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Theme: "Manny"

**Scripture:** Proverbs 16:9 (HCSB) *"A man's heart plans his way; but the Lord determines his steps."*

**A Thought:** It was special day at the coffee cafe. I had the pleasure of meeting two young men who were enrolled in an on-line bible college. Both were studying for a test. After a brief introduction our chitchat turned to how our Lord has blessed our lives. At the opposite end of the table a tall and heavy-set gent was listening quite intently to our conversation. His sun-burn face with with a heavy five o'clock shadow conveyed a weariness. His clothes were soiled with sweat stains and grime. This man worked hard for a living. Thin lines furrowed above the ridge of his eyes. A mortal, laden with yesterday's burdens. *"A joyful heart makes a face cheerful, but a sad heart produces a broken spirit."* (Proverbs 15:13) I was on the verge of an introduction when Manny interrupted and joined in the conversation. A Mike Tyson soft voice quietly with a sense of indignation sputtered.. "God, God, He, He doesn't do anything, especially for people like me." He continued, "He just sits in heaven, looks down on us. I guess sometimes He does but for only for special people." Manny starred at all three of us and waited for an answer. Whoa! Many minutes ensued with rapid-fire testimonies, appropriate scriptures and resolving with the determination that our Lord Jesus Christ loved each of us. One of the young men stated that a good father withholds no good thing from his son and would give him a fish instead of a stone. Manny responded not unlike many of us when our spirit is at low ebb..."but I feel God always gives me stones (trials)." The other student responded stating that the scriptures are clear according to (Matthew 7:7-11 ESV), (9) *"What a man among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?"* Again, we reassured Manny of God's love for each of us. Tranquility and stillness was in order. He took a sip of his coffee, nodded and his earlier stern countenance gave away to a warm smile. He got up, shook hands, we hugged. I reached out for his hand and handed him my Bible and I bid Manny farewell. *"Commit your activities to the Lord"* (Prov.16:3a).

Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

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**Talk to yourself:**

- How would you have responded to Manny in less than a hour conversation?
- How often do you feel like Manny? Do you believe the Lord listens to you?
- Talk to a Christian brother about your doubts, hurts and trials.
- Say the Lord's Prayer and study each line of God's Word.

**Scriptures to read:**

- Exodus 20:3; Psalm 18:2, 34:18, 72:36; Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 55:8, 57:17-19;
- Jeremiah 17:7; Matthew 11:28; John 14:27, 16:33; Romans 14:23, 15:5;
- 1 Corinthians 5:5, 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 4:17

**Quote:** Ann Voskamp, author One Thousand Gifts Devotional: Reflections On Finding Everyday Graces.

Pray - Make it the refrain of your day. *"God, open the eyes of my heart."* The journey must be spirit-led, everyday."

**Bottom Line:** Survey after survey report disturbing news that less and less men attend church. Needless to say if they don't attend the chances are they won't make Bible classes and such. Men, do not let pride, ignorance and sin get in the way of the Lord's promise. We have a knack to be prideful, ignorant and for many of us sin plays havoc in our lives. The Father has entrusted our Lord to save us. Jesus is talking to you and me *"Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Luke 11:28). When we face trials (or stones i.e. Manny) we find it difficult to talk and ask God for help....all due to the heaviness of our heart. Why wait? Go before the Lord! *"Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares about you"* (1 Peter 5:7 HCSB). Manny was concerned as he stated earlier that he was not "one of those special people God talks to." Phooey. Not the case. God brought us Moses, David, Job, Peter, Paul and many other godly men who were argumentative and suffered under dire circumstances. God loved them and likewise He loves us. Take heed to (John 14:27 HCSB) *"Peace I leave you, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."*

**NOW.....THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE**

Spiritual Dabbler, Your bro, Ray