

## Understanding the Ways of God

### Readings Isaiah 30:18 – 21, 55:8-11, 42:9

1. Our personal image of God, is very important. He is gracious, compassionate and a God of justice (Isaiah 30:18- 21). *What else? How do you view Him?*
2. We often think in terms of straight lines and fixed points. We desire to go straight from what we think God is telling us to its immediate fulfillment. God thinks more in terms of the journey than the destination – there are things he desires to teach us along the way. Discuss
3. Our journey may seem slow because there are relational things God wants to sort out in our lives (we may even call them crises). He wants to confront the next thing in our lives that doesn't make sense to him - that would prevent that destiny unfolding. *What sort of things?*
4. Most of us are aware of the things in our life the Lord wants to deal with. David said “*my sin is ever before me*” – we usually know our weaknesses and failings. *Do you agree? What are some of yours?*
5. We can either work at building these weaknesses into strengths, or we can wallow in our own negativity. *What do you usually do?*
6. It is important that we do not protect people from the dealings of God. Sometimes we rush in and rescue people & do not allow God to complete His work. Can you give an example of this happening?
7. We can't fail any of God's tests– we just get to take them again and again – to revisit things because we resist change. *What is a test you have had to resit?*
8. Joseph had to learn certain skills. People today don't understand this training process - they go for counselling about this problem and about that. A good Christian counselor may be able to help us with the process but God desires that we grow in strength so that we can rule and reign in the situations in which He has placed us. The first person we have got to rule over is ourselves – sometimes it's a matter of telling our emotions and our inner child to “grow up”. *Discuss*
9. It is our lack of growth that contributes to God's timing being put back further. Some of these detours are caused by our stubbornness; others by our own stupidity! Each of the detours brings valuable life lessons. *Discuss*
10. We can speed up the process by cooperating and walking with God (The fast track). Are you submitting and cooperating with this confrontation, transformation process?

### Personal Reflection: What are the main things that absorb your thoughts, interests & energy?

- Are they worth all the effort & obsession?
- What are the spiritual **desires** of your **heart**? How are you **growing** in these **things**?
- How would you **describe** your **Christian walk** at present?
- **What is needed** to bring greater **growth** & fruitfulness?
- Focus on your **secrets**. Tell God about them?
- If they involve sin, **confess** them to the Lord and ask for his forgiveness?
- Is there **someone else** you need to share your difficulties with – your spouse, a close friend?
- Is there someone you need to **forgive or ask forgiveness** of?
- Is there a **safe, quiet place** at home where you can meet regularly with the Lord?