

LIFE WITHOUT LACK

"Jehovah is my shepherd, I shall not want." (Ps. 23:1)

"They that seek Jehovah shall not lack any good thing." (Ps. 34:10)

Sessions 1 & 2: GOD IN HIMSELF. The glorious, self-sustaining, eternal being of the Shepherd. <A>. God's self-sufficient, all-powerful, purely spiritual personality of utmost goodness is seen (i) In His Creation [Rom 1:19-20, Heb 11:3. Note: creation is not ex nihilo.]; (ii) In His historical acts [Deut 4:32-40 & 11:7, II Kings 6:17]; (iii) in the inspired descriptions and names which He assumes [Ex 3:14, 20:4-7, Neh 9:5-7]. <B>. Before the present world existed, God in His triune personality existed without beginning, an everlasting sweet and rapturous society, so great in power that He could not possibly not-exist; with the created "host of heaven," an innumerable domain of spiritual beings of infinite degrees of magnificence, constituting an everlasting kingdom which cannot be shaken. [Josh 5:14, Job 1:6, 38:7, Ps 68:17, 84:2, 8 & 12, 90:2, Dan 4:17, <sup>+7:10</sup> Micah 5:2, Haggai 2:6-7, John 17:5 & 24, Phil 2:6, Col 1:15-17, Heb 12:22-23 & 26-28]. <C>. God and His realm are available to us through our spirit-like side: principally our intellect and will [John 4:23, 6:56 & 63, 7:17, 17:3, Rom 12:2, II Cor 3:18, Eph 1:17-19, Col 3:3] The secret of the human life is what is in our mind or heart, for that is where our acts and attitudes come from. [Prov 4:23, Matt 6:21, 15:19] The most important thing about us is our mind. The most important thing about our mind is where we put it, or where it is put, out

of choice or necessity. [Eph 4:17-19] The object of our mind enters our life through our thoughts and actions. LIFE WITHOUT LACK CONSISTS, FROM THE HUMAN SIDE, IN HAVING OUR MINDS FIXED UPON GOD AS HE IS. For man dead in sin, this requires that the news of God's reality and nature be brought to him in the power of God's spirit [Luke 4:18, Rom 10:14, I Thess 1:5], and then that with the new life imparted he should seek in all things to know the rule of God and have the kind of righteousness God has. [Deut 4:29, Jer 29:13, Matt 6:33] To pray, "Hallowed be thy name" [Matt 6:9] is to plead that the Heavenly Father would make Himself known in His true nature to all on earth. The present corruption of earth began and sustains itself in refusal to accept God as He truly is, which took the form of pretending God to be lower than man. [Rom 1:21-32] But God will never overcome man simply by directly revealing Himself. He is a spirit that can be resisted, grieved and even quenched. [Acts 7:51, Eph 4:30, I Thess 5:19] As, indeed, can the evil spirit, Satan. [Jas 4:7, I Peter 5:8-9]

Session 3: WHY THERE ARE PEOPLE ON EARTH. "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You pay attention to him." [Ps 8] The earth is a special cosmic arena where spirits with a body that allows them to act without direct control from God and good can become characters confirmed in love and service of God in His absence. This makes a special demand upon will and character, and as a result creates a special treasure which goes far beyond the worth of mere conscious personality as such.

Humans are to be God-like in being relatively independent, creative beings who by intelligent choice live to create and sustain what is good and would even sacrifice themselves for what is good—above all, for God Himself. Testing and trial is therefore essential to the entire project, as well as to the call of God to every individual human being that ever lives. Thus, count it all joy! [Jas 1:2-4; cf. Matt 5:11-12, II Cor 12:9-10] The society of such people are a unique treasure in all of God's creation. [Eph 3:10, Malachi 3:16-17] Our appointment in creation was to bring good into existence by our action. [Gen 1:26-31, 2:7-8, 15-25] Notice how many times the word "good" occurs in the first two chapters of Genesis! Work is made painful by the fall, because it becomes divorced from God's power. Sweat enters. [Gen 3:16-21] One of the twelve commands is, "Six days shalt thou labor." [Ex 20:9] It is one of the most grievously neglected commandments in the word of God. Work is the expending of energy to produce good. This is God's call to every person. It includes many things, from having and raising children, to the development of good personal relations, to artistic creativity and political leadership. It is in work that we are to know the grace of God, with one day each week of utter grace. Persons are to be respected as individual, creative will, to be joined with only in respectful love, giving and receiving. Man and woman in marriage is to be the deepest level of respect, love and flourishing in the grace of God. [Gen 2:24-25, Eph 6:21-28, I Peter 3:1-7] Such a relationship was to lie at the source of human existence as it

was intended by God. Therefore Satan attacked it to, in one blow, rupture trust between humans and God as well as between husband and wife [Gen 3:10-13], inevitably spreading to other family members [Gen 4:5-10]. The person of Jesus and the word of His Gospel of the Kingdom can restore to mankind the original intent of God in creation. <sup>malachi 4:6,</sup> [Matt 5:13-16, Eph 3:20-21]  
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Session 4: WHY IS THERE SUCH TERRIBLE LACK, EVIL, IN THE WORLD NOW? Because Satan continues to be able to control the major structures and process of human life, upon the earth. He can do nothing about God's unshakeable kingdom, but he can, through human infirmity and rebellion, slow--only slow, not abolish--God's intentions for the human race, above described. Satan works in the spirit-like realm of the heart, in its individual, as well as social and historical reality. <sup>(Daniel) 10:13,20</sup>  
 ^ From there he continues to be the "prince of this world" [John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11] or "the prince of the power of the air" [Eph 2:2], through his control of "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places." [Eph 6:12] He makes playthings of ordinary human beings [II Tim 2:26], and tries to frighten [I Peter 5:8] believers into unfaith, overwhelm them with accusations (often placed in the mouths of other brethren) [Rev 12:10], or enmesh them in lies and lying [John 8:44]--without which (lies) his entire dominion and power over mankind would totally collapse. But "the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." [I John 3:8] And He will, as His new community receives the power of God. [Luke 10:17-22]

Session 5: TRUST ("FAITH") IN GOD: THE KEY TO LIFE IN HIS SUFFICIENCY. Trust or faith is reliance upon something in attitude and action. Today it is necessary to replace all occurrences of "faith" in the Bible with "trust." Trust in God is reliance upon Him in the face of all fears. (Dan 3:17-18) Trust is substance or reality (ὕπόστασις) of things hoped for, evidence or proof (ἔλεγχος) of things not seen at the time. (Heb 11: 1) It is evidence that the Word of God is present and working, and, through contact with that Word, as it works, trust brings into reality the things hoped for--hence is their substance. Faith comes from hearing the Word (Matt 13:18-23, Rom 10:13-18), and that Word which creates faith also created and maintains the world. The world is made, not from nothing, but from that which does not appear (Heb. 11:3), namely, God's action (energy/word). Thus, the just live by trust (Hab 4:4, Rom 1:17), because trust puts them in contact with what can alone enable the just to be just, and to live as they do. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who love me, and gave himself for me." (Gla 2:20) Trust in God is always manifested in the will to do right, in opposition to habit and social pressure, because He from whom the power comes is righteous. Faith is, therefore, fed by experience. It is opposed to sight (II Cor 5:7), but not to knowledge (II Cor 4:18, Heb 11:27). Faith does not come by trying to rely or believe. We must not try to believe, but we may seek faith by seeking the Word of God. (Josh 1:8, Ps 1;cf Amos 8:11-13) And trust, having the effect of

involving God in our lives, grows from faith to faith (Rom 1:17), allowing personality, human spirit, soul and body, to realign itself to safely receive God and exercise His power without simply disintegrating. But God will eventually triumph through His people. (Dan 11:32, Hos 10:12)

Session 6: TRUST COMPLETED IN DEATH TO SELF. Jesus' choice: To glorify his Father through a death that brings forth abundant fruit. (John 12:23-26) Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 2) and Moses' choice (Heb 11) as cases. Our choice redefined by the Kingdom inversion which makes the first last and the last first (Matt 19:30, 20:16) It is in the light of this that we see the world is not worth our souls and are prepared to give up our lives. (Matt 16:24-27, Luke 14:25-35) Hence, in approaching our death to self and "dying daily" (I Cor 15:31, Gla 2:20 & 5:24) we must never forget that THE POSITIVE MOMENT COMES FIRST: the beauty and goodness of identification with Christ before we give up ourselves. Tremendous harm has been done to the essential teaching of death to self by putting the negative first. Then we must learn the sufficiency of God to our surrendered self through patience. (Rom 5:3-4, Heb 6:12 & 10:36, James 1:3, I Peter 1:6) Unshakeable, constant, free-flowing hope arises out of death to self and patient continuance in well-doing (Rom 2:7, 12:12). BUT WHAT ABOUT DISAPPOINTMENT: PAIN, FAILURE, INJURY BY OTHERS, SICKNESS, INABILITY. In the life without lack we meet these by:

(i) Honest and thorough prayer and listening, conversation with

God, (ii) Acting in trust against the lack or threat, and (iii) Praising God as we go forward. Study how this worked for King Jehoshaphat (II Chron 20, especially vss 5-6, 15-17, 21-22) Become very familiar with this chapter, and add to it Romans 8. Most Christians today have not been trained in this. Hence, instead of rejoicing in tribulation, they give up and they sulk, and they close themselves off from life without lack. The self remains alive and on the throne of our lives as long as my concern, confidence, and aims take what happens to me as the ultimate point of reference. Humility, the genuine regard for God and others over ourselves, gives us blessed relief from self. (Matt 11:28-30, Phil 2:3-10) Die to self now, but offering yourself entirely to further the good of others and the Glory of God. Ask him to break your old habits of self obsession. You may need to repeat this, continually asking God to lead and teach you, until it is effectively done.

Session 7: SUFFICIENCY COMPLETED IN AGAPE. The one sure sign of the learner (disciple) of Jesus. (John 13:34-35) Love is "abiding in Christ. (John 1-17) The experiential progression from trust to agape. (Rom 5:1-8) What LOVE does in those who through faith and patience in death to self have effectively surrendered to it. (I Cor 13) This expressed in Servanthood. (Matt 20:25-28 & John 13:4-17, Eph 5:1-2) And in mission/work which is your gift in your life. (John 20:21, Gla 6:7-10, Eph 4:24-28, Phil 4:8-9) The removal of fear and torment by Love. (I John 4:17-19)

Session 8: THROUGH ONE DAY WITH JESUS. Suggestions for your effectually ordered life in the constant presence of Jesus, Jehovah-rohi (Ps 23:1) and Jehovah-shammah (Ezk 48:35), our Shepherd-God-With-Us. (Matt 28:20, John 14:1-26, Rom 12 & 13, Phil 4:11-13, Heb 13:5-6)

In this session we will begin with the evening prior to the day--which is otherwise to be an ordinary day in your life--and we will develop an individualized plan for you to be fully in touch with Jesus until you go to sleep at night. We will be dealing with real problems and failures, showing how they are to be dealt with and overcome until we feel experientially comfortable in a life without lack, with no fear of evil.



REVEALED NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT \*

"Elohim"--(Gen 1:1-2:4, Deut 32:39, Isa 45:5, 22, Ps 91:2) occurs 2,570 times in the O.T. Conveys the idea of creative and governing power, of omnipotence and sovereignty.

"Jehovah"--(Gen 2:4, 28:13, Ex 3:14-15, 6:2-3, II Chron 14:11) occurs 6,823 times. Means a self-sufficient, personal being who enters into covenant relations with men. It is derived from the Hebrew verb havah, meaning "to be" or "being." "LORD" in A.V.

"El-Shaddai"--(Gen 17:1-2, 49:24-25). Means Almighty, all-abundant to His people, one who even compels nature to act "unnaturally."

"Adonai"--(Gen 15:2, Isa 6:8, Ps 97:5, 123:2) Refers to God's relationship to his people as their loving master, signifying ownership and the claim to unrestricted obedience.

"Jehovah-Jireh"--(Gen 22:14) LORD Who Provides

"Jehovah-Rophe"--(Ex 15:26) LORD Who Heals

"Jehovah-Nissi"--(Ex 17:15) The LORD Our Banner

"Jehovah-M'kaddesh"--(Lev 20:7-8) The LORD Who Sanctifies Us

"Jehovah-Shalom"--(Judges 6:24) The LORD Who Is Peace

"Jehovah-Tsidkenu"--(Jer 23:5-6) The LORD our Righteousness

"Jehovah-Rohi"--(Ps 23:1) The LORD Our Shepherd

"Jehovah-Shammah"--(Ezk 48:35;cf Ex 29) The LORD Who Is There (Here)

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\*Information excerpted from Nathan J. Stone's Names of God, Moody Press, 1944