

MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES
GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN DANIEL 4
DANIEL 4:28-37; ROMANS 11:33-36



The Heart of the Matter

Few theological doctrines have caused more of a stir than the doctrine of divine sovereignty. More often than not, the controversy swirls around a misunderstanding of the truth. Taken to an extreme, it can cause God to seem unfair, prejudiced, and lacking in compassion. However, when we see God's sovereignty in its biblical context we discover not only a deep sense of security for today but greater hope and reassurance to face whatever tomorrow brings. Thankfully, we can always count on this: the One who is in control does all things well.



Discovering the Way

1. Who's in Charge of Our Lives? (Daniel 4:28-37)

We often think that we are in charge of our lives. Nebuchadnezzar learned that he wasn't, and neither are we.

2. What Does That Mean . . . and Not Mean? (Romans 11:33-35)

God is in charge because He is sovereign. But what exactly does that mean and not mean?

3. Where Will This Lead? (Romans 11:36)

All of this leads to one astounding truth: the glory of God!

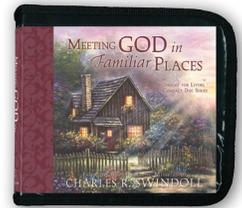


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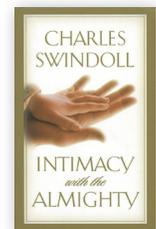
Why should we care about God's sovereignty? We should care because it relieves us from anxiety when wrong things persist. It keeps us from pride when we are blessed. And it frees us from explanation when it's so confusing.



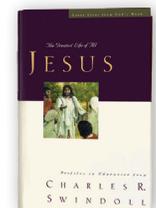
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MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES

GOD'S COMFORT IN PSALM 23

PSALM 23:1-6



The Heart of the Matter

There is not a more familiar setting to meet God than in Psalm 23. It is the psalm everyone turns to when alone and afraid, when in harm's way on the battlefield, when surrounded by the splintered remains after a disaster, while lying on a hospital bed facing serious surgery, as prison bars slam shut, and when overwhelmed by grief. Many know it by heart, but few have ever looked deeply into the psalmist's heart to discover what he *really* meant or to understand the Shepherd who comforted the psalmist.



Discovering the Way

1. Observing What's Obvious . . . but Usually Missed

We call Psalm 23 the *Shepherd's Psalm*. It should really be called the *Sheep's Psalm*.

2. Understanding What's Written . . . but Quickly Overlooked (Psalm 23:1-6)

Let's divide the psalm into three stanzas and discover God's divine comfort.

God's comforting _____ (23:1-2).

God's comforting _____ (23:3-4).

God's comforting _____ (23:5-6).

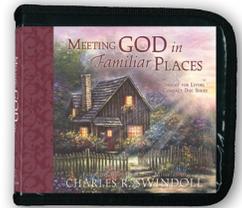


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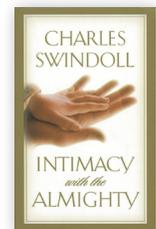
There are three important but easily forgotten truths we should apply to our lives. First, God's comfort makes life livable. Second, God's comfort makes trials bearable. And third, God's comfort makes heaven believable.



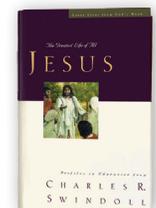
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MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES
GOD'S LOVE IN ROMANS 8
ROMANS 8:28–39



The Heart of the Matter

Ours is a world filled with insecurity and uncertainty, a world where most feel unloved and unlovable. Tragically, this has resulted in a twisted mental image of God. Many picture Him as distant, sullen, and angry, like some sort of frowning, peeved deity who is hunting us down. The good news is that the Bible portrays an image of God that is in sharp contrast to such an erroneous caricature. No section of Scripture sets forth His love more emphatically than these verses in Romans 8. Here we see that God is for us!



Discovering the Way

1. God's Love at Work (Romans 8:28–30)

To understand God's love at work, we begin with a summary statement and five declarations.

2. God's Love on Display (Romans 8:21–39)

To understand God's love on display, we begin with a summary statement and five questions.

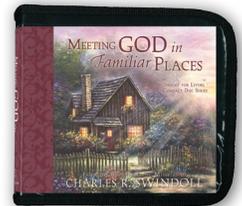


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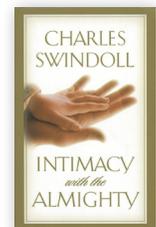
God's love in Christ is the chain that binds us to Him. Because God's love is inseparably linked to His Son and because belief in Christ inseparably links us to God, it follows that God's love is inseparably linked to us.



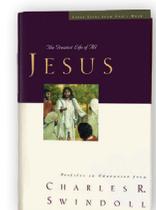
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MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES
GOD'S PEACE IN PHILIPPIANS 4
PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9



The Heart of the Matter

Addictions abound. And they're not limited to those who don't follow Christ. Many Christians struggle with nagging, relentless, recurring habits that defy quick and easy solutions. Curiously, we don't identify the most common of all addictions as such. Instead, we rationalize our way around it. We shrug our shoulders and mumble that everyone does it. But this habit is never treated lightly in the Scriptures—the addiction of anxiety. Just plain *worry*. Thankfully, God has a plan of escape.



Discovering the Way

1. Getting Serious about Resting

God has promised liberty and release, but too often we have ignored His provision.

2. Looking Deeper into Worry

Before we can overcome our addiction to anxiety, we must understand what it means, analyze the solution, and correct our perspective.

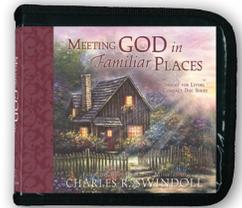


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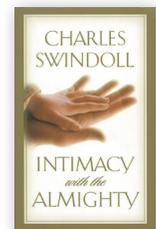
Putting peace to work in your life begins with coming to Christ in faith and then trusting Him with every aspect of your life. As Isaiah 26:4 promises, "In GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock."



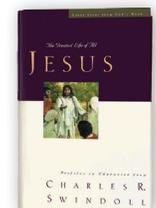
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MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES
GOD'S BLESSINGS IN MATTHEW 5
MATTHEW 5:1-12



The Heart of the Matter

The most famous sermon in history is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). The immediate impact it had on those who originally heard it was astonishment (see 7:28–29). Delivered in a calm, quiet, and deliberate manner, Jesus compared the blessed life associated with His teaching with the cursed life associated with the Pharisees' teaching. Jesus introduced His sermon with eight blessings and eight promises, known as the Beatitudes.



Discovering the Way

1. Three General Observations (Matthew 5:1–2)

Unlike most preachers and their sermons, Jesus did things differently and memorably.

2. Eight Essential Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–12)

Each of these eight character traits and the corresponding promises leads to a blessed life.

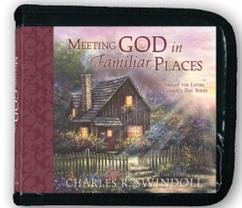


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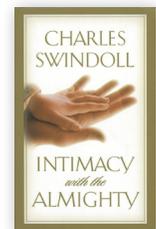
Two practical responses follow Jesus's teaching. First, to you who wonder if it's worth it, the rewards of God flow freely to those who love Him this devotedly. Second, to you who wish to share the Lord with others, the sharing of Christ comes easily from those who live this differently.



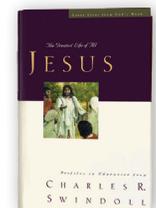
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MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES

GOD'S PROMISE IN ISAIAH 9

ISAIAH 7:14; 9:6-7



The Heart of the Matter

The biblical account of Jesus of Nazareth fascinates people of all ages. And when we come to realize that much of it was predicted long before Christ arrived on planet earth, we're all the more intrigued. As we step into the imaginary time tunnel, we'll return to an era when Hebrew prophets lit their rooms with torches and wrote their sacred words with quills on scrolls of parchment. No less than seven-and-a-half centuries before Mary's baby cried in Bethlehem's manger, Isaiah not only predicted Jesus's coming but also revealed His names and described His authority.



Discovering the Way

1. Understanding the Prophet Isaiah's Ancient World (Isaiah 7:1-13)

To understand the significance of Isaiah's prophecy, we must first look at some history.

2. Examining the Prophet Isaiah's Inspired Words (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7)

As we examine Isaiah's prophecy, pay special attention regarding the Virgin's Child (7:14), the Child's birth (9:6), the Messiah's names (9:6), and the Lord's kingdom (9:7).

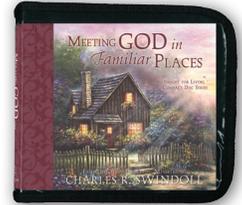


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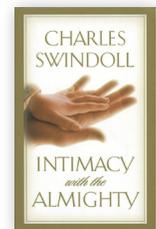
The greatest gift you can receive is the gift of eternal life, of being in Christ's family. You can do that now by asking Him, in faith, to forgive your sins and give you a new, spiritual life.



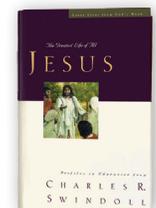
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MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES
GOD'S GIFT IN LUKE 2
LUKE 2:1-14



The Heart of the Matter

Have you ever received a gift you didn't want? Most of us have. Socks instead of a compact disc, the figurine you'd *never* display, the cow calendar instead of the Cowboys calendar. When someone gives you something that you don't want rather than what you do, it's easy to wonder if they pay attention to who you are. Occasionally, however, they know you better than you think. Sometimes, they give you what you *need* rather than what you want. And that's a special gift indeed.



Discovering the Way

1. The Unexpected Gift (Luke 2:1-14)

The Jews wanted a champion and got a child, expected a sword and got swaddling clothes. This is not what they'd asked for.

2. The Unanticipated Problem

The Jews needed a Savior but not for the problem they wanted solved—Rome. They needed a Savior for their *real* problem—sin.

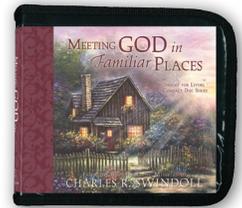


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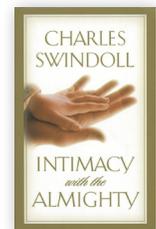
What besets you today? Whatever it may be, there is a greater problem all of us face—the problem of sin. To solve that one, we must accept God's divine gift of grace, which was Jesus's death on the cross.



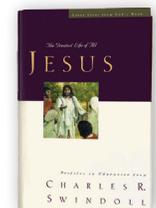
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MEETING GOD IN FAMILIAR PLACES
GOD'S PRESENCE IN JOSHUA 1
JOSHUA 1:1-9



The Heart of the Matter

In this study, we have met God in some of the most familiar places in Scripture, and today is no different. It is here in these verses that we read how God made His presence known to Joshua—a man who had more than a few enormous challenges before him. Not only did Joshua face the daunting task of replacing Moses as Israel's leader, but he was also about to embark on a tough military campaign with troops who had no training against well-trained, equipped warriors. When you imagine how Joshua must have felt, you can appreciate the assurance the Lord gave him with His presence.



Discovering the Way

1. Putting Ourselves in Joshua's Place

After forty years as Moses's assistant, Joshua suddenly found himself as the leader of the Hebrews—without Moses there to guide him.

2. Reminding Ourselves of God's Encouragement (Joshua 1:1-9)

Moses may have been gone, but God wasn't. With a clear commission (1:1-2), specific promises (1:3-5), identical commands (1:6-7, 9, 18), and a prolonged meditation (1:8), God told Joshua to get at it.

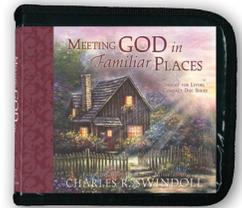


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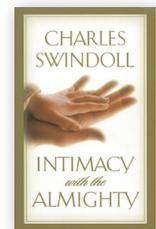
As God was with Joshua, so He is with you. And the lessons Joshua had to learn you must learn yourself. First, God's will is what's important, not yours. Second, God's presence is what's empowering, not yours. Third, God's Word is what enriches, not yours.



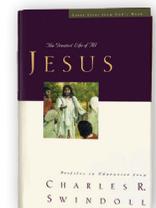
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