

# It's Personal, Not Private!

## *Raised for Victory:*

Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 12:1-3

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Since we are spiritual children, we need help growing. The Bible speaks of us as sheep. We are called sheep because we need help to grow. Sheep need help, just as children need help. The Bible teaches that we are royal children who need help to live and grow. As a royal child, I need help to grow! At my request someone made a sign for me. Bring it up here. This side says *louder*. The opposite side reads *slower*. I want to speak loud and clear enough. You are welcome to contact an usher or tech person if you are having difficulty hearing. However, no tag board will read *shorter*. No help there! In fact, the tech people will delete this word from the power point today. (Project *stop*). Quit that. That won't be on a tag board either.

For the first couple months of 2010, God has been speaking to our Bethany family about becoming "Can Do" persons. When a month ago Marj Rossing shared her story of experiencing peace with God, I was surprised and then moved as she witnessed to how God was forming her as a "Can Do" person. Now in March, the season of Lent that remembers the struggle when Jesus fasted and fought with the devil for 40 days, and then in the power of the Spirit launched a work that brings victory, God wants to open our eyes to how he raises us for victory.

Listen to this prophecy from Jeremiah 31 that is unfolding in our lives:

***"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*** (Jeremiah 31:33-34, NIV)

Today God puts his law in our minds and thoughts. God writes his will into our desires and emotions, so that we know him personally. *“No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.”* Today we can know God personally. We can have a personal relationship. **Indeed, we are to know God personally and relate personally.**

I’ve asked a couple to come forward and help me illustrate this. (I introduce a couple who know each other intimately.)

The exercise I just completed is senseless for the most part because they already know each other much more closely than I do. They already are relating and conversing. It is senseless for me to introduce people who are already relating to each other.

Whether intellectually they have suffered impairments or are exceptionally gifted, **the Holy Spirit enables people today to become intimate with God... like Jesus.** It was Jesus’ intimacy with his Father that helped him sort out Satan’s deception and gain the victory.

As adults **we begin to know God personally when we taste his love in forgiveness.** *“They will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”* When your feelings of guilt are gone because of Jesus, you personally taste the amazing love and peace of God. On the other hand, children often taste the love of God before they experience guilt. They receive God’s love in simple trust. As they grow older, however, sins and deception can steal that joy and obscure the truth. The forgiveness of Christ is the reason they experienced love when they were young, but when they grow older the forgiveness of Christ becomes an essential experience of love. As they receive mercy, they become merciful. As they taste patience, they become patient. As they obey Scriptures and experience answered prayers, they grow faith in God’s word. From the least

to the greatest, we are to know God! If we know God like Jesus, we grow a life that is victorious in struggle.

Our relationship with God is very, very personal; yet your relationship with God is no more private than your relationship with a parent when you have siblings. You learn a lot about your father and mother as you relate to them with your brothers and sisters. When you're young, your older brother or sister can really help you. They can help you learn when to ask them for candy... and when it is better to be quiet. They can show you the effects of certain behaviors, good and bad. They can help you patch up your relationship with Mom and Dad teaching you how to apologize. They can also lead you into a heap of trouble.

One Saturday morning, Diane and I were startled by a yell, "John!" Moments later John burst into our bedroom and leaped into our bed expecting protection. His big sister followed behind. With John in our protective custody, the story unfolded. Sarah woke up and looked at the clock and found she was at least an hour late for a meeting. She checked a couple other clocks just to be sure. Hurriedly she called the parent in charge to apologize. The parent responded, "Sarah, what are you talking about? Everybody is sleeping here, it's just 7 am!" John and Sarah learned that day that their parents not only tolerate harmless pranks, but enjoy them. Of course, that meant John was vulnerable to such a prank as well.

Today, you have brothers and sisters in Christ, who carry the name of Jesus. They can mislead you, but they also can help you. **Your brothers and sisters in Christ can be a great help in knowing God and fulfilling His desires**, but they are no substitute for direct contact with God.

One day while observing a counseling session, I watched a young woman receive counseling. I witnessed how the woman was directed to speak her hurts aloud to God. After she

finished, she was asked to listen to God and share thoughts, images or whatever came to her. As she shared, it became clear that Jesus was talking and she was listening. The woman was not becoming dependent on the Christian counselor. She was growing her relationship with Jesus who guides us to victory. God then gave me an image of myself. Let me demonstrate it. (Pick two volunteers. Stand between them while you introduce them.) Suppose I stand between two people I introduce like this. They really can't get to know each other because I'm in the way. God gave me this image of myself standing between Jesus and some individuals. I wasn't helping the individuals take Jesus' hand, pour out their heart to him, and then listen and hear accurately. I really help people when I get alongside Jesus and them and help them converse.

In Hebrews 11, God gives us a list of our siblings who are victorious through faith. Some do the impossible. Others surrender their life in heroic sacrifice. Then we read:

***Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***  
(Hebrews 12:1-2, NIV)

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who've won the victory. They are our family. We also have brothers and sisters with us now. Together, their example and voice can help us, but we must fix our eyes on Jesus. He has begun your faith and he is developing your faith. He is both your example and living coach.

God has given you both "this great cloud of witnesses" and us, your brothers and sisters. We're to help you see and walk with Jesus. Do you see? Do you hear? Do you personally know Jesus? He has already acted that you might win. He is now present in the Spirit for your victory? Use the questions in the sermon guide and visit with him now.