

NEW BEGINNINGS

Gods Power Source

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A NEW BEGINNING

The story of Anthony Miles, about his search
and walk with God.

NEW JOURNAL PAGES

Discover yourself and the relationship you
have with God.

A New Beginning by Anthony Miles

My name is Anthony Miles. I'm 22 years old. I don't have a college degree. I don't have wealth. I'm not a pastor, youth pastor, worship leader, etc. I will most likely never have any major exposure within the church nationally or internationally. I'm no John Piper, Mark Driscoll, Billy Graham, or John Wesley. My name isn't known by the masses. I don't go to a mega-church. I don't live in a large city. I grew up in a very small town in rural Tennessee. I even grew up on a farm. I played basketball in high school, but wasn't the best. I play the guitar and enjoy singing, but I'm only average. I'm not a great orator or expositor. Most times I feel like Moses; tongue-tied, unable to speak clearly and incompetent at producing my thoughts verbally. I'm not the smartest guy on the planet. I made decent grades in school, but I was never at the top of the class. I had a good amount of friends, but I certainly was not one of the most popular guys in school. I'm just a normal, average guy.

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Wednesday

Genesis 1 - 3

Focus Verse - Genesis 3:12 ***The man replied, it was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.***

In today's reading, we explore the wonders of God's creation. We read about the magnificent life that God established for Adam and Eve, and the incredible opportunity they had to live forever in communion with God. Unfortunately, we are also allowed to witness the first time a person tried to dodge responsibility for their actions by shifting the blame to another.

God didn't ask Adam where he got the fruit; He asked him if he ate it. He didn't ask Eve who talked her into disobeying; He asked her what she had done. Yet both of them tried to minimize their actions by casting the blame on someone else. That tactic doesn't work with our parents, teachers, or bosses today, and it didn't go over so well in the beginning with God, either. Although many things can influence our actions and behavior, ultimately it is our choice whether to act properly or to give into temptation. God will neither excuse us nor condemn us based off of the actions of others. ***For we are each responsible for our own conduct*** (Gal. 6:5).

Thursday

Genesis 4 - 6

Focus Verse - Genesis 6:9 ***This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.***

The story of Noah simultaneously shows us the best and the worst of humanity. In only ten generations, mankind had managed to fill God's world with wickedness and perversion. This grieved the Lord to the point that He decided to destroy every living thing upon the earth. In the middle of all of the evil though, there was Noah. Somehow Noah had found the inner resolve not to be swayed by the world around him.

In our world today, we are once again surrounded by ungodly behavior. The pressure to just "go along with the crowd" can be intense. We may feel that the only way to have friends and "get ahead" is to set aside some of our beliefs in right and

wrong. In times like these, we must remember Noah. Genesis tells us that Noah was **righteous** and **blameless**. That does not mean he was a perfect, sinless man; It means that he tried his best to live for God. God does not expect us to be perfect; He knows we cannot be. He simply wants us to accept the gift He has given us through His Son Jesus Christ and to try our very best each day to live for Him. Always try to live **so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people** (Phil. 2 :15).

Friday

Genesis 7 - 9

Focus Verse - Genesis 8:15-16 **Then God said to Noah, Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives.**

Yesterday we discussed the righteousness of Noah. Today we are going to focus on his obedience. First God told Noah **Build a large boat** (6:14). Next He said **Go into the boat with your family** (7:1) and the animals. Finally, He told him to **Leave the boat**. Each time, Noah did exactly what God asked him to do. He didn't ask "why?" He didn't say "I'll do it when I get around to it." Not once did he whine, "but God, I don't want to! There aren't any clouds out there!" Without question, argument or complaint, Noah obeyed God.

Many of us today have a problem with the concept of unconditional obedience. We have been raised to believe that we should have an opinion on everything. We resent being "told what to do," and, as a result, we demand explanations from everyone that has expectations of us. As hard as it may be for us to accept, God's directives on the subject are clear. We are supposed to obey Him, as well as those He places in authority over us. Not just when we feel like it, but 100% of the time. **Those who accept My commandments and obey them are the ones who love Me. And because they love Me, My Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal Myself to each of them** (John 14:21).

Saturday

Genesis 10 - 12

Focus Verse - Genesis 12:3 ***I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.***

Out of that simple sentence spoken to Abram, the Lord brought about the salvation of the human race. When God first formed His covenant with Abram, He already knew everything that was to come. Even before the law was given to Moses, the Lord knew that the weak and sinful nature of mankind would not allow them to keep it. He knew how tenuous their relationship with Him would be, and He knew how many times it would be pushed to the breaking point. Yet He also knew that every step of the journey would be necessary in order to prepare us to accept His Son.

It should be comforting for us to realize how well God knows us. His plan is woven into every moment of our lives. As we head out on our own for the first time, many of us still are stuck in uncertainty. The future looms in front of us and we really aren't sure of our place in the world yet. That's okay! We may not know, but God does. Like Abram, we need to allow ourselves to be open to His call. ***Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect*** (Rom. 12:2).

Sunday

Genesis 13 - 15

Focus Verse - Genesis 13:9 ***The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I'll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I'll go to the left.***

Abram was offering Lot a very generous choice. As the elder and more influential relative, it would have been within Abram's rights to have assigned land to Lot. Abram, however, knew he had nothing to fear by allowing Lot to choose. He had faith that God, whose promise he was following, was in full control of his future. ***Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend***

on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take (Prov. 3:5-6). Lot's reaction to Abram's offer revealed a lot about the younger man's character. Lot did not balance his needs against his uncles, nor did he consider outside factors, such as the type of people that would become his neighbors. Lot considered only the richness and suitability of the land, and on that basis he chose his portion. ***But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction*** (1 Tim. 6:9).

When faced with choices in our lives today, how do we react? Do we show the unwavering faith of Abram, and follow God's lead, or do we display the calculating greed of Lot? In society today it is the prevailing belief that we should always look out for our own best interest. The question is frequently asked, "If you don't look out for yourself, then who will?" God leads us in a different direction. If we are willing to yield to Him, then He will care for us and show us the way. At every crossroad, we should not look for our "best" choice, but instead for the choice that will be the most fair to all involved. When in doubt, always lean in the other person's favor. It flies in the face of what we have been taught here on earth, but it lines up perfectly with God's Word. ***Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves*** (Phil. 2:3).

Monday

Genesis 16 - 18

Focus Verse - Genesis 16:2 ***So Sarai said to Abram, The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her. And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal.***

The Lord had promised Abram that he would have a son, and from that son he would eventually have descendants too numerous to count. Even though Abram was already an old man at that point, he believed God's promise. Although he believed what God had said, Abram still made a crucial mistake. It was clear to both Abram and Sarai that she could not have children. Therefore, in order for God's word to be fulfilled, they decided to go about it a different way. In their impatience, they stepped outside of God's plan.

How do we know if we are following God's plan or if we are trying to direct it? For starters, God will never ask us to do something against His established commandments in order to follow His plan for our life. If what we feel we need to do is either illegal or immoral, then chances are good the idea is totally our own. Secondly, if we feel anxious or uncomfortable with our plan of action, that is also a sign that the directions are not coming from God. When we are in step with God, we will feel a sense of peace, even in troubled times. ***And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them*** (Rom. 8:28).

Tuesday

Genesis 19 - 21

Focus Verse - Genesis 20:2 ***Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by saying, She is my sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace.***

These Scriptures reveal a serious character flaw in Abraham (previously Abram). Let's compare today's focus verse to one that we have read recently. ***So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you*** (12:13). In both cases, Abraham feared for his life if those around him knew that Sarah (previously Sarai) was his wife. In both cases, Abraham chose to lie rather than rely on the protection of God. Each time Abraham chose to lie, he made matters worse for everyone involved.

There are two lessons here for us today. The first one is obvious. Half-truths, bending the truth or twisting the truth are the same as lying, and nothing good will ever come of it. Lies will just get in the way of God's plan for us. The second is not as easy to see, but is equally important. God understands our human shortcomings and fears. He will not condone our misdeeds, and he will allow us to experience the consequences of them, but He loves us and He is not going to give up on us just because we have a weakness. God corrected Abraham and allowed him to learn from his mistakes. He will do the same for us if we let Him. ***But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness*** (1 John 1:9).

JOURNAL
A New Beginning

Week One - Who am I? Each day set aside time to contemplate your personality and your life. Examine both things you like and things that you wish you could change.

Week Two - Who is God? Each day set aside time to contemplate your relationship with God. What does He mean to you, not just as a whole, but in different situations?

Week Three - How can God work in my life? Go over your first two weeks of journal entries. Where do you see the need for God's presence and intervention?

Week Four - How is God at work in the world? Each evening consider the day that has just passed. Write down at least one example of a moment that you saw God at work.

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