

**HUNGRY FOR GOD:  
STUDIES ON PRAYER**

**2**

**DEVOTIONAL PRAYER**

**Psalm 131**

**By Claudia Cook  
and Beth Crawford**

*“The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.”*

Psalm 24:2

*“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshiper will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”*

John 4:23

*“Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness.”*

William Carey

*“In the morning when I rise, In the morning when I rise, In the morning when I rise,  
Give me Jesus.”*

Larry Shackley

## AIM OF STUDY

- To encourage participation in regular devotional times with God.

## KEY VERSES

*“O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. ...Search me, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Psalm 139:1, 23–24

## PREPARATION

Read over the notes on “**How to Teach the Bible in Small Group**” and “**Some Practical Suggestions for Leading a Small Group Discussion**” in Vineyard Church of Columbus’ *Small Group Leadership Training Manual*. Before you read over the Scripture, pray that God would give you direction for leading your group and teach you something relevant. Then, read through the passage and the Bible study below. **You will need to go over the questions and choose which ones you want to emphasize and which you could eliminate if your time is limited.** Note that the application questions are marked with an asterisk (\*). Rather than leaving these to the end of the study, ask one or two as you work through the passage so people are being confronted by Scripture’s truths and applying them to their own lives. If you find you are falling behind schedule and need to move ahead, you could summarize some of the passage and then go to the final questions. **Plan enough time to have your group experience being silent in God’s presence after you complete the brief Bible study discussion. It’s important they try this as a group in order to establish or reinforce the habit of being still and listening to God.**

These studies contain more background material and information on the passages than any group will cover in a meeting. The authors are supplying this for the leaders’ benefit—to help reduce your study and preparation time; to provide resources for possible questions group members may raise; and to clarify some gray areas of doctrine that may be in your mind as you prepare. Obviously, we cannot exhaust any one subject in a document like this, so you may want to do further reading and discuss doctrine with your pastor. We highly recommend *The New Bible Dictionary* and *The New Bible Commentary* as excellent resources for study.

At the end of this study, we have provided a tongue-in-cheek exercise in the format of a multiple-choice test. If you choose to use it for the opening section, **copy the test for each group member and guest** so you can hand it out at your meeting. In addition, we have supplied some practical guidelines that can enhance spending time alone with God. You may want to **copy this handout** for people to take home after the study.

## **OPENER**

[Begin by handing out copies of the multiple-choice test found at the end of the study. Take less than five minutes for folks to fill it out, and review their answers to this tongue-in-cheek exercise very quickly. Then, skip to the question on guilt, and pray before reading the psalm.]

[If you choose not to use the handout, you can briefly discuss the questions below before praying and reading the psalm.]

### **What comes to mind when you hear the word “devotion”?**

Devotion can mean “wholehearted commitment to God, to another person, or to a task” (Manser, p. 505). The dictionary meanings for devotion are “religious fervor: piety,” “an act of prayer or private worship” or “a religious exercise or practice other than the regular corporate worship of a congregation” (m-w.com, “Devotion”). For this discussion, we will refer to “devotions” as a **time alone with God that usually consists of private prayer and Scripture study.**

### **What experience have you had with personal devotions? Is taking time to read Scripture and pray something you do on a regular basis? Why?**

Extensive research on what made a small groups healthy revealed three main factors: daily spending time alone with God, praying for the group members, and setting plans for the group (Christensen). Many leaders and Christians eager to serve Jesus become so busy with activity that they neglect the heart of what it means to be a Christian: time to build a relationship with God.

### **How many of us feel guilt or frustration over the topic of “personal devotions”?**

Don't be discouraged if many in your group, or you yourself, struggle in this area. Christians know this is a good thing to do, but in our humanity, we are not always consistent in our practices [e.g., exercise, diet, rest, evangelism, giving, serving others]. Because many feel guilty or defeated in establishing the habit of regular or daily devotions, reassure the group that this study is meant to help each person overcome his or her frustration. Some simply don't know how to make their time interesting and have slacked off out of boredom. Some have lofty expectations that they fail to meet. Others doubt the benefit because they have not had vital contact with God or are going through a dry spell, and therefore don't try to keep up a seemingly fruitless practice. And some folks may have never been shown what to do at all.

Let's stop and pray about our expectations and experiences. First, let's take time silently to confess to God anything we think might stand in the way of our relationship with Him. Then, I'll ask the Lord to work in us through this study and help us have a renewed mind about time alone with Him.

[Allow for several minutes of silence.]

***Then pray that God would forgive our sin, and pour out His Spirit on us to help each grasp His heart for him or her.***

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

[This is background material for leaders. You may decide what to share with your group.]

The *Psalms* is a prayer book and hymnal of the Jews. The word *psalm* comes from the Greek *biblos psalmon* transliteration of the Hebrew for “book of praises” (Williams, *Psalms 1–72*, pp. 18–19). Sometimes it is referred to as “The Psalter,” taken from the third century Greek translation of the Old Testament used by the early church (Soderlund, p. 400). The title is from *psalterion* for “stringed instrument” or “collection of songs” (Williams, pp. *Psalms 1–72*, 18–19). Jesus would have grown up hearing and learning the psalms as part of His regular worship. He and the New Testament authors quoted *Psalms* frequently, and showed how many verses of these inspired words applied to His life and ministry.

Because *Psalms* is made up of “inspired Hebrew prayers and hymns,” it is well loved by many people (Fee & Stuart, p. 169). The psalms are poetry, but Hebrew poetry, which does not need to rhyme or follow a strict meter [beats]. The authors do use recognizable poetic forms, including parallel lines that state a thought similarly or sometimes expand on it. Like other poetry, the psalms are full of images or symbols, picture words meant to stir the emotions as well as the mind. Some psalms were meant to be sung. Because they are poetic literature, we need to read and interpret them in context, as hymns and prayers. The beliefs and feelings expressed also need to be seen in light of the entire body of Scripture. Just as any other portion of Scripture, no one verse should be lifted out of context and given a meaning that does not harmonize with the setting (Fee & Stuart, pp. 169–185). Therefore, when a psalmist expresses a sense of abandonment, we should not conclude that God does abandon His people, something that would contradict other Scriptures (Deuteronomy 31:6; Matthew 28:20). Instead, we can understand from the psalmist's honesty that it is not sin to come to God and pour out our hearts to Him (Christensen).

Under the heading of Psalm 131, the compilers have put “A song of ascents,” which can be found along with all the psalms from 120–134. This description may refer to a group of psalms used specifically for making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for holy days. It could also refer to psalms that the Levites sang as they went up the 15 steps of the temple between the Court of the Women and the Court of the Israelites, but we cannot be certain about these traditions (Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, p.43).

## STUDY THE PASSAGE: Psalm 131

### 1. Let's read Psalm 131 out loud together.

#### How does the psalmist approach God (v. 1)?

In Psalm 131, the psalmist approaches the Lord humbly and quiets himself so he can listen and interact with the living God. He says that his “heart” is not proud and his “eyes” are not haughty. In verse two, he refers to his “soul.” All three of these terms represent his whole person, and should not be taken for different components of his life. Mentioning that his heart is not proud means that he has humbled himself; writing that his eyes are not haughty indicates he is not presuming on his close relationship with God (Kidner, *Psalms*, pp. 73–150, p. 447). Worship that continually emphasizes the intimate connection we can have with God through Jesus Christ may result in a loss of respect for the holiness and grandeur of God. This psalmist comes before the Lord not as an equal or a buddy but as an obedient and willing servant.

#### \*How do you usually approach times of prayer?

### 2. What does he mean by “not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me” (v. 2)?

The psalmist writes he does not “concern himself with” grand things. The New American Standard Bible says that the Hebrew is literally “*go after, walk*” meaning to get involved in (p. 883). Perhaps the psalmist is avoiding boasting of any accomplishments or plans knowing that he was speaking to the Creator and Ruler of the universe (Stek, pp. 926–927). As the Lord said to Job, “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?” (Job 38:4a). If we remember verse 1, in which he did not want to be proud or presumptive, then the psalmist expresses his desire to not be like the arrogant fool who ignores or scoffs at God (Psalm 2, 14, 52). The psalmist knows who he is and what he should be concerned with: he is the servant of the Lord who is ready to do His Master’s will (Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, pp. 447–448).

### 3. How does pride impact our communication with God?

God detests pride. The Scriptures are full of warnings that He will oppose the proud but show grace to the humble (Deuteronomy 8:12–20; Proverbs 3:34, 21:4; Isaiah 2:12–18; Matthew 23:12; Romans 12:16; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). If God cannot tolerate but punishes the proud, then how can we expect to have clear or intimate communication with Him if we do not approach Him humbly?

**4. Knowing that all of us are proud at times, how are we able to come directly to God and enjoy His holy presence?**

In His mercy, God has provided a way for any humble sinner to approach Him. He sent Jesus to live our lives and fulfill all the demands of the covenant [sacred agreement between God and His people] (John 14:30–31; John 17:4; John 19:30), making Jesus the only sinless person in all of human history; (1 Peter 2:22). God also allowed Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice who died in our place to pay for our countless sins/offenses against God (Romans 3:22–26; Hebrews 7:26–27; Hebrews 9:15; 1 John 4:9–10). When we trust in Jesus' death on our behalf, we can have peace with God (Romans 5:1) since He will forgive our sins and no longer look on us as enemies (Romans 5:10). His blood has paid our death sentence and purchased our forgiveness, so we only need to confess our current sins in order to be forgiven and cleansed again (1 John 1:9). Therefore, we can approach God not because of our own worth but because He has counted Christ's righteous life in our favor and put our sinful record on Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21).

**5. How does the psalmist picture time alone with God (v. 2)?**

The psalmist uses an analogy of a child calmly resting on a mother's lap or leaning his or her head against her chest, and the quiet state he is in as he prays and waits for God to speak or act.

**6. Why would a weaned child be more still than a nursing one?**

A weaned child is one who no longer needs to nurse for sustenance. Instead of expressing hunger through impatient fretting or crying, the weaned one may continue to sit on mother's lap, but is now settled and content. The mother has already met the young one's need for nutrition another way, so this is a child who can relax and enjoy the warm embrace without making selfish or urgent demands.

**7. Why is stillness important when we spend time with God?**

We should think of being in God's presence as if we were in the presence of a famous dignitary. Out of respect, it's appropriate for us to cease our activity, silence our own voices, and wait to understand the wishes of the person of greater rank. In Habakkuk 2:20, the Lord calls for the whole earth to be silent in His presence before He judges the nations. In Scripture, we read of God's voice being loud and powerful (Exodus 19:16–19, 20:18–10; Psalm 29; Ezekiel 1:24, 10:5, 43:2; John 12:28–30; Revelation 1:10, 15). But at other times, God spoke quietly to His individual servants (Genesis 18; Exodus 33:9–11; 1 Samuel 3:1–14; 1 Kings 19:10–13; Jonah 4; Acts 9, 10:1–20). It is both practical and reverential to remain still and wait quietly to hear God's voice or receive His presence.

**\*How often do you sit quietly in God's presence and listen? How often do you have an agenda for God or the time you spend together? Why?**

**9. What is the outcome of waiting in God's presence for the psalmist (v. 3)?**

It's unclear whether the psalmist urges his fellow citizens to hope in God at all times while he waits quietly for God to reveal Himself or after he has waited and encountered the living God. Nevertheless, hope in God "both now and forevermore" indicates the certainty of blessing and reward when we continually trust in Him. If the psalmist had been despairing but experienced the Lord's love and power renewing his faith, then he could exhort others to wait on God and find hope, too. If he were still in the midst of waiting to see God's help manifest, he might be urging them to join him in believing in God's promises, remember all that God had already done for them, and wait expectantly for the Lord's deliverance or revelation.

**\*How might our lives be different when we wait for God before we speak or act?**

If your group wants to learn more about silence, refer to the Disciplines of the Spirit Bible Study on *Solitude*.

## **APPLICATION**

[Following the brief Bible study, please take time for this group experience so your members can learn to incorporate silence in their devotions].

**\*Let's take 10 minutes to be quiet before God.**

1. Let's humble ourselves, and confess we deserve none of the kindness God has shown us or the good things He's given us.
2. Let's thank Him that Jesus has opened the way to come boldly to Him at any time.
3. Let's ask Him to draw near to us.
4. Then, we'll sit silently and calm our whole beings: mind, body, emotions, and spirit.
5. With expectancy, let's wait for God to visit with each of us in some way. Let Him be God.
6. If you find your mind wandering, you could look back over Psalm 131, which we just studied. If something in the Psalm stands out to you, probably the Holy Spirit is communicating to you, so stop and try to be inwardly quiet again.

[After 5–10 minutes, you may end the silence with the next question:]

- 7. Would anyone like to share one thing that surprised or touched him or her in the quiet alone with God?**

[Additional application questions follow. Select one if time permits.]

**\*How important is it to you to have a close relationship with God? How can your relationship with Him become more intimate?**

**\*How do you perceive God's knowing you? Is God scrutinizing your every move or gazing on you with intimate parental affection?**

**\*How has your idea of or attitude toward meeting alone with God changed during this study?**

**\*If you believed that God would speak to you regularly about what He wants for your life, how often would you take time to meet with Him?**

You may want to share the InterVarsity Press booklet titled *Quiet Time* with the group (Lander) or hand out copies of the guidelines below.

**\*What is the next step you can take to arrange a regular time to be alone with God?**

**\*What are some practical guidelines for making our times alone with God "real"?**

You may want to end the discussion by handing out the list of guidelines from Claudia Cook's Devotions Class.

## **WRAPPING IT UP**

God longs to spend time with us and develop a deeply personal, intimate relationship. Remember the goal of your devotional time: experiencing God's presence. Ask for God's help. He is pursuing you (Cook).

## **Practical Guidelines for Enhancing Your Time Alone with God**

**Adapted from Claudia Cook's "Life of the Disciple Devotions Class"**

### **A. See prayer as the heart of a relationship: "coming home."**

"The heart of Christianity is relationship, and the heart of any relationship is communication" (Cook). Richard Foster describes prayer as coming home to the heart of God (Foster, *Prayer*, pp. 1–2). God longs to spend time with us and develop a deeply personal, intimate relationship. Foster maintains that God's "overwhelming love invites a response.... Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love" (Foster, *Prayer*, p. 3).

### **B. Make a time and place to be alone with God.**

It's helpful to think of your time alone with God as an appointment you make with Him. Just as you look forward to meeting with close friends or your loved ones, develop the attitude that you won't frequently skip this time. Once you settle the issue of meeting regularly with God, begin to order your life around Him. We see Jesus rising early in the morning to meet His Father even after an extraordinarily long day of work (Mark 1:35).

- Can you think of any better way to start the day? When we don't make time at the beginning of the day, it becomes harder to slow down and meet with God later. If you are not a "morning person," there are several things you can do to help you focus. Some may need a cup of tea or coffee, and others may want to walk or talk out loud during prayer.
- Do you need to go to bed earlier so you are alert when you wake up in the morning? "Routine is our friend in the devotional life" (Cook). As we get adequate sleep, devote time to meeting with God, and then follow His leading throughout the day, we may find that we develop other habits that fit the rhythm of life God created: day and night, work and rest, speech and silence, etc. (Ecclesiastes 3:1–8).
- Do you have a quiet place where you can relax and be alone together? Utilizing the same chair or room for your rendezvous with the Lord can help you unconsciously quiet or relax yourself. Some people use traditions like lighting a candle that signal time set apart for God just as a candlelit dinner and fine china help set a romantic or a special mood with people you love or want to honor.
- Do you have a Bible reading plan to follow so that your encounters are not totally random? If you don't, try reading one psalm every day or use a plan that helps you cover the whole Bible in one to four years systematically.
- As you develop these habits, you will find yourself more frequently looking forward to this intimate time with the Lord.

### **C. Learn to be honest with Him.**

Every close relationship needs both parties to be honest with each other. Many Christians are afraid to get real with God and admit their frustration over failing to develop this habit, not knowing Him better, or lacking skill in hearing His voice, etc. However, the Bible is full of real people with similar feelings. The Psalms reveal a wide variety of emotions and situations we can relate to. Begin to confess doubts, longings, and lack of motivation when appropriate. Even though we can't hide from God, admitting these things helps us remove barriers to intimacy. God wants to meet us in the areas of our lives that are broken, messed up, or not working well. He doesn't turn away from a humble, contrite person (Psalm 51:17). Talking out loud when we pray can help us be more honest and prevent long periods of introspection [turning inward to ourselves rather than outward to God].

### **D. Learn to listen to Him.**

Listening to God is a skill we can learn. It takes time, effort, and practice. Don't give up after a few instances of sitting quietly and waiting for Him to communicate something personal to you. Because He loves us so much, He will help us learn to recognize His "voice." Often His words will be simple and loving. That's because we are simple people and He full of love. Try spending five minutes in silence each day with the intention of listening to Him. Write down any thoughts that go through your mind. After you have experimented with this for a week or so, share what you have recorded with someone who seems to have a real relationship with the Lord. We may need their objectivity and their familiarity with God to help us realize what we are hearing from Him. God often "speaks" through a quiet or faint impression on our hearts or minds, so keep your expectations realistic as you begin.

### **E. Protect intimacy: develop a secret history with Him.**

Not everything two close friends discuss should be shared with others. Likewise, God may speak to you about things that are just for you to know. It can be helpful to record what you think God is saying and look back over that every six months or year to see how God has been working in your life. Some people may want to celebrate anniversaries of important things God has done. Remembering His faithfulness and His mighty acts were one of the main reasons God commanded His people to gather three times a year for sacred feasts (Leviticus 23). Jesus told us to remember His loving sacrifice whenever we take the communion elements (1 Corinthians 11:23–25). Note that "communion" can mean "mutual participation; an act of sharing; intimate fellowship or rapport" (m-w.com). Christianity is about a relationship, and remembering and celebrating the special moments in our relationship with God is worthwhile.

#### F. Use conversation starters.

- Reading a portion of Scripture, such as one of the Psalms, and then responding to God about what He impresses on you through His Word, can be a helpful in beginning your time with the Lord. It can be hard to talk with God when you have no idea of where to begin. Some people take verses of the Bible and reword them as personal prayers that they then offer to God out loud.
- Many have used written prayers of the fathers and mothers of the faith or the committees that have composed prayers and liturgy for various Christian denominations. These can both teach us how to pray and assist us in expressing our thoughts and feelings toward God. They can serve as models for our daily conversations with God, too.
- Devotional guides often combine Scripture with reflections and prayers but may also include poems, songs, hymns, etc. to help enrich our interaction with the Lord. They are sometimes arranged by time of day, by the seasons, by topics, or by life events.

#### G. Be creative: walk, write, draw, sing, and/or dance.

Since we are meeting with the great Creator and Artist of the universe, feel free to express yourself in a variety of ways. Some people like to engage God through writing, singing, drawing, or dancing. Realize that God treasures our childlike trust and wholehearted abandonment of ourselves to Him. Then it will be easier to offer up a variety of “languages” of the heart to Him. Once the pattern of meeting with God is established, using other means of expression or periodically using an alternate devotional guide may help keep you from settling into a monotonous routine.

#### H. Ask for a prayer language (1 Cor.14: 2, 4, 15, 18).

Although the practice of praying in tongues has caused a great deal of division in the church—both in Paul’s day and in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries—we do believe that the **private** use of tongues may be helpful in our devotional prayer times. Paul writes about tongues as

...prayer with one’s spirit ([1 Corinthians] 14:14–16) ... that ... edifies the person praying (14:4). Edifying oneself is not a sub-Christian goal, even if it is not the goal of ministry in the church.... Do we not pursue personal prayer and Bible study partly to strengthen our own relationship with the Lord?

(Carson, cited in Keener, p. 124).

Since Paul says he prays in tongues more than all the Corinthians, but he does not seem eager to pray in tongues in public worship without interpretation of them (1 Corinthians 14:18–19), we can guess that he prayed in tongues a lot in private (Keener, p. 124). Some people find that they have a

greater sensitivity to the Spirit of God when they quietly pray in tongues (Keener, pp. 183–186).

In Vineyard, we don't want to promote tongues as *the* most important gift, as a sign of spiritual maturity, or even as evidence necessary for salvation. We do not assume everyone prays in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:29–30) in our congregation or even in many Pentecostal or so-called charismatic churches (Keener, pp. 176, 181). However, we do recognize it as one of many gifts, and like other gifts, people often need to mature in their use of them. Keener suggests that when someone uses tongues, one's "...focus should be on sincerely praying with his or her spirit to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to make sure the words come out right" (p. 125).

If you do not currently pray in tongues, Paul suggests that we "eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy" (1 Corinthians 14:1). If you desire this gift as a help to your prayer life, then simply ask God for this gift, believing that He gives good gifts to His children (Luke 11:13; James 1:17). Do be careful to pursue intimacy with the Lord, not "obtaining this gift," as your private passion.

#### **I. Expect some difficulties and deal with them realistically.**

- Count on distractions that could take your focus off the Lord. The sinful desires of our own flesh, the world or culture we live in, and the devil are at war against our intimate union with God (James 1:14–15; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15–16; 1 Peter 5:8–9). But don't be discouraged. The Lord has promised a way of escape from any temptation including those that would lure us away from Him (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- Some find that if they write down things that come to mind that they might forget, they can stop worrying about the item. Others may want to simply imagine giving that thought or task to Jesus.
- Concentrating on our breathing is another technique that is recognized around the world and by many religions as a way to fight inner and outer distractions. It is not merely a pagan practice or magic; it's how God designed our bodies. Inhale through your nose for a count of 4; exhale through your mouth for a count of 8. Repeat this until you begin to feel your body slow down and relax. As you exhale, you can imagine all the junk in your life that disturbs or distracts you leaving. And, as you inhale, you can ask the Holy Spirit to fill you.
- The over stimulation and multi-tasking many of us participate in due to our lifestyle choices and our culture, make it difficult to be quiet and empty our thoughts of everything but the Lord. Beginning to simplify our lives and doing only one thing at a time can also help us learn to be more focused on just the Lord's presence.
- Introspection is a trap we can fall in to when we think over and over again about problems, etc. We need to turn away from talking to ourselves and pray, which is talking to God. Talking out loud can help us avoid this if we

habitually introspect in our thoughts or writing. Claudia Cook has a helpful tape on the subject if you need more help combating it.

- Approach time with God with some expectations but be sure they are reasonable. Many people become frustrated or discouraged because they try to implement unrealistic plans for their devotional time all at once. Start slowly and let your time with God grow and develop. There will be days you miss and other ups and downs, because you are in a dynamic relationship with the Lord. While He doesn't change (Hebrews 13:8), we do depending on our emotions, energy levels, seasons of life, and other factors beyond our control.

**J. Remember that each day you can start over.**

Remember that God gives you new mercies each day (Lamentations 3:21–23). Don't let past failures or frustrations color the next day's rendezvous with God. It's perfectly okay to even discuss your feelings and experiences with Him in your time of prayer!

Finally, remember the goal of your devotional time: experiencing God's presence. Ask for God's help. He is pursuing you.

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## [Humorous] Multiple-Choice Test for the Devotions Bible Study

1. "Devotions"
  - a. means boredom
  - b. is another name for a nap
  - c. is what happens when someone loses his or her rank in the military
  - d. is a good name for an online store selling the things we like to consume
  - e. is another name for spending time alone with God in Bible study and personal prayer.
  
2. My favorite place to be alone with God is
  - a. any quiet place
  - b. my special chair
  - c. out of doors
  - d. anywhere but my basement
  - e. anywhere but the belly of a large fish.
  
3. I usually pray alone
  - a. once a day
  - b. before a meal, test, or job interview
  - c. when I'm desperate and have tried everything else
  - d. none of the above
  - e. all but d and then some.
  
4. My "plan" for reading Scripture
  - a. doesn't exist
  - b. is so obscure that I can't decipher it
  - c. balances both Old and New Testament passages
  - d. is flexible and works for me
  - e. is too ambitious even for Billy Graham.
  
5. My goal in spending time with God
  - a. is to persuade Him to "buy me a Mercedes Benz"
  - b. is to figure out how to hear His voice
  - c. is to look good and to earn a merit badge
  - d. is to get to know God better
  - e. is both b and d.
  
6. If I could ask God for anything, I would
  - a. ask for a good auto mechanic or a computer that never crashes
  - b. ask for more friends who understand my sense of humor
  - c. ask Him to work a miracle [which might include a and b]
  - d. ask for answers to some of the hard questions I can't answer
  - e. ask for a closer relationship with Him.