

Chapter One - "God's Ways are not Our Ways"

Scriptures

1) Look up and write out: **Philippians 1:21**

2) Read: **Hosea 6:1**

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord.: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up."

3) Read: **John 12:24-25**

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

4) Look up and write out: **Proverbs 14:12**

5) Read: **Deuteronomy 30:19-20**

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that Thou mayest cleave unto Him: for *He is thy life...*"

6) Look up and write out: **Isaiah 55:9**

7) Read: **Psalm 119:71**

“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.”

Chapter One - “God’s Ways are Not Our Ways” Homework

Terror in the Mountains

- 1) What did Nancy do when she knew they were going to crash?
- 2) What did God do in return?
- 3) Have you ever experienced a similar scary moment? What did you do?

Only Part of My Life

- 1) Explain in your own words the difference between having God only as a “part” of your life and having Him as your “life” itself.
- 2) Name four supernatural things that God wants us to experience in our Christian walk?
- 3) In order to have these supernatural attributes, what is it that we have to do continually?

God’s Cornering Process

- 1) What attitude must we develop in order to be filled with God and His abundant Life?
- 2) Why does God put us in a “corner?” What are the two ways out? Has God ever cornered you? Explain.

God’s Ways

- 1) Looking back, what does Nancy now say about the refining process God put her through?
- 2) What is the one thing she would now change?

Chapter Two - "Too Busy for God" Scriptures

1) Look up and write out: **Matthew 23:27-28**

2) Read out loud to your mate: **Proverbs 31:10-31** (husbands read to your wife)
1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (wives read to your husband)

3) Look up and write out: **Matthew 13:22**

4) Look up and write out: **Isaiah 29:13**

Chapter Two - “Too Busy for God” Homework

Whitewashed Tombs

- 1) On the outside, Chuck and Nancy looked like the “perfect” Christian couple. However, on the inside, they struggled with four big things. What were they?
- 2) What does the Bible call these kinds of Christians? (Matthew 23:27)
- 3) Have you seen marriages like this in your sphere of friends?

Loveless Relationships

- 1) Have you ever witnessed a marriage like this?
- 2) What makes Nancy’s story a little different than so many others we hear about today? Did Nancy and Chuck really love God the way He intends?
- 3) Jesus came to give us “abundant Life.” Define abundant Life and list three of its attributes.

Blind Date

- 1) Throughout their courtship, Chuck lovingly shared about his Jesus. As Nancy began to read the Bible for the first time, what did she finally realize?
- 2) Have you ever experienced an emptiness in your soul as Nancy did? How did you try to fill it? Explain.

Our Marriage

- 1) As struggles began to appear in Nancy’s marriage, what was the one thing she knew to be true about God and His Word?

- 2) God wants to accomplish a miracle in us even in the middle of a trial. What happens however, if we jump out of the fire too soon? What is another reason to patiently endure the trial?

Too Busy for Church

- 1) After moving several times and attending a denominational church, what were the four things that Chuck and Nancy became too busy to do?
- 2) Why did their love for the Lord “grow cold?” (Matthew 24:12) Have you ever experienced something similar?

Giving Our Lives Away

- 1) Once the airplane incident occurred, what did Nancy and Chuck both do? What did they promise the Lord?
- 2) What must we put along side of our words and our promises to the Lord? What does He require in order for it to be “truth?”

Chapter Three - "Where's the Love?" Scriptures

1) Look up and write out: **Psalm 103:12**

2) Look up and write out: **Romans 7:15**

3) Read: **John 12:24**

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

4) Look up and write out: **2 Corinthians 4:11**

5) Look up and write out: **Matthew 24:12**

Chapter Three - "Where's the Love?"

Homework

Marriage Trials

- 1) When Nancy thought of marriage, whose was the kind she envisioned and hoped for? Why? If you had your desires, what kind of a marriage would please you?
- 2) When Nancy complained about Chuck's long hours or his extensive traveling, how did he respond? Why did he react that way? Have you ever had a similar response from your spouse? What did he/she say?

Chuck's Temperament

- 1) Knowing _____ and _____ to respond to your spouse is absolutely critical in marriage. Why?
- 2) Is your spouse's temperament different than yours? Explain.

Nancy's Temperament

- 1) On the 'outside' Nancy pretended everything was fine. But, on the 'inside' what two negative things were happening? Why are these two things so deadly? Have you seen them occur in your own marriage?
- 2) At this point, Nancy would go to God asking what? Why was nothing working for her? Do you ever feel this way?

Diversity of Interests

- 1) Chuck and Nancy's marriage became more and more strained because of what?
- 2) In your marriage, are your personalities and interests as diverse as Nancy and Chucks? What have you done to compromise? Explain.

Different Stress Levels

- 1) After many attempts to create a loving atmosphere for Chuck, Nancy finally gave up and did what? Why?
- 2) What questions did she then ask God? Have you ever felt the same way? Explain.

Chaos

- 1) Why didn't Chuck want to come home at night? What was the atmosphere like?
- 2) How about your home life? What does your spouse come home to?

Overwhelmed with Unhappiness

- 1) Without Jesus literally _____, we are all “walking time bombs” ready to explode.
- 2) The buried _____ and _____ that Nancy never dealt with, began to motivate all of her actions. Have you ever experienced this? Explain.

Happiness Depends on Three Things

- 1) Nancy found that her happiness totally depended upon what three things?
- 2) Her whole world rose and set with how she _____ these three things. Do you find you do the same?

A Total Impossibility

- 1) Why did Nancy find living the Christian life such a struggle? What did God finally show her? Can you relate?
- 2) Why do we feel like ‘hypocrites’ when we try to love someone whom we really can’t stand? Why is it that we respond just the opposite of how we want to? Do you ever do this?

Agape is God

- 1) Define Agape. In order for Agape to flow through us, what do we need to do first?
- 2) Many Christians today are confused about God’s Love. Can you explain what it is; how it differs from human love and what we must do to let it flow through us?

Chapter Four - "God, What are You Doing to Me?" Scriptures

1) Look up and write out: **Matthew 15:8**

Chapter Four - “God, What are You Doing to Me?” Homework

Our Children

- 1) Who played an important role in God’s cornering process in Nancy’s life?
- 2) Who is it in your life that God has used? Explain.

Our Boys

- 1) What were the three things that Chip and Mark found missing at home and that they began to search for elsewhere?
- 2) Are these three things available in your home? Be honest.

Lisa

- 1) What were the two things Lisa began to do to protect herself from what she saw happening to her parents?
- 2) Have you ever experienced these two things? Share how.

Michelle

- 1) Because of Michelle’s physical needs, Nancy felt like she was losing _____ of everything she cherished.
- 2) As a result, she would again go to the Lord and cry out, “it seems like You have abandoned me when I need You the most.” Have you ever felt this way? What happened?

Intolerable Situation

- 1) Why didn’t Chuck feel free to bring home his worries or his struggles? Why couldn’t Nancy see what was going on with Chuck or help him? Why couldn’t she move towards him?
- 2) What were the three things that Nancy and Chuck lacked at this point in their marriage? Have you ever experienced any of these negative things in regards to your mate? What did you do to overcome them?

Chapter Five - “Why Can’t He Change First?” Scriptures

1) Look up and write out: **Ephesians 5:22, 25; 6:1**

2) Look up and write out: **Matthew 23:25**

3) Look up and write out: **James 1:22-24**

4) Read: **1 Corinthians 13:1-8**

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not *Agape*, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not *Agape*, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not *Agape*, it profiteth me nothing.

Agape suffereth long, and is kind; *Agape* envieth not; *Agape* vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. *Agape* never faileth...”

5) Look up and write out: **2 Corinthians 8:12**

6) Look up and write out: **Romans 8:29**

7) Read: **John 12:24**

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

8) Look up and write out: **Matthew 23:26**

Chapter Five - “Why Can’t He Change First?” Homework

Read Any New Book

- 1) What four ways did Nancy try in her own strength to save her marriage? Each of these ways would work for awhile, but when she got tired of performing, what always happened? Have you ever experienced something similar? Nancy wanted a ‘magical’ formula that would change Chuck, not necessarily for his good, but for what?
- 2) Why is it so imperative to have an inside-out change, rather than just an ‘outside’ change?

The ‘Way of Emotions’

- 1) Emotional outbursts are common among many women. Why are they a trap?
- 2) How do men often react? Can you give examples of each.

Cold as Ice

- 1) Nancy’s anger was really a symptom of a much deeper cause, which was what?
- 2) Why couldn’t she control how she really felt? Have you ever had a similar experience?

Controlling Our Feelings

- 1) So often we control our feelings rather than give them over to the Lord. Describe the difference between these two ways of responding.
- 2) What is the only way we can truly get rid of our pain?

The ‘Way of Submission’

- 1) Describe the ‘way of submission’ according to Ephesians 5:22-26. What happens, however, when one or more of the family is out of their place in that chain? What is the result?
- 2) Why did Nancy feel like a ‘doormat?’ What did she do that caused her to feel like a ‘powerhouse?’

Take Any Class on Marriage

- 1) After reading this chapter, describe what a hypocrite is. Have you seen any hypocrisy in your church? Give an example.
- 2) What does God need from us in order to use our lives as an open vessel?

Why Should I Be the First to Change?

- 1) What was God's answer when Nancy asked Him the question, "*why should I be the first to change?*" Has God ever told you something similar?
- 2) What must the basic ingredient be for this change to come about?

A Diamond in the Rough

- 1) God's basic will is to conform us into His image. What two things must He do in order to bring this about? Why doesn't it matter 'who' is the first to begin this change?
- 2) Define 'abundant Life.'

The Real Problem

- 1) What are some of the things that Nancy didn't recognize separated her from God's Love? Do you ever struggle with any of these?
- 2) Why didn't all the books Nancy read, the classes she took and the emotions she expressed, save her marriage? What was she lacking? How about in your life; are you lacking these things?

Chapter Six - "What Other Way is There?" Scriptures

1) Read: **Matthew 7:3-5**

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou, hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

2) Look up and write out: **Genesis 2:18**

3) Look up and write out: **Proverbs 19:13**

4) Look up and write out: **Isaiah 59:2**

5) Look up and write out: **Psalms 24:4**

6) Read: **John 12:24-25**

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”

7) Look up and write out: **Psalms 119:70**

8) Read: **Philippians 2:5-9**

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every Name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”

Chapter Six - "What Other Way is There?" Homework

Explosion Point

- 1) What is one of the main reasons there are so many divorces, split families and broken relationships today? Our natural inclination is to do what?
- 2) As Christians, we have three options as to how to handle our emotions. What are they?

Showdown

- 1) What are two important things to remember when we share our real feelings with each other? Otherwise what can happen?
- 2) Have you ever experienced this? What happened?

Supportive Partner

- 1) In Genesis 2:18, God lays out what His purpose is for women. What does He say? What exactly does a 'helpmate' do?
- 2) Chuck yearned for Nancy to be what? What was it that had pushed him away? Can you relate? Explain.

The War Zone

- 1) When men come home from work, what is it that they are looking for?
- 2) Tension at home just drives men to do what?

Our True Selves

- 1) What were some of the things that the Lord revealed to Nancy that she was holding on to and that separated her from Him? What exactly does it mean to be 'separated' from the Lord? When this occurs, what happens to His Love?
- 2) Have you ever experienced any of these 'fleshly' things? Did you experience God's Love being quenched? Did you notice a difference? Can you share.

A ‘New’ Way to Love

- 1) What was the ‘new’ way of Love that the Lord showed Nancy?
- 2) What was Nancy’s prayer? Have you ever prayed a similar prayer? What did Nancy do that finally began to turn her life and her marriage around?

Not a One Time Choice

- 1) Why is God’s *Way of Love* a moment by moment? Share your personal experience.
- 2) Do these faith choices get easier to make the longer we walk with the Lord? Explain from your own experience.

“Yes, We’re Willing”

- 1) Who did the Lord tell Nancy He was going to start changing first? Why? What response did Nancy make? Have you ever had a similar conversation with the Lord? Explain.
- 2) What does John 12:24-25 have to do with God’s *Way of Love*? Explain how God’s Love gets quenched in our hearts.

How Do We Do This?

- 1) What are the three steps that God showed Nancy how to deal with the sin in her life?
- 2) Write these three steps out on 3X5 cards and memorize them.

Our Responsibility

- 1) What two things does God require from us in order to work in and through our lives? Wonder if we don’t ‘feel’ willing, what should we do then?
- 2) Describe the three supernatural gifts that God will supply through us when we yield ourselves to Him?

Chapter Seven - "A More Excellent Way" Scriptures

1) Look up and write out: **Romans 8:39**

2) Look up and write out: **Isaiah 29:13**

3) Look up and write out: **1 Corinthians 13:8**

4) Look up and write out: **Matthew 7:14**

Chapter Seven - "A More Excellent Way" Homework

Teach Me about Your Love

- 1) What did Nancy do that allowed God to finally transform her life? Describe the before and after. Can you relate to this?
- 2) Just because we are Christians doesn't mean we have God's Love automatically working in our lives? Why? Why not? Explain. What is the critical *first* step to allowing God's Love to operate in our lives?

A More Excellent Way

- 1) Describe what 'maturity in Christ' is.
- 2) What is 'tough Love?' When is tough Love appropriate? Give an example.

Focus on Jesus

- 1) When we stay 'open vessels' for God's Love to flow, what four things result?
- 2) What kind of a reaction does this kind of unconditional Love prompt from others? Have you ever experienced this? Share.

The Difference

- 1) Compare some of the ways Nancy reacted 'before' with the ways you react. Are they similar? Share what you found.
- 2) How has God taught you to react? What should some of the results be when you react in His *Way of Agape*.

The Key

- 1) We can be free as long as we do what? What are we to keep our focus on? What happens if we take our eyes off of the Lord? Have you ever experienced this?
- 2) God's Love does what four things in a marriage relationship?

Chapter Eight - "God's Way of Love" Scriptures

1) Look up and write out: **Isaiah 29:13**

2) Look up and write out: **1 Corinthians 13:8**

3) Look up and write out: **Matthew 7:14**

4) Look up and write out: **1 John 4:17**

Chapter Eight- “God’s Way of Love” Homework

Challenges

- 1) Marriage was originally designed as an earthly model to show what?
- 2) What danger lies ahead if we keep honoring God with our lips only? (Matthew 24:12)

Living Abundant Lives

- 1) Again, what is abundant life? Why does God consider it so very important?
- 2) Why is it so vitally important to be ‘living examples’ of God’s abundant life?

Keep Looking Up

- 1) List four things that we cannot control or change in our lives. But, what is it that we can do?
- 2) Is there anything too big or too difficult for God’s Love to fix? Are you willing to do all that’s needed to have His Love flow through you? Why is this way so hard to do?

What Will Make Us Willing?

- 1) What is it that will make us willing to change?
- 2) By allowing difficult times in our lives, God gives us what? Again, define what maturity in Christ is.

Only Way That Works

- 1) What is the answer to why we should be the first to change?
- 2) What is the key to being able to do so?

God’s Love Never Fails

- 1) God’s Way of Love works even when we _____, _____
_____ and _____.
- 2) All we need to be is _____.

God's Way of *Agape*

- 1) *The Way of Agape* incorporates three things. What are they?
- 2) How is *The Way of Agape* any different from our own natural way of loving. Explain.