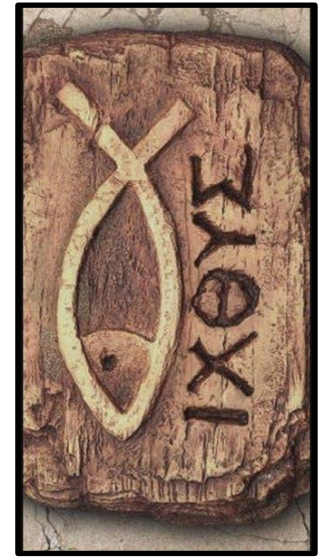


## September 24 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

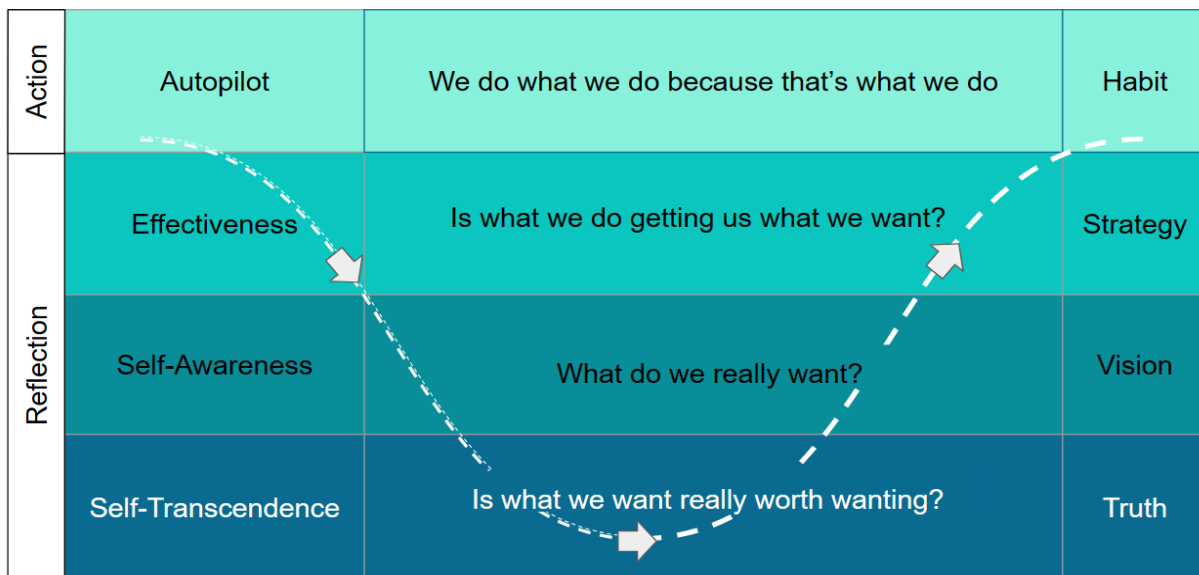
### Life Worth Living Study – Week 3 – Diving In – What’s Worth Wanting?

Part 1 Chapter 1 of Life Worth Living is entitled “Diving In – What’s Worth Wanting”. It speaks of four levels at which we live: autopilot, effectiveness, self-awareness and self-transcendence, shown graphically in the figure below. From the text, much of life is lived up at the surface...humming along, and in a state of flow. In the best case scenario, what we do is finely tuned to give us the results that we want. We live by reflex whenever we are not reflective about our actions.



However, sometimes we realize that our actions are not really taking us where we should go. We ask the reflective question... that’s how we have always done it no longer cuts it. How can we get more of what we want? Unfortunately, the effectiveness question strikes many people as the most insightful question there is. The authors state that Silicon Valley is a master of effectiveness, always looking to ways of making life more efficient and productive. We must remember that there are matters deeper than effectiveness.

## Diving In



Eventually effectiveness begins to ring hollow. What do we really want? What are we really after? We are led a little deeper into the need for self-awareness. In the depths of self-awareness, we come to realize that our visions of a good life may be worthwhile but they may be just our own. Our wants may not be compelling to others or even understandable. We may ask how can we use our wants to live with integrity. We orient our lives explicitly and intentionally to that which our lives have always been called to. The authors state that the self-awareness layer can be a lonely place.

In the success scenario, we have managed to orient our lives around getting what we want, but there appears to be something missing. The frustration of recognizing that this “good life” isn’t all it is said to

be. What we really want is a whole vision of life. To know the shape of a flourishing life leads us into the bedrock – the self-transcendence depth. At this deepest level, we seek visions that are worthy of our humanity. We ask not what we want but is it worth wanting. We are no longer the heart of the matter and here questions of truth matter and others come back in focus.

The text states that we cannot live at such depths every moment - it would be too suffocating thus we have to re-surface. However on the surface of the every day we are to take what has been revealed to us at the deepest depth and practice and live that which we have come to understand and claim.

As followers of Christ, we are usually taken to those deep depths of truth in times of great joy or great despair, when we are allowed by the Holy Spirit to experience God's real presence and immeasurable love and grace in a faith forming way. We understand better who He is and who we are in relation to Him. As Christians, we yearn to look to God's Word in Scripture to find wisdom and perspective and long for relationship with Him through pray and worship, always seeking first His Kingdom in all that we are and do.

We look to King David of Israel for example in His relationship with God. David, who arose as a boy shepherd to be anointed by God through the prophet Samuel as the future king, loved God and His people. In his 40 years as ruler, between approximately 1010 and 970 BCE, he united the people of Israel, led them to victory in battle, conquered land and paved the way for his son, Solomon, to build the Holy Temple. Almost all knowledge of him is derived from the books of the Prophets and Writings: Samuel 1 and II, Kings I and Chronicles I.



David is credited as the writer of Psalms. It is here that we see David the man working his relationship with God. From the extreme of emotions and questions, he seeks God throughout his life, calling out from the mountains of joy and praise to the depths of despair and sorrow, that is not unlike each of us.

Psalm 42 is King David's prayer in the depths of discouragement: *'Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. The Lord will send his faithful love by day; his song will be with me in the night.'* Most likely, the setting of the psalm is that the sons of Korah—the leaders of tabernacle worship to whom the psalm is attributed—were accompanying King David as he was driven from Jerusalem by his rebellious son Absalom into the northern hills of Mount Hebron. As David and those faithful to him fled for their lives, they looked back in sadness at their home of Jerusalem, remembering and longing for times of joyful communal worship to God and faithful fellowship in the temple more than 100 miles away. Psalm 42 is a record of their thoughts in that time of exile. The sons of Korah were Levites, from the family of Kohath. By David's time they served in the musical aspect of the temple worship. Korah led a rebellion of 250 community leaders against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus. God judged Korah and his leaders and they all died, but the

sons of Korah remained. They were so grateful for this mercy that they became notable in Israel for praising God.

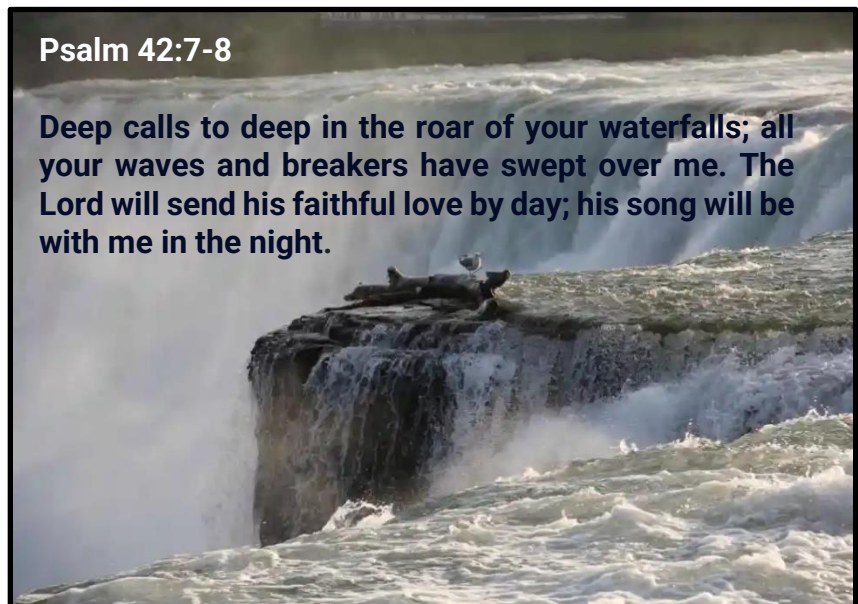
The songwriter laments his great need and thirst for God's presence like a deer panting for streams of water. The emphasis is on the desperation of the need where sorrow is always a sense of lack. The exiles were longing for their Savior in tears while their enemies taunted them, even to the point that they had no appetite in their feeling of isolation. Cut off from Jerusalem, they could only remember what it was like to take part in worship with shouts of joy in the festive processions. In the reminiscing, the songwriter attempts to encourage himself in the Lord and place his hope in God. The songwriter waffles between confident hope that he would soon be able to praise the Lord as he had in the past, and despair of a "downcast soul" over his present affliction.

Perhaps in the presence of a waterfall in the exiled high country, the psalmist laments figuratively, "Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me". The Hebrew word translated here as "deep" refers to the deepest depths of the sea. The psalmist and those with him had lost all footing, and felt as if recurring waves of trouble had plunged their souls into a bottomless ocean of sorrow and despair. The psalmist is expressing the fact that his soul was in profound deep need of God and His unfathomable greatness

and depth. F.B. Meyer thought of this as the depths of God answering to the depths of human need. "Whatever depths there are in God, they appeal to corresponding depths in us. And whatever the depths of our sorrow, desire, or necessity, there are correspondences in God from which full supplies may be obtained. The deep of divine redemption calls to the deep of human need. The deep of Christ's wealth calls to the deep of the saint's poverty. The deep of the Holy Spirit's intercession calls to the deep of the Church's prayer."

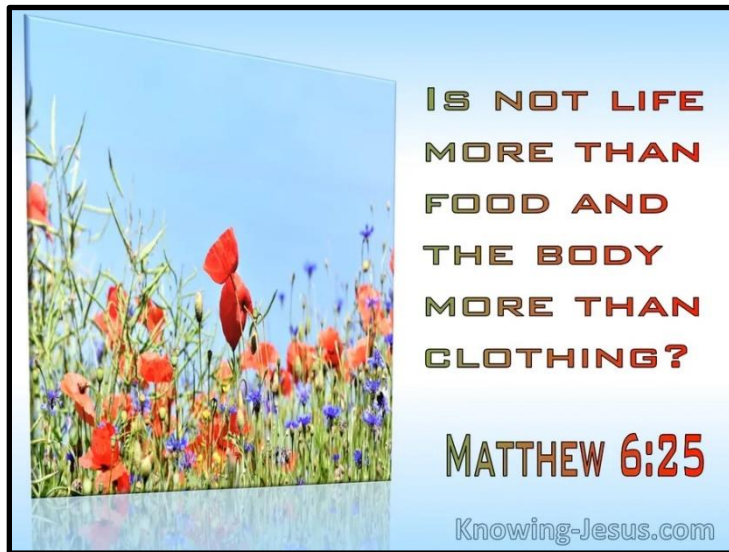
The psalmist pauses from the painful memory to challenge his own soul. He does not surrender to his feelings of spiritual depression and discouragement. Instead, he challenges them and brings them before God. "*Hope in God. He will come through because He has before.*" Even in this low time, there remains hope. He is assured by 'God's love directed by day and at night by God's song within him, giving praise'. In these depths, David has found the bedrock of life – God, who is our hope.

David has the confidence to call God his Rock – his place of security, stability, and strength. At the same time he could honestly bring his feelings to God and ask, "*Why have You forgotten me?*" It was because he regarded God as his Rock that he could pour out his soul before Him so honestly. He senses God sustaining him, but his battle is not over. There is the constant oppression of the enemy. The taunt, "*Where is your God?*" continues from them. As the oppression of the enemy continues, David continues





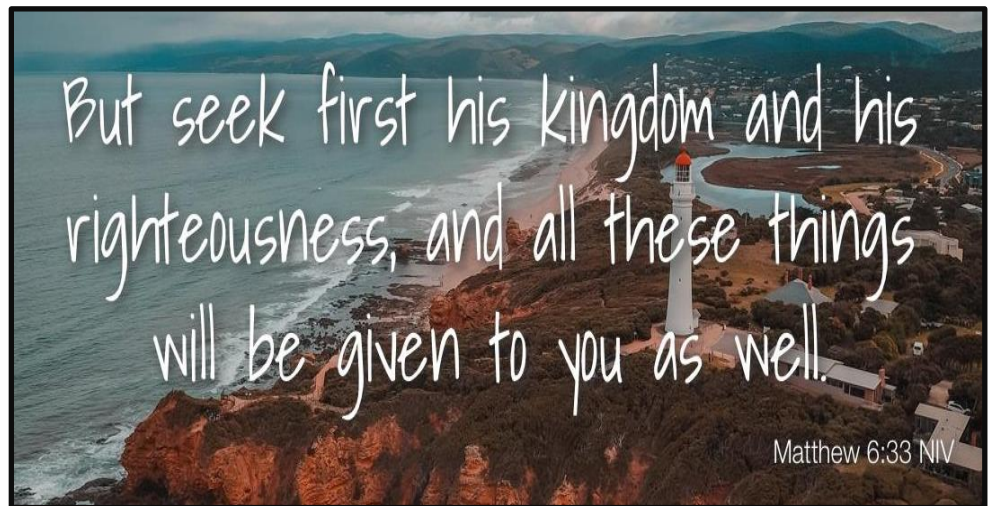
to speak to himself and challenge his own sense of discouragement, repeating the helpful and encouraging words that he and everyone buried under discouragement needs – *‘keep hope in God and keep confidence that I shall yet praise Him’*.



To understand the deep truths of life, we also look to the questions of Jesus in Scripture, specifically Matthew 6:25. Jesus asks, “Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” Commentary states that there is scarcely any sin against which our Lord Jesus more warns his disciples, than disquieting, distracting, distrustful cares about the things of this life. This often ensnares the poor as much as the love of wealth does the rich. But there is a carefulness about temporal things which is a duty, though we must not carry these lawful cares too far.

Worry, fretting, anxious ridden, tumultuous thoughts, troubled spirit, disquieted heart and mind – none are proper for a child of God. Simply put, Christians are not to worry. We worry when we are overly concerned about getting what we think we want. Ann Voskamp shares: “All worry is a desperate wanting of my own way.”

Anxiousness takes our eyes off of Jesus, our Substance and Provider, and places them on the shadow – our own frail weaknesses and inabilities. God takes pleasure in those who hope in His goodness and mercy. Jesus desired for His followers not to be torn apart in their minds and spirits. Paul echoes our Lord’s sentiments in Philippians citing prayer and thanksgiving as the antidotes for the prison of worry both of which bring us an unearthly peace and joy:



What our Lord taught is that our relationship with God is to be the dominating focus of our lives – seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness - and we are to be cautiously carefree regarding everything else in comparison to that. It is a matter of priorities. When we are consumed with fret over our circumstances, whatever they may be, that is wrongly taking over the priority of our lives.

**“Jesus Christ knows our circumstances better than we do, and He says we must not think about these things to the point where they become the primary concern of our life. Whenever there are**

competing concerns in your life, be sure you always put your relationship to God first.” Oswald Chambers

"There is unwavering peace today when an uncertain tomorrow is trusted to an unchanging God."  
Ann Voskamp

## Looking ahead – Sunday September 24

Discuss your life inventory questions from [Life Worth Living](#)  
Introductory “Your Turn” in the context of today’s discussion.

Discuss what do you want Jesus to do for you?

