

LIVING CHOICES

Class 3 – Loving One Another


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LOVING ONE ANOTHER


- Human Dignity Over Dehumanization
- Charity Over Acquisition
- Love Over Fear
- Conclusion



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HUMAN DIGNITY OVER DEHUMANIZATION


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²⁷ So God created humans in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

⁸ Now a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. (Exodus 1:8-12)



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DEHUMANIZATION

To dehumanize is to deny the value and worth of an individual or group as an excuse to deny them rights, justice, aid, and even life, often with the goal to secure or boost one's position, privilege, or power.



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DEHUMANIZATION

- Dehumanization is a slow and insidious process (Brené Brown)
 - We disagree, are offended, or are hurt
 - We begin to see others as less than human
 - We begin to lose our willingness and ability to listen, communicate, and empathize
 - Our inhibitions against degrading and harming others are subverted (Brené Brown quoting David Smith)
 - Others fall outside our moral code



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DEHUMANIZATION

- It is “the primary instrument of violence that has been used in every genocide recorded throughout history.”¹
- Given it is a process, it must never be tolerated in any form.¹
- It diminishes and ruins our own humanity and society²

(¹Brené Brown, ²David Gushee and Brené Brown)



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WAYS WE DEHUMANIZE

- Numerous, including the subtle and obvious
- All have existed since the beginning of known civilization
- We see examples throughout scripture
- Even God’s chosen people practice dehumanization
- Scripture includes numerous attempts to address dehumanization
 - The Flood
 - The Law
 - The Prophets
 - Exile and Restoration
 - Christ’s work
 - Spread of the Gospel
 - Letters of guidance and instruction to the churches



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WAYS WE DEHUMANIZE

- We use and exploit others for our personal benefit
 - We value things and use people (Kyle Allen)
 - We look for what is useful without concern for what is just (Alexis de Tocqueville quoted by Marilynne Robinson)
- We measure others and ourselves by busyness, productivity, and accomplishments
- We envy and idolize others; fawning and then pillaging



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WAYS WE DEHUMANIZE

- We bully
- Our economic system:
 - Is based on competitive struggle and “the survival of the fittest.” (Daniel M. Bell, Jr. and John Kenneth Galbraith)
 - What we consume appears to us miraculously, without any discernable connection to the social costs of their production. (Daniel M. Bell, Jr.)
 - Market investments provide returns disconnected from social costs (Yuval Noah Harari)
 - Many feel we cannot afford provisions to create or sustain justice and individual dignity (Marilynne Robinson)



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WAYS WE DEHUMANIZE

- We isolate ourselves and talk “about” rather than “with” others, making it easier to judge and dehumanize (Curt Thompson)
- The reputation of a system or those in power is more important than human dignity (Brené Brown)
- We use dehumanizing language (Brené Brown), e.g. rats, cockroaches, savages, pedophiles, baby killers, communists, deplorables
- We accept inhumane treatment of prisoners, view penalties as retaliation, and limit the pathway back into society
- Social media provides the opportunity to dehumanize anonymously, with little accountability (Brené Brown)



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WAYS WE DEHUMANIZE

- We let slights, disappointments, and disapproval lead to contempt and disgust (Brené Brown)
 - Contempt is the conviction of the worthlessness of another; there can be no compromise because the other is dismissed (Arthur C. Brooks and Pamela Meyer)
 - In disgust, the other is repulsive; we want to avoid being poisoned by them (Brené Brown)
- We divert blame and scapegoat



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HOW WE DEHUMANIZE

- To help us organize the stimuli that constantly bombard us, our brain is better at individualizing faces that look like us and tends to categorizing the rest (Jennifer L. Eberhardt)



Mr. Raymond and Mr. John
on a GoTriangle bus



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HUMAN DIGNITY

Human dignity says that all people are of inherent value and worth. We are born with human dignity and never lose it. As such, all humans always should be treated as having value and worth.



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BASIS FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

- We were created by God in God’s image (Genesis 1:27)
- God is:
 - **Love:** we are made to live in a relationship of love with God and others
 - **Just:** being in relationship necessitates accountability for one’s actions and how they affect others
 - **Creative:** we have imagination and the capability to care for and change our world which necessitates responsibility
- These gifts of God are the basis for human dignity, as well as humanity’s meaning and purpose



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BASIS FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

- If humanity exists by random chance
 - Humanity’s existence and our individual lives are without meaning or purpose
 - There is no basis for human dignity (Francis A. Schaeffer)
 - Others are competitors to be vanquished or persons to be exploited
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 1 states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”



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IMPLICATIONS OF HUMAN DIGNITY

- Each human life has a place in the community of humanity
- Failure, loss or marginalizing of any one person diminishes the community
- Thus, we must:
 - Insist on the dignity of all persons
 - Be diligent and aware. Dehumanizing rhetoric and images are everywhere
 - Repent of past dehumanization, rehumanize (Brené Brown), and seek reconciliation
 - Seek the common good (Andy Crouch)



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EVERYONE YOU ENCOUNTER IS AN IMAGE OF GOD

- This implies that any encounter in life is a holy vision
- This encounter is asking from you not just admiration but:
 - What does this moment want from me?
 - What does God want from me?

(Marilynne Robinson based on John Calvin)



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SMALL GROUPS

- Share a time when you were dehumanized or witnessed a friend or family member dehumanized and how did it make you feel?
- Share examples of dehumanizing words and actions in our country today? If they continue, where might it lead?
- What could you as an individual do to push back, even in small ways?



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CHARITY OVER ACQUISITION


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“¹⁵ And he [Jesus] said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” (Luke 12:15)

²⁴No one can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and wealth.
(Matthew 6:24)




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TWO ECONOMIES

Economy of Acquisition	Economy of Charity
The autonomous individual rules	We are one body
The individual is a self-interest maximizer	Community united in shared purpose and the common good ¹
Neither owe nor properly expect anything from others	We are our brother and sister’s keeper ²
Unrestricted individual choices with little concern for external consequences ³	Consider impact on others and environment when making choices

(Daniel M. Bell, Jr. except ¹Andy Crouch ²Daniela C Augustine ³Marilynne Robinson [external consequences])



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TWO ECONOMIES

Economy of Acquisition	Economy of Charity
Human relations are ordered as competition, struggle, conflict and “survival of the fittest” ^{1,2}	Human relations are ordered as mutual servanthood seeking the “flourishing of all” ^{3,4}
Giving, receiving, and gratitude are burdens	Giving is an expression of our need for one another
Giving is done for advantage or demonstration of one’s invulnerability	Giving is an act of gratitude
One needs nothing that cannot be bought and if it has no dollar value it has no value	Receive true riches ¹

(¹Daniel M. Bell, Jr. ²C.S. Lewis
³Margaret Visser ⁴Marilynne Robinson) 23



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JUSTICE IN THE TWO THE ECONOMIES

Economy of Acquisition	Economy of Charity
There is not enough ¹	God gives all that all need to flourish ¹
Focus on enforcing the terms of voluntary, contractual exchanges ¹	Legal ² and economic systems promote the general welfare
Wealth is earned	All we have is a gift from God
That some flourish and some perish is not unjust ¹	Failure to assist those in need makes us guilty of injustice ¹ (Jeremiah 22:13-16)
Redistributing wealth is an act of injustice ¹	“Jubilee” (new beginnings for all) is a part of God’s economy ³ (Deuteronomy 15:7-11)

(¹Daniel M. Bell, Jr.
²Christopher J.H. Wright ³Derek Tidball) 24



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RELIGION OF CONSUMERISM

- Most religions promise paradise, if one meets wonderful ideals that nobody manages to live up to
- Today, the capitalist/consumerist religion offers paradise if:
 - The rich remain greedy and spend their time investing and making more money
 - The masses give free reign to their cravings and passions – and buy more and more
- It is the first religion whose followers do what they are asked to do.
- How do we know we will get paradise? We've seen it on television.

(Yuval Noah Harari)

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SCRIPTURE ON ACQUISITION

- Exodus 22:21-24—Do not oppress a resident alien or abuse a widow or orphan
- Leviticus 19:13—Do not defraud your neighbor; steal; or delay paying the wages of your workers
- Amos 5:10-11—Because you trample the poor, you will not live in your stone houses or drink the wine of your vineyards
- Amos 8:1-8—God will not spare Israel; you sell grain on the Sabbath, deceive with false scales, buy the poor with silver and needy for a pair of sandals; and sell the sweepings of wheat
- Matthew 6:19-21—Do not store up treasures on earth
- Matthew 6:24—No one can serve two masters
- Matthew 6:25-33—Do not worry, God knows your needs. Seek first God's kingdom and all these will be given to you as well
- Luke 18:18-25—It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God

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SCRIPTURE ON CHARITY

- Leviticus 19:9-10—Leave part of your harvest for the needy
- Deuteronomy 15:1-11—”Jubilee,” remission of debt incurred by the needy
- Zechariah 7:9-10—Render true judgments, do not oppress the alien or those in need, show kindness and mercy
- Matthew 6:2-4—Give your alms in secret
- Acts 20:35—More blessed to give than receive
- James 2:14-17—Faith without works for those in need is dead
- 1 John 3:17—How does God’s love abide in those who refuse to help the needy?



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DEFINITION OF CHARITY

Giving out of caring
for those that receive one’s gifts
(Margaret Visser)



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CHARITABLE ACTIONS ARE:

- Works of mercy (Luke 10:36-37)
- About human flourishing (renewing human relations) and not merely sustaining bare biological life
- About renewed relations that embody the truth that life does not consist of an abundance of possessions (Luke 12:15)
- An act of justice, not an act of pity
- Acts where merit and desert are not ruling considerations—all we have are gifts of God to be used for God’s purposes

(Daniel M. Bell, Jr.)

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GIVING IS AN ACT OF:

- *Gratitude* to God for the many blessings God as given us
- *Love*, recognizing:
 - Our interdependence
 - God’s desire that we share our abundance so that no one is without the necessities of life
- *Faith* in God that God will supply all our future needs

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IN GIVING WE CAN FIND:

- *Security* in our greater reliance on God to supply our needs
- *Contentment* in our lessened reliance on acquisition and consumption to give our lives meaning
- *Abundance* in our greater reliance on the shared resources of a community of faith and the true riches of service
- *God is glorified* as others offer thanks to God for our generosity
- *Our humanity* (what God intends us to be) as we learn the lessons that practicing charity teach



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SMALL GROUPS

- What makes acquisition easy and charity hard?
- Which is easier for you, anonymous giving or working together with those in need? Why?
- Why is it easy to resent or demonize those in need?



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LOVE OVER FEAR

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¹⁶ . . . God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:16-19)




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“Perfect love may cast out fear, but fear is remarkably potent in casting out love.”

(P.D. James)



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FEAR OVER LOVE: BEGINNINGS

Genesis 3:6-13	Knowledge Gained	Outcome
Eyes opened/naked/made loincloths	Vulnerability	Shame
Afraid/hid	Fear	Separation
Have you eaten/she gave me/serpent tricked me	Accountability	Blame



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WHAT WE FEAR

■ We fear others:

- Conflict
- Criticism, rejection, humiliation, and disconnection^{1,2}
- Being taken advantage of
- Being injured or killed

■ We fear inadequacy:

- Weakness and vulnerability
- Being ordinary
- Not measuring up^{1,2}
- Making mistakes²
- Failure¹

(¹Brene Brown, ²Curt Thompson)



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WHAT WE FEAR

■ We fear loss of:

- Status and power²
- Control and independence
- Financial means and possessions
- Connection

■ We fear change

- That cherished institutions will lose their meaning or disappear

- That we will be judged obsolete, out-of-it, or ignorant
- That our children will follow the will of a changing society rather than the will of God
- That we will be caught in the crossfire should God act in judgment on our society.

(²Curt Thompson)



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FEAR CATERES TO OUR LESSER INSTINCTS

- Self-righteousness, posturing, and selfishness (Brené Brown)
- Anger, blame, spite, aggression, and retaliation
- Unethical behavior (Brené Brown)
- Withdrawal, isolation, life paralysis (Brené Brown) and hiding our talents (Marilynne Robinson) (Matthew 25:14-30)
- Feeling coerced or threatened by the differences of others
- Sacrificing freedom and integrity for order and security
- Silence on societal injustice



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AS FEARFUL CHRISTIANS, WE:

- Forget God tells us to fear not^{1,2} (Psalm 23)
- Forget what God has done in the past and despair
- Forget our fallibility and judge
- Speak of ourselves “threatened and embattled”¹
- Approach “the rest of the country cowering and threatening and wagging our fingers” and declaring our “exceptional piety”¹

(¹Marilynne Robinson, ²Michael Gerson/Peter Wehner)



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AS FEARFUL CHRISTIANS, WE:

- Focus on not being like others rather than being like Jesus (Christian Cleveland)
- Orient our lives around avoiding threats (Christian Cleveland)
- Think God’s truth and purposes hinge solely on us (Marilynne Robinson)
 - Enlist the state to protect our version of Christianity
 - Use and misuse political power to ban activities we see as contrary to God’s will, yet are common in society



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LOVE IS A VERB

- Love manifests itself in the sphere of deliberate and obedient action in response to God’s self-revelation in Christ rather than emotion (John Stott)
- John 3:16—For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (Sarah Ruden)
 - English translation by necessity uses adjectives to describe love
 - Original Greek has only verbs, e.g. in Greek “love is patient” is “love patients” and “live is kind” is “love kinds”



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WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE ALL

- Live in harmony and peaceably with all (Romans 12:16)
- Love your enemies (Matthew 5:43-48) (Luke 6:32-36)

It seems to me, people tend to forget that we are to love our enemies, not to satisfy some standard of righteousness, but because God their Father loves them.”

(Reverend Ames in Marilynne Robinson’s novel *Gilead*)



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WHY LOVE ALL?

- God is love and first loved us (1 John 4:7-21)
- So others will know we are Jesus’ disciples (John 13:34-35)
- Loving God and neighbor underlies the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:37-40)
- There is no fear in love (1 John 4:18)
- So we can walk in the light and there is no cause for stumbling (1 John 2:7-11)
- If we love one another God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:15-17)



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LOVE IN COMMUNITY

- Our words and actions should build and enhance the health of the human community (Robert W. Wall)
- There is no place for words or actions that:
 - Break or damage social bonds
 - Take advantage of others
 - Treat others as things to be used.



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LOVE IN COMMUNITY

- Love is learned (Maia Szalavitz and Bruce D. Perry)
- We can only love, if we have been loved (Brian Edgar)
- In our culture today, we see the unloved:
 - Focus on trying to gain love rather than showing love (Brian Edgar)
 - Exhibit hatred for and retaliation against a community that shows them no love and did not teach them how to love



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WHEN ACTING IN LOVE, REMEMBER:

- This is ‘tough love’ because it is tough on the believer who loves (Darrell L. Bock)
- This is ‘radical love’ because:
 - It calls for denying oneself
 - May require accepting radical changes in the way we live
 - It is a love of service and meekness (Darrell L. Bock)
- “Love becomes sentimental if it is not strengthened by truth, and truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love.” (John Stott) (1 John 3:16-18)
- Joy and peace are love’s by-products. God gives them, not when we pursue them, but when we pursue God and others in Love. (John Stott)



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- To love everyone selflessly is a lot harder than to sober up, stop fighting, and behave decently, or to bring justice to the weak, or to accommodate a spouse, or to deeply respect authority, or even to be open to whatever status in life God’s purpose and providence may grant.”
- “It might be possible if love is not an ethereal, abstract standard, an impossible assignment written in lightening on a rock, but a living God.”
- “Suppose the love people need to carry out loves them and helps them, sometimes through the other people it loves, and sometimes merely as itself. Suppose that, though human beings fail most of the time, love never does.”

(Sarah Ruden)



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KNOWING LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS

A love story
(Maxie D. Dunnam)



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SMALL GROUPS

- The previous nine choices can help reinforce acting out of love or acting out of fear. For example, while empathizing is an act of love, distance makes it easier to avoid uncomfortable, uncertain, and difficult situations.
- Consider such connections for several of the other choices

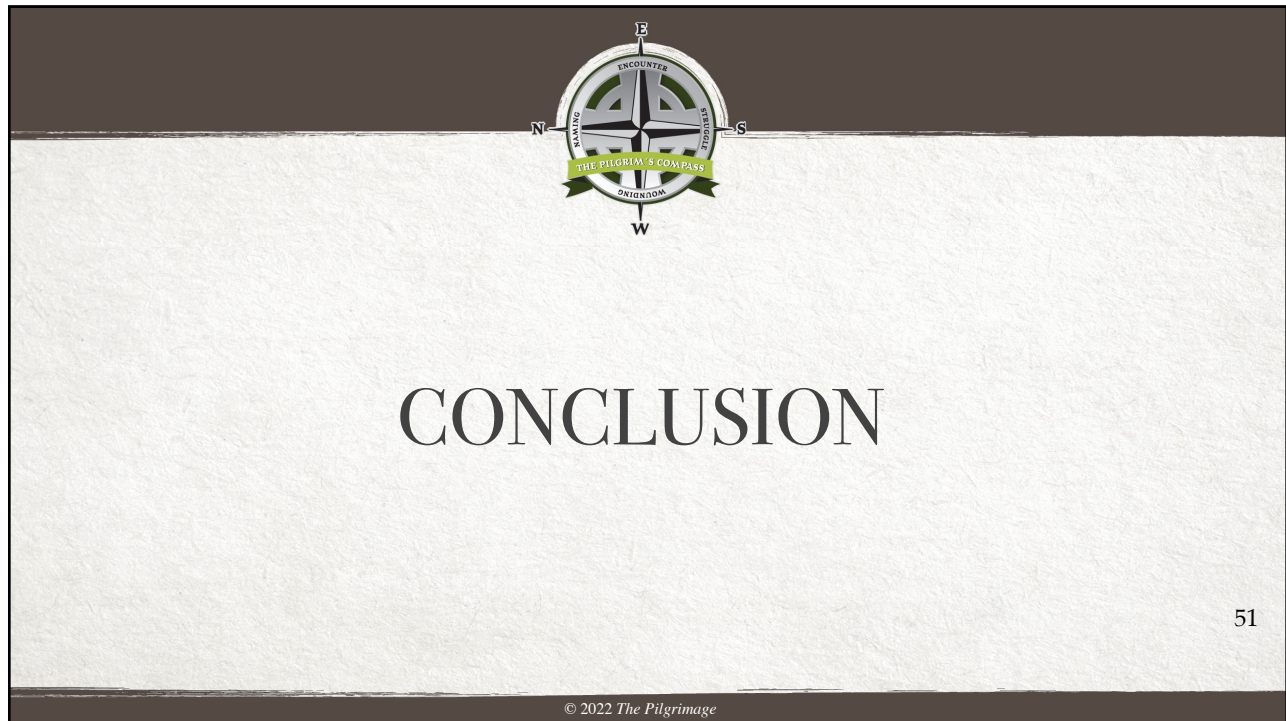
- Interdependence over individualism
- Relationships over rules
- Oneness over sameness
- Recognition over tolerance
- Empathy over distance
- Grace over retribution
- Service over self
- Human dignity over dehumanization
- Charity over acquisition



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COMPLETING THIS COURSE FOR CREDIT

- Attend each class and participate
- Within 30 days following course completion complete two activities
 - Consider and make a personal list of your own living choices
 - Complete one of the following:
 - Read and consider the “Related Scripture & Quotes” handouts for the three classes OR
 - Read and consider a biography of a man or woman of faith

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MY OTHER CHOICES

- For interaction with others
 - Inquiry over preconception and party
 - Trust over suspicion
 - Civility over derision
 - Problem-solving over blame
 - Encouragement over discouragement



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MY OTHER CHOICES

- For viewing and treating myself:
 - Being over doing
 - Connection over disengagement
 - Mindfulness over distraction
 - Place over status
 - Play over self-control
 - Integrity over pretense
 - Humility over pride
 - My best over perfection
 - Gratitude over entitlement
 - Assurance over security
 - Joy over anxiety



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The logo is a circular emblem with a compass rose in the center. The cardinal directions are labeled: N (North), E (East), S (South), and W (West). The words 'ENCOUNTER', 'STUDIES', 'ORIGINATOR', and 'PLANNING' are arranged around the compass rose. A banner across the center of the compass reads 'THE PILGRIM'S COMPASS'.


HOPE OVER DESPAIR

the Holy Spirit kindles hope

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These materials are based on a concept by and were prepared by John Page (of Cary, NC) in consultation with The Rev. Dr. Paul H. Lang for *The Pilgrimage*, a ministry of the Presbyterian Foundation's The Institute of Church Renewal, Presbyterian Church (USA)

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