. But for many years it was for me a theoretical truth rather than a practical one.

Fifteen years ago I was in a car on my way to teach at a Bible College in Switzerland. It was winter time and the roads were icy and snow covered. The car went into an uncontrollable skid and I was quite seriously injured. Instead of going to the Bible School, I went to the hospital!

On my way to the hospital I asked the ambulance driver to stop briefly at Kilchzimmer, the European Headquarters of Child Evangelism Fellowship, where my wife and I both lived and worked. I wanted to inform my wife, of course, about what had happened, and where I was going. But I also wanted to pick up a book from my office which I could read in hospital. I did not relish the thought of lying in the hospital without having something to read! I quickly picked up a book which I knew I had never read before, and took it with me in the ambulance. The title of the book was *Romans—Atonement and Justification: An Exposition of Chapters 3 v20–4 v25* by Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones. As I lay in the hospital and read that book I came into contact with truths I had not previously known or understood. I then studied the Bible to see if these truths were taught there, and I discovered they were. One of those truths was the absolute

and complete Sovereignty of God; that He is Sovereign and in control of all people, all circumstances and all creatures, and that He has a plan towards which He is working, and no one or nothing can hinder Him or stop Him.

I began to see and understand this great truth as I studied it and, step by step, came to believe it—with all my heart. I saw God as He really is—the sovereign, all powerful Potentate. That was to prove a turning point in my life. When I came to understand and believe in the sovereignty of God, I began to learn how I could safely leave **everything** in His Hands. I had always believed in the sovereignty of God in theory but now I began to see it and understand it clearly and practically. He will always accomplish His purposes. He knows what He is doing. He does not need me or depend on me. But I need Him and depend on Him. When I have a God like that why should I worry or fret?

What a difference it makes to see God—from the Word of God—as He really is. As a result of this new understanding I came more and more to experience a new peace in difficult circumstances, a new confidence and trust when praying and evangelizing, and a new depth to both prayer and service. This did not happen all at once of course. It was not a crisis. It was a process which thankfully continues unto this day.

Charles Spurgeon said that the second greatest truth he ever learned (after the truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the Cross) was the truth of God's Sovereignty. He said that the day when he first learned this truth was the day when "the boy became a man."

Let us make this, then, our first goal—to see **God as He really is**—and as He is revealed to us in His Word; and to see and understand not just the truth of His Sovereignty but the many, many truths He has revealed about Himself.

### *We Need to Know God Personally More and More*

It is good, and necessary, to know what God is like. But this is, really, only the first step. The next step, on the basis of what we know about Him, is to get to **know Him** better—and on a more and more personal basis.



The possibility and the importance of actually knowing God is clearly outlined in the Bible. Some of these verses and passages we have already referred to.

Exodus 33 v13, "Now therefore I pray Thee if I have found grace in Thy sight show me now thy way—**that I may know Thee.**"

Psalms 9 v10, "They that **know Thy Name** (God's Name is equivalent to His Nature) will put their trust in Thee."

Psalms 36 v10, "Continue Thy loving kindness unto them **that know Thee.**"

Psalms 46 v10, "Be still and **know that I am God.**"

Jeremiah 9 v24, "Let him that glorieth glory in this—that he understandeth and **knoweth me.**"

Daniel 11 v32, "The people that **do know their God** shall be strong and do exploits."

Hosea 6 v6, "I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and **the knowledge of God** more than burnt offerings."

John 10 v14, "I . . . know my sheep and **am known of (or by) mine.**"

John 17 v3, "This is life eternal **that they might know Thee** the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (knowing the Father and the Son).

John 14 v7, "If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth **ye know Him** and have seen Him" (knowing the Father through the Son).

Ephesians 1 v17, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of Glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the **knowledge of Him.**"

Philippians 3 v8, "I count all things but loss for the excellency **of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.**"

Philippians 3 v10, "**That I may know Him.**" (This was written 30 years after Paul's conversion, and the initial experience of coming to know Christ)

Colossians 1 v10, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in **the knowledge of God.**"

2 Timothy 1 v12, “**I know whom** I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.”

2 Peter 1 v2, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you **through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**”

2 Peter 3 v18, “Grow in grace and **in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**”

1 John 5 v20, “That **we may know Him** that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

The principle of knowing God and our responsibility to do so is also illustrated by a number of pictures given in the Bible which show the relationship between God and ourselves:

- Ephesians 5 v22–32—He is the husband; we are the wife. He loves—we obey.
- Hebrews 12 v5–11—He is the father; we are the children. He chastens - we grow.
- Matthew 25 v14–46—He is the king; we are the subjects. He commands—we serve.
- John 10 v1–18—He is the shepherd; we are the sheep. He leads—we follow.

In all of these relationships we need to get to know Him more and more—as our husband, our father, our ruler and our shepherd.

It is interesting that the Bible uses the word “know” so many times to explain our relationship with God. The teaching of the Bible is that God wants us to **know** Him. This is a word used so often in our human relationships. We get to know people. How do we get to know people? As we understand that process we will better understand how we can get to know God. How do I really get to know a person?

- By reading about him.
- By hearing about him.
- By meeting him regularly.
- By spending time in His presence.
- By talking to him.
- By listening to him.
- By fellowshiping with him.

These are the same steps we need to take to know God.

- We read about Him in the Bible.
- We hear others testify concerning Him.
- We meet with Him regularly in our quiet time.
- We spend time with Him.
- We talk to Him in prayer.
- We listen to Him through His Word.
- We fellowship with Him.

And the more we do these things the better we know Him

In all of this we need to remember that God has revealed Himself in, and through, the Person of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Hebrews 1 v1-3, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Also the declared purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ and his ministry was to lead us and bring us to God our Heavenly Father. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14 v6) and in the following verse "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." Again, in John 17 v26, the Lord Jesus says to His Father, "I have declared unto them Thy Name and will declare it."

The knowledge of God begins at the Cross of Jesus Christ (John 17 v3) and we are exhorted to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Peter 3 v18). As we come to see and know the Lord Jesus Christ we come to see and know God.

### *We Need to Focus on God*

When I see and understand God more clearly and as I get to know Him more and more, I am ready for the next step. I need to change my whole way of thinking! What do I mean?

Let me return again to my basic problem. The main mistake I make is that when I am faced with a problem I focus on myself. I

focus on the problem, and I focus on other people. Eventually my thoughts turn to God. But I need to learn—right away, immediately, as soon as a problem comes—to turn my eyes to God and to focus on Him. The word focus means to concentrate. So I want to learn to focus or concentrate my thoughts on God rather than on myself, on my problem, or on other people. I am better able to do this now if I have learned more about Him from His Word and if I am becoming more and more intimate with Him.

***I need to focus upon God when I read my Bible.***

As I read the Bible in my quiet time the first question I should ask is: What does this verse/passage/chapter teach me about God? When I see a truth about God I need to underline it, or write it down.

Let us, for example, look at the book of Jonah. Why is the book of Jonah in the Bible? What is the purpose and goal of this book? The answer is—in the light of all we have been studying—to teach us what God is like. Yet so often we read it and teach it as a book only about Jonah and about ourselves. It is not primarily so. It is a book about God.

Chapter 1 teaches us that **God is persistent**. He does not give up on us, but continues to deal with us and discipline us despite our disobedience.

Chapter 2 teaches us that **God is present** even in the belly of a great fish. The miracle to me is not so much that Jonah was there inside the fish, but that God was there—ready and waiting to hear Jonah’s prayer. He is with us in our difficulties—and ready to hear us when we pray.

Chapter 3 teaches us that **God is powerful**. The repentance and conversion of the whole city of Nineveh is surely one of the greatest displays of God’s power ever seen. We can fully trust Him to accomplish His purposes.

Chapter 4 teaches us that **God is patient**. When Jonah is angry and sits and sulks outside the city, which God has forgiven, God does not punish him. Instead He speaks to him graciously, and gently shows and teaches him concerning what He has done. How wonderful it is that God is so patient with us also.

### ***I need to focus upon God when I pray***

We can see a good example of this kind of praying when we read the prayer of David in Psalm 86. This Psalm contains many petitions and prayer requests. But it is based upon three great truths about God which David has learned. The prayer requests in verses 1–4 are based upon the truth expressed in verse 5, “For thou Lord art **good**.”

- God is good. I know He will hear me.

The prayer requests in verses 6–9 are based upon the truth expressed in verse 10, “For thou art **great**.”

- God is great. I know He can answer me.

The prayer requests in verses 11–14 are based upon the truth expressed in verse 15, “For thou O Lord art . . . **gracious**.”

- God is gracious. I know He will help me.

What a difference it makes in our praying when we see God as He really is—and we focus upon what we have learned about Him.

### ***I need to focus upon God when I face a problem***

The prophet Ezekiel was a young man (probably 30 years old). God was preparing him for a very difficult ministry, full of problems. God wanted him to go—not to a foreign people or foreign field—but to his own people (Ezekiel 3 v5); and He knew (and told Ezekiel) that they would not listen to him (3 v7). What a difficult ministry! What a serious problem! How did God prepare Him for this situation? The first step was that Ezekiel had visions of God (1 v1).

- He saw the likeness of a throne (1 v26)— illustrating the sovereignty of God (Psalm 103 v19, Revelation 4 v10–11)
- He saw the likeness of a man (1 v26)—illustrating the grace of God (John 1 v14, 2 Corinthians 8 v9)
- He saw the appearance of fire (1 v27)—illustrating the holiness of God (Exodus 3 v2–6, Hebrews 12 v29)
- He saw the appearance of a rainbow (1 v28)—illustrating the faithfulness of God (Genesis 9 v12–17)
- He saw, altogether, “the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Lord” (verse 28).

It was after Ezekiel has seen these visions of God that God called him and sent him (chapter 2 v1–chapter 3 v12). And Ezekiel went (chapter 3 v14) although with a bitter heart. He did not seem over-enthusiastic about his mission as he pondered the problems involved. But then in verse 23 he saw the glory of the Lord again—just as he had in chapter 1, and that was the final solution to his problems.

***I need to focus upon God when I worship***

We will study this theme throughout the remaining section of this chapter. But we have now seen that the more we know about God, the more we know God and the more we focus upon God:

- the better we understand His Word
- the better we pray
- the better we can handle our problems, live for Him and serve Him
- the better we can worship Him

***We Need to Worship God—In Spirit and in Truth***

The normal and natural consequence of knowing more clearly what God is like, of knowing Him better and of focusing my thoughts upon Him should be to worship Him. The most important activity and greatest responsibility of the Christian is to worship God.

***God commands me to worship him***

“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29 v2)

***Jesus Christ teaches me to worship God***

“God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4 v24)

***God the Father is looking for worshippers***

“The Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4 v23).

***Worship is the natural and normal response of the believer to what he has learned about God***

Read 1 Chronicles 29 v10–13.

***Worship has three main parts:***

While worship has many elements and constituent parts, I believe

that there are three main parts and it is with these we should begin.

1. I **learn** something about God as I read His Word. I need to worship God on the basis of **truth**. That is what the Lord Jesus taught us (John 4 v23, 24).

As I read His Word I **see** some truth about God. I should then worship Him on the basis of that revealed truth. For example:

- ↗ God is Sovereign, or
- ↗ God loves me so much, or
- ↗ God is holy

2. I should then **say** to God what I have seen or learned:

- ↗ Dear God, you are in control; you are so powerful, or
- ↗ Dear Lord Jesus, you died for me and paid the price for my sin; or
- ↗ Dear Father, you are so pure and holy

3. Then in my heart I should **love** Him, **adore** Him and **worship** Him in spirit and on the basis of the truth I have seen and said. I may express this love and adoration with words:

- ↗ Dear God, you are in control. I bow before you—my great powerful God.
- ↗ Dear Lord Jesus, you died for me. I love you and adore you for that.
- ↗ Dear Father, you are so pure and I worship you, the Holy One of Israel.

Or I may just worship in silent loving contemplation and adoration.

### ***A Biblical example of worship***

Psalm 95 is a good example of worship and illustrates clearly what we have been outlining. The Psalm consists of three main parts:

1. *A declaration:* The Psalmist has seen and learned a great truth about God and he expresses it in verse 3. "The Lord is

a great God and a great King above all Gods.”

2. *An explanation:* What does the Psalmist mean when he calls God “a great God?” How has he learned this truth? There are five facts he has learned about God which have showed him that He is great. God is:

- a God who creates (verse 5)
- a God who controls (verse 4)
- a God who cares (verse 7)
- a God who calls (verses 7, 8)
- a God who chastens (verses 10,11)

3. *An application:* Every truth needs to have an application. The Psalmist sees three applications of the truth that God is Great.

- verse 1, “Oh come let us **sing** unto the Lord.”
- verse 2, “Let us come before his presence **with thanksgiving.**”
- verse 6, “Oh **come** let us **worship** and bow down; and kneel before the Lord our maker.”

Worship is the greatest activity we can engage in. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

### *For Further Thought and Reflection*

That was a long chapter wasn’t it? Here is the summary of it.

- We need to see God as He really is
- We need to know God personally, more and more
- We need to focus on God in every situation
  - when I read the Bible
  - when I pray
  - when I face a problem
  - when I worship
- We need to worship God in spirit and in truth

Do you see these four needs in your life? Are you satisfied with your progress with regard to them? Do you really want to see growth and development in each of these four areas? The next chapter will outline what you should do.



## Chapter 6: The Action We Must Take

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**W**e have now four goals set clearly before us:

1. to see and understand God more clearly
2. to know God better
3. to focus upon God in every situation
4. to worship God

How can we achieve these goals? What practical steps do we need to take? We should begin by revising some of what we have already learned and, in doing so, ask ourselves five simple questions.

*What is the main purpose of the Bible?*

To show us what God is like.

*How can we see and understand God more clearly?*

By reading the Bible—with that purpose in mind.

*Do we have a "quiet time" each morning?*

Of course we do.

*What do we do in our Quiet Time?*

We read the Bible and we pray.

*What is our goal in reading the Bible each morning?*

Usually it is to find a promise, an encouragement, guidance, a Bible verse which will help us throughout the day.

But, as we have seen, we need to reverse our whole philosophy and way of thinking. We **should** read the Bible in our Quiet Time. But instead of reading it from the point of view of ourselves and our needs, we need to ask God to use what we read to show us something about Himself. This might be a new truth we have not seen before. It might be an old truth which we already know, but which comes back with freshness. It might be a deeper, clearer and fuller understanding of a truth.

But this is the key! We need to study God! Theology means "the study of, or words about, God." So we need more and more to become

theologians! In our Quiet Time each morning we want to discover or see a truth or truths about God. I repeat what I have said several times already. As we become theocentric (or God-centred)—in our Bible study, in our prayer life, in our service, and in the midst of our problems—God blesses us in a special way and gives us strength to handle our problems.

Do you remember the words of Daniel, “They that know their God shall be strong and do exploits” (Daniel 11 v32)? The more we look at, talk about, think about and even, sometimes, pray about our problems—the bigger they often become. The more we see and understand God, know God, focus upon God and worship God, the less our problems become, or the more strength we have to handle them.

Do you want God’s blessing upon your life and ministry? Do you want strength to handle your problems? Then make it your goal each morning in your Quiet Time to ask God to help you see some truth about Himself.

### *This is Treasure!*

Would you like treasure? Gold, silver, diamonds, rubies and emeralds? This treasure is very valuable. It is hidden and needs to be looked for. But it can be found by those who are willing to look for it.

Are you willing to start looking for buried treasure today? It’s hard work! But the treasure is there in the Word of God just waiting for you and me to find it—and when we do, God will bless us through it. The eight simple and logical steps to take in our Quiet Time each morning (in addition to interceding for others) are as follows:

- Ask God to show you something about Himself.
- Read a passage of God’s Word.
- See something about God—His Person or His Work—from this passage.
- Underline what you have seen in your Bible or write it down in a little book you keep for this purpose.
- Think about this truth which you have seen and ask God to help you know Him better because of it.
- Worship God on the basis of this truth. Say what you have

seen to Him, and in your heart love Him and adore Him.

- ↗ Keep thinking about it throughout the day.
- ↗ Share it with someone else.

I promise you, dear children's worker, that as you follow these eight simple steps each day, God **will** bless you, and that He **will** help you with your problems. **This** is God's solution. This is real treasure! Do you understand? Are you ready and willing to take action?

*For Further Thought and Reflection*

Do you want to find treasure? Open your Bible at Psalm 139. What are the three main truths which this psalm teaches us about God? Follow carefully the eight steps outlined above. Can you see how these truths can influence your life and your service, and help you in your worship of God?

## Chapter 7: One Plan We Might Follow

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**T**he first possible plan and the one which requires most work and study is based upon a systematic study of God's attributes, qualities or characteristics. There are many of these attributes. Dr. Tozer in his very helpful book *The Knowledge of the Holy* lists the following:

- The self existence of God
- The self sufficiency of God
- The eternity of God
- The infinitude of God
- The immutability of God
- The divine omniscience
- The wisdom of God
- The omnipotence of God
- The divine transcendence
- God's omnipresence
- The faithfulness of God
- The goodness of God
- The justice of God
- The mercy of God
- The grace of God
- The love of God
- The holiness of God
- The sovereignty of God

Dr. J. I. Packer in his wonderful book *Knowing God* (which every children's worker should possess, read and study) adds to this list:

- The majesty of God
- The veracity or truthfulness of God
- The jealousy of God
- The wrath of God

Arthur Pink in his excellent book *The Attributes of God* adds still further:

- The patience of God

And there are more.

### *Steps to Take*

The first step in this plan is to select the attribute of God which you are going to study. Once you have selected it, you should endeavour to do four things:

- Understand what this attribute means. A good book on the subject would help you do this. Any of the three books already mentioned will provide much assistance.
- Find, throughout the Bible, verses which refer to this attribute and which will help you better to understand it. These verses can be found in one of the following ways:
  - by using a concordance and looking up each verse where the attribute is mentioned.
  - by using a chain reference Bible. For example, if you plan to study the grace of God using the *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* look up the word "grace" in the cyclopaedia of topics and texts. It is covered by the numbers 1445, 1446, 1447, 1448 and 1449. Under each number you will find verses which refer to your topic. The first verse given is the start of the chain; and from that verse onwards you can trace your theme through the Bible—by following the number given.

In the *New Scofield Reference Bible* you can look up your theme (the grace of God) in the index at the back; and there you will find the first and last references to that subject. You can then follow these references step by step using the information provided in the margins.

- You could then look for a Bible story—or Bible stories—which would illustrate this truth.

For example if you are studying the grace of God you could read and study carefully the following Bible stories. Each will help you to understand this truth about God better.

- The conversion of Saul (Acts 9 v1-22); also read Paul's testimony (1 Corinthians 15 v10 and 1 Timothy 1 v12-16)
  - The justification of the publican (Luke 18 v9-14)
  - The story of Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9)
  - The Christmas story (in connection with 2 Corinthians 8 v9)
- The fourth and final, but not least important, step is to make application of this attribute to yourself, your life and your ministry.

For example if I truly understand the truth of God's grace—what should the results and consequences be in my life?

- I will thank and love God more for all He has done “Oh to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be.”
- I will worship the God of all grace.
- I will depend upon Him for daily supplies of His grace. Grace is not just for the past. It is also for the present.
- I will become more gracious in my dealings with others.

A study of God's attributes is a veritable treasure trove. Take them one at a time. Spend time on them. Make notes. And God will bless you.

### *For Further Thought and Reflection*

Meditate upon the great truth of the Sovereignty of God.

- What does it mean?
- Where is it taught?
- What is its application for your life and ministry today?

Do you really believe that God is completely sovereign and that all that happens to you is either sent by God or allowed by God? If so, what should the effect be in all the “departments” of your life and ministry?

## Chapter 8: Another Plan We Might Follow

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**O**ur goal is to see, know, focus on and worship God. Our decision is to take time each morning with God's Word to accomplish this goal.

The second plan I would suggest is based upon a series of daily consecutive readings of the Scriptures—one chapter at a time. As you read the chapter follow the eight steps I outlined on Pages 30 and 31. This is probably the simplest plan and method to follow.

Our plan then is to read a chapter of the Bible each morning, asking God to show us some truth about Himself.

I would suggest to you that you begin your reading plan with the 40th chapter of the book of Isaiah. When you see a truth about God in this chapter, underline it in your Bible or write it down in a little book. Think about it. What does this mean for you today? Say it to God as you worship Him. Keep thinking about it through the day; and endeavour to share it with someone else. If you meet often with another person at home, or in your work place or wherever, decide with that person to read the same chapter each day, with the same purpose. Then when you meet, share with each other what you have seen, and what this truth means to you. This can also be done in a class situation with teachers, or with young people.

### *Isaiah Chapter 40*

Let us, as an example, read through Isaiah 40 together and make a note of the great truths this chapter contains about God.

- God is the Creator (verses 12, 22, 26, 28)
- God is powerful and controls His creation (verses 10, 15, 17, 22, 23)
- God is wise and needs no help in understanding (verses 13, 14, 27, 28)
- God is the only God. There is none like Him (verses 18, 25)
- God is the Holy One (verse 25)
- God cares for each of us—like a shepherd (verse 11)

Isn't it wonderful that God is so great, so powerful and so all knowing and yet He cares for you and me? We are His flock, His lambs and His ewes and He feeds us, gathers us, carries us and leads us. What wonderful truths about God. There is so much in this chapter about God that we might find it difficult to cover it all one morning. We might need one week! The closing verses of Isaiah 40 are probably the best known:

Verse 29 He giveth power to the faint  
He increaseth strength (to them who have no might).

Verse 30 They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.  
They shall mount up with wings as eagles.  
They shall run and not be weary.  
They shall walk and not faint.

But we need to remember that these precious promises are applications of what has preceded them throughout this chapter. These applications depend upon the power and strength of God. It is as we see God as He really is and as we get to know Him, that He will give us the power and strength we need.

### *Isaiah Chapter 41*

Let us look also, as a further example, at Isaiah 41. What can we learn about God from this chapter?

- God is eternal—He is the first and the last (verse 4)
- God is sovereign and controls the nations (verses 2, 3)
- God is the Holy One of Israel (verses 14, 16, 20)
- God is the One who chooses us (verses 8, 9)
- God is the One who knows us and who makes us what He wants us to be (verse 15)
- God is powerful and able to give us spiritual refreshment and spiritual blessing (verses 17-20)
- God is personal and holds our hand (verse 13)
- God hears us when we call to Him (verse 17)
- God is our Redeemer (verse 14)
- The goal of all God does is that He might be glorified (verse 20)



Is it any wonder then that over and over again throughout the chapter the application rings out—do not be afraid (verses 10, 13, 14). How can we be afraid when we have a God like this?

My suggestion is that you continue to do this each morning. Work your way right through the last 27 chapters of the book of Isaiah—one chapter each morning. You might need more than one morning for some of the chapters. Some chapters will of course give more treasure than others. But the treasure is there—hidden though it might be. The truths about God are just waiting for you to dig them up and be blessed through them.

If you come to a verse which you don't understand, don't worry about it. It can wait until later. You will find enough treasure and truth about God in the verses you do understand.

### *The Book of Psalms*

When you finish the book of Isaiah start on the book of Psalms. Read one Psalm each morning except for the longer ones which will need to be sub-divided. But follow the same pattern. Look for treasure—truths about God. Note them. Meditate upon them. Worship God on the basis of them. Think about them throughout the day. Share them with others. In Psalm 1, for example, which is quite short we can see several wonderful truths about God:

- ↗ God is the One who imparts blessing to us (verse 1)
- ↗ God has spoken to us in His Word (or Law) (verse 2)
- ↗ God is the One who gives growth and blessing (verse 3)
- ↗ God is just and judges sin and sinners (verses 4, 5)
- ↗ God knows His people and watches over us (verse 6)

These are the reasons why we should obey Him and His word, walk in His way and be involved in His work (verses 1 and 2).

### *The Gospel of Mark*

After going through the book of Psalms the next step could be to read and study, chapter by chapter, through one of the Gospels—say the Gospel of Mark. Remember our basic premise—the main purpose of the Bible is to show us what God is like.

But we need to remember another equally important truth. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth to show us what God is like. He is “the brightness of His Glory and the express image of His Person” (Hebrews 1 v3). He is “the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4 v4), “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1 v15). He that sees Jesus Christ has seen the Father (John 14 v9 and John 12 v45).

When we see Jesus Christ as portrayed in Scripture, we see God, and we learn more and more about what God is like.

As we read Mark’s Gospel chapter by chapter we should ask ourselves the question: As I look at Jesus Christ in this chapter, what do I learn about God?

For example in Mark chapter 1, outlining the early days of the ministry of the Lord Jesus, we can see in Him a number of wonderful truths about God.

- God is a Trinity (verses 10, 11)
- The grace of God as revealed in His willingness to become man and endure temptation (verses 12, 13)
- The wisdom and omniscience of God (verses 21, 22)
- The power of God:
  - He controls evil spirits (verses 23–26)
  - He heals sickness (verse 31)
  - He heals the leper (verses 41, 42)
- The compassion of God displayed towards the leper (verse 41)
- The desire of God:
  - to use people in His service (verse 17-20)
  - to save people (verse 15)

How wonderful it is to see and study the Son of God in the Scriptures, and through Him to see God the Father (John 14 v9).

And now are you ready to start? Today? In your quiet time tomorrow morning? Make your decision—your resolution—to start reading, studying and meditating upon Isaiah 40 and ask God to show you something new, or old, about Himself.

### *For Further Thought and Reflection*

We have been thinking of three books in the Bible which we could study—chapter by chapter—so that we could better see and

know God. But the same principle applies to all Scripture. For example what can we learn about God?

- ↗ in Genesis chapters 1 and 2
- ↗ in Genesis chapter 3
- ↗ in Genesis chapter 4
- ↗ in Genesis chapter 5
- ↗ in Genesis chapters 6–8

You can compare your five answers, if you wish, with my five which follow:

- ↗ God is all powerful and can do anything.
- ↗ God knows everything and we cannot hide from Him.
- ↗ God is gracious and has provided a way to approach Him.
- ↗ God is personal and wants us to walk with Him.
- ↗ God is just and must punish sin.

## Chapter 9: The Results We Can Experience

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**A**s we see God, know Him, focus our thoughts on Him and worship Him what can we expect to happen in our lives? What does the Bible teach? We have already seen most of the answers, but it will be helpful to summarize them and revise them.

I am not in a position, of course, to make promises or give precise and absolute guarantees. But I am sure, from what we have already seen and studied in the Word of God, that there are many blessings which God has promised to those who know Him, and who then on the basis of that knowledge obey Him. This does not necessarily mean “success” and the instant and immediate solution of the problem(s)—although it might. But it does mean that God will, more and more, give strength and grace to overcome failure and to handle problems, as we give Him His rightful place in our lives.

### *Knowing God Can Help Us in Our Prayer Life*

The more we know about God and the better we know Him, the more we will know to whom we are speaking, and the more we will be able to trust Him for His answers.

All the great men and women of the Bible, and the great “prayers” show a clear and deep knowledge of the One to Whom they were praying.

Nehemiah starts his prayer in Nehemiah 1 v5 and 6, “I beseech you, O Lord God of Heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments. Let thine ear now be attentive. . . .”

Daniel commences his prayer in Daniel 2 v20-23, “Blessed be the Name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are His and He changeth the times and the seasons; He removeth kings and setteth up kings. He giveth wisdom unto the wise and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things. He knoweth what is in the darkness and the light dwelleth with Him. I thank thee . . .”

The apostles prayed in Acts 4 v24 onwards “Lord, thou art God which hast made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said . . . The kings stood up . . . to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now Lord. . . .”

These were men who knew their God, and who, on that basis and foundation were better able to pray to Him.

And when the disciples asked the Lord Jesus to teach them to pray He said unto them (Luke 11 1-4), “When ye pray say, ‘Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us . . .’”

### *Knowing God Can Help Us in Our Worship of Him*

The Lord Jesus rebuked the woman of Samaria in John 4 v22 by telling her, “You worship ye know not what.” How can we worship God if we do not really know Him? Worship is not only in spirit. It is based upon truth (John 4 v23 and 24).

As we read about David’s worship of God in 1 Chronicles 29 v10 onwards we see that it is based upon the truths he had learned about God—and his knowledge of Him.

David said, “Blessed be thou Lord God of Israel our Father for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all.”

Then in verse 13 and on the basis of what David has seen about God and what he has said to Him he continues to worship: “Now therefore our God we thank thee and praise thy glorious Name.”

### *Knowing God Can Help Us to Be Strong*

We have already seen the promise given in Daniel 11 v32, “The people that do know their God **shall be strong**.”

We all need to be strong—spiritually strong—and able to withstand temptation, opposition and discouragement. We can see this perfectly illustrated in the life of the man who wrote this verse:

- In Daniel chapter 1 he would not risk defilement with the food offered and was strong enough to resist eating it.
- In chapter 6 he would not suspend his practice of praying three times each day despite the threat of death—and he continued to pray before an open window!

### *Knowing God Can Help Us to Be Busy for Him*

Daniel 11 v32 reads, “The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits (or take action).” Knowing God does not turn us into mystics and recluses; it galvanises us to action and to obedience to God’s commands. We can see this, again, illustrated in the life of Daniel, a man who truly knew God:

- In chapter 9, verse 3 onwards he was busy in prayer.
- In chapters 2, verses 4 and 5, he was busy helping others to understand God’s will and God’s word—and especially the truth that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men” (chapter 4, verse 25).
- In chapter 6, verses 1–3 he was busy in his position of leadership

### *Knowing God Can Give Us Great Peace in All Situations*

When we see clearly the wonderful truth that God is on the throne, and that He is in complete control of everything and every person, we will have peace—complete peace, perfect peace. Why should we worry when our God is Sovereign?

In Psalm 29 v10 we read the great truth, “The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.” And in the following verse, we read the natural consequence and application of this truth when it is properly understood and thoroughly believed. “The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with **peace**.”

We read again the words of Isaiah—the man who had seen the Lord seated upon a throne (Isaiah 6 v1), and who had never forgotten this great truth. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect **peace** whose mind is

stayed on thee (or whose mind is steadfast) because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26 v3).

Peter underlines the truth that peace comes as a result of knowing God when he writes in 2 Peter 1 v2 "Grace and **peace** be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." That is the peace God gives us as we see Him, know Him and focus on Him in the midst of all our problems.

### *Knowing God Can Give Us Everything We Need*

This is the clear teaching of Scripture. Peter writes in 2 Peter 1 v3 "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness **through the knowledge of Him** that hath called us to glory and virtue." This "all" includes everything which has been outlined above plus many other blessings such as:

- ↗ The blessing of wisdom. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of **wisdom** and revelation in **the knowledge of Him**" (Ephesians 1 v17).
- ↗ The blessing of freedom, "But now after that ye **have known God** or rather are known of God how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be **in bondage?**" (Galatians 4 v9).
- ↗ The blessing of growth. In Colossians 1 v10 Paul writes, "being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." This is one possible translation. But most commentators prefer "bearing fruit and increasing in every good work **by the knowledge of God.**" In other words the knowledge of God is the means of growth rather than the result—although it is that too.

### *Knowing God Can Help Us to Handle Our Problems*

This is the natural conclusion of all that has been written so far and brings us back to the main theme of our book. The person who is willing to change his way of thinking, and his basic self-centred philosophy; the person who learns to study God and has made it his goal and desire to know God better; the person who knows how to

focus his thoughts on God and not on himself or his problems—that is the person who is able to handle his problems in a God glorifying way.

Psalm 13 gives an excellent illustration of someone who has learned to see the solution to his problems by focusing upon God. The Psalmist David outlines, in verses one and two, three problems which he has been experiencing:

- a loss of the sense of God’s presence (verse 1)
- a deep feeling of sorrow and discouragement (verse 2a)
- an experience of defeat and despair (verse 2b)

And he cries out “How long . . . How long . . . How long?” David then makes three requests in prayer to God in verse three:

- Look on me
- Listen to me
- Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death

The most vital of these three requests is, I believe, the third one. David sees his greatest need to be, not the removal of the problems he faces, but the ability to see things in their proper perspective—and especially to see God as He really is. And that is exactly what happens. God opens David’s eyes and he sees three great truths about God:

- God’s unfailing love, compassion and mercy (verse 5a)
- God’s salvation (verse 5b)
- God’s goodness (verse 6b)

As David sees and focuses on these great truths about God rather than on his problems, there are three results or consequences:

- he trusts (verse 5a)
- he rejoices (verse 5b)
- he sings (verse 6)

### *Postscript for Children’s Workers*

If what we have outlined is true, and if God really and truly blesses those who see Him, know Him, focus upon Him and worship Him—then this is something we want to teach to and share with our



children. It is not something to keep to ourselves. Consequently when preparing a Bible lesson for children we need to ask ourselves the following questions:

- Is there a truth about God in this lesson which I would like my children to understand and believe?
- How can I teach it to them in and through my lesson?
- How can I apply this truth to both my saved and unsaved children so that it will be a help and blessing to them resulting in:
  - a life changed
  - a problem solved
  - a prayer-life developed
  - a service encouraged
  - a worship deepened

We need to be **God**-centred not only in our own lives, but also in our ministry to the children.

### *For Further Thought and Reflection*

Look again at the results of knowing God:

- it helps us to pray
- it helps us to worship
- it helps us to be strong
- it helps us to be busy
- it gives us great peace
- it gives us **all** we need
- it helps us to handle our problems

Put a tick at any of these seven areas in which you personally feel your need of help. Be honest with yourself. The wonderful thing is not just to see your needs, but to know how those needs can be met. **Start a new stage in your life today** by determining, in a new way, to see, know, focus on and worship God.

## Chapter 10: Does It Work?

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**D**oes all of this work in practice? Is what I have outlined practical—or is it just a series of interesting theories? It is helpful to see the practical consequences in three lives. I don't wish to identify two of the people concerned. So I will use different names for them. I have asked them for, and have received, permission to include their "testimonies" in this book.

We need to recognise, of course, that we are all different from each other and that our problems are often different. Consequently, the details of our experiences may also differ. But the same basic premise remains identical for everyone. God blesses and helps those who know Him.

### *Esther's Testimony*

"Esther" had come a long way to attend our three month Leadership Training Institute at Kilchzimmer. As director of the Institute I had many opportunities to teach the students and also to have fellowship with them. I noticed Esther right away and I watched her carefully during the first two weeks. She seemed very sad and very withdrawn. When it was her turn to lead the student prayer meeting she had obvious difficulty in doing so. She spoke very little and never smiled.

Then I found myself sitting beside her at the dinner table. She sat quietly, with lowered eyes, and looked so sad. I tried to initiate a conversation with her but without success. It was obvious to me that something was wrong; and I said to her, "Esther, if you have a problem, I would really like to try and help you with it. Please feel free to come and see me in my office any time you wish."

Several days later there was a knock at my office door. When I opened it Esther stood there. She asked me if she could speak with me. During the hour (and more) which followed, Esther shared with me her problems. She had had a particularly difficult home situation as a child. She had been subjected to years of verbal abuse by her father who continually ridiculed her and criticised her. As a result, she felt that she was no good at anything, or for anything. She didn't know why she was at the Institute and felt that there was no way that God

could bless or use someone like her.

I thought I could see what her main problem was. She was focusing upon herself, her background, her parents and her problems—and not upon God. I asked her to open her Bible at Isaiah 43. I wanted her to see two things. Firstly, that God cared for her and that she was very precious and important in His sight.

Verse 4 says, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable and I have loved thee."

I said to her, "It does not matter, Esther, what people say about you, or do to you. Don't look at them or listen to them. Look at God. Understand that He is a God who cares for you personally and that you are precious and honourable and important **to Him**. That is what counts."

Then, secondly, I suggested that she learn to focus her thoughts on God and on what He is like; and that she should understand clearly that God is her Father and that He loves her very much. I shared with her the words of verses 18 and 19, "Remember ye not the former things neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing (in your life). Now it shall spring forth. Shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

We prayed together and I asked God to help Esther to see Him as He really is, to believe what she saw and to make a new start in her life.

And this is exactly what happened! A real miracle took place in Esther's life. From that day onwards she was literally a new person. She smiled; she laughed; she enjoyed leading the student prayer meeting; she gave an excellent demonstration Bible Lesson before the whole class. As she kept her eyes upon her God He gave her peace and joy. He took away the hurt of the problems she had had and she felt loved and appreciated by God—and also by us.

Today she is in a full-time ministry working with street children in one of the world's great cities and God is blessing her and using her.

In one of her letters to me she wrote: "You wouldn't believe how easy it is for me now to say, 'Abba Father.' I had to travel all the way to Kilchzimmer to learn this. You remember that I didn't even know why I was at Kilchzimmer at the beginning. But the Lord opened my eyes and I knew why before I left; and I know it now even better—**God is so good** and I praise Him."

### *Lydia's Testimony*

“Lydia” had been involved in Christian work for a number of years before she came to our three month Leadership Training Institute. Soon after the Institute began she asked me if she could speak with me. I had already been watching her and I knew that there was something wrong somewhere. Like Esther she was very withdrawn. She seemed so sad and it was obvious that something was troubling her.

When we met together she began to tell me of the problems in her life. They were many, and I do not need to outline them here. But she also outlined what had happened:

- For two years she had tried to find a solution to her problems. She had gone to different churches and had read different books—but without success. Indeed the problems seemed to get worse.
- As a result she said that her life was a complete desert and that there was absolutely nothing growing there.
- So she felt she could not go on any more and she was ready “to give up” everything.

I asked her to turn with me to Isaiah chapter 41. I shared with her basically what I shared with Esther—and what I have shared with you in this book.

“Your problem, Lydia, is that you have your eyes upon yourself, your problems, your work, your failures and upon other people. You need to get your eyes upon God, to see Him more clearly and to know Him better—and to focus upon Him. As you do that **He** will bless you, and **He** will bring water and growth to the desert.”

We read verses 17, 18, 19 and 20 together.

When the poor and needy seek water and there is none . . . **I the Lord** will hear them. **I** will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys; **I** will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water. **I** will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree. . . . **I** will set in the desert the fir tree. . . . That they may see and know and consider and understand together that **the Hand of the Lord hath done this** and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

“Focus on Him, Lydia, and He will bring the rain.”

We prayed together and as she was leaving I suggested we meet again the next day for further discussion and prayer. But she smiled and said “There is no need. I see it! For the first time, I see the answer.”

Two days later as I was sitting at the head of the table in the dining room she came over to me and whispered with a smile “The rain has started to fall!” And so it had. The difference was obvious to everyone. She really radiated! It was another miracle. God had done something special in her life when she learned to focus her thoughts on **Him** and not on herself and her problems.

That happened two years ago. God continues to bless Lydia and continues to work in her life. She has a very extensive ministry in her own country, working with children and training teachers; and she also works often in a neighbouring country which has great spiritual needs.

She writes to me regularly about how God is blessing her in her walk with Him, and in her work for Him.

In a recent letter she wrote, “During the past year God has renewed my whole life completely. I hardly can find any words to tell about it but something wonderful has happened to me. God has given me a new start, new attitudes, new thoughts, new promises, new strength, a new deeper relationship with Him and new tools to my hand to work as a teacher and to serve him. Slowly and step by step God changed the situation I had when we spoke the first time at the Institute. God still has His finger very clearly in my life. The verses in Isaiah 41 v17–20 are very real in my life.”

And in another letter: “There has been such a blessing in my life after the Institute that I cannot even describe it. God has touched me very deeply. It is not true that it is raining in my life. I am now sitting under a waterfall”

### *A Personal Testimony*

The third case study concerns myself. As I come towards the end of the book I want to share with you what a help and blessing its contents have been to me in my life and ministry. I have not yet learned

these truths as I should have, but I am thankful that I am trying to learn them and apply them to myself.

I know from personal experience how long, how gradual and, even at times, how difficult this learning process is. Sometimes the solution does not come immediately. We need to be patient and not expect too much too soon. But we do need to start!

I praise God that around fifteen years ago He began to teach me so many truths about Himself, and the importance of keeping my eyes on Him in the midst of all circumstances and problems. I have endeavoured to do this, with varying degrees of success, during these years and it has pleased God to grant me a real measure of peace. He has given me strength to handle many of the problems which have arisen in the work. In future books I will have the opportunity to explain and go into more detail concerning my own experiences—and also how I have been endeavouring to learn and put into practice what I have outlined in this book.

But I literally don't know how I could have survived without Him and without what He has been teaching me about Himself.

This was why I wanted to write this book. I want its contents to be of practical help to you, my dear co-workers among children; and I pray that, as you read and study what has been written, God will make Himself very precious to you.

- ↗ That you will see, and understand, Him more clearly.
- ↗ That you will know Him more intimately.
- ↗ That you will focus upon Him, more and more, in every situation.
- ↗ That you will worship Him more fervently.

**And that is victory!**

### *For Further Thought and Reflection*

Could you yourself add a personal testimony of how knowing God better has helped you with your problems? Perhaps this was before you read this book, or perhaps during or since your reading of it. If so please write and share your testimony to --*CEF SBM, PO Box 308, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT28 2YS, Northern Ireland.* It would be an encouragement to me, and could also be an encouragement to others.

## Books for Further Reading

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*The Attributes of God* by Arthur W. Pink. Publisher unknown.

*God's Ultimate Purpose* by D.M. Lloyd Jones. Published in UK by Banner of Truth Trust. This is one of Dr. Lloyd Jones' excellent volumes on Ephesians. All of these and his volumes on Romans are highly recommended.

*The Grandeur of God* by C. Samuel Storms. Published in USA by Baker Book House.

*The Joy of Knowing God* by Richard L. Strauss. Published in USA by Loiseaux Brothers. This is an excellent book; and perhaps the simplest, best and most helpful book on the subject I have ever read.

*Knowing God* by J.I. Packer. Published in UK by Hodder and Stoughton.

*The Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer. Published in USA by Harper and Row.

*One Holy Passion* by R.C. Sproul. Published in USA by Thomas Nelson Inc.

*Our God is Awesome* by Tony Evans. Published in USA by Moody Press. This is a very recent book—and is excellent.

*The Sovereignty of God* by Arthur W. Pink. Published in UK by Banner of Truth Trust.

*"Sam Doherty's writings have blessed people around the world! During his 29 years as European regional director of Child Evangelism Fellowship, God's servants have been helped and challenged by the books he has authored. Now in his new position in CEF he is devoting more time to writing, providing Christians everywhere (and children's workers in particular) with much needed biblical-based teaching. This new title, 'The Problems of a Children's Worker and God's Solution' provides answers in an area of ministry where there is little resource material available. I trust you will find it most useful, as I have, for our day."*

**John W. Cook, Vice President, Overseas Ministries**

**Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc.**

*"This is a helpful guidebook not only for children's workers but for all Christians and Christian workers. The truths presented are biblical and practical and have been proved in every day experience."*

**Warren Wiersbe, Author and Conference speaker**

*"I know of no one better qualified to write on this subject than Sam Doherty. For more than four decades he has engaged in actual children's work and has led the rapidly expanding ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship in Europe. As an annual guest lecturer at our college he has fairly infected students with his focused vision on reaching Europe's boys and girls for Christ. The pages of this book demonstrate his unique ability in bringing the Bible to bear on all issues of life. Sam Doherty understands the problems of a children's worker and speaks from experience when he applies God's solution."*

**Doyle Klaassen, Principal, Bibelschule Brake, Germany**

*"When Sam first shared with me his desire and plan to devote time to this writing project, I was elated at what I knew would be a very rewarding provision for the future of ministry to children. Now that I have read the manuscript of this, his first offering in an extended series, I am convinced that my elation was more than justified. This is not a 'hurry-up' book. Though brief, it pack years of love, prayer, and service into its pages. It should be worn, not merely read."*

**Dr. Bob Alderman, Pastor, Shenandoah Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia**

*"This book is not theory, but is the product of a godly man's life whose life has been unselfishly spent praying for, and ministering to, the children of this world. Sam Doherty lives what he preaches, therefore I heartily and gratefully recommend this book to all who have a heart for children and who want their lives to be used by Jesus Christ in faithfully sharing the Gospel."*

**Gene Warr, Businessman, prayer warrior and supporter of God's work worldwide, Oklahoma City, USA**