

Unstuck: #3 “It’s a Trap” – 2 Samuel 10-11

Dr. Matthew Cassidy – 1/29/2012

[Video clip from “Rain Man”, 1988 movie – scene at the airport when Raymond Babbitt, an autistic savant, cannot get on an airplane, despite his overbearing brother’s, Charlie Babbitt, insistence that they get to Los Angeles as quickly as possible. Raymond absolutely, cannot board the plane and ends up screaming at the top of his lungs and hitting his own head with his hands.]

There are a lot of ways to get from Cincinnati to Los Angeles but flying is not one of them for Raymond. He is not going to get on that plane. The reason I showed that video clip is actually for your homework. We are going to look at some things next week and I want you to see that this story.

“Rain Man” is a classic expression of great story writing about how a soul is changed. It starts with a journey. People usually don’t know they are on a journey for soul transition but they are. In this particular story, it is about a person who knows himself and another person who thinks he knows himself. One person understands his limits and is content with those limits; the other person thinks he has no limits and there is nothing he can’t do and the world is before him. One person is an idiotic savant; the other person is just an idiot. One person will stay the same and he won’t change because he can’t change; the other person will either change or destroy his own life and everyone around him.

It is a classic way of writing a story and I say classic because that is the way Shakespeare wrote a lot of his plays. Somebody is going on a journey and finding themselves – and in finding themselves, they find they have a lot to change. Shakespeare stole it from the Bible.

When somebody goes on a journey in the Bible, it means they are going somewhere with God and something will have to change. When you look at today’s story, it is a story of *Pinocchio*, a boy becoming a man – and by the way he is on a journey when he does that.

Homework for next week

Next week we will look at the life of Jacob in Genesis 25-29 as he goes on a journey. If you want to get ahead, you can read those chapters. What is the journey that he is on? Who is being changed? How is Jacob being changed? I want you to look at how Jacob is made and how he was raised and how that plays a part into who Jacob is – what his values are. What is it going to take to alter his view of God and his view of the rest of his life?

Then I want you to project your own story onto Jacob's story. Literally, have you ever been on a journey and during that expedition, you come to an understanding of who you are – and maybe you don't like that so much.

There is a saying that people grow in strength in community and then they are tried or tested in isolation. Maybe when you moved to Austin, how about those first four months or two years? Or when you went to college for the first time, if you did that, and how was that freshman year?

The point there is that it is not just a coincidence. I think it is when God works a lot. So that is to help you understand the life of Jacob and to help you understand what we are going to be doing next week because the first two weeks in our series together called "Unstuck" we looked at the plan of spiritual progress. We looked at the stages and we spent a whole Sunday talking about the wall and how easy it is to get stuck there. What it means and what it is like.

This week and next week, we will look at knowing yourself. As St. Augustine said: To know God, you must first know yourself. The better you know yourself, the better you are able to know God.

This week we are going to look at the life of David, since we started that last week. We are going to find out a little more about him and maybe some things we could learn from him. What I would like you to do to appreciate today's teaching time is to put on a hat of a coach. I have learned so much from coaches and I would like you to enjoy that perspective on life for a few minutes. They know how to get things done.

Coaches mentoring a player for maximum outcome

When I was in college, I spent some time with some of the football players at the University of Texas and I mildly learned the depth of the complexity of coaching college athletes. Coaches have to win the games of their sport and by doing that, they have to bring out the very best in each of their players. They also have to out-think and out-strategize their opponents. But in college, especially, they have to care for and nurture the individual souls. These are young men and women. They are rather fragile and ignorant about themselves.

So, it first dawned on me, 20 or 30 years ago, the genius behind these men and women who do this when a friend of mine took me to meet one of the star players of the team. This particular player had a pretty difficult background. He had four brothers and, interestingly, he never mentioned his mother or father. The reason is that the five boys raised themselves. There were no rules or boundaries. They just ran wild. This star of the team was extremely large at an early age and because of that, he had a celebrity status. People knew he was going somewhere and he was going to be something someday. Girls pursued

him and took advantage of his innocence and he lost that early on. Grown men would take him out drinking, hunting, and some things that junior high kids are not supposed to be part of; his loss of innocence had a significant influence on his soul and his ability to make choices. He was a very impulsive individual and passionate and sensual. It would ultimately cause his demise and everybody knew that because he was such a passionate individual.

What I found interesting was the way the coaches dealt with him. They had him move off campus and live in South Austin with a Catholic priest. This is a true story and I couldn't believe it. I drove down there to meet the priest and to meet the football star. The reason it was set up that way was because the priest lived far off of UT campus and so the celebrity thing wouldn't get into the student's head too much. The priest was very structured and disciplined, as many of them are, and he awakened at the same time every day. He would work out and eat his meals at the same time every day. If he worked out and did everything else right, his spiritual life came into pattern as well and then his life worked better. The coach knew that and so he moved his player as far away as possible from the UT campus.

On the UT away games, the coaches arranged that this star would always share a room with somebody who was just the opposite of him. On both sides of the star's locker in the locker room, were guys who were stable, predictable, old school. When the star would room elsewhere for away games, he would have one of those two guys with him because they knew the stability that comes from a great background. They weren't even all that good of players. I think the coaches had them on the team just to help this guy. One of these guys was notorious for always being the first one to bed and asleep – and he made sure the star athlete was there with him. It was a great way to manage the star's soul so that he could be the best he could be. The coaches were not just making the best of his athletic ability but they were trying to make the most of his soul and life; the team won because of it.

My point here is know thyself. If you know yourself, you can keep yourself from getting into trouble and you can go on routes that would be more advantageous for you. You might know yourself to be someone who will never fly from Cincinnati to Los Angeles. There is no way you are getting on that plane and you are okay with that.

The reason I bring up this story is because when I was looking at the passage for today, 2 Samuel 10-11, this particular person came to mind. The main character here is David. When I was looking at the passage, I thought – that reminds of that guy I used to know in college. He is just like him – a very passionate person, a great athlete. But listen, David was known for being passionate. If you studied his life much, you know that to be true.

David, a Man of Passion

When David was on the run from Saul [which we talked about last week, 1 Samuel 25], he and 600 of his men, a small army, worked security for another man's shepherds. The wealthy man was named Nabal. Nabal means fool which ought to tell you what kind of man he was. Nabal owned all these sheep and shepherds and he was a gentleman rancher. It was sheep shearing season and that was when they would slaughter a few of these lambs. David sends a couple of his men in to say: *Hey, I heard you are having a sheep shearing festival and we would love to be part of that party because we have been part of your security.* Nabal says: *Who is David that I would care about him. Isn't he just one of the guys that Saul is out to kill?* [1 Samuel 25:10-22] *No I will have nothing to do with that.*

These two servants of David tell him of Nabal's response. David says three words: *Get your swords.* Then he tells 400 of his 600 men to mount up with swords and says this: :22 "May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!"

The punishment does not seem to fit the crime in that story, does it. What about these poor shepherds? *What a minute. It wasn't our decision.* – What about the guy who works the water well or feeds the fish at Nabal's house? "May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!"

Now, Nabal's wife for intervene and save all these people's lives but the point is that David is a very passionate individual and you *don't* want to make David mad. I'm just telling you that he is a passionate individual and impulsive too.

In 2 Samuel 6, a very famous scene that you probably have in your memory, where David is bringing in the ark of the Lord and for the first time in the ark's history, it is coming into a fortified city where it will have a resting place. David is so excited about this. He is very zealous for the Lord and for this event. So David is out in front of the ark and there is a giant parade and all of Israel is invited. David is in nothing more than flamboyant underwear; that is all he has on. 2 Samuel 6:14 "David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might." He worshipped with all of his strength, some translations say. – So he is flailing about and I am not saying it is bad. I am not making fun ... because someone did make fun and they were cursed and I don't want to be cursed. What I am saying is that he is a very passionate person and when he worships, it is a full body event. Make room for him. Some of you are a little like that where we need to give you an empty seat on either side of you – that's okay. There are passionate people and David is one of those.

David wrote a lot of the Psalms; he is a poet and song writer. Song writers are known for their emotional volatility. My point is this. If we know that about David, wouldn't we know the way he would fall into a trap? Wouldn't we know his weaknesses? Shouldn't David know himself well enough to know that about himself? If we were his coach, we would do things for protection.

We all have traps that are laid out for us and some of us walk through him and others walk around them. I don't know if you saw this on the internet this week. It was kind of fun.

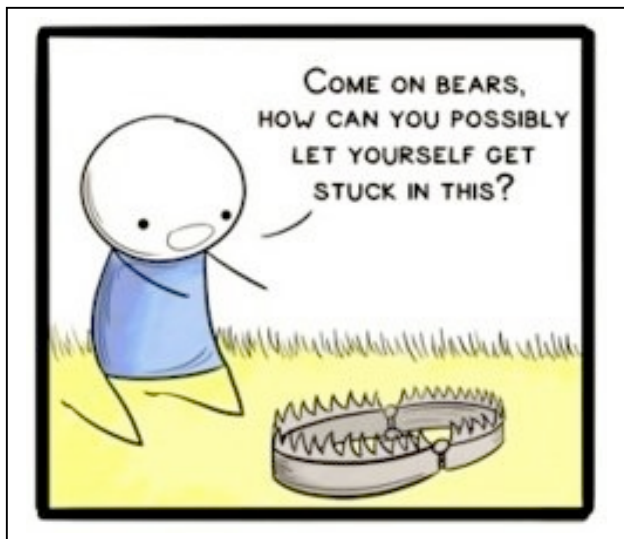
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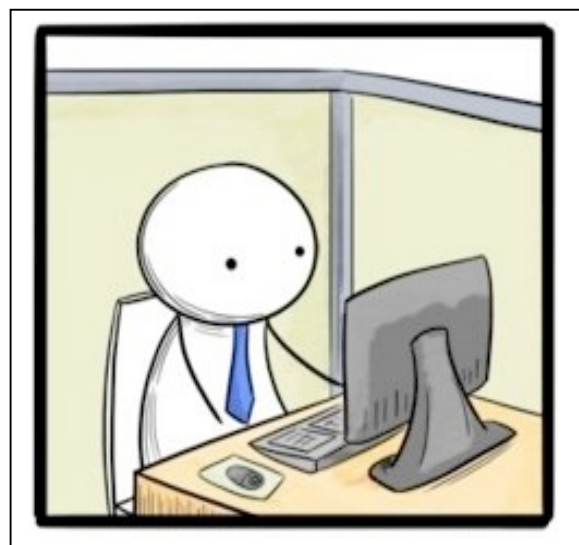
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There he is on Pinterest and then he is gone. He wakes up and now his kids can walk and then they are in college. We should know better and we do it anyway.

When we look at the life of David in 1 Samuel 10 -12, which is one storyline, I want you to be listening for how the author is setting this background music. The background music is to set tone and mood. It is the famous Jaws beats, and you know there is somebody who is in a lot of trouble and they are going to be shark food very soon. You just know that.

There is a way of doing that in literature in the Older Testament. It is the narrator's comment where he wants to magnify or amplify; he is bringing in that mood. He is trying to teach us by saying something about what is happening. He will say it multiple times by the way. The other thing we are looking for is key words that are used over and over again. It is a trick of the trade.

The key word for these three chapters is "sent" or "send". He uses one of those two words 23 times in three chapters. It is a common word and I understand that but he is making the point that the king is *sending* instead of *doing*. The king is delegating instead of participating. That is where this king goes wrong. The narrator is going to emphasize where the king *is* instead of where the king *should be*. It is a trap. Everybody should see it coming – the way this is written. I will try to emphasize that for you as we go through the story itself.

2 Samuel 10 – They Way Things are Meant To Be

The second part of the story starts in 2 Samuel 10. To give context, it is where David should be. There is a king who dies and David send some flowers and some well-wishing to the new prince turned king. That king humiliates David's ambassadors; that shames them. This is Judaism, an eastern religion, and in the Middle East when you shame someone, you have just started a war.

In 2 Samuel 10:17 David gathers all of Israel and crosses the Jordan River and goes up to Helam. The other guys, Arameans, all fled before Israel. David killed 700 of their charioteers and 40,000 of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach, the commander of their army, and he died there. – That is David. That is what he does and he does it well.

2 Samuel 11 – The Trap

The trap is set in the next chapter. The author changes the mood because now we are changing locations and he is setting this up. The music is daunting.

2 Samuel 11:1 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David **sent** Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army [New American Standard Bible reads: all the Israelite army].

So even today, it is the time of the year to go fight in that part of the year, the spring. And who goes out to war in the spring specifically? Kings.

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war ...

But it says that David sends Joab, his commander to do it. Who does David send? He sends everyone, the whole army, all of the army. But David stays back in Jerusalem.

I want you to visualize with the music going (Jaws notorious beats). In Jerusalem, there are only two types of males habitating that great town: old feeble men, and young boys. That is it. Every single other man is out at this battlefield – save one. What the city is significantly populated with are very beautiful women, who do not have a man near them. That is where David is - a very passionate and impulsive individual. What is he doing? He is just killing time and time is going to kill him.

The next sentence says what his men are doing:

2 Samuel 10 They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

You see how the narrator is saying in a loud voice – but David remained in Jerusalem. See how the background music emphasizes, this is a really bad place for this man to be because he is not supposed to be there – because in the springs when kings go off to war, David sent everyone else. This is not going to bode well. Does David not understand who he is, the way God made him, his background, his memories, what he does well, what he does not do well? Is David like Raymond about to board an airplane? This is not David's path to success.

2 Samuel 11:2-5 The Adultery

2 Samuel 11:2 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,

It is interesting that David's location is juxtaposed. David was getting up from bed. What were the previous two words that were motion words – besieged and destroyed. Every other male in Israel is besieging and destroying --- and David is in his bed. He can't sleep; he is restless. That happens when you are taking too long of a vacation. These men, David's army, sleep fine at night because they are exhausted from besieging and destroying. They are not sleeping in beds.

So David goes out for a walk on the top of his palace and he sees a woman bathing and she is very beautiful.

2 Samuel 11:3 ... and David **sent** someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

David lists his mighty men at the end of this book, basically men who would receive the medal of honor. Uriah the Hittite is one of them. He is one of the best special forces guys in the Israeli army. This is his wife. David sent for her and she comes.

2 Samuel 11:6-13 The Cover Up

The next thing that happens is the cover up. I want you to see again how this plays out. The word *sent* will be used again three times in two sentences. David gets her pregnant in this one-night affair and the only way he can figure out how to cover this up is to send for Uriah to come back and have Uriah sleep with his own wife and then the pregnancy will look like it is from him – not from David.

2 Samuel 11:6 So David **sent** this word to Joab: “**Send** me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent him to David.

Everybody is being sent.

:7 When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going.

And how is every single male in all of Israel doing, except me, David. I need a report because I am sending; I am not being there.

They talk a little and then David sends Uriah to his home with some gifts. Here are some chocolates and some flowers. You are married, right? Yeah, take these home and wash your feet. But when Uriah goes home, he won't enter his home; he sleeps on the front porch. David finds out about it and his plan is not working. So he asked Uriah: I heard you almost made it home. What happened? Here is Uriah's response – and listen to the narrator speaking:

2 Samuel 11:11 Uriah said to David: “The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my Lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!”

Israel and Judah and all the army and Joab, you know the commander, and the ark of the covenant is living in a tent. What kind of man would not be out in a battlefield right oh, except your kingship.

The story doesn't end there because David says: Why don't you spend another night here and you will dine with me tonight. (2 Samuel 11:12). David forces a drunk on Uriah the Hittite. Uriah the Hittite goes home but again he sleeps on the porch. Listen to the story the narrator is communicating to us. An outsider, Uriah the Hittite, who is not from one of the twelve Israel tribes but from outside of Israel. He

converts to Judaism and is following Yahweh, the great and only God. This Uriah, who is drunk, is more righteous than the king who is sober. Uriah knows his place as a soldier is to be sleeping on the hard rock, not on a soft bed. Uriah knows that soldiers just grow soft if they vacation too long during the middle of a combat situation.

The narrator is telling us again and again and again that David went wrong when he went home. He was never supposed to be there in the first place.

2 Samuel 11:14-25 The Murder

David will do one more set of sending. He will send Uriah to his death. He gives Uriah a note to give to Joab, the commander, which says: [2 Samuel 11:15] Next time you besiege the city, everybody retreat but don't tell Uriah. And that is how Uriah is killed.

The purpose of the story is – where did David go wrong? David went wrong when he was in the wrong place. He is a very passionate person and he should have known better. Passionate people, impulsive people cannot be vacationing or experience leisure for too long. Idle hands are the devil's workshop. That was written about passionate, undisciplined people. David should have known better. He was never supposed to be there.

If David could go back in time Where did David's crime start? Do you think if he could get one of those fancy DeLoreans [*Back to the Future*, 1985 movie] that can travel in time with the flux capacitor where do you think he could go? Do you think David would go back to the city gates right before he crosses that threshold and he says: *Boy, this is a bad place and I need to leave.* ... No, he would go farther back in time when he is with the troops and he first has that thought – *You know what. It is the spring and I love Jerusalem in the spring. You can just see the flowers bloom from the hilltops. This battle is just a cleaning up mission now anyway. I can go home.* – Then he would be slapped with sobriety and say: *Wait a minute. I know me. I can't go home at a time like this. I can't be trusted in a city full of women where there are no men. Listen to the background music. It is starting to get scary for me. Who do I think I am?*

If you were to coach David, how would you coach him? You would tell him to make big boundaries, tall walls around certain aspects of his life.

Know Yourself; Create Your Boundaries

I know a fair amount of wise people and it seems like one of the common denominators for them is that they know themselves and they know their limitations. They are content with those limitations and they have structured their lives around those limitations.

I learned at a very early age that I have an extremely vivid imagination that can run wild and free. I learned that I cannot watch even remotely scary movies. My point in telling you this story is that you can watch scary movies; I am not saying you can't. I am just saying I can't because of my imagination. When I am scared at night because I am hearing things outside – and I don't mean as a kid, I am talking about last night – I don't think there is a bad guy out there who is just out on parole and he is trying to get in and take something. I think there is a giant, 7 foot insect that is trying to crash into my house and implant some kind of spawn inside of my chest so that I can be an incubator that will jump out later and harvest my body for nutrients. That is what I am afraid of. When I go to the movies with my kids and they show previews, I will hold my eyes down and not even look. Sometimes I can't even hear. I'm not saying you can't; I am just saying, I can't. I know how I am made and I can't live with that.

When I was with Walk Through the Bible Ministries, it was an organization that traveled literally all over the world and teach the Bible. They attracted a fairly passionate group of public speakers because you have to be hyperactive to be able to do it. They were losing a lot of instructors because of moral failures. Here is how they figured out when the failures started. So Bruce Wilkinson instituted a new policy that when you walked in the door of the hotel room, the first thing you did was to unplug the television and then turn it all the way around to face the wall. -- I am not saying you have to do that on your next business trip. I am just saying that if you are like the Walk Through the Bible instructors, you probably do because you know yourself. You are going to be impulsive and have too much time and too much creativity will always lead to a troubled life. It is a trap.

I know people who have problems with greed that they always think in their future in a context of panic about how much money they will need. The way they have solved that is to budget their life to have a certain amount for living, and a certain amount for a healthy savings, and then they give everything else away. They know if they don't have a plan for savings that is reasonable, they will always go to a panic where they keep amassing huge amounts of wealth. – I am not saying everybody has to do that. I am just saying these people I know who have this problem, that is the way they live their lives. Those are the boundaries they have set up because they don't want to get trapped.

I had a conversation this week with an individual who is a champion in his field. It was a funny conversation because I said: *Hey, I caught you.* He said: *What are you talking about?* I said: *I have been watching this for years. You never talk about your accomplishments. Then when other people start talking about them, you automatically deflect it. You will not let people know about what you have done and where you have been. I know what you are up to.* He said: *Yeah, I do that.* I said: *Why do you do that? You have done so many great things.* He said: *Well, because if I let people talk too long, I start buying it. I start believing it. I can feel my ego kind of swell and I have been around long enough in my field to see that never leads to a good place.* I said: *Pride before the fall?* He said: *Pride before the fall. So I have learned that when people starting going, I let them get in one or two sentences and then I am off to – But what about you. You could use some work here. How can I help you?* That is what he does all the time.

I know a gal who has a propensity, her weakness or frailty is gossip. She had to lay down a plank in her life and just say: I am not going to say bad things about anyone ever, about anything ever. This was an expensive decision for her because she didn't know it but she ended up having to get a whole new set of friends because birds of a feather flock together. When you say: I can't talk that way about other people... then you have to go to other people because the gossip crowd won't let you stay and not play. So it was pretty hard. But the point is that she knew herself and she knew how to get out of it and so she chose to.

Application

Everybody has a spring where kings are supposed to go out to war. Do you know what yours is? If you want to know God, you have to know yourself. The better you know yourself, the better you can know God. One of the first things you need to know about yourself is where your traps are.

I want to say this right. Do you think that the devil knows what to put as bait for your trap? Yeah, he does. It would be good for you to know that too so that you cannot play with it, so that you can go way around it. The devil is out to devour us. He loves to make a slow meal of us. So you have to know what he would bait that trap with. It would be very good for your soul.

So, when we look at the application for our time together, let's look at – What is your trap? Where are you not supposed to be? If you were the coach of you, who would you put as your roommate on an away game? It is probably not going to be someone like you. If you are a perfectionist and melancholy, and those usually go together, would you want a room with another melancholy perfectionist? I don't think so. So, I want you to be thinking about that as you go into this next week – What is your trap? What is it baited with? What are you going to do to avoid that?

The next one is insightful about who you are. If you don't know how you are made, you might not know your final destination. I mean, literally the way we have been put together.

Have you ever seen those quirky studies of identical twins separated at birth and then 45 years later they find both of them. They find both twins, raised by completely different types of parents and socio-economic differences, and different values, and different parts of the world. Nothing is overlapping except that Jack and Jeff are 45 years old; they both married girls named Rhonda; they both drive a '69 El Camino; they have a golden retriever named Ralph. How does that happen? I am not suggesting that we are fatalistic in the way God made us. What I am suggesting is that the way you are made is going to affect the destination that God has for you. You are going to get to Los Angeles in a different way than I would get there. Raymond is not going to take a plane; he is going to take a car.

That leads us to the second one. If you don't know how you have been raised, you might not know how you are going to get there. If you are not aware of the various values and even nightmares you are carrying with you, you might not know how you are going to get there. Not only is your destination different from person to person but the means of getting there. Some people are going a different way.

I am not going to play with the idea that is fatalistic and this is the way I was raised. This is what I experienced growing up and therefore I have to do these things. That is not it at all. What is better, if you look at it this way, it is not so that you can be a victim but it is so that you can be a conqueror of these things. That is the joy of this.

I had a conversation this week with a guy who has a background that is insane. If it were a novel, there would be too many chapters about the way he was made, but especially the way he was raised. It is just crazy. But, every time I talk to him, he is never a victim of those things; it is stories about how God in His power has conquered those things. – He says: *I am telling you about this background because I am not going to let it affect my family. I am ending this in my generation and my children will live with a different type of background.* – But if you don't appreciate what that is, it is pretty hard to slay a dragon that you cannot see.

So I want you to be thinking about these three questions this week.

What is your trap?

What is baited in that trap?

How has God made you specifically so that you might know the destination that God has for you and the means of getting there? That generally is affected by how you have been raised.

Every single one of us has an incredible story that we get to write in our decisions so that we might give it to God for the angels to hear about. If you want to know God, you have to know yourself better. We will spend the next two weeks talking about this.

If you are going through in your small group structure this book “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”, [re-titled “Unstuck”], read Chapter 4 and apply it to your life. This book is still on sale out in the foyer.

Last week, I said that we are all going to go through a desert. Every one of us has multiple deserts in our lives. Wouldn't it be great if we had the Bible has a compass, if we had a guide with us? But wouldn't it be efficient if we had one of these, a map. If you come back next week, we will talk about the map. Hopefully next week we will be able to talk about ways God made you and some of the ways you were raised. It will influence how you will be tempted, a path of success that you could go through that is most like a Bible character, and that will lead to a life worth celebrating. You better come back next week and you better have done your homework too.

Let me close with a prayer.

Psalm 139:1-7

O Lord, You have searched me

And you know me,

You know when I sit and when I rise;

You perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;

You are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue

You know it completely, O Lord.

You hem me in – behind and before;

You have laid your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,

Too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

We are grateful we can't flee from Your presence, dear God. I ask that You help us in our analysis that your Spirit would help us understand ourselves – because while we pray You would deliver us from evil

and deliver us from temptation, that we are culpable for being part of that and we need to avoid things that are tempting for us. So, God, we ask that You would help us Amen