

Restored

Seeing Me through God's Eyes

Restored

*Seeing Me through
God's Eyes*

by REST Ministries
under the leadership of H*VMI

about

REST MINISTRIES

Offering hope to the hurting, ,abused and addicted in the church and the community.

If you know people, then you know hurting people. Emotional and spiritual pain transcends social and economic boundaries. Even within the church, many may not be aware of the pain in themselves or others because it is buried beneath a forced smile or their Sunday best.

REST Ministries is a compassion ministry of H*VMI with a mission to facilitate restoration to the hurting, abused and addicted whether they are in the church or in the community; and to equip others to do the same.

REST Ministries uses Biblical Truth as the foundation for the support and resources we offer. REST also desires to point people toward the hope and healing that can be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

We help individual through support, programs, resources, and seminars. We help the church and community through resources, training workshops, and speakers for missions conferences.

Our educators have traveled throughout the country and the world training churches and communities to reach out to those who are hurting. Please contact us for a list of our current workshops.

**"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden,
and I will give you rest."**

Matthew 11:28 (NASB)

*God has truly blessed me by putting you in my life.
Your ministry has certainly served many purposes in my life,
spiritually, mentally and emotionally.*

- from a woman in prison -

*Thank you for sharing so many wonderful treasures of truth with us.
I pray we all let God ignite a passion for Christ in us
as we seek total and complete freedom in Him!*

- from a workshop attendee -

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was created by **REST Ministries**,
under the leadership of



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INTRODUCTION

This is not a self-improvement guide, but rather, a biblical look at who we are through God's eyes. This study is designed as a supplement/resource for one who has first completed REST Ministries' *Bridge to Restoration* workshop. Our prayer is that you will accept our invitation to join or start a support group using this study as a way to put into practice the steps of restoration that you learned while attending the workshop.

If you have not attended a *Bridge to Restoration* workshop, then this is an invitation to learn the steps to restoration in your life; an invitation to explore the truth about life, God and yourself.

In our world, sometimes it is very hard to know what or who to believe. The world teaches that there are many truths; that truth is "relative," but that cannot be. Truth will never conflict with itself. There must be one standard of truth where by all else is judged all the time. In the Bible, John 17:17 tells us that, "Your (God's) word is truth." In John 14:6, Jesus said, "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**" Jesus and His Word, the Bible, is the standard of truth that this study uses.

This is not a self-help workbook or a Bible study to help your self-esteem. This is a God-esteem book. This study looks at what God says about us. Some people reject what God says about them as truth because they don't feel worthy. What they really think is that their opinion or other people's opinion is more important to them than God, their Maker's. God's opinion is Truth. We each have a choice: to accept or reject what God says. He does not force us to believe. However, we cannot reject the truths of God's Word and be in a right relationship with God. Just as we cannot be close to someone we do not trust; who's word we do not believe.

The question for you right now is: Whose opinion is more important to you—yours and other people's or God's, the One who created you? In other words, whose opinion is "truth" to you? There can be no profit in studying what God says about your identity if you automatically or eventually reject it for another's opinion.

If you have been valuing your opinion or others' above God's, please humble yourself before God and confess your sin—yes, believing a lie is sin. Confession simply means to agree with God that you were wrong (1 John 1:9). Then as you work through this study, reject all other opinions, including your own, as lies and accept what God says about you as Truth.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20-21

God heals us as we, by faith, believe and obey His truth over the lies of Satan. **Therefore, we urge you to change your focus from self to God and enjoy seeing yourself through God's eyes!**

Bible Study Instructions:

Each week you will have a lesson together in your support group, introducing the topic of the week. This is designed to give you some head knowledge of the topic. (If you are not going through this as part of a support group, the answers to the weekly lessons are found in the Appendix.) Then during the week, you will have daily lessons to work on to help the head knowledge become heart knowledge so that it is applied to your life.

There are five daily lessons a week, giving you the weekend off and allowing time to catch up when needed. However, you will apply the information best if you spend time each day, Monday – Friday, alone with the Lord, working on the lessons rather than cramming them all into one day's work.

Come to the group lesson the next week prepared to share from the highlighted portions of the daily work, which are marked by the magnifying glass to the left of this page. Prepare your heart in prayer, as well, so that you are ready to receive the introductory lesson of the next way that God sees you through His eyes.



As Paul prayed for the Ephesians, so our prayer for you is that through this study you will be rooted and established in love so that you can experientially know and grasp how wide and long and deep God's love is for you!

*For this reason I kneel before the Father,
from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.
I pray that out of glorious riches
He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp
how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
according to His power that is at work within us,
to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
forever and ever! AMEN.*

Ephesians 3:14-21

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

You will want to look ahead to see what additional teaching media is suggested for the lessons so you have time to order them. During each weekly lesson, discuss the previous week's highlights, then teach the new week's lesson.

WEEK 1 • HIS CREATION

Since there are no daily lessons to review this week, we suggest you use the time to give your testimony. For the lesson, you will need a tape measure to make a nine foot circle and a one inch circle to demonstrate the difference in size between the sun and the earth. At the end of class, explain that they have five days of homework to do and that they should come prepared the next week to discuss the highlighted parts of the daily lessons and any questions they have from the lessons.

WEEK 2 • DEAD OR ALIVE

Discuss the highlighted parts of the daily lessons from last week then teach the lesson from week 2. In this lesson we use, scene 8, "Aztec Gold," from the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*. We realize that not all religious groups use secular movies. You do not need to see the movie to understand the illustration in the lesson. If you choose to do show the movie, you will need to rent, buy or borrow the movie and have a way to show it in the classroom. It is easier to use the DVD version to find the scene but the video works fine if you cue it up before class. If you think anyone may be offended by this movie in your class, then certainly don't show it.

WEEK 3 • A NEW CREATION

After your discussion of the week 2 daily lessons, introduce this week's topic with lesson 3. This week we suggest showing a video about the life of a butterfly. You can do a Google search to find a video about the butterfly or you can watch this You Tube video about the life cycle of the butterfly. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1S8WzwLPIM> (you might need to copy and past this link). On page 30, draw a caterpillar under "Our Past," a chrysalis under "Our Present" and a butterfly under "Our Future." Examples are in the answer appendix. If you have a large class, you could make an overhead out of page 30.

WEEK 4 • HIS HOME

This week's focus is on us being the Temple of God. To understand that better we need to first understand what the Old Testament temple was. Here are some teaching suggestions: 1) [HTTPS://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euYT4t2j2Lo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euYT4t2j2Lo) – this video gives you an understanding of the temple. It is about 30-35 minutes long. 2) A book Understanding The Holy Temple of the Old Testament by Leen & Kathleen Ritmeyer available from Amazon. 3) If you are artistic and want to make your own temple, instructions can be found on page 158.

WEEK 5 • HIS IMAGE

It is important is to have a visual illustration to look at for this lesson. Draw an apple tree

and Christmas tree on a chalkboard before class; make a flannel graph illustration; use an overhead projector; or, draw it on a poster board if that works for you.

WEEK 6 • FORGIVEN

To add help your class visualize, you could bring a full backpack or a pumpkin as a centerpiece. You could also bring a 3x5 card for each participant to write down the sins they're struggling to let go of the most and then have them write in red the word "teleo" across them. Or, you could write out Romans 3:23 and the first part of 6:23 on an index card and then write over it "teleo" in red.

WEEK 7 • HIS CHILD

This is a difficult lesson for some to comprehend. Many Christians sympathize with the older brother and don't see that he did anything wrong. Help your students to see that both sons were wrong in their relationship with the Father. I suggest that you play the song "When God Ran" by Benny Hester at the end of the class time. This will give the students time to internalize the lesson and time to think about where they really land on the line. It may help them to visualize God running to them when they come to their senses. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nTNhIE2GyM> – Song and lyrics of "When God Ran."

WEEK 8 • BELOVED

Obviously, women relate to this lesson better than men, but some women have a hard time thinking of being this intimate with Jesus, especially if there is any sexual abuse in their background. You might ask the class to bring their wedding pictures to class just to get to know each other better or you could ask the women, "what is your definition of intimacy? Write down some of their answers and then compare it with the dictionary definition of the word "intimacy" and discuss.

WEEK 9 • PART OF HIS FAMILY

You might get a large roll of paper and have someone lie down on it and draw their outline then put everyone's picture on the outline. You could even cut up your church directory if you are all from the same church. The point is to illustrate that we are all one body and need to be working as a unit.

WEEK 10 • FULLY EQUIPPED

If you would like more information about spiritual gifts testing or resources, please contact Jackie England, jengland@hvmi.org or Judy Edinger, jedinger@hvmi.org

WEEK 11 • HIS AMBASSADOR

In the Appendix you will find "100 Typical Questions from a U.S. Citizenship Test." You might want to read some of them to see if the class would pass. What if we had to pass a Heavenly Citizen test? What kind of questions would you find on it?

WEEK 12 • FREE!

This is the last week! There are no daily lessons. We suggest you have the class write down what they got out of the course. How did it or did it not help them? We would love to have your feedback or questions. You can send them to jengland@hvmi.org or jedinger@hvmi.org.

IS GOD IN CONTROL?

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:15-17

This verse is talking about Jesus...
 How many things does it say Jesus holds together? _____

Do you really believe that?

Do you believe that God is big enough to hold together your life?

Those of you who feel like your lives are going well will probably answer, "Yes!" However, those of you who feel like your lives are not going according to plan may have a harder time believing that God is really in control.

Job was this way. The Bible tells us that he was a very righteous man who had a great life until God allowed him to lose it all.

Read Job 1:6-22.

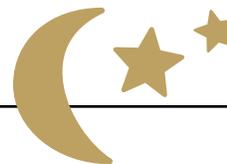
Twenty-nine chapters later, we see that Job started to feel like God was no longer in control of his life. Job went on to demand an audience with God to find out why...

Read Job 29:1-5 and 31:35.

When God finally spoke to Job, He didn't answer Job's questions of why. Instead, God pointed out to Job His Creation and the marvelous ways that He sustains it.

Why do you think God answered Job like this? _____

Instead of God explaining to Job why He allowed all those bad things to happen to him, God told Job to look at His Creation. So let's take a look at a part of God's Creation to help us appreciate His awesome ability to control His universe.



Have you ever laid on the grass on a warm summer night and looked up into the sky?

Isn't it an awesome sight? What is the closest star to us? _____

Imagine the sun as a ball nine feet across. In our imaginary scale model...

How big would the earth be in comparison? _____

How big would you be? _____

Can you imagine yourself in that scale? How big are you feeling right now?

Now consider the fact that the sun is just an average size star.

Think back to that summer sky and realize that all of those little, twinkling stars are THAT much bigger than you. Now, how big is God? He not only thought up the idea of Creation and was able to put His plan into action, but He also keeps it all going.

Perhaps you feel like David right now when he said,

*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?*

Psalm 8:3-4

And yet we know that not only is He mindful of us, but He sent His own Son to become a "nanodot" like us so that He could die for us.

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

Philippians 2:5-8

Jesus gave up the glory of being God, took on flesh and blood and came down to this little planet so He could die for you and me! What an awesome Savior we have!!

If you started this lesson worried about things in your life, has your attitude changed?

Listen to how Job responded after God described His all-powerful and sustaining handiwork.

I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted.

Job 42:2

Job had come to the place where he could trust God to be in control during the bad times, as well as in the good. Have you?



*“The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of His hands.”*

Psalm 19:1

GOD SEES ME AS HIS CREATION

DAY 1 • How Do I Correct My View of God?

In order to see ourselves through God's eyes correctly, we need to have a correct view of God!

Read through the following list and check the description of God that is the closest to your view of Him. Do not check how you think you are supposed to view Him, but rather how you respond to Him when things in your life aren't going the way you think they should.

I see God as...

- an authority figure with a big stick just waiting for me to do something wrong.
- a parent who is trying to take all the fun out of life.
- distant—He really doesn't care about what I do.
- someone who is naïve and easily manipulated.
- impossible to please, so I've given up trying.
- a parent who is there for me and cares about what I do.
- _____



Often the authority figures in our lives, especially our parents, play a large part in shaping our view of God...

Where has your view of God come from?

- Childhood Experiences
- Parents
- Scriptures
- Traumatic Experiences
- Teachers, Pastors or Religious Authorities

As a child, what was your view of God? _____

Has your view of God changed through the years? How? _____

Did the small group lesson "God sees me as His Creation" change your view of God in any way? If so, how?

Read the first two chapters of Job in your Bible.

Check which attributes of God you see there:

- Supreme Ruler (sovereign)
- All-knowing (omniscient)
- All-powerful (omnipotent)
- Ever Present (omnipresent)
- Loving
- Holy
- Infinite (has no beginning or end)
- Creator
- _____

Job was not aware of the conversations between God and Satan. All he knew was that in less than 24 hours he lost almost everything dear to him for no apparent reason.

Be prepared to share from Job Chapters 1 & 2 on the following:

God's view of Job: _____

Satan's view of Job: _____

Job's view of God during the crisis: _____



Take a moment to put yourself in Job's shoes. How would you have felt if you were Job?

Do you think that Job felt blessed before his loss or after his loss? [circle one]

If your heart's desire is to see God through the clear lens of His Truth, spend some time right now asking Him to help you.

*"Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths;
 guide me in your truth and teach me,
 for you are God my Savior,
 and my hope is in you all day long."*

Psalm 25:4-5

God sees me as His Creation!

DAY 2 • Does It Really Matter WHAT I Believe?

Not only do we have incorrect views about God, but we also have them about our ourselves, our lives, and others.

Abuse can come in many forms: physical, emotional, spiritual, etc. One of the worse parts of abuse is the lies that are left behind in our belief system. Lies like,



It is easy to see how being abused as a child can leave us with many false beliefs, but does that mean that those who have not been abused are lie free?

Read the following story:

Once upon a time there was a little girl who loved to play in the street. Her mother repeatedly told her to stop, but she wouldn't listen to her mother. The mom warned her daughter that it was dangerous, but she saw no danger. She only saw a fun, flat playground. The mother finally had to spank her, but the little girl still did not believe there was any danger. The little girl decided that the reason her mom didn't want her to play in the street was because her mom "just didn't want her to have fun." She decided to avoid being spanked again, she would play in the street only when her mother wasn't looking. This belief about her mom continued to effect the little girl's decisions as she grew up.

Was the little girl's belief about her mom truth? _____

What was the truth? _____

This false belief about her mother could lead the little girl to become a rebellious teenager who believes her behavior is justified because her mom "just doesn't want her to have any fun."

Scripture tells us that we all have lies in our belief system.

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Jeremiah 17:9

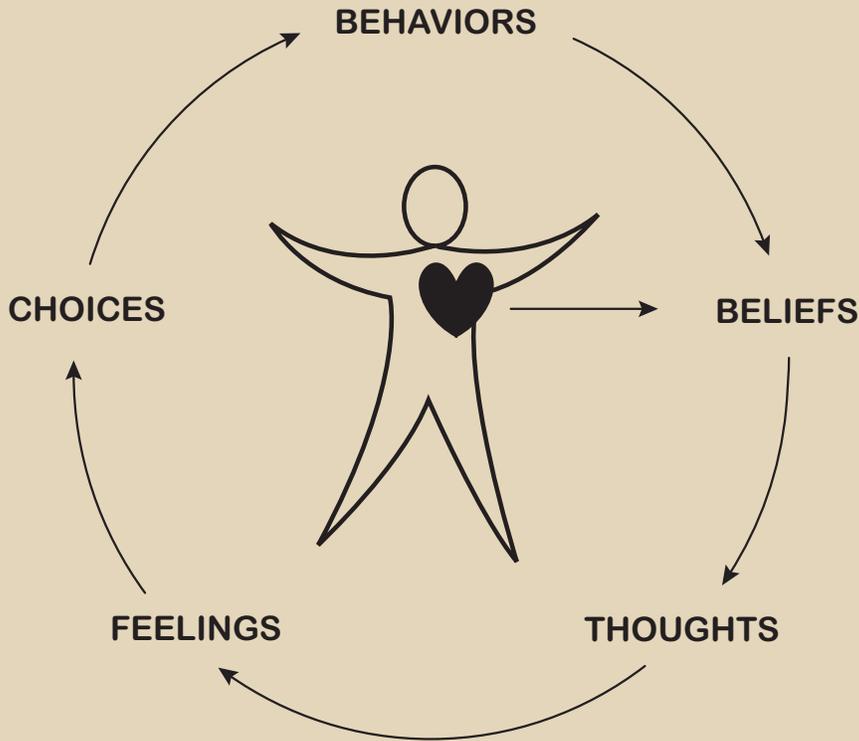
This verse isn't referring to our hearts making up lies as much as it is talking about our hearts believing lies. If you think of man's heart as a receiver, then the only channels that are clearly received are from the stations broadcasting propaganda. It is much easier for our hearts to believe a lie than the truth. Look at what the next verse says:

I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.

Jeremiah 17:10

It matters a lot what I believe if the Lord is going to examine my heart and mind to reward me for my deeds! (Why doesn't God examine my deeds to reward me for my deeds?)

REST Ministries illustrates the previous verses with the following belief cycle.



We all develop a deeply rooted "belief system" about ourselves. Out of our beliefs come our thoughts; our thoughts feed our feelings; our feelings shape our choices; our choices create our behavior; and, our behavior reinforces our beliefs.

God created us to work this way, and it is a great system—as long as we aren't operating out of a deceptive heart. That is why the process of "Restoration" has to start within our heart. We must now take *captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ* (2 Corinthians 10:5) so we can be *transformed by the renewing of our mind* (Romans 12:2).

Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior? Yes No

If yes, what is keeping you from experiencing your own Restoration?

If no, please continue this study. You will learn how you can have your sins forgiven and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.



DAY 3 • How Do I Stop Living According to LIES?

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test
and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Romans 12:2

- (1) **We must identify the lies.** This is easier said than done because we have a deceitful heart and so lies are easier for us to believe than the truth.

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick.

Jeremiah 17:9

- (2) **We must know that we have an enemy.** He is trying to destroy us and he is the father of lies.

*You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your
father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth,
for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language,
for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

John 8:44

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around
like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that
your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

1 Peter 5:8-9

- (3) **We must understand**—accepting Jesus as our Savior does not automatically remove all of these lies from our belief system.



File Box Illustration

Imagine that you are back in grade school learning your math facts...

Your teacher has you write each new math fact on a 3X5 card and then put them into a file box. During the math review time the next day your teacher asks you to take out your file box and find the card with 2+2 and tell her the answer. You proudly take out your 2+2 card and tell her, "2+2=5!" The rest of the class snickers, and your teacher gently tells you that you must have written down the wrong answer. The teacher tells you to make a new card with the correct answer.

The next day when the teacher asks for 2+2 again you are sure you have the right answer. You raise your hand while you are still searching for the card. Just as she calls on you for the answer you discover a problem—you have two cards in your box with 2+2. One with "2+2=4" and one with "2+2=5." You don't know which one is the truth!

Why is there a problem? _____

When we accept Jesus as our Savior we begin inserting Truth, but the lies are not automatically deleted.

So how do we remove the lies from our belief system?

- (4) **We must remove the lie through confession.** We are purified when we agree with God (confess) that we have been believing a lie about Him, ourselves, or others.

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Hebrews 3:12

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

- (5) **We must accept God's Word as Truth.** God's Word exposes Satan's lies and reveals to us...

The Truth—about God and ourselves!

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

Review the Steps

Write in the missing words from the five steps below.

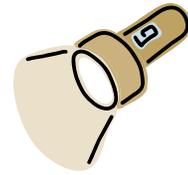
1. _____ the lies.
2. _____ that we have an _____ who is the father of lies.
3. _____ that having Jesus as our Savior does not automatically remove all these _____ from our belief system.
[file box illustration]
4. _____ the lie through _____.
5. _____ God's Word as _____ and plug it into our belief system, which will lead to changed behavior.



“...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Colossians 3:10

DAY 4 • Lies Exposed—TRUTH Revealed



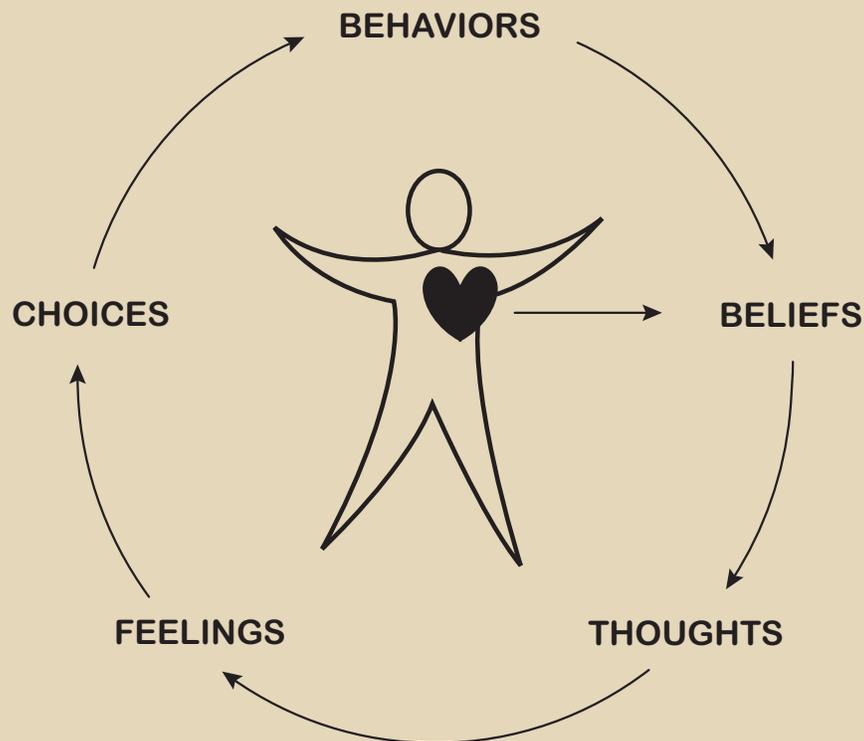
God's Word exposes Satan's lies and reveals to us the truth about God and ourselves!



Below are five lies that the book of Job exposes:

1. Suffering is always a symptom of guilt.
2. If God is a loving God and bad things happen to good people then God must not be able to control all things.
3. If God is in full control of everything and bad things happen to good people then God must not be loving.
4. Satan and God are equal powers.
5. We are here by a chance evolutionary process.

Pick one of the first four lies listed above and insert it into the belief cycle below. Fill in what thoughts might come out of that false belief and what feelings would result. Come to class prepared to share choices and behaviors also.



If you discovered that you have believed in one or more of these lies go through the steps from Day 3.

Below are Truths that you may want to memorize.

- 1 Peter 4:19
So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.
- Ecclesiastes 7:14
When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.
- Lamentations 3:21-23
Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
- Job 1:12
The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD .
- James 5:10-11
Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.
- Luke 10:17-20
The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."
- Revelations 20:1-3
And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

DAY 5 • God Created ME

At the end of Chapter 2 of Job, Job's friends show up. After sitting in silence for seven days and nights, these friends spent a lot of time telling Job that he must have sinned to deserve his present situation and that he needed to confess. Job insisted that he has done nothing wrong.

What was the truth? (What did God say about Job in chapter 1?)

Job finally gets very frustrated trying to convince his friends that he did nothing wrong, and he demands an audience with God Himself (Job 31:35). **Read God's response in chapters 38-42.**

When God spoke to Job He said nothing about what Job did or didn't do to deserve what had happened to him. Instead, God spends four chapters pointing out his creative abilities and powers.

Then Job replied to the LORD:

"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted."

Job 42:1-2

Today most schools teach Evolution, not Creation. Some of you may believe in Evolution, some in Creation, and some in both. How do you answer questions about radioactive dating, missing links and dinosaurs?

Does it matter which theory we believe?

If we can't totally believe the Bible when it says in Genesis 1:1,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,

then how can we believe John 3:16, when it says,

For God so loved the world that He sent His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Can Creation and Evolution both be true?

In Genesis, the Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and that He called it "very good" (1:31). Unfortunately the world did not stay perfect. The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve disobeyed God and allowed death to enter the world (3:1-19). Satan was also allowed reign, for a time, over this world. Psalm 102:25-26 tells us that the universe is now wearing _____ like a _____. That's Creation in a nutshell!

In contrast, Evolution says that our world all started with a "big bang." Then, by chance, from that explosion came a one-celled organism and over billions of years more and more complex beings have evolved.

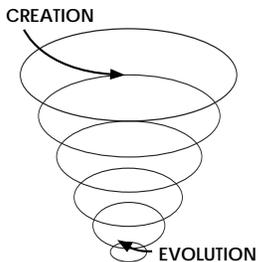
These are opposite theories. To the left is an illustration of a downward spiral. Creation say that we started at the top of the spiral and are on our way down. Evolution says we started at the bottom of the spiral and we are on the way up.

Is Evolution a fact or a theory? _____

In order for something to be a proven scientific fact, it must be:

1. Observed
2. Demonstrated
3. Repeated

God sees you
as His
Creation,
do you see God
as your
Creator?



Since we cannot observe, demonstrate or repeat the beginning of the universe, both Evolution and Creation will **always** remain theories, scientifically speaking. So, it is up to us to decide which belief makes sense. Do you see a world that is wearing out or a world that is getting more and more complex?

If you buy a new car, does it stay new?

But lets be "scientific" about this by looking at one of our scientific laws*...

The Second Law of Thermodynamics, which Albert Einstein viewed as the premier law of all science, says that **energy becomes less and less useful through time**. It is sometimes referred to as "the Law of Entropy." {Entropy is the general trend of the universe toward death and disorder.}

So, according to this law, are we on our way up the spiral or down? _____

Does it really matter how old the earth is?

Does the age of the Earth matter? Absolutely! The Bible does not tell us the earth's age, but if we add up all of the generations in it we come up with a little over 6,000 years. Evolutionists say that the earth is 5 billion years old, proving it through radiometric dating. But, if God created the rocks with the appearance of age, would this throw off today's dating? How old did Adam look the day he was created? Were the trees already bearing fruit? Did God create the stars so that the light was shining on the earth the day they were created? I wonder how old the rocks would have tested the day of creation...

How about those dinosaurs?

In school you probably learned that dinosaurs reigned for 140 million years, and mysteriously became extinct about 60 million years before man appeared.

According to Genesis 1, when did dinosaurs appear? _____

How do we know that dinosaurs ever existed? _____

Nearly all fossils* are found in sedimentary rocks, which were formed by flowing water. These fossils were buried before the plant/animal could decay or be eaten. A worldwide flood is the only reasonable explanation of the fossil record. Such a flood is described in Genesis 6-8.

The book of Job was written about two hundred years after the flood. What animals do you think God is describing in Job 40 -41? **Read Job 40:15-41:34.**

When we look around us, it is clear that we are on our way down the spiral. Why do scientists continue to believe and teach that we are on our way up?

Because then they can do whatever they want and can fool themselves into believing that they are not accountable to God. **(Read Romans 1:18-32.)**

How about you?

Do you recognize God as your creator and that you are living in a world turned upside-down by man's sin? Do you understand that man is condemned to hell because of our sin? Do you know that God loved you too much to leave you in that hopeless state and sent His own Son to die for you?

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

***Scientific Laws** are theories that have been observed, demonstrated, and repeated over and over by many different scientists.

***Fossils** are hardened remains or traces of plants and animals that are found on the rocks of Earth's crust.

Week 2

ARE YOU DEAD OR ALIVE?

Compare the following two perspectives on life:

- 1) You only live once, so go for the gusto! (beer commercial)
- 2) To live is Christ and to die is gain! (Philippians 1:21)

How would each perspective affect your behavior if it were a part of your belief system?

Satan does not want you to invest your life in eternal things so he will always be looking for ways to tempt you with temporal things. You will need to work at keeping an eternal perspective.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Colossians 3:1-2

The Bible tells us that we are eternal beings. We are either eternally dead or eternally alive. We may look alive but we are born dead.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:1-5

We were not originally created to be born dead. Romans 5:12 tells us that death entered the world through one man.

Who was that one man? _____

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Romans 5:12

Read Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17.

What did God say would happen if they ate of the forbidden fruit? _____

Did they die? _____

Death literally and biblically means separation. Who were Adam and Eve separated from? _____



Read Genesis 3:1-13.

3:1 - How did Satan misquote God? _____
Satan is immediately putting doubt in Eve's mind.

3:3 - How did Eve misquote God? _____

3:4 - How might it have impacted Eve if Satan was actually touching the tree's fruit as he questioned her command from God?

One of Satan's root lies is, "God is withholding something good from you."

How has Satan used this one in your life? _____

Have you confessed to God that you believed this lie about Him? _____

Do you have His truth with which to replace it? _____

What is His truth? _____

At that time a curse was put on the human race.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us
Galatians 3:13a

If we could see each other through God's eyes it would be easy to see who was still under the curse and who wasn't. The Disney movie, *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, illustrates this well. It is a comedy adventure about a group of pirates doomed to live as the undead after stealing a cursed treasure. They look the same as everyone else until they are in the moon light and then you can see them for what they really are—dead.

We may all look the same but some of us are dead and some of us are alive. Some of us have had the curse removed by trusting in Jesus as our Savior.

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

I John 5:11-13



ARE YOU DEAD OR ALIVE?

GOD SEES ME AS DEAD OR ALIVE

DAY 1 • Why Was I Created?



Why does the Bible say God created you?

- 1) Read Isaiah 43:7. _____
- 2) Read Ephesians 2:10. _____
- 3) Read Colossians 1:16. _____

How do you feel about that? _____

Why does an artist paint a picture? Why does a gardener plant a garden? Why does a creator create?

Read *Welcome to My Garden* by Cindy Harmon.

Welcome to My Garden

Once upon a time there were two very different gardeners living next to each other. One neighbor was a very good gardener. She took such good care of her garden that people came from far away to see it. The other neighbor took such poor care of his garden that most people didn't even consider him a gardener.

One day when the good gardener woke up she went to her bedroom window, as was her daily routine, to take in the day's first glimpse of her beautiful flowers. She gasped as she stared out the window because they were not there. She dressed quickly and ran outside to find out what had happened to them. She was very surprised to see them over in the middle of her neighbor's weed patch! Suspecting that her neighbor had stolen them in the night, she ran over with her shovel in hand to reclaim her precious plants.

It broke her heart to see her choice plants haphazardly scattered among those disgusting weeds. As she began to push her spade into the hard, parched ground to rescue her most prized rosebush the plant yelled, "Stop!" The plants began to tell her that they hadn't been stolen at all but rather they were here by their own choice. The good gardener fell back dismayed. "But why?" she questioned, "Haven't I always taken good care of you? Have you ever lacked anything?"

"Oh sure," the plants answered, "you always took good care of us, but now we know why! Your neighbor told us the truth about you. He told us that you only created that beautiful garden to show off. You are just using us. We know it's true because when the people come to admire our beauty they always give you the credit! Now when people see us they will say, 'Look at those beautiful plants in the middle of those weeds!' and we will get the credit we deserve for our beauty."

Through her tears, the good gardener tried to explain to her plants that it was true that she had created this garden for her own enjoyment. However, she took such good care



of them because she loved them and knew what was best for them. They were beautiful because she had made sure all of their needs were met.

"There you go again taking all the credit," her prize plants yelled in unison. The gardener turned to the impatiens and tried to reason with them, "You have always been so beautiful under the shade of my giant oak tree but believe me, out here in the full sun you are going to wilt."

"That's the other thing we are tired of!" they yelled back. "You are always telling us what to do and where to go. Why do you always get to make the rules? Over here in this garden, we can go anywhere we want to. Your neighbor told us that you make us stay in the shade because if we were planted out here in the sun our true beauty would outshine yours."

A few weeks went by, and as the good gardener predicted, the plants began to shrivel and wilt from lack of water, too much sun and weeds choking them. Soon they were crying out for the good gardener to help them. The good gardener told them she would love to have them back if they were ready to admit they were wrong and agree to live by her rules.

"No!" they would yell, "but if you really loved us you would at least come over here and give us a drink and get some of these weeds off of us!" Their groaning and accusations continued both day and night.

One night, while the good gardener tried to ignore it and get some rest, the noise began to get louder and louder. Finally, she couldn't take it any longer. She sat straight up in bed, and then she realized that the noise wasn't coming from her rebellious plants; it was her alarm clock going off. As she rubbed the sleep from her eyes, she discovered that it had all been a bad dream. She ran to her window and looked out to see her garden as beautiful as it had always been.

Then the good gardener fell on her knees, realizing she was just like the plants in her dream. She had ears to hear lies, a heart to believe them and feet to run after them. She thanked her Heavenly Father that even after she had rebelled against Him, He loved her enough to provide a way for her to return and be grafted back into His garden.

Read Jeremiah 2:1-32 and Isaiah 5:1-7.

How have you treated God like the plants in the story or like the nation of Israel in the verses you just read?



***I AM THE TRUE VINE,
AND MY FATHER IS THE GARDENER.***



DAY 2 • Restored to WHAT?



Before man's sin what kind of relationship did Adam and Eve have with God?

Read Genesis 2:17. They had no knowledge of good and evil—total innocence.

Read Genesis 2:25. They had no shame.

Do you think they felt loved by God? _____

When God came to walk with them in the cool of the day, what do you think they talked about?

Compare that with the things you talk to God about. Is there a difference?

Read Genesis 3:6-11.

How did their relationship change after their sin? _____

If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior and you are "alive" in Christ, then your relationship with God your Creator is restored!



Why Don't I Feel Restored?

Unconfessed sin breaks fellowship with God. Most of our unconfessed sin is in our belief system. The lies that we might not even realize we are holding onto get in the way of our accepting God's love. Have you ever tried to love someone who felt unlovable? Be prepared to share in class your experience with this.

Read Romans 5:5-8.

How different would your life be if you *felt* 100% loved by God?

In what ways are you still trying to earn God's love? _____

Agape is the Greek word for God's love. One of the reasons we have trouble accepting God's love is that we think He loves like we do.

Agape is not a natural love, but a supernatural love.

It's **unconditional**—it loves no matter what.

It's **one-sided**—it doesn't have to be returned to be kept alive.

It's **other-centered**—it always puts the others' interests above its own.

The one thing we did not lose in the Garden of Eden is God's love! Why are so many of us trying to earn something we have 100% of already?

Agape

***We know that we live in him and he in us,
because he has given us of his Spirit.
And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son
to be the Savior of the world.
If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God,
God lives in him and he in God.
And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.
I John 4:13-16***

DAY 3 • But If Only You REALLY Knew Me...



*Then the eyes of both of them were opened,
and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together
and made coverings for themselves.*

*Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God
as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day,
and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

Genesis 3:7-8

Were Adam and Eve naked before they ate of the fruit? YES, and they felt no shame (Genesis 2:25)! So what changed? They became conscience of their guilt. As a result, they experienced their first emotion resulting from their sin (disobedience)— shame. Their way of dealing with the feeling of shame was to cover themselves and hide in a place where they had once felt free to be exposed.

Their need to physically hide was the outward response to what was taking place on the inside—the thinking that, “I not only did something bad, but I am something bad.”

The dictionary’s definition of shame is a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety.

Shame is the result of allowing our own wrong behavior or the wrong behavior of others to define us.

The following are a list of areas that tend to provoke shame in us. Check any that you believe still define you today:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abortion | <input type="checkbox"/> Family member addiction/mental illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giving up a child | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal addiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce | <input type="checkbox"/> Abusive toward others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rape | <input type="checkbox"/> Abused emotionally, physically or sexually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual sin | <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childhood home life | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |



When we feel shame, our thought life is flooded with thoughts that literally do paralyze us. We conclude that we are bad, unworthy, less than, etc. As a result, we feel the need to hide and remain hidden so that no one else sees just how bad we are. Some of the thoughts that rob us of our joy and peace are:

“If you really knew me you wouldn’t like me.”

“I’m really bad.”

“I make people do bad things.”

“I’m not worth being loved.”

“I’m not worth spending time with.”

“I’m not good enough.”

Is your thought about you in that list? _____ If yes, write it out below. If your thought about yourself is not on the above list, please write it below instead.

Check ways that you have possibly used to cover up and hide so that your shame would not be revealed:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defensiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Perfectionism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blame-shifting | <input type="checkbox"/> People-pleasing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rebellious | <input type="checkbox"/> Shyness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addictions | <input type="checkbox"/> Denial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimizing |

As a child of God, you no longer have to hide. God knows all about your past. He made a way for you to overcome the shame and have a new identity.

Read Romans 10:11; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Colossians 2:14-15; 1 John 3:1a. Look at what God did for you in His love for you...

- He cancelled any charges against you!
- He rendered any evil powerless over your life!
- He cleansed you through Christ!
- He set you apart as holy!
- He made you right with God!

Overcoming shame requires leaving the past and the shame at the foot of the cross and believing God's truth that you have been set free from the power of sin and the past. His love and grace have given you a new definition, that of beloved child. Absolutely nothing, including the past, can separate you from that love!

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...
No, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither
angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither
height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
Romans 8:1, 37-39

**YOUR PAST DOES NOT DEFINE WHO YOU ARE ...
YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER DOES!**



*How great
is the love the Father has
lavished on us,
that we should be called
children of God! And
that is what
we are!
1 John 3:1a*

*He canceled the
record that contained
the charges against us.
He took it and
destroyed it by nailing it
to Christ's cross.
In this way,
God disarmed the
evil rulers and authorities.
He shamed them
publicly by his victory
over them
on the cross of Christ.
Colossians 2:14-15 (NLT)*

*Anyone who trusts
in him will never be
put to shame.
Romans 10:11*

*But you were washed,
you were sanctified,
you were justified
in the name
of the Lord Jesus Christ
and by the Spirit
of our God.
1 Corinthians 6:11b*

DAY 4 • The BLAME Game



Once Adam and Eve came out of hiding, they still weren't ready to accept God's love or the consequences of their sin.



Read Genesis 3:12-13.

Who did Adam blame for his sin? _____

Who did Eve blame for her sin? _____

Who do you blame for your sin? _____

*If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 1:9

Confess means to agree with God that what you did was wrong and to take responsibility for your actions. No ifs, ands or buts!

Did Adam and Eve admit to eating the forbidden fruit? _____

Do you think that Adam and Eve confessed their sin to God? _____

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-12:13.

Which sins did David commit? _____

David wrote Psalm 32 after his sin with Bathsheba.

Read Psalm 32:1-5.

If we want God's forgiveness and the peace that David experienced, we need to confess our sins—not just admit we did something wrong!

Unconfessed sin will block our hearts from accepting God's love. **Please take some time right now to ask God to show you any unconfessed sin in your life.**

What did He show you? _____

The biggest regret I have from raising my three sons is that I didn't demonstrate God's love enough! As a result, I have really stressed unconditional love with my grandchildren. The greatest gift I have ever received from my oldest grandchild, Troy, was a note he wrote me after he had disobeyed me.

Troy had swung a plastic golf club when his sister was standing too close and hit her in the head. The result was a large cut on her head that needed stitches. So she and I went to the emergency room, while Troy stayed behind with Peepaw (Grandpa). Peepaw and I would have chalked it up to an accident except I had just told him two minutes before not to swing the club when his sister was nearby. Instead, he got mad when she wouldn't move and... Wham!

He wrote the following note while I was with his sister at the hospital and gave it to me when I got home.



It was such a blessing to me—almost worth the trip. (Usually he would have beat himself up about it the rest of the day and made us all miserable!)

Just as that simple note from Troy meant so much to me, so does our recognition of God's unwavering love mean so much to Him!

Write your own note to God below, expressing your thankfulness for His unconditional love even when you're bad:



DAY 5 • Ain't NOBODY Gonna Tell Me What To Do!



Adam and Eve went on to have two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain had a bad attitude—“Ain’t nobody gonna tell me what to do!”

Read Genesis 4:1-9.

Why was Cain angry? _____

Why did Cain kill his own brother? (1 John 3:11-12) _____

If Cain didn’t know what an acceptable offering was, why didn’t he ask God?

Cain was angry because he wanted to make the rules. Cain did not have a shame problem or unconfessed sin. He had trouble letting God be God.

**“THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO
DON’T GET TOLD WHAT TO DO
ARE PEOPLE WHO DO WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED
TO DO WITHOUT BEING TOLD!”**

- DR.. WYATT MULLINAX -

Our emotions and behavior never just happen; they always begin in our thought processes. The direction of our human responses moves from thinking to feeling to behavior in that order.

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

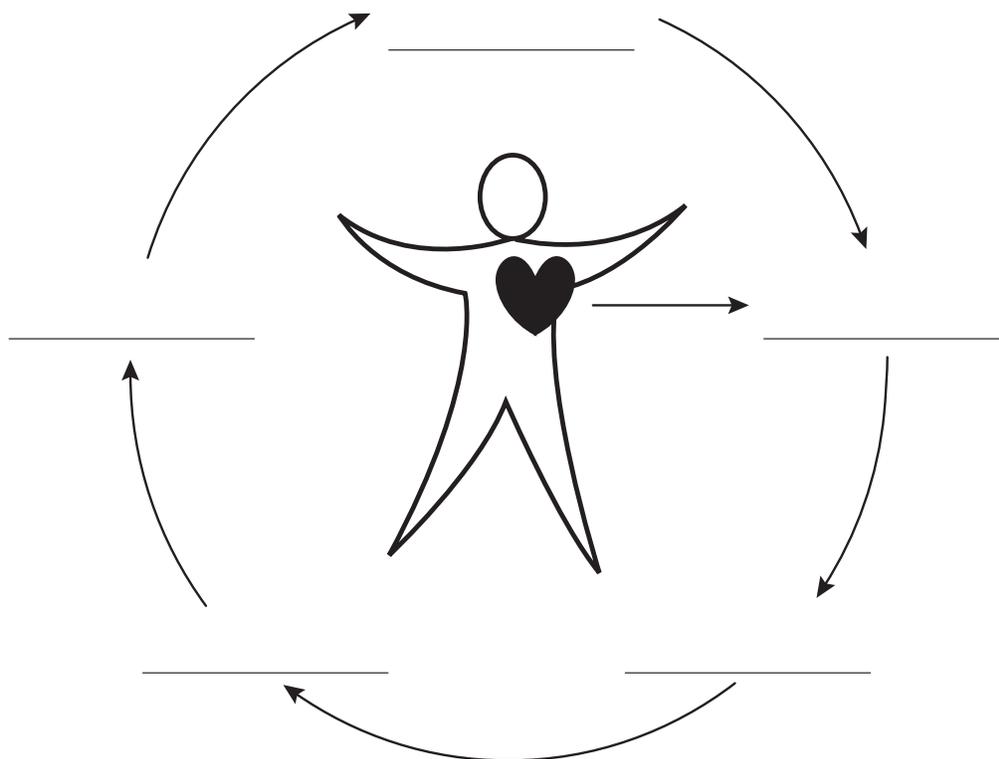
Proverbs 23:7 (KJV)

So, I can change my behavior by changing my _____.

That is not to say that every thought that passes through your mind will trigger an emotion. The Bible doesn’t say, *As he thinks, so he is*. What the passage says is, *As he thinks in his heart, so is he*. The phrase *in his heart* refers to a particular kind of thought, **a deep-felt kind of thinking**. The thoughts that you deeply believe will determine how you feel about and behave in situations you encounter.

God also gave us a will—we have a choice. We can choose to go against our feelings, and we can choose to change our beliefs and thoughts. We are not just creatures of instinct.

For Review—Fill in the belief cycle below: (Look at page 10 from Week 1 if you need help.)



Compare the belief, "I am unconditionally loved by God," with one of the statements on page 19. Write what your thoughts, feelings, choices and behaviors would be for each belief. How different are they?



_____	versus	<i>I am unconditionally loved by God.</i>
_____	(thoughts)	_____
_____	(feelings)	_____
_____	(choices)	_____
_____	(behavior)	_____

You can consider yourself really mature when you once-and-for-all accept the fact that situations do not cause harmful emotions and behavior; **your false beliefs about situations cause your self-destructive reactions.**

**“THE WEAPONS WE FIGHT WITH ARE NOT
THE WEAPONS OF THE WORLD.
ON THE CONTRARY,
THEY HAVE DIVINE POWER TO DEMOLISH STRONGHOLDS.
WE DEMOLISH ARGUMENTS AND EVERY PRETENSION
THAT SETS ITSELF UP
AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD,
AND WE TAKE CAPTIVE EVERY THOUGHT
TO MAKE IT OBEDIENT TO CHRIST.”**

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-5

We Are New Creations in Christ



*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but
be transformed by the renewing of your mind...*

Romans 12:2a

In Roman's 12:2, Paul urges believers to *be transformed by the renewing of their minds*. The original Greek word for transform in this verse is "metamorphoo," which means to change into another form. We get our word metamorphosis from this Greek word, which describes the process that a caterpillar goes through when it turns into a butterfly or a tadpole into a frog.

Paul used this same word in the following passage:

*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory,
are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 3:18

This verse clearly states that the transformation is a process. Yet, just a few verses later Paul says,

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
the old has gone, the new has come!*

II Corinthians 5:17

People often explain this verse by saying that we used to be caterpillars but once we accept Christ as our Savior, we are changed into butterflies. However, I never understood how the transformation process described in 2 Corinthians 3:18 fit into that picture. For a clearer understanding, let's first review the process that the butterfly goes through...

The butterfly starts out life as an egg. This egg hatches into a hungry little caterpillar with a nearly insatiable appetite, devouring everything in sight! After a couple of weeks of non-stop eating, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis around itself, and it goes through a God-directed process of transformation from an ungainly caterpillar into a beautiful winged creature.

Obviously, the caterpillar does not change directly into a butterfly. Our process is the same! The Bible describes three different stages that the Christian goes through. They are:

- (1) Justification (Romans 3:21-28),
- (2) Sanctification—Positional & Practical (1 Corinthians 1:2; John 17:15-19), and
- (3) Glorification (Romans 8:18-25).

JUSTIFIED
[a guilty sinner declared righteous]

OUR PAST

SANCTIFIED
[set apart for God's use]

OUR PRESENT

GLORIFIED
[given new bodies in heaven]

OUR FUTURE

GOD SEES ME AS A NEW CREATION



DAY 1 • A Butterfly in PROCESS

Notice that most of the verses referenced in this lesson are from Romans and Corinthians—all written by Paul. Paul probably knew more intimately than any other biblical figure the power of God to change a life. He even called himself “the worst of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Read Acts 9:1-9; 17-21 (Note that Paul’s name was Saul prior to his conversion).

Paul’s conversion was very dramatic and immediately evident. Not all of us have such dramatic testimonies. However,

Can you think of any examples in your own life of how God has changed you?

Is there any evidence of this transformation process in your life? _____

Remember, your transformation is not finished. You are a new creature, but you are not what you are going to be. If you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have gone from a caterpillar to a chrysalis, but you are not a butterfly yet!

Paul said it this way,

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:12-14



If all Christians are going to be glorified someday, why should we bother pressing forward? If God is already fully pleased with me as a result of Christ’s death on my behalf, then why should I choose to obey God? Why shouldn’t I just enjoy the passing pleasures of sin and then go to heaven when I die?

6 REASONS TO LEARN TO OBEY GOD WHILE WE ARE IN OUR CHRYSALIS:

(1) The love of Christ motivates us to obey.

Christ’s death revealed the depth of His love for us. Our obedience reveals the depth of our love for Him.

Read John 15:9-14; Galatians 2:20.

Does the love of God motivate you to obey Him? _____

(2) Sin is destructive.

Broken homes, hatred, bitterness, suicide, alcohol, drug abuse, sleeplessness, tension, etc. are the result of sin. When we sin, we also grieve the Holy Spirit and block His power in our lives. If we truly believed in sin's destructiveness, we would be afraid of it. We are deceived because sin is usually pleasurable—temporarily.

Read Galatians 6:7-8.

List some ways you have experienced the destruction of sin in your own life:

(3) Our Father will discipline us.

God is a good father, so He will discipline us when we need it. He always disciplines His children out of His love. He never punishes out of His anger. God's discipline is sent for our correction, not condemnation; to teach us that sin is harmful. God's motive for discipline is always love, never anger or revenge.

Read Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32.

How does understanding God's discipline motivate you? _____

(4) God's commands for us are good.

When we sin we are rebelling against our Creator, doubting that He who made us really knows what is best. Rather than viewing God's commands as restrictions, we need to see them as His good guidelines, given for our protection and direction.

Read Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 7:12; Romans 12:2

How does viewing God's commands as good motivate you to obey them? _____

(5) Obedience is an opportunity to honor God.

Each time we choose to obey, we express the righteousness we have in Christ. Our actions, then, become a reflection of who we are in Christ.

Read I Peter 2:9-12; Colossians 3:17

Are your actions reflecting Christ? _____

(6) Our obedience will be rewarded.

Disobedience results in spiritual poverty. It short-circuits our fellowship with God and leaves us with confusion, guilt and frustration. On the other hand, obedience to Christ enables us to experience His love, joy, and strength. We are completely loved, forgiven and accepted apart from our actions, but how we live is very important! Obedience here on earth will also be rewarded in heaven.

Read I John 1:5-7; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Are you missing out on any rewards? _____

DAY 2 • Transformation COMPLETION

Someday God is going to pour His wrath out on the earth. The Bible refers to this time as the Tribulation.

For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.

Matthew 24:21

Those who have salvation through Jesus Christ are not destined to experience God's wrath.

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

God has promised that before He pours out His wrath He will rapture out all believers. Those who have already died in Christ will receive their glorified bodies first. Then those who are alive during this time will be transformed into their glorified bodies "in the twinkling of an eye."

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

There has been a lot written and even more movies made about what is going to happen on the earth during the Tribulation, but what are the believers doing in heaven during this time?

We are all invited to a wedding—ours! The Wedding of the Bride of Christ!

Read Revelations 19:5-9. (We will study it in more detail in week 8 of this study.)

The second thing that will take place in heaven during this time is the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.



Paul is comparing our lives with a building. Who is the foundation? _____

List the six different building materials we can use: _____

Which of those building materials will not endure the test of fire? _____

If our works prove to have eternal value what will we receive? _____

What happens to the person who has the right foundation but has done nothing in their life that deserves an eternal reward?

I like to think of the Judgement Seat of Christ as an Award Ceremony, much like the one we have at the end of high school. Some students get all kinds of recognition for the wonderful things that they did during their years there and some students don't even get mentioned, but all of them have accomplished the basic requirements to graduate.

What is the basic requirement to get to heaven? _____

This passage also reminds me of the story of the Three Little Pigs. They all laid a good foundation but only one chose the right building materials for his house.

What does your spiritual house look like? _____

What kind of works do you think God considers gold, silver and precious stones?



Tomorrow we will look at what God's Word says we will be rewarded for.

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

Matthew 16:27

DAY 3 • WHY Should I Obey God?

We cannot work our way into heaven...

Many will say to me on that day,
 "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name,
 and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?"
 Then I will tell them plainly,
 "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"

Matthew 7:22-23

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—
 and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done,
 but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal
 by the Holy Spirit,

Titus 3:5

...BUT we will be rewarded for our works once we get there!

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels,
 and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

Matthew 16:27

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid,
 which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly
 stones, wood, hay or straw,
 his work will be shown for what it is,
 because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire,
 and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.
 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.
 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved,
 but only as one escaping through the flames.

I Corinthians 3:11-15



How do we know that eternal life is not our reward?

[Hint: What is the difference between a gift and a reward?]

WARNINGS CONCERNING REWARDS

We cannot lose our salvation but we can lose our rewards. God warns us to protect our spiritual rewards.

Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for,
 but that you may be rewarded fully.

2 John 1:8

*Only hold on to what you have until I come.
To him who overcomes and does my will to the end,
I will give authority over the nations—*
Revelation 2:25-26

*Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do,
you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*
Matthew 6:1

CROWNS AS REWARDS

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such
a way as to get the prize.
Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.
They do it to get a crown that will not last;
but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.*
1 Corinthians 9:24-25

What kind of crown is Paul referring to that will not last? _____

How Are the Following Five Crowns Obtained?

Verse	Crown	Obtained By
1 Corinthians 9:24-27	Incorruptible Crown	
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20	Crown of Rejoicing	
James 1:12	Crown of Life	
2 Timothy 4:8	Crown of Righteousness	
1 Peter 5:2-4	Crown of Glory	

Are You Exchanging Your Life for Temporal Things or Eternal Rewards?

Is it wrong to be motivated by eternal rewards to obey God? _____

What motivated Moses? (Hebrews 11:24-26) _____

What motivated Paul? (1 Corinthians 9:24-27) _____

What motivated Jesus? (Hebrews 12:2) _____

*I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have,
so that no one will take your crown.*

Revelation 3:11



NOTE:

During the olympic games at the time of Jesus, the winner received branches made into a crown, not gold medals like in today's games.



DAY 4 • Becoming What I AM

It's a process.

Speaking of all his accomplishments before he came to Christ, Paul declared,

*I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own** that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the **righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.***

Philippians 3:8b-9

The Greek word for righteousness is *dikaioisune*. It has 2 facets:

- (1) The state of being right before God.
- (2) The way in which one becomes right before God through integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling and acting.

Paul recognized that his "state of being right before God" came *from God*.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

What does Paul mean by "training in righteousness," if we are already righteous? Answer: He knew that while God sees all believers as righteous, we are also in the process of becoming righteous in our daily living.

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:29

We are in the process of becoming who we are!

Write the above statement, replacing the "we are's" with "I am's."

Read Romans 6:6.

Here is our struggle, we are no longer slaves to sin but our bodies have been conditioned to sin, it has become our habit. Our flesh is not restored, but we now have the power to override the desires of our flesh.

We are creatures of habit. How much thought do you put into tying your shoes? Bet you don't even think about putting the key into your car's ignition. These are things you just do. Some habits are good, but unfortunately because of sin we have bad habits, too. What do you do when you don't get your way? What do you naturally do when you feel angry or lonely? The way you automatically respond is your habit.

Habits are a part of us and they are hard to break, but not impossible! According to Philippians 4:13, we *can do all things through Christ who gives us strength*. God's Spirit in us gives us the power to make faith choices rather than feeling choices. We don't have to be a slave to our flesh any longer!

The Bible tells us that in order to become who we are in God's eyes, we have to make a conscience effort to change our sinful habits.

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Romans 6:13

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17



For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

Romans 6:6

• **Changing sinful habits begins with considering our flesh and its desires dead!**

Read Romans 12:1.

Unlike salvation, this is not a once and for all decision. In the Old Testament, God required animal sacrifices to take the penalty of man's sin. These animals were killed, then later laid on an altar to be burned. Suppose the animals had still been alive when they were laid on the altar. What would have happened when the fire was lit under them?

Today God calls us to be living sacrifices. But much like our pretend scenario, we are always jumping off the altar when the heat in our lives gets turned up. We must decide (make a conscience choice) to crawl back onto the altar; to become a living sacrifice again.

• **Changing sinful habits begins when we allow our thought life to be renewed.**

Read Romans 12:2 and 8:5.

Check the ways you are allowing your mind to be renewed by God:

- Hearing the Word of God
- Teaching the Word of God
- Reading the Bible

• **Changing sinful habits begins with the desire to honor God in all that we do.**

*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God.*

1 Corinthians 10:31

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. According to the verse, I am to do everything
" _____ of God."

• **Changing sinful habits begins when we choose to yield to the Holy Spirit.**

*Live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your
sinful nature craves. The old sinful nature loves to do evil,
which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants.*

*And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These
two forces are constantly fighting each other,
and your choices are never free from this conflict.*

Galatians 5:16-17

In order to please God I need to be filled by the Spirit, because He gives me
desires that are _____ from what my sin nature desires.

As I allow God to transform my thinking, I will know what God wants me to _____.

***Praise God, He gives us everything we need, including Himself,
so that we can do what pleases Him!***

*Therefore,
I urge you, brothers,
in view of
God's mercy,
to offer your bodies
as living sacrifices,
holy and pleasing to
God—
this is your spiritual
worship.*

Romans 12:1

*Do not conform
any longer
to the pattern
of this world,
but be transformed
by the
renewing of your mind.
Then you will
be able to test
and approve
what God's will is—
his good, pleasing
and perfect will.*

Romans 12:2

*Those who live
according to the
sinful nature
have their minds
set on what that
nature desires;
but those who live
in accordance
with the Spirit
have their minds
set on what
the Spirit desires.*

Romans 8:5

*For God is
working in you,
giving you the desire
to obey him
and the power to do
what pleases him.*

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

DAY 5 • What is Our Way OUT of Temptation?



*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.
And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.
But when you are tempted,
He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

I Corinthians 10:13

(1) Expose it to the light!

Have you ever been seized by temptation?

What is the first thing God tells us about temptation in this verse? _____

Satan wants you to think that your temptation or sin is unique. He wants you to feel too ashamed to share it with anyone so he makes you think that your thoughts are worst than anyone else's. The truth is that we are all in the same boat! Keeping it a secret keeps us under Satan's control!

(2) Don't fight the thought, refocus your mind!

Temptation begins in our thoughts. To resist temptation, we must refocus our minds onto something else.

Most diets fail because they cause us to think about food too much!

Rick Warren, in his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, puts it this way:

Temptation begins by capturing your attention. What gets your attention arouses your emotions. Then your emotions activate your behavior, and you act on what you felt. The more you focus on "I don't want to do this," the stronger it draws you into its web.

Lets look back at the first time man was tempted. **Read Genesis 3:1-6.**

The temptation came in a form that looked good. What does your temptation look like?

How did Satan get Eve's attention? _____

Since temptation begins with a thought, what is our quickest escape route?

Eve began to reason with Satan instead of just saying no and walking away. That gave Satan time to draw her into his web! We need to have other things to focus our thoughts on when we are seized by temptation. It needs to be something that will grab our attention and arouse our emotions. The verse below tells us what kind of things we should think about.

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right,
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—
if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

Philippians 4:8

Just reading through that list of things probably didn't grab your attention or arouse your emotions. What if you started to think about a pure and lovely waterfall? Imagine standing next to it. What does it look like and feel like? Now are your emotions involved?

Think of things for the other words in Philippians 4:8 that you could use to refocus your thoughts the next time you are seized by temptation. Be prepared to share them with your group.



(3) Use the Word as your weapon—not as a reasoning tool!

How do we know what is wrong or right in this world? _____

Your Word is Truth.

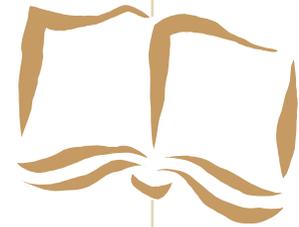
John 17:17b

*Take the helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit,
which is the Word of God.*

Ephesians 6:17

*For the Word of God is living and active.
Sharper than any double-edged sword...*

Hebrews 4:12a



Our *only* offensive spiritual weapon is the Word of God. Do you know how to use it?

Eve tried to quote God's Word but got it wrong. What does this teach us?



Review the Belief Cycle from Lesson 1, pages 6-9.

Did any lies in your belief system surface this week?

If so, write them below:

Read Matthew 4:1-11.

How did Jesus resist Satan? _____

What are some of the differences between how Jesus and Eve used the Word of God when they were tempted by Satan?

What is your weakness? Do you have Scriptures memorized with which to resist Satan? (See "The Sword of the Spirit" in the Appendix for verses on dealing with specific temptations.)

I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11



Week 4



My Heart, His Home

The Hebrew word for the presence of God is *Shekinah*. The Shekinah first appeared before Moses in the form of a burning bush.

1. The presence of the Lord should be honored by His people!

Read Exodus 3:1-6.

Where was Moses when he saw the burning bush and what was he doing?

What did God tell Moses to do? Why? _____

How did Moses respond? _____

God went on to tell Moses that He was sending him back into Egypt to get His people out. Pharaoh finally let the Israelites leave after losing his own son during the tenth plague.

2. The presence of the Lord provides guidance!

Read Exodus 13:17-22.

How did God's Shekinah Glory appear in this story? _____

What was His purpose? _____

3. The presence of the Lord does NOT mean the absence of trouble!

Read Exodus 14:8-12.

Who hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would chase the Israelites? _____

How did the Israelites respond when they saw the army in the distance? (circle below)

- a) They began to panic.
- b) They cried out to God for help.
- c) They turned on their human leader and wanted to become slaves again.

How do you respond when God allows trouble to come into your life? Have you ever responded like the Israelites? _____

4. In the presence of the Lord there is Safety for His people!

Read Exodus 14:13-14.

Compare what God told them to do in battle with what God tells us to do in battle today in Ephesians 6:10-18:

5. In the presence of the Lord there is power!

Read Exodus 14:15-31.

How did the Shekinah Glory appear to the Egyptians? _____

Read Exodus 19:1.

After three months of following the Lord, the Israelites returned to where Moses had been when he first saw the Shekinah Glory of God in the burning bush at Mt. Sinai. While there, Moses received the Ten Commandments and other instructions for the Israelites.

6. In the Presence of the Lord there is instruction!

Read Exodus 24:12-18.

How is the Shekinah described in this passage? _____

Read Exodus 25:1-9.

What did God want the people of Israel to build and why? Who designed it?

7. The Presence of the Lord dwells with His people!

Read Exodus 39:32-43 and 40:16-38.

How exciting it must have been to see the glory of God move into the dwelling place that God had requested them to build. How comforting to have the very presence of God Himself living among them!

480 years after the Israelites built the Tabernacle, King David's son, Solomon, built a temple to replace it. King Solomon took seven years to build the first Temple in Jerusalem following the plans that God had given King David (1 Kings 6:1).

Read 2 Chronicles 5:1-14

Can you imagine this scene? What if while you were singing praises to God in church next Sunday, a cloud moved into the sanctuary and the musicians had to stop because the glorious presence of the Lord moved in?!

If that wouldn't get your attention, read 2 Chronicles 7:1-3 to see what happened after Solomon offered God his prayers along with the people's sacrifices.

Where does the Presence of the Lord dwell today? _____

**"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit,
who is in you, whom you have received from God,
and that you are not your own?"**

1 Corinthians 6:19

GOD SEES ME AS HIS HOME



DAY 1 • We Are the TEMPLE of God

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own...

1 Corinthians 6:19

In the Old Testament, the Shekinah Glory—the visible sign of God’s presence—dwelt in the physical Temple of Solomon. Now, God’s Spirit dwells in us. Before Solomon built the first Temple, the Israelites had a portable temple called the Tabernacle.

Read Exodus 40 and 1 Kings 6.

As you read Exodus 40, did you notice the similarities between the Tabernacle and the Temple? The Tabernacle had two rooms: an outer room called the Holy Place, where only priests were allowed and an inner room called the Holiest Place or Holy of Holies, which was only entered once a year by the high priest. Here stood the Ark of the Covenant, containing the Ten Commandments and other precious things. In the courtyard outside stood a bronze washing basin and the alter, on which sacrifices of animals were burnt.

Temple History

- **King Solomon’s Temple**

King Solomon, one of the sons of King David and Bathsheba, took seven years to build the first Temple in Jerusalem. It was twice the size of the portable Tabernacle, which it replaced and on which it was modeled. Solomon’s splendid Temple had a checkered history of neglect, plunder, and misuse. It was finally looted and destroyed in 587 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar when the Israelites were taken into Babylonian captivity.

- **Nehemiah’s Temple**

When the exiles returned from their Babylonian captivity, they rebuilt the Temple on a far inferior scale. So much so that the older priests wept aloud in disappointment when the foundation stone was laid (Ezra 3:7-13). Through the years, the Temple was probably improved upon **but the Shekinah Glory never returned**. Then in 167 BC, Antiochus IV, the Seleucid king, set up a pagan altar in the Temple. When the Jewish heroes the Maccabees defeated the Seleucids, they had to cleanse the Temple and rededicate it. In 63 BC the Roman Empire captured Jerusalem and King Herod rebuilt the Temple.

- **King Herod’s Temple**

While King Herod’s Temple was unquestionably the largest and most magnificent of the three, it was not built for the glory of God. It was built to gain the favor of the Jewish people. This was the Temple that was in Jerusalem during Jesus time. **The Shekinah glory never dwelt there.**

Herod's magnificent 150 feet high structure greatly impressed the disciple who said to Jesus as he was leaving the temple, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

"Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." (Mark 13:1-2)

Jesus also used the Temple to illustrate his resurrection when he said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. (John 2:19-21)

- **The Temple Destroyed**

In AD 66, the Jews rebelled against their Roman masters but by AD 70 all of Jerusalem except the Temple was back in Roman hands. The Jewish zealots took refuge in the Temple and refused to surrender, so the Romans were forced to torch one of the wonders of the ancient world. All that remained of Herod's Temple by the time the Roman army was finished was the platform on which it was built literally fulfilling Jesus' prophecy in Mark 13:1-2.

- **Today's Temple**

The temple is not just a building rather where the presence of the Lord dwells. Until the Lord bodily returns His spirit dwells in all believers. How do feel about being the home of God's Shekinah Glory?

Some of us are not pleased with our physical bodies. Some us may even have broken bodies. We need to remember that as believers our value is based on the fact that we contain God's Shekinah Glory!

- **Future Temple**

During The Tribulation, the Anti-Christ will setup his own image in the Temple in Jerusalem and demand to be worshiped. So at some time in the future, another Temple will have to be built in Jerusalem.

*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him,
we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed
by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us,
saying that the day of the Lord has already come.
Don't let anyone deceive you in any way,
for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and
the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.
He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped,
so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

DAY 2 • PRESENCE Principles

1. The presence of the Lord should be honored by His people!

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

! Corinthians 6:19-20

2. There is guidance in the presence of the Lord!

Read John 16:5-15, Romans 8:26 and 15:13. Write a job description for the Holy Spirit below:

He is not just a higher power, He is a person!

He has feelings—Read Ephesians 4:30.

He has intellect—Read I Corinthians 2:10-11.

He has a will—Read I Corinthians 12:11.



Read Acts 16:3-10 to see how the Holy Spirit guided Paul and his companions on his second missionary journey.

How has the Holy Spirit guided you? [Be prepared to share in group.]

3. The presence of the Lord is NOT the absence of trouble!

Read James 1:2.

James tells us to consider our trials as joy. To consider them all joy is not...

- **Denial.**

It is not keeping oneself feeling happy by denying the reality of trials.

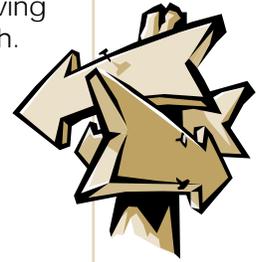
- **Complaining.**

Praying for deliverance from a trial is appropriate, but doing so with a complaining spirit is far from what James envisions for the Christian.

- **Self-pity.**

Obedying while thinking "Poor me!" is different from obeying with pure joy.

When we go through a trial, confusion, fear and anger are normal. Sometimes these emotions can reveal lies in our belief system about God’s love for us and His character. Recognizing and confessing these false beliefs, rather than giving in to the emotions keeps us single-minded; it purifies and strengthens our faith.



Read Hebrews 12:2.

How did Jesus consider His trial as joy? _____

Joseph in the Old Testament is a good example of a single-minded person. **Read about his life and trials in Genesis 37, 39-47.**

List the trials that Joseph faced below:

Read Genesis 45:5 and 50:20.

What did Joseph believe about God that kept him single-minded and joyful, rather than bitter about his trials?

What if Joseph thought that God was out to get him or was punishing him? Would he have been able to accomplish the job God had for him if he had become bitter against God during all those years of false imprisonment?

When you are faced with a trial, what kind of thoughts do you have?

Do any of your thoughts need to be replaced with God’s Truth?



Review the Belief Cycle from Lesson 1, pages 9-12.

DAY 3 • PRESENCE Principles continued...

**4. In the presence of the Lord there is Safety for His people!**

Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

Just as God did battle for the Israelites, He has promised to do battle for us. We need to put on our armor and STAND. So many times we run off the battle field in fear or try to fight the battle in our own strength. Have you ever experienced God doing battle for you? (Be prepared to share in class.)

5. In the Presence of the Lord there is Power!

*For this reason I kneel before the Father,
from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.
I pray that out of his glorious riches
he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp
how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
according to his power that is at work within us,
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
forever and ever! Amen.*

Ephesians 3:14-21

Read Ephesians 1:19-20 and Romans 8:11.

How powerful is the Holy Spirit?

Wow! The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is living inside of you! Yet if the Holy Spirit left, would there be any difference in your life? How can some have this awesome Power in us and never benefit from Him? We're the same as Amish living in a modern house wired with electrical power. Though the power is there, they never use it. We need to plug into the Holy Spirit's power!

6. In the Presence of the Lord there is Instruction!

Read James 1:1-8.

James tells us not to be double-minded, which literally means to have two minds with divided allegiance to each.

*For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?
But we have the mind of Christ.*

I Corinthians 2:16

Scripture speaks about three types of minds:

- 1) The Natural Mind (An Unbeliever)
- 2) A Double-minded Person (A Christian)
- 3) A Single-minded Person (Also A Christian)

What two minds does the Christian have? _____

According to James, how do we become a single-minded Christian? _____

*Father, if Thou art willing, take this cup from Me;
yet not My will, but Thine be done.*

Luke 22:42

How did Jesus demonstrate single-mindedness?

7. The Presence of the Lord dwells with His People!

Read Romans 8:9.

According to this verse, can you be saved without having the Holy Spirit?

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation. Having believed,
you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,
who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption
of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

Ephesians 1:13-14

He is the down payment or deposit, guaranteeing our immeasurable future inheritance!

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more
than all we ask or imagine,
according to his power that is at work within us,
to him be glory in the church and
in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! Amen.*

Ephesians 3:20

Romans 8:9

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives inside of you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.



DAY 4 • DUTIES of the Priest

Read Hebrews 8:1-10:22.

Why do we no longer offer animal sacrifices? (Hebrews 10:1-2) _____

According to Hebrews 9:11-12, who went into the Holy of Holies and how often?

According to Hebrews 9:11, who is our high Priest? _____

Hebrews 9:3 mentions a curtain that separated the Holy place from the Holy of Holies. What happened to that curtain at Jesus death? (See passage below.)

*And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.
At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.
The earth shook and the rocks split.*

Matthew 27:50-51

Read I Peter 2:1-10 and Revelation 1:5-6.

Today, who are the regular priests? _____

As priests, what sacrifices are we to worship God with today? (See verses below.)

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy,
to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—
this is your spiritual worship.*

Romans 12:1

*I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied,
now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.
They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.*

Philippians 4:18

So, we are not only The Temple of God we are the daily priests and our lives are the sacrifice! Not a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin but a sacrifice made out of love for our Heavenly Father.

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the
blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body,
and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,
having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience
and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess... for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:19-23



So how did the priests in Solomon's Temple worship the Lord? What was their order of service?

1. The priests opened the gates to the Outer Court with trumpet blast. Anyone could enter the Outer Court. Everyday they sang a different song...

Sunday -	Psalm 24	Thursday -	Psalm 81
Monday -	Psalm 48	Friday -	Psalm 93
Tuesday -	Psalm 82	Saturday -	Psalm 92
Wednesday -	Psalm 94		

Three times during the song they would pause while the priests sounded their trumpets and all the people in the courtyard would fall prostrate before the Lord. They did this both at the beginning and end of the service.

↳ **Personal application?** See Ephesians 5:18-20.

2. The official priest would then proceed to the Lavers of Bronze to wash his hands and feet. These were made of polished metal so he saw his own reflection.

↳ **Personal application?** See John 13:4-11 and 1 John 1:9.

3. They moved to the Brazen Alter to offer the sacrifices.

↳ **Personal application?** See Romans 12:1 and Galatians 2:20

4. The priests bathed in the Molten Sea.

↳ **Personal application?** See Ephesians 5:26, John 15:3 and 17:17

5. One of the priests gathered some of the hot coals from the sacrifices into a brass carrier. He entered the Holy Place, where he changed his clothes and placed the hot coals on the Incense Alter. The smoke from the Incense rose up and filled the Holy Place.

↳ **Personal application?** See Colossians 3:5-10 and Revelation 5:8.

6. The priest then gathered on the steps facing the congregation in the Outer Court, blessed the people and recited Scripture. The service ended with song.

↳ **Personal application?** See Ephesians 5:2, 2 Corinthians 2:15 and Philippians 4:18.

DAY 5 • A SPIRITUAL View of the Temple of God

1 Corinthians 3:16 says,

*Don't you know that you yourselves are _____
and that God's Spirit lives in you?*

To understand what the above verse means, we must be familiar with the Old Testament Temple. The descriptions below correlate the Temple architecture with our human architecture... (Refer to the chart of the Temple on your right.)

1. The Holy of Holies

Where the Spirit of God actually dwelt. It makes sense, then, if we are comparing ourselves to the Temple that the Holy of Holies corresponds to **God's Spirit in the Believer**. This is our new life source making us "born again."

2. The Holy Place

In front of the veil where the priest changed his clothes and placed hot coals from the sacrifice onto the Incense Alter.

*A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you:
and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,
and I will give you a heart of flesh.*

Ezekiel 36:26 (KJV)

Not only did we get a new spirit, but we also received a new heart when we were born again! We can compare the Holy Place with **our new heart**, where we take off the old and put on the new. (See Colossians 3:5-15.)

3. The Porch

With its two pillars, it served as a doorway to God's presence or life. This corresponds to **our free will**. We can choose to submit to God and allow His life to flow freely into ours and onto others, or we can rebel and close it off so that God's life is blocked or quenched.

4-5. The Inner & Outer Courts

When we make faith choices rather than feeling choices, God's love flows freely into **our soul and body** and onto others.

6. The Side Chambers

As you can see on the chart, the side chambers were built around the outside of Holy of Holies and Holy place. However, there was no access into them from either place (1 Kings 6:5-6). They are called the Cheder and were to be used as storage for items of worship and to display Israel's treasures to remind the people all that God had done for them. Instead, it was in these secret, hidden places that the priest stored idolatrous worship items and entertained temple prostitutes.

Could these correspond with **our secret places**, where we hide and bury our wounds and the lies that go with those wounds? Those things that are just too painful to retain in our consciousness. Lies stored in these secret chambers have access to our souls and often keep us from making faith choices. They close the door on God's light, preventing it from shining into our soul and onto others.

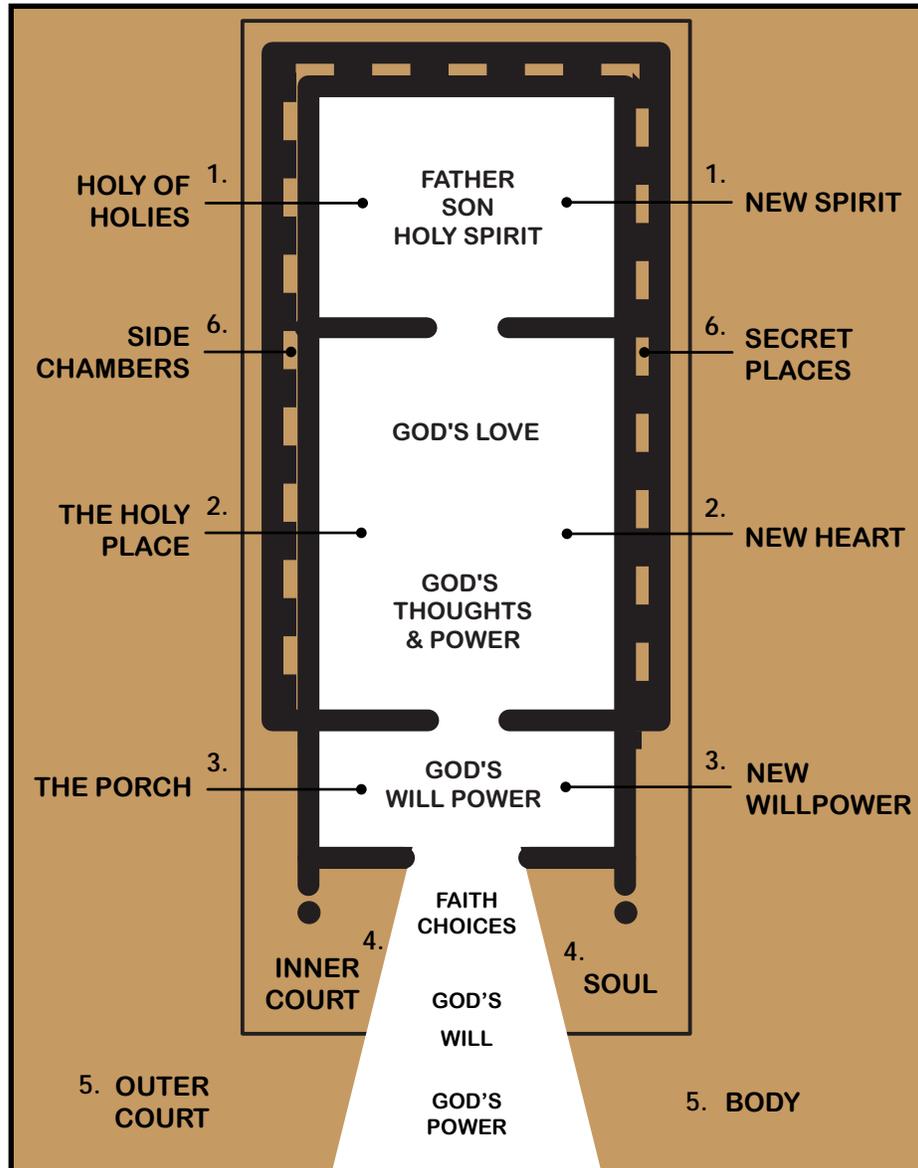
Do you have secret chambers that need to be cleaned out and filled back up

with God's Truth (2 Chronicles 29:15-16)?

Our hearts don't need to be transformed. We have a new heart. It is our souls that are in desperate need of being restored. Our souls are made up of our thoughts, emotions and desires. The side chambers are also part of our souls. Think of our souls as neutral area that can either be filled with God's life or self-life. As we allow our souls to be filled with God's life, they are restored to what God intended them to be (Psalm 23:3).

For more study on this spiritual view of the Temple, read **Be Ye Transformed** by Nancy Missler, available from kingshighway.org.

The Temple of God



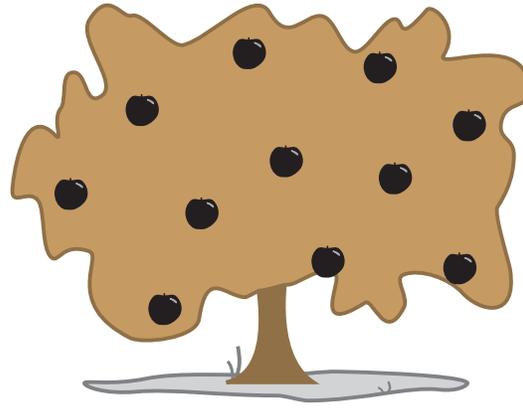
Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16 (NASB)

Review the Belief Cycle from Lesson 1, pages 9-12.

Do you have any secret chambers that need to be cleaned out?

ARE YOU PRODUCING FRUIT?



What are the differences between a decorated, cut Christmas tree and a live, producing apple tree?

Before we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior, the Bible tells us that we are dead in our sin.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
Ephesians 2:1

Death = _____

Before we have trusted Christ as our Savior, which are we more like? [check one]

- an apple tree a Christmas tree

After we have trusted Christ as our Savior, which are we more like? [check one]

- an apple tree a Christmas tree

Christians are not only alive, like an apple tree, but we are also supposed to be bearing fruit.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.

John 15:16a

What kind of fruit does Jesus expect us to bear?

Read Galatians 5:22.

According to Galatians 5:22, what kind of fruit is suppose to hang on Christians?

So if you don't see this fruit in your life what should you do?

How do apples get on an apple tree? _____

If you had an apple tree and it wasn't producing apples would you just go out and hang some apples on the tree?

What should you do? _____

In John 15:5 Jesus says,

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him,
he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"*

How do you remain in Jesus? _____

So if you look at your life and you don't see much kindness should you start trying to hang some kindness on your life?

What should you do? _____

*Are you living your Christian life more like a
Christmas tree or an apple tree?*

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.*

*But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.*

*He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.*

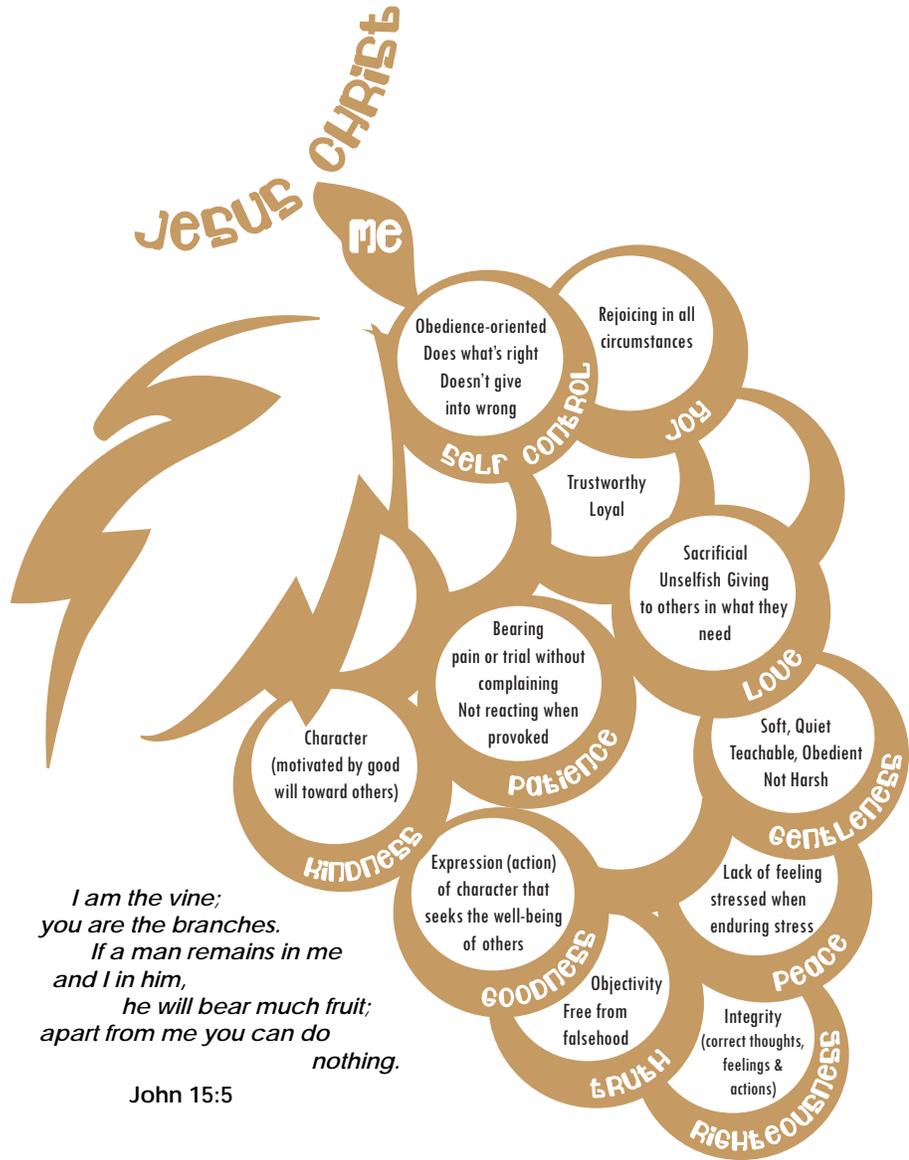
Whatever he does prospers.

Psalms 1:1-3

GOD SEES ME AS HIS IMAGE

DAY 1 • Living by the SPIRIT

The result of choosing to live by the Holy Spirit produces the Fruit of the Spirit...
(Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 5:9)



*I am the vine;
you are the branches.
If a man remains in me
and I in him,
he will bear much fruit;
apart from me you can do
nothing.*

John 15:5

Does this look like the characteristics of your life?

Which fruit have you found yourself saying, "I don't have any of that!?"



Take heart, the truth is, as long as you have trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior you have **all** of the characteristics of this fruit living inside of **you**. It is all the same fruit from the same source.

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

Colossians 2:9-10

We are commanded to live by the Spirit.

Write out Colossians 2:9-10 in your own words below:



So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Galatians 5:16 (AMP)

According to Galatians 5:16, what does it mean to live by the Spirit? _____

We cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit because even if it looks good for a moment, our sin nature will cause it to wither quickly.

Read Romans 8:3-8. Write out the differences between living according to the sinful nature and living according to the Spirit.

Living by the Sinful Nature:

Living by the Spirit:



Living by the Spirit is a process that takes daily effort, humbly seeking after God, willingly putting your own desires aside and being obedient to God's Word (Matthew 26:39; Luke 9:23; James 1:22-25, 4:10).

When the angel told Mary all that the Holy Spirit was about to do in her, Mary's response was, "I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1: 35-38).

You can rest assured there has been no prophesy about a second immaculate conception, yet God has promised to do a mighty work in you through His Spirit.

Are you willing to continually give up control to Him? _____

If you answered yes, spend time telling the Lord of your commitment to be willing. If you answered no or not yet, honestly share your struggle with Him and ask Him for the ability to be willing.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Psalms 51:12

DAY 2 • WALKING into His Image

Each choice to walk according to the Holy Spirit creates character building moments that grow us more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. **Moment-by-moment we are walking into His image.**

Read Romans 8:29 below. What is God's goal for you?

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:29

As we read, study, meditate on the Word of God, the Spirit of God transforms us into the very image of God.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

More and more time spent with God conforms us more and more into Jesus. So what does this look like?

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:5-8

He went on a little farther and fell face down on the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine."

Matthew 26:39 (NLT)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

John 5:30b

Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does..."

John 5:19-20

Think about it! What did Jesus give up? _____

What was His attitude? _____

What were Jesus' actions? _____

According to Matthew 26:39, did Jesus struggle at all? _____



Who did Jesus desire to please? _____

What motivated Jesus to please His Father? _____

Read Philippians 2:3-5. What should your attitude be? _____

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:3-5

Look at the passage again. What does that mean you need to give up?

What are some actions you can take to reflect a humble, others-centered attitude?

[Commit to follow through with doing what you just wrote out.]

And find out what pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 5:10

What are you instructed to do in Ephesians 5:10? _____

We love because he first loved us.

I John 4:19

According to I John 4:19 what should be your motivation to please God?

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Psalms 1:1-3

We tend to take on the likeness of those with whom we spend consistent time.

Who are you looking more and more like? _____

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:2

DAY 3 • My TREASURED Things

Do you find yourself reacting instead of stopping, thinking and finding out what pleases God in your circumstance? Do you struggle with loving others with a sacrificial love? Do you tend to have a bad attitude and become resentful about life circumstances and other people? Do you find yourself trying to please others rather than God?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. Struggle is a part of this Christian walk. The Apostle Paul shared his ongoing struggle in the book of Romans.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Romans 7:21-23

This was the same Paul who encouraged us with the fact that we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Let's take another look at Solomon's Temple to see what might cause a "waging war" within the temple...

He built a complex of rooms against the outer walls of the Temple, all the way around the sides and rear of the building. 6 The complex was three stories high, the bottom floor being 7½ feet wide, the second floor 9 feet wide, and the top floor 10½ feet wide. The rooms were connected to the walls of the Temple by beams resting on ledges built out from the wall.

So the beams were not inserted into the walls themselves.

The stones used in the construction of the Temple were finished at the quarry, so there was no sound of hammer, ax, or any other iron tool at the building site.

The entrance to the bottom floor was on the south side of the Temple.

There were winding stairs going up to the second floor, and another flight of stairs between the second and third floors. After completing the Temple structure,

Solomon put in a ceiling made of cedar beams and planks.

As already stated, he built a complex of rooms on three sides of the building, attached to the Temple walls by cedar timbers. Each story of the complex was 7½ feet high.

1 Kings 6:5-10 (NLT)

When all the work King Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated— the silver and gold and the furnishings—

and he placed them in the treasuries ("storerooms") of the LORD's temple.

1 Kings 7:51

There were 30 rooms on each level. Ladies, can you imagine having 90 walk-in closets to store all of your stuff?! It is said that idols were stored in these rooms. These objects were gifts to Jerusalem or collected as booty or in payment of taxes. Both the things that were used to honor God and the things that were treasured objects were stored in the same rooms.

Look back to the Temple illustration on page 48. What do these storerooms represent for us as the Lord's Temple?



Could it be that when it comes to worship we tend to be subconsciously motivated by our own glory or splendor? OUCH! That doesn't feel good, and yet this revelation is freeing! Freedom begins when we shed the light of truth on those stored away things that motivate us away from worshiping God through godly living (Galatians 5:16-17).

Read the verses below then answer the following questions.

What do they indicate about our motives, innermost thoughts and desires?

What do they indicate about God's knowledge of each?

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Hebrews 4:12-13 (NLT)

People may be pure in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their motives.

Proverbs 16:2 (NLT)

And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

James 4:3 (NLT)

Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

Matthew 6:21 (NLT)

Any self-denying thought, desire, affection or expectation that motivates our behavior is an idol, a god in the place of God. We are worshiping what we think we need or will bring pleasure rather than wholeheartedly worshiping God.

Then he takes what's left and makes his god: a carved idol! He falls down in front of it, worshiping and praying to it. "Rescue me!" He says. "You are my god!" ...The poor, deluded fool feeds on ashes. He is trusting something that can give him no help at all. Yet he cannot bring himself to ask, "Is this thing, this idol that I'm holding in my hand, a lie?"

Isaiah 44:17,20

What is it in your life that you believe will rescue you from loneliness, rejection, or your present trial?

Ask the Lord to reveal those hidden treasures that motivate you away from worshiping Him.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Psalms 139:23-24 (NLT)

DAY 4 • The Gods of My DESIRES and AFFECTIONS

*Do not worship any other gods besides me.
You must never worship or bow down to them, for I, the LORD your God, am a
jealous God who will not share your affection with any other god!*

Exodus 20:3,5a (NLT)

What ungodly desire or affection are we allowed to put before God? _____

Is putting an ungodly desire or affection before God a sin? _____

Lets look at two biblical examples of godly desires and affections versus ungodly desires and affections...

Example 1: Two Women Who Desired to Have a Child

*When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children,
she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob,
"Give me children, or I'll die!" Jacob became angry with her and said,
"Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?"*

Genesis 30:1-2

*In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD .
And she made a vow, saying,
"O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and
not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD
for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."
...I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him.
So now I give him to the LORD . For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD ."
And he worshiped the LORD there.*

1 Samuel 1:10-11, 27-28

What did Rachel do to get what she wanted? _____

What did her actions reveal about her worship? _____

What did Hannah do to get what she wanted? _____

What did her actions reveal about her worship? _____

Is the desire to have a child an ungodly desire? _____

What turns it into an ungodly desire? _____

How would you complete the following sentence:

"Give me _____ or I'll die!"



Example 2: Two Fathers with Deep Affections for Their Sons

Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord. This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt. Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death. Why do you honor your sons more than Me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by My people Israel?

1 Samuel 2:12,17,22-25,29b

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

Genesis 22:1-3

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33

Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

What do you think might have motivated Eli to not discipline his sons' actions?

By his actions, who did Eli love more, his sons or God? _____

What do you think might have motivated Abraham? _____

By his actions who did Abraham love more, his son or God? _____

Is it wrong to love children? _____

When does the love for our children become an ungodly love? _____

What or who do you love enough to disobey God? _____

Having desires and affections is not wrong when the desires and affections have God at the center of them.

Read Matthew 6:33, Psalm 37:4, Colossians 3:1-2 and Hebrews 7:25 listed in the right-hand margin. Spend some time meditating on them over the next couple of days.



Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Colossians 3:1-2

Ask God to help you make Him the center of your affections and desires. Jesus continues to intercede for you.

Hebrews 7:25

DAY 5 • Giving Up for HIS Glory



When we are really honest with ourselves and God, we find that at the core of ungodly desires and affections our idol is ourself. The idol of self has one goal: self-preservation. We desire to protect and save ourselves. We even believe, as Eve did in the garden, that we know what is best for us and we know the best way to accomplish what is best for us.

The following is a list of some of the ways we attempt to preserve ourselves. **Check the ones that apply to you:**

- I need to be loved. I have to love myself. (Self-love)
- I have to do everything. I rely on no one—including God—but me. (Self-reliance)
- I have to get what I want. I'll do whatever it takes. (Selfishness)
- I have to be recognized. I'll do whatever it takes to get attention. (Self-centered)
- I am always right. I'll do anything to prove I'm right. (Self-righteous)

Keep in mind a thread of pride weaves through all of these attempts to preserve oneself.

Read Jeremiah 17:5.

What does God say about those who put their trust in mere humans? _____

*This is what the LORD says:
"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.*

Jeremiah 17:5

Any attempt to put our desires and affections above God instead of on God is idolatry. We need to search those storerooms of our inner being and be honest with God and ourselves about who and what we believe will satisfy us other than God.



If God has shown you an area that needs to be cleaned out, go back to the steps for removing lies on pages 9-12 in Lesson 1. Then allow the Lord to walk you through the house-cleaning process.

God's way of preserving us:

Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Luke 17:33

*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have,
because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

Hebrews 13:5

He promises Himself to us when we willingly give ourselves to Him.

Are you willing to be satisfied with Him alone?

As we finish up this week, let's look at one more aspect of the Temple that may apply to us today.

There were two pillars at the front of Solomon's Temple. One was named Jakin (meaning, "He establishes") and the other Boaz ("In His Strength"). The pillars stood at the sides of the entrance as a reminder to all of Jerusalem of the mighty glory of the Lord. We don't have an exact picture of the decorations on the top of the pillars, but what we do know is that at the top there was lily-work with a bowl encircled with pomegranates. Lilies represented beauty and splendor while pomegranates represented fruitfulness and joyfulness.

Picture yourself standing between those two pillars: "He establishes" and "In His strength." In your hand is that desire or affection that has been taking up space in the storeroom. It is time to make the conscious choice. Will you choose the beauty and joy that results from entering the Holy Place, laying that desire or affection down at His feet and leaving it there? Or, will you choose to continue to hold onto it in the Inner Court?

God knows the idols we worship and rely on in our storeroom (our subconscious). He will lovingly bring that idol out of our subconscious by allowing circumstances and/or people to come into our lives until that idol is brought into the open, rejected and replaced by a greater affection and desire for Him. When we chose to let go of self-preservation and accept God's way, we serve as a reminder of His mighty glory.

TO HIS GLORY

by Chris McNamara

It is to His glory when I am lost
and He is found.

It is to His glory when my feelings of worthlessness
reveal His worthiness.

It is to His glory when my feelings of sorrow
are encompassed by joy.

It is to His glory when my feelings of anxiety
are covered by unsurpassing peace.

It is to His glory when my feelings of discomfort
are relieved by being comforted.

It is to His glory when while feeling unlovable
I know I am loved.

It is to His glory when I am feeling hard-pressed
yet I live as though I am free.

It is to His glory when my burden is shared with others
and unity is revealed.

It is to His glory when that unity
leads the world to ask the question "Why?"

It is to His glory when through all the adversity,
I can answer boldly in light of His truths and love for me...

IT IS ALL TO HIS GLORY!



Week 6



IS YOUR BACKPACK FULL?



Have you ever gone hiking?

Imagine you have a backpack on and it has a rock in it for every sin you have ever committed.

- ▶ How do you feel?

Pumpkin Story

A co-worker asked a lady recently baptized what it was like to be a Christian.

She replied,

It's like being a pumpkin! God picks you from the patch, brings you in and washes off the dirt you may have gotten from the other pumpkins. Then He cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then He carves a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.

Read Psalm 32:1-5. In this passage David describes how he felt while he was carrying around his sin. Can you relate to how David felt?

Do you feel like all of the dirt has been washed off and all of the yucky stuff has been removed?

Maybe God hasn't "picked" you yet. [You are picked when you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.]

...Or, maybe you have not allowed God to clean you yet.

Read Psalm 51:1-9. Here David confesses his sin and asks to be cleansed.

- ▶ Do you have a right to unload your backpack?
- ▶ Do you have a right to feel clean?

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:8-9

Four biblical solutions to emptying the sin from your backpack are:

1. Accept Jesus as Savior
2. Admit that you have sin. [Identify the "rocks" in your pack]
3. Agree with God that it is wrong—no excuses!
4. Allow Him to take it.

Futile solutions to your sin are:

1. Denial—"I don't feel guilty. I love living this way."
2. Reeducation—"The only reason I feel guilty is because someone is trying to push their standards on me. What I am doing isn't wrong."
3. Self-Atonement—"I am scum. I will punish myself for a while to make up for it." [Sometimes depression and addictive behaviors are ways of us trying to punish ourselves for our sin.]

THE DEBT FOR YOUR SINS HAS BEEN PAID IN FULL!

During the Roman Empire, if you were charged with a crime a Certificate of Debt was hung outside of your jail cell. All your crimes were listed on this piece of paper and the debt you owed for your crimes. Your cell was usually in a public place for all to see.

When your debt for your crimes was paid, one Greek word—tetelesthai—was written across your Certificate of Debt. This means "paid in full."

If your crime was serious enough to warrant death, you were crucified for all to see and the Certificate of Debt was attached to the cross.

What did the Certificate of Debt say on Jesus' cross? (see John 19:19)

Just before Jesus died He cried out in a loud voice one Greek word. It has been translated into what three English words? (see John 19:30)

- ▶ The Greek word that Jesus shouted was tetelesthai—paid in full!

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Romans 3:23 tells us our crime against God. Romans 6:23 adds what our debt for our crime is. These two verses make up *our* Certificate of Debt against God.

When Jesus died on the cross, He was made the payment for us. When we **accept** His death as the payment, Jesus marks our Certificate of Debt with the word Tetelesthai—Paid in Full!

GOD SEES ME AS FORGIVEN

DAY 1 • The COST of Forgiveness

Is forgiveness easy?

Have you ever been hurt very deeply by someone?

When someone hurts us we have three options:

- 1) Lie—tell them that it's okay because it really didn't hurt anyway.
- 2) Never forgive them—and tell them so.
- 3) Forgive them—tell them that they hurt you terribly but you will no longer hold it against them.

► Would option three be easy to do?



Read the following story:

There once was a man and a woman who were married. The man was a good and faithful husband. He provided for his wife so that she did not have to work outside their home. He also met all of her emotional needs, often telling her how beautiful she was and how much he loved her. The woman loved her husband, but she got bored with her life and slept with another man. Her husband eventually found out and was devastated. After many days agonizing about what to do, the husband told his wife that he would accept the wounds of her adultery and purify them with his love and forgiveness. The wife was extremely relieved and grateful. However, the very next week she was in bed with the other man again.

If you were the husband, how would you feel?

Isn't this how we treat God?

*The LORD said to me,
"Go, show your love to your wife again,
though she is loved by another and is an adulteress.
Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites,
though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."*

Hosea 3:1

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you,
how often I have longed to gather your children together,
as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,
but you were not willing."*

Matthew 23:37

Read Luke 22:39-44.

Sometimes we act like it was easy for God to forgive us. What did it cost God?

Have you ever taken God's forgiveness flippantly?

Have you used God's grace as a license to sin because you knew He could forgive you?

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

When you confess your sin, are you agreeing with God that you were wrong?

When you confess, are you remembering how much your forgiveness cost God and how much your sin grieves God?

Read Psalm 51. [David wrote this psalm after Nathan the Prophet confronted him with the adultery he had committed with Bathsheba.]

Pick one or two of the verses in Psalm 51 that you relate to and write them in your own words below as *your* psalm to God:

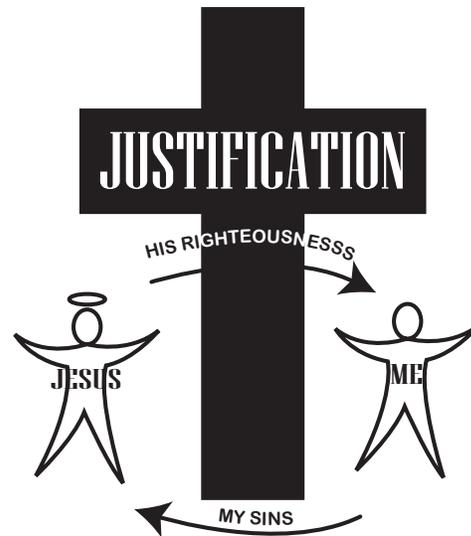
*Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD" —
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

Psalm 32:5



DAY 2 • A Matter of FACT

God's forgiveness toward us is not based on a feeling but on fact.



*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,
so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

2 Corinthians 5:21

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 2:24

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

Romans 8:33

Write out your definition of justification based on the above verses:

GOD'S JUSTICE

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
love and faithfulness go before you.*

Psalm 89:14

What are some of God's characteristics according to Psalm 89:14?

*For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.
Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty.
He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins.
For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and
to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe
that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us.*

Romans 3:23-25a (NLT)

Fill in the blanks based on Romans 3:23-25a:

God in His gracious kindness declares me _____.

He has freed me by taking away my _____. For God sent _____ to take the punishment for my sins and to _____ God's anger against me. I am made _____ with God when I _____ that Jesus shed His blood, sacrificing His _____ for me.

Who falls short of God's standard? _____

Yet, does He hold everyone guilty? _____ Why or why not? _____



GOD'S MERCY & GRACE

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:10

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's judgment. For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life.

Romans 5:8-10 (NLT)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

Ephesians 1:7

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:4-5

What was God's motivation for sending His Son? _____

What was His purpose for sending His Son? _____

Based on the above Scriptures, write out all the benefits you have received through Christ's death for you.



Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

DAY 3 • But I Still Don't FEEL Forgiven

Your Status Before God

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions, yet now he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through his death on the cross in his own human body. As a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

Colossians 1:21-22 (NLT)

And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's judgment. For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life.

Romans 5:9-10 (NLT)

Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

Hebrews 10:17

For he has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. God has purchased our freedom with his blood and has forgiven all our sins.

Colossians 1:13-14 (NLT)



Choose each correct statement according to the above passages and write it out on the corresponding line:

_____ I am not condemned. I am a little condemned.

_____ Through Jesus God sees me as guilty. Through Jesus God sees me as holy and blameless.

_____ I have been made almost right in God's sight by the blood of Christ.
I have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ.

_____ God continues to hold my sins against me. God does not hold my sins against me.

_____ God has forgiven all of my sins. God has forgiven all but my big sins.

Everyone who believes in him is declared right with God.

Acts 13:39a (NLT)

Do you believe you are freed from guilt? _____

If not, what guilt do you believe is not covered by Jesus' death on the cross?

Read the conclusion of Jesus' parable about the lost son below:

So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son." But his father said to the servants, "Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found." So the party began.

Luke 15:20-24 (NLT)

How did the father respond when he saw his son returning to him?

How did the son respond to his father? _____

How do you think the son felt? _____

Here are a few of God's promises to you:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

Jeremiah 31:3b

The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

Zephaniah 3:17

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Luke 15:7

Do you believe God? _____

Read through His promises to you again. Write out any thoughts or feelings that come to mind.

Where there is doubt, ask God to help you with your unbelief (Mark 9:24b).



*...I do believe;
 help me overcome
 my unbelief!
 Mark 9:24b*

DAY 4 • Measuring the STANDARD

In order to walk in the freedom of forgiveness, we need to be clear on who determines the standard of righteousness (sinlessness).

*But now God has shown us a different way of being right in his sight—
not by obeying the law but by the way promised in the Scriptures long ago.
We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins.
And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or
what we have done. For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.
Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty.
He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins.*

Romans 3:22-24 (NLT)



Does obeying the law make you right in God's sight? _____

How are you made right in God's sight? _____

Have you been attempting to be made right according to a law or standard other than God's? If yes, whose?

How do you feel when you don't meet the standard? _____

Do you constantly feel like you don't measure up; like you have to work hard to be acceptable and pleasing? Allow God's truth to set you free!

Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Hebrews 10:14

By sacrificing His life, Jesus satisfied God's expectation so that you could be seen as perfect—complete and pleasing to God. The only thing that you can do to be right before God is put your faith in Jesus Christ, believing that His sacrifice was good enough to satisfy God the Father's standard.

Even our own expectations do not measure up to God's glorious standards. We will become frustrated when our lives are motivated by an attempt to satisfy our own standards or that of others.

*But they are only comparing themselves with each other, and
measuring themselves by themselves. What foolishness!*

2 Corinthians 10:12b (NLT)



How does Scripture describe our attempts to live by our own standards?

When we feel the pressure of expectations, we need to ask ourselves this question, "Who am I trying to please: God or man?" (Galatians 1:10)

Read the following passages about trying to please man.

*His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said,
"He is of age; ask him."*

John 9:22

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

John 12:42

What motivated the parents in John 9:22? _____

What motivated the leaders in John 12:42? _____

When our motivation is the fear of disapproval, rejection or the strong desire for acceptance, we will be overcome by self-imposed guilt when we fail to meet the set standards.

Self-imposed guilt...

- results from attempting to meet our own or others' standards.
- pulls us away from God because we believe we are unworthy.
- leads to condemnation. [Satan wins as he uses the lie to keep us in bondage and remind us of how bad we really are.]

When you placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you not only received the right to enter

A little boy placed a frog into a box with a lid so he could keep it as his pet. After awhile the little boy's dad thought the frog had been confined long enough, so he told his son it was time to let it go. The little boy took the box back to the pond where he had found the frog. Before he set the frog free, the boy said his goodbyes with the lid still on the box, thinking the frog would instantly leap out and go away. When the boy finally lifted the lid, he stood in surprise as he watched the frog only jump as high as the ledge of the box. After watching the frog jump only as high as the ledge repeatedly, the boy finally scooped the frog out of the box and placed him on the ground so the frog could see that he was really free.



Did the little boy set the frog free? _____

What do you think kept the frog from acting free? _____

heaven but you received freedom from condemnation in the present.

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8:36

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:1 (NLT)

What do you think Paul meant when he wrote, "make sure that you stay free?"

How are you responding to the freedom God has granted to you? _____



DAY 5 • The FORGIVEN Forgive

*For if you forgive men when they sin against you,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins,
your Father will not forgive your sins.*

Matthew 6:14-15

*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times
shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"
Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."*

*Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like
a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.
As he began the settlement,
a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.
Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and
all that he had be sold to repay the debt.
The servant fell on his knees before him.
"Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything."
The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.
But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants
who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him.
"Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded.
His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him,
"Be patient with me, and I will pay you back."
But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison
until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened,
they were greatly distressed and went and told their master
everything that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in.
"You wicked servant," he said, "I canceled all that debt of yours
because you begged me to.
Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?"
In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured,
until he should pay back all he owed.*

*This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you
unless you forgive your brother from your heart."*

Matthew 18:21-35



What did the king do with the debt that was owed by the servant? _____

Was the king merciful toward the servant? _____

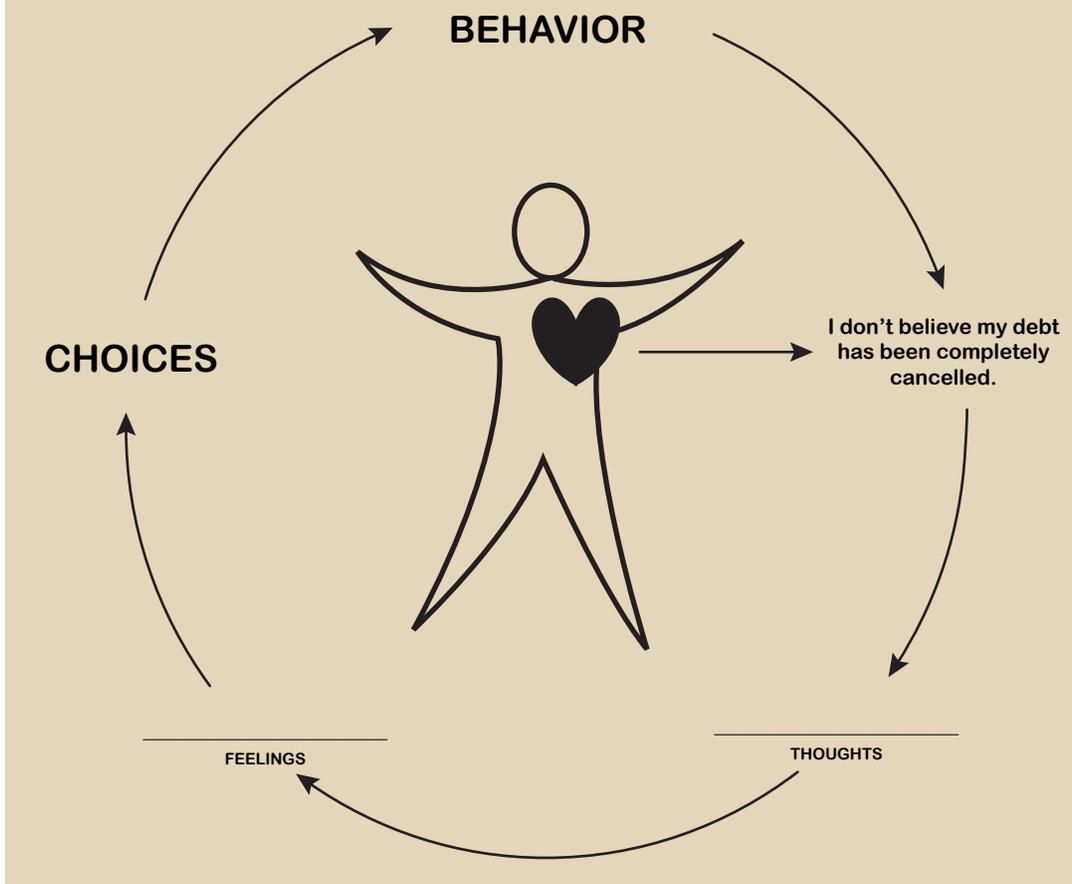
What did the servant do when he went away from the king? _____

By his actions, do you think the servant believed the debt had been cancelled?
Why or why not?

In light of what the king had done for him, how could the servant have treated his
fellow servant differently?

What do you think it means to forgive your brother *from your heart*? _____

Fill in what thoughts might come out of the following false belief and what feelings would result. Come to group prepared to share choices and behaviors also.



Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love controls us.

*Since we believe that Christ died for everyone,
we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live.*

*He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life
will no longer live to please themselves.*

*Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.
So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them.*

2 Corinthians 5:14-16 (NLT)

Week 7

WHOSE CHILD ARE YOU?



Read Luke 15:1-32.

In this passage Jesus tells three parables. Jesus often taught in parables. A parable is a simple story that illustrates a moral or spiritual truth. In each of these stories, something of value was lost and then found. Below, list the valuable thing that was lost in each story and then rejoiced over when it was found.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Discussion Questions:

- Did any of these things increase or decrease in value after they were lost?
- Did the oldest son value the relationship he had with his father more than his inheritance?
- Do you think the oldest son would have partied with his family if his brother's sheep had been lost and then found?
- Would he be happy if his brother had lost his wallet with a large sum of money and then found it?
- Who gets an inheritance?
- Who earns the money that is in the bank so that there is something for the heir to inherit?
- Was the oldest son viewing his inheritance as something he needed to earn rather than enjoy?
- The oldest son was acting like he had been sacrificing something by living a life of obedience. Have you ever felt that way?
- Both sons were self-righteous. The youngest son came to his senses (verse 17). What about the older son?
- Can you relate to either of these sons?

The younger son's inheritance decreased but the son's value did not. God sees you as His child if you have accepted Jesus as your Savior.

*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God—*

John 1:12

How do you see yourself?

*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,
if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing
with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

Romans 8:16-18

If you are a Child of God, are you enjoying your relationship with your Father? Where are you right now? (Place an X on the line below near what best describes you.)

resentful of God's rules	in the "pig sty" of sin	accepting God's grace	trying to <i>gain</i> acceptance	resentful of unearned blessings
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What is keeping you from enjoying God, your Father's, grace? _____

When the youngest son came to his senses and went home, how did his father (God) respond?

How would you expect Him to respond to the oldest son if he ever came to his senses?

How do you expect God to respond to you?

*Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,
the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."
So you are no longer a slave, but a son;
and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

Galatians 4:6-7

GOD SEES ME AS HIS CHILD

DAY 1 • We Are Children of the KING!

Whose kingdom do you belong to?

*Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you
to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.
For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the
Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Colossians 1:12-14

*Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of
the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?*

James 2:5

Have you been transferred from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of light? _____

How does that happen? _____

When we become a part of God's Kingdom, the above verses tells us that we share in an inheritance!

Who usually receives someone's inheritance? _____

*He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not
recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.
Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name,
He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of
natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

John 1:10-13

*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear,
but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."
The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,
if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Romans 8:15-17



Can you imagine finding out as a twelve-year-old orphan that a king is adopting you?

As you're packing to leave the orphanage and go live in the palace, what might your thoughts be?

Do you wonder what your heavenly Father is like?

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:8

Many people do not believe in God because they see so much suffering in the world. They conclude that either God is not all powerful (as He says He is), that He is not a loving God (as He says He is), or that He doesn't exist at all.

Did God promise that this fallen world would be free from suffering? _____

Has He promised that the Christian's life would be trouble free? _____

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33b

So, if we can't expect an easy life from a loving Father, what can we expect from Him?

As we have already read, 1 John 4:8 tells us that God is love.

Read I Corinthians 13:4-8 to find out what love is. Write "My Father" or "Daddy" in the spaces below in place of the word "love" to see what a loving God is like.

- _____ is patient,
- _____ is kind.
- _____ does not envy,
- _____ does not boast,
- _____ is not proud.
- _____ is not rude,
- _____ is not self-seeking,
- _____ is not easily angered,
- _____ keeps no record of wrongs.
- _____ does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
- _____ always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
- _____ never fails.



How else has God, our Father, shown us His love? _____

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:8

DAY 2 • A FATHER'S Discipline



Besides His love, we can expect our Heavenly Father's discipline.

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Proverbs 3:11-12

Read Hebrews 12:5b-11.

According to these verses, whom does the Lord discipline? _____

What is He treating us like when He disciplines us? _____

Why does He discipline us? _____

If we allow the discipline to train us, what does it produce in us? _____

What is God's wrath? _____

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever;
He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love
for those who fear Him...*

Psalm 103:8-11

Circle the word anger in the passage above.

What does this passage tell us about God's anger? _____



*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life,
but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.*

John 3:36

According to John 3:36, who has the wrath of God on him? _____

Does God's wrath remain on you? _____

*The LORD is a jealous and avenging God;
 the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath.
 The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and maintains His wrath against His enemies.
 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power;
 the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished.
 His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of His feet.*

Nahum 1:2-3

There are more verses talking about God's anger and wrath than about His love and mercy. Why do you think God tells us so much about His wrath?

What is the difference between discipline and punishment? _____

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
 but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

Proverbs 1:7

*But God demonstrates His own love for us in this:
 While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood,
 how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!*

Romans 5:8-9

God's *wrath* is for the unsaved and someday it will be carried out. They will be punished for rejecting His Son's sacrifice and receive the full penalty for their sin.

God's *discipline* is for His children. It is always administered through His love and for our good to train us in righteousness.

If you still fear your heavenly Father's wrath, take time now to ask Him to show you why.

**What lie needs to be removed
 so that the Truth can take it's place?**



DAY 3 • Kingdom PRIVILEGES

*"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty."*

2 Corinthians 6:18



As God's child you have received many privileges. Below is a list of just a few. **Write the matching privilege next to the corresponding Scripture.**

Security • Someone On My Side • Free Access • Belonging • Victory • Comfort • Cared For • Freedom to Grow Up • Loved • Right to Be in the Family • Peace

Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. Ephesians 3:12 (NLT) _____

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, Ephesians 2:19 _____

Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. Romans 8:34 _____

So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:6 _____

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—John 1:12 _____

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 John 3:1 _____

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Ephesians 4:14-15 (NLT) _____

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:6-7 _____

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27 _____

No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. Romans 8:37 (NLT) _____

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. 2 Corinthians 1:3 _____

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Ephesians 1:3

God, your Father, has blessed you with every spiritual blessing.

Read Ephesians 1:4-12. Replace the words “us” with “me,” “we” with “I” and “sons” with “daughter.” Jesus stated,

“There are many rooms in my Father’s home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly.”

John 14:2 (NLT)

Read Zephaniah 3:14-17 and Revelation 21:3-7. Underline the benefits you will enjoy for the rest of eternity.

*Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout aloud,
O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!
For the LORD will remove his hand of judgment and will disperse the armies of your enemy.
And the LORD himself, the King of Israel, will live among you!
At last your troubles will be over, and you will fear disaster no more.
On that day the announcement to Jerusalem will be, “Cheer up, Zion! Don’t be afraid! For the LORD your God has arrived to live among you. He is a mighty savior.
He will rejoice over you with great gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears.
He will exult over you by singing a happy song.”*

Zephaniah 3:14-17 (NLT)

*I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying,
“Look, the home of God is now among his people!
He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.
He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.”
And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making all things new!”
And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.”
And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give the springs of the water of life without charge!
All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God,
and they will be my children.*

Revelation 21:3-7 (NLT)

What specific privileges encourage you? Spend some time thanking your heavenly Father for them.



DAY 4 • Abba

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Romans 8:15-16

The word "Abba" is an Aramaic word that literally means papa or daddy. It is a term of endearment that implies an intimate, safe relationship.

Unfortunately, we don't always see God as our intimate safe daddy, nor do we see ourselves as being able to have an intimate safe relationship with Him. Many things can influence our perception of God, especially our experience with our earthly parents.

Read the following, and write out what you think the children's perceptions of God may have been and what they may have believed about themselves based on these experiences with their parents.



Perception 1: Joseph & His Brothers

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

Genesis 37:3-4

Joseph possibly saw God as _____

Joseph possibly believed he was _____

The brothers possibly saw God as _____

The brothers possibly believed they were _____

Perception 2: Rachel & Leah

Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful. Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her." So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her. When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?" Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

Genesis 29:16-23, 25-27

Rachel possibly saw God as _____

Rachel possibly believed she was _____

Leah possibly saw God as _____

Leah possibly believed she was _____

Perception 3: Jacob & Esau

*Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren.
The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.
The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country,
while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents.
Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

*Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau.
When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back,
Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau,
'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my
blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.'*

*Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you:..."
What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and
would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing." His mother said to him,
"My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me."*

*When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son
Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself with the thought of killing you.*

*Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran.
Stay with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides.*

*When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him,
I'll send word for you to come back from there.*

Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

Genesis 25:21, 27-28, 27:5-13, 42-45

Jacob possibly saw God as _____

Jacob possibly believed he was _____

Esau possibly saw God as _____

Esau possibly believed he was _____

Perception 4: Adonijah

*About that time David's son Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, decided to make
himself king in place of his aged father. So he provided himself with chariots and horses and
recruited fifty men to run in front of him. Now his father, King David,
had never disciplined him at any time, even by asking, "What are you doing?"
Adonijah was a very handsome man and had been born next after Absalom.*

1 Kings 1:5-6 (NLT)

Adonijah possibly saw God as _____

Adonijah possibly believed he was _____

What about you? Take some time right now to think through your relationship with your parents. You may want to sum up your story below:

DAY 5 • God, My DADDY



For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalm 139:13-16

How do you feel, knowing that you were not a surprise to God your Father?

Psalm 139 not only affirms that God uniquely designed you with a purpose and plan, but also confirms that God uniquely selected the mother and father he would use to bring you into being. Your biological parents may not have been the ones that raised you but that was also not a surprise to God.

Read Psalm 139:13-16 again and fill in the blanks.

_____ _____ _____ ordained for me were written in your book
 _____ one of them came to be.



God predetermined the details of your life, including your parents.

Yesterday you looked into the lives of some of the biblical characters and their relationships with their parents. You may have seen similarities between your parents and theirs, and you might have identified with the beliefs they possibly developed about themselves as a result of those relationships.

List below the qualities that you did not like and qualities that you appreciated in those who raised you:

Mom: I did not like _____

I appreciated _____

Dad: I did not like _____

I appreciated _____

Other: I did not like _____

I appreciated _____

Based on your relationship with your parents, what do you believe about you?

Your parents may not have been ideal and you may have felt like God's people did when they were in captivity:

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me."

Isaiah 49:14

The truth is your Heavenly Father has never forgotten about you. Instead He has lovingly used your past and your parents to mold you and draw you to Himself.

Read God's response to His people:

*Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion
on the child she has born? Though she may forget,
I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.*

Isaiah 49:15-16a

This is the same promise He has made to you—**"I WILL NOT FORGET YOU!"**

Have you ever had something engraved? The Hebrew word for engraved is: "chaqmaq" and it literally means "cutting in." Your Heavenly Father has carved your name into the palms of His hands, keeping you before Him at all times.

Read the following passages:

*Long ago the LORD said to Israel: "I have loved you, my people,
with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.*

Jeremiah 31:3 (NLT)

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

Psalms 68:5

When Israel was a child, I loved him as a son, and I called my son out of Egypt.

*But the more I called to him, the more he rebelled,
offering sacrifices to the images of Baal and burning incense to idols.
It was I who taught Israel how to walk, leading him along by the hand.
But he doesn't know or even care that it was I who took care of him.
I led Israel along with my ropes of kindness and love.
I lifted the yoke from his neck, and I myself stooped to feed him.*

Hosea 11:1-4 (NLT)

*So I tell you, don't worry about everyday life—
whether you have enough food, drink, and clothes.*

*Doesn't life consist of more than food and clothing? Look at the birds.
They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because your heavenly Father feeds
them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are.*

*So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing.
Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from
day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.*

*So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries.
Today's trouble is enough for today.*

Matthew 6:25-26, 31, 32b-34 (NLT)

What are God's qualities as your Heavenly Daddy? _____

Based on how He cares for you, what do you believe about yourself?

*See how very much our heavenly Father loves us,
for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are!*

1 John 3:1a (NLT)



Week 8



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Isaiah 62:5b

I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.

Hosea 2:19-20

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

2 Corinthians 11:2

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25-27



Have you given much thought to the fact that we are the Bride of Christ? Look at the following promise Jesus made to his disciples the night of his crucifixion, through the eyes of a bride.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 14:1-3

To comprehend the full impact of this promise, we must understand Jewish marriage customs in biblical times. There were three major steps to a Jewish wedding:

1) Betrothal—Establishment of Marriage Covenant

- The bridegroom would go to the house of the prospective bride and negotiate a dowry or "mohar" with the woman's father.
- The marriage covenant was established when the purchase price was paid. A ceremony was performed, and as a symbol of the covenant the bride and groom would drink from a cup of wine.
- From that moment, the bride was set apart exclusively for her bridegroom and they were considered husband and wife.

2) Separation Period

- The bridegroom would go back to his father's house to prepare a place for his wife.
- The separation gave the bride time to gather her trousseau and prepare for married life.

3) Wedding Celebration

- At the end of the separation period the groom would return to take his bride to live with him. This usually occurred at night.
- There would be a torchlight procession made by the groom, best man and other male attendants.

- The bride would be expecting her groom to return for her but she did not know exactly when he would arrive.
- When the groom came close to the bride's home, he would shout to alert his bride of his coming. Her attendants were supposed to be prepared to accompany her at a moments notice.
- With the bride's face veiled, the entire wedding party would return to the home of the groom's father. The wedding guests would already be there, and the wedding party would escort the bride and groom to the bridal chamber. There the couple entered a physical union for the first time.
- After the marriage was consummated, the bridegroom would announce the consummation to the wedding party who were waiting outside.
- After hearing the news, the wedding guests would feast and celebrate for the next seven days.
- During these seven days of "huppah," the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber. Then the bridegroom brought his bride out unveiled for all to see.

The analogy between Jewish marriage customs and Christ's relationship to the Church is beautiful. Christ came to this earth and died for you. Through shedding His blood, He paid the price necessary to purchase you to be part of His Bride. He established a new covenant through which you can enter a special relationship with Him. Now every time the gospel of Jesus is declared, He is proposing to His bride. In essence, He is saying,

*I, Jesus, take thee, sinner, to be My Bride.
And I do promise and covenant before God the Father and these witnesses,
to be thy loving and faithful Savior and Bridegroom;
in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow, in faithfulness and in waywardness,
for time and for eternity.*

Just as the bride could accept or reject the Jewish bridegroom's proposal, so you can accept or reject Christ's proposal to you. If you reject it, you will remain in your natural father's house.

You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.

John 8:44a

If, however, you accept Christ's proposal, your sins will be forgiven, and you will enter that relationship that makes you part of His Bride, the Church. And after this time of separation, He will return *for you*.

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Revelation 22:16-17

Come Lord Jesus!

Most of this lesson was adapted with permission from the Friends of Israel Ministry tract, "Behold, The Bridegroom Come!" by Renald E Showers.

GOD SEES ME AS BELOVED

DAY 1 • Have You ACCEPTED Christ's Marriage Proposal?

Accepting Christ's proposal is quite simple. When you sincerely believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He came to this earth, died for your sins and rose from the dead, you, in essence, are saying to Jesus,

*I, sinner, take Thee, Jesus, to be my Savior.
And I do promise and covenant before God
and these witnesses to be Thy loving and faithful Bride;
in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow, for time and eternity.*

As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Isaiah 62:5b

I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.

Hosea 2:19-20

In order for you to make these verses personal I have changed the pronouns in the verses below to first person. Fill in the blanks below:

*As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, _____
my God _____ over me.*

Isaiah 62:5b

*God will _____ me to him _____;
He will betroth me in _____ and justice,
in _____ and compassion. He will betroth me in faithfulness,
and I will _____ the LORD.*

Hosea 2:19-20

Have you ever committed spiritual adultery?

Paul expressed concern over this possibility when he wrote the following to the Corinthian believers.

*I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ,
so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.
But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning,
your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

2 Corinthians 11:2-3



James expressed the same concern when he rebuked the Christians he was writing to.

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

James 4:4

Or, do you think Scripture says without reason that the Spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?

In the above verses, what does James say makes us a spiritual adulterer? _____

Honestly evaluate your devotion to Jesus Christ.

Do you love Him as much now as when you first accepted His proposal? Is He truly the center of your universe? Is He the One who gives your life meaning and purpose?

If not, confess this to Him and be assured that even if we are faithless, He is faithful.

If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

2 Timothy 2:13



Read what James said next to those Christians that he accused of spiritual adultery.

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

James 4:6-10

Below, write out a love letter to Jesus, your Husband:



Trust the Holy Spirit to renew your devotion to Him, as you wait for your heavenly Bridegroom to come at any moment!

DAY 2 • WHEN Will the Groom Return for His Bride?

Just as the Jewish bride did not know the exact timing of her wedding day, we do not know the exact time of Jesus' return for His Bride, the Church.

Read Matthew 24:3 - 25:13; answer the questions and fill in the blanks below.



What question did the disciples ask Jesus in Matthew 24:3? _____

What did Jesus warn us of in verses 4-5? _____

In verse 6, Jesus tell us that we will hear of _____ and rumors of _____ but see to it you are not _____.

In verse 7, Jesus say that there will be _____ and _____ in various places. However, He says that these are not the signs of His return but of merely the beginning of _____.

Verse 9 tells us what will come next... _____

Verse 10 tells us the result of the previous things will be _____

Verse 12 says that because of the increase of _____, the love of most will grow cold.

Verse 13 tells us who will be saved. _____

Verse 14 tells us what will happen just before the end comes. _____

Verse 15 tells us when the people in Judea should flee to the mountains. _____

Verse 22 tells us that if those days had not been cut short, not one would survive. For whose sake are they cut short? _____

According to verses 23-26, what should we not believe during this time? _____



According to verse 27,

What will the return of the Lord be like? _____

When will the sun be darkened and the moon not give its light and stars fall from the sky? _____

At that time, what will appear in the sky (verse 30)? _____



Verse 31 tells us that just like a Jewish groom, Jesus will send His angels with a loud _____; and then they will gather His Elect from the four winds and from one end of the heavens to the other.

What lesson are we to learn from the fig tree? _____



Verse 36 tells us who knows the hour when all of this will take place. _____

Verses 37-41 tell us how this will be like the days of Noah. _____

Verse 42 tells us what we need to do. _____

Verse 44 tells us to be ready because _____



DAY 3 • Our WEDDING Day!

Jesus will return for his Bride some day. We will enjoy our wedding day banquet while those left on earth endure The Tribulation.

Read I Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11 and I Corinthians 15:50-58.

Who will be the first to be given their new bodies and united with Christ?

[Notice that there will be a loud command and trumpet call when Jesus returns.]

Why will the Lord's return come like a thief in the night? _____

Who will not be surprised at the Lord's return? _____

How quickly after the Lord returns for us will we get our new bodies? _____

Read Revelation 19:1-10.

What is our wedding dress made of? (v 8) _____

What does it stand for? _____

Will you be standing there in your slip? _____

Read Matthew 25:1-13.

Here Jesus tells a parable to help us understand this time.

How many virgins were there? _____

How many were wise? _____

What made the others foolish? _____

The foolish virgins were only concerned with the present, not in being prepared for the coming events. The virgins were the Bride's attendants that were sent out to greet the Bridegroom. What if the Bride had picked all foolish attendants? Often in Scripture oil is compared to the Holy Spirit. They were not allowed into heaven because they didn't have the Holy Spirit.

Are you looking forward to the Bridegroom's return?

Are you prepared?

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Titus 2:11-14

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be Alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: he leaves his house in charge of his servants, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!

Mark 13:32-37

He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:7-11

Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:7-8

DAY 4 • HOPE in Christ's Return

Once we have accepted Christ's proposal, we immediately have hope that He is coming back for us! This hope is not a "hope so" hope that believes *maybe* it will happen. Instead, it is a *confident* expectation that believes it will happen.

Jesus, our bridegroom has made a vow to us...

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 14:3



How do you feel knowing that Jesus is preparing a place and is coming back to take you there?

According to 1 Thessalonians 1:6, the Thessalonians were undergoing severe suffering, yet Paul commended them for their faith, love and endurance motivated by the hope they had in the return of the Lord (v 3).

Does the hope of the Lord's return motivate you to walk by faith? Does it grow your love towards God and others? Does it cause you to endure when undergoing suffering?

If not, what do you think the reason might be? _____

Hope is confident expectation that something good is going to happen. It is something that we can look forward to with pleasure.

Because God in His power and faithfulness raised Christ from the dead, we can confidently expect Christ's return to raise us up! (1 Thessalonians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14)

Our hope is in the salvation from His wrath!

And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 NLT

What are we rescued from? _____

Our hope is in knowing that Jesus' mission will be fulfilled—our living with him forever! (See John 17:24)

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. So comfort and encourage each other with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 NLT

For God decided to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. He died for us so that we can live with him forever, whether we are dead or alive at the time of his return.

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 NLT

Who will rise first? _____

What will happen to those who are still alive? _____

What was the reason Christ died? _____

Are you looking forward to living with Him forever? If not, why?

Our hope is in the transformation of our earthly bodies into glorious bodies!

And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.

Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere.

Philippians 3:20-21 (NLT)

What will be finished on the day Christ comes back? _____

What will our bodies be like? _____

What does a glorious body mean for you personally? _____

We are merely passing through this earth in our earthly bodies. On the day Christ returns for us, He will take us home to be with Him forever! On that day, our salvation from God's wrath will be complete! On that day, His work in us will be finished! On that day we will receive new bodies like His!

Re-read 1 Thessalonians 4:18 and 5:11. What are we to do with the knowledge of Christ's impending return?

Are you comforted and encouraged knowing that He is coming back for you? If not, ask God to reveal the reason to you.

*That is why we never give up.
Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.
For our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long.
Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever!
So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now;
rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen.
For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NLT)



DAY 5 • In Faithfulness AND In Waywardness

Look back at this week's lesson and read the vow Jesus made in His proposal to us. One of His promises is to be our loving and faithful Savior and Bridegroom... in faithfulness and in waywardness.

I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.

Hosea 2:19-20

The Greek word for faithfulness is *pistis*. It has two definitions. The first describes God's faithfulness toward us: trustful, one who shows themselves faithful in the transaction of business, worthy of trust, one who can be relied on.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the Commander of all the rulers of the world. All praise to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us.

Revelation 1:5 (NLT)

If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

2 Timothy 2:13

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Deuteronomy 7:9

The second definition of *pistis* describes our faithfulness toward God: easily persuaded, believing, confiding, trusting, one who trusts in God's promises, one who is convinced that Jesus has been raised from the dead, one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and Author of Salvation.

Our faithfulness is evidenced when we live a life demonstrating that we believe and are fully convinced that God is completely faithful to His promises.

Jesus gives us an ideal of how we can demonstrate faithfulness toward Him in His exhortation to the churches in the book of Revelation.

Read Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

What did Jesus commend the church of Ephesus for? (2:2-3) _____

What did He hold against them? (2:4) _____

What did Jesus commend the church of Pergamum for? (2:13) _____

What did He hold against them? (2:14) _____

What did Jesus commend the church of Thyatira for? (2:19) _____

What did He hold against them? (2:20) _____



What did Jesus hold against the church of Sardis? (3:1b-2) _____

What did Jesus hold against the church of Laodicea? (3:15-17) _____

How did Jesus advise the churches to overcome those things He held against them? (2:5, 24-26; 3:3,19-20)

Jesus brought to light those areas where the churches demonstrated both faithfulness and faithlessness. He will do the same for us when He comes back for us (2 Corinthians, 5:10, 2 Timothy 4:8). Review the above and answer the following:

What demonstration of faithfulness would Jesus commend you for? _____

What demonstration of faithlessness would He hold against you? _____

What actions can you take to become more faithful while you await Jesus' return for you?

Make a commitment today to act in faithfulness until the Bridegroom returns. .

May we all hear on the Day of Christ's Return
"Well done, good and faithful servant!"

He who has called you and is coming back for you is faithful.

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.
 May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our
 Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.*

1 Thessalonians. 5:23-24

*He will keep you strong to the end,
 so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

1 Corinthians 1:8-9

Therefore, keep watch...

Week 9

HANDS -N- FEET

Christ and His Church are inseparable. Last week we looked at how God, The Father, sees the Church as the Bride of Christ. This week we will see ourselves as Christ's Body. These descriptive pictures from the Bible confirm that Christ and His Church belong together.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 1:18-23

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:18-20

The spiritual bond uniting Christ and the church is real. Christ as the Head of the church is the source of her life, her nourishment and well-being. The Church is a one-of-a-kind Body of Christ, living in intimate connection with Him. The church is not just an earthly institution.

Can a part of your body decide that it does not want to be a part of the body any longer?

If it could, how long would it live disconnected from the rest of the body? _____

For our physical body to function and work in the right way, it is necessary to have many different members all working as a unit. The same is true with the body of Christ. If you are saved then you are ONE of these members. But you are not the ONLY ONE! Christ has chosen you to be a part of His body and has a job for you to do.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-18.

Christ's body is a unit with many members, just like our physical body. Our body doesn't work very well if it doesn't work as a unit with each member doing its job, and so it is with Christ's Body. At the end of the Last Supper, Jesus prayed for His disciples. The prayer is recorded in John 17. A large part of His prayer was for the Father to help them be one as He and the Father are one.



*My prayer is not for them alone.
I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,
that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.
May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:
I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world
know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

John 17:20-23

Do you think that the Church is doing a very good job of being one in complete unity as Jesus prayed for? Are we each doing our part in the body? Why or Why not? What do you think unity is?

Could our bodies be separated from our head and still have life? What useful purpose could a head be if it didn't have a body?

Christ as the Head lives out His will and purposes through His body, the Church. His willingness to do this is a mark of His love for the Church and an expression of how much He values us.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus didn't just write the New Testament Himself while He was here on earth? To us it seems like He could have done it easier and better, but He left the very important job of writing His Father's words down on paper for His body to do. Why?

He has a job for each one of us to accomplish—what's yours?

Robert McCheyne wrote about two lepers who were once seen sowing peas in a field. The one had no hands, the other had no feet—these bodily members had wasted away because of the disease. The man who lacked hands was carrying the other man who lacked feet on his back. He carried in his hands the bag of seed and dropped a pea every now and then, which the other pressed into the ground with his foot; and so they managed the work of one man between two. Each of these men could not do certain things, but TOGETHER they were able to do the job.

So it is with the Body of Christ. Alone there are many things that we are not able to do, but when we work together we are able to do the job!

Illness also gets in the way of the Church accomplishing its job. How spiritually healthy are you? If the other believers were just as spiritually healthy as you are would the body of Christ be well?

Sometimes members of a body choose to live in the body, sharing its benefits while maintaining complete independence—they become parasites or cancer.

God save us from being cancer within your Body!

But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:24-27



GOD SEES ME AS HIS FAMILY

DAY 1 • Many Are ONE Body

The Apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthians with the fact that they were all members of one Body of Christ.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

I Corinthians 12:27

A little biology insight will give us a glimpse as to what it means to be a part of the body...



The **brain** is made up of approximately 100 billion nerve cells called **neurons**. Neurons gather and transmit electrochemical signals similar to the way wires work in a computer. Various types of neurons serve as messengers, telling different parts of the body what to do and how to respond.

The human body is made up of about 10 trillion cells. Of those 10 trillion cells, there are about 200 different types, such as, **muscle** cells, **liver** cells and even cells that make up the clear lenses in our **eyes**.

Every cell contains **DNA** (Deoxyribonucleic Acid), which is an encoded, detailed set of plans for building different pieces of the cell—much like a blueprint.

DNA is made up of blocks in a strand called **genes**. Genes tell cells to make other molecules called **proteins**. These proteins allow a cell to perform special functions, such as working with other groups of cells to make part of the body function properly.

Every gene survives based on the actions of **enzymes**. The immune system relies almost totally on enzymes to fight off viruses and diseases.

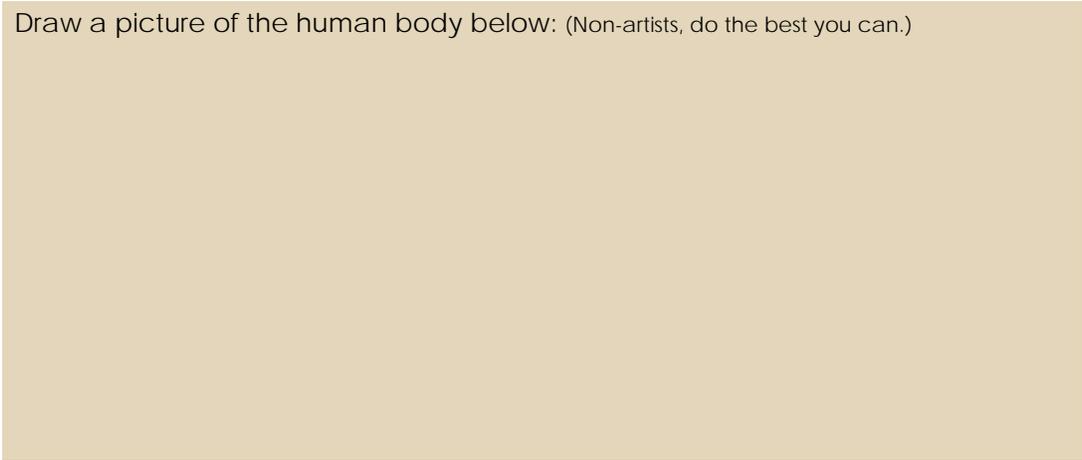
The **heart** pumps **blood** through **arteries**, **capillaries**, and **veins**, providing oxygen and nutrients to every cell in the body.

Amazing, isn't it? Yet, these are only a *few* of the very small but vital parts of the human body.

Would it be possible for your body to function properly if any one of these parts were defective or stopped functioning?

What would happen if the genes decided they didn't want to work with the DNA?

Draw a picture of the human body below: (Non-artists, do the best you can.)



Did you draw just an eye? What about legs coming out of the head? Are some parts of the body separate from other parts? That would be absurd, right?

Just as all of the parts of the human body have a special place and function, so do each of us have a special place and function within the body of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

What does Paul say about the parts that seem to be least important?

What does that mean? _____

Can any of the parts function independent from the other parts? _____

What does the verse, *The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you,"* mean to you personally?

According to this passage, what occurs when something happens to you?

Have you experienced a time of suffering when someone else suffered or a time of rejoicing when someone else rejoiced? If so, describe it below:

Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)



DAY 2 • Honoring God by HONORING His Family

As believers we are members of God's family.

His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.

Ephesians 2:19 (NLT)

You have probably heard of or personally experienced the "only child syndrome." God has made very clear that He has not placed us in an only child family but a super-sized, extended family.

As His family, God has instructed us on how to act toward one another.

Rate your "one another" quotient. On the first line write the number that most correctly indicates how much you practice each one.

1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = frequently

___ ___	Have CONCERN for one another	1 Corinthians 12:25
___ ___	Be DEVOTED to one another	Romans 12:10
___ ___	HONOR one another	Romans 12:10
___ ___	LOVE one another	John 13:34
___ ___	SERVE one another	Galatians 5:13
___ ___	ADMONISH one another	Colossians 3:16
___ ___	LIE NOT to one another	Colossians 3:9
___ ___	ENCOURAGE (exhort) one another	1 Thessalonians 4:18
___ ___	PRAY for one another	James 5:16
___ ___	Be KIND to one another	Ephesians 4:32
___ ___	FORGIVE one another	Ephesians 4:32
___ ___	COMFORT one another	2 Corinthians 1:4
___ ___	Show HUMILITY toward one another	1 Peter 5:5b
___ ___	AGREE (get along) WITH one another	1 Corinthians 1:10
___ ___	BEAR with one another	Ephesians 4:2
___ ___	ACCEPT one another	Romans 15:7
___ ___	SUBMIT to one another	Ephesians 5:21
___ ___	STOP PASSING JUDGMENT on one another	Romans 14:13
___ ___	TOTAL	

Now go back, and on the second line write the number that most correctly indicates how much you would like others to practice each one toward you.

What do the totals tell you about your relationship with others? _____



Read 1 John 4:19-21.

What do the totals indicate about your relationship with God? _____

The world tells us if we love self more, we will feel better about ourselves and others.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:37-39

What does this Scripture indicate about your love for yourself? _____

According to the Bible, we already love ourselves. Human nature is to do whatever it takes to save ourselves, be it physically, emotionally or socially. God, knowing our nature, demonstrated His love toward us, gave us His Spirit (1 John 4:11-17), and then instructed us to follow Him "Just as". Read the following "Just as" Scriptures:

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other.

Just as *I have loved you, you should love each other.*

Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

John 13:34-35 (NLT)

And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:2

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:36

God gives us commands, knowing they are best for us. One of the greatest remedies for depression and self-pity is to reach out despite how we are feeling; to act toward others the way God has acted toward us.



Write out a plan of how you will "one another just as" this week. Then follow through, even if you don't feel like it. If you ask God to help you, He will honor your willingness.

DAY 3 • Knee Jerk REACTIONS

Remember when we learned about neurons on Day 1? **Read the following quote retrieved from the How Stuff Works website:**

When the doctor taps the right spot on your knee with a rubber hammer, receptors send a signal into the spinal cord through a sensory neuron. The sensory neuron passes the message to a motor neuron that controls your leg muscles. Nerve impulses travel down the motor neuron and stimulate the appropriate leg muscle to contract. The response is a muscular jerk that happens quickly and does not involve your brain. Humans have lots of hard-wired reflexes like this, but as tasks become more complex, the pathway "circuitry" gets more complicated and the brain gets involved.

Have you ever had a knee jerk reaction to something, or more specifically, to someone? Have you ever felt like someone was getting on your "last nerve?"



Like muscular jerks, we tend to have emotional and social jerks that happen quickly. There are various reasons for our "knee jerk" reactions, stemming from the fact that we are all born sinners. We are going to spend today and tomorrow looking at just three of them.

1. Family background

With or without words, we were taught by our family of origin how to respond to our environment.

If you grew up in a family where someone had an on-going emotional, psychological, social or physical problem that negatively affected everyone in the home, then you grew up in a dysfunctional family (Proverbs 11:29). Even with its negative pay-offs, we naturally bring whatever dysfunction we learned as children into our adult relationships because it is comfortable.

Some types of dysfunctional families and their common results are:

The Chaotic Family is marked with inconsistency and indecisiveness by the parents. The result is family members that are disconnected.

The Controlling Family is marked with rigid structure, dictatorship communication, and overly critical parents. The result is family members are fearful and insensitive.

The Coddling Family is marked with lack of authority, avoidance of disagreements and overprotection by parents. The result is family members are undisciplined.

The Codependent Family is marked with strong need to conform, lack of self-direction and overly possessive parents. The result is family members are insecure.

Which one of these dysfunctional families can you relate to? _____

Many times it is our own insecurities, insensitivities, lack of discipline and disconnectedness that prevent us from being a healthy, functioning part of the Body according to God's purpose and plan.

If any of these have kept you in bondage, you can be freed up by making the choice to let go of the past. Identify the patterns you have fallen into and begin to take steps that will lead you to becoming a healthy functioning part of the Body of Christ. (Seek accountability)

*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child;
when I become a man, I put childish ways behind me.*

1 Corinthians 13:11

*No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies
on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,
I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God,
through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.*

Philippians 3:13-14 (NLT)

2. Personality Conflicts

Speaking of the body, God uniquely forms our natural temperaments using the genes from our parents and grandparents. The following are four basic temperaments that have been used to determine individual personality types. Most people are not 100% of any of these but a blend of two or more.

As you read below, circle the weaknesses and strengths that most accurately describe you most of the time: (You can even ask a family member or close friend to do it for you.)



Choleric

Strengths: Strong-willed, determined, independent, optimistic, practical, productive, decisive, leader, confident.

Weaknesses: Crafty, sarcastic, domineering, inconsiderate, angry-cruel, self-sufficient, unemotional, proud.

Sanguine

Strengths: Compassionate, talkative, outgoing, enthusiastic, warm, personable, friendly, carefree.

Weaknesses: Unstable, weak-willed, undisciplined, restless, undependable, egocentric, loud, exaggerates, fearful.

Melancholy

Strengths: Gifted, analytical, sensitive, perfectionist, aesthetic, idealistic, loyal, self-sacrificing.

Weaknesses: Rigid, unsociable, self-centered, theoretical, critical, moody, impractical, revengeful, negative.

Phlegmatic

Strengths: Calm, easy-going, dependable, efficient, conservative, practical, leader, diplomat, humorous.

Weaknesses: Stingy, fearful, indecisive, spectator, self-protective, selfish, unmotivated.

Count the circles in each temperament. The one with the most circles is your dominant personality trait and the next closest number is your secondary trait.

Since every one of us has weaknesses, every one of us is in need of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life.

Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you.

*Then you will sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves,
making music to the Lord in your hearts.*

*And you will always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord
Jesus Christ. And further, you will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Ephesians 5:18-21 (NLT)

DAY 4 • Knee Jerk Reactions (CONTINUED)

Today we will continue to look at personalities and the part they play in how we get along with others.

Let's look at a group of children as an example:

One child is moody, controlling and loves challenges. Another child is easy-going, indecisive and content to let someone else do the problem solving. The third child is outgoing, weak-willed and prefers to act like there are no problems or challenges.

Based on these few personality traits how do you imagine the interactions between these three could be positive?

How could the interactions be negative? _____

Below is a biblical example of what can happen given various personality types:

*Now, dear brothers and sisters,
I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves.
Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church.
I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.
For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your arguments,
dear brothers and sisters. Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul."
Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ."*

1 Corinthians 1:10-12 (NLT)

Other factors were probably an influence, but personality differences most likely played a part in the divisions that were taking place. It could have been that some more easily followed Paul because he was a more decisive leader. Some followed Peter because he was a more personable leader and others followed Apollos because he was a more detailed leader.



Think back to various people you have worked and/or served with, become close friends with and even your spouse...

Do you see similarities in those you tend to feel at ease and work best with?

What about those you tend to feel guarded and have difficulty working with?

God created each of us with various personalities, knowing that there would be tension and conflicts. In our various personalities, His goal is that each of us begin to look and act more like His Son (Romans 8:29). This seems to be hard, but just as we needed the brain to move beyond the "knee jerk" reaction, so is our need for Jesus Christ, the Spiritual Head, to respond to "one another just as."

3. Selfishness

Later in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul sheds light on what was at the heart of division within the church:

For you are still controlled by your own sinful desires. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your own desires? You are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord. When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I prefer Apollos," aren't you acting like those who are not Christians?

1 Corinthians 3:3-4 (NLT)

Paul accused the Corinthians of being selfish. Selfishness will cause divisions and quarrels in any relationship.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.

James 4:1-2

Whatever our personality type or background, we are all prone to selfishness. The natural sanguine is egotistical, the natural choleric is insensitively selfish, the natural melancholy is self-centered and the natural phlegmatic is self-protective. Each has a unique way of working out the same sinful nature—selfishness.

The opposite of selfishness is *love*. **Read Philippians 2:1-4.**

Think about your recent conversations with others. Have they focused more on you and your affairs or on the other person?

When you are in a social situation, are you waiting for someone to seek you out and engage you in conversation, or do you seek out others?

Do you find yourself becoming bitter because you are not included, or do you attempt to find ways to include others?

If you are feeling like YUCK, it is okay. You aren't the only one. Once we recognize our selfishness, there is an answer to it—choose to "one another just as."

Review the list of commanded "one anothers." Make a commitment to practice them, especially when you don't *feel* like it. You will be amazed at how much better you feel after you choose obedience over selfishness.

Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

1 Corinthians 10:24



DAY 5 • What Do I Do with OFFENSES?

The Responsibility of the Offended

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Matthew 18:15-17

Write out the steps you are to take when someone sins against you, according to Matthew 18:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying, "Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye," when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log from your own eye; then perhaps you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

Matthew 7:3-5 (NLT)

According to this passage, is it wrong to confront? _____

What step do we need to take before we confront? _____

Read Ephesians 4:32. The Greek word for forgive is charizomai. It means to graciously and willingly give a gift.

There are three elements involved in forgiveness:

1. An offense or injury
2. A debt resulting from the injury or offense
3. Cancellation of the debt

A heart attitude of forgiveness before it is requested is essential. This humble willingness to extend the gift of forgiveness comes out of the heart that recognizes and appreciates the gift of forgiveness God has extended to us.

Read Matthew 6:14-15. What will happen to us if we do not have a heart attitude of forgiveness toward those who have offended us?

There are two elements of forgiveness that are essential to avoid bitterness and resentment: The choice to forgive and the process of forgiveness.



The choice to forgive is the conscience decision to not hold the debt against the person any longer. The process of forgiving is remembering the decision and continually making choices based on it. Not dwelling on the offense and willingness to restore the relationship are part of the process of forgiving.

What forgiveness does not do:

- It does not give what the offender deserves but what he/she needs. [Matthew 7:20-27]
- It does not release the offender from consequences of his/her actions. [Matthew 5:25-26]
- It does not mean there is instant trust. Forgiveness and trust are not the same. Trust must be earned.

Is there any one you need to forgive? Ask God to help you begin the process.

The Responsibility of the Offender

Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God. Matthew 3:8 (NLT)

The turning away from sins is called repentance. Ongoing evidence of repentance will earn trust.

Repentance requires:

- Confess (agree with) God about the offense. [1 John 1:9]
- Confess the offense to the offended and seek forgiveness when appropriate. [Matthew 5:23-24, James 5:16a]
- Making restitution when possible [Luke 19:1-10]
- Act as forgiven [1 John 2:1-3]

Read Matthew 5:23-24.

What is the biblical responsibility of one who has committed an offense? _____

To be reconciled means to change the relationship, to renew the friendship.

It involves specific actions on the part of both the offended and the offender:

- Confession of sin by the offender
- Forgiveness of the sin by the offender
- Establishment of a new relationship (better than it was before the offense)

Is there anyone you have offended and with whom you need to seek forgiveness? Ask God to help you with the process.

Finally, all of you should be of one mind, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate when people say unkind things about you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and he will bless you for it.

1 Peter 3:8-9 (NLT)

FULLY EQUIPPED

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

According to the above verse, with what are we equipped? _____

For what are we equipped? _____

Which is why we were created!

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10



God sees us as fully equipped because we have His Word to do what He has created us to do!

What does it mean to be equipped?

In Hebrews 13:20-21, the author prays that God will equip the Hebrews with everything good for doing His will.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The same Greek word for equip is used in the verses below but translated differently. Can you figure out which word it is? **Circle the correct word.**

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them,

Matthew 4:21

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Galatians 6:1

Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

1 Thessalonians 3:10

Look up the verses above in other translations of the Bible. Write the different words that are used below.

Equip = _____

*We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God,
that we may understand what God has freely given us.
For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?
But we have the mind of Christ.*

1 Corinthians 2:12&16

What else are we equipped with? _____

According to John 15:5 what can you accomplish apart from Jesus? _____

What can you do with Jesus according to Philippians 4:13? _____

We are each fully equipped with God's Word, Mind and Spirit.
On top of that the Spirit gives each of us a special gift with which to serve the body.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

Have you unwrapped your gift?

Are you using your gift?



*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others,
faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

1 Peter 4:10

*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness
in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.*

Colossians 2:9-10

GOD SEES ME AS FULLY EQUIPPED

DAY 1 • Equipped with His PRESENCE

When God calls us to go through tough stuff or to complete a task, He equips us with His very presence.



Going Through the Tough Stuff

Read Genesis Chapter 37.

How would you have felt if you had been Joseph? _____

How would you have responded? _____

Read Genesis 39:2-4, 21-23. How did the fact that “The LORD was with Joseph...” affect the events in Joseph’s life?

Joseph was successful wherever he was because God was with Him. Joseph was in slavery for 13 years. After his release, he was put in charge of all of the food in Egypt. During the time of a famine, Joseph was in charge of selling grain to the people. His brothers were sent to Egypt two times by his father to buy grain for their family. They did not recognize Joseph, but on their second visit Joseph revealed his identity to them. **Read Genesis 45:5-8.**

After Joseph’s father died, his brothers were still concerned that he would take out revenge on them. This was Joseph’s response:

*But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God?
You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish
what is now being done, the saving of many lives.
So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.”
And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.*

Genesis 50:19-21



How did the awareness of God’s presence affect Joseph’s attitude and response to his brothers?

What was Joseph’s perspective on his brothers’ dealings with him? _____

God's presence means that He will enable us to go through the tough stuff with peace and joy, knowing that He does not intend to harm us but has a purpose and plan to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

Has there been a tough time that God has taken you through? It may even be taking place now. Write about the ways you have seen His presence and how it affected or is currently affecting you below.

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.
Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you,
I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.*

Isaiah 43:2-4

Doing the Work God Prepared in Advance For Us to Do (Ephesians 2:10)

Read Exodus 3:1-14.

What was God calling Moses to do? _____

How did Moses respond? (vv 11,13) _____

How did God answer Moses? (vv 12,14) _____

Have you ever responded with "who am I?" when you sensed God was asking you to do something?

God assured Moses just like He does us that He was not relying on Moses to get the job done. Moses would be able to do the work God called him to do only because God, the great I AM, would be with Him.

Read Luke 1:26-38.

What was God calling Mary to do? _____

How did the angel encourage Mary (v 28) _____

What was Mary's response (vv 34,38) _____

The question, "How will this be?" comes to mind for all of us when God calls us to do something that is seemingly impossible. But when we believe that He will be with us, we can rest in knowing He will provide and will do things in us and through us that are beyond what we could ever think or imagine!

What has God called you to do? _____

Are you willing to step out in faith, believing that He has given you everything you need including His promise, "I am with you...?" _____

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified;
do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Joshua 1:9



DAY 2 • Equipped with His GRACE

God not only equips us with His promised presence, He also provides for us a full supply of what we need when we need it—His grace. God extended His grace to us in the provision of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), and He continues to supply grace upon grace in our daily lives.

From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another.

John 1:16

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.

If God took you into heaven, revealed things to you that man does not know and then sent you back here, what would you do? How would you feel?

Look at verse 7. What was Paul given? _____

Why was it given to him? _____

Who gave it to him? _____

Who did Paul plead with to remove it (v 8)? _____

After three times of pleading, Paul accepted God's response:

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses,
so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

2 Corinthians 12:9



Write your own definition of "sufficient:" _____

Do you believe that God's grace is sufficient for you in your times of difficulty?

What was Paul's response? _____

Does Paul sound like a masochist to you? Since we know Paul wasn't a masochist, what gave him boldness to boast about his weaknesses and delight in insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties? The answer is that he believed God and humbly walked in His power.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:25. What is God's weakness? _____

Do you believe that God's weakness is stronger than your own strength? _____

Paul humbly understood that God's power inside of Him was completely sufficient to supply whatever he needed whenever he had need.

We don't know what Paul's thorn was but we do know that it was not removed. God is a God of deliverance and healing, but often He chooses to extend His grace so that whatever the thorn, it will work for us and not against us.

*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Hebrews 4:16

A Testimony of God's Grace

At nine months pregnant with our third child, I sat peering at my husband's lifeless body through streams of endless tears. Many people walked by to give their condolences and let me know they would be there for me and would help supply whatever I and my children needed. In the midst of it all, the Lord whispered in my ear, "My grace is sufficient." Despite the circumstances, He assured me He was going to provide and that those people would be a part of the provision. Oh, how He had already begun the process!

I had slept soundly the three nights between the accident and funeral. My 19-month-old son who would not sit still for a moment or stay with anyone else, sat calmly on the bathroom toilet while I showered in preparation for the funeral. My mind had been filled that morning with the song repeating in my mind, "God is so good, God is so good, God is so good to me."

My immediate instinct was to get a job because we had no money, but who was going to hire a nine-month pregnant woman? Two weeks after the funeral our third child was born, but not without complications. The nurses and social workers told me I needed to have a caseworker because I was in a high stress situation. I continually told them my God would supply, but they were concerned that I didn't understand the seriousness of my situation.

God did supply and He continues to. He not only supplied tangible needs, but He drew me closer to Himself. While my heart was ripped open, He performed heart surgery by removing those things that were keeping me from being free in Him and He replaced them with His truth. Could He have done it differently? Yes, but God knows me. He knows what is best for me, and He's willing to allow me to suffer knowing He will work it for good—my growth and His glory.

Grace does not mean there will be no suffering. Grace in the midst of suffering gives us the ability to rise above our circumstances even stronger and with greater faith and hope than what we once had.

- Chris McNamara

Write how you have experienced God's grace in your own life?



*And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ,
after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you
and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*

1 Peter 5:10

DAY 3 • Equipped with His WORD

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

What the Word Does

- **Teach**—instruct in living
Goal: Wise decision-making
- **Rebuke**—address known sin by telling faults or warning
Goal: Repentance
- **Correct**—straighten up; improve the life/character of one who is ignorant
Goal: Change
- **Training in Righteousness**—tutor by discipline in purity of life, correct thinking, feeling and acting
Goal: Growth and stability
- **Thoroughly Equips**—thoroughly well-fitted
Goal: Doer of good works determined by God

God says that His Word is useful for all of the above. Re-read the list carefully. What area(s) of your life is/are not covered by God's word?

What the Word Is

For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

According to the above verse, what makes the Word of God different from all other writings?

How do you think exposing who you really are, equips you to do what God wants you to do?



Read Psalms 19:7-14 and 119:89-114. Write a description of God's Word (laws, precepts, statutes, commands, ordinances all refer to God's Word), according to these passages.

When David looked at the mirror of God's Word, He acknowledged his own shortcomings and prayed that his words would be pleasing to God:

**By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward...
May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Psalm 19:11,14

Our words flow out of whatever is in our hearts (Luke 6:45). We can keep our hearts clean and equipped by meditating and memorizing God's Word.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11

Read Matthew 4:1-11 and Ephesians 6:17.

What weapon was Jesus equipped with to fight against Satan's temptation?



Write some of the purposes for the Scriptures according to the following passages:

Romans 4:18-25 _____

Romans 15:4 _____

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 _____

Read James 1:22-25.

What happens when we only listen to the Word? _____

According to verse 25, what does the law do for you? _____

What is required of you in order to experience that promised freedom? _____

In your own life, do you think of the law of God as restraining or freeing?



Going through this study has required taking an intent look into God's mirror. When you put into practice what you have learned, you're taking another step in being thoroughly equipped and freed up to do whatever God has prepared for you to do.

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.
But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*

Psalm 1:1-3

DAY 4 • Gifted in LOVE

God does not call us to do anything that He has not already equipped us to do. He takes our unique personalities, allows us to go through various life experiences and tempers the two by calling us into a relationship with Himself, giving us His Spirit and His Word. Through His indwelling Spirit we have His character, the ability to receive and believe His Truth and the capability to do and go through whatever is placed before us.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2 Peter 1:3

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:16

One of the ways the Holy Spirit of God equips us is through spiritual gifts. Each and every believer receives at least one spiritual gift but unlike the fruit of the Spirit everyone does not receive all of the gifts.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6,11

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

Romans 12:6a

Spiritual gifts serve purposes beyond the person to whom God graciously gives the gift. You may be saying "no duh!" But before you blow by this, think for a minute about yourself or others that attempt to fit into areas of ministry where they obviously do not belong. Could it be an attempt to use a gift that has not been given? On the other hand, there are some that don't serve at all because they are waiting until they know what their gift is and fear being that other person. In either case, by the actions of each, whom are they really serving?

Read the Following Passages:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:10-11

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7



Who should use their spiritual gifts, according to 1 Peter 4:10? _____

Does that include you? _____

Circle the correct word(s) to complete the sentence: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..."

...when asked." ...whenever he/she feels like it." ...faithfully."

How are the gifts to be exercised, according to 1 Peter 4:11? _____

What stated purposes for exercising spiritual gifts are listed in all of the passages?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:30b-13:13.

This passage falls in the middle of Paul's discourse on where spiritual gifts come from, the various types of gifts and the purposes of the gifts.

What is the most excellent way? _____

What are we if we do not have love? _____

What do we gain if we do not have love? _____

Do gifts last forever? _____ Does love last forever? _____

Where does the ability to love come from (see Galatians 5:22)? _____

Why do you think Paul took the time to write about what love is in the middle of teaching about spiritual gifts?



This is agape—the love that is only of God. Others will be more attracted to God and willing to listen to us when they see and feel God's love as we exercise the spiritual gifts He has given to us.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 again, and replace the word love with your name.

What areas did not quite ring true as you read? _____

Ask God to help you in those areas so that you can better serve in the most excellent way of love.

*There are three things that will endure—faith, hope, and love—
and the greatest of these is love.*

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NLT)

DAY 5 • Gifted PASSION

Read these passages that list many of the spiritual gifts in the Bible. **Circle each gift as you read.**

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:6-8,13

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

Ephesians 4:11

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28

The following is a short description of each of the gifts listed at least once in the above passages: *

Administration = Organizing and supervising others

Apostle = Starting new ministries or churches

Discernment = Distinguishing truth from error

Evangelism = Telling the good news of the Gospel

Exhortation = Coming alongside of others with encouragement and counsel

Faith = Resting in God's promises and abilities

Giving = Sharing material resources with others

Healing = Helping people become whole

Helps = Assisting other believers in their ministries

Hospitality = Welcoming and entertaining people

Knowledge = Desire for and ability to learn truth

Leadership = Setting goals and motivating others to accomplish them

Mercy = Showing compassion to those who are suffering

Miracles = Performing mighty deeds for God

Pastor = Caring for the spiritual welfare of a group of people

Prophecy = Speaking forth the message of God

Service = Working at a task that needs to be done

Teaching = Instructing others in the Word in a systematic way

Tongues = Speaking in a language unknown to the one speaking

Tongues Interpretation = Interpreting what has been spoken by someone speaking in tongues.

Wisdom = Applying knowledge to life.

* Taken with permission from *Finding Your Best Fit in Ministry* by Phyllis A. Kline Ministry Tools Resource Center at www.mintools.com.

If you are not sure what your spiritual gift is look back over the list and see if there is anything that you recognize as something you do often, enjoy doing or have been told you do well. If any or all three apply than there is a good chance that is a gift that God has given you for the specific purpose of building His body. Remember, there is a possibility that God has given you more than one gift.

List the gifts you believe you may have below:



Ask those who know you well if they believe these are your gifts.

Many times we don't do anything in the body because we are unsure of the gifts God has given us. The best way to discover your gifts is not necessarily by a survey but by actions. As you prayerfully become involved in ministry in areas in the church you believe you'll enjoy, your natural gifts will flow out of you into that ministry. God has not given us gifts that are burdensome. They work in a complimentary way with our personalities, experience and passion.

We tend to view the gifts as being positions; for example, administration. The gift of administration involves the ability to organize and supervise. Many believe a person with the gift of administration can only serve in what the world sees as an administrative role like office work, as the manager or the secretary. The fact is a person with the gift of administration may also have a passion for babies. That person could use their administrative abilities in the nursery by bringing a sense of organization to a place that can often be chaotic.

Below are some questions to help you discover what your passion may be:

What do you get really excited about? _____

What burdens you? _____

What do you think is an important part of church life? _____

What do you tend to feel compassion for the most? _____



When you find your passion, your spiritual gifts will enable you to serve effectively in that area of ministry. Commit your passions to the Lord and He will direct you!

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

GOD'S AMBASSADOR: PART OF OUR CITIZENSHIP



Is there anyone here who is not a citizen of the United States?

How did you become an American citizen?

How else could someone become a citizen of our country?

What are the advantages of being a US citizen? _____

Are there any responsibilities of citizenship? _____

During the years right after Jesus death, if you were not born a Roman citizen you could buy a citizenship.

*Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship."
"But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.*

Acts 22:28

What was the advantage of being a Roman citizen? Why would people pay a large sum of money for it?

Read Acts 16:11-40.

What city did all of this take place in? (v 12) _____

According to that verse, what kind of city was it? _____

Paul and Luke established a church in the city of Philippi. Many years later when Paul was imprisoned he wrote a letter to the church there. We call it the Book of Philippians.

Read Philippians 3:1-20.

Paul encouraged the Philippians to count as loss their Roman citizenship and everything else that might be considered important here on earth and to embrace the fact that they were citizens of heaven.

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens,
but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,*
Ephesians 2:19

How did you become a citizen of Heaven? _____

What advantages are there to being a heavenly citizen? _____

What responsibilities are there? _____

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal
through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

2 Corinthians 5:20

What is an ambassador? _____

What does an ambassador do? _____

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above,
where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature:
sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.
Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.
But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these:
anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.
Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices
and have put on the new self,
which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Colossians 3:1-10

GOD SEES ME AS HIS AMBASSADOR

DAY 1 • Chosen to GO

An ambassador is one sent on a special mission with a special message, authorized and representative of the authority that sent them. Simply said, an ambassador acts as **a personal messenger**.

In the New Testament times, Rome had two kinds of provinces. One province (the Senatorial) peacefully submitted and obeyed the laws, while those in the other province (the Imperial) were rebellious, trouble makers for the Roman government. In response, Rome selected and sent out ambassadors only to the Imperial provinces—those making trouble.

In the same way, as Christians, we are God's ambassadors to a world that is rebellious against God.

*For the sinful nature is always hostile to God.
It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why
those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.*

Romans 8:7-8 (NLT)

*But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us
while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood
of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's judgment. For since we were
restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies,
we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life.
So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—
all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.*

Romans 5:8-11 (NLT)

So who died and made us ambassadors? _____

You are a Chosen People...

Read John 15:19, Ephesians 1:10-11 and 1 Peter 2:9.

Who chose you? _____

From where did He choose you? _____

Why did He choose you? _____

What does being chosen make you? _____

With a New Citizenship...

Read Colossians 1:13-14. Where were you rescued from and brought to?





Read **Philippians 3:20**. Where is your new citizenship? _____

Commissioned to Go...

Read **John 17: 18, 20:21**. Who sends you? _____

Read **Acts 1:8**. What do we receive when the Holy Spirit comes upon us?

What are we to do in that power? _____

Jesus gave a list of geographical locations in which those specific disciples were to be ambassadors. He first listed Jerusalem, Judea and then Samaria. **Their order is significant!**

1] Jerusalem—their home (Our Family)

The message is first to be presented in our homes. Based on the message you give, who would those in your home say sent you? _____

2] Judea—their town (Our Friends/Familiar)

We are called to share the message He gives us with those we know. However, friends and family can be the most difficult people to share the message of Jesus with because we have the most at risk. Nevertheless, we are responsible to do so. We are to share the gospel verbally when appropriate and, most importantly through our actions. Remember, our actions speak louder than our words! Your choices and attitudes will speak volumes.

Make a list of friends and/or family members that need to know the message of Jesus Christ in the margin. Pray and ask God how he wants to use you as an ambassador to these people.

Friends & Family:

3] Samaria—the place they avoided out of fear and prejudice (Our Unfamiliar)

It is human nature to have prejudices and preconceived ideas about those we are unfamiliar with. But, we have received the power of God and therefore we have received the ability to love even those we may consider enemies and boldness to reach out to those we may consider intimidating.

Make a list of unfamiliar individuals or people groups that you tend to be prejudice against (this could be because of race, status, disabilities, etc.). Pray and ask God how he wants to use you as an ambassador to these people.

Unfamiliar:

Jesus performed a miraculous exorcism on a demon-possessed man. When Jesus was preparing to leave the man wanted to go with him. This was Jesus' response:

“Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Mark 5:19-20

The Decapolis consisted of about 10 Greek cities. This man was sent by Jesus to share the message of what Jesus had done for him. He excitedly went and shared it with those in his household and with people in many cities! We have been called to do the same.

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.

1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)

DAY 2 • The MESSAGE of the Ambassador

What message are we sent to present? In summary, the message is about **God's love towards us and His provision for us.**

Below are a selection of messages listed in the New Testament:

Reconciliation with God	2 Corinthians 5:20, 1 Timothy 2:3-4
Jesus' glory, He is God	John 12:38-41
This new life	Acts 5:20-21
The Good News of peace	Acts 10:36
Christ's sufferings & resurrection	Acts 17:2-3, 11
Salvation by faith in Christ	Romans 10:9-17
The cross and Christ crucified	1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:4
Sound doctrine	Titus 1:9

Let's look at the message of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:

What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NLT)



As Christ's ambassadors, this is how we can convey this core message:

I have become a _____ person. I am not the _____ anymore.

All this newness of life is from _____ who brought me back to Himself through what _____ did.

I am Christ's _____ and God is using me to speak to _____.

God was in Christ, _____ the world to _____, no longer counting people's _____ against them.

For God made Christ, who _____ sinned, to be the _____ for _____ sin so that we could be made _____ with God _____ Christ.

Be _____ to _____!

There are many ways to share the message of Christ but one of the most effective ways is by sharing our own personal testimonies of who we once were, what Christ did for us and who we are now.

Praise God that while he uses us to share His message he does not hold us responsible for the response.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:6-7.

What did Paul say about his and Apollos' responsibility? _____

What did He say about God's responsibility? _____

It is not our job to force others to receive and accept the message. The presentation of the message must be done in a way that is representative of Jesus Christ.

If you have presented the Gospel to someone who has yet to receive it, do not be discouraged. Continue to act as a representative of Jesus Christ to them.

Take some time to expand on 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 by writing your own personal testimony. Then pray for an opportunity to share it with someone. (You may need to use a separate piece of paper.)

Here's a suggested format to get you started:

1] I am not the same anymore. This is what I was like...

2] I accepted God's free gift of eternal life when... (describe the circumstances)

3] I have become a new person. This is what I am like now...



DAY 3 • REPRESENTING the Sender Well

The characteristics and thoughts of the sending authority are made known by the representative.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

You are the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. Many times unbelievers reject the message because they watch the messenger (us). They know us, they see us and they hear us. When we attack with Bible quotes, act self-righteous, argue or whine about our circumstances, their response is "Something smells fishy around here, I don't want any of that!" rather than the desired response of "mmmmm, something smells sweet, I want some of that!" On days when I have made chocolate chip cookies the first thing my children experience when they come through the door is the aroma of the cookies. What's their response? Absolutely—"mmmmm, I want some of that!"

You are the aroma of Christ wherever you go. What would be the response of those who experience your fragrance in your home, at your workplace, at church?

"Something smells fishy, I don't want any of that!"

- OR -

"Mmmm, I want some of that!"

In order to represent the sender well, we must continually look to the One we are representing for guidance and instruction.

Read Colossians 3:1-2 and Hebrews 12:1-2.

According to Colossians, what two things are we commanded to do since we have been raised with Christ? _____

According to Hebrews, what is our motivation to run the race God has set before us? _____



Think back to a time when you were dealing with some kind of conflict in your life. Did you focus more on the problem or on Jesus? _____

Write how your focus affected your response. _____

How do you think a change in focus might have changed your response? _____

Read John 7:16-18, 8:28-29, and 12:49-50. Answer the following:

Who is the sender in these passages? _____

What did Jesus say about the One who sent Him? _____

What did Jesus do to honor or please the One who sent Him? _____

Do you believe you are able to honor God the Father in the same way Christ honored His Father? _____

Read John 7:18 again. What did Jesus say is necessary to honor the sender?

Have you made the choice to seek God's honor above your own?



Read Psalm 1:1-3 and 119:97-98.

What attitude is described towards God's commands?

What does the one who delights in obeying God's commands do with God's Word (law)? _____

What is he like? _____

Who do you think the produced fruit might be for? _____

Is your attitude toward God's commands the same as the psalmist? _____

We cannot rightly represent the One who has sent us if we do not first know His characteristics and His thoughts. That requires spending time with Him regularly and unhurriedly. Time used wisely is spending it with the One who wisely created time.

If you don't already have a time set aside to spend with the Lord, plan that time now and begin. Write down your next appointment with God in the margin. Consider it your most important appointment of the day! You might be pleasantly surprised by the sweet aroma even you, yourself will experience throughout the day.

My next appointment with God is on:

Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise.

Use his words to teach and counsel each other.

Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:16-17 (NLT)

DAY 4 • A REJOICING Representative

What would you think of an ambassador's home country if he constantly complained about it not providing for him? How do you think the authorities from that country would be treated if they came to visit?

What conclusion do you think others come to regarding our heavenly home when we complain about how we're not being provided for or getting what we want? What opinion do you think they might come to of our ruling authority—God the Father.

And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:17 (NLT)

Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:20

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

Philippians 4:6 (NLT)



Fill in the blanks from Colossians 3:17:

In _____ I do or _____ I am to be a _____ of the Lord Jesus, giving _____ through Him to God the Father.

Write out what that means to you in your own words:

According to Ephesians 5:20 and Philippians 4:6, for what are you to give thanks? _____

You may be asking, "Does this mean I am to give thanks for abuse, divorce, addiction, loss of finances, loss of job, loss of a loved one, an unfulfilled long awaited desire?" The fact is God is grieved over those things that bring us pain. HOWEVER, as we have seen in other weeks, He is also a God that uses pain in our lives for our good and even the good of others. It is for that reason, that we not only can thank God but can even rejoice in Him through whatever trial He allows us to go through!

Do you believe...

- that suffering, problems and trials are good for you? _____
- suffering, problems and trials are opportunities for joy? _____
- that you are able to rejoice *always*? _____
- that suffering and eduring trials is a natural part of Christian living? _____

Read Romans 5:1-5. What does it say about the following?

Joy/Rejoicing: _____

Benefits of suffering: _____

Read Philippians 4:4-8. Joy/Rejoicing: _____

Read James 1:2-4. Joy/Rejoicing: _____

Benefits of suffering: _____

Read 1 Peter 4:12-14. Joy/Rejoicing: _____

Benefits of suffering: _____

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
2 Timothy 3:12

Do your beliefs about suffering and rejoicing line up with God's truth? _____

Your response in times of suffering will reveal what you really do believe.

You're ability to be a rejoicing representative begins with the sacrifice of praise.

In many of the psalms, the psalmist—usually David—began by questioning God's care for him. However, as he spoke to God his attitude changed from that of despair to a confident rejoicing in the Lord. [See Psalms 10 and 13.]

Be honest with God and then recall the truth about who He is and has been in your life. You will find yourself praising His Name.

Take time to write down some of God's characteristics that have comforted you in the past or even now. Then praise Him for who He is!



With Jesus' help, let us continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by proclaiming the glory of his name.

Hebrews 13:15 (NLT)

DAY 5 • The PROTECTION of the Messenger



Read Acts 16:16-36.

What did Paul and Silas do that upset the authorities? _____

Where were Paul and Silas when they were praying and praising? _____

What happened to Paul and Silas as a result of their praise? _____

Paul and Silas' choice to act as rejoicing representatives set them free from their circumstances and others were brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ!

What an awesome testimony but how were they able to praise God after they had been beaten and imprisoned.

Paul and Silas' response in the midst of persecution indicated that they understood that the battle was not against flesh and blood.

*A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power.
Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.*

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NLT)

Because they understood the spiritual battle they understood the need for spiritual armor—the full armor of God.

The full armor of God is detailed in Ephesians 6:13-20:

- **The Belt of Truth** (v 14a)

On the soldier, the belt or girdle held part of the armor together. For us to be victorious, our lives must be held together by God's truth. Satan is a liar (John 8:44) and he will tempt us to believe his lies. That is why living lives based in God's truth is so important. Having a clear conscience is an awesome weapon when it comes time for battle. Paul and Silas had clear consciences even though they were being accused.

- **The Breastplate of Righteousness** (v 14b)

The breastplate was made of metal plates and covered the front and back of the soldier, from neck to waist. It protected all vital organs. As believers we have Christ's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21) to guard us, but we also need to *practice* righteousness. If our heart is not protected our witness will be contaminated (Luke 6:45). Paul and Silas were being persecuted for their righteous acts.

- **The Shoes of the Gospel** (v 15)

The soldiers wore sandals with hobnails in their soles to give them better footing during battle. We can stand firm while going through the battle because of the gospel—we do have peace with God (Romans 5:1). As ambassadors, we are to take the gospel of peace wherever we go (Romans 10:15, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Paul and Silas shared the gospel of peace with a slave girl and then later with their jailer.

- **The Shield of Faith** (v 16)

The shield was about four feet tall by two feet wide. Fiery flames were extinguished when they hit the shield covered in leather. The sides of the shields were made to interlock with other shields so while in battle the soldiers could create a wall of protection for each other. We're not in the battle alone (1 Peter 5:8-9)! When Satan attempts to throw the fiery darts of lies and accusations, it is our faith in the God who is faithful to His promises that will help us to stand. Paul and Silas evidenced their faith by praying and praising God. Prayer is added to the armor (v 18). We are to go to God in prayer at all times (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

- **The Helmet of Salvation** (v 17)

The soldier's helmet protected their brain or mind. This is the first place Satan attacks us because he knows how easily we can be deceived (2 Corinthians 11:1-3). Our mind must be controlled by God (Romans 8:6, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Paul and Silas evidenced minds controlled by God as they did not lose control when they were set free but instead lovingly spoke the word of the Lord to the jailer and his household.

- **The Sword of the Spirit** (v 17b)

The soldier always had a short sword at hand for up close fighting. The Word of God pierces our heart (Hebrews 4:12). We have all experienced those convicting wounds from the Word but those wounds are for our healing. On the other hand, when we use God's word against Satan, his schemes are destroyed (Matthew 4:1-11). Paul and Silas used the word to teach and correct.



Look back at verse 13. Who is responsible to put on the full armor of God?

It's important to note that in verse 20 Paul states, "...for which I am an ambassador in chains." Paul was writing this letter to encourage the other believers in their faith while he was imprisoned!

Below is a checklist of what a well-armored representative of Jesus Christ is. **Check those behaviors you see evidenced in your life:**

- _____ Committed to yielding to the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16-23)
- _____ Devoted to pray for others and for self (1 Thes 5:17, Ph 2:3-4)
- _____ A Doer of the Word (James 1:22-25)
- _____ Always giving thanks (2 Chr 20:15-17, 20-21, 30; 2 Thes 5:18)
- _____ Eager to forgive (Eph 4:32)
- _____ Makes the most of every opportunity (James 3:13-18)
- _____ Speaks words that build others up (Eph 4:29, Pr 15:1)
- _____ Acts, not reacts (Eph 4:31-32)
- _____ Not judgmental (Mt 7:1-5)
- _____ Uncompromising in beliefs (1 Cor 10:31-11:1, 1 Jn 2:4-6)
- _____ Has other's best interest at heart (1 Cor 13:4-8a, Eph 4:15)

Rejoice at how God has worked in your life! Then pray and ask God to reveal to you what armor you are neglecting. When you dress in the morning, think about putting on each piece of armor.

Praise God that He gives you everything you need to be a rejoicing representative!

Week 12

GOD SEES ME AS FREE INDEED!



So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free.

John 8:36

What are some of the lies you have been set free from since the beginning of this study?

Fill in the missing words in the verses below, taken from the New Living Translation:

Romans 8:1-2 (NLT)

So now there is no _____ for those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the _____ that leads to death.

Galatians 5:1 (NLT)

So Christ has really set us _____. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the _____.

Galatians 5:13 (NLT)

For you have been called to live in _____ —not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to _____ one another in love.

Galatians 5:13 tells us one thing that our freedom in Christ is **not**—freedom to selfishly serve our sinful nature. Read through the verses below and identify what else our freedom is **not**.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

What are two things that we are not free from right now?

What keeps us from enjoying our freedom in Christ?

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Unconfessed sin separates us from enjoying fellowship with God and our freedom in Christ. Also, not accepting His cleansing from the wrongs we have done will leave us drowning in guilt rather than enjoying our freedom in Christ.

Many of us have experienced the constant burden of guilt over a sin in our past. We memorize Romans 8:1 but we don't seem to be able to apply it to "that" sin. Often our guilt plays on our fears of failure and rejection and stands as a block between God and us. It sabotages our joy and freedom in Christ.

God has sent us the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sin so that we will experience a Godly sorrow that will lead to repentance.

Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-10.

Our world uses guilt as a motivation to get people to conform to their way of doing things. We are so used to being manipulated and manipulating others by guilt that we often have a hard time separating it from the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

According to 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, what is the purpose for godly sorrow?

Which leads to? _____ And leaves no? _____

What does worldly sorrow bring? _____

Based on previous lessons, what is death? _____

Ask God to show you the truth about conviction of the Holy Spirit and the guilt you are carrying.

Although God sees us as free, we need to continue to fight for our freedom!

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does:
The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.
On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.
We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up
against the knowledge of God,
and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

We need to learn to take our thoughts captive, without dwelling on the untruthful thoughts. If we dwell on the thought then before long our emotions will be involved and we will find ourselves making choices that we had not wanted to make about the very thing we are to avoid! When you have thoughts you know are wrong,

confess (agree with God) that it is an ungodly thought and give it to Him, then start thinking about godly things.

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right,
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—
if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

Philippians 4:8

It is good to have things that fit these categories already in mind to switch your thinking, too. For this to work, the thoughts must be something that arouses your emotions. For instance, if you are a gardener, think of lovely flowers; if you are a fisherman, think of your next excellent fishing trip.



“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:32

APPENDIX

WEEKS 1-12

Lesson Answers.....141-146

WEEK 3

The Sword of the Spirit: Verses when Tempted.....147-148

WEEK 4

Temple Model.....149-150

WEEK 11

100 Typical U.S. Citizenship Test Questions.....151-154

LESSON ANSWERS

WEEK 1

- page 1 • How many things does it say Jesus holds together? **ALL things.**
- 1 • Why do you think God answered Job like this?
To give Job a different perspective, and to assure Job that God was able and willing to create and sustain His creation.
- 1 • What is the closesst start to us? **The sun.**
- 1 • If the sun was a nine foot ball, How big would the earth be in comparison? **1 inch.** How big would you be? **A nanodot.**

WEEK 2

- page 13 • Who was that one man? **Adam.**
- 13 • What did God say would happen if they ate of the forbidden fruit? **They would die.**
- 13 • Did they die? **Yes, spiritually.**
- 14 • Who were Adam and Eve separated from? **God.**
- 14 • How did Satan misquote God?
He extended God's command to ANY tree in the garden.
- 14 • How did Eve misquote God? **She exaggerated God's command by saying that they couldn't even touch the fruit of the middle tree.**
- 14 • Do you have His truth with which to replace it? **Romans 8:28**

WEEK 3

- page 25 • Under "Our Past": **Draw a catapillar.**



- 25 • Under “Our Present”: **Draw a chrysalis.**



- 25 • Under “Our Future”: **Draw a butterfly.**



- 32 • How are the following five crowns obtained?
 Incorruptible Crown—**by self-control.**
 Crown of Rejoicing—**by discipling others.**
 Crown of Life—**by perseverance under trial.**
 Crown of Righteousness—**by looking forward to Jesus appearing.**
 Crown of Glory—**by pastoring others.**

WEEK 4

- page 37 • Where was Moses when he saw the burning bush and what was he doing?
At the foot of Mt. Siani, shepherding his father-in-law's flocks.
- 37 • What did God tell Moses to do? Why? **Remove his shoes. Because he was now standing on Holy ground.**
- 37 • How did Moses respond? **He hid his face.**
- 37 • How did God's Shedinah Glory appear in this story?
As a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.
- 37 • What was His purpose?
To guide the Israelites both day and night.
- 37 • Who hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would chase the Israelites? **God**
- 37 • How did the Israelites respond when they saw the army in the distance?
 (a) They began to panic.
 (b) They cried out to God for help.
 (c) They turned on their human leader and wanted to become slaves again.
- 37 • Compare what God told them to do in battle with what God tells us to do in battle today in Ephesians 6:10-18:
Prepare, then stand and watch Him do the battle for us.

- 38 • How did the Shekinah Glory appear to the Egyptians?
Causing them confusion & as doing battle for the for the Israelites.
- 38 • How is the Shekinah described in this passage?
As a cloud covering the mountain and as a consuming fire.
- 38 • What did God want the people of Israel to build and why? Who designed it?
**A sanctuary for Him that He could dwell among His people.
God designed everything, including the furniture.**
- 44 • Where does the Presence of the Lord dwell today?
In us—His people.

WEEK 5

- page 49 • What are the differences between a decorated, cut Christmas tree and a live, producing apple tree?
**A Christmas tree is dead (cut off from its life source) and has pretty balls hung on it.
An apple tree is alive and produces its fruit.**
- 49 • Death = **Separation.**
- 49 • Before we have trusted Christ as our Savior, which are we more like? **A Christmas tree.**
- 49 • After we have trusted Christ as our Savior, which are we more like? **An apple tree.**
- 49 • What kind of fruit does Jesus expect us to bear?
New believers and spiritual fruit.
- 50 • According to Galatians 5:22, what kind of fruit is suppose to hang on Christians? **Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**
- 50 • How do apples get on an apple tree? **They are produced.**
- 50 • What should you do (if an apple tree wasn't producing apples)?
Prune the tree; fertilize it; make sure it is getting enough sun and water.
- 50 • How do you remain in Jesus? **Pray; read His Word; obey Him...**
- 50 • What should you do (if you don't see much kindness in your life)? **Get closer to Jesus!**

WEEK 6

- page 62 • Sometimes we act like it was easy for God to forgive us. What did it cost God? ***The death of His only Son.***

WEEK 7

- page 73 • Below, list the valuable thing that was lost in each story and then rejoiced over when it was found.
1. A man's sheep. 2. A woman's coin. 3. A man's son.

WEEK 8

- page -- • None.

WEEK 9

- page 97 • If it could, how long would it live disconnected from the rest of the body? ***Not very long!***

WEEK 10

- page 109 • According to the verse above (2 Tim 3:16-17), with what are we equipped? ***Scripture.***
 What are we equipped for? ***Every good work.***
- 109 • Look up the verses above (Mt 4:21, Ga 6:1 & 1 Th 3:1) in other translations of the Bible. Write the different words that are used below.
 Equip = ***Mend, restore, complete, perfect.***
- 110 • What else are we equipped with? ***The Holy Spirit.***
- 110 • According to John 15:5, what can you accomplish apart from Jesus? ***Nothing.***

- 110 • What can you do with Jesus, according to Phillipians 4:13?
ALL things.

WEEK 11

- page 121 • What are the advantages of being a US citizen?
We can vote, have freedom, work for pay, have social security and have the protection of our police and armed forces.
- 121 • What was the advantage of being a Roman citizen?
Why would people pay a large sum of money for it?
A Roman citizen could not be imprisoned without a trial.
- 121 • Read Acts 16:11-40. What city did all of this take place in?
Philippi.
According to that verse, what kind of city was it?
A Roman colony
- 122 • How did you become a citizen of Heaven? **Reborn.**
- 122 • What advantages are there to being a heavenly citizen?
Freedom, protection, inheritance...
- 122 • What responsibilities are there? **Walk according to the Spirit; attend church; love each other...**
- 122 • What is an ambassador? **A representative or a messenger.**
- 122 • What does an ambassador do? **Delivers a message.**

WEEK 12

- page 133 • Fill in the missing words in the verses below, taken from the New Living Translation.

Romans 8:1-2

So now there is no **condemnation** for those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the **power of sin** that leads to death.

Galatians 5:1

So Christ has really set us **free**. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the **law**.

Galatians 5:13

For you have been called to live in **freedom**
—not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom
to **serve** one another in love.

- 133 • What are two things that we are not free from right now? **Loving and serving others.**
- 133 • What keeps us from enjoying our freedom in Christ? **Unconfessed sin and lies in our belief system.**
- 134 • According to 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, what is the purpose for godly sorrow?
Repentance.
Which leads to? **Salvation.**
And leaves no? **Regret.**
- 134 • What does worldly sorrow bring? **Death.**
- 134 • Based on previous lessons, what is death? **Separation (in this case, from God).**

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

VERSES WHEN TEMPTED

Bad Temper

A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.

Proverbs 29:11

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1

Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger: for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

James 1:19-20

Hanging with the Wrong Crowd

Do not be misled! Bad company corrupts good character.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not set your foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.

Proverbs 4:14

But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler.

1 Corinthians 5:11

Sexual Immorality

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord...

1 Corinthians 6:13

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

1 Corinthians 6:18

Do you not know your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19

It is God's will that you be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality...

1 Corinthians 4:3

Addictions

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.

2 Corinthians 5:14

Everything is permissible for me - but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me— but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 Corinthians 6:12

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18

Mental Illness

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

Isaiah 26:3

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Unclean Speech

From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

James 3:10

*“I have hidden your Word in my heart
that I might not sin against You.”*

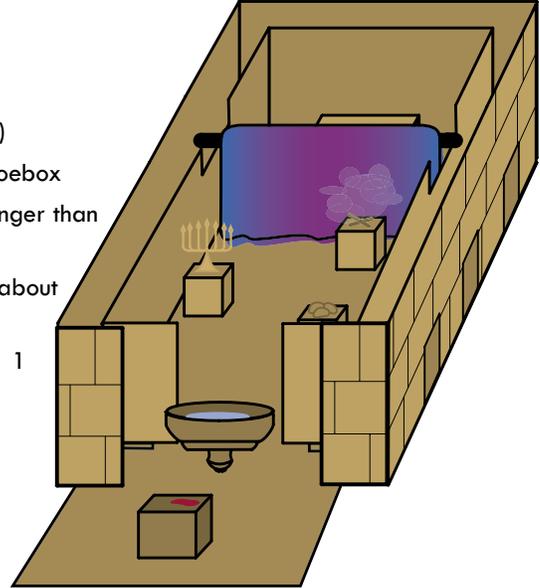
Psalm 119:11

TEMPLE MODEL

- adapted from edupatterns.com/lesson_20.htm -

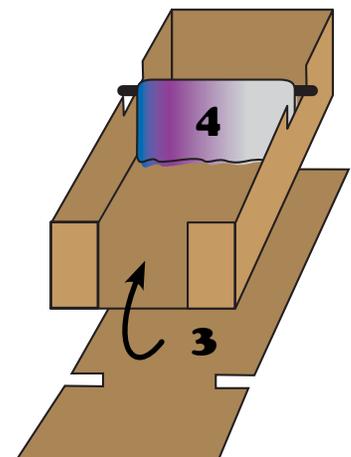
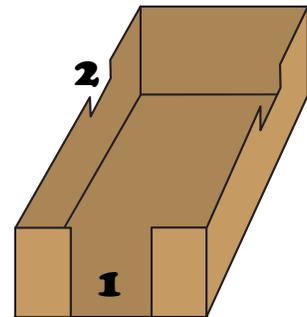
Materials Needed:

- 2 shoe boxes (1 slightly larger than the other)
- corrugated cardboard, 6" longer than the shoebox
- a small dowel rod or pencil, about an inch longer than the smaller shoebox's width
- white/cream scrap fabric, shoebox width & about 3" longer than shoebox depth
- 5 wooden blocks: 3 about 3/4" cubed, 1 matchbox size & 1 slightly larger block
- 1 lid from a juice bottle (squirt type lid)
- gold and bronze paint
- purple, blue & black markers or paint
- plain tan - brown construction or craft paper
- glue; scissors; an exacto/utility knife
- optional: miniature candelabra, tan "loaf-like" beads & matches or small sticks



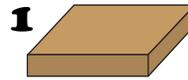
Temple Instructions:

1. Cut a doorway in the smaller shoe box, as illustrated to your right.
2. Cut notches near the back of the shoebox for the curtain to hang on a dowel rod. The back room of the Temple (Holy of Holies), was separated from the rest of the Temple by a curtain. Leave about a third of the shoebox for this room. Cut the dowel rod about 1/2" wider than the shoebox.
3. Using a piece of corrugated cardboard for the temple floor and courtyard area, cut the cardboard to fit inside the shoebox. Leave about 6" extending past the doorway.
4. Glue or sew scrap fabric over the dowel rod and place the curtain illustrated to your right. With a pencil, mark where the curtain falls on the cardboard floor. Color the curtain with blue and purple markers/paint.



Furniture Instructions:

1. COVENANT BOX – matchbox size block



2. TABLE WITH THE MENORAH – 3/4" cube

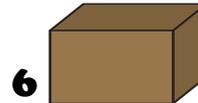


3. TABLE WITH THE INCENSE – 3/4" cube

4. TABLE WITH THE SHEW BREAD – 3/4" cube



5. LAVAR – squirt bottle lid

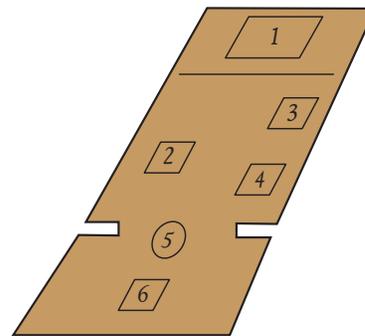


6. ALTAR – larger block

Paint pieces 1 – 4 in gold and pieces 5 – 6 in bronze.

Optional:

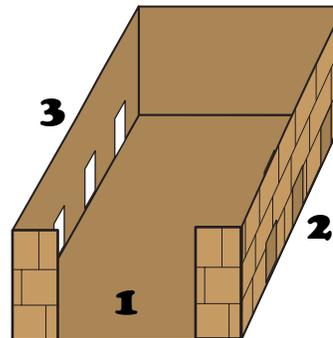
Remove the cardboard floor from the box and cut holes—corresponding to the numbers in the illustration below—into the cardboard for each of the pieces to fit into like a puzzle, then put the cardboard back into the shoe box. (The benefit to doing this is that the pieces don't slide around and you know exactly where they go when teaching the lesson.)



Inner Court & Final Instructions:

Paint the inside of the temple in gold (the sides of the smaller shoebox and the cardboard "floor"). While that is drying...

1. Cut a doorway out of your **larger** shoebox, as illustrated to your right. Make sure what is left will cover the edge of your smaller shoebox when placed inside.
2. Cover the sides of the larger shoebox with plain brown/tan construction or craft paper. Use a black marker to give the outside the appearance of stone.
3. Use an exacto or utility knife to cut several rectangles out of the larger shoebox for the side chambers, as shown above.
4. Optional: When the furniture is dry, glue the candelabra to one of the cubes for the Menorah Table; several sticks/matches to another cube for the Incense Table; and, several beads to the last table for Table with the Shew Bread.



Now, you're ready to assemble your Temple! Get creative and add your own touches. Check out a more realistic portrayal of the Temple at womeninthebible.net/Model_of_the_2nd_Temple_of_Jerusalem.jpg for more ideas. Have fun!

100 U.S. CITIZENSHIP TEST QUESTIONS

- found at shusterman.com -

- (1) What are the colors of our flag? *Red, White, and Blue*
- (2) How many stars are there in our flag? *50*
- (3) What color are the stars on our flag? *White*
- (4) What do the stars on the flag signify? *There is one for each state in the United States*
- (5) How many stripes are there on the flag? *13*
- (6) What color are the stripes on the flag? *Red and White*
- (7) What do the stripes on the flag signify? *They represent the original 13 states.*
- (8) How many states are there in the U.S.? *50*
- (9) What is the 4th of July? *Independence Day*
- (10) What is the date of Independence Day? *July 4th*
- (11) From what country did the U.S. win independence? *Great Britain*
- (12) What country did we fight during the revolutionary War? *Great Britain*
- (13) Who was the first President of the United States? *George Washington*
- (14) Who is the president of the United States today? *George W. Bush (2007)*
- (15) Who is the vice president of the United States today? *Richard Cheney (2007)*
- (16) Who elects the president of the United States? *The electoral college*
- (17) Who becomes the president of the U.S. if the president should die? *The vice president*
- (18) For how long do we elect the president? *4 years*
- (19) What is the Constitution? *The supreme law of the land*
- (20) Can the Constitution be changed? *Yes*
- (21) What do we call a change to the Constitution? *An amendment*
- (22) How many changes or amendments are there to the Constitution? *27*
- (23) How many branches are there in the U.S. government? *3*
- (24) What are the three branches of the U.S. government? *Legislative, executive, and judicial*
- (25) What is the legislative branch of our government? *Congress*

- (26) Who makes the laws in the United States? *Congress*
- (27) What are the two houses of Congress? *The Senate and the House of Representatives*
- (28) What are the duties of Congress? *To make laws*
- (29) Who elects Congress? *The people*
- (30) How many senators are there in the U.S. Congress? *100*
- (31) Name the two U.S. senators from your state. *(It's time for a little research on your part!)*
- (32) For how long do we elect each senator? *Each term is 6 years*
- (33) How many voting representatives are there in the House of Representatives? *435*
- (34) For how long do we elect the representatives? *2 years*
- (35) What is the executive branch of the U.S. government? *The president, cabinet, and the departments under the cabinet members*
- (36) What is the judicial branch of the U.S. government? *The Federal Courts*
- (37) What are the duties of the Supreme Court? *To interpret laws*
- (38) What is the supreme law of the United States? *The Constitution*
- (39) What is the Bill of Rights? *The first 10 amendments of the Constitution*
- (40) What is the capital of your state? *(It depends on which state you live in.)*
- (41) Who is the current Governor of your state? *(Ditto)*
- (42) If both the president and the vice president die, who becomes president? *The Speaker of the House of Representatives*
- (43) Who is the current chief of justice of the Supreme Court? *John Roberts*
- (44) Name the thirteen original states. *Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Rhode Island, and Maryland*
- (45) Who said "give me liberty or give me death"? *Patrick Henry*
- (46) Which countries were our enemies during WWII? *Germany, Italy, and Japan*
- (47) What were the 49th and 50th states admitted to the U.S.? *Hawaii and Alaska*
- (48) How many terms can a president serve? *2*
- (49) Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.? *A famous civil rights leader*
- (50) Who is the head of your local government? *(It depends on where you live.)*
- (51) According to the Constitution, a person must meet certain requirements in order to be eligible to become president. Name one of these requirements. *Must be a native born citizen of the United States. Must be at least 35 years old by the time he/she will serve. Must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years.*
- (52) Why are there 100 senators in the Senate? *2 from each state*
- (53) Who nominates the Supreme Court justices? *They are nominated by the president*

- (54) How many Supreme Court justices are there? *9*
- (55) Why did the Pilgrims come to America? *For religious freedom*
- (56) What is the head executive of a state government called? *Governor*
- (57) What is the head executive of a city government called? *Mayor*
- (58) What holiday was started by the American Colonists? *Thanksgiving*
- (59) Who was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence? *Thomas Jefferson*
- (60) When was the declaration of Independence adopted? *July 4, 1776*
- (61) What is the basic belief of the Declaration of Independence? *That all men are created equal*
- (62) What is the national anthem of the United States? *The Star-Spangled Banner*
- (63) Who wrote the Star-Spangled Banner? *Francis Scott Key*
- (64) Where does the freedom of speech come from? *The Bill of Rights*
- (65) What is the minimum voting age in the United States? *18*
- (66) Who signs bills into law? *The President*
- (67) What is the highest court in the United States? *The Supreme Court*
- (68) Who was the president during the Civil War? *Abraham Lincoln*
- (69) What did the Emancipation Proclamation do? *It freed the slaves*
- (70) What special group advises the president? *The cabinet*
- (71) Which president is called the “Father of our Country”? *George Washington*
- (72) What INS form is used to apply to become a naturalized citizen? *Form N-400*
- (73) Who helped the Pilgrims in America? *Native American Indians*
- (74) The first Pilgrims sailed to America in what ship? *The Mayflower*
- (75) What were the 13 original states of the United States called? *The colonies*
- (76) Name three rights or freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. *Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion*
- (77) Who has the power to declare war? *The Congress*
- (78) Name an amendment which guarantees or addresses voting rights. *The 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments*
- (79) Which president freed the slaves? *Abraham Lincoln*
- (80) In what year was the Constitution written? *1787*
- (81) What are the first 10 amendments to the constitution? *The Bill of Rights*
- (82) Name one purpose of the United Nations. *To try to resolve world problems*
- (83) Where does Congress meet? *In the Capitol in Washington, D.C.*

- (84) Whose rights are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights? *Everyone living in the U.S. (Citizens and non-citizens)*
- (85) What is the introduction to the Constitution called? *The Preamble*
- (86) Name one benefit of being a citizen of the United States. *Obtain federal government jobs; travel with a U.S. passport; petition for close relatives to come to the U.S. to live.*
- (87) What is the most important right granted to U.S. citizens? *The right to vote*
- (88) What is the United States Capitol? *The place where Congress meets*
- (89) What is the White House? *The President's official home*
- (90) Where is the White House located? *Washington, D.C.*
- (91) What is the name of the president's official home? *The White House*
- (92) Name one right guaranteed by the first amendment. *Freedom of speech, press, religion, peaceable assembly, and requesting change of the government.*
- (93) Who is the commander in chief of the United States? *The President*
- (94) Who was the first commander in chief of the U.S. Military? *George Washington*
- (95) In what month do we vote for the president? *November*
- (96) In what month is the new president inaugurated? *January*
- (97) How many times may a congressman be re-elected? *There are no term limits*
- (98) How many times may a senator be re-elected? *There are no term limits*
- (99) What are the two major political parties in the United States? *Republican and Democrat*
- (100) How many states are there in the United States? *50*