

What Does God Want From Me? (The Wheel Illustration)

(appropriate for Mid Schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily, January 2014

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

(Source: Rev. John S. Mahon, Grace Community International, Houston, TX)

A Burning Desire?

As I sat in the airport with six of my co-workers waiting for a flight home from a business trip, we got to talking about summer plans. The discussion quickly turned to the Christian mission trip I was taking to Zambia in a few weeks. One of my co-workers (a Christian) said, "I've never had a burning desire to go on a mission trip. I don't mind helping others go but I just never had that burning desire". Really? Is that how we decide what God wants us to do? Whether or not we have a burning desire? The reason this is a bad strategy is:

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Burning desires don't often take us where God wants us to go. In fact, there is nothing in the universe that is more deceitful than our own heart – our own desires! What does the word deceit mean? It means to trick. To convince you that something wrong is right, or that something right is wrong. To the point where you really do believe or do the opposite of what you should!

God's Word

So if we can't use our burning desires to figure out what God wants us to do what method should we use?

Isaiah 66:2

"For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

God loves all of us and gives salvation as a gift freely. But if you want to be a person that God pays close attention to you need to be a person who "trembles at His word". What does that mean, to "tremble at His word"? It means to treat it with great care, pay attention, and do exactly what it says. We don't play with it.

"The Bible says that God made the universe in 6 days but I believe in the Big Bang" – is that trembling at God's word? No. *"The Bible says that God personally created Adam and Eve but I believe in evolution"* – Is that trembling at God's word? No. I could go on and on with other examples.

When God says something in His Word we don't argue with it we take it seriously, work to understand it in detail, and take action.

An Impactful Life

How many of you would like to live your lives in relative comfort and then die, having lived a life that was not meaningful and had no real impact in the lives of other people?

How many of you want to have a life that God uses to impact other people in a way that is eternally valuable? How many of you want that even if it means having a little discomfort from time to time?

And how exactly do you go from being a high school student to this person that God is going to use to make an impact for eternity? What exactly does that path look like?

Tonight these secrets will be revealed!

The Call

Let's say you were born with the right genetics to someday become a professional baseball player for the New York Yankees. There is nothing in your DNA that would stop you from playing at that level. But you have never played baseball before. So, you call up the owner of the Yankees and you say, "Mr. Yankees owner, my name is so-and-so and I am a teenager and I have decided to surrender my life to you. I have struggled over this decision for a long time but I have decided that I will play whatever position on the Yankees you want me to play – I'm even willing to play in the outfield! So, when you are ready to use me, just give me a call on my cell phone and let me know what position you want me to play." Then you go back to what you were doing for the next ten years.

Is the call coming? No. Why not? You surrendered your life to whatever the Yankees owner wants you to do, didn't you? What's missing? What is missing is you haven't been working on developing your skills in hitting, throwing, fielding, and running. What are these called? The fundamentals.

The same is true in the Christian life. "God I surrender my life to you. How ever you want to use me, just let me know" – and that's all you do. Is the call coming? No.

Its kind of like this. I am trying to coach you in baseball. You show up and say, "I want to learn baseball so here I am. What do you want me to do?" and I say, "Great! Put this glove on your left hand". You say, "Well, I'm not really comfortable with that idea. The glove seems kind of dirty. Its probably a little scratchy. I've never put a glove on before, so I don't think I will". What now? We're done. There is nothing more to talk about. "When you are ready to put the glove on, let me know and we can continue. Until then, we're done." Is the Yankees owner going to call? No. The call is not coming.

You become a Christian and God says, "Great! You are on the team. The first thing I want you to do is get baptized" and you say, "Well, I'm not really comfortable with that idea. The water looks cold, I would have to do it in front of all those other Christians, its not something I've done before, so I don't think I will". Is the call coming? No. So, if you want God to use you, if you want to get "the call", you need to be working on the fundamentals.

This is why we have so many people sitting in our churches but not that much seems to be happening. Many of them have not been working on the fundamentals. What are the fundamentals?

The Six Fundamentals

The six fundamentals of the Christian life can be represented by a Wheel as shown in this Wheel Illustration from The Navigators

(<http://www.navigators.org/us/resources>).

- 1) **The Hub:** Christ is the hub of the wheel and provides us with the power to live the Christian life.

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Every day we have to make a decision. Who will be the decision maker for today? Will it be me and what I want? Will it be what the World system wants? Or will Christ be calling the shots today?



Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Surrendering our lives to God each day is one of the fundamentals. It is necessary but not sufficient.

- 2) **The Rim:** Obedience is the rim. Like the promising baseball player who was unwilling to put on the glove we cannot grow and mature if we stop obeying what God has told us to do in His Word. When we stop trembling at God's word and say "no", our growth is suspended, hopefully temporarily!

John 14:21

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

Romans 12:1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

The Spokes: In a wheel the transfer of power occurs through the spokes. The four spokes are The Word (the Bible), Prayer, Fellowship, and Witnessing. These are the fundamentals. Because they are so important, satan works hard to make sure we don't feel like doing these things (much less have a burning desire to do them). Instead of relying on our feelings we will apply the antidote to the **Jeremiah 17:9** problem:

Hebrews 12:11

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Luke 9:23

And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Discipline: *training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character, orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior, a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity*

We do these things by applying discipline to do what God has told us to do whether we feel like it or not.

- 3) **The Word:** This is the time and effort we put into hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on God's Word.

II Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

- 4) **Prayer:** This is the time and effort we put into praising God, confessing our sins to Him, thanking Him for who He is and what He has done, and asking for His help and provision for ourselves and others.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

John 15:7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

5) Fellowship: This is the time and effort we put into patiently strengthening the faith and obedience of other Christians. It includes activities such as: admonishing the unruly, encouraging the fainthearted, helping the weak (**I Thessalonians 5:14**), reproving, rebuking, exhorting (**II Timothy 4:2**), loving and serving, worshipping together, comforting and building up others, being hospitable, and praying for each other.

Hebrews 10:24-25

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Matthew 18:20

“For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

6) Witnessing: Sharing with people how we became Christians using a first person account of the Gospel and verses of Scripture. Our testimony must include the contents of **I John 5:11-13**.

I John 5:11-13

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Matthew 4:19

And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Your Wheel as a Diagnostic Tool

OK, now take out a piece of paper. I want you to think back over the last month and draw what your wheel looks like. For example, if you are doing well on a spoke make it long. If you are not doing so well on a spoke make it short. Remember that what is important is not what you know but what you actually do. Knowledge without action is not good.

I Corinthians 8:1

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

John 14:15 - “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Take a few minutes and draw your wheel.

What did you learn by drawing your wheel? It’s a good way to check and see how you are doing in the fundamentals and whether you are keeping them in proper balance or not.

So, by drawing your wheel every once in a while you can see if your deceitful heart is tricking you! Your heart may be telling you that you are doing fine but the Wheel might show you otherwise! Then you can apply discipline to correct the situation. See how that works?

So here in AWANAs we are helping you memorize and study the Bible, (The Word), we are teaching you how to pray, and we have lots of fellowship activities to encourage you in your faith. And we have the 5 minute Bridge Illustration challenge to help you get better in witnessing. But you have to decide to put Christ first and to obey when He tells you what to do in these areas.

Other Ways to Use the Wheel

You can also use the Wheel to evaluate any ministry work you are involved in. Reviewing our AWANA ministry using the Wheel showed that we were pretty good at everything except Witnessing so we added the Bridge Illustration: "First Person Five Minute Bridge Illustration" at <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

You can also use it when discipling someone to make sure you cover the fundamentals in a balanced way and are training them in doing, not just knowing.

You can use it in making decisions about the future. For example, the Wheel is a good dating aid! if you are thinking about dating a girl ask yourself if dating her is going to help you in your prayer life or your witnessing or will she get in the way? Will this girl help me memorize verses or laugh at the idea of memorizing verses?

"I'm thinking about marrying this girl – she's Jewish". But when you look at the Wheel Illustration you realize that that's a problem from a fellowship point-of-view.

When selecting a job which one will enable me to be involved in these things (the four spokes) and which one will make it more difficult for me? If one job option is high travel will that hinder your ability to be involved in the activities of the four spokes?

What about what house to buy? There is a church in town that would clearly be best in terms of my involvement in the four spokes. Maybe I should buy a house close to that church.

So, use the Wheel Illustration to help you in your decision making.

Conclusion

If you work hard at the six fundamentals of the Christian Life I can guarantee that the call will come. I don't know exactly when and I don't know for exactly what because that is a function of your design. But if you work hard at these six things (putting Christ first, Obedience, The Word, Prayer, Fellowship, Witnessing) I can guarantee that you will get "the call" and God will use you in an important and eternally valuable way.

The Wheel Illustration (NASB)

Source: The Navigators (<http://www.navigators.org/us/resources>).

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The Hub: Turns and supplies power to the wheel. Christ our hub, supplies the power necessary for the Christian life.

II Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come

Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

The Rim: Supplies the friction for motion. Where the “rubber meets the road”. The words, “The Obedient Christian In Action” remind us that we spring into action, responding to the power source of Christ, our Lord.

John 14:21 - He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

Romans 12:1 - Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

The Spokes: Give us balance and enable the transfer of Christ’s power to our daily lives. Through the implementation of these disciplines in obedience to Christ, we spring into action.

The Word: Reveals His principles and commands for life and ministry enabling us to know Him more personally.

II Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Joshua 1:8 - This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Prayer: Unleashes the power of God in your personal battles and in the lives of those for whom you pray.

Philippians 4:6-7 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

John 15:7 - If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Fellowship: Learning from and encouraging others through interdependence and loving relationships with each other.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Matthew 18:20 – “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

Witnessing: God has given Christians the privilege and responsibility of sharing the Good News about Christ.

Matthew 4:19 - And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.



QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: What Does God Want From Me? (*The Wheel Illustration*)

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 17:9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Isaiah 66:2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 15:5, II Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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JEREMIAH 15:16

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 14:21, Romans 12:1-2*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 12:11, Luke 9:23*

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How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 3:16, Joshua 1:8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: What Does God Want From Me? (*The Wheel Illustration*)

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Philippians 4:6-7, John 15:7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 10:24-25, Matthew 18:20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Thessalonians 5:14, II Timothy 4:2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: What Does God Want From Me? (*The Wheel Illustration*)

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 5:11-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 4:19, Romans 1:16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 8:1, John 14:15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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