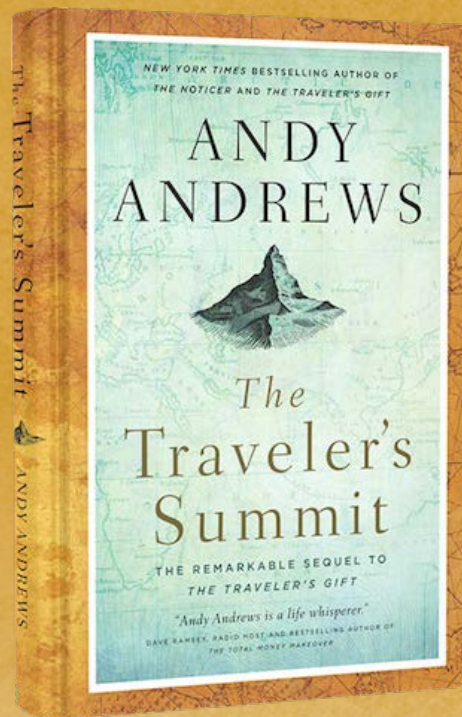


GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU: WORDS TO SAVE HUMANITY

A SIX-PART SERMON SERIES *by* DR. ALAN W. MCBRIDE

PART FIVE OF SIX: BUILD CHARACTER



based on

The Traveler's Summit

ANDY ANDREWS

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I. INTRODUCTION - WORDS TO SAVE HUMANITY

A. Build Character

In this series of messages so far, God has communicated four elements in His personal summits with you that are necessary to have in your mind, heart, and life in order to cooperate with Him in bringing about His ultimate purpose: save humanity. Jesus has asked you to choose to **restore hope** because He is hope, **seek wisdom** as it comes from God, **show courage** as one who bears Jesus' salt and light in the world, and **exhibit self-discipline** through forgiving self and through doing what you might not wish to do in order to obey and please God.

I want to share with you now what will be the purpose of Jesus' summit with you today. Jesus wants you to **build character**. We will soon approach the issue and importance of character in a child of God, but first, allow me to bring you again to one of the sources of God's direction for this series of talks.

PERSONAL NOTES:

I. INTRODUCTION - WORDS TO SAVE HUMANITY

B. The Traveler's Summit - One Answer to Restore Civilization

In the book by Andy Andrews, *The Traveler's Summit*, our hero, David Ponder, is an “everyman.” *The Final Summit's* main character is representative of humanity and the leader of this traveler's summit to save humanity. As he stands before the archangel Gabriel, Ponder gives his summit's fifth out of six possible answers containing a life and civilization changing virtue. There is one answer Gabriel and God are seeking for individuals and society to place in their lives in order to restore humanity to the path that leads to successful civilization. Gabriel has charged Ponder and the summit members to find it.

Ponder says, “We sought **wisdom**, and our **hope** began to take greater shape. The understanding we gained about the necessity of **courage** moved hope and wisdom into action—and a broader search for where the true answer might lie. And though discouraged, our own exhibition of **self-discipline** kept us in the race long enough to develop what humanity also needs to develop. And that would be **character**.”

Andy Andrews wrote this summation of five responses to the question: “**What does humanity need to do, individually and collectively, to restore itself to the pathway toward successful civilization?**” His summit in heaven of incredible world leaders and great people from history has brought them to the point of having only one more opportunity to be correct in order to save civilization. Andrews' story sets the stage for only one virtue, arrived at by the summit group, to be the correct answer to avert God's final judgment. **One idea to save individuals and civilization.** Each of the previous ideas contributes to and fleshes out the correct answer, but there can be only one answer.

If you are reading along in Andrews' great book while we are spending time in this series of messages from God's Word, you'll sense the tension building. As an effective author, communicating God's truth, Andy does know how to build suspense leading to a surprise climax!

I. INTRODUCTION - WORDS TO SAVE HUMANITY

C. Choose All God's Virtues to Save Humanity

There is one primary difference between *The Traveler's Summit* and this series of messages, *God's Summit with You: Words to Save Humanity*. In his craft for storytelling, the author has built a system in the book that unifies all the characteristics of hope, wisdom, courage, self-discipline, and character. These virtues, used in tandem, are intended by Andrews to lead the summit members in heaven to one answer, which is the final answer of *The Traveler's Summit*.

In God's summit with you over these past four messages from the scriptures, **all** the qualities and virtues we have discussed or will mention today, adding the one to be revealed next week, must be grasped by the follower of Jesus Christ. You must choose to follow the new nature which God has created in you through the experience of conversion in Jesus Christ by faith and carry through each of the characteristics to effectively cooperate with God's plan to save humanity. **Does that sound impossible?**

PERSONAL NOTES:

I. INTRODUCTION - WORDS TO SAVE HUMANITY

D. Seeming Impossibilities

On August 5th, 2010, the attention of over 1 billion world television viewers, more than the number who saw the lunar landing in 1969, were riveted for 69 days on an arid mine entrance 28 miles from Copiapo, Chile. Thousands of tons of rock in an unstable geologic composition collapsed, sealing the mine far down below. One group of miners, above the collapse, was able to escape immediately. But the copper mine collapse was thrust into the minds and prayers of so many people because 33 miners were still missing, unheard from and feared dead for 17 days. Their survival seemed impossible.

After 17 horrible days for everyone above and below ground, a six-inch bore hole was drilled, searching to see if there was any sign of life below. The small drill-bit emerged 20 yards from the miners' "refuge" in the mine. After 17 days, hearing drilling activities through the rock, they were relieved. At the end of their emergency supplies of water and food, breathing oxygen poor air, and nearly hopeless, they attached a note which read. "We are alright in the refuge—33 of us."

Impossibly, 2,300 ft. below the surface and three miles from the only source of escape, the 33 miners waited as the greatest mine rescue, and possibly greatest rescue of any kind, took shape. As devastating and harrowing as this experience was for the trapped men and their awaiting families, the complexity and level of coordination of many different systems, processes, and people above ground was daunting. It seemed impossible to effect a rescue.

The specialized equipment (three different sets) to drill a hole large enough for a man to be raised or lowered through unstable rock had to be acquired from across the globe. Then, three holes had to be drilled simultaneously, aimed at differing angles, through extremely hard rock, aimed to hit a space 50 square feet by 8 ft high from a half a mile above. All this drilling effort, managing three drilling crews with three different languages, and maintaining communication, breathable air, food, water, medical supplies, and hope for the trapped men for 62 days after finding them was a herculean task.

In addition, the care of the families, the need to communicate with a billion interested people, and the political and financial issues related to the embarrassing and expensive rescue all had to be managed. Then, it all fell into place when the first of the 33 miners was pulled up through the one rescue shaft that hit the mark on October 13, 2010. **The whole time, it seemed impossible to succeed.**

II. POWER IN GOD'S WORDS

A. Nothing is Impossible in You with Christ

There is **nothing impossible** when you are combined with Jesus Christ. You can accomplish many things by yourself—God has given you great abilities! You are already an incredible person made in God's image. You already have within you the God-given abilities and gifts to place you in position to influence your world and the people therein.

Remember though, more than your own resources, you have the very real person, presence, and power of Jesus in you. Jesus told the 12 disciples immediately before he left them to be crucified, "I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you." (John 14:18) He has proven this to you also by having met you in these personal summits, and at other times in your life up to now.

PERSONAL NOTES:

II. POWER IN GOD'S WORDS

B. Power in God to Make a Difference

In recent weeks, in your summit with Jesus alone, He has given you the items needed in your make-up as a follower in His mission. He has given you inner resources you did not know you had. Jesus has named for you from scripture words that reflect His character in you. With these words the Spirit has taught, He gives something immeasurable—**power**. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

To most effectively reach individuals for salvation and save humanity through you, Jesus' has taught you in these summits:

- Your trust is well placed in the One who is the author and giver of hope.
- He will give you His wisdom as you seek Him in your mind and heart along the way in His saving purposes.
- You will have courage to be salt in a world unflavored by Jesus' grace and shine His light into the world to attract, warm, illuminate, and reach with His love.
- Making a difference in others' lives and in civilization requires the self-discipline to forgive yourself for failure. You know that you will also need self-discipline to do the things that will please God's heart.

God called Abraham to be a difference maker in the world, for all time, by telling him that due to his obedience to follow God, all the people of the world would be blessed. When Jesus identified the nature of His followers as salt and light in the Sermon on the Mount, He was referring to your nature too! He has now called you to make a difference. You know in your inner person that God will enable and bring to pass in you all that He desires for you if you allow him. Jesus wants to summit with you to add **Character** to the virtues that make a difference.

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - II SAMUEL 11:1-3

A. How We Learn

In *The Traveler's Summit*, while David Ponder and the heavenly group are discussing the possibility that wisdom may be the answer to the question to save civilization, Andy Andrews creates a fascinating interchange of ideas about how people learn. Prime Minister Churchill says to his fellow summit members that the best ways to learn are through reading and quality associations with other people. Joan of Arc adds that learning comes from concentrated times of reflection. President Lincoln says that in the backwoods of Kentucky, the only learning he had was by imitation of others in his manner of speech and writing.

Churchill then jokes back to the group, "There's an old saying that goes, 'Experience is the best teacher.' That's not entirely true. I believe *other* people's experience is the best teacher. Ha! Let *them* go through it, I say."

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - II SAMUEL 11:1-3

B. Vicarious Learning

Churchill joked about something I call “vicarious learning.” I recently read about a Marine, serving our country in Afghanistan, hearing the birth of his first child described to him over satellite phone by his mother-in-law in real time. He experienced the birth vicariously through the eyes and by the words of someone else. When a missionary comes to your church and shows video and tells about the way God is moving in the place where she or he is serving Christ, unless you go back with them to the mission, you are involved in Missions vicariously.

You and I can have many learning experiences vicariously through others, but the effectiveness of vicarious learning nose-dives when the learning is from other people’s mistakes. I have observed in my life and in numerous other situations with people that this kind of learning seldom takes place. It appears we learn best from our own mistakes and miscues, assuming that the errors of others doing the same things would never happen to us.

However, if we seek wisdom from God and exhibit self-discipline in our minds, we can learn effectively from someone else’s poor choices—there’s every reason to learn!

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - II SAMUEL 11:1-3

C. The Text and an Irony

II Samuel 11:1-3

¹ It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

² Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.

³ So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

I hope that you will not find it ironic in this message that one of the summit members in heaven in *The Traveler's Summit* is, biblically, one from whom God wants you to learn vicariously what mistake to avoid.

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - II SAMUEL 11:1-3

D. Israel's Greatest King - A Man After God's Heart

Israel's second king after Saul, King David was the protector of God's chosen people for 33 years. David displayed intelligence and political wisdom in uniting the 13 tribes of Israel under his rule from Jerusalem. He was the guardian of the Ark of the Lord. He danced worshipfully before God and played music to honor God. He was God's greatest warrior King because of his love, obedience, and worship of God.

In I Samuel, the prophet named David "a man after God's own heart." It was through David that God covenanted to extend a royal lineage "forever" in II Samuel 7:13. It was this royal lineage through which Jesus was delivered by his mother, Mary. He is revered in Judaism, Christianity, and in Islam.

In *The Traveler's Summit*, his character introduces the principle of self-discipline during the heavenly summit. David was clearly a disciplined person in light of all his accomplishments for God and for his people. However, he was **forgetful**.

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - II SAMUEL 11:1-3

E. King David's Forgetfulness

In II Samuel 11, David displays this forgetfulness in three ways—the first instance, contributing tragically to the second and third, overshadows all his mistakes. The narrative states that in the spring of the year when kings go out to battle, David sent his lieutenant, Joab, instead. David stayed home in Jerusalem.

1. The king forgot his calling and duty to be actively engaged in protecting Israel by being present at the lead of his army in battle. This forgetfulness regarding duty led to the second instance of forgetfulness.
2. The king forgot who was not his wife. Certainly, David was, overall, the man after God's heart, but he was also product of the ancient mid-eastern world. In similar fashion to other kings of the day in neighboring kingdoms, David actually had eight wives named in scripture in II Samuel 6:23. In I Chronicles 3, the scripture points out that David had additional unnamed wives and many concubines.

David overlooked the fact that he was already married multiple times and decided that he should have another man's wife—Bathsheba. When he discovered that she was pregnant with his child, David ordered the murder of Bathsheba's husband Uriah to legitimize marrying Bathsheba.

3. David forgot that he served a God who knows all things. David's greatest level of forgetfulness overshadows and influences the string of sins he committed as told in II Samuel chapters 11 and 12.

PERSONAL NOTES:

IV. CONCLUSION: JESUS' SUMMIT WITH YOU

A. Build Character as a Leader

I began this message by pulling the punch of telling you first what Jesus wants you to learn by the close of this message. Jesus wants you to **build character**.

Andy Andrews writes in *The Traveler's Summit*, "If you want to test a person's character, give him power." He goes on to say in the voice of Abraham Lincoln, "Because power corrupts, humanity's need for those in power to be of high character increases as the importance of the leadership position increases."

In your personal summit with God, He wants to remind you that, as a Christian, **you are a leader**. You lead others to see Jesus Christ in you in order for them to come and experience Him for themselves. This truth is central to God's plan to save humanity. At the same time that he has told you to restore hope, seek wisdom, show courage, and exhibit self-discipline, Christ is calling you also to build character.

It is not impossible because Jesus is with you and will be in you to accomplish what He has asked you to do. God's plan is to save individuals for an eternal relationship and save all of humanity and restore civilization to the level of the Kingdom of God. He calls you to cooperate and follow Him in this great purpose.

PERSONAL NOTES:

IV. CONCLUSION: JESUS' SUMMIT WITH YOU

B. Character is who You are When No One but the Holy Spirit is with You

To build character, you must understand that reputation is only what others think of you. Character is who you are when no one but the Holy Spirit is with you. King David degraded his character before God because he failed to remember the standard of personal holiness he needed to hold before a God who knows all things about us. In Andrews' book, King David remarks to the summit in heaven, "The discipline of desire is the very basis of building character."

Jesus asks you in this summit to know who you are at all times, and to know whose you are. You will build character as you grow in your openness to God, self, and others. God will use you as an integral part of His plan to save humanity.

I want to pray for you:

"Oh God, heighten our sense of awareness of You in such a way that we take on Your character. Touch my friends with Your Spirit in order that they are the same person when out of view as when they are in view of others. Through all, they are Your child and are always in Your heart and mind.

Give my friends the joy of obedience and the pleasure it brings to You. Use us fully as part of Your purpose to save humanity by leading us to build characters that please You and show Your holy character to others. In Christ.

Amen."

PERSONAL NOTES:
