

## Finding *Renewal* in the Love of God

### Unit 6: Living Renewal as a Testimony to the Eternal Life

#### Prayer Prompt and Experience 6: Claiming the Treasure

*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* (NIV; 1 John 5.11)

#### ***The concept:***

Sometimes the Word of God speaks to us clearly; loudly and distinctly articulating its Truth much as waves crash into a rocky coast, hurling foamy waters high into the air. *And we get it.* Sometimes, however, the Truth washes in—whispering ever so gently, lapping upon the sand, pushing forward, and retreating before returning once more. I've chased shells in those elusive waters; they are not easy to grasp. Just as your hand is upon them, the current pulls them away. What seemed so easily within reach seems altogether lost.

At such times, no amount of self-determination will produce discernment. What remains yet to be seized is not knowledge, but understanding; not more thought, but patience; not more will but submission; not more determination, but an exercise of faith. One must wait faithfully to see the treasure returned—not merely within reach—but delivered, literally dropped at one's feet.

John teaches God has given us *life, the life of His Son.*

This life is a life of *joy*, of *victory*, of *confidence* and *protection*, of *belonging*, of *love*—it is a life that *chooses* the right. The last study question asked you to consider which qualities of life seem most elusive to you in your walk with Christ. The question asked you to name what might be *limiting* your life in Christ. You were asked to determine whether you might enact changes that could aid your growth. What did you write?

While confession illuminates our need and repentance recommits us to persevere, the failure to truly claim *life* is more systemic. Further, we recognize that even if we *could* discover the root of the problem, we likely could not heal the disease by treating the system. What we need is a God's-eye view: one that fully and clearly sees our dilemma, all the while recognizing the intrinsic value and reality of the life that exists in the resurrected Christ.

We catch glimpses of that life, which like that elusive shell gets pulled and controlled by tides and currents. We reach for it as we anticipate capturing some bit of understanding, and we train our eyes to scan the shallow waters, awaiting the next glimmer of insight. But in the end we must resign ourselves to wait; we have little control but to remain vigilant. Either God will deliver the treasure or we will never find it.

***The exercise:***

***During your group prayer time; Meeting 16 (Unit 6, Meeting 1):***

1. In a chain-type prayer, each group member should pray aloud for understanding.
2. Read aloud chapter 5 in 1 John. As you read, listen for any phrase, teaching, or promise that attracts your attention, piques your interest, or inspires a question.
3. Read the whole chapter and then sit quietly with that reading for another 10-15 minutes. Ponder the thoughts that come to your mind, but remain silent.
4. After 10-15 minutes, you may share some of your thoughts with one another. However, keep in mind that the point of the exercise is to *hear God*. Maintain an atmosphere that reflects each individual's own quest. Keep this time short—no more than 10-15 minutes.
5. Take another few minutes in silence (about 5-10) to write down any questions, thoughts, ideas, or pictures that seem to linger.
6. At the end of your time together, the group leader should close the experience by praying again for understanding.

***During your group prayer time; Meeting 17 (Unit 6, Meeting 2):***

1. Share in regard to your experience listening to God the past week. Take no more than 10-15 minutes for this sharing. The purpose of the sharing is to allow each participant to testify to the others regarding his/her progress and experience, and to encourage one another in the process of waiting for further clarification.
2. In a chain-type prayer, each group member should pray aloud for understanding.
3. Read aloud chapter 5 in 1 John. As you read, listen for any phrase, teaching, or promise that attracts your attention, piques your interest, or inspires a question.
4. Consider the questions, thoughts, ideas, or pictures that you experienced during the previous week.
5. Look back at your response to the last study question in Lesson 6. What *did* you name as one limiting factor keeping you from fully realizing the benefits of life in Christ? Does this response still ring true in your mind? After a week of listening to God, how might you tweak that response? Would you totally change it?
6. What connection, if any, do you find between your response to the final study question and the thoughts and ideas that have been pondering in the past week? If there are no connections, can you determine why? For example, perhaps your response to the study question was a temporary dilemma that no longer troubles you or perhaps your thoughts have been influenced by a more recent event. Write down any questions, thoughts, ideas, or pictures that come to mind.
7. You may want to share some of your thoughts with one another. Keep in mind that the point of the exercise is to *hear God*. Maintain an atmosphere that reflects each individual's own quest. Keep this time short—no more than 10-15 minutes.
7. At the end of your time together, the group leader should close the experience by praying again for understanding.

***On your own, one day during the week following Meeting 17:***

1. Review “the concept” section at the beginning of this exercise.
2. Pray for understanding.
3. Read chapter 5 in 1 John.
4. Look again across your notes from Meetings 16 and 17.
5. Sit quietly with these thoughts for 10-15 minutes.
6. What would you like for God to teach you in relation to these ideas and thoughts?
7. Pray for understanding. Determine to spend at least 30 minutes tomorrow, interacting with the Lord about these ideas, questions or thoughts.
8. In order to prepare yourself for tomorrow’s exercise, please read the following instructions as well as the blog article for which you will find a link below.

***Day 2:***

1. Pray for understanding.
2. Spend at least 30 minutes, interacting with the Lord about the ideas, questions or thoughts that he has been bringing to your mind. Choose a task that will allow you to ponder and pray.
  - a. Take a walk
  - b. Weed a flower bed
3. As you begin, lay the question before the Lord. As thoughts enter your mind, ask more questions. Each time you ask a question, be aware of the thoughts that come into your mind. Respond to each thought—either with another question or, if your mind has wandered, by redirecting your mind toward your question.
4. After you have finished, write about your experience. What did he reveal to you?
5. Pray for further understanding.

There is no way that I can fully describe to you the way that this exercise will look by the end of the experience. This will be your personal prayer journey with the Lord. However, I have experienced two very striking encounters like this in my life. They both represent holy moments. I have written about one of them on my blog: <http://blessedandrenewed.blogspot.com/2010/03/hour-of-clearing.html>. I pray you will find such meaning in your personal prayer journey today.