



Sociologists tell us that we all have a private self and a public self, the one we show to others.

-- And while the world may say, “Image is everything,” we know better.

-- Public image may involve publicity campaigns and controlling “spin.”

-- But self-image is what can bring us a sense of dignified calm that doesn’t slip into arrogance and pride.

-- How wonderful it would be if we were free of hypocrisy and our public and private selves were the same.

-- Many of us privately want to be a blessing to others and yet we wonder how we could ever really accomplish this.

TR: Don’t you yearn to have your family, friends, and co-workers think . . .



... “Here comes a blessing,” when they see you approaching?
-- In our small groups we were introduced to BLESS, a simple strategy to take our private desire to be a blessing and turn it into a public reality.

TR: In our groups we reviewed . . .

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

LISTEN WITH CARE

EAT TOGETHER

SERVE WITH LOVE

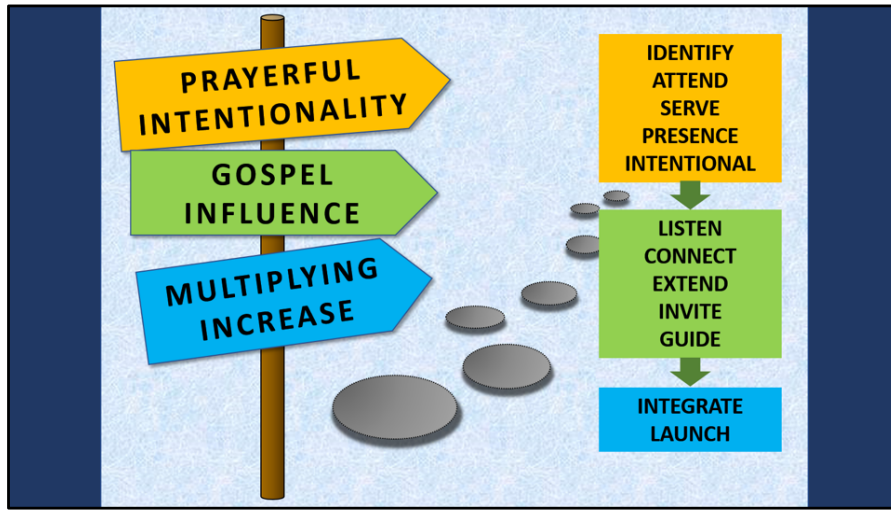
SHARE OUR STORY

... READ SLIDE

- The integration of our private desires and public actions, our motives and methods . . .
- . . . takes more than just a simple flow-chart.
- It isn't really a linear process.

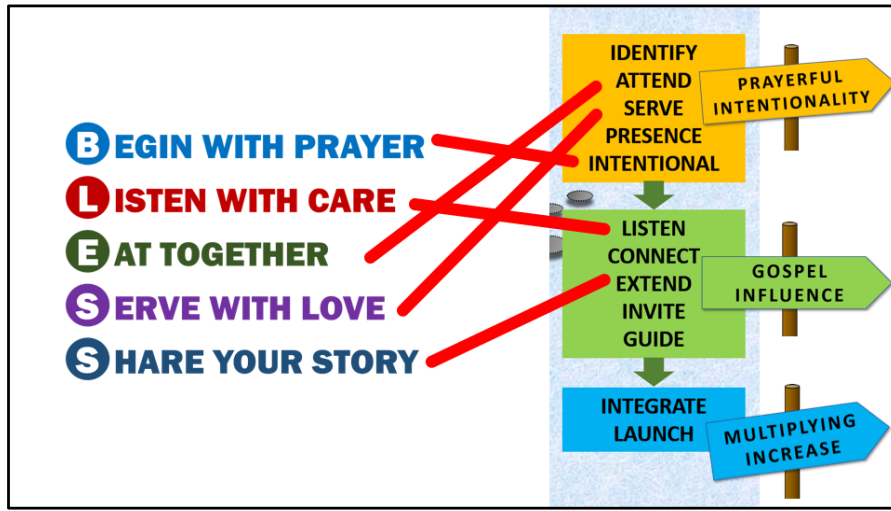
TR: We can see this when we look at THE PATH OF INFLUENCE .

..



The three signposts were . . . READ SLIDE
-- We also showed you some stepping stones along the way to those three signposts . . . READ SLIDE

TR: We are not trying to confuse you by giving you different models, but show you that the models are really very similar.



In your sermon notes you can capture how BLESS corresponds to five specific action stepping stones on the Path of Influence.

-- The order is different but that only bothers the OCD among us, who really want the disorder to be called CDO, so it can be in alphabetical order.

-- When we have FLUENCY in a language, we can have great freedom even while we remain within the constraints of grammar.

-- So, GOSPEL FLUENCY is not a rote flow chart, but a flexible process of communication and connection.

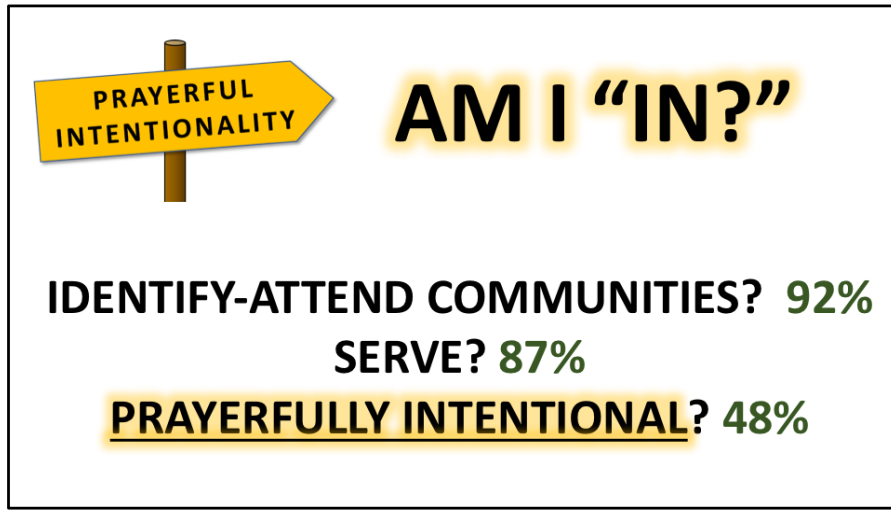
TR: Our hope is to BLESS others as a Gospel Influence, and to do that we first need to ask ourselves . . .



... "Am I IN?"

TR: That is the question of the day behind signpost number 1 . .

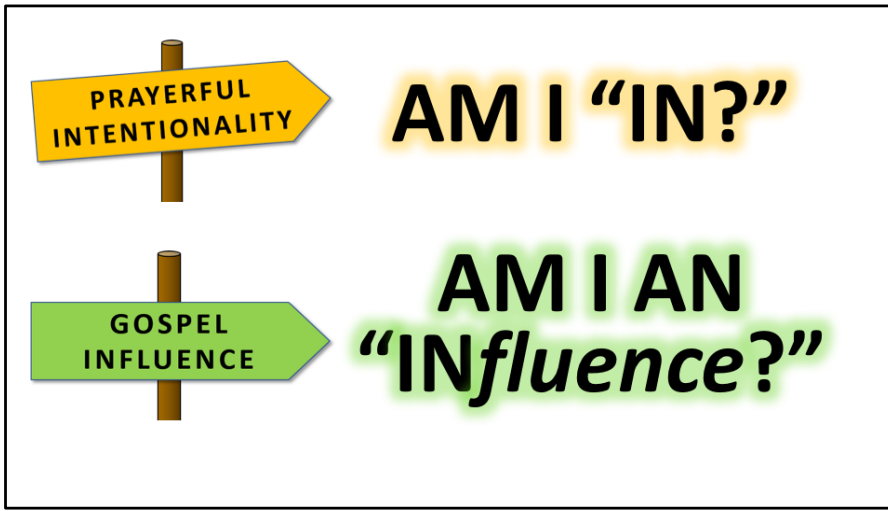
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In the recent survey I sent out to those on our email communication list, these were the results . . . READ SLIDE

- Even as BLESS says, "Begin with Prayer" . . .
- SO, AM I IN says, "Prayerful intentionality"
- "I pray before, during, and after gathering with my communities so that I can be mindful and intentional about being a salt and light influence.

TR: But our campaign of Influence can't stop there . . .

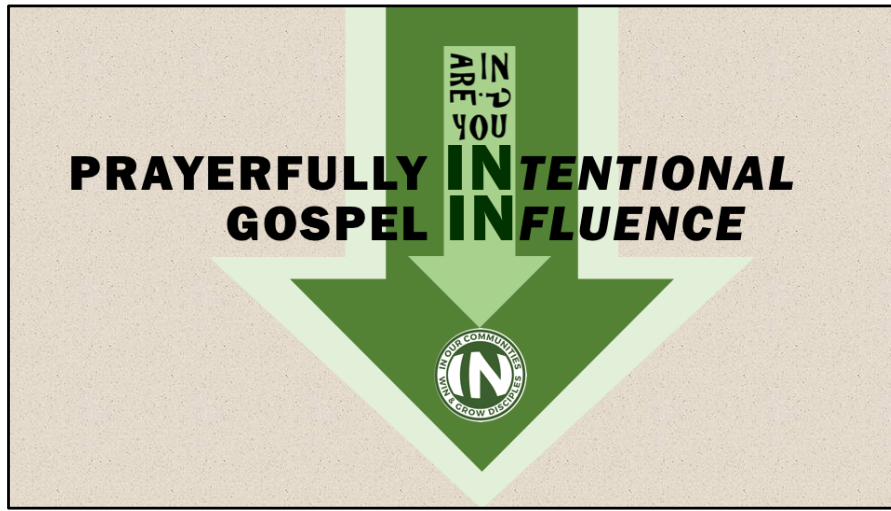


Our hope through this Fall is to spur one another on to prayerful intentionality . . .

-- AS we learn how to be an effective Gospel Influence.

-- In terms that our Youth Pastor Trevor Wickes developed, "Talk the Walk."

TR: Being Gospel Fluent helps us . . .




. . . Make the Most of Every Opportunity IN OUR COMMUNITIES to win and grow disciples who show allegiance to Jesus Christ.

-- But the answer to reaching our communities as our country has drifted further and further from any biblical understanding of truth . . .

-- . . . means we need to be winsome connectors and communicators.

TR: To not just DO gospel fluency, but to BE gospel fluent, we . .

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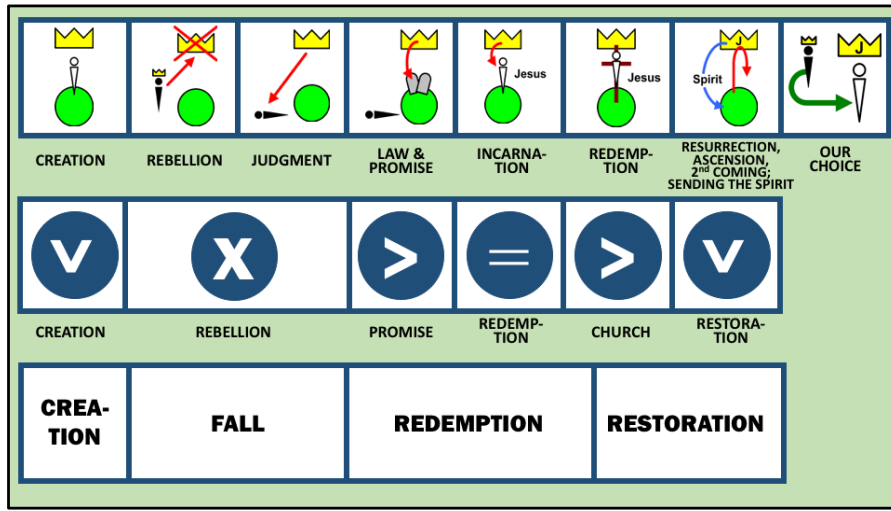
**But, first
we need to
INfluenced
by the Gospel
ourselves.**

. . . READ SLIDE

-- If we haven't really being influenced, how can we hope to be an influence?

-- Specifically: How does the Gospel connect with and impact my sense of self-worth, self-image, self-esteem, self-value? How does God's story address my insecurities and fears of inadequacy?

TR: As we ask that question and as we move this week into looking at the first 3 acts of the gospel story, we can become confused by the different models.



Just like the BLESS and the PATH OF INFLUENCE . . .

-- SO, the three models with 8 simple drawings, 6 acts, and 4 movements.

-- Before you throw up your hands in frustration, look and see how they integrate.

-- REVIEW SLIDE

-- What we want is Gospel Fluency – when it is more than just vocabulary and grammar . . . it just sounds right because you are fluent in it!

-- EX: Taking 8 years of German and by the end it “sounded” right even when I wasn’t sure of the grammatical rules.

TR: Let’s start at the beginning, all three models begin there with CREATION.

INfluenced
by the Gospel truths
about
Creation/
New Creation

As we move down our sermon notes to point number 3, we realize that we must . . . **READ SLIDE**

-- Cf. 35 years ago hearing of missionaries who needed to begin with creation in order to give context to the rest of the Gospel Story.

-- Our culture is so biblically illiterate that is exactly where we have to begin as well.

-- EX: Patrick using biblical phrase in football practice . . . “like the parting of the Red Sea” and no one knew what he was talking about.

TR: In a sense, Gospel fluency is having gospel lenses through which we look at everything in life.

A worldview . . .



**. . . it's like a belly button.
We all have one.**

This is a worldview.

-- As someone said, worldviews are like belly buttons, we all have one (James N. Anderson)

TR: The person who has been gospel saturated in their worldview, has been radically influenced by the truth of creation.

Genesis 1:26

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."

ESV

In Genesis, the first chapter in your Bibles . . . we read of creation and specifically the creation of humankind . . . READ SLIDE

-- This is the literary high point of the creation account as seen in, "And . . . and . . . and . . ." until the creation of Adam . . . "THEN"

TR: Verse 27 continues, this time in poetic form . . .

Genesis 1:27

So God created man
in his own image,
in the image of God
he created him;
male and female
he created them.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: The rest of the Bible assumes this creation of everything from nothing AND of humankind in the image of God.

Psalm 139:13-14

For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my
mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.

ESV

Psalm 139 captures a worshipper's heart when it says . . .
READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 15 continues in poetry (though I had to change the justification to make it fit the slide) . . .

Psalm 139:15-16

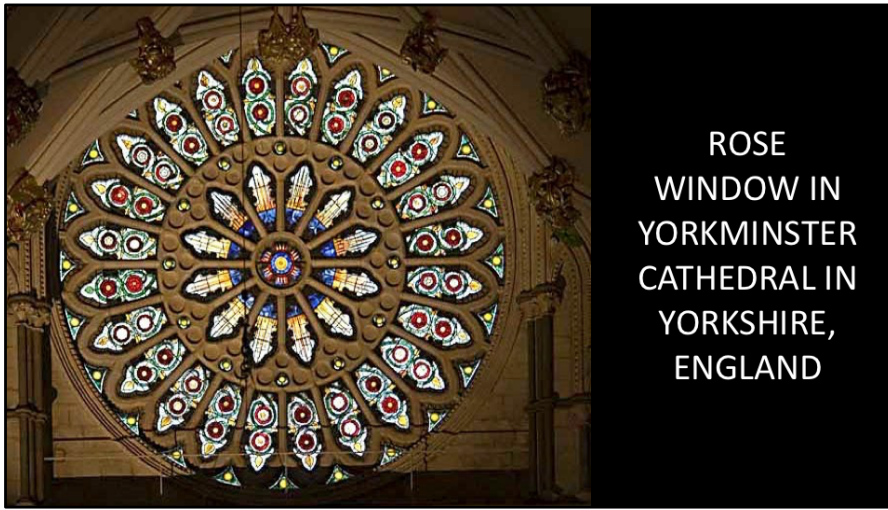
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Something powerfully changes, is influenced within us, when we allow the truth of creation to penetrate deep into our souls.

TR: Ravi Zacharias tells of a presentation he made at a leading university about what it means to be human. Just before his talk, a professor showed slides similar to these . . .

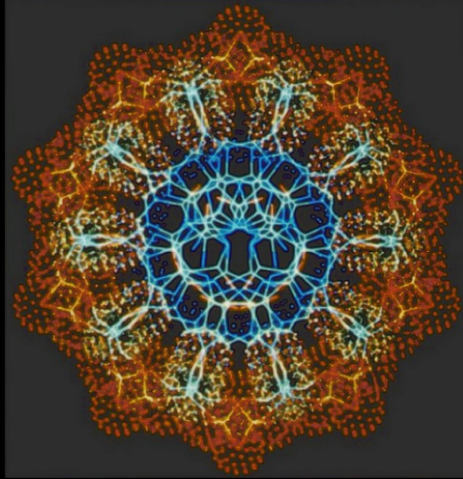


ROSE
WINDOW IN
YORKMINSTER
CATHEDRAL IN
YORKSHIRE,
ENGLAND

First, the . . . READ SLIDE

TR: And then . . .

VIEW ALONG
THE AXIS OF
THE β DNA
DOUBLE
HELIX



READ SLIDE

TR: While some will bow down to the gods of chance and fate, those who are Gospel Fluent understand that the beauty and splendor of creation is meant to draw our gaze to the awesome Creator.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ME IS . . .

I WAS **CREATED**,

And as we look from that Creator to ourselves and our self-image, we realize that we were **CREATED**.

-- From the dust . . . not naturalistic nor theistic evolution. It is to the dust that we will return.

-- Creation was ex nihilo, from nothing. God created in freedom and with purpose, and therefore human life can be meaningful, intelligent, and purposeful.

-- I am not just highly evolved primoradial slime.

TR: I was created . . .

THE TRUTH ABOUT ME IS . . .

I WAS CREATED,
. . . BY **GOD**,

. . . by **GOD**.

-- We were created by a direct act of God, a face to face encounter

TR: I was created by God . . .

THE TRUTH ABOUT ME IS . . .

I WAS CREATED,
. . . BY GOD,
. . . IN HIS **IMAGE**,

. . . in HIS IMAGE.

-- Ravi Zacharias in answering, “What does it mean to be human?” “It means we are created in the image of God for the glorious reality of being in permanent fellowship with Him.”

-- This image involves: rational understanding, moral obedience, religious communion.

-- It is found even in fallen people as Genesis 5 and 9 makes clear.

TR: The image of God is not the “likeness” of God . . . looking like Him. That’s how we end up being focused only on the outward appearance like the Calvin, not of theological fame . . .



READ SLIDE

-- Creation teaches us that we all have a core identity, even though it has been besmirched by the fall and by sin.

TR: That makes me jump ahead in God's story to redemption and restoration. Even though we want to stay with the first of the 4 movements, 6 acts, or 8 simple drawings.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ME IS . . .

**I WAS CREATED,
. . . BY GOD,
. . . IN HIS IMAGE,
. . . AND I CAN BE RESTORED TO
THIS IMAGE THROUGH **CHRIST.****

READ SLIDE

-- Perhaps we should say, “to the fullness of this image” since we still bear the image.

TR: Consider these passages . . .

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: And also . . .

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

ESV

**2 Corinthians 3 . . . Note typo in notes (NOT 1 Corinthians) . . .
READ SLIDE**

TR: And in Ephesians and Colossians we read . . .

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

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: And . . .

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

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Many of the longer term attenders may be tempted to roll their eyes and say, “This is so basic.” But, I believe the majority of us continue to struggle with our sense of self-identity, self-worth, self-image, self-esteem, self-value.

**THESE TRUTHS CAN
INfluence
ME TO BE . . .**

We need to see how these truths can influence us and then let them do that.

TR: When we put on the gospel lenses . . . when we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us through the renewing of our minds with the truth of creation, we will become . . .

THESE TRUTHS CAN INFLUENCE ME TO BE . . .

30

HUMBLE,

. . . HUMBLE.

- The truth of creation is that we are NOT the Creator.
- Humility is more than just assuming that we shouldn't apply for a spot on the Trinity.
- "Humility is not denying the power you have but admitting that the power comes through you, not from you." (Smith, p. 45)

TR: Psalm 8 captures this humility . . .

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴**what is man** that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: God is God and I am not. But I can, through Christ, be His and so I can become . . .

THESE TRUTHS CAN *influence ME TO BE . . .*

32

HUMBLE,
CALM,

. . . CALM.

-- We can be CALM because we were created by God . . . the One Who has revealed Himself as the Source of all, He is the Almighty, He is Sovereign, He is Wise,

-- And then we learn even more . . . He is loving . . . He is Love itself.

-- And that He is unchanging . . . we have a solid rock on which to build our lives.

-- The truth of creation reminds us that we do not have to be “The Manager of the Universe” (as one goofy T-shirt put it . . . imagine what one is saying if that is a gift you give someone.

EX: My being comfortable with Kathy driving over a bridge, but less so when “I’m in charge.” God, the Creator, is in charge! He is driving!

TR: As creation and new creation truths impact us we also will find ourselves becoming more . . .

THESE TRUTHS CAN INFLUENCE ME TO BE . . .

HUMBLE,
CALM,
DIGNIFIED.

33

. . . dignified.

-- Not arrogant or presumptuous, but dignified.

TR: Psalm 8 addressed this as well . . .

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and **crowned him with glory and honor.**
⁶You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

ESV

READ SLIDE

- As parents, we often have to stop siblings from running one another down. But, we also need to stop people running themselves down.**
- Humility is seeing ourselves as God sees us.**
- Dignity is living with gratitude for how God now sees us, created in His image, and re-created through Christ.**

TR: The truth of creation must influence us in how we see ourselves, but it also must change how we look at others . . .

**THE TRUTH ABOUT
HUMANITY IS . . .
ALL WERE CREATED BY GOD
IN HIS IMAGE,
EVEN THOUGH
WE ARE ALL FALLEN**

READ SLIDE

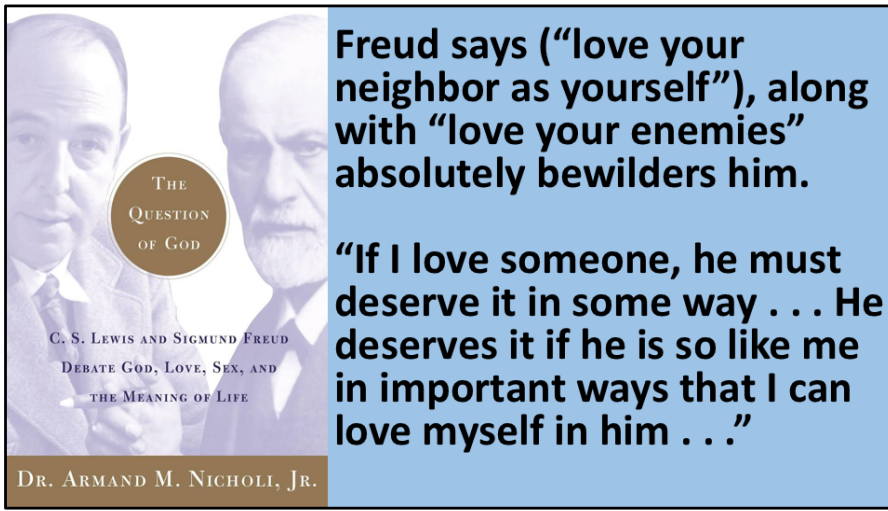
- For the gospel fluent, for the ones who have been deeply influenced by the gospel . . .
- . . . there is no room for bigotry, racism, classism,
- . . . there is no room for Nazi-ethics, for ethnic cleansing, for dog-eat-dog oppression of those weaker than we are . . . at this moment.

TR: Gospel fluency, when we have been influenced to the core of our identity, we will . . .

THESE TRUTHS CAN
Inspire ME TO . . .
LOVE STRANGERS
AND EVEN MY ENEMIES

. . . be inspired to . . . **READ SLIDE**

TR: I reviewed again a book I read a while ago that compared the teaching of C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud.



Freud says (“love your neighbor as yourself”), along with “love your enemies” absolutely bewilders him.

“If I love someone, he must deserve it in some way . . . He deserves it if he is so like me in important ways that I can love myself in him . . .”

At one point, the author says . . . READ SLIDE

-- Freud’s worldview, his lens through which he saw the world, made love something that has to be reciprocal.

-- “If I do this, shouldn’t you do that?”

-- But God showed us His love, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

TR: Whether influenced by Freud or others, everyone around us has a . . .

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

LISTEN WITH CARE

EAT TOGETHER

SERVE WITH LOVE

SHARE OUR STORY

. . . self-identity.

-- As we **BEGIN WITH PRAYER** and **LISTEN WITH CARE** we will be able to see what lenses they are using to see themselves and others.

-- **AND**, if we have been deeply influenced ourselves by the truth that we were created by God in His image and can be restored to this image through Christ . . .

-- . . . we will be able to let them look through our lenses and perhaps begin to see the world in an all new way.

-- **EX**: My roommate letting me try on his glasses.