



**STRATEGIC
DISCIPLESHIP**
TRAINING RESOURCES

PHASE 3

STUDENT MANUAL

by Robert Laidlaw

StrategicDiscipleship.com

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STUDENT NOTES

Historically, a disciple was a person who studied under a master-teacher to learn both his knowledge and approach to life, with the goal of passing that knowledge and lifestyle on to others. As disciples of Jesus, we long to understand everything Jesus taught, live by it and teach others to do the same. Discipleship ALWAYS has the intent of passing what you have learned on to others.

Jesus was very clear his intention was that we would spread his teaching throughout the world, so that people of all nations could enter relationship with him and experience his forgiveness and life. So discipleship is not an accidental by-product of going to church; discipleship is to be strategic and intentional, with a kingdom-impacting goal in mind.

God has called others to disciple you, but that does not negate your personal responsibility for your growth. No teacher can make a student grow spiritually. The student needs to assume responsibility to do the hard work of learning, developing disciplines, and stepping out in faith in ministry and missional experiences.

To grow as a disciple, there are four areas that need to be developed:

- 1) Truths you need to understand and embrace
- 2) Disciplines you will need to embed
- 3) Ministry responsibility to a local church family
- 4) Missional focus, both locally and globally

This curriculum merely raises the “issues” we believe are beneficial to address in the discipleship journey. It is your job to work on practical expressions of your growth through developing disciplines, experimenting with various ministries and finding ways to share your faith with those in your spheres of influence.

The challenge of discipleship is learning to die to self and allowing Christ to live in and through us. This means putting an end to our expectations and priorities and learning to allow his agenda to direct our days. Living by faith takes on a whole new understanding as we follow the Spirit’s leading, not knowing the outcomes or how he will provide. We follow anyway, because we have declared Jesus is Lord.

The outflow of the Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered life is an incredible sense of joy, peace and purpose as we partner with Jesus in the adventure of reconciling the world to him. There is no life like it.

Let the adventure begin!

SESSION 1: THE MISSION

When you think of the Old Testament, do you typically think about it as having an evangelistic focus? Why or why not?

What do you think was God's intent or strategy in the Old Testament with regard to mission?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Since the fall of man, society continued to grow, not only in size, but in unrestrained sinfulness. This sinful mindset was represented through characters such as Lamech.

Genesis 4:23-24 (ESV)

²³ Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. ²⁴ If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

Civilization had become so wicked God chose to destroy it with the flood in order to provide any hope for mankind's survival. After the flood however, man's sinful nature continued to drive him away from God and to live contrary to the creation mandate given to Adam and Eve.

By Genesis 10 there are 70 nations or people groups in existence on the earth. All present day nations stem from these seventy nations.

Genesis 10:32 (ESV)

These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 11:1-9 (ESV)

¹ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing

that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

What was so evil about what these people were doing that God had to come down, change their language and disperse the people?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

THE CALL OF ABRAM

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Summarize the ways in which God promised to bless Abram?

In what ways was the call of Abram in direct opposition to man's goals expressed at the tower of Babel?

What was the ultimate goal of Abram's blessing?

In what ways does God still desire all nations on earth to be blessed?

In what ways does God bless us that might encourage others to turn back to him?

Exodus 19:3-6 (ESV)

³ ...while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

What did it mean when God said that Israel, as a nation, would be a kingdom of priests? In what ways was this consistent with the idea of "image"?

THE TEMPLE

Read the following verses regarding the temple.

Isaiah 56:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ "And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant— ⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

Haggai 2:7 (ESV)

And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.

What role was the temple to play in the world? Is this different from what you previously understood?

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Why did Peter use the descriptions applied to Israel in the Old Testament to describe believers in the New Testament?

Psalm 67:1-7 (ESV)

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah ² that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!

⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah ⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!

⁶ The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. ⁷ God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Why did the psalmist ask God to bless Israel as a nation?

What do you think about the Psalmist asking God to bless him? How do you feel about asking God to bless you? Is that a selfish request?

When you ask God to bless you, do you find it is usually more for mission or for your personal comfort? Why is that?

What does God's desire to bless you say about his desire for "your" impact in this world?

In what ways did Israel perhaps misunderstand their role in God's kingdom mission?

In what ways do we tend to forget our role in this world?

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Dissect the above passage. How many truths can you discover?

Matthew 24:14 (ESV)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Why do you think Jesus will wait until all nations have heard the gospel before he returns?

How does this relate to Abraham's blessing?

What does this communicate about what our life focus should be?

How can we personally speed up the return of Christ?

Romans 10:12-15 (ESV)

¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

What are the implications of this passage for us?

Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV)

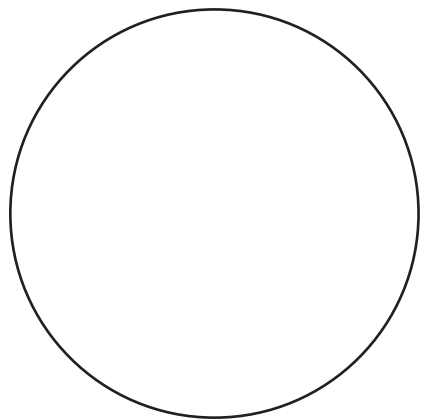
⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Jesus will accomplish his mission and he will accomplish his mission through his people. What are some reasons we personally need to take up this call?

God has placed each of us in various communities where he desires that we represent him and his love to the people around us. These circles of influence include family, work, school, neighborhood, sports teams, choirs etc. **Draw these circles on the following page.**

CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE

Draw a large circle for every circle of influence God has placed you within. Write the names of the people within each circle. Ask God to show you how you can represent him in each of these areas of influence and point people to Jesus Christ.



What can you do this week to act on God's passion for all people to know him, as you engage in your various circles of influence?

SESSION 2: THE CORE MESSAGE

If you had the opportunity today to help someone embrace a relationship with Jesus Christ, would you feel confident in your ability to communicate what they needed to know? Explain.

What truths did you understand at the time you became a Christian that enabled you to cross that line of faith?

What do you think are the essential core truths a person needs to understand in order to become a Christian?

Read the following verses and determine the requirements for salvation.

Romans 3:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ ...as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Acts 16:31 (ESV)

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

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

Acts 3:19 (ESV)

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out...

Romans 10:9 (ESV)

... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

In light of the above verses, would you modify any of the “essentials” you had previously listed?

A _____ you have a broken relationship with God.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

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

1 John 1:8 (ESV)

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us..

Isaiah 59:2 (ESV)

...but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

B _____ Jesus Christ died and rose again for your sins.

John 1:12 (ESV)

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

John 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

C _____ your sins and repent.

Luke 13:3 (ESV)

No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Luke 15:10 (ESV)

Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

D _____ Jesus is Lord.

Romans 10:9 (ESV)

... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Why is it important to acknowledge that there is a problem in our relationship with God?

What exactly is it about Jesus that we are to believe in order to be saved?

What do the following verses reveal about what we must believe about Jesus?

John 20:31 (ESV)

...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1 Peter 3:18 (ESV)

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (ESV)

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Why is it necessary to believe Jesus is God in order to be saved?

Below are two ways to explain our dilemma and how to be restored to relationship with God. (We have already discussed the Bridge to Life presentation in the Foundations series.)

MARRIAGE:



ONENESS

God created us to be in intimate relationship with him, where he would enjoy us and we would enjoy him forever. His Spirit was to live within us, making us literally “one” with him. This was the way it was at the beginning of Creation.

DIVORCE

In time, we became unfaithful and rejected our relationship with God. We declared independence from him and went our own sinful way. Because we separated ourselves from the source of goodness and life, we ended up only with death. The life we had hoped to gain was revealed to be a deception and we lost everything we had. We are now in the process of dying physically, but we have already died spiritually.



RECONCILIATION

In spite of all this, God still loves us deeply and wants to restore our relationship with him. In order to do so, the death penalty for our unfaithfulness needed to be paid. God came as a man (Jesus Christ) to die on the cross to pay that price and make forgiveness possible.

REMARRIAGE

For those of us who desire to be restored to relationship with God, all we need to do is ask God to forgive us for our sins (in light of the fact that Jesus paid the death price on our behalf), turn away from sin (repent) and accept his Spirit into our lives to direct and lead us.



Heaven is then described as a huge wedding feast prepared for all those who choose to enter this new covenant relationship with God. (Matt 8:11, 22:1-2, Lk 13:29, 14,15)

Have you ever chosen to enter this type of relationship with God?

LEGAL SYSTEM:

Our relationship with God can be described in terms of a legal system.

Picture a person brought before a judge for a very serious crime they committed. They are guilty. They know it and the judge knows it.

GUILTY

The guilty verdict is given and the person is sent to prison to await the death penalty. The person is then about to be led away in bondage to wait for that fateful day.



PARDON

The judge then makes an astounding and absurd offer. He declares that he will send his own son to prison for the time allotted and then face the death penalty for the guilty person. On top of that he will offer the person a complete pardon and an opportunity to be adopted by the judge himself.



DECISION

The guilty person then has a decision to make. Does he/she accept the gift of adoption and the pardon, or does he/she decide to pay the consequence himself/herself? Either way, the judge's son still pays the price, the only question is whether or not the person will allow it be applied to his/her life.



ANALOGY EXPLAINED

We stand guilty before God for all our sin. Because he is a righteous and just God, he must declare us guilty and give our sins the consequence they deserve – death. But because God is also limitless in his love, he came to earth to pay the death price for our sin, in order to provide us with a pardon for all wrongs done.



He has now already paid the price on our behalf. The only question is whether we will allow the death and resurrection of Jesus to be applied to our lives or not. To accept this incredible offer, all we need to do is confess our guilt and accept the free gift of grace God offers us. This action, when authentically done, will be evidenced through a turning away from sin and accepting the leadership of God over our lives.

Have you ever confessed your sin to God, received his forgiveness and made a decision to let him completely direct your life?

Which illustration do you find it easiest to relate to?

Which illustration would you find easiest to explain to others?

Is there anyone in one of your circles of influence with whom you could share one of these illustrations? If so, who? When?

Is there some other way you can develop relationships with people this week that might reveal God's love and truth to them?

Each week, try to make "mission" an intentional focus of your life.
Look for practical ways to represent God's heart passion.

THE MISSION

SESSION 3: KNOWING YOUR STORY

What is the most significant thing Jesus changed in your life when you embraced a relationship with him?

In what specific ways might each story that was told, be of value to a non-Christian to hear?

What exactly is a testimony?

Psalm 66:16 (ESV)

Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

Why do you think hearing people's stories is so impacting?

If each of us were to take time to share with a non-Christian the difference God made in our lives, what type of things do you think you would want to share?

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF TESTIMONY SHARING

Describe a testimony principle for each of the sections in Paul's testimony.

Acts 26:1-29 (ESV)

¹ So Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: ² "I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, ³ especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

1)

⁴ "My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. ⁵ They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. ⁶ And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, ⁷ to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! ⁸ Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? ⁹ "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

2)

¹² "In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴ And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷ delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

3)

¹⁹ "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. ²¹ For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²² To this day I have had the help that comes from God,

and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³ that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

4)

²⁴ *And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.”*

5)

²⁵ *But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. ²⁶ For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” ²⁸ And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” ²⁹ And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”*

6)

In point form, write down the parts of your story that you think would be meaningful in pointing another person toward God. Use the principles mentioned above.

Ideas might include:

- What were some ways you had tried to find answers or fulfillment apart from God?
- What was going on in your life that made you realize you needed God in your life?
- How were you introduced to Christ?
- What made you decide to give your life to Christ? How did you go about this?
- What difference has Christ made in your life?

For those who became Christ-followers as a child, it may be more impactful to simply express how Christ has been at work in your life lately or through difficult times.

TIPS:

- Keep your story short and to the point. It should be very practical.
- Keep your story natural. Don't use “churchy” words or expressions that people will not understand or resonate with.
- Allow people to see how meaningful this experience was for you.
- Do not put down other churches, denominations or people.
- Your story is ultimately to be more about God than it is you.
- Once you are done your story, ask for their reaction. If appropriate, ask them if they are interested in knowing God in a similar way.

YOUR STORY OUTLINE:

THE MISSION

Be prepared next week to share your story with someone else in the group.

Knowing your own story and sharing it with others is two completely different things. What are some possible scenarios where it would be natural to share your life changing story?

What are some tactful ways you might be able to bridge into telling your story?

Examples:

After someone shares a struggle they are facing:

“I’ve had a similar sort of struggle in my life. Would you be interested in hearing how I made it through it?”

When someone comments on some positive aspect of your life:

“I’ve definitely had some down times, but can I share with you what made a world of difference for me?”

When people are questioning God’s role in their life:

“I’ve had times when I questioned God too. Can I tell you a story of how God changed my life?”

We often feel we do not have a story to tell. The reality is however, that it is highly likely that there is someone within your circles of influence who is in a similar situation you were in before you came to Christ. Hearing your story and why you chose to embrace Christ might be exactly what they need to hear to give them hope. It may be why God placed you alongside of them.

Is there anyone within your circles of influence with whom you could share your story in the near future?

If a person responds with a desire to have a relationship with God, that is when you will want to explain the truths necessary to understand in order to become a child of God.

What are the four essential truths we discussed in session 2?

A _____

B _____

C _____

D _____

THE MISSION

SESSION 4: S.A.I.L.

Share your short, personal, spiritual story with one other person in the group.

REPRESENTING GOD

We can freely talk about sports, movies, events, etc. with no problem whatsoever. Why do we sometimes find it challenging to share how God has worked in our lives?

How can we overcome insecurity of talking to others about Christ?

When you hear the word “evangelist” what image pops into your mind? Is it a negative or positive image and why?

Who are some people you know in your church that seem to be especially effective at connecting others to God or bringing them to church? Do they fit the evangelist stereotype? Why or why not?

We are not all necessarily gifted evangelists, but we are all called to have spiritual impact in our world, helping others know Christ. **Look at the following passages to determine various ways we are to have influence.**

INFLUENCE 1

Matthew 5:13 (ESV)

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

Influence: _____

Describe the effect salt has on food.

When Jesus tells his disciples they are salt of the earth, what do you think he means?

We represent: _____

For salt to be effective it requires: _____

In what practical ways might we have a savoring influence in the world around us?

What might cause us to lose our saltiness?

What are some practical ways you could have a savoring influence within the circles God has placed you that might reflect the love of God?

THE MISSION

INFLUENCE 2

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Ephesians 6:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Influence: _____

How would you define the role of an ambassador?

We represent: _____

To be an effective ambassador requires: _____

According to these verses, what is the message that we are to represent to this world?

Why is opening our mouths necessary as an ambassador?

Do you think the people within your circles of influence see you as an ambassador for Jesus? Why or why not? How could you represent his message of reconciliation to them?

If you truly understood your role as an ambassador, how that might affect your life?

INFLUENCE 3

Genesis 1:26-28 (ESV)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Colossians 3:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Influence: _____

What does it mean to image God in this world?

We represent: _____

To be an effective ruler requires: _____

What are some practical ways we can live out "image" from day to day?

How did Jesus exercise "image" rule?

What does it mean to represent God's rule in this world?

John 14:12 (ESV)

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

1 Corinthians 4:20 (ESV)

For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

How might you exercise God's rule within your circles of influence?

INFLUENCE 4

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Acts 13:47-48 (ESV)

⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." ⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

Ephesians 5:8 (ESV)

...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Influence: _____

We represent: _____

To be effective as a light requires: _____

Light, as a symbol, has two main connotations in scripture:

- 1.
- 2.

How might we help people see the glory of God?

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (ESV)

³ *This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

Have you had opportunities in the past to help clarify some misunderstanding about God or faith? Share your story.

How might you be able to lovingly bring truth about God into your circles of influence?

SALT

AMBASSADOR

IMAGE

LIGHT

We are to SAIL into the world bringing each of these forms of impact. Much is entrusted to us as we are God's means of changing this world. He did not create a "PLAN B". We need to take our job description very seriously.

God respects you so much that he leaves his kingdom impact resting in your hands. Realize your significance, embrace your calling, go out with courage and authority and represent Jesus Christ well.

SESSION 5: STRATEGIC AND INTENTIONAL

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

What are some goals that you strategize for in life?

What changes do you need to make in your life to accomplish these goals?

Why do you plan ahead for these things? How many goals would be reached if you just played things by ear and hoped for the best? Why?

Do you think Jesus had strategies for his ministry? Explain.

What sort of things might Jesus have had to give up in order to have accomplished his mission?

Do you think the Apostle Paul developed strategies for his mission impact? In what ways?

What sort of things do you think Paul might have had to give up in order to have had such a mission impact? Why do you think he did it?

If you are to truly have a missional impact in the world around you, what might you have to change or give up? Why might you do this?

THE MISSION

We often feel ineffective and inadequate to be kingdom builders. In the following passages look at the various types of people God used as Salt, Ambassadors, Image and Light.

A SERVANT GIRL

2 Kings 5:1-3, 15 (ESV)

¹ Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. ² Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

[After being healed by Elisha]

¹⁵ Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant."

The girl was a slave, forcibly taken from her home in Israel by Naaman's army (he was the captain of the army.) Why do think she was willing to help Naaman?

The captain of an enemy's army came to faith simply because a servant girl suggested he go to a man of God to ask God to heal him.

What similar opportunities might we be able to take advantage of in our circles of influence?

A HITCH HIKER

Acts 8:26-31 (ESV)

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ²⁷ And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:35-36, 38 (ESV)

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Have you ever had a prompting from God to witness to someone? If so, share your story.

What principles can you learn from this story regarding sharing truth with others?

A FRIEND

John 1:45-49 (ESV)

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

What did it take for Philip to convince Nathaniel to follow Jesus?

What principle can we take away from this passage?

A DEBATER

Acts 19:8 (ESV)

And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Acts 17:2-4 (ESV)

² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

Why was Paul so effective in outreach?

What can we learn from Paul?

A HOST

Luke 5:29 (ESV)

And Levi [Matthew] made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.

What approach did Matthew use to bridge his friends to Jesus?

How might we apply this principle today?

Do these stories give you any ideas about how you might introduce people to Jesus? If so how?

Do you think the church grows most when it has dynamic outreach programs or when every day Christ-followers represent Christ within their circles of influence? Why?

What does this teach us about individual or team roles in building the kingdom?

The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest evangelists of all time, gives us some tips on connecting others to God.

Colossians 4:2-6 (NIV)

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

1. _____

Why did Paul feel he needed to encourage us to devote ourselves to prayer and being watchful for opportunities?

What would it mean practically for us to devote ourselves prayer and looking for opportunities? How would it change our daily perspective?

2. Pray for an _____

What did Paul mean by an “open door” and why did he ask us to pray for one?

How are we to recognize an open door?

Does an open door imply we have no responsibility to create opportunities? What are your thoughts on this?

3. Pray for _____

Have you ever blundered your way through telling someone about Christ?

Paul was an incredible teacher; why do you think he felt he needed prayer help for communicating the gospel clearly?

4. Be _____

Paul says:

- To be wise in the way we relate to non-believers
- To make the most of every opportunity
- To be full of grace in how you talk, seasoned with salt

What does it mean to use grace/salt in how we communicate?

2 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

...then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment...

If the only reason God has not yet brought judgment and placed believers on a new earth is that he is waiting for everyone to hear the gospel, what does that say about how we should align our life priorities?

As you evaluate your life, are you able to identify some mis-ordered priorities? How far down your list of priorities has sharing Christ dropped over time?

**We encourage you to be strategic and intentional in sharing your faith with others.
There is nothing else you can do in all of creation that will have eternal impact.**

Daniel 12:2-3 (ESV)

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

SESSION 1: THE SPIRITUAL REALM

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE

Daniel 10:4-14 (ESV)

⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) ⁵ I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. ⁹ Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

¹⁰ And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

¹² Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.

¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”

Daniel 10:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

What do you think of the above passage? How would you explain what is going on in this story?

This passage must raise many questions for you. To help bring clarity, let’s first explore the nature of angels in general and then progress to a better understanding of the spiritual conflict as expressed in the story.

ANGELS

What are angels?

Greek word: aggelos (pronounced ang' el os) =

Hebrews 1:14 (ESV)

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Where did angels come from; did they always exist?

Colossians 1:16 (ESV)

For by him [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Job 38:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ *“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.*

⁵ *Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

Are there different types of angels? Can angels have different appearances?

Read the following passages in your Bible and describe the type of angels seen there.

Jude 1:9

Isaiah 6:2

Ezekiel 10:12-14 _____

Hebrews 13:2 _____

Other angelic descriptions:

Invisible 2 Kings 6:15-17

Fiery 2 Kings 6:15-17

Dazzling Luke 24:4

Angels are not people who have died and gone to heaven.

One caution with regard to angels:

Colossians 2:18 (ESV)

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind...

What are some ways we might be tempted to worship angels or give them undue attention?

The apostle John was even tempted to give an angel undue attention.

Revelation 22:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ⁹ but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

How does the angel refocus John in the right direction?

EVIL SPIRITS

What are the other creatures that opposed the messenger angel in Daniel 10?

Mark 1:32-34 (ESV)

³² That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

What are demons and where did they come from?

Revelation 12:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Jude 1:6 (ESV)

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell [Tartarus] and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...

Where are evil spirits now?

Job 1:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

1) Roaming freely through _____

Revelation 9:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

2) Bound on _____

Luke 8:30-31 (NIV)

³⁰ Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

2 Peter 2:4 (NIV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to Tartarus, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

Jude 1:6 (NIV)

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

3) Bound in the _____

Back to Daniel 10

How are we to understand the prince/king of Persia in this story?

As there are various angelic roles in heaven, there is also a hierarchy in the demonic realm. Look at how Paul names these various positions in descending order.

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but
against the rulers, against the **authorities**,
against the **cosmic powers** over this present darkness,
against the **spiritual forces** of evil in the heavenly places.*

If the rebellious angels were defeated, then why are they still able to resist God's righteous angels?

In light of the reality that evil spirits are present around us, what implication does that have for us this week?

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 Genesis 3:1-6

Questions to consider:

- In what ways was the serpent crafty?
- How has Satan been crafty in your life? What ways has he used to entice you to sin?
- What does Satan cause Eve to question?
- Have there been times when Satan has tried to get you to question what God has clearly spoken in scripture?
- Have you ever embraced temptation because it seemed to promise you something God would not provide?
- Sin is always attractive. What sinful things are you attracted to right now?
- Your sins are already forgiven in Christ. You are now guilt free with regard to them. The consequence has been paid. You don't need to be trapped in shame any longer. The question is, "Are you allowing Satan to deceive you right now in an area of your life?" Is there any sin in your life you need to turn from right now so as not to be deceived by Satan all over again?

- In what ways did Satan strike a victory over mankind in this encounter?
- Spend some time thanking God for his forgiveness, and also ask him to reveal areas where you may still be holding on to Satan's lies.

DAY 2 Genesis 19:1-26

Questions to consider:

- Have you ever wondered what angels must think about the human race as they come down from heaven and experience our sinfulness?
- If angels were to give a report of what they have seen with regard to your life, your priorities, your actions, and your love of God, what would they say?
- It's sad to think that Lot had slipped so far into the cultural perspective without realizing it. How might that be true of you as well?

2 Peter 2:7 (ESV)

...and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked...

- Lot believed in God, but continuously made choices to adapt to the culture he was in instead of changing the culture. Fortunately, God sent angels to his rescue. Have you allowed yourself to get into circumstances that distort your thinking?
- Have you embraced relationships that are pulling you further from God?
- When God tells you to do something, do you hesitate?

DAY 3 1 Samuel 16:14-16, 23**Questions to consider:**

- Why do you think music soothed Saul's soul when he was tormented by the evil spirit?
- David's songs were ones of praise to God. Have you ever tried listening to praise music when you were feeling troubled? What effect does it have on you?
- Praise is powerful because it puts God in proper perspective and creates an environment distasteful to evil spirits.
- Would you characterize your life as a life of worship and praise to God that is an inhospitable environment to evil spirits?
- Are there areas of your life that evil spirits would find quite acceptable?

DAY 4 2 Kings 6:8-23**Questions to consider:**

- Have you ever felt the odds were stacked up against you? Has your situation ever seemed hopeless?
- What do these times of anxiety indicate about our trust in God?
- Have you ever seen God come through and provide in ways you never anticipated?
- Wouldn't it be great if, similar to Elisha's servant, we could see what is happening around us on the spiritual plane? If you knew there were angels fighting on your behalf, would it give you a bit more confidence as you go through your day?
- If the servant had not seen the angels, would that have changed the spiritual reality?
- Could the servant have been at peace without having seen the angels?
- Just because we don't see what God is doing, doesn't mean he is not active. How can you start to exercise a greater trust in God this week?
- Why did Elisha not destroy the army that came to destroy him?
- What do you learn about grace through this story?

DAY 5 Luke 4:1-13**Questions to consider:**

- Why would God allow Jesus to be tested in this way?
- Why does God allow you to be tested?
- What is Satan's goal whenever he brings a temptation your way?
- In what ways have you been tested as Jesus was?
- What was the key to Jesus' success at resisting temptation?
- What scriptural truths do you fall back on when you undergo temptation?
- Have you memorized any verses that will help you in your specific areas of struggle?
- Did you notice how even Satan knows the Bible? How does he distort it?
- Do you know the Bible well enough to counter such attacks? How can you know it better?
- What was Satan's reaction to Jesus' defense?
- How can you better prepare yourself for future attacks?

SESSION 2: SATAN'S IDENTITY

Who is Satan?

Revelation 12:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Satan is the _____

Revelation 12:12 (ESV)

Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

John 8:44 (ESV)

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Satan is the _____

What is the extent of Satan's power? What are his limits?

Job 1:6-12 (ESV)

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." ⁸ And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of

his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” ¹² And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

What do we learn about Satan and his authority?

Satan is _____

Job 1:13-15, 17 (ESV)

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, ¹⁴ and there came a messenger to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Satan has the ability to _____

¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Satan has the ability to _____

Job 2:7 (ESV)

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Satan has the ability to _____

What is Satan’s overall objective?

Matthew 4:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Satan wants to _____

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Satan wants to _____

Does talking about Satan raise a tension in you, does it make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?

Do believers need to fear Satan? Why or why not?

1 John 4:4 (ESV)

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:18 (ESV)

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

Jude 1:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. ⁹ But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

What does the above passage indicate should be our attitude toward the angelic realm?

How might understanding the content of this study affect how we live this week?

For resolution to the story of Job, read Job chapters 38-42.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION FOR PERSONAL INTEREST

Possible prophetic allusion to Satan's downfall

These passages refer directly to earthly kings, but some scholars believe they may have a dual function of symbolizing the downfall of Satan as well.

Isaiah 14:12-15 Ezekiel 28:12-15

If not specifically about Satan, they still express the heart attitude of pride and rebellion that Satan exhibits.

Some Descriptors of Satan

Abbadon (Destroyer)	Revelation 9:11
Accuser	Revelation 12:10
Angel of light	2 Corinthians 11:14
Antichrist	1 John 4:3
Beelzebub	Matthew 12:24
Belial	2 Corinthians 6:15
Devil	1 John 3:8
Dragon	Revelation 12:9
Enemy	Matthew 13:39
Father of lies	John 8:44
God of this age	2 Corinthians 4:4
Leviathan	Isaiah 27:1
Murderer	John 8:44
Prince of demons	Matthew 12:24
Prince of this world	John 12:31-32
Roaring lion	1 Peter 5:8
Ruler of the kingdom of the air	Ephesians 2:1-2
Satan	Mark 1:13
Serpent	Revelation 12:9
Tempter	Matthew 4:3
Thief	John 10:10
Wicked one	Ephesians 6:16

Satan's Counterfeit Kingdom

Own Trinity	Revelation 16:13
Own Theology	1 Timothy 4:1
Own Synagogue	Revelation 2:9
Own Preachers	2 Corinthians 11:4-5
Own Sacrificial System	1 Corinthians 10:20
Own Gospel	Galatians 1:6-7
Own Kingship	Revelation 13:2
Own Worshippers	Revelation 13:4
Own Miracles	2 Thessalonians 2:9
Own Indwelling Spirits	Mark 1:32-34
False Christs	Matthew 24:4-5
False Teachers	2 Peter 2:1
False Prophets	Matthew 24:11
False Brethren	Galatians 2:4
False Apostles	2 Corinthians 11:13

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 1 Corinthians 15:26

Questions to consider:

- Why is death the last enemy to be defeated?
- As you go through your day, consider how death still needs to be defeated in your life? What aspects of your life still reveal death is at work?
- How will Jesus ultimately defeat death in you?

DAY 2 Ephesians 2:1-3 Colossians 1:13-14

Questions to consider:

- How has Satan's rule been exercised in your own life?
- Are there still ways in which you are allowing him to have authority?
- In what ways is it evident Jesus has rescued you?
- How is living under Jesus' rule different for you than living under Satan's rule?
- If you are truly part of the kingdom of the Son, how might that affect how you live this week?

DAY 3 Romans 6:1-10

Questions to consider:

- What aspects of your life have died since you gave your life to Christ?
- Have there been some sinful behaviors that you have been set free from?
- Do you sometimes feel you still “have” to sin?
- Is your life being lived to the glory of God?
- How will that be reflected throughout your day?

DAY 4 Romans 6:11-23

Questions to consider:

- Are there any areas of your life you still need to put to death?
- Is your body used solely for righteousness?
- Do you sometimes try to justify your sin? How?
- We have been set free from sin’s grasp. We don’t have to sin any more. It’s purely a choice. Is there a specific, real choice you need to make today?

DAY 5 Romans 8:1-17

Questions to consider:

- Do you ever feel like you still deserve to be condemned for past failures? Does Satan ever whisper these thoughts to your mind?
- What should be your response be whenever you feel like beating yourself up for past sins?
- Which of your thoughts glorify God, which represent your old nature?
- What evidence is there to show the Spirit of God is in your life?
- Are you free from fear or do you still question God’s love for you as his child?
- What does it mean, practically, for you to be a co-heir with Jesus?

SESSION 3: JESUS' VICTORY

SATAN'S STRATEGY

Satan has already been defeated and expelled from heaven. In his rage, he now desires to destroy that which God loves – his people.

How exactly, did Satan gain victory over the human race?

Genesis 3:1-6 (ESV)

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Satan enticed Eve and Adam to sin against God knowing that the consequence was

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

For the wages of sin is death...

Why was death such a key element of Satan's strategy?

Death _____

Death _____

If we die in our sin, we have no opportunity left to receive new life.

Death _____

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1 Corinthians 15:26 (ESV)

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

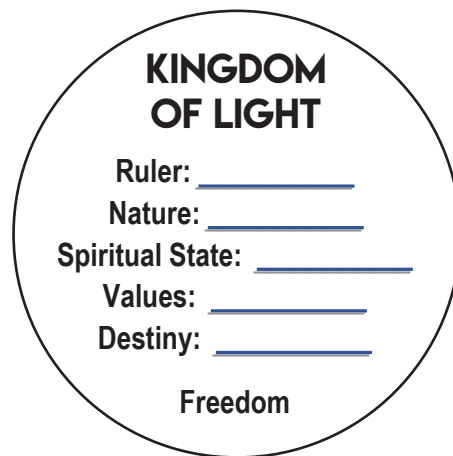
Why is death considered the final enemy that must be defeated?

Luke 4:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.

What does Satan mean when he says the authority over kingdoms of the world was "given" to him?

What are some ways you can think of to describe the difference between the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God?



JESUS' VICTORY

This session may come across as a review for most of you, however, it is an extremely important review that you must thoroughly understand when dealing with spiritual warfare. These truths must be firmly embedded in your understanding if you are to have ongoing spiritual victory in your life.

How did Jesus' death defeat Satan's kingdom?

In what way does each of the following verses show how Jesus set us free from Satan's grasp?

Colossians 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1) Jesus provided _____

Psalm 103:12 (ESV)

...as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

What are some practical implications for us when we start feeling convicted about past sins?

Colossians 1:21-22 (ESV)

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him...

Romans 5:6 (ESV)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

2) Jesus _____

Romans 8:1 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

How does Satan try to convince us otherwise?

What are some theological problems with the concept of punishing yourself?

a)

b)

Romans 6:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin.

3) Jesus _____

Romans 6:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

Romans 6:4 (ESV)

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

4) Jesus _____

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (ESV)

⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...

What are some of the practical implications of this truth for our lives?

WHEN WE DIE...

Where do people go when they die?

Some confusion comes into play when we read the word "Hell" in the Bible. It's really not the best translation as they actually use when talking about three very distinct locations in the Bible.

Location 1: _____

Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell [Hades] shall not prevail against it.

Location 2: _____

2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell [Tartarus] and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...

Location 3: _____

Matthew 23:33 (ESV)

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell [Gehenna]?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Before his death and resurrection, Jesus told the following story:

Luke 16:19-31 (ESV)

¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ ²⁵ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ ²⁷ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ ²⁹ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

What do we learn about where the unrighteous go?

What do we learn about the waiting place of the righteous?

At the time of Christ’s death and Resurrection:

Ephesians 4:8 (ESV)

Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”

Who are the captives that Christ is leading?

By dying on the cross and rising to new life, Jesus defeated Satan's hold on mankind. No one has to submit to his rule or control. There is a doorway made available for anyone who would want to leave Satan's kingdom and find life in Jesus. Satan's power is broken!

How does it make you feel as you reflect on all that Christ has done to free you from Satan and Sin's grasp?

Verses that emphasize Jesus' victory:

Hebrews 2:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV)

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

1 John 3:8 (ESV)

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1

Personal Quiz

Every spiritual battle we face is a tension between truth and error. See if you can find verses from the past lesson or lessons that will counter the lies Satan tries to throw at us.

What are some verses you could rely on when:

Satan tries to make you feel guilty about past sins? _____

Satan encourages you to punish yourself for things you have done wrong? _____

You feel like you need to punish other for their sins? _____

You feel like you don't deserve God's forgiveness? _____

You fear that God may want to punish you? _____

You think you can't break free from a sinful pattern in your life? _____

An evil spirit tries to convince you that you can never break free of its grasp? _____

You are afraid of dying? _____

You feel like you don't have any purpose in life? _____

It feels like Satan is winning the war? _____

You are tempted to focus on the "rules" instead of the relationship? _____

DAY 2 Ephesians 1:3-14

Questions to consider:

- Identify every spiritual blessing you've received in Jesus Christ according to this passage.
- Which one means the most to you?
- Do you find it hard to believe that you've actually received any of these blessings?
- How does it make you feel to hear that God has desired to lavish all this love on you?
- How does it make you feel to know that God has a purpose for your life?
- If you truly believe you've received these blessings, how would that change your life this week?

DAY 3 Ephesians 1:15-23

Questions to consider:

- What does Paul give thanks for?
- What does Paul pray for in each paragraph?
- How is this power available to us?
- Why is Jesus given responsibility for everything?
- What does this passage imply about us?

DAY 4 Colossians 1:9-14

Questions to consider:

- What does Paul pray for the Colossian believers?
- Is your life being lived in a manner that is worthy of the Lord? If not, what areas need to change right away?
- Has your knowledge of God deepened over the past few months? Keep in mind, knowledge refers more to intimate relationship than it does information.
- Are you bearing spiritual fruit in your life and in the lives of others? Why or why not?
- What might need to change in your life to increase the amount of fruit you are bearing?
- Have you recently thanked God for the day in which he has rescued you?

DAY 5 John 14:11-14

Questions to consider:

- What does Jesus mean when he says we will do what he has been doing?
- What does he mean when he says we will do even greater things?
- What is Jesus saying about our authority on earth?
- What are the implications of asking for something in Jesus' name?
- Jesus declares that his people will do these things. What is keeping us from seeing this fulfilled in our own lives?
- How might we start exercising this type of authority given to us?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SESSION 4: THE BELIEVER'S AUTHORITY

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

What happened to Jesus after he left earth to return to heaven?

What do the following scriptures reveal about Jesus' post-resurrection life?

Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1) He is _____

Luke 22:69 (ESV)

But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.

2) He is _____

1 Peter 3:22 (ESV)

[Jesus,] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

3) He is _____

Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

4) He is _____

What are the implications of the above verses for Satan and his rule in this world?

John 12:31 (ESV)

Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

THE NAME OF JESUS

Matthew 7:22-23 (ESV)

²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

What is the spiritual state of these individuals?

How were they able to perform these feats if they did not have a relationship with Jesus?

The name of Jesus can be evoked by anyone, but the results are not always guaranteed for non-believers. See below.

Acts 19:13-17 (ESV)

¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." ¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. ¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

What principles can you learn from this passage?

THE AUTHORITY OF BELIEVERS

After his ascension, Jesus was seated on his throne, at the right hand of the Father, and given all authority over heaven and earth.

What do the following verses say happened to us at the time Jesus sat on his throne?

Ephesians 2:6 (ESV)

...and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

Colossians 2:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

We are also seated with Christ on his throne and share in his authority over heaven and earth. That same authority available to Christ Jesus is available to us since we are united with him. Everything Christ accomplished while on earth, he can continue to accomplish through us, his church.

Luke 9:1-2 (ESV)

¹ And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

What is the three-fold ministry Jesus called his disciples to carry out?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Luke 10:17-20 (ESV)

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸ And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

After the disciples returned and shared their experience, why did Jesus respond that he saw Satan fall from heaven?

What does Jesus mean in verse 19?

Why are the disciples not to rejoice in the fact that they have authority over evil spirits?

Mark 9:14-29 (ESV)

¹⁴ And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.

¹⁶ And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" ¹⁷ And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸ And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

¹⁹ And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me."²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."²³ And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes."

²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" ²⁵ And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."²⁶ And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead."²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

²⁸ And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

²⁹ And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

Why were the disciples unable to make the evil spirit leave the boy?

What does this teach us about our authority?

If preaching, healing, and deliverance were the thrust of Jesus' ministry, the twelve's ministry, the seventy-two's ministry, and the early church's ministry, what is the implication for us today? Should these also be a part of our ministry in the local church and as we walk through our community?

Why do we see so little of this in North American churches?

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

What is the significance of Jesus' authority in this passage?

- 1) If Jesus tells us to make disciples that should be our _____
- 2) To make disciples is going to require _____
- 3) This spiritual authority resides within us because _____

Romans 16:20 (ESV)

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

When will Satan be crushed under our feet?

1 Corinthians 6:3 (ESV)

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

How can you start to express the authority of Christ in and through your life this coming week?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 James 5:14-20

Questions to consider:

- Why is it important to deal with any sin issues before praying for healing?
- How does confessing our sins to one another help clear a path for healing prayer?
- Elijah was a man who followed God's leading very devotedly. As a result, his prayer life was very effective. What hinders the effectiveness of our prayer lives?
- How can we start representing God's love and power through our lives?
- Is it reasonable to think that we could also see healing occur through our ministry?

DAY 2 Acts 16:16-18

Questions to consider:

- What was Paul trying to do when the evil spirit kept interfering?
- Why did the girl's behavior bother him so much? Didn't she seem to be promoting Paul's ministry?
- Paul didn't need to spend time praying about this incident, he simply acted. What role do you think prayer played in Paul's life on an ongoing basis?
- Though Paul spoke the words, where did he understand the authority came from to drive out the spirit?
- How did Paul speak to the evil spirit?
- Did he "request" it leave?
- Did he ask God to make it go away?
- What was the immediate response to his words?
- If we have the same Spirit of Christ in us, do we have the same authority over evil spirits?

DAY 3 Acts 3:1-10

Questions to consider:

- Do you think Peter and John went around healing everyone they saw? Why or why not?
- How much time did Peter and John need to spend in prayer before they healed the man?
- What role do you think prayer played in their life on an ongoing basis?
- By what authority did Peter and John heal the lame man?
- Notice that between today's and yesterday's story, the name of Jesus is always declared. Why do you think this is?
- What do you learn about the authority delegated to the believers in this story?
- Is such authority also delegated to you?
- Why don't we see more of this happening in our churches and community? Were such actions limited solely to the early church?
- What role do you think the Holy Spirit played in directing Peter, John and Paul?
- Do you invite the Spirit to direct you throughout your day?

DAY 4 Mark 9:14-29

Questions to consider:

- Have you ever felt like you were in a hopeless situation and no one could help you?
- Why were the disciples unable to cast out the spirit?
- What does the fact that they were arguing show about how they were relying on the Holy Spirit?
- Is it comforting to know that despite our lack of faith, Jesus will still sometimes step in and take control?
- What is meaningful about the father's response to Jesus?
- Why did Jesus want to deal with the spirit before the crowds came?
- How do you think Jesus' rebuke to the disciples might have influenced their life?
- Some spirits are stronger than others. What is needed to deal with very powerful spirits?
- How much time are you spending with God in prayer?

DAY 5 Mark 5:24-34

Questions to consider:

- How is it that the woman was healed even though Jesus never intentionally healed her?
- What role did the Holy Spirit play in all the workings of Jesus?
- How did Jesus know that a healing had occurred? How many others probably bumped into Jesus that day?
- What was it about this woman that evoked the Holy Spirit to respond to her need?
- What is Jesus' desire for each of us?
- Does Jesus still want to see people healed today or was his compassion limited to his earthly ministry?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SESSION 5: EXERCISING AUTHORITY

We are told to exercise authority over evil spirits as part of our mission. How exactly are we to do that?

Acts 16:16-18 (ESV)

¹⁶ As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” ¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

Why did Paul cast out the evil spirit?

What insights can you gain from Paul’s response to the evil spirit?

This type of interaction is what we call a “**Power Encounter**.” It is a straight-forward presentation of authority that commands the spirit to leave and the spirit must obey. This is needed in certain circumstances, but there are other dynamics we will now explore that may also come into play when trying to help a person long term.

Luke 11:24-26 (ESV)

²⁴ “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ ²⁵ And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. ²⁶ Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”

Spirits are comfortable with that which they are familiar (just like us). Once they find “rest” in a person, they establish their hierarchy, their realm of influence and control, their networks, their deception, and embed their destructive patterns in the person’s life. When a spirit leaves a person, it is at unrest and longs to return to what it had before.

In the meanwhile, with the spirit’s absence, the person put their life back in order. The spirit

returns only to find the “dwelling place” cleaned up and empty. He then invites other spirits to join him in bringing destructive control back into the person’s life.

What would be needed to prevent the evil spirit from being able to return to the person’s life?

What are the implications for the slave girl if she does not acknowledge Jesus as her lord?

Simply casting a spirit out of a person is not the person’s final solution. They need to have their dwelling place (their lives) filled by the presence of Spirit of Christ.

Is it possible for a Christ-follower to be controlled by an evil spirit?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

What truths can we gain from the above passage?

Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...

If a person has areas in their life not fully surrendered to God, what are the implications for evil spiritual influence in this area of their life?

Ephesians 4:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

Greek word for opportunity: topos = A dwelling place, position/ An opportunity to exert power

What are some indicators that a person may be accompanied by an evil spirit?

Some red flags to watch for:

Past experiences of seeking information (even if just for “fun”)
Ouija board, tarot cards, palm readings, etc.

Premonitions

Voices and visions

Spirit guides

Sustained Fears

Other possible indicators:

- Ongoing nightmares
- Inability to sing praises
- Blank scripture pages
- Drowsiness during spiritual discussions/bible studies
- Mental interference during discussions about God and truth
- Intense sinful feelings
- Ongoing Despair
- Sin patterns that can't seem to be broken, etc.

For more insight into potential foothold areas refer to *The Steps to Freedom in Christ* by Neil Anderson.

If a Christian comes under the influence of an evil spirit, how can they become free?

This following process is what we would identify as a “**Truth Encounter**”. It differs from a power encounter, as the goal is to identify a lie, replace it with truth, and in so doing break the hold an evil spirit has on the person’s life. The benefit of this approach is that it removes the foothold or point of permission in the person’s life, so that the spirit has no grounds for returning.

Use the following scriptures to give insight in to the freedom process.

Ephesians 4:23-24 (ESV)

²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

John 16:8 (ESV)

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...

1) _____

John 8:31-32 (ESV)

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Ephesians 6:17 (ESV)

...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

2) _____

James 4:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

3) _____ any evil spirit that has been attached to you due to that lie

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

4) _____

**You do not have to be a victim.
You are seated on the throne beside Jesus.
You have authority over evil spirits.**

Do not let Satan fool you into believing otherwise.

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAYS 1-4

Read through “**The Steps to Freedom in Christ**” booklet by Neil Anderson very slowly and carefully. The goal at this point is not so much to pray the prayers, but to understand the content.

Make sure you reflect on all the points raised and make note of any specific areas that relate to you.

DAY 5

Set aside a couple of hours to go back to the beginning and pray through all the prayers in *The Steps to Freedom in Christ*. It is best to do this all at once as opposed to broken over several days, but this is not a rule.

Share with your group at the next meeting as to how the process went for you.

- Was anything revealed?
- Was any freedom gained in any specific area?
- Was it a meaningful exercise?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SESSION 6: MAINTAINING FREEDOM

Share with your group your experience working through The Steps to Freedom in Christ.

- Was anything revealed?
- Was any freedom gained in any specific area?
- Was it a meaningful exercise?

MAINTAINING FREEDOM

Spiritual attack is simply a part of our present spiritual reality. Jesus couldn't avoid it, the early church couldn't avoid it, and we can't avoid it.

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

What are some ways we can maintain our spiritual freedom and effectiveness in light of the ongoing assault on our lives?

Ephesians 6:10-18 (ESV)

¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

¹⁴ *Stand therefore,*

*having fastened on the **belt of truth**,*

*and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**,*

¹⁵ *and, as **shoes for your feet**, having put on the readiness given by the **gospel of peace**.*

¹⁶ *In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;*

¹⁷ *and take the **helmet of salvation**,
and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God,*

¹⁸ *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...*

In what ways does the armor of God help us stand our ground?

UNDERSTANDING THE ARMOR

Discuss why each piece of armor is essential for standing firm against Satan's attacks.

Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

How is salvation a critical piece of our armor?

Satan will often sow seeds of doubt regarding our salvation and try to cause us to question our faith. If we give in to these thoughts, we become rendered ineffective in our spiritual life.

Romans 8:37-39 (ESV)

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How does it feel to know that you cannot be defeated, if you simply abide with Christ?

Breastplate of Righteousness

Colossians 1:22-23 (ESV)

²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

How is righteousness a critical piece of our defense?

Satan will obviously try to tempt us to not live righteously. In so doing he renders us less effective and robs us of confidence, joy and peace.

How can we resist in light of Satan's continuous attack?

Matthew 26:41 (ESV)

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

1) _____

2) _____

Ephesians 4:21-24 (ESV)

²¹ ...assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

What are some "old self" things we need to put aside to be spiritually effective?

Belt of Truth

John 8:31-32 (ESV)

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

What are some of the lies you've bought into in the past? What bondage did they create?

How might Satan try to hinder us in this area of our defense?

Satan will always try to deceive us in two primary ways:

1) Our view of _____

2) Our view of _____

Every deception we struggle with will ultimately be rooted in a distortion of one of these two anchors of faith.

How will we be more vulnerable in everyday life if we drop this piece of armor?

Neither our feelings nor our limited knowledge are sufficient to lead us in truth.

Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In what way are we more prepared and ready for spiritual battle if we have the good news of the peace of God?

How will we be more vulnerable in everyday life if we drop this piece of armor?

How can we develop a deeper assurance and peace in our relationship with God?

1) _____

2) _____

Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16 (ESV)

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one...

What fiery dart does faith extinguish?

What areas do we tend to doubt God the most?

Which are you inclined to question the most? Why?

1 Peter 1:3-5 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

What is the relationship between faith and hope?

Discuss and try to explain these next two statements:

Faith creates Hope

Hope increases Faith

Colossians 1:5 (NIV)

the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven.

No Faith – No Hope! No Hope – No Faith!

The Sword of the Spirit: The Word of God

John 17:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

The Bible: our greatest defense and our greatest weapon.

In what way is scripture our greatest defense?

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Jeremiah 23:29 (ESV)

Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

In what way is scripture our greatest weapon?

What are the implications for our life if we do not know how to use the Bible effectively?

ARMOR

PROVIDES

SALVATION

RIGHTEOUSNESS

TRUTH

PEACE

FAITH

WORD OF GOD

Which piece of armor do you find you tend to drop the most?

What steps might you take this week to ensure you have securely fastened that piece to your life?

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 Ephesians 6:18-20

Questions to consider:

- On top of the armor, Paul also says we should pray for all the saints. Why does he encourage this?
- Do you ever pray for the spiritual strength and protection of other believers?
- Do you ever pray that people in your church would fearlessly proclaim Jesus Christ?
- Why not spend time today simply praying for the spiritual protection and spiritual effectiveness of people in your church and around the world.
- Pray this also for yourself!

DAY 2 2 Timothy 2:22 and James 4:7-8

Questions to consider:

- If we have such incredible armor, why should we need to flee?
- In the first verse we are not just to flee one thing, but to pursue the opposite. What are you pursuing?
- When we flee one thing and pursue another, why does that make Satan flee?
- What areas do you need to flee from this week?
- What do you need to pursue this week?

DAY 3 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Questions to consider:

- How does sexual immorality affect a person on a deeper level than other sins?
- In our culture we have become very immune to sexual immorality. It is so commonplace that we believe it is almost normal. In what ways have you perhaps crossed the line of what God defines as appropriate in your perspective?
- Do you have a right to do whatever we want with our body? Why or why not?
- If your life/body actually belong to Jesus Christ, are you truly using your life and body in a way that glorifies God?
- Are there some things you're doing right now that do not bring joy to Jesus?
- How can you flee from these things this week?

DAY 4 1 Timothy 6:6-11

Questions to consider:

- If God promises to meet all our needs, why do we always feel we need more money?
- Why are we so discontent with what we have?
- If the stuff we have hasn't brought us joy and fulfillment, why do we keep thinking more stuff will?
- How can the pursuit of money lead one away from God?
- Why does this result in grief?
- Instead of pursuing more money, what does Paul recommend you pursue?
- How might that actually bring more joy and fulfillment into your life?
- What does your cheque-book show about what you believe will bring you joy and fulfillment?
- Why not take some time to look at your budget to see what you value as the highest priority in your life?
- How can you become free from the love of money and what you believe it offers you?

DAY 5 1 Corinthians 10:12-14

Questions to consider:

- Why does Paul caution those who think they are standing firm?
- Why do we always think our temptation is stronger than what others face?
- Why do we sometimes feel the temptation is too strong for us to resist?
- When tempted, have you ever looked for the open door – the way out?
- Is it comforting to know you can actually resist temptation?
- What is the connection between idolatry and giving into temptation?
- In areas in which you are frequently tempted, find some scripture passage you can declare and stand on the next time you are challenged.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SESSION 1: HEARING GOD

AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIP

In your relationship with God, who does most of the talking?

Do you think God has things he would like to say to you personally? Share your thoughts.

Does God still speak to his people in direct ways today? Explain.

In what various ways did God speak throughout scripture?

We know that the primary way God chooses to speak to us is through his word, but sometimes he chooses other ways as well.

Read the following scenarios and discuss whether or not you believe God might still speak that way today.

Samuel

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (ESV)

¹ Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

⁶ And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." ¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel...

Means of Communication: _____

Do you think God may still speak through an audible voice? Have any of you had an experience with hearing God speak audibly to you?

Abimelech

Genesis 20:1-7 (ESV)

¹ From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. ² And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. ³ But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." ⁴ Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? ⁵ Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." ⁶ Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷ Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

Means of Communication: _____

Have any of you ever had a dream where God communicated a message to you?

Peter

Acts 10:1-16 (ESV)

¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ² a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. ³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." ⁴ And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵ And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, ⁸ and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. ⁹ The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰ And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance ¹¹ and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³ And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴ But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." ¹⁵ And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." ¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Means of Communication: _____

What is a vision?

Have any of you ever experienced a vision from God? What did you see?

Peter

Acts 10:17-20 (ESV)

¹⁷ Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate ¹⁸ and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. ¹⁹ And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."

Means of Communication: _____

What do we mean when we talk about the "voice of the Spirit"?

**Have you ever had the Holy Spirit speak distinguishable words into your mind?
What was spoken?**

Isaiah 30:21 (ESV)

And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

Paul

Acts 20:22 (ESV)

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there...

Means of Communication: _____

What do we mean when we talk about promptings of the Holy Spirit?

Have you ever experienced a prompting of the Holy Spirit? What happened?

Agabus

Acts 11:27-28 (ESV)

²⁷ Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).

Means of Communication: _____

Have you ever had a prophetic message given to you, or have you been given a prophetic message to pass on to someone else? Share your experience.

Acts 2:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

Why might God choose to speak in some of these more dramatic ways?

How does talking about this sort of communication make you feel? Does it make you feel uneasy, excited, or curious? Share your thoughts.

Do you think this type of communication should be evident in the church today?

Is it something people should seek after?

What are some hindrances that might keep us from hearing from God?

Mark 1:35 (ESV)

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

Jesus was clearly led by the Spirit and knew every step of the way what the Father wanted him to do, what the Father wanted him to say, and how the Father wanted him to say it.

What does the above scripture passage reveal about how Jesus developed such an ear to hear? What principles can we learn?

Acts 13:2-3 (ESV)

² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

How can we develop a sense for “listening” to God within our group prayer times?

If you sense the Holy Spirit speaking a message for the group during a prayer time, how should you respond to that?

In your own prayer times this week, try to find a quiet place where you can talk to God, but also spend time listening to see if there is anything he wants to communicate to you. Sometimes it simply involves asking questions and being ready to listen in case God chooses to speak in such a way.

1 Samuel 3:10 (ESV)

And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.”

CAUTION: God’s primary way of communicating with us is through his word. It **must always** be a priority in our lives. Always seeking a “special revelation” can lead to some dangerous opportunities for the evil one to counterfeit God’s voice. Next session we will discuss how to discern between the spirits, and how to discern whether or not a messages is from God.

LIVING YOUR FAITH

SESSION 2: DISCERNING THE MESSAGE

Have there been times when you heard someone say, “God told me...” or “God led me...” and then it became evident God hadn’t directed them in such a way?

How do we evaluate whether a message/prompting is from God, from our own imaginations, or from an evil spirit?

Keep in mind that Satan also wants to send messages and direct our paths according to his purposes. See the following scriptures:

1 John 4:1-3 (ESV)

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

1 Timothy 4:1 (ESV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons...

With this in mind, we need to be very discerning to not listen to just any voice or message we hear. If Satan can masquerade as an angel of light, it will require spiritual wisdom for us to distinguish between what comes from him, and what comes from God.

What are some ways you can think of to help us discern if a message is from God or not?

Evaluating a Message:

- 1) Is it consistent with _____
- 2) Does it represent _____
- 3) Is it just a passing idea or _____
- 4) Is there a _____ with other godly people?
- 5) Does it stretch _____

Let's explore these tests to understand them more deeply.

1) Is the message consistent with scripture?

Why would it be a problem for God to say something now that is different from what he spoke previously?

God does not _____

Numbers 23:19 (ESV)

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

When all is said and done, our final authority is always the Word of God.

2) Does the message represent God's purposes?

What are God's two purposes for us?

a) To bring us into deeper _____ with him and his family.

b) To empower us to _____ his rule and love to the rest of the world.

Every message from God is to help us fulfill the two greatest commands of loving God and loving our neighbor.

Matthew 16:13-17 (ESV)

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 16:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

In the first example, Jesus says that Peter’s statement is divinely inspired.

In the second statement, he is saying it is satanically inspired.

In what way do these two statements of Peter contrast?

Peter’s First Statement:

Peter’s Second Statement:

How was Jesus able to discern which message was from God, and which was not?

What are some examples of a message that would not represent the purposes of God?

Jesus will never call you to do something that does not represent his purposes or love as he modelled in scripture.

3) Is the message just a passing idea or an unrelenting burden?

If you're an "ideas" person you've probably had many ideas that you were passionate about one week, and forgot all about the next week. Can you share some examples?

Have you ever had what you thought was a strong conviction from God about something, but then had that feeling fade within a short time? What do you make of these experiences?

Daniel 2:1 (ESV)

In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

Daniel 7:15 (ESV)

As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me.

How were Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel affected by the messages they received?

Jeremiah's Dilemma

Jeremiah 20:9 (ESV)

If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

Can any of you relate to Jeremiah? Can you share some experiences where God placed a heavy burden on your heart that simply would not go away until you responded?

4) Is there a unity of the Spirit with other godly people?

Why is unity within the body of Christ an important test of a message from God?

Matthew 18:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

What does this passage imply is the priority – the unity of believers or prayers being answered? Why?

What should you do if other believers are seeking God’s direction as well, but are not in agreement with you?

1) _____

2) _____

Philippians 1:27 (NIV)

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then...I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

5) Does the message stretch your faith?

Why would God’s message to us often involve us taking some step of faith?

If God gives you a message or call to action, it is because YOU need that in your life in order to grow in your walk with him. Otherwise, he would have given that message or prompting to someone else.

Jonah 1:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” ³ But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

Why did God call Jonah to take the message to Nineveh, knowing what his response would be?

What kept you from obeying at times when you felt the Holy Spirit prompting you?

What was the result in your relationship with God, or the family of God, when you did obey a prompting from the Spirit?

There are many deceiving voices and we need to carefully discern which voices are from God, and which are not. Take comfort in the fact that Jesus says his true sheep will recognize his voice.

John 10:3-5 (ESV)

³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

SESSION 3: SPIRITUAL FOCUS

Before we begin, think of all the different ways you spent your time in the past week. Write them below, and we will refer back to this list later.

Following his baptism, Jesus started his Spirit-empowered ministry.

Luke 4:14-21 (ESV)

¹⁴ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because
he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

What exactly was the mission that the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to do?

What is the common denominator between the above passage and next two passages?

Disciples

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

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.

Phillip**Acts 8:29, 36-40 (NIV)**

The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁶As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" ³⁷³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

⁴⁰ Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Do you get the sense that the Holy Spirit is on a mission? What gives that away?

If the Holy Spirit is on a mission, what is the implication for everyone he fills and leads?

**The question is not whether our lives should be mission-focussed,
but where and how we will carry out that mission.**

Paul & Peter**Galatians 2:8-10 (ESV)**

⁸ ... (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

What was Peter's mission?

What was Paul's mission?

What is your mission?

The Holy Spirit is very focussed on finishing the mission of bringing people to Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus will not return until the Holy Spirit has sent the gospel message to every people group around the world.

Matthew 24:14 (ESV)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

If someone were to look at your description of how you spent the past two weeks (your list at top of study), what would they determine is your life focus or mission?

As a group, discuss what you think a mission-focussed life looks like.

1 Corinthians 3:10-14 (ESV)

¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

As you reflect on how you are investing your life, what things from the past two weeks do you believe will go through the flames and come out on the other side? (Refer back to the list at the beginning of the study.)

Burned in the Fire

Purified in the Fire

What are some of the challenges or hindrances we face in living a mission-focussed life?

What is the difference between living a mission-focussed life and doing a ministry?

Can you think of some people that are living a mission-focussed life? What is it about their lives that make that evident?

If we are “truly” disciples of Jesus, then we must embrace his mission.

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

We are directed by Jesus to:

How can we move from simply having a ministry we “do” within the church to living a life with a mission focus?

Are there some ways we need to simplify our lives so that we can have a greater spiritual impact?

How might our lives change we if truly surrender to the mission of Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

What is the alternative to NOT embracing a life of mission?

Luke 10:17, 21 (ESV)

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"

²¹ In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."

**Why do you think the disciples were filled with joy as they embraced the mission?
Why was Jesus filled with joy?**

THIS SAME JOY IS AVAILABLE TO YOU AS YOU EMBRACE HIS MISSION IN YOUR LIFE.

LIVING YOUR FAITH

SESSION 4: RESPONDING TO GOD

Exodus 5:1-2 (ESV)

¹ Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” ² But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”

Pharaoh raised a very important question, “Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?”

Even Moses did not know God at first.

Exodus 4:10-13 (ESV)

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” ¹³ But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.”

Why did Moses respond the way he did?

What did Moses not understand about God?

What are your thoughts about the following quote?

“We will only respond to God to the degree that we ‘know’ God.”

THE NAMES OF GOD

Exodus 3:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

God's Name: _____

What does God mean by the name "I AM"?

SIDE NOTE:

The Hebrew writing for the name of God in this passage is YHWH.

Because the Hebrews feared using the name of God inappropriately they determined they should never pronounce it at all. Instead they would use the name Adonai (Lord or Master) whenever YHWH occurred. As a result, no one really knows how to pronounce God's name.

In an attempt to come to an understanding of the pronunciation some have added vowels to YHWH to create:

YaH-WeH or

Ye-Ho-VaH (Jehovah – the W in YHWH is often expressed by a V)

Many Bibles simply translate the name YHWH as "LORD" using small capital letters.

If Moses truly understood God as being I AM, how would that have changed his reaction?

YHWH COMBINATION NAMES

Yhwh was combined with other terms in order to stress God's attributes at times of specific need. Look at each name of God and discuss how understanding that name would bring greater freedom to your life. Also notice how Jesus fulfills each name.

Genesis 22:14 (ESV)

So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

Yahweh Jireh: _____

Implication:

Matthew 6:25-33 (ESV)

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Judges 6:24 (ESV)

Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

Yahweh Shalom: _____

Implication:

John 14:27 (ESV)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

1 Samuel 17:45 (ESV)

Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

Yahweh Sabbaoth: _____

Implication:

Romans 8:31 (ESV)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Psalm 23:1-4 (ESV)

¹ *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.* ² *He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.* ³ *He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

⁴ *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

Yahweh Ro'i: _____

Implication:

John 10:11 (ESV)

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Jeremiah 23:6 (ESV)

In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

Yahweh Tsidkenu: _____

Implication:

Romans 3:21-22 (ESV)

²¹ *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—* ²² *the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.*

Ezekiel 48:35 (ESV)

And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD Is There.

Yahweh Shammah: _____

Implication:

Revelation 21:3-4 (ESV)

³ *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

⁴ *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

Which name of God speaks the most strongly to you? Why?

Which name of God might give you confidence to do what he calls you to do?

What fears do you presently have that you now identify are rotted in a misunderstanding of who God is?

What steps of faith have you resisted taking because you did not understand who God is?

John 17:3 (ESV)

*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

LIVING YOUR FAITH

SESSION 5: SUBMISSION TO GOD

UNDERSTANDING REDEMPTION

1 Peter 1:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

What does it mean to “redeem/ransom” someone?

1 Corinthians 6:19 (ESV)

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

Romans 6:22 (ESV)

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

If Christ has paid the price for our freedom, how does that affect his right to determine the course of your life in the following areas?

Your career:

Your relationships:

Your health:

Your money:

Does his right to direct our lives, as he sees fit, create any tensions for you?

The story of Job brings the tension of God’s right to handle our lives as he sees fit, to a climactic tension.

Read Job 1:1-19

If this happened to you, how would you react to God?

What characteristics of God would you be inclined to challenge?

Job's Response:

Job 1:20-22 (ESV)

²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Why do you think Job was able to respond in such a way after these intense tragedies?

What truths is he holding on to?

Read Job 2:1-8

Job's personal health is now attacked by Satan, under God's sovereign oversight.

What is the basic premise Satan was arguing?

Job's Response:

Job 2:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." ¹⁰ But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

How might Job have been tempted to sin in what he said?

What truth did Job cling to that kept him from falling?

Job's three friends come to grieve with him, but instead they end up frustrating him with their claims as to why he is suffering.

Job 4:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? ⁸ As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. ⁹ By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

What is the premise on which Job's three friends are operating?

What do you think about this line of reasoning? Do you agree or disagree?

Job 42:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. ⁸ Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."

Did Job's loss and illness have anything at all to do with his lack of faith or some hidden sin in his life? What was the cause of Job's suffering?

How do you feel about God's decision to let Satan destroy Job's life in such a way?

How do you reconcile this with the holiness, justice, and love of God?

As Job struggled with trying to understand the cause of all his suffering, he defended himself before God by challenging the justice of God. God responds...

Job 38:1-11 (ESV)

¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ² “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. ⁴ “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ⁸ “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, ⁹ when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, ¹⁰ and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, ¹¹ and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’?”

(This is just a small example of a huge barrage of questions with which God assaults Job – Job 38-41)

What was God’s response to Job’s challenge of his justice?**Job’s Response:****Job 40:3-5 (ESV)**

³ Then Job answered the LORD and said: ⁴ “Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. ⁵ I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further.”

Job 42:1-6 (ESV)

¹ Then Job answered the LORD and said: ² “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³ ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ ⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶ therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

What changed in Job’s perspective? What realization did he come to that caused him to humble himself and approach God in awe and a worshipful manner?

God knew why Job was suffering and allowed it to continue for his divine purposes. Though Job did not understand those purposes, how did God want Job to continue to relate to him through the experience?

Why did God allow Satan to act in such a way toward his faithful child?

- 1) God was exalting _____
- 2) Job needed a _____
- 3) We need to learn to _____

What do you think this statement means?

“How we go through suffering is an indication of our belief about redemption”

Luke 22:41-44 (ESV)

⁴¹ And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” ⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

What are the most powerful words of this passage?

If we truly believe that Jesus has authority in and over our lives, how does that change how we should view our circumstances?

How should we react to God at times when we discover he is letting us suffer?

What does it truly mean to trust God to be “God” in our lives?

Not my will, but yours be done!

LIVING YOUR FAITH

SESSION 6: NAVIGATING SUFFERING

The early church faced significant persecution. For many, it meant the loss of their jobs and means of supporting themselves and their families. For others, it meant the rejection of their families and friends, or it meant torture and death. Many were questioning where God was, why was he letting this happen, and was it worthwhile to remain loyal to Jesus Christ.

What would you want to say to these early believers to encourage them?

James writes to Christ-followers who were struggling with this tension.

James 1:2-4 (ESV)

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Why is our natural tendency to shrug off these words as being too idealistic?

If we remember that these words are actually written by God through James, and that God is very serious in what he speaks to us, how might we view these words differently?

What perspective is God adding here that could allow us to embrace suffering differently?

God tells us that suffering will occur, but that he can take the suffering this world throws at us and turn it into something that accomplishes his divine purposes. How does suffering make us mature and not “lacking anything”?

Hebrews 2:10 (ESV)

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

How was Jesus made perfect through his suffering?

Have there been times in your life when you felt tempted to abandon God due to the suffering you were experiencing?

Have there been times in your life where, in hindsight, you see that God used your trials to strengthen your faith in him and to make you more mature?

God continues to speak through James:

James 1:5-8 (ESV)

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

In the midst of this discussion on suffering, what prayer request is blatantly missing?

Why should we ask God specifically for wisdom when in the midst of suffering?

Why does James stress the issue of not doubting?

There are some questions which we need to ask in discerning God's leading:

- 1) Have you been asking for wisdom?
- 2) Have you been seeking direction through the Bible?
- 3) Is there unity in the Spirit within the family of God on this direction?
- 4) Has God opened a way for you to go?
- 5) Is there a sense of peace once you've made your decision?

If we believe God is giving us the wisdom we need, how will we approach the situation differently?

Summary of Daniel 3:

King Nebuchadnezzar made a statue of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on a plain in Babylon. Everyone, when indicated, was to bow down and worship the golden image or be thrown into a blazing furnace. Choosing to stay loyal to God, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the image and were consequently reported to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king once again issued the instructions to them about what they were to do and added the ominous end note, “But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three young Hebrew men who were taken captive as slaves from Israel and brought to Babylon.

What type of frustrations could they have potentially had with God during this time?

If they bowed down to the golden image under duress, could anyone have blamed them?

Why were they willing to suffer being burned alive, instead of “insincerely” bowing before a statue?

Their response:

Daniel 3:16-18 (ESV)

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

- 1) Do you think they had issued some prayers up to God as they were being taken before the king?
- 2) Was their decision consistent with scripture?
- 3) Was there a unity in their spirits to the course they chose?
- 4) Did they believe God would prepare a way?
- 5) Did they have a sense of peace about their approach to this moment of suffering?

What is so powerful about their statement in verse 18?

How do you think standing together helped them through this trial? What lessons can we learn from their friendship?

If God had allowed them to be burned in the fire – would it change your perception of what they should have done?

Would God still be holy, just, and loving had he not rescued them? Explain.

How do you “feel” about God when you or loved ones are going through suffering?

If we have given our lives completely over to God, then the question can never be “WHY?” It must simply be, “WHAT?”

“WHAT, God, do you want me to do, as your servant, in the midst of this pain?”

If we ask for WISDOM, he promises to give it to us.

Is there any area in your life where you need to surrender the need to know “WHY” and are willing to simply embrace the “WHAT”?

Spend time praying as a group for the various struggles each one faces and ask God to give his wisdom to know how to navigate through the suffering in a way that will glorify him and build his kingdom.

SESSION 7: SUBMITTING TO OTHERS

Colossians 3:3 (ESV)

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

If we have died to self, how should that affect how we interact with other people?

Exodus 21:23-25 (ESV)

²³ But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Matthew 5:38-42 (ESV)

³⁸ You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

What was God’s intention when he told the Israelites “eye for an eye”?

Genesis 4:23-24 (ESV)

²³ Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. ²⁴ If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”

Have there been times when you’ve been tempted to get revenge? Did you give in or show restraint?

Was Jesus contradicting what was written in Exodus 21?

Why would Jesus say these things? Isn't there a danger of the person being taken advantage of?

Have there been times when turning the other cheek turned out not to be the best solution?

Is Jesus saying we should give in to every oppressor?

Were there times when Jesus did not turn the other cheek?

What did Jesus raise as a priority in each of the Matthew 5 verses?

The early church struggled with dying to self:

1 Corinthians 6:1-7 (ESV)

¹ When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? ² Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! ⁴ So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? ⁵ I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, ⁶ but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? ⁷ To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?

What is the main point Paul is trying to communicate?

Does that mean we should just always give up and never work things through?

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

How might this scripture free us to not worry about having our needs or expectations met?

SPIRIT-FILLED SUBMISSION

Ephesians 5:18, 21 (ESV)

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...

²¹[Submitting] to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives submitting to husbands	Eph 5:22
Husbands submitting to wives	Eph 5:25
Children submitting to parents	Eph 6:1
Parents submitting to children	Eph 6:4
Slaves submitting to masters	Eph 6:5
Masters submitting to slaves	Eph 6:9

Why do you think submitting to one another is an outflow of the Spirit-filled life?

Why do we find submission to others so difficult?

Jesus' Example of Submission

John 13:3-15 (ESV)

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

Why did Peter struggle with the idea of Jesus washing his feet?

Why did Jesus wash his disciples' feet?

How can we translate the principle of feet washing into today's culture?

Why is it sometimes easier to serve someone else as opposed to letting someone else serve you? What sinful barriers must we allow the Holy Spirit to break down in our lives so we can allow ourselves to serve and be served?

What would our church be like if it were filled with non-complaining, servant-hearted "feet-washers"?

Do you find it is easy to slip back into a perspective of an "others should serve me" mentality? How can we prevent that from happening?

How can we cultivate this attitude more deeply within our church?

How can we personally commit this week to being a feet-washer?

SESSION 8: JUDGING OTHERS

Tensions will always occur between people whether it be at work, at home, in public, or even at church.

What causes tensions or conflict between you and others? Are there any consistent patterns or commonalities in the types of tensions you experience?

Discuss the following quote:

“The only consistent feature in all of your dissatisfying relationships is you.”

<http://www.despair.com/viewall.html>

When conflicts occur, how do you typically handle them? Are you more inclined to want to confront the conflict right away or are you more inclined to withdraw? Why?

Can you think of any biblical examples where relationship conflict was handled badly?

Can you think of any biblical examples where relationship conflict was handled well?

Can you share an experience where a broken relationship was restored in your life? How did that restoration happen?

What are some biblical principles we can apply to resolving relational conflict in our lives?

Following are some scriptures that give us wisdom regarding restoring our broken relationships. Reflect on the significance of each passage.

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)

¹ "Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

In what ways do we tend to judge others? Think through the past week and try to recall some times when perhaps you "judged" someone.

Why is it so easy to spot shortcomings in other people, but ignore our own at the very same time?

What does Jesus say we should do at these times?

Why is it so difficult to admit that we also have flaws, and instead of condemning, choose to support the other person?

If we truly understood that we will be judged by the very standard we judge others, how would that affect how we would judge others?

When we judge someone, we also tend to hand out a punishment to them in some way. These punishments may be blatant or very subtle. What are some examples of ways you have punished people you have judged in the past...or present?

Psalms 75:7 (NASB)

But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another.

What does it mean to declare God is Judge?

Romans 14:10-13 (ESV)

¹⁰ *Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” ¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

¹³ *Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.*

What are some reasons as to why God is the only one who can rightly judge?

Romans 12:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”*

What does the above verse imply about our role in judging and condemning others?

Share some examples of times when you assumed responsibility to judge and condemn someone, but in the long run you found it only hurt yourself instead.

Judging others is an incredible responsibility that carries a heavy burden. God tells us he is freeing us from this responsibility so that we never have to worry about judging or condemning another person at all – he will take care of that for us.

If we truly believe that we are not responsible to judge or condemn any other person, in what ways might that free us?

What does Romans 12:20 say our response should be, instead of condemnation?

What might be some practical results of feeding our enemy?

1)

2)

Why would we show love to others if they only continue to seek to harm us?

God is giving you permission this week to not judge or condemn anyone; you are freed from that heavy burden. If you are free from this responsibility how will it practically affect how you relate to people this coming week?

CHALLENGE: Try to go through this next week without judging or condemning anyone.

Consider:

- Are there any people you need to treat differently?
- Are there any people you need to ask for forgiveness for how you've judged them?
- Are there any people from whom you have been withholding love? (avoiding, silent treatment, gossip, grumbling etc.)

Relationship is what we were created for; relationships therefore, needs to be our highest priority. There are times when God will choose to judge "through us", but we will discuss that in a few weeks.

Matthew 5:9 (ESV)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

SESSION 9: RESOLVING CONFLICT

Just because we are not to judge others does not mean we are not to acknowledge and resolve problems. What is the difference between judging someone and acknowledging a problem that exists between people?

The goal of this study is to look at a biblical approach to resolving conflicts as they potentially occur within the family of God. Though the focus here is within God's family, many of the principles will be applicable to life outside the church as well.

PEOPLE YOU HAVE WRONGED

Matthew 5:23-24 (ESV)

²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Why does Jesus say to make things right with another believer before you come to worship God?

What is the role of the altar?

PEOPLE WHO HAVE WRONGED YOU

Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

What is the four-stage process for reconciliation when a believer has wronged you?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

Why should we always approach the person on a one to one basis first?

Why are we inclined to talk to others about a person who has wronged us, as opposed to talking to the person?

What is wrong with this approach?

What should we do if someone starts to vent to us about another person?

Who is the one who should initiate reconciliation?

Why is it beneficial to take a witness along if the first approach doesn't work?

What are the witnesses witnessing to?

Why should an unresolved issue between two believers be taken to the church?

John 17:20-23 (ESV)

²⁰ I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

John 13:34-35 (ESV)

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

What is the problem with holding on to grudges?

We will discuss the meaning of the last step during the last session and what happens if the offender refuses to submit to the church.

Resolving conflict is a significant aspect of learning to submit to one another.

OTHER BELIEVERS WHO ARE WRONGING GOD

Galatians 6:1-5 (ESV)

¹ Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load.

Why would we ever confront someone else about their sin? Isn't that being judgmental?

What are some reasons we might not feel comfortable approaching another person regarding their sin?

Why are all these reasons insufficient?

What should be the basis when confronting sin?

Why does Paul stress that we should restore others gently and to watch ourselves so that we won't be tempted?

Romans 12:14-21 (ESV)

¹⁴ *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.*

¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another.*

Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.

Never be wise in your own sight.

¹⁷ *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.*

¹⁸ *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

¹⁹ *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

²⁰ *To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."*

²¹ *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Dying to self and submitting to others is an all-encompassing commitment.

Which of the above phrases in Romans 12 do you find the most difficult?

TIME FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Write down any names that come to your mind that you believe the Holy Spirit is prompting you to talk to.

**Make a commitment to connect with that person
within the next week or at the earliest time possible.**

LIVING YOUR FAITH

SESSION 10: JUDGING VS. FORGIVING

REVIEW: JUDGING

In the previous studies we discussed how we are NOT to JUDGE or condemn others. What do you recall were the reasons for this?

If we are not responsible to JUDGE or CONDEMN others, how are we told to relate to them?

Only this type of freedom can make it possible for us to LOVE our ENEMIES as Christ commanded.

In what practical ways does judging trap us in our personal lives?

Personal freedom comes through not being bound to another person's actions against us by not sustaining judgment against them. It was never our position to judge, never our position to condemn, and never our responsibility to do anything but LOVE.

James 4:12 (ESV)

There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

NOT JUDGING must be rooted in the theological understanding that GOD IS JUDGE and he will take care of justice.

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

How have you heard forgiveness explained in the past?

How might our understanding of being free through “not judging” change our perspective on forgiveness?

FORGIVENESS is NOT about setting ourselves free because we are already freed by the act of not judging and choosing to love our enemies. This happens before we come to the concept of forgiveness.

If “NOT JUDGING” sets us free, then what is the role of forgiveness?

What DOES Forgiveness mean?

Go through the following checklist and see if you have embraced any of these beliefs in the past.

Forgiveness does NOT mean:

- Approving of what someone else did
- Pretending that evil never took place
- Making excuses for other people’s bad behavior
- Ignoring abuse
- Letting others walk all over you
- Pretending that you were never hurt
- All negative consequences of sin are cancelled

What are some times when you may forgive a person, but LOVE will not let the past behavior continue?

BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS

Psalms 32:5 (NLT)

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

Psalm 51:8-12 (ESV)

⁸ *Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.*

⁹ *Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.*

¹⁰ *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

¹¹ *Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

¹² *Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.*

What is the benefit for the one who is forgiven?

Forgiveness is about setting the OTHER PERSON free.

Can you recall a time when you felt emotionally free, despite the fact that someone wronged you; they however, were plagued by guilt and shame?

You were already free due to the fact you chose to let God be judge, but they were not free due to the guilt of their actions. What would they need to do in order for THEM to be free from the wrong THEY perpetuated against you?

Luke 17:3-4 (ESV)

³ *Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”*

What is the relationship between REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS?

Ezekiel 18:30b-31 (ESV)

³⁰ Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

What does it mean to repent?

- 1) To _____ personal wrong doing
- 2) To _____ for the wrong behavior
- 3) To humbly and sincerely _____
- 4) To change one's mind and _____ and to live righteously

**If the goal of forgiveness is to set the other person free,
they can only become free when they come to a point of repentance.**

Colossians 3:13 (ESV)

...bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

What is the example God gives us with regard to forgiveness?

- 1) God _____ the wrongs we have committed against him.
- 2) God understands that those wrongs have created _____ in the relationship.
- 3) God _____ in the relationship by paying the consequence for our wrongs – even when we didn't care.
- 4) God _____ of forgiveness at expense to himself.
- 5) God lovingly _____ his forgiveness through repentance and restore relationship with him.

Why do you think people in relationship with God are told to forgive others?

Why would we be willing to forgive someone if they repeatedly wrong us?

What if the person refuses to repent?

Can you share an example of how others have forgiven you?

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

How have you typically responded when you've been relationally hurt?

Forgiveness is not about ignoring history, nor is it about ignoring changes that need to occur. Forgiveness is about giving the other person the opportunity to move forward in their relationship with you as opposed to being trapped in their past sin.

Matthew 6:12-14 (NLT)

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

How would you paraphrase what Jesus is saying?

Why does Jesus connect God's forgiving us with how we forgive others?

When we refuse to forgive, what does that imply about our view of God as Judge?

Additional reading:

Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor (Matthew 18:21-35)

Personal Reflection:

Who has wronged you that you are still judging and condemning, and have not offered forgiveness.

Write down any names you believe the Holy Spirit is prompting you to stop judging and offer forgiveness.

SESSION 11: HOW TO FORGIVE

Proverbs 20:22 (ESV)

Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

What should you do when you discover you have been judging and condemning someone?

1) Consider your relationship _____

What truths do we need to acknowledge about God that would set us free from the need to judge others?

How should you resolve the distrust you have with God in these areas?

1 Peter 2:23-24 (ESV)

²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Why did Jesus act the way he did?

2) Consider your relationship with _____

Luke 23:33-34 (ESV)

³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Why did Jesus not respond in anger to those killing him?

Why were the soldiers doing what they were doing? What was their perspective and motivation?

Why is it important to understand the other person's perspective?

Ephesians 4:2, 31-32 (ESV)

² ...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love...

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

What role does humility play in offering forgiveness?

Matthew 18:35 (ESV)

So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

What does it mean to forgive from the heart?

Philippians 4:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

What role should thankfulness play?

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for

Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

What role should mission play?

If we are free, what then is the motivation for offering forgiveness?

1 John 4:10 (ESV)

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

What do the above verses teach us about how we should seek reconciliation with people who have wronged us?

Luke 15:11-24 (ESV)

¹¹ And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

In this case, why do you think the Father did not go chasing after the son when he left?

What determines when you should chase after someone versus waiting for them to come to you?

When the son did return, what was the significance of the gifts the father gave him?

Robe:

Genesis 37:3 (ESV)

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors.

Isaiah 61:10 (ESV)

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Ring:

Genesis 41:41-42 (ESV)

⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.

Sandals:

What principles might we carry from this story into our own relational conflicts?

CAUTION: The above story is a parable and as such it is designed to only illustrate one key point and cannot be taken to extremes.

In what ways do we need to be careful about using this as a sole model for forgiveness?

John 21:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him?

How was this approach to restoring the relationship different than our typical approach?

What principles might we carry from this story into our own relational conflicts?

What are some practical ways one might initiate reconciliation with someone who has wounded them and does not seem repentant?

2 Corinthians 5:18 (ESV)

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...

What does the above verse indicate about how we should approach life?

Go and be a minister of reconciliation this week!

LIVING YOUR FAITH

SESSION 12: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Review: What is the four-stage process for reconciliation when someone has wronged you?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

What should the church do if someone refuses to repent and continues in a sinful direction?

What do you think Jesus means when he says to treat such a person as you would a Gentile or a tax collector?

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (ESV)

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. ² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

³ For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. ⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

What is your initial reaction to this passage?

GOING DEEPER

1 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

What is the nature of the man's sin?

Leviticus 18:7 (NLT)

“Do not violate your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; you must not have sexual relations with her.

1 Corinthians 5:2-3 (ESV)

² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. ³ For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.

Why might the church have been proud of such a situation?

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

What is the ultimate goal of delivering the man over to Satan?

What does it mean to “deliver someone over to Satan”?

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (ESV)

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

What is the comparison to the Passover Feast?

Paul is concerned about the man’s sin, but what is his greater concern?

Have you seen situations where you could see sin sweeping through a community of people?

What would happen if the church continued to turn a blind eye to this sin?

How damaging would it be to the representation of the church if they allowed evil to run through it unchecked?

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (ESV)

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

How should we relate to a person who claims to be a Christ-follower, but defiantly chooses to continue sinning?

If we are not to dissociate with non-believers, why should we dissociate from a believer acting like a non-believer?

How many times in this entire passage does Paul say they are to put the man outside the community of faith?

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)

¹ “Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

How are we to reconcile the above passage with Matthew 7:1-5?

Why do we find it hard to apply this teaching?

**Has anyone seen this practice of church discipline applied in a church?
How was it applied and how did it conclude?**

The following passage may or may not refer back to the man in 1 Corinthians 5, but it does reveal how the church is to respond to the believer who repents of his sin.

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 (ESV)

⁵ Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. ⁶ For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, ⁷ so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹ For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. ¹⁰ Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, ¹¹ so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

If the person eventually repents, how are we as a church to respond?

What are Satan’s designs/schemes?

How do you think the church community would be affected if we had to exercise discipline within the church?

Church Discipline is always a “last resort” after every other step has been pursued to bring the person into a healthy walk with Jesus Christ.

Personal Reflection:

Is there some area in my life where I am giving into Satan’s schemes?

LIVING YOUR FAITH

SESSION 1: WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

John 4:19-24 (ESV)

¹⁹ The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” ²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

How would you define what “worship” is?

What was the woman’s focus with regard to worship?

Jesus indicates there was an old way and now a new way to worship. What was the “old” way to worship?

Why does Jesus say there is now a new way to worship? What brought about that change?

John 2:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

What is Jesus referring to in the above verse?

Revelation 21:22 (ESV)

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

WORSHIP

How might focusing worship on a person change one's approach to worship?

In what ways might we be tempted to forget this principle in our worship?

What do you think it means to worship in "spirit"?

John 3:3-7 (ESV)

³ Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Note: The Greek word (anothen) translated "again" can also mean "from above". In this story Jesus is playing with words and Nicodemus is getting very confused. Jesus is saying that no one can get to heaven unless he is born "from above" but Nicodemus is hearing born "again".

What determines whether one is born from below or born from above?

How does this understanding of the Holy Spirit affect our understanding of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman?

Why is it necessary to worship in spirit?

How does the presence of the Holy Spirit allow us to worship God as Father?

In what ways might we be tempted to not worship in spirit?

What do you think it means to worship in “truth”?

Colossians 2:17 (ESV)

These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Hebrews 9:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

How might knowing this help us understand what it means to worship in truth?

John 14:6 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

How would understanding this have changed the Samaritan woman’s perspective about worship?

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Hebrews 1:6 (ESV)

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

When we think of Old Testament worship we think of the temple, sacrifices, priests in flowing robes and animals being led through the crowds. What picture comes to your mind when you think of the worship today?

When Jesus talked about a new way to worship, do you think he was limiting it to a one hour worship service each week? How would you define worship in a broader sense?

In what way is every aspect of our life to be an act of worship?

Romans 12:1 (ESV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

How would you paraphrase the above verse?

Colossians 3:22-24 (ESV)

²² *Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.* ²³ *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,* ²⁴ *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

How were slaves to show worship to God?

If we do not do whatever we do as if we were doing it for the Lord what does that say about our understanding of worship?

How might this perspective of worship influence how we work and relate to others?

Ephesians 5:18-21 (ESV)

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

If we have not worshipped God in this way through our week, how might it affect how we worship on Sunday mornings?

How can we make everything we do an expression of worship this week?

What is one specific way you can change this week to bring glory to God through your life?

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SESSION 2: WORSHIP AND INTEGRITY

The following story of King Saul relates a tension we might experience in our worship of God. Saul was appointed by God to be the first king over Israel. Outward appearances would make one think Saul would make a wonderful king, however, inner character flaws worked against what God had called him to do.

King Saul was commanded by God to destroy the Amalekite nation (all people and animals) as God's act of judgment against them. Saul did as he was told except that he brought back their king alive along with the best of the sheep and cattle.

Read the rest of the story and consider the worship tension that is revealed.

1 Samuel 15:12-31 (ESV)

¹² And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal." ¹³ And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

¹⁴ And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?"

¹⁵ Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction."

¹⁶ Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak." ¹⁷ And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. ¹⁸ And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' ¹⁹ Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

²⁰ And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.

²¹ But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

²² And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."

²⁴ Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. ²⁵ Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD."

²⁶ And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." ²⁷ As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸ And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. ²⁹ And also the Glory of Israel will not

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lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”

³⁰ Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God.” ³¹ So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD.

What worship tension do you see in this story?

How would you define the word “integrity”?

Explain how integrity could be understood as being “undivided”?

In what ways does Saul reveal that he lacks integrity? In what ways is he divided in his character?

What internal struggle is Saul experiencing? What are some evidences of this?

What is Saul’s greatest concern in verse 30?

Matthew 22:37-38 (ESV)

³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.

How does integrity relate to how we worship God?

Have you ever discovered that while singing a worship song you were more preoccupied with how you were sounding to the people around you than you were declaring the content of the song to God? Or, did you not sing out loud out of personal insecurity?

Provide some additional examples of times when a divided heart prevents us from worshipping God in spirit and truth. Don't just focus on "worship services" as worship is so much more.

There were many times in the Old Testament when God was frustrated with the worship of the Israelites. What was the source of frustration in the following passages?

Amos 5:21-27 (ESV)

²¹ "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. ²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. ²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. ²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. ²⁵ "Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? ²⁶ You shall take up Sikkuth your king, and Kiyun your star-god—your images that you made for yourselves, ²⁷ and I will send you into exile beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

Malachi 1:6-14 (ESV)

⁶ "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?' ⁷ By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the LORD's table may be despised. ⁸ When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. ⁹ And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts. ¹⁰ Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. ¹¹ For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table

is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. ¹³ But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD. ¹⁴ Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

How would you summarize the above tension?

Leviticus 22:19-22 (ESV)

¹⁹ ...if it is to be accepted for you it shall be a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. ²⁰ You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you. ²¹ And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it. ²² Animals blind or disabled or mutilated or having a discharge or an itch or scabs you shall not offer to the LORD or give them to the LORD as a food offering on the altar.

In what ways might we struggle with a divided heart on this issue? When are we tempted to not give God our best?

What was the original purpose of offering the sacrifice and what perspectives did the Israelites forget?

What perspectives are we sometimes guilty of forgetting?

In what ways might neglecting the Lord's Table create a similar tension?

Isaiah 29:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, ¹⁴ therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

Why does God so detest people going through the motions in their life of worship?

What are some ways Jesus revealed peoples' divided heart?

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ ...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 John 4:18 (ESV)

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

In what ways does fear and anxiety reveal a divided heart?

When we do this, we live in tension between what we believe with our heads and value in our hearts. How might this affect how we worship God?

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How can we begin to be people of integrity, free to worship God in spirit and truth?

Are there some areas where you know that you have lacked personal integrity and it has interfered with living a life of true worship to God?

Can you see how living a life of integrity and worship will strengthen your relationship with others?

Are there some steps you can take this week to become a person of greater integrity?

What are some barriers you can anticipate facing?

Are there some ways this week you can joyfully offer your lives as living sacrifices to God?

How might walking in integrity, create a deeper joy in your walk with God?

SESSION 3: WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Psalm 100:1-5 (ESV)

- ¹ *Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!*
² *Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!*
³ *Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*
⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!*
⁵ *For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.*

We've spent two weeks discussing worship. How would you define worship now?

Why do you think praise is so important to God?

Is worship for God's benefit or for ours?

Acts 17:24-25 (ESV)

²⁴ *The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*

Why is it so essential for us to worship God?

1) Worship implies _____

What do you think this means?

2) Worship defines the _____ of our relationship

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What do you think we mean by this?

Psalm 100:3 (ESV)

Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

What truths does worship help us remember about God and our relationship with him?

What is the ultimate expression of worship in the New Testament?

Romans 10:9 (ESV)

...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In what ways did Jesus change the nature of the relationship we can have with God?

Romans 8:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

How did this contrast with the Old Testament?

Exodus 24:1 (ESV)

Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.

Can you think of some times when Jesus revealed this new relationship approach with God?

Matthew 6:9 (ESV)

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Matthew 19:14 (ESV)

...but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

How does our perception of God tend to change how we worship?

What is wrong with our perspectives at these times?

Psalm 33:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. ² Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! ³ Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

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Psalm 47:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!

1 Chronicles 25:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ They were all under the direction of their father in the music in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the order of the king. ⁷ The number of them along with their brothers, who were trained in singing to the LORD, all who were skillful, was 288.

Why do you think music plays such an important part of worship to God?

Why do you think we see men get more emotional at a football game than we do in a worship service?

How do you know when someone is excited at a sports game? How does it reflect in their body language?

How might Spirit-filled worship be expressed physically?

Circle the various forms of worship in the following passages.

Psalm 95:6 (ESV)

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

Psalm 134:2 (ESV)

Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the LORD!

Psalm 47:1 (ESV)

Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

Psalm 149:3 (ESV)

Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!

Revelation 4:10 (ESV)

...the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying...

Why do you think we are sometimes hesitant to worship in some of these ways?

What are some ways we could begin to have greater integrity in our worship with regard to “how” we physically worship?

Psalm 96:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! ² Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. ³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

Psalm 18:49 (ESV)

For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations, and sing to your name.

Why do you think there is such a strong connection between worship and declaring God to the nations in scripture?

Discuss the following quote:

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church.
Worship is.
Missions exists because worship doesn’t.”
John Piper

How does worship and missions relate to our understanding that we were created for Relationship and Representation?

What does a lack of mission in one’s life indicate about the nature of their worship?

What does a lack of worship reveal about one’s mission focus?

How can we take steps to go deeper in both our worship and mission focus?

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