

Alicia Frierson
Week 1
Journal Assignment

I have chosen Anna as my inspirational character. I can see Anna as someone that went through some challenges in life. She was only married to her husband for 7 years and then became a widow. As I recall my life and 7 years of marriage to my husband, I recall the birth of two children, very simplistic times, and much struggle. In fact, when we had reached year 7, we were just beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. My husband was committed to making a good life for us. I can truly say, by this time we were on our way to a better life.

In Anna's life this was the end of a very short union. According to the scripture after her husband's death she spent the rest of her days as a widow. However, her opportunity for purpose in life was never taken from her. I have no idea what her life was like while she was a married woman. However, I see where after her loss she took on the role of a full-time servant of the Lord who spent her life serving in his house. She was a woman of prayer.

This is inspirational to me because one of the first callings I experienced in my life as a Christian was the call to prayer. As a young woman in my early twenties, I was always a part of the church prayer sessions. My church would periodically have 3 days of fasting and prayer, we would call these shut ins. The church also had an intercessory prayer group that I was a part of. These were mainly held by some of the older women in the church. Prayer and fasting were normal habits in my life. I believe it was those early days of dedication and commitment to serving the Lord that have brought me through difficult times in my life. Not to say that I'm no longer fasting or praying but the dedication level was much higher in days gone by. Sometimes I feel as high as a kite with my walk in the spirit and other times I have to push and push. When I think about how Anna stayed in the temple and served God night and day with prayer and fasting it inspires me to continue to strive and persevere for these times of fellowship and sacrifice unto the Lord.

Now the church I attend has been closed due to the pandemic and people not wanting to return. We would have prayer services every Monday night. I miss this so much. Telephone prayer calls can't replace the moves of God we would experience at these services. Not to mention the words the Lord would speak to encourage us in our walk.

I believe that due to Anna's dedication to service in the temple she had opportunity to learn so much about the soon coming Messiah. She was able to identify Him and speak of Him due to her knowledge and her prophetic anointing.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Father,

I thank you so much for the gift of your son Jesus. Through him you redeemed me, delivered me, and saved me from my enemies. You gave me salvation. Thank you. Father you have also given me ability in Christ to walk in holiness for the rest of my life. God when challenges come in my walk, I know that your mercy is on them that fear you from generation to generation. Thank you that I can serve you without fear. In Jesus name amen.

Week 2 Journal Assignment

I chose number 3 for my journal this week.

Sincerely feeling that my focus is not on doing God's will right now, I wrestle because I'm so used to having my hands busy in something. There are many things I want to do and many things I feel like I need to do. However, something inside of me is saying "seek His will during this time of your life." Several, painful adjustments have had to be made. The church my husband and I Pastor has been closed. We've lost several people since Covid but not necessarily due to Covid. No growth. No building to worship in. Husband/Pastor losing passion seems like he has lost his way. Amid all of this, a fall has left me with a broken leg to heal from. At a time when I am usually doing book clubs and hosting women's zoom inspirational meetings; everything is halted. I am told by the Lord to be Mary, not Martha right now. This week as I sought God's will, I discover that He cares so much about what concerns me and wants to give me the answers I need. To not feel guilty because of the things that are going on, He is working it all out as I trust Him. No, at the moment, I don't know what the plan is, but I do know that God loves me and daily He is showing me the way. He wants me to be at peace in His will.

Week 3 Journal Assignment

1. Luke 6:20-26

a. I think this portion of scripture represents the rich and the poor, the privileged and the under-privileged the faithful and the faithless. I believe for today; these groups are illustrative of those who are despised and maybe even hated for their economic status as well as their moral Christian beliefs. It speaks to those that are poor, but followers. Jesus promised them the kingdom of God. On the other hand, I see a representation of people that trust in their riches and are happy and content with their material gain and their social acceptance. These are not living their lives for Christ and their future comes with woe, which is grief.

b. I find this section comforting. I think so because it allows us to see that what we suffer on this earth with Christ in our lives and for his sake comes with reward.

2. Luke 6:27-31

- a. Because he knew everyone there was not hearing. They may be listening but, not hearing. These people were those who were following him or were deciding to follow him.
- b. The command to love.
- c. Enemies are takers, users, and abusers. At the moment, I believe my enemies may be from afar, not in my close circle.
- d. We are to love, bless, do good and pray for them, treat them like we would want to be treated.

3. Luke 6:32-38

- a. I believe that YOU would be the followers, those who have heard and accepted the teachings of Jesus. The SINNERS represent the world/society or those that have not decided to follow Jesus. They haven't heard and accepted his teaching. His way of teaching illustrates that the YOU'S are not to respond and live the same way the sinner does. Jesus defines a totally different way of living.
- b. The nature of love Jesus wants us to have appears to me like a love that is willing to sacrifice everything, overlooks, and doesn't respond to the inconsiderateness or cruelty of others. It is a forgiving love that continues to endure. I could stretch myself more

- in the area of giving to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from me, don't try to get them back.
- c. My insight this week would stand as a reminder that Jesus wants us to be deliberate in how we conduct ourselves among those that are our enemies. He has reward for us as we continue to love him and live for him even under persecution. Our life's behavior is to look and be different than that of the sinner due to different responses and thought processes.

Week 4 Journal Assignment

This week's assignment was very welcomed for me. I had just begun to get up each morning and sit in silence. I really felt like sometimes my mind was going and going and going. The stillness was necessary. I could not help but find myself in Psalms 46:10. I remembered years ago Pastor John told us that stillness is a form of prayer. He said some things you will not know until you have sat in the presence of God quietly enough for him to speak to you. As I close out this week, I've learned through these times of quietness that I need to wake myself up in the area of faith in my life. I need to remind myself of Hebrews 11:6. I must believe that God is. I also found myself basking in the worship song "Waymaker". I am encouraged.

WEEK 5

In response to number 1: There is a lot to learn about the Father in the first nine chapters. I observed through the first 3 chapters however, how intricate and detailed God is. He planned out every aspect of the birth of Christ and the redemption of mankind. I love how Luke revealed in his account that redemption could not be accomplished without the willingness and obedience of Mary, Joseph and Jesus.

In response to number 2: Jesus was very focused on obeying His Father. He was a compassionate person, caring about the sick. Jesus was a teacher. It was very important to him that his followers and disciples knew what he was teaching and what it meant. He shared much wisdom and revelation with his followers. He wanted them to know what he was all about, the father was all about and the kingdom was all about.

In response to number 3: I could see the disciples as being willing to learn. I could see them not afraid to ask questions. I could also see them developing a deep love and admiration for Jesus and his teachings.

In response to number 4: The religious leaders were not concerned about truth. They wanted to tear down and accuse Jesus because they were evil. They were more concerned about their traditions and political protocols than they were of the fact that the son of God was in their midst and that He had come to teach them and prepare them with this kingdom teaching.

Week 7

- 1.) For the last two lessons I find the following to be the character traits that Jesus instilled in his disciples. Also, some of which we can glean from today.
 - a. Takes up his cross and follows Jesus
 - b. Is not ashamed of Jesus
 - c. Willing to forsake his family
 - d. Counts up the cost
 - e. Receiver of children
 - f. Laborer in the Lord's harvest
 - g. Walks by faith and without fear
 - h. Has power
 - i. Not hesitant to ask for what is needed
 - j. Not afraid of those that can kill the body
 - k. Allows the Holy Spirit to speak through him sometimes unprepared
 - l. Takes no thought for his life by not worrying about tomorrow
 - m. Seeks the Kingdom of God
 - n. Faithful and faith filled
 - o. Not a server of mammon, doesn't serve two masters.

2) Father, thank you for reminding me through your word of the price it costs to be your disciple. I don't look at it as if it is a burden, but it makes me aware that you are worthy of the life that I am called to live. I know the price you paid for me and because of that, I'm more willing to submit my all. Help me in the areas that I need help in. I desire to be your servant and to be a laborer in the harvest, to walk by faith and not by sight. I endeavor to not worry about what tomorrow may bring but instead just continue seeking your kingdom. I will continue to walk

in your power and not be a server of God and mammon, realizing that you said it would be one or the other. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ help me to reveal this truth in my daily living.

WEEK 9

When I think in terms of Peter and the biblical stories that follow this disciple, I cannot help but go back to his conviction and when he experienced the fishing miracle. I also can't help but think about how courageous he was when he walked on water. Which was something that no other disciple at that time endeavored to do. He also was ready to defend Jesus when he was about to be taken away. When I think in terms of myself and what I may call my personal failures, I am so glad to know two things; and these things I believe the Lord has helped me to embrace.

- 1) "Yes, you missed it this time and perhaps you will miss it other times as well. However, I will not allow you to make this your idea of who you are in Me." Many times, I have felt like a total failure, and I try to beat myself up with condemnation for failures. My prayers are that of godly sorrow and its real, yet somehow, after my pity party is over, I experience the Holy Spirit encouraging me to keep going and to not give up. He lets me know there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. I would describe this as my walk. I do not endeavor to walk in the flesh. Even though I might fail sometimes, my goal is to daily walk in the spirit.
- 2) God reminds me that I am human, and I am not perfect. His son provided the forgiveness that is necessary to keep me in a position that allows Him to complete the work He has begun in me. Just as Peter was not without forgiveness but went on to do a great work in the Kingdom of God so will I. He could not allow to let his public failures interfere with the purpose and destiny that Jesus had called him to and set before him. Therefore, God is telling me to forget the things which are behind but to reach forth to the things which are

before, to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And I will! 😊