**Unwrapping Spiritual Blessings**

**From the Book of Ephesians**

**A close up of a cage

Description generated with high confidence**

**The Profound Mystery of Christ and His Bride**

**------------------------A Discipling Series------------------------**

**Virginia P. Porter**

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Scriptures used are from the NET Bible and the King James version of the Holy Bible.

See notations after each passage referenced.

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**Dedication**

To my daddy

**Foreword**

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Introduction



**Introduction**

**Ephesians 1:3 (KJV)**

***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.***

My husband and I were newlyweds when we decided to open a wedding boutique. For the first seven years of marriage, Art pursued a career in engineering, and I dressed brides for their weddings. The themes of love, marriage, brides, and weddings are woven throughout the tapestry of my life. What little girl doesn’t dream of such things? Given that I come from so much brokenness in these areas, even verbalizing this, seems a bit disingenuous. From the outside looking in, I seemed to have life all figured out. In reality, I was a broken woman, from a broken home, in a broken marriage. Something was missing, but what could it be? In hindsight, I know that the Lord was at work, using every void to till the soil of my heart in preparation it for Himself. At twenty-seven years old, Jesus found me. He didn’t fix my marriage or instantaneously heal every area of brokenness, but His love changed me. It’s been some thirty years now and He is still changing me.

Intrinsically I knew that the Bible held the answers. But I hadn’t an inkling how to find them. Then again, what babe in Christ does? I returned to the small country church where I grew up, immersed myself, and growing family, in church life. Something was still missing.

Right from the start, the Lord gave me an insatiable hunger and thirst for His Word. Over the years, the quest to know Him has not diminished one bit--it’s only intensified. suppose the mystery of Christ and His bride first peaked my interest in the book of Ephesians, but it was the life altering truths it contains that have held me there. For the last eight years I have plumbed the depths of the book, attempting to surface with some comprehension of the inexhaustible wealth therein. I’ve concluded that I’ll never reach the bottom. Even so, it’s too late now, I’m in to deep.

Word by word, verse by verse, one soul healing truth upon another, He has revealed Himself to me. In awestruck wonder, I have unearthed enumerable blessings for the bride of Christ. Such as, having a new heavenly address, the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, embracing God as my daddy, becoming better acquainted with the person of the Holy Spirit, and lastly, my new multiethnic family. That’s just the tip of the iceberg. There is such an abundant of heavenly mammon that my heart must download what’s been inscribed there to make room for more. Hence, the writing of this series. That is how the Lord works. It’s the principle of the sower from Matthew 13. I cannot hoard what He gives me. If I don’t share it, I lose it. I give away freely what He gives, then He gives more. Whatever it takes, I want more. More understanding of my heavenly Father, more revelation of the divine mysteries afforded me in the person of the Holy Spirit, and more of the fullness of my Redeemer seated at the right Hand of God.

God’s manifold wisdom, the mysteries of His Kingdom, His eternal blueprint, are the inheritance of the bride of Christ. Like extravagant wedding gifts, bequest to us from the heavenly Father, they are ours in order that God’s glory can be manifest through us (1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Luke 8:10). Paul was entrusted with twenty such gifts and unwraps them for us in his epistles. Six of them are in the book of Ephesians.

What began as a twelve-week study, has morphed into this series entitled *The Profound Mystery of Christ and His Bride*. If you did book one, *Spiritual Matchmaking,* then you know that I’ve had some success at matchmaking. But that’s not what the book is about. As the name implies, in book one, cupids’ arrow was aimed at introducing people to the heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus. That’s the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19). Hence, the title -- *Spiritual Matchmaking.* The intended target of this second book is the bride of Christ- the church. If you are totally confused at this point, and have no idea what I am talking about, I implore you to please read *Spiritual Matchmaking* first. Then this will all make sense.

Just to clarify, the church, and bride of Christ, are people who have believed on Christ Jesus for salvation, been twice born and purchased by God through the blood of His Son – the heavenly Bridegroom and lover of your soul. This study is written for His bride. As a woman whose been married, by the grace of God, for three decades, I write from the framework of my personal context. That said, before you decide if this study is for you, I’ll add this caveat: Regardless of your station of life, be it single, divorced, or widowed, **this is *not* a Bible study about marriage. It’s about our union with God in Christ. Y**our marital status is inconsequential. What matters is that God’s Word is living, relevant and if you will lean in and apply your heart to seek Him, Jesus will meet you in the pages of your Bible.

The bride of Christ is the target of this study, but what specifically, is its purpose? In short, the aim of this study is to fulfill Jesus’ last command and Great Commission. Let me explain. Once a person’s been properly introduced to the Lord Jesus, and accepted His proposal, it’s sort of like getting married. Everything is new, and exciting, yet unfamiliar. Both spiritually and physically speaking, we are treading on sacred, yet, uncharted ground. How’s a woman supposed to deal with all these life altering changes? Particularly, when she doesn’t have godly role models in which to pattern her life after (Titus 2:3-13). Herein lies the million-dollar question. Actuality, this study was birthed out of my own predicament and quest to find the answer. After thirty years of ministering to women in the church, I’m convinced I’m not alone. The good news is, this Bible study is intended to get you started on this life transforming journey, but you can’t go solo (Ecclesiastes 4:9-13).

Perhaps, you have just met the Lord Jesus, or maybe you have been a Christian for years. Either way, if you will approach this study with an open mind and heart, you’ll be pleasantly surprised by all the practical and profound lessons we can learn together as we unpack the extravagant gifts bestowed on us by our heavenly Father in the book of Ephesians. Prepare to be blessed.

**How to Use This Book**

Here are a few instructions before we begin. While it is helpful if you have completed the first book in this series, *Spiritual Matchmaking*, it is not required. Ultimately, the goal of this Bible study is not knowledge. It’s knowing God intimately and becoming His disciple. So, you need a Bible, or at least a Bible app such as Bible.is or Bible.org. The important thing is that you pick the translation that is easiest for you to comprehend.

This study is meant to be done in small groups of women. Jesus choose a group of twelve. Then He divided the twelve into three groups of four. Although, a community of two believers (with the Holy Spirit joining you) can make a perfect number also. The point is to build spiritual relationships! So please invite a friend or two to join you.

The questions at the end of each week’s lesson are there to help you getting better acquainted with one another. But most of the questions do not require a right or wrong answer. Their purpose is to stimulate conversation about what we have learned. We want to take this ancient Holy Text and learn to make personal relevant life application. If all this works as intended, God’s unchangeable Truth will bring hope, help, direction, and purpose into each one of our lives.

**Week #1**

**Setting the Stage**



### Key Passage

### Ephesians 1:15-18 (KJV)

### *For this reason,because Ihave heardof your faith in the Lord Jesus and your lovefor all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember youin my prayers. I pray thatthe God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him, – since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened– so that you may know what is the hope of his calling,what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints.*

### 

**Introduction**

It’s been said that the devil is in the details. I beg to differ. As I see it, the story is in the details, and the more the better. My husband, on the other hand, just wants the facts. For instance, he tells me, “I talked to so and so today.” Then he will leave it at that. I proceed to bombard him with questions: “Where were you? Who else was there? What did they say? What was your response? All he offers is a few bullet points. It’s so frustrating. Facts are fine, but they don’t tell the whole story; they are just snapshots.

Inquisitive by nature, I approach Bible study this way. By asking questions about the text I ‘m studying, I gather as much information as I can. Then the big picture comes into focus. Collecting the Biblical facts, not only helps me maintain the integrity of interpterion, it’s the means to the end—which is seeing God in His story. When I find Him, He begins to rewrite my story. And that, my friend, is transformational.

If you did book one, *Spiritual Matchmaking*, then you’ll know that I love to pull the gospel metaphors from the Old Testament. That said, while this study is primarily based on the first three chapters of Ephesians, we’ll not stay confined there. The beauty of studying the book of Ephesians is that it affords us an opportunity to get an overview of the entire New Testament. Be it directly, or indirectly, the books of the New Testament are connected to the book of Ephesians or the history of the church at Ephesus. As we go along, we’ll see how it all ties together.

**Back Story**

To set the stage, we’ll do an exploration of the landscape and history surrounding Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus. We’ll touch on the geography but concentrate mostly on the people. You will discover that we have much in common with them. Here is some interesting trivia about this group of believers.

Paul spent three years in Ephesus. For a portion of that time, a Gentile doctor named Luke was also there with him. How do we know that? Because, Luke wrote it all down in chronological order in the book of Acts. He was a stickler for details (a man after my own heart). It is worth noting that the gospels of Luke and Acts were, in fact, personal letters that Luke addressed to a man named Theophilus. Additionally, these two letters comprise one-fourth of the New Testament. Luke wrote the first letter to evangelize Theophilus, and the book of Acts was written to disciple him (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2, 16:1-14). Here is a confession: I’ve employed Luke’s strategy in the writing of this series. Book one, is a veiled attempt to introduce people to the Heavenly Bridegroom. My intent was to evangelize the lost, help believers solidify their salvation, and equip them with a tool to share their faith. The aim of this book and the two that will follow it is discipleship. Herein lies the answer to that million-dollar question.

How does all this pertain to the book of Ephesians or Ephesus? Without the book of Acts, the book of Ephesians would not make much sense. Acts contains the history of the church at Ephesus (Acts 18:1-28, 19:1-41, 20:1-38). Additionally, approximately seven years after Paul was in Ephesus, he wrote two personal letters to his primary disciple Timothy, who was pastoring the church at Ephesus at the time. Hence, we have First and Second Timothy.

If you were to visit the ancient city of Ephesus today, you would find its ruins on the western coast of Turkey next to the modern city of Selcuk. In addition to having an enormous coliseum, the metropolis of Ephesus was the site of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana or in Greek Artemis. She was worshiped as a fertility goddess and so temple prostitutes and sex slavery were prevalent there. Superstitions, witchcraft, and all manner of evil were the fabric of this hedonistic society. It was not so different from the world we live in.

You might be surprised to know that the apostle John spent his last years evangelizing in and around Ephesus. In fact, he wrote the gosple of John, as well as 1st, 2nd and 3rd John while there. Additionally, from the cross, Jesus tasked John with the care of His mother, Mary (John 19:25-29). She was with John in Ephesus. Attesting to these facts, the Basilica of Saint John and the House of Virgin Mary are there even today.

John was arrested in Ephesus and taken to Patmos, an island not far from the city located in the Aegean Sea. This is where he received the book of Revelation. Subsequently, Ephesus is the first of the seven churches that Jesus addressed (Revelation 2:1-7). Today, in Turkey, a country so steeped in church history, only .02 percent of the population call themselves Christian. The saints at Ephesus were discipled by Paul, Timothy, Mark (2 Timothy 4:11), the apostle John, and many others we haven’t even mentioned. What went wrong? Obviously, someone dropped the ball and failed to make disciples.

Let’s return to Luke for just a moment. Think about this: It’s quite possible that Luke and Mary’s paths crossed while they were in Ephesus, but we can’t know that for certain. What we do know is that Luke interviewed Mary, and she shared some details about Jesus’ birth that no one else was privy to.

**Luke 2:16-19**

***So they hurried off and located Mary and Joseph, and found the baby lying in a manger.***

***When they saw him, they related what they had been told about this child, and all who heard it were astonished at what the shepherds said. But Mary treasured up all these words, pondering in her heart what they might mean.***

Where am I going with all of this? In the passage above, notice that Mary “treasured” the details surrounding Jesus’ birth in her heart. Interesting. How then, did Luke know this? Apparently, he interviewed her, and she opened her heart and told him. But what if she hadn’t? What if Luke never wrote it down for Theophilus? Do you see my point?

This is a study for women. So, let’s contemplate the role that Mary, the mother of Jesus, likely played in the lives of the women of Ephesus. She, of all people, would have understood her *personal responsibility* to fulfill the Great Commission. Can you imagine being discipled in her home and hearing the gospel unfold through her eyes? Paul, in his letter to Titus (who was also in Ephesus), wrote that the older women are to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5). Who better than the mother of God to teach women how to love their husbands and families?

If you are keeping count, we have connected ten books of the New Testament to the city of Ephesus. While this study is centered on the book of Ephesians, we’ll not be confined to this one epistle so that we see the divine mysteries unfold from many angles. For now, though, let’s connect some dots.

When the citizens of Ephesus received the good news of Jesus, they were rescued from the kingdom of darkness, and everything changed—even their citizenship. Their physical address was Ephesus, but their spiritual address was heaven because now they were *in Christ*(Colossians 1:13-14). At one time, they were sinners and considered unclean by the Jews. Now they were saints and blameless in God’s sight. They were part of the bride of Christ and had gained a whole new family. But would they reproduce and carry on the Name?

**Passing the Baton**

Someone once said that the greatest hindrance to learning is knowledge. Do you know what happens when you stop learning? You stop growing and if you don’t use your mind, you might possibly lose it, and a mind is a terrible thing to waste. Take the example of Paul and Timothy, pastor of the church at Ephesus at the time, for example. Knowing that his departure was emanate and soon be home in the presence of the “Living Word of God,” Paul asked for three things (2 Timothy 4:6-13). He wanted to see his dear son Timothy, his cloak to keep him warm, and lastly, his scrolls and parchments – his Bible. He was going to study God’s precious Word until he was face to face with the Lord.

Ideally, every believer should be taught how to study the Bible, but since most of us will never go to a Bible college or seminary, how else are we going to learn? Furthermore, if the church was making disciple by Jesus standard, there would be no need for such institutions. According to The Gospel Coalition International, 75 percent of Christians now live in countries that have no access to Biblical training. The ministry I work for, Catalyst Missions, is doing something about that. While they are training the pastors and leaders around the globe, we are equipping women to with the tools to make disciples. That includes teaching them to study the Bible for themselves. In case you haven’t noticed, that is what this study is intended to do. Biblically literacy is the hallmark disciple making. The Bible is the curriculum of the entire process. Here’s how it worked - Paul taught Timothy to study the Bible, Timothy taught the saint, and the saints taught their disciples and on and on the baton of Truth was passed down.

Herb Hodges was a spiritual father to me and countless others around the globe. He was instrumental in casting the vision for Biblical discipleship for me, my church. In April of 2018 he finished his race and went home to be with Jesus. He illustrated Jesus’ strategy this way: Suppose you are sitting in a church building. The pews are filled with people—each with an empty cup in hand. The pastor stands on the podium and flings a bucket full of water over the people in the congregation. How much water do you think will reach each person’s cup? Now picture a small group of women in a home. One has a full glass of water. She fills the empty glass of the women to the right of her, who in turn does the same for the woman beside of her. Which scenario do you think is most effective? Obviously, the glass to glass method is. But honestly, how much of the latter is taking place with in your local church body?

Biblical disciple making looks like this—woman to woman, glass to glass, house to house. Beginning in their own context, it spreads to the next town, barrio and city, it crosses borders and nationalities until God’s kingdom comes. Not to give too much away, but in the last book in this series, we’ll see how God’s grand plan for his bride culminates at the Wedding Supper of The Lamb. We have a lot of ground to cover before we get there, though. Next week we will dive right in and unpack the first few verses of Ephesians to discover the treasures of knowing the heart of our Father in heaven, from whom all blessings flow.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.

1. What did you learn about the book of Ephesians that you did not know? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. List every reason you can think of to explain why is communication is important in any relationship? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do you think we continually need to be reminded that we are personally, and passionately loved by God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. It has been said that the difference in head knowledge and heart knowledge is eighteen inches. Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and then describe what is meant by that statement. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the stated reason for God choosing to reveal Himself to the apostle John and Paul (1 John 1:1-4; Galatians 1:11-19)?

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1. After you read 1 Samuel 3:1, 7, 19-21 and Proverbs 29:16-18, put into your own words what these passages say about the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. From the above two passages, when the Word of God is rare in your life, what are the inevitable effects? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Week #2**



**You’ve Got Mail**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:1-5**

***From Paul,******an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints [in Ephesus],******the faithful******in Christ Jesus.******Grace and peace to you******from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!******Blessed******is******the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed******us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ.******For******he chose us in Christ******before the foundation of the world that we may be holy and unblemished******in his sight******in love.******He did this by predestiningus to adoption as his******sons******through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure******of his will.***

**Introduction**

*Everyone Communicates Few Connect,* saidJohn C. Maxwell in his insightful book by that title. Being connected and staying connected is essential in all relationships. Especially in marriage. To connect on a heart level, we must learn how to communicate by speaking, what Gary Chapman, calls “a love language”. In his book *The Five Love Languages*, he identifies the five ways that communicate love to another person. Not knowing your spouse’s love language, can be a root cause of an unhappy marriage. Here they are: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gift’s, acts of service, and physical touch. Often the formation of your love language comes from a deficit in your family of origin.

When Art and I got married, we didn’t know there was such a thing. What we did know is that actions speak louder than words. As two lost people, our actions communicated, quite boisterously, how disconnected and unhealthy our relationship was. This is no excuse, but I came from a broken home, and frankly, I didn’t know the difference. When the Lord saved me, and thirteen years later, saved Art, we had a lot of emotional and spiritual baggage to unpack. Neither of us had been discipled, nor did we know what the term “disciple” even meant.

We desperately needed help. So, we began attending Family Life Weekend To Remember marriage conferences. Slow learners that we are, by the time we attended our third conference, it finally dawned on us that if this marriage was going to survive, we had to learn to communicate. In session 7 of the conference manual (page 92) it states: “Genuine communication requires that a couple seeks to understand and be understood.” And, “Understanding increases with increased levels of communication.” This includes learning to be a good listener. Incidentally, as I write these words, Art and I are celebrating our thirty-third wedding anniversary. I might add, we are still working on applying these important truths and I suppose we will be till death do us part.

In his book, *Sacred* *Marriage*, Gary Thomas said, “A giant thread runs throughout Scripture comparing God’s relationship to his people with the human institution of marriage.” (Page 28) What is true in the realm of any marriage relationship is also true of our relationship with Jesus. Therefore, I think it’s important to learn how to communicate with God our Father and His Son, our heavenly Bridegroom. By communication, though, we are not talking about simply transferring information. Rather, we mean the kind of interaction which fosters deeper understanding between two individuals. In marriage, this kind of intimacy forges the bounds of endearment. Every relationship starts with that.

**You’ve Got Mail**

Don’t you love to open your mailbox and find, among the piles of bills and junk, that rare hand addressed letter? Someone has taken the time to send you a personal message and you can hardly wait to open it and see what is inside. That’s how I envision it was when the saints when they got word that Tychicus had arrived all the way from Italy, with a letter from their spiritual father, Paul (Ephesians 6:21). The ties that bound them were forged in the three-years Paul had invested in Ephesus. They loved him, and he loved them. All his letters would be hand copied and circulated to all the saints in Asia Minor. Well, at least the faithful ones (Ephesians 1:1). Had I been there, I would have grabbed my writing tools and took off running to take notes of every word Paul had written.

He began with “Grace and peace to you” – a common greeting. Yet, what made it extraordinary was the fountain head of from whom the greeting originated. You see, Tychicus may have carried it, Paul penned it, but message came from a heavenly place. It was a letter from God the Father and His beloved Son Jesus.

Once Paul had clarified the source, his salutation began with a blessing that reminds me of a liturgical hymn we sang in church when I was a child. It was written in the sixteen-hundreds by Thomas Ken and begins like this, “Praise God, from whom all blessing flow…”.

Drinking from the heavenly fountain of blessings found in Ephesians is like trying to drink water from a gushing fire hydrant or flowing waterfall. Having been at this for eight years now, I admit, it’s overwhelming to grasp, much less express in words. Apparently, that’s how Paul felt as he was swept way in worship basking in the glory of God’s unspeakable love and magnificent purpose for the church. Throwing grammar to the wind, the first fourteen verses are one long run on sentence punctuated with praise and thanksgiving. Evidences of a man whose life was radically altered by the grace of God.

Given his imprisonment in Rome at the time, it’s astonishing the contentment displayed in the narrative of Paul’s letter. Practicing what he preached – he found unspeakable joy in knowing Christ more, even in suffering. As he wrote in another epistle composed during his confinement, Paul was not a prisoner of Rome, he was a prisoner of Christ (Philippians 1:12, 3:8-14, 4:4-13). Incarceration was of no consequence. Paul was at peace knowing that he was there at the sovereign providence of God. Redeeming this time, he took dictation as the Holy Spirit inscribed these blessed realities upon his heart (Jeremiah 31:31-35). How these truths must have bolstered Paul’s faith. I’ve no doubt it can do the same for us. And so, let’s lean in close and read this love letter from the Father postmarked from heaven.

**Communicate or Miscommunicate? That’s the Question!**

With all the advances in technology these days, we can instantly communicate with anyone anywhere in the world. We have regular phones, Smart phones, Whatsapp, text messaging, email, Facebook, FaceTime and a plethora of other forms of communication right at our fingertips. But, are we really communicating? With autocorrect, things can go hilariously wrong. If you want a good laugh, just Google -texting gone wrong. (You might want to insert *clean* texting gone wrong, though.)

* Can you give an example of miscommunication that took place through using technology?

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Coupled with the fact that when reading a written text, you can’t see expressions or read emotions, too often these mediums miscommunicate resulting in misunderstandings. To the point, curt messages are the norm in the workplace. In relationships, though, as previously mentioned, transferring facts, can do more harm than good. The ladies at our church have a book club and currently we are studying through a book titled: Relationships -A Mess Worth Making by Timothy S. Lane & Paul David Tripp. In it, they tell a story of a woman whose long-distance engagement waned and (Pages 5-6) their absence did not make the fiancées heart grow fonder. The emails and phone calls from her beloved became more and more infrequent until the day is all came to an abrupt end. Adding insult to injury, her fiancée broke off their engagement by email. She was devastated. Undoubtedly, the ties that bound them were thread bare from the start.

Joney Caudill, my ministry partner and spiritual mother, has a different story to tell. A few years ago, she lost the love of her life - her husband Calvin. They were married for 49 years. Calvin was in the U.S. Navy for a large part of their marriage and spent a great deal of time at sea. There was no such thing as Skype, video messing or FaceTime, so he communicated to her through letters – over a hundred of them! Joney, kept them all. They are treasured tangible expressions of Calvin’s love for her. On a personal note, my husband’s jobs have required him to travel for much of our married life. Our marriage was negatively impacted by periods of separation. It did not help, that 30 years ago, there was no cell phones or facetime.

It's the same when it come to our relationship with the Lord. When communication is interrupted for any length of time, it is hard to maintain a relationship with Him. He never leaves us, but we are prone to drift from Him, and before we know it, our love for Him has grown cold. That’s what happened to the saints at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-6). How then, can we stay on course in intimacy with Christ and avoid falling into the same loveless state of the church at Ephesus? I’m glad you asked, this is our next point.

**The Bible - God’s FaceBook**

One of the notable changes wrought by having a true conversion is a new-found desire to know God and His Word. There is vast difference in gaining knowledge and Knowing God. And apart from the Holy Spirits illumination, knowing God beyond a mere intellectual assent, is not possible. Growing in the knowledge of God, is not only the aim of Bible study, it is also paramount to maturing in the faith (Colossians 1:9-10). That’s why, if given the opportunity to speak to a new believer, I would place a Bible in their hands, look them in the eye, and in all seriousness, I would say, “This book is your lifeline to God; you can’t live without it!” It is my deep conviction that the Bible is that vital. Let me tell you why. The Bible, in its entirety, is a picture of God in the face of Christ Jesus. The Old Testament prophets foretold of Him, the gospels give the record of His incarnation, but the epistles, such as Ephesians, explain the gospels.

Words have power. As King Solomon said, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21). Words can shred a person’s soul into tiny pieces, or they can talk someone off an emotional, or even a physical cliff. A person could live days off an encouraging word. Whereas, as James asserted, the words that roll carelessly off an evil tongue can kindle the fires of hell (James 3:6-8). Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can do irreversible damage.

That said, as for this book that you hold in your hands, I’ll add this disclaimer. My sincere prayer is that every story and illustration from my life written here will be taken with a grain of salt. My words are only advantageous to you as far as they line up with the Bible. So, take it at face value, I am fallible. Nevertheless, I am convinced that God’s Word is perfect, incorruptible, and completely trustworthy. Because of its fidelity, it will accomplish, anything and everything that God desires it to (Isaiah 55:10-11).

**Acts 17:11**

***These Jews were more open-mindedthan those in Thessalonica,for they eagerlyreceivedthe message, examining the scriptures carefully every dayto see if these things were so.***

For this reason, I implore you, be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11. Examine the Scriptures for yourself - and take God at His Word. As you do, you will discover why your spiritual life literally depends upon God’s Word. It is alive, active and powerful, but the source of the power is not found on the written page, but in a person - Jesus Christ…*the Word who became flesh and made His dwelling with us* (John 1:1-14).

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2. [*Acts 9:7*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27224) *Or sound*
3. [*Acts 9:8*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27225) *Lit was seeing*
4. [*Acts 9:12*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27229) *A few early mss do not contain in a vision*
5. [*Acts 9:13*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27230) *Or holy ones*
6. [*Acts 9:15*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27232) *Or vessel*

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Essentially, we have two internet connections to the Lord - His written Word and prayer. In another lesson, we are going to delve into the many dimensions of prayer; for now, though, I just want to point out that the Word of God and prayer are so closely conjoined, that communion with God is dependent on both. One without the other is a one-sided conversation, and no relationship will survive or thrive like that.

### Lookup Proverbs 28:9 and Isaiah 59:1-3. Then compare them to John 15:7-10 above. In your own words, what do these passages communicate? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

God already knows every word on our tongue before we speak but he still wants to hear our voice in prayer (Psalm 139:1-16). Yet, according to the two above passages, if we have no desire to listen to His Word, He’s not interested in hearing our prayers. Please don’t misconstrue what I’m trying to say. Of course, we can read the Bible without praying and we can pray without reading the Bible. But when you combine prayer and God’s Word then you have true interaction with God. For instance, this morning, while reading God’s Word, I found myself spontaneously praying in response to what I was reading, thus, reminding the Lord of His promises.

“Does God still speak to people?”, one might ask. I’ll let Jesus answer that question: “My sheep,” he said, “hear My voice” (John 10:27). The Greek word for *voice* is *phone*. We hear God’s “phone” when we read His Word. Do you want to hear His audible voice? Simple. Read the Bible out loud. Just for a moment, let’s pretend that God still speaks in an audible voice. What do you think He would say to you? What would He like for His blood bought bride to know? We don’t even have to guess -for it is written ….

**Ephesians 5:25**

**H*usbands, love yourwives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.***

**Jesus Loves Me This I Know**

One day of the year is set apart to commemorate one of the saints. I’ll give you some clues. The air is filled with the fragrance of flowers and perfume. The store shelves are stocked with heart shaped boxes of chocolates and all manner of expensive cards about love. Can you guess what day it is? That’s correct - it’s Valentine’s Day. Since, one of my love languages is giving gifts, I have already purchased the cards and candies to give to my family. My husband’s job necessitates travel so he is gone much more that we would prefer, yet this is how he provides for us. He was working out of town last week and I was keeping my five and three-year-old granddaughters. They came hopping into my office as I was writing in Art’s Valentine card. Naomi said, “What are you doing, Noonie?” (That’s what they call me.) “I am writing this card for Poppie,” I replied. She asked, “Are you telling him how much you love him and miss him?” I replied, “I sure am.” Then she said, “Tell him I miss him and love him too - don’t forget to draw a heart on it!” My daughter has given us three precious granddaughters and they have us wrapped around their tiny little fingers. Their words and their deeds communicate love.

* Read Song of Solomon (Songs) chapter 2. Describe the love between Solomon and his bride. In verses three -five, where did he take her? There was a banner there, what did the banner say? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The saints at Ephesus heard about God’s love from Paul, but they also heard it from the apostle John. Remember, John was in Ephesus when he penned all his epistles. In fact, John wrote more about the love of God than any other writer of the New Testament. The love of God was not a religious cliché or sentimental platitude to John. He was loved by God and that became the hallmark of his identity.

**1 John 4:16-17**

***And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and the one who resides in love resides in God, and God resides in him. By this love is perfected withus, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world.***

In His commentary on the love of God, (September 24,2017) Wade Trimmer writes:

If you could have interviewed John, the disciple of Jesus, and asked, **“Who are you? What is your primary identity?”** You would not here him reply, “Why I am a handpicked disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ. I traveled in the elite circle with Peter and James. I’m an evangelist and pastor of one of the great churches of the New Testament — the church at Ephesus. I’m also the author of the books of John and Revelation, as well as having three personal letters published in the Bible. Listen to how he identified himself. Listen to how he identified himself: [John 13:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.23), “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, **whom Jesus loved**.” [John 20:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2020.2), “Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, **whom Jesus loved,** and said unto them”; [John 21:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2021.7), “Therefore **that disciple whom Jesus loved** said unto Peter;” [John 21:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2021.20), “Then Peter, turning about, sees the **disciple whom Jesus loved following;”** He declares his identity is found in knowing that he is th**e “disciple whom Jesus loved!”**

* Take a moment and reread the following passages: John 3: 16, 13:23, 14:21-24; 20:2, 32:7, 21:20. How did John identify himself? What does is the significance of this description? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Interestingly enough, the Greek word for voice is *phone*). The voice of God rings loud and clear through the ancient text of the Bible. What is the primary message of the Bible? As elementary as is sounds, the most important bit of information God’s Word communicates, is that He loves us, passionately, personally, and permanently because we are in Christ.

**1 John 4:10**

***In this is love: not thatwe have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.***

Visualize the cross, where Jesus stretched out His arms as if to say, “I love you this much!” His love is infinite and four dimensional; it spans from east to west - the distance that He has cast our sins from us (Psalm 103:8-14). God’s love is long, boundless and eternal. How high is God’s love? As high as the heavens are above the earth and it’s deeper than the sea (Psalm 36:5-9). Yes, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” These lyrics come straight from God’s love letter… and it’s written in red. Oh, don’t forget to draw a heart around it!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.

1. It has been said that the difference in head knowledge and heart knowledge is 18 inches. Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and then describe what is meant by that statement. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-6. When God opens a person’s spiritually blind eyes, what two things He reveals to them? Be specific. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Read the story of Eli and Samuel, found in 1 Samuel 3:1-21 And list two important principles you can ascertain about the connection between the Word of God and the revelation of God. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. In 1 John 1:1-4 and Revelation 1:1, 8, 12-19, what was revealed to the apostle John? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the stated reason for God choosing to reveal Himself to the apostle John and Paul? (1 John 1:1-4; Galatians 1:11-19) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. After you read 1 Samuel 3:1, 7, 19-21 and Proverbs 29:16-18, put into your own words what these passages say about the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. From the above two passages, when the Word of God is rare in your life, what are the inevitable effects? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Week #3**



#### He’s a Good, Good Father

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:3-5**

***Blessed******is******the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed******us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ.******For******he chose us in Christ******before the foundation of the world that we may be holy and unblemished******in his sight******in love.******He did this by predestiningus to adoption as his******sons******through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure******of his will.***

**Introduction**

The birthdays are ticking by so fast that I usually have to ask Art “Now how old am I?” Every year when my birthday rolls around I get melancholy. Not that I mind getting older. It’s just that there are some circumstances surrounding my birth and infancy that have left scars that December 2 seems to open up. One would think that surpassing the midcentury mark, I would be over theses childish emotions, but I’m not. This birthday had an extra element of sadness with the passing of my daddy. The only message I have saved on my phone is His birthday message. “Hey babe, this is your dad, wishing you a happy birthday. See you later - I love you.” As you might imagine, hearing his voice was bitter sweet.

This year my birthday fell on a Sunday. As I sat in church, listening to the message and taking notes, my heavenly Father began to speak to my downcast heart. In that still small voice, He reminded me that, while my first birth was important, my second birth is what makes me His child. He’s my daddy and I am loved eternally, in fact, I was loved before time began. It’s just one of the profound mysteries, found in Ephesians. His gifts just keep on coming, and in Christ, the gifts and callings are irrevocable (Romans 11:28-29; James 1:17). Isn’t He wonderful? There is no better book of the Bible to study to unwrap the blessing we received at our second-birth than Ephesians.

**Every Good and Perfect Gift from the Father**

The first word in the Hebrew dictionary is father and the first time it’s mentioned is at the wedding of Adam and Eve. God Himself officiated the ceremony. This was His charge to the couple: “*For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh”* (Genesis 2:24). They must have been a bit confused by this statement. They had no parents - only God the Father. The One who ordained marriage and family’s in the first place. The family is the most fundamental unit of civilization and the glue that holds it together. By God’s design, fathers are the head of their families. Good or bad, fathers are the compass that charts the course for posterity.

Our concept of God as Father is shaped by our life experience with our earthly fathers. What kind of emotions are stirred when you think of your father? Can you see how this impression of fatherhood has affected your view of God your Father? I’ll share more in another lesson, but as I write this, it is coming up on the one-year anniversary of my father’s homegoing, and it conjures all kinds of emotions in me.

Those who never knew their father, or had a poor example of what a father should be, will often erroneously superimpose this image on God as father. This underscores the importance of knowing the heavenly Father’s enormous heart of love on a deep and personal level. That’s our aim for this lesson.

**Jeremiah 31:3-4 (KJV**)

***“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: Therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”***

**The Father Picks the Bride**

**Romans 8:14-16**

***For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear,but you received the Spirit of adoption,by whom we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself bears witness toour spirit that we are God’s children.***

One of the profound mysteries unveiled in the narratives of Paul’s letters to the Romans and here in Ephesians, is the sovereignty of God. In fact, this overarching theme permeates and premediates all that God has planned and purposed for the church. Until we understand the significance of this, we can’t appreciate what it means to be a child of God and the spiritual blessings that come with this honor.

In many cultures, the father selects the bride for his son. The same is true for the bride of Christ. Before time began, God the Father chose us for Jesus and the Father draws us to Jesus (John 6:39-65; Ephesians 1:3-5). We were stone cold dead in our sins until the Father quickened us through the gospel message (Ephesians 1:13, 2:1-6). As John asserted, we cannot, and will not, come to Jesus any other way.

**John 6:44-46**

***No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him,and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who hears and learns from the Father comes to me. (Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God – he has seen the Father.***

Once we received Jesus through repentance and faith, the Father places us *in* Jesus. That’s our new spiritual address (Ephesians 2:5-7). In this holy heavenly place, Jesus reveals the Father to us. For He said, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:1-6). And…. “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father” and…. “I and the Father are One” (John 10:30-38). And furthermore, “No one has ever seen God. The only one,himself God, who is in closest fellowship withthe Father, has made God known” (John 1:14-18).

I love to study the original languages of the Bible. That’s where I find the meat of the Word, and some gold nuggets too (Hebrews 5:11-14). To see what I mean, look closely at the following words from our key passage, put them in context and make note of any insight you might gain.

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* **Will:** Strong’s #2307 Greek word thelema: *a determination, i.e. act, choice, specific purpose, decree, volition, inclination, desire, pleasure, will.* See this used in: Eph. 1:5, 9, 11,

5:17, 6:6-7; John 6:38-40; 1 Peter 2:15, 3:17, 4:2-3, 4:19; 2 Peter 1:21.

* **Chose**: Strong’s #1586 Greek word eklegomi: *to select, make a choice, choose out, chosen.*

From #1588 eklektos: *select by implication, favorite, chose, elect.* See this used in the following: Ephesians 1:4; John 13:18, 15:16 -19; 1 Peter 2:4-9.

Children don’t choose their parents and parents don’t choose their children, except through adoption. As mindboggling as it is to grasp, before God created anything, in eternity past, He selected us to be in His family. There is no greater portrait that depicts the sovereign will of the Father like adoption. Before we talk about this subject, let’s clarify a few things. Every one’s situation is unique and what I am about to share, will not apply to every person. For instance, sometimes parents are forced to sacrificially give up their child because they could not feed them or care for them as they ought.

Such is the case of a set of twins who were found in a mud hut in Ethiopia, still sucking on the breast of their dead mother. To her last breath, she was caring for her babies. My cousin and her husband went to great expense to adopt them. They welcomed them into their home that is now comprised of *eight* multi-ethnic children. What a beautiful picture of God’s family they are. Then there is a young woman named Ellen Humerickhouse, who gave up everything to follow Christ and serve “the least of these” by opening La Limye’ Ministries Children’s Home in Haiti. From Ellen, as well as another ministry in Haiti that we support called One Door Ministries, I’ve heard many a story of mothers abandoning their babies simply because they had no food to feed them, and they could not bear to watch their children die of starvation. As a mother and grandmother, I cannot even imagine it, can you?

In case you would like more information on these ministries, here are the links to their websites: <http://LaLimye.com/> [www.onedoorministries.org](http://www.onedoorministries.org/)

**Isaiah 49:13-19**

***Shout for joy, O sky!Rejoice, O earth! Let the mountains give a joyful shout!***

***For the Lord consoles his people and shows compassion to theoppressed.***

***“Zion said, ‘The Lord has abandoned me, the sovereign master has forgotten me.’ Can a woman forget her baby who nurses at her breast? Can she withhold compassion from the child she has borne? Even if motherswere to forget, I could never forget you!***

***Look, I have inscribed your nameon my palms; your walls are constantly before me. Your children hurry back, while those who destroyed and devastated you depart. Look all around you!All of them gather to you. As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “you will certainly wear all of them like jewelry; you will put them on as if you were a bride. Yes, your land lies in ruins; it is desolate and devastated.But now you will be too small to hold your residents, and those who devoured you will be far away.***

##### **Joney’s Story**

Rarely does a person make it through life without knowing rejection in some form or another. Yet there is an altogether different kind of pain for those who are abandoned. Especially orphaned children or women who have been deserted by their husbands. Often, they are haunted by some nagging questions like: “Why I am not wanted?” or “Am I not worthy of love?” If we take the bait of these insidious thoughts, Satan will begin to replay the sorrowful record tormenting us and insuring that the wounds remain open and agonizing. He adds to the lyrics with words like, “Something is wrong with you…. No one loves you.” This can set you up for a lifetime of self-pity and victim mentality. Perhaps you can relate. If so, then my prayer for you is that the heavenly Father will break this record of lies once and for all, replacing it with the truth of His unfailing love.

**Psalms 68:5-6**

***He is a father to the fatherless and an advocate for widows. God rules from his holy palace. God settles those who have been deserted in their own homes;***

***he frees prisoners and grants them prosperity.But sinful rebels live in the desert.***

My spiritual mother, Joney Caudill, has graciously agreed to open her heart and share with us her story of finding her true Father. This is Joney’s story….

*Even when I type the word “father” it’s hard for me to bring to mind any image of my earthly father, because he died before I was three. Have you heard your mom or dad recount their first meeting? I haven’t. In fact, I know very little about their lives together. I was born in 1946, in Washington, D.C. I don’t know why my parents were in Washington or where they lived prior to that: I only know that they met in North Carolina. I think my father owned a business there and my mother worked for him. She was twenty-three and he was over forty-five. Their illicit relationship developed despite the fact that my father was a married man.*

*As a result, my parents lived a secret life, always careful to hide, not only their affair, but also my existence. My father had two families. Family number one, his “legitimate family,” lived in North Carolina, where he spent his weekends. Family two, lived in another state where he “worked” and lived his secret life. He kept up that lie until September 1949, just before my third birthday, when suddenly, without warning, he was gone. He left that Friday afternoon and expected to return, as usual, on Sunday night. Sometime after arriving home, he suffered a major heart attack and died a short time later. The devil had come to collect his due! He was fifty-three. It’s been wisely said that sin always takes you further than you want to go, it keeps you longer than you want to stay, and it will cost you more than you want to pay. My parent’s selfish actions cost everyone. Like the devastation after an earthquake, shame and heartache tore gaping holes in not only me and my mother, but in my father’s legitimate family, as well. As for my mother and I, we were left nothing, not even his name. My parents were so ashamed, that they even changed their names on my birth certificate. As a mistress and an illegitimate child, we had no legal right to any inheritance; we were penniless.*

*Sadly, mother carried the guilt and shame of their sin for the rest of her life. She believed that she was past God’s mercy and it destroyed her, first emotionally, and then physically. Her perceived unworthiness and disgrace drove her to marry another abusive man which subsequently led her to abuse alcohol. Immersed in a self-punishing, victim mentality she stayed with my stepfather for 17 years and would have stayed longer, had she lived. She died at the age of 49. Cancer had consumed her liver, the result of years of alcohol abuse. Consequently, I am forever aware that, were it not for God’s grace and mercy, I would have continued my mother’s same sin pattern.*

*When I lost my father, somewhere deep in my little girl heart I felt abandoned. In those days, not much was known about the psychological effect’s abandonment has on children. But today, as many of us know all too well, the damage cannot be underestimated. It’s catastrophic! You see, no human being could understand the emptiness left by my father. But God… my real Father knew, and He had a plan. Of course, it was years before I understood what was missing, and that I was looking for love and acceptance in all the wrong places. I didn’t know my heavenly Father - but He knew me. Furthermore, He had a plan for my life, and it was a good plan.*

*As strange as it may seem, God used all my painful past to draw me to Himself. It was later in life when I met my Heavenly Father and the truth of His love healed my afflicted soul. I am His, He chose me as the Bride for His Son. I am wanted, and He will never ever abandon me because I am in Christ. He took what the enemy of my soul intended for my destruction and turned it into beauty. My life today is completely the opposite of my mother’s, for one reason… the Lord Jesus Christ! If it weren’t for Jesus, I’m fairly certain, I would be the town drunk! But because He saved me, I can hold my head up and walk in His grace all the way home till I get to my Father’s house. And best of all, my children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will have a Christian legacy. Our study of the book of Ephesians has reminded me of how very blessed I am to be adopted by God my Father. His Word is personal and healing to me, and it can be for anyone who has suffered the sting of someone else’s sin. To the praise of His Glorious Name, I’ve been healed by the love of my Father!*

Joney’s story is not that uncommon, is it? But you know what? There’s no such thing as perfect parents, perfect children or perfect families! Can we just be honest and admit it? We’re all broken. There has never been an earthly mother or father who could fill the shoes of God. They weren’t meant to. So, when we try to make “little gods” out of people, they will inevitably let us down. And when they do, as Joney testified, God can use this hunger and thirst for love to point us to our heavenly Father.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** John 6:37-47; 1 Peter 1:2, 2:9-10; James 1:27; Romans 3:9-31; 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:3-6; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Isaiah 43:1-21; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Revelation 17:14; Psalms 10:14, 27:10, 45:10-11, 8:5-6, 66:13, 103:13-17, 49:15-16

**Flowers for the King’s Daughter**

As we end this lesson, I have one more story to share. Before I became a grandmother, God brought a young woman named Jamie into our family of faith. Jamie was a wife and mother of two little girls when she had a miscarriage and almost lost her life. Through this incident, she realized if she had died, she did not know where she would be. When she came to faith, I invited her to my home to get to know her better. She told me she did not have a father for most of her life, because he was imprisoned for acts, he committed against her and her sisters. Her mother lived several hours away and was undergoing radiation and chemo for cancer and shortly thereafter, her mother passed away. Jamie and I began a discipling relationship. I have learned new truths from every person that I have attempted to disciple. From Jamie, I learned about the heart of our heavenly Father.

When Jamie found out she was pregnant again, this brought some fear because of the previous miscarriage. So, we prayed. When it was time for the birth, she and her husband had no family at all to be there for them. A pastor and his wife on staff at our church, were instrumental in bringing this family to the Lord. The day of delivery came and Jamie had to have an emergency cesarean section. This couple were the only ones with them in this very frightening time. Praise the Lord, Jamie and baby girl came safely through the delivery.

The next day, on my way to get some cheap flowers to take to Jamie at the hospital, I got to thinking about my own daughter and what it would be like when she gives has babies. Knowing that the hospital room would be full of family to welcome this new life into the world. (At this moment, she is about to give birth to number four.) What a contrast this was to Jamie and her husband’s situation, as new believers in the family of God, yet all alone. At that moment, the Lord interrupted my thoughts. He spoke into my spirit, “If that was your daughter in the hospital, would you give her cheap flowers?” Ashamedly, the answer was no. Very clearly in my heart, the Lord spoke, “Jamie is *My* *daughter,* I give good gifts to My children, and I want her to have the best!” I turned around and went to the florist to have flowers made up for the “King’s Daughter.” When I carried the flowers into the room, there they were. It was just the three of them - the King’s daughter, Jamie, the King’s son, Kyle, and their newborn baby girl. I told Jamie that I was just delivering the flowers that the “Heavenly Father” had ordered for her.

C.S. Lewis wrote, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains.” If rejection and wounds from the past bring pain to your heart, then listen to the words of your Heavenly Father. “I am the Father to the Fatherless.” Whenever you are reminded of your painful childhood in the home of your earthly father, here is a passage to cling to:

**Psalm 45:10-11**

***Listen, O princess!******Observe and pay attention!Forget your homeland and your family! Thenthe king will be attracted byyour beauty.***

***After all, he is your master! Submitto him!***

This Psalm was composed for King Solomon on His wedding day. (Don’t forget, the Father gets to pick the bride for His Son.) Hebrews chapter one, ascribes this passage to the Lord Jesus, and as the bride of Christ, these words can certainly apply to you.

In closing, if possible, please go to YouTube and listen to this song by Chris Tomlin entitled: “Good Good Father.” I hope this lesson has properly introduced you to God who is the perfect Father. In fact, He is the Daddy of our dreams. We are not fatherless. We never have been - we just never Knew who He was. He loves us, knows us personally and intimately…. He’s a good Father, but even more…. He’s our *Daddy.*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:23-31 and describe the kind of people God chooses.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the name Father mean to you, and how do you feel about God being a Father? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Were you, or anyone close to you, adopted? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. If so, then describe ways that this has impacted your, or their lives. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. To find out how God feels about widows and orphans, read the following passages and then paraphrase a statement on each. (James 1:27; Psalms 68:5-6; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 23:3; Deuteronomy 10:18) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Read Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV) and fill in the blanks: “In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ He predestined us to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_as His sons through Jesus Christ.”
7. In the last words of the Old Testament, the Lord speaks to the issue of fathers and their children. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. Read Malachi 4:6 and write in your own words how the Father feels about fathers who leave their children and also what is it He desire for the relationship between fathers and their children? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. From Exodus 20:1-6, what do you think is meant by the sins of the fathers being

visited (KJV) upon the children to the third and fourth generation? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. When God said, He would show His love to a thousand generations, it was contingent upon two things. What are they? (Exodus 20:1-6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Think on These Things

Did you learn something new? Did you find a new promise to claim as your own? Did you find a command to obey, a sin to confess or avoid? Is there a passage you could turn into a prayer? How did the Lord speak personally to you through this lesson? What action will you take in obedience to God’s voice? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Memory Verses**

**Week #4**



**Accepted in the Beloved**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:6-7 (KJV)**

***To the praise of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.***

**Introduction**

Do you battle with insecurities? Does the enemy of your soul assault your memories with a repertoire of your rejections and failures? He does me, I know them well, hurts, rejections, soul wounds that tell me I am no good, stupid, unlovely and unlovable. If left unchecked, and exposed to God’s Truth, I can take my eyes off Jesus, and allow the fear of rejection to paralyze me, dictating where I find my identity, rather than in Christ. If we are being honest here, I think most of us struggle with this. That’s why the truth we are going to learn today is so relevant and freeing. The good news is, we accepted and loved infinitely more than we deserve, and more than we can imagine by the One that matters most.

Even if it were possible for finite humans to explain or define the Devine, that is not the point of this study. Our goal is to know Him, and see Him for who He is. When we do, we will realize that all the gifts, treasures and blessings are hidden and personifies in Christ Jesus. In this lesson we’ll explore some blessing that are ours in Him. Such as, the favor of God on us, the love of God for us, the righteousness of God that covers us, and the grace of God that redeems us. It is all about Jesus.

**Favored One**

Every now and again you come upon a passage of Scripture that you have read before, and yet you never thought much about it. It may seem just a simple clause. But when you take a closer look and just below the surface, you find a diamond. Case in point, is Ephesians 1:6. The interpreters of the King James Bible, picked a seemingly inconspicuous word to define those in Christ. The word, printed above, is *accepted.* Actually, the other translators used a more accurate word - favored. Let’s do a word search from Strong’s Concordance.

* **Highly** **Favored**/ **Accepted:** The Greek word is charitoo. It means to: *to grace, i.e. endue with special honor, make accepted, and be highly favored.*  (The following words are derived from this Greek word: grace, gift and forgiveness.)
* **Good Pleasure:** Strong’s #2107 Greek word eduokia: *satisfaction, delight, kindness, wish, purpose, desire, good pleasure, will.* See: Eph. 1:5 &9. (This word is derived from Strong’s #2106 eudokeo) **Well Pleased:** See: Luke 3:22; Matthew 3:17, 12:18, 17:5; Mark 1:11
* **Good Will/ Good Pleasure:** The Greek words areedudokia or. Here are the definitions: *satisfaction, delight, kindness, purpose, desire, good pleasure, will, to think well of i.e. approve, to approbate, think good, be well pleased, be the good pleasure, and be willing.*

The words: *pleased or well pleased are a*lmost exclusively used in reference to the Lord Jesus, with a few exceptions. In the following passages, they are they are applied to those who are in Christ. I will underline the words in the following passages. Ephesians 1:5 (KJV) “Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” Ephesians 1:9 (KJV) “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself.”

Each time the Father spoke from heaven, He said: “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am *well pleased*.” Because Jesus is the unrivaled object of the Father’s affection, the Father’s love and acceptance of us, rests solely upon His love for His Beloved Son. Therefore, all God’s children are not just accepted by God, but, in Christ, we are highly favored, blessed and loved by the Father as if were Jesus.

**DIGGGING DEEPER**: Habakkuk 1:13; Isaiah 59:1-2; Colossians 1:16-23; Luke 3:22; Matthew

3:17, 12:18, 17:5; 2 Peter 1:16-17; Mark 1:11

At Jesus birth, a heavenly host appeared and declared: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among men with whom *He is pleased*.” The King James version said, “On whom His favor rest” (Luke 2:13-14). In this instance, the words *pleased* and *favored* are the exact same word applied to Jesus! Do you understand the significance of that? This is how blessed we are. Because Christ now lives “in us,” and God the Father is *well please with Him*, the Father’s *favor* now rest “upon us.” Let that sink in as we make some personal applications. When you read the Bible, do you think about the people listed as super humans? Well - they were not. They were human just like us.

Since Mary, the mother of Jesus, spent her last days on earth in Ephesus, let’s take her as an example. You’ll be astonished at the spiritual blessings we have in common with her. She was just a teenage girl living in the small hamlet of Nazareth - a place synonymous with the word despised. Or, in other words, good for nothing (Luke 1:26; John 1:45-46).

Can you imagine the thoughts running through her teenage mind when she was visited by the angel Gabriel? Before He announced that her womb would be the incubator of Immanuel, he greeted her with this declaration. In the King James English, Gabriel said: “Thou that are *highly favored, t*he Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.” (Luke 1:28) We marvel at this encounter and the great honor bestowed upon Mary, don’t we? And rightfully so. But please don’t miss this hidden treasure; the words *highly favored* are the exact same word used in Ephesians 1:6 for *accepted.* Just think of the implications of that. Albeit hard to believe… if you are in Christ, then you are as highly favored by God as Mary, the mother of God.

**Isaiah 43:3-4**

***For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,your deliverer.***

***I have handed over Egypt as a ransom price, Ethiopia and Seba in place of you.***

***Since you are precious and special in my sight,and I love you,***

***I will hand over people in place of you, nations in place of your life.***

If this fact were not hard enough to embrace, then consider a further wonder. Mary carried the Son of God (her Creator) within her. Likewise, we also carry God the Holy Spirit in us. Although we are seldom cognizant of His presence. But what a difference it could make in our humdrum everyday lives if we lived fully aware that we carry God around with us. Yes, my friend, in Christ, we have been honored indeed! Once we were separated from God, yet now, not only is God with us, but, like the Virgin Mary, God is in us! And furthermore, because we are in His Beloved Son, the Father is well pleased to give us all things in and through Him.

**DIGGGING DEEPER**: Romans 8:28-32; Luke 5:27-32 ,12:32; John 1:10-18, 8:1-11, 14:6-24, 16:27; Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 3:17, 12:18, 17:5, 21:28-32; Colossians 1:12-19; Galatians 3:13, 4:5; Revelation 5:9

**Redeemed by His Blood**

**1 Peter 1:18-19**

***You know that from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors you were ransomed – not by perishable things like silver or gold, but by precious blood like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, namely Christ.***

Chances are, the word redemption is not a word commonly used in your vocabulary. For the saints at Ephesus, though, the word redemption had great significance. The practice of slavery was the norm in the Grecian-Roman world of that era. In fact, Paul addressed it in his letter to Timothy, the pastor of the church at Ephesus at the time (1 Timothy 6). The Ephesians were quite familiarwiththepractice of redemption*.* Some of them had even been freed from slavery through a redemption price. When Paul described our spiritual bondage to sin and subsequent death required by the law, they had a visual reference.

One of the best novels I have ever read that paints a portrait of redemption is *Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers. She was a very successful author of romance novels when she met the love of her life – the Lord Jesus. Like so many of us, she too had called herself a Christian before she was truly born–again. You can read her testimony recorded in the back cover of this novel. A masterful allegory on the book of Hosea, the story beautifully portrays the amazing grace of God towards His lost sinful humanity. In fact, Hosea, as well as Isaiah, were two of the Old Testament prophets who were privy to the mystery, later unveiled to Paul, that God is the Husband of His people (Isaiah 54:13). (Hosea chapters one, two and three, would make for a great side study.)

The hero in Rivers book is a mirror image of the Lord Jesus. He passionately loves a bride who runs away from Him into the abusive arms of one man after another. Her lovers use, abuse and abandon her. Yet, even after she is sold into slavery to sin, he woos her, pursues her and ultimately gives up everything to buy her for Himself. While Rivers’ story is fiction, God’s story of redemption is not. And it’s His story that gives us eternal hope for our future, regardless of our past.

**WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance**

* **Redeem/ Redeemer** Strong’s #1350 Hebrew word Gaal: *to redeem; of oriental law of kinship; i.e. to be the next of kin and as such, to buy back a relative’s property, marry his widow, avenger, deliver, kinsfolk-man, purchase, ransom, redeemer, revenger.* See: Ruth 4:4,14; Psalm 103:4; Isaiah 43:14; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8.
* **Redeem** Strong’s #3085 #3804 from #3803 Greek word Lotrosis: *a ransoming redeemer; loosen with a redemption price; atonement.* See: Titus 2:14; Ephesians

1:7; 1 Peter 1:18; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12.

* **Redeemed** Strong’s #59 Greek word Agorazo: *to go to the market place; to purchase; redeem; buy.* See:Revelation5:9.
* **Redeemed** Strong’s #629 Greek word Apolutrosis: *act of ransom in full; salvation; deliverance; redemption.* See: Ephesians 1:7 -14, 4:30; Colossians; 1:14; Hebrews 9:15.
* **Redeemed/Rescue** Strong’s # 1805 Greek word Exagorazo: *to buy up, i.e. ransom; to rescue from loss (improve opportunity) redeem.* See: Galatians 3:13, 4:5; Ephesians 5:16.

**Week #5**



**Such Were Some of You**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:6-7 (KJV)**

***To the praise of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.***

**Introduction**

In each of Paul’s four prison letters, he addresses the letters to a group of people identified as saints. The mailing address was Ephesus, but it was a circular letter to all the faithful saints throughout Asia Minor. I bring this up because God has preserved His Word for posterity for a reason. If you are a saint, then you are His sheep. Therefore, you can hear His voice (John 10:26-27). Interestingly, *voice* in Greek is *phone*. Oh, the things He wants teach us about Himself and our identity, if we will approach His Word as though He were speaking directly to each of us, for if we are a saint, He is.

Many of us who have come to Christ in adulthood, know the ravages of sin, shame and guilt. It’s much easier to identity as who we were, not who we are in Christ. Furthermore, unless someone comes along and shows us our new identity, we might even revert back to acting like a sinner, instead of who we *are* - saints.

People who are not saints, like to label those who are as “holier than thou.” Then again, even believers make this statement, “I am no saint”, or, “I am just a sinner, saved by grace.” Yet that’s a half-truth. Reality is, if you are in Christ, you *where* (past-tense) a sinner, but now you are a saint. That means you are holy. To quantify, we are not sinless, but we should be progressively, sinning less. Do you think of yourself that way? I know certainly didn’t.

Who we are is wrought by where we are - that is our spiritual address *in Christ* Jesus, the Beloved of the Father. Once we discover are true identity, who we are, and where we are, then we can be what we are - holy people.

When it comes to our identity in Christ, ignorance is not bliss, it is spiritual bondage. The Lord came to set us free. This week, we are going to tackle some issues head-on that can hinder our growth cause the saints to have an identity crisis. Appling the gospel truth to the wounded soul, is part of the discipling-process. That’s exactly what this lesson is intended to do.

**From Sinner to Saint**

**Colossians 1:21-22**

***And you were at one time strangers and enemies in your minds as expressed throughyour evil deeds, but now he has reconciled you******by his physical body through death to present you holy, without blemish, and blameless before him.***

When I became an empty nester, I understood the phenomena called an identity crisis. One day I was mom and care giver, the next, out of work. What to do now? I am still a mother, but roles change. Same in marriage, divorce and widowhood but even more so. Similarly, when we were saved. All we know is our old self, we don’t know who we are in Christ. One moment we are in sin and separated from God, now we’re a saint and inhabited by the Holy Spirit. We still have the propensity to sin, but we no longer love it as we once did. Paul addresses this in Romans chapter 7.

From the bedroom to the board room and everything in between, all Scripture is useful for instruction in every area of life (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Curiously though, when it comes to sex, there are some passages that are never addressed from our pulpits. Broaching this subject in Bible study may seem a bit taboo. Yet, when the church remains silent on the matter, we’re allowing the world to conform us into its image of sexuality (Romans 12:1-2). No wonder that even Christians are confused about such an important part of life. For heaven sakes - sex was God’s idea! Lately, though, I have noticed that this has become a central issue for discussion on Christian broadcasts. It’s about time! There is much at stake.

Maybe you are single, or widowed and thinking, “This subject doesn’t apply to me.” Or, “Where is she going with all of this?” Please bear with me for a moment. As uncomfortable as the subject is, I can assure you that there are some married and single folks you know who could greatly benefit from addressing this issue from a Biblical viewpoint. God is pro-marriage, but He has also given the gift of singleness to some. They should not be ostracized or ignored in the church because they play a vital role in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 7:10-40). We would do well to learn how they steward their sexuality in a way that is God honoring.

Our identity governs, not only our sexuality, but every area of life. And once again, this is but one of a gazillion life issues that is best suited to be addressed in the context of gospel-centered discipling relationships. It is high time we bring this subject out of the shadows of darkness and into the light of God’s Word. However, as with all our lessons, this is but a tool to get the conversation started, not a thorough Biblical exposition on this rather sensitive subject--nor is it intended to be. It is, however, an attempt to glean from Paul’s letters to the saints and uncover some insights on this relevant matter.

**Biblical Sex Education**

Ephesus was reputed to be the most important city in the Roman province of Asia. It was also a very hedonistic society. They were rich, but morally bankrupt. Wickedness and perversion of every conceivable kind abounded. Not unlike its neighbor across the Aegean Sea – Corinth, Greece. And not unlike the world in which we live.

Did you know that according to an article in USA TODAY, dated September 19, 2017, in 2016, about 40 million people worldwide were subject to modern slavery? Among them, about 28.7 million were women or girls forced into marriage, sex slavery or slave labor. It has been estimated that number to be around 57,700. In the United States this kind of evil is far removed and frankly, not even on our radar However, there’s another evil that is shockingly prevalent - child sexual abuse. Studies and statistics very but all agree, that nearly 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be victims. There is nothing new under the sun, just new inventions of evil (Romans 1:24-30). The catastrophic fall out of the original sin remains and the causalities are everywhere. Even in the church.

**Titus 2:11-14**

***For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.  It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.***

To be transparent, my sex education came primarily from a high school health class, what I saw on tv, and read in secular magazines. Consequently, I had a warped world-view that led to a lifestyle of sin. Believe me when I tell you, I have many scars and shameful regrets to prove it. Oh, how I wish I had been saved before I got married and had a godly woman to disciple me. How about you, did you have a godly woman instruct you with “the talk”?

**Titus 2:3-5**

***Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good. 4 In this way they will train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited.***

**Digging Deeper:** Proverbs 5:15-23; Hebrews 13:4; Song of Songs 1:5-11; 5:1, 6:4-8:4; Ephesians 5:28-33

A few years back, something very peculiar happened at our small country church. An elderly man who’s been widowed for some time, bought a case of books for the young married Sunday School class. Would you believe his gift to us was a Christian book on marital sex? “Well, I never!”, you say. Me either, sister. The name of the book is *The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love*, by Tim and Beverly LaHaye. I am a little embarrassed to admit this, but I was over fifty-years old, had been married for three decades, and had three grown children when I read this book. I learned things about my body and the “marital bed” that I had never heard before. For instance, I learned that procreation is not the only God ordained purpose of sex (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:23-25; 18:11-13). Suffice to say, the book was quite the Christian sex education and I highly commend it to you. Once I understood God’s redemptive plan for sexuality, I wanted to fully embrace the beauty of this all-important mystery of oneness in my marriage. Now, this same Sunday School class is using another book by Jay Harvey titled *Knowing the Bible Song of Solomon*. It is also a real eye opener!

Normally, our church uses a quarterly curriculum that explores a book of the Bible, and it is my preference to study the Bible chapter by chapter and verse by verse. Occasionally, I substitute teach the senior ladies Sunday school class, and I jump at the opportunity to be with these women and learn from their wisdom. On one such occasion, they were just starting the book of 1 Corinthians. To my dismay, our lesson skipped over some passages. So, I asked if they would mind reading the whole book and expounding on it verse by verse. When the Sunday came to teach 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, followed by 1 Corinthians 7:1-9, I began the lesson by asking a loaded question. I said, “How many of you are struggling with being tempted by prostitutes? They all laughed awkwardly. One of the senior saints said that she and her husband had talked about it and neither of them wanted to study it! I told her honestly – neither did I! But the more I studied and prayed about it, the more the Lord taught me. And this is what I want to share with you now.

Before we dive into this letter, let’s get some context. In Acts chapters 17-18 we learn that Paul spent roughly 18 months in Corinth where he evangelized, made disciples and planted churches – i.e. family homes (1 Cor. 1:11). When Paul left, Apollos, a disciple of Priscilla and Aquilla, came to Corinth and did the same as Paul. Five years passed and Paul was in Ephesus when the church at Corinth sent a delegation of men to settle some issues that had arisen in this yet immature group of believers (1 Corinthians 1:11-17, 3:1-9-17, 16:7-8, 15-18). The chief issue we are going to look at is the licentious and pagan sexual practices that were not only tolerated but embraced in the church at Corinth. Paul begins by referencing a now lost letter. Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9-20, 7:1-16.

**He Made them Male and Female**

**Genesis 1:27-28**

***God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them,***

***male and female he created them.  God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.”***

Somethings been bothering me for quite some. There is a proverbial elephant in the church closet. It’s been safely locked up in our homes also, to the glee of the enemy. He just loves the dark. But recently, the elephant has march right out of the closet to the beat of the drum called the “Me Too”. Movement. What I find so strange is that half of the women I have ministered to in the last 30 years have been wounded by this ever-increasing disturbing trend. The church seems oblivious to their plight all the while the enemy is gaining ground and the causalities everywhere.

Hardly a week goes by that we don’t hear another story from a broken-hearted mother whose children or grandchildren have abandoned their Christian upbringing in favor of a sexual lifestyle totally opposed to God’s design. The devil, through media and government legislations, is overtly pushing a demonic agenda that our children are buying into, hook, line and sinker. Like the early church in Corinth, we are embracing and slowly molding ourselves into the image of this corrupt world. We are living in a time of wholesale sexual identity crisis that rivals Sodom and Gomorrah. How are we to respond to this? It depends on if you are dealing with a person in or out of the church. Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13.  It all stems from a lack of knowledge about God our creator is, who we are without Him, where we are and how we got there, and lastly, God’s remedy in Christ (Genesis chapters 1-4; John 1:1-18; 1 Corinthians 1:18-24; 1 John 4:1-19). In short, we have either missed the gospel all together, or, diluted it to a man made, man centered gospel that is good for nothing.

**Digging Deeper:** Lev. 18:22; Judges 19:22-24; Luke 17:29; Jude 7; Titus 1:10-16, 2:11-14; Revelation 2:18-23, 9:2, 18:9

Using broad strokes, we have merely scratched the surface of reclaiming sexuality as God intended. This topic has many dimensions, each demanding an enormous amount of pen and ink. Therefore, I will defer to those who are more qualified to speak with expertise on these matters. Rosaria Butterfield is one of these people. Rosaria is a pastor’s wife and mother, a writer, speaker, former professor of English at Syracuse University. She is also a *former* atheist and lesbian. In her first book, The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert, she details her radical conversion to Christ. Her second book, Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ, is a must read for anyone dealing with this subject. Additionally, you can find numerous YouTube videos where you can hear her beautiful redemptive story. The Lord has given us this sister to equip the church for such a time as this. If we are to find the heart of God in this matter and desire to reach those struggling with sexual identity, we would do well to do some research and listen to those who know experientially, from which they speak.

**Titus 3:3-6**

***For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions***

***and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But “when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, 5 he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior.***

In their insightful book *Boundaries*, Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, speak directly to the cause, and effects, and rebuilding of lives that have been torn asunder by sin. I found it extremely practical and eye-opening personally, and I highly recommend it. To sum up this lesson, from kinds of people God chooses: Short pithy gems,here is a fitting quote by J. R. Miller:

Christ is building His kingdom with earth’s broken things. Men want only the strong, the successful, the victorious, the unbroken – in building their kingdoms. But God is the God of the unsuccessful, of those who have failed. Heaven is filling with earth’s broken live, and there is no bruised reed that Christ cannot take and restore to glorious blessedness and beauty. He can take the life crushed by pain or sorrow—and make it into a harp whose music shall be all praise. He can lift earth’s saddest failure –up to Heaven’s glory!

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Psalms 72:1-12, 107:8-21; Jeremiah 8:20-22; Proverbs 4:20-23; Hebrews

4:12-13

###### **WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance**

* **Saint/Holy**: Strong’s #40 – Greek: Hagios -*most holy one, saint. Sacred, pure, morally blameless, consecrated.* See: Ephesians 1:1, 4, 13, 15, 18, 19, 2:19, 21; 4:12, 30; Romans 1:6-7
* **Sanctified**: Strong’s # 37-John 17:17,19; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11; 1 Timothy 4:5; 1 Thessalonian 5:3
* **Pure:** Strong’s #53 – Hagnos from holy /saint*, clean, innocent, modest, perfect, chaste, clean, pure.*1 John 3:3; 1 Peter 2:9
* **Pure**: Strong’s #2513 Katharos*, clean clear, pure*. Hebrews 10:22
* **Cleansed**: Strong’s #2511/2513- Karharizo: *to cleanse, make clean, purge, purify, pure.* John 13:10-11
* **Blameless**: Strong’s # 298 Amometos–*unblamable.* 2 Peter 3:14
* **Blameless**: Strong’s # 410-*unaccused, irreproachable blameless*. 1 Corinthians 1:8,
* **Blameless**: Strong’s #274- Amemptos- *faultless, blameless, un-blamable*. 1 Thessalonians 5:23

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 1 Peter 1:14-17; 1 John 1:7; 2 Peter 3:14; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 6:9-20; 7:1215; Ephesians 5:25-27; Col. 1:19-22; Titus 2:11-15; 3:3-7

Spiritual songs are scriptures put to melody, such as a song by Kari Jobe titled “My Beloved.” It is based upon the words king Solomon wrote about his bride. If you are in Christ, then you are His bride. The following passage from Song of Solomon reminds us of how the Lord views us…. We are clean, spotless, pure and holy.

**Song of Songs 4:7**

***You are altogether beautiful, my darling! There is no blemish in you!***

In light of all the Lord has done to forgive us and free us from our sins, how are we to apply this truth? We will conclude with some admonitions from God’s Word. Let’s read Romans 6:12-22, 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:13-19 and 1 Peter 2:9-11; Ephesians 5:1-27.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.**

1. Would you describe yourself as a sinner or a saint? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you experienced the trauma of abuse? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. If so, have you struggled with any addictions that could have resulted from past wounds? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. If so, have you sought help through counseling? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Has God revealed to you any areas in your life that need further healing or deliverance? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you think some of our insecurities come from an unhealthy fear that God will treat us as our sins deserve, or perhaps that God cannot truly love us because of what we have done? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you feel like you must pay penitence for your past sin to earn God’s love? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. Read: Psalms 103:1-14. In verse 4, the Psalmist describes deliverance from the pit. Can you describe a “pit” that he Lord has delivered from? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Think on These Things

Did you learn something new? Did you find a new promise to claim as your own? Did you find a command to obey, a sin to confess or avoid? Is there a passage you could turn into a prayer? How did the Lord speak personally to you through this lesson? What action will you take in obedience to God’s voice? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Memory Verse**

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

***Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals,thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive,and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christand by the Spirit of our God.***

**Week #6**



**The Mystery of God in Christ**

**Key Passage**

**Ephesians 1:8-12**

***4 For he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. 5 He did this by predestining us to adoption as his legal heirs through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will – 6 to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son.***

***7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the richesof his grace 8 that he lavished on us in all wisdomand insight. 9 He did this when he revealed to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, 10 toward the administration of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ – the things in heaven and the things on earth. 11 In Christ we too have been claimed as God’s own possession, since we were predestined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will 12 so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, would be to the praise of his glory.***

**Introduction**

Some have compared the first fourteen verses of the book of Ephesians to the Grand Canyon. Experiencing this wonder once, I concur with this comparison. But here’s my dilemma: The more I study, the more I find. Every vantage point surpasses the last. It is like standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon, looking out over its vastness, it takes your breath away leaving you speechless. How does one begin to describe the glory of a King and God whose indescribable? In summarizing man’s attempt to write about God, the great theologian, Thomas Aquinas said, “It feels like straw.” These are my sentiments exactly.

Yesterday after our disciple group met, Joney and I went to a store and the lady who greeted us at the door wore a red button with these words on it: Jesus is… I could not help myself but asked, Who is Jesus to you? She replied, “He is my everything.”

Without a doubt, Jesus Christ is the most polarizing figure in all of history. And yet, a large portion of the world’s population has never even heard His name. As for the those who have, some hate Him, some deny His existence and still others, while believing the historical facts about Him, are simply indifferent towards Him. Saul would be one who would be numbered in the category of those who hated Jesus, until he was stopped in his tracks while on the road to Damascus. Then everything changed. When Jesus called Saul by name, he must have wondered who in the world could this possibly be (Acts 9:1-31). Saul asked the risen Savior, *“Who are you Lord?”* That’s not a simple question, but it is one of the most important questions we could ever ask.

On one occasion Jesus asked His disciples a probing question: “Who do you think I am?” Peter responded, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 16:13-19). When it comes right down to it, only God can reveal the true identity of Jesus. And when He does, you’ll be forced to decide what you will do with Him. Who is Jesus to you personally? Your response to that question will set the trajectory for your life now, as well as your eternity. We had better get this right.

Dr. Steven J. Lawson, founder of One Passion Ministries, puts it this way, “Tell me what you think of Christ and I will tell you the state of your worship, the standard of your holiness, and your sacrifice in evangelism and missions. Everything hinges on your vision of Christ.” In this lesson, we’ll be answering that question from both a Biblical, as well as a personal perspective.

And so, this is our lofty goal; to gain a fresh vision of the mystery of God, hidden in Christ.

**Behold Your God**

**Revelation 1:10-20 (ASV)**

***I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, what thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus,***

***and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.***

***And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks***

***one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about***

***at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass,***

***as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he***

***had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword:***

***and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.***

C.S. Lewis, author of The Chronicles of Narnia, was once a skeptic. In his classic book, Mere Christianity he wrote:

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

**Mystery of Jesus in the Old Testament**

**Ephesians 3:1-2 (ESV)**

***For this reason, I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—***

***assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me***

***for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,***

***which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now***

***been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.***

Every millisecond of our lives, from the cradle to the grave, was mapped out before time began. That means that every single thing in comes into our lives must pass through the sieve of God sovereign plan. Throughout the ages His plans were not entirely unknown. Although hidden in symbolisms and metaphors, each minute vestiges found the narratives of the Old Testament were a micro picture of God’s plan. You put them all together and what you have is a portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hidden from the writers of the Old Testament in shadows, signs, types and symbols is a mystery. In the third century Saint Augustine wrote, “In the Old Testament the New lies hidden, in the New Testament the old is laid open.” Here is the principle that we must understand to unlock all the mysteries of the Bible. Without a proper understanding of the Old Testament, the New Testament doesn’t make much sense, and vice versa. The Bible, therefore, must be viewed as a seamless story. A useful tool you can use to see the story as it unfolds in sequence is the Chronological Bible.

When Christ Jesus is referenced in the Old Testament, before His incarnation, it is called a Christophany. Remember, the Old Testament was the Bible Jesus quoted from. It was after His resurrection and before His ascension that Jesus did a chronological Bible study with two men on the road to Emmaus, and then later with His disciples.

Jesus, at this point, had fulfilled at least 353 specific Old Testament passages before He laid the Bible open and revealed the mystery to His disciples. As the old adage goes, “Hind-sight is twenty -twenty.” As Jesus went from the Law of Moses to the Prophets and the Psalms, they realized He was the Lord God Almighty. Wouldn’t you have loved to be part of that Bible Study?

**Luke 24:25-49 (NASB)**

***And He said to them, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets***

***have spoken! Then beginning with the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in ALL the Scriptures. They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?” Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,***

***and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again***

***from the dead the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.***

***And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you: but you are to stay***

***in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” AMEN.***

The terms used for the study of interpretation of the Scriptures are hermeneutics and exegesis, and they are frequently used interchangeably. The word hermeneutics comes from the Greek word hermeneuo and it means to *translate, interpret, to explain thoroughly, and expound on.* Jesus used this word in the above text; specifically, in Luke 24:31, 32, 45. It’s translated as: *opened their eyes* *or minds* and *explained.*

Herb Hodges, whom I consider a spiritual father, is the man who was instrumental in casting the vision of Biblical disciple making for my church. In my ignorance of the Greek language, I had always assumed that exegesis, was referring to “exiting Jesus” from the Scriptures. I always seize the opportunity to learn from Brother Herb. So, as we were seated next to one another on a plane bound for Nicaragua, I ask Brother Herb to explain exegesis to me. This is what He said, “Exegesis means to take by the hand and lead out from invisibility to visibility.” In reality, I was not too far off base. Jesus took them by the hand and hearts and exited Himself from the Scriptures!

* **Genesis 1:1, 22:1-18 and** **John 1:1**- Christ Jesus is the Beginning God, Creator (Colossians 1:13-20), Last Adam, the Seed, and the covering. His cross – the Tree of Life, a type of righteous Able slain and He is Jehova Jireh the ultimate provision and sacrifice of God.
* **Exodus 12:13, 34:20**- Christ Jesus is The Great I Am, deliver, Savior, and Passover Lamb.
* **Leviticus** **17:11, 23:5** – Christ is the “I Am Holy” God and High Priest mediator between God and Man. (Holy 90 times; Blood- 60 times; Atonement 49 times)
* **Numbers 21:1-9** - The water giving rock 1 cor. 10:4; The star of Jacob and scepter out of Israel, David’s Son, salvation from the curse (Numbers 21:1-9; John 4:13-16).
* **Deuteronomy 18:15-18, 21:23**- Prophet like Moses, (Lev. 18:115-22, Acts 3:22, 7:37) Christ, redeems us from the curse of the Law (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).
* **Joshua 5:15**- the Hebrew Name for Jesus; The Captain of the Lord’s host (Joshua 5:15)
* **Judges 21:25**– Like the judges; Christ is the one who delivers His people from Sin, satan, and death. He is also the ultimate Judge (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:3-6).
* **Ruth**- **4:14**; Christ is the Kinsman- Redeemer.
* **1 Samuel 3:19-21, 18**:**7**- The Son of David, Israel’s King and Messiah (Revelation 19:16).
* **2 Samuel 7:12-16**- God kept His covenant and redemptive plan through Christ, the Eternal King (Revelation 22:16.
* **1 Kings 8:53, 11:35-36**-Christ’s wisdom and glory far surpassed the wisdom of King Solomon (Luke 11:31).
* **2 Kings 8:19;** the ministries of prophets, Elijah and Elisha, mirrored Christ (Luke 24:19; Revelation 21:23).
* **1 Chronicles 28:4** - Messianic dynasty of Christ is traced back to David. (1 Chron. 3, 17:13, 29:10-13; Luke 1:32-33; Hebrews 1:5; Rev. 5:12-13
* **2 Chronicles 7:1, 36:19**- Solomon’s reign is a picture of Christ’s eternal reign (Rev.21-22).
* **Ezra 6:16-** Like Ezra the priest who led God’s people out of Babylon, Jesus had the same agenda to set the captives free (Luke 4:18).
* **Nehemiah 6:15-** Restoring God’s people to their homeland, so does Christ, as Son of David and King of Israel He came to reestablish God’s covenant people and kingdom (Matthew 21:9; John 12:13)
* **Easter 4:14-** Christ is seen here in the providential protection and provision for God’s people (John 17:12)
* **Job 1:21**, **19:25-27**, – In Job, Christ is the mediator between God and man, a redeemer who lives (1 Timothy 2:5).
* **Psalms 16:8-11, 19: 7-11, 22:7, 16, 78:1-2, 150:6; 119: 105-** The crucifixion of Christ Psalm 32:1-2. Psalm 2 points to His kingdom coming on earth.
* **Proverbs 2:6; 3:5-6 -**The wisdom of God (Hebrews 1:3; Matthew12:42; Colossians 2:2-3).
* **Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12:8-** This book depicts the emptiness and futility of life apart from God. Christ fills the void (John 5:40, 10:1-10, 15:5; Hebrews 1:1-10; Ephesians 1:19-23).
* **Song of Songs 6:3-** Christ is the Beloved and the church is His bride (Ephesians 1:6; 5:32).
* **Isaiah 9:1-2, 7:14, 40:3-8, 28-31, 49:6, 52:53:12, 61:1-2** – Here we find the signs of His incarnation and virgin birth and the vivid account some 150 later of Christ the suffering Servant. He would be a light for the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth.
* **Jeremiah 30:15, 31:31** – Jeremiah’s suffering predicts Messiahs sufferings. He wept over Jerusalem and foretold of the imminent destruction of the temple (Jeremiah 7:11-15, 9:1). These are but three of numerous parallels between Jesus and the prophet (Luke 19:41; Matthew 24:1-2). God’s word is a fire as God is a consuming fire.
* **Lamentations** **1:12** - As God’s wrath was poured out on the city He loves; His wrath was poured out on the Son He loves (John 3:14-16; Romans 6:23).
* **Ezekiel 38**:**23 –** The expression “Son of Man” (90 times) pointed to Christ the Son of Man.
* **Daniel 4:3; 7:13-14, 27, 9:24-26**- Daniel saw the Son of man coming to reign and finally rule on earth (Luke 1:31-33).
* **Hosea 1**:**10 2:13-23, 3:1, 13:4-5-** Jesus is Salvation. Like Hosea, He redeems from slavery.
* **Joel**- foresaw the second coming of Jesus (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10) and also the Holy Spirit coming on His followers (Acts 2:16-21).
* **Amos 4:11, 5:24** -Jesus is the righteousness of God and fulfill all God’s righteous requirements.
* **Obadiah 17**-Jesus is our Savior Herod, an antecessor of the Edomites, would attempt to kill Jesus
* **Jonah**- As Jonah was three days in the belly of the fish, Jesus was in the earth then resurrected (Luke 11:29-31).
* **Micah 2:2-4, 3**:**8, 4:1-5, 5:2-5**- foretold of the birthplace of Israel’s great King and Shepard, and Peace. He would have global impact (Matthew 2:60).
* **Nahum 1:2-15** -Christ is the messenger who proclaims peace and good news (Acts 10:36; Matthew 8:26).
* **Habakkuk** **3:16-** He stood in awe of the presence, holiness and power of God. John did the same when He saw Christ on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:17).
* **Zephaniah 3:15-17-** Christwas the king of Israel in flesh and would be the restorer of the Remnant (Mark 15:26).
* **Haggai 1:8, 2:6-7**- Here Christ is the Glory of God for Israel and the Gentile nations (Luke 2:32).
* **Zechariah 3:8; 8:3, 9:9, 12:10, 23:5-6, 33:14-17** – In Zechariah we see Christ as a branch from Jesse and Jehovah our Righteousness and King. Also, foreshadowed the piercing of Jesus Body (John 19:34,37; Revelation 1:7).
* **Malachi 1:11, 2:17- 3:6**- Here Christ is the Refiner’s Fire and Sun of righteous who brings healing to His people.

**His Name Is Above Every Name**

**Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)**

***Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above***

***every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth***

***and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,***

***to the glory of God the Father.***

Each name or title for God is a Self-revelation, and there’s a scarlet thread that ties each of the names of God together. There’s only One who ever lived up to the Name. And it is written: “Jesus Christ is thesame*, yesterday and today and forever****.***” (Hebrews 13:8)

**Acts 4:10-12 (NASB)**

***BY THE NAME of JESUS CHRIST, the NAZARENE, who you crucified, whom God raised***

***from the dead- by THIS NAME this man stands here before you in good health.***

***And there is SALVATION in NO one else; for there is NO OTHER NAME under heaven***

***that has been given among men BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED.***

Remember that John was in Ephesus when he wrote his gospel and his letters. John begins his gospel by stating that Jesus *is the Word of God*. And in Revelation he said of Jesus, “His name is the Word of God.” (The Word of God translated in Greek is Logos.)

**John 1:1-4 (NASB)**

***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

***He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.***

As we’re about to see in the following Word Search, there is a word that parallels the Greek name for the Word of God,and in Hebrew the name is Memra. Used interchangeably with the name LORD, Memra is synonymous with God Himself. In other words, there is no distinction between the LORD Himself and the *Word of God*.

**WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance:**

### Targum: The Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Scriptures for the Jews who came out of captivity in Babylon, possibly translated by Ezra (Neh. 8:6-7). In Greek the Memra is God, yet is a separate personality from the Father and Holy Spirit. (Source: from the internet: oneinmessiah.net/TargumMemraTheWordOfGod.htm edited by Malachi Yosef)

### Memra/ The Word of the LORD: This is an Aramaic word meaning: a command, or appointment. It comes from the Aramaic word Imrah, also spelled Emrah. It means: *commandment, speech, or word* (Ps. 147:15, Is. 55:10-11). It is the equivalent of Logos/ The Word. Source of this information is Bible word.org. (John 1:1-3, 10, 14; Psalm 33:6; Gen. 1:27; 9:17, 28:20-21)

### Word: In Greek is Logos. It is defined as: *something said a topic, subject of discourse, also reasoning, or motive, the Divine Expression (i.e. Christ): - account, cause, communication, doctrine, fame, mouth, utterance, word, work.*

### Word: In Hebrew is Dabar. It is defined as: *to speak, commune, declare, commune, promise. A word spoken, communication, message, act, answer, counsel, message, power, word and a work.*

**John 11:25 (NASB)**

***Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live***

***even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.’***

When God introduced Himself to Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He said, “*I Am Who I Am,*” *The LORD God Almighty.* Now compare this, to the preposterous “I Am” statements of Jesus, and keep in mind that Jesus Christ is eternal and unchanging. If His claims were not true, then they would sound extremely arrogant, wouldn’t they? But, on the other hand, if He was and is the Great I Am, then these are not the words of one who is narcissistic. Jesus was just speaking the truth, for as He claimed, “I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life!” (John 10:9; 14:6)

But did Jesus’ actions speak louder than His words? Take, if you will, the conversation Jesus had with Martha as she was grieving the loss of her brother Lazarus. “*I am the resurrection and the life,*” Jesus said, and then He proceeds to raise Lazarus from the grave. Now mind you, this was *not just a resuscitation*; Lazarus had been stone cold dead for three days! Jesus hates death, for He stated plainly: “I Am the life!” On one occasion, he turned a funeral into a party by bringing a young man back to life, and on another occasion, gave a 12-year-old girl back to her parents.

If all of that were not enough, what do you make of all the dead saints who followed Him up out of the grave? It makes one wonder what that must have been like, both for the resurrected and for those who saw them walking about wearing their grave clothes! It is one thing to claim to be the resurrection and the life, and it’s an altogether different thing when you take authority of a dead body and command it to live. Only God could do that! And you know what? One glorious day, He will do away with death all together.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** John11:1-44; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56; Matthew 52-53; 1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 20: 13-15, 21:1-4

**Isaiah 42:8 (NASB)**

***I am the LORD, that is MY NAME; I will not give MY GLORY to another,***

***Nor MY praise to graven images.***

**Isaiah 45:21-25 (NIV)**

***Declare what is to be, present it—let them take counsel together. Who foretold this***

***long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the Lord?***

***And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. “Turn to me and be saved, all you end of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.***

***By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not***

***be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.***

***They will say of me, ‘In the Lord alone are deliverance and strength.’”***

***All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame.***

**Acts 10:42-43 (NASB)**

***And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is***

***THE ONE who has been appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. Of HIM ALL the prophets bear witness that through HIS NAME everyone who believes***

***IN HIM receives forgiveness of sins.***

**WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance:**

* **I AM** inHebrew is Hayah. It is the root word for the next name LORD.
* **LORD** in Hebrew is Yehovah-Jehovah:*The LORD-The Self-Existent or Eternal Jehovah, Jewish national name of God.* The root of this word is the name: “**I Am.**”
* **Jesus or Joshua** in Hebrew is Yehowshuwa. In Greek this name is **Jesus**. This Hebrew name is made up of two words, one we just saw, the **LORD-Jehova**, from the root word **I AM**, and the second word that the name **Jesus/Joshua** comes from is the word save or **Savior.**
* **Savior or Save** in Hebrew is Yasha**:** -*to be open wide or free-rescue be safe-bringing salvation, save, savoir, get victory.*
* **Isaiah** in Hebrew is Yeshayahuw. This name comes from the word **Savior**. His name means, *Yesha has saved*. (Did you note that Isaiah’s name means “*Yesha has saved”* – in the past tense?)

I know this is a lot of Greek and Hebrew, but I hope you will not skip over these Word Searches. I implore you to take a closer look. As you look at those words, do you see Jesus? Do they answer the question of His identity? In case you’re not yet convinced, were not done yet. By the way, Jesus’ favorite “Self- title” is - The Son of Man. This is curious because we know that based on the Bible He is The Son of God. So why did He speak of Himself in third person as the *Son of Man*?

**Daniel 7:13-14 (NASB)**

***I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven ONE LIKE a***

***SON OF MAN was coming, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented***

***before Him. And He was given Dominion, GLORY and a kingdom that all the peoples,***

***nations and men of every language might serve HIM. His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.***

* After you read the following passages, give an explanation as to why Jesus called Himself the *Son of Man*. (Daniel 7:9-14; Revelation 1:13; Mark 8:31) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 24:30 (NASB)**

***And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will morn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY***

***with power and great glory.***

**Mark 13:26 (NASB)**

***Then they will see The Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.***

**Matthew 28:18 (KJV)**

***And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying,***

***“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”***

**Deuteronomy 4:39 (NIV)**

***Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above***

***and on the earth beneath; there is no other.***

**Psalms 103:19 (ESV)**

***The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.***

**Isaiah 45:11-12 (NASB)**

***Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:***

***“Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, and you shall commit to Me***

***the work of My hands. “It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it.***

***I stretched out the heavens with My hands. And I ordained all their host.***

**Isaiah 43:10 (NASB)**

***So that you may know and believe Me and understand that I AM He. Before Me***

***there was no God formed, and there will be none after me. I, even I am the LORD,***

***and there is no savior besides Me.***

**Genesis 17:1 (NIV)**

***When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said,***

***“I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless.***

**Exodus 6:2-3 (NIV)**

***God also said to Moses, “I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob***

***as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord I did not make myself fully known to them.***

**Isaiah 54:5 (NIV)**

***For your Maker is your husband – the LORD Almighty is his name – the Holy One of Israel***

***is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.***

**Exodus 3:13-15 (NIV)**

***Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them,***

***'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said,***

***"Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' God, furthermore,***

***said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, '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, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.…***

**John 8:58 (NASB)**

***Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”***

**1 John 1:1 (NASB)**

***What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes,***

***what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the WORD OF LIFE.***

**Revelation 2:8 (NASB)**

***The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this***

**Revelation 3:14 (NASB)**

***The AMEN, the faithful and true Witness, The Beginning of the creation of God”, says this.***

**Revelation 21:6 (NASB)**

***Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. “***

**Revelation 22:13 (NASB)**

***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.***

**John 1:10-14 (NASB)**

***He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory,***

***the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* Acts 5:31; Romans 9:5; Psalm 2:6-12, 83:18, 86:9-10, 97:7, 45:6-7, 101:1-13; Daniel 7:13-14; Isaiah 42:8, 45:5-6, 52:10; Hebrew 1:1-13; 12:2-3, Acts 5:31, 10:36; Matt. 8:29, 22:41-45, 24:30, 26:64, 28:18

**Week #7**



**Holy Spirit- OurEngadgement Ring**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:13 -14 (ESV)**

***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, who is the guarantee***

***of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.***

**Introduction**

Thus far, we have met God the Father - our Daddy. And then we beheld God the Son - our Redeemer. Now, we will turn our attention to God the Holy Spirit otherwise known as “Jesus’ other self” (Galatians 4:6).

Perhaps you grew up in a church where the Holy Spirit was seldom mentioned. Or, you heard sermons about Him, but didn’t really know or understand His activities in your life. Ashamedly, this was me. Consequently, for years I thought the Holy Spirit was a thing – not a person.

There are those who out of Biblical ignorance or the fear of being labeled too extreme refuse to even broach the subject of the Holy Spirit. To their great loss, they miss the most intimate part of their relationship with the Lord. You see, while He was in the flesh, Jesus was “*God with us*,” but now, for those who have believed in Him, the Holy Spirit is “God *within* us!” (John 1:11-14, 3:5-8; 1 John 3:24, 4:5-8, 5:1) Do you want to get to know Him? There are no short cuts; you must become a good student of the Book He wrote -- the Bible.

The following passage in Psalm encompasses so many of the attributes of the Holy Spirit. Here are a few. At the moment of new birth, the Holy Spirit floods our thirsty soul with the living water welling up to eternal life (John 4:4-24). In Revelation, He *is* the river of Living Water. He baptized us and cleaned us from within, thus making sinners saints. If you’ll remember, saint and holy are the same Greek word (Mark 1:8; Matthew 3:1-11).

**Psalm 46:4-7 (NIV)**

***There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Highest dwells. God is within her; she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.***

***Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.***

***The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.***

Love and Joy, the first two fruits of the Spirit, not only makes glad the City of God, but He makes us who are filled with Him glad on earth. He is Christ within us, the hope of glory. He’s our Teacher, Comforter and Helper. He speaks to us from His Holy Book to bring life to the written Word of God. He is the One who places a sword (specific verses from scripture) into our mind so that we can withstand the enemy’s attacks. At the break of every new day, He helps us by imparting new mercies, graces, and strength. And by the way, God the Holy Spirit is our advocate and intercessor (Romans 8:9-27).

If you think all this is wonderful, then just you wait, we’ve only begun discovering the many facets of the Holy Spirit. We have a lot of ground to cover, and although this may be an exhausting study, it will in no way be an exhaustive study. By the end of this lesson, our aim is to become better acquainted with the One who is so intimately familiar with us. And as we do, we will have ample opportunity to make some real-life practical applications and begin to recognize His work in and through our lives.

**1 John 4:13-16 (NIV)**

***This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.***

***And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.***

***If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God.***

***And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.***

***Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.***

**He’s the Seal of Our Inheritance**

**2 Corinthians 1:20-22 (NASB)**

***For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore, also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.***

Seize the opportunity to return to the wedding theme of this series, now, we will discover that the Holy Spirit is like our engagement ring. When we were born spiritually; we were sealed by the Holy Spirit. The seal is a mark of authenticity and protection (Ephesians 6:13-18). Like a signet ring of a King, that is used to seal his letters or important documents. The word pledge is the modern Greek word for engagement ring. The Holy Spirit signifies that we belong to Jesus, and the seal guarantees that there will be a wedding. This engagement cannot be broken because God keeps His promises. And then lastly, we will look at our inheritance.

**Titus 3:5-7 (NASB)**

***He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according***

***to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified***

***by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.***

**WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance**

* **Seal** #4972 the Greek word Sphragizo: From #4973: *to stamp with a signet or private mark, for security or preservation, to keep secret, to attest, seal up.* (Eph. 1:13; 4:30; Romans 15:28; 2 Cor. 1:22; John 3:33)
* **Seal** #4973 the Greek word Sphragis: *a signet, (as a fencing in or protecting from misappropriation); the stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy, or genuineness) seal.* (2 Tim.2:19; Rev. 9:4)
* **Pledge or Earnest (engagement ring of promise)** #728 the Greek word Arrhabon**:** *a pledge, i.e. part of the purchase -money or property given in advance as security*. (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Ephesians 1:14)
* **Pledge** #6162 from #6148 the Hebrew word Arabown: *to braid, to give security, engage, give pledges, put in surety.*

**Ephesians 1:13b-14a (NASB)**

***Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,***

***who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.***

Wow, the Holy Spirit is like our engagement ring! What is our inheritance? That’s the greatest blessing of all! But before we do, we will need to come to grips with a truth about those who are sealed with the Holy Spirit. This is a truth that is hard to fathom, and it is especially so for some who have been raised in certain religious affiliations. May the Holy Spirit illuminate His Words giving us the ability to embrace these realities as our very own. For only then will we be able to appropriate this truth in our lives. For the sake of clarification, in the next three passages you will find at least nine titles given to believers.

**1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)**

***You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a***

***holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.***

**Revelation 1:5-6 (ESV)**

***From Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings***

***on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us***

***a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

**1 Peter 2:9 (NASB)**

***But you are a Chosen Race, a royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, and A People***

***for God’s Own Possession, so that you may proclaim the excellences of HIM***

***who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.***

Did you notice that we are a holy priesthood, a holy nation, and a kingdom of priests? Contemplate with me the deep implications of all of this. We won’t expound on each of these titles for now, but we’ll focus upon the significance of being a holy priesthood. No doubt Paul, being the Old Testament scholar that he was, must have been jumping for joy as he thought of the implications of these realities for the saints. Most believe that Paul penned the book of Hebrews. If this is so, then clearly, he had the same thing in mind when he wrote of Jesus being our Great High Priest of a New Covenant.

**Isaiah 61:6-7 (NIV)**

***And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance.***

***And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.***

Isaiah must have had the same thing in mind as the Holy Spirit inspired him to write about those whom the Lord sets free. He called them priests and ministers of God. And note the exchange that takes place. Instead of shame - we’ll receive a double portion, instead of disgrace - everlasting joy. These are just a few of the fringe benefits of our redemption! But the source of our joy is found in our inheritance!

**Ephesians 1:3-9 (ESV)**

***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,even as he chose us in him before the foundation***

***of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In lovehe predestined us***

***for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,to the praise***

***of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insightmaking known to us the mystery***

***of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the***

***fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.***

Remember in a previous lesson we learned what the name s*aint* means? The Greek word *Hagios* is translated as two different words: saints and holy. The two words are interchangeable. Keeping this in mind, let’s explore what it means to be a priest. The office of priest is mentioned some 700 times in the Old Testament and approximately 80 times in the New Testament. You can read about some examples in the following passages, but for now there are five aspects to the priesthood that we want to point out.

**Deuteronomy 18:1-2 (ESV)**

***The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel.***

***They shall eat the Lord’s food offerings as their inheritance. They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them.***

Number one, out of all the tribes of Israel, only the tribe of Levi was *chosen* by God to be His priests. Number two, they were to make sacrifices and *pray to God* on behalf of the people. So are we; it’s one of the functions of the Holy Spirt in us. Number three, they had to be *blameless* before God. (Deut. 18:13) Number four, they were the *only ones who could approach God* or be in His presence in the Holy of Holies. And number five the ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Levites had no allotments or inheritance or private ownership of land. “Why might this be,” you may ask. Because for them and for every saint in Christ, *the Lord Jesus is our inheritance* andthe Holy Spirit is our guarantee!

**Joshua 13:33 (NIV)**

***But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance;***

***the Lord, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them.***

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Genesis 15:1; Numbers 18:1-32, 26:3; Deuteronomy 18:1-8, 28:9; Joshua 13:14, 33; 18:7; Ezekiel 44:28; Isaiah 61:1-6; Hebrew 4:14-8:13; 1 Peter 2:9-10

One glorious day, when everything will be conformed to the will of God’s eternal plan, and all things will reach their fulfillment, we will behold the Triune God. The imagery described by John the Revelator in the book of Revelation is reminiscent of Eden before paradise was defiled by sin. You see, Eden was a type, or replica of heaven. And John got to see it. What he saw was the God-Head, Father and Son seated upon the throne, and from them flowing like a magnificent waterfall was the River of Life -- God the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Ezekiel added his vision to that day, and he said that, “Where the river flows everything will live.” Likewise, the Holy Spirit reminds us of the words of Jesus, “The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing, the words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life.” (Ezekiel 47:1-12; John 6:63) On either side of this river is the Tree of Life. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the Nations. (Revelation 22:1-6) Oh, don’t you long for that day? But until that day comes, through the study of God’s Holy Word, we get to drink deeply and tap into this healing water that flows within us through God the Holy Spirit.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Ephesians 1:10-14; Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12; John 3:1-16, 4:3-25, John 6:36, 7:37-39; Psalm 1:1-3, 46:4-11; Jeremiah 17:5-14

**Holy Ghost Writer**

**Acts 19:1-2 (ESV)**

***And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them,***

***“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said,***

***“No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”***

When Paul first arrived in Ephesus, he met twelve disciples there who were never introduced to the Holy Spirit. So, he began to teach them. In reality, though, someone else was teaching *through* Paul - God the Holy Spirit.

**2 Peter 1:19-21 (NASB)**

***So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention***

***as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning star arises***

***in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter***

***of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will,***

***but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.***

Doctor Luke, who penned two detailed books of the New Testament, called the Words the Holy Spirit inspired him to write “Living Oracles” (Acts 7:38; Luke 1:1-4; Hebrews 4:12). What makes the Word of God “Living” is the One who authored, inspired and breathed His life into it -- God the Holy Spirit. Have you ever heard of a ghost writer? In this case, we are talking about the *Holy Ghost writer!* Paul referenced the Holy Spirit fifteen times in his letter to the saints at Ephesus, and furthermore, it is not insignificant that Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote his letters to the saints at Corinth. In these letters, Paul referenced the Holy Spirit approximately 53 times.

Why do I point this out? As any teacher of God’s Word knows, whatever the Holy Spirit is presently teaching you, becomes, as the prophet Jeremiah described it, “Fire in his bones” (Jeremiah 20:9). In other words, you can’t contain it. I liken it to the need to “give birth.” Any truth that the Holy Spirit was burning into the heart of the writer was verbally expressed to those closest to them. Therefore, we can be fairly certain that every letter that was written upon the hearts of Paul, Timothy and John during their stay in Ephesus became a sermon that was preached to the saints in Ephesus.

* How many messages do you think you have heard in your lifetime that focus on the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What difference does it make if the Holy Spirit is an object - like a force, or Him being a person? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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* Can you think of any ways it is better to have God within us that even to have God with us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance**

* **God breathed or inspired** is the Greek word Theopneustos: *divine breathed in, given by inspiration of God.* As you can see, this word comes from the next word for Spirit. (2 Timothy 3:16)
* **Holy Spirit** is the Greek wordPneuma: *to breathe, to blow, Holy Spirit, Christ’s Spirit, life, Spirit, Mind, and breath*. (John 20:21-22)
* **Holy Spirit i**n Hebrew is Ruwach: *wind; by resemblance breath, exhalation, life, air, anger, blast, breath, courage, mind, spirit, and tempest.*
* **Comforter** is the Greek word Parakletos: *an intercessor, consoler, advocate, comforter.*

**The Acts of the Holy Spirit**

**Ephesians 3:14-16 (ESV)**

***Let’s us consider some of the aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.***

***For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven***

***and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you***

***to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.***

Some call the book of Acts “the Acts of the Apostles,” but others call it “the Acts of the Holy Spirit.” Which one is correct? They both are. Here is why. When Jesus left to return to His Father in heaven, the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write about “All that Jesus *began* to do and to teach.” (Acts 1:1) Acts simply picks up where the four gospels left off. Referencing the work of the Holy Spirit some 58 times, Luke details the *acts* that the Holy Spirit was *doing* in and through the apostles. Robert E. Coleman in his book The Master Plan of Evangelism, said: “Jesus was God in revelation; but the Spirit was God in operation.”

His work may seem anonymous, and for the most part, go unnoticed. But He has been working or *acting* in and through His saints ever since and He still is (Joel 2:28-29).

Here are just a *few* of the “actions” of the Holy Spirit.

* Ephesians 2:18 He gives us access to the Father.
* Acts 1:1-2 He wrote, through Luke, the books of Luke and Acts to win, disciple and teach Theophilus. (1 Corinthians 2:4-16; John 16:12-15; 2 Timothy 2:2)
* Acts 1:8 In fulfillment of the Scriptures, He filled every believer and thousands of people were saved from many nations through their witness. (Joel 2:28-32; Luke 24:24-53; Acts 1:12-16, 2:2-47)
* Acts 4:1-31 He gave them the words to say and the ability to speak boldly. (Mark 13:10-11, Luke 12:11; Acts 2:4, 4:1-31, 6:8-10, 7:1-53, 8:1-8, 13:2,15:28, 16:6, 19:1-12, 21:11, 28:25; Ezekiel 11:5; Zechariah 7:11-12)
* Ephesians 3:3-5 He reveals things that only He knows and makes these things known to the church. (Acts 5:1-9, 6:1-7, 7:51-53, Acts 8:29-39, 11:28, 15:28, 16:6, 20:22, 21:4, 1 Peter 1:11, John 14:17; 1 Timothy 4:1-2 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 5:7; Jude 20)
* Acts 7:51-60 He enables the saints to die with grace and forgive those who hurt us. (Philippians 2:13)
* Acts 10:34-48 He convicts us of sin, and leads us to faith in Christ and repentance. Then, at the moment of new birth, He is poured out on all true believers. (Ephesians 1:13-17, 2:22, 4:3-4, 3:5-16; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:1-27; Acts 11:15-24; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Ezekiel 11:18-19, 36:26-27)
* Acts 9:31, 27:1-28 He comforts. (John 14:26; 2 Corinthians 1:2-7) He helps, He heals, and He gives liberty over sin. (Luke 4:14-18; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Romans 1:1-27)
* Acts 20:38 He gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness and self-control - even in the worst of circumstances. (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 2:1; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:1-25; Acts 4:13-21, 5:26; Matthew 9:8)

##### **Three in One**

Although this foundational doctrine is found throughout the Bible, you will not find the word “Trinity” in the Scriptures. Yet, God has disclosed Himself in the Bible as three persons who coexist as One, hence the name Trinity (it means three). Each person of the Godhead has different, yet unique rolls. And to the degree that we understand each of their roles, will greatly affect our view of God. Besides, this is but one of the foundational Christians of the faith.

Notwithstanding, it’s a difficult concept to grasp, much less explain. It’s not surprising that there has been some confusion surrounding the Trinity. Even though I broach this subject with a little trepidation, we would be amiss to overlook this crucial doctrine. There are three ways to approach this complex subject. We can deny it, ignore it, or minimize it. Those choose these options, and remain in ignorance despite the magnitude of Scriptural evidence, will be held as culpable as the ones who erroneously deny the doctrine of the Trinity all together. Rather than ignoring or minimizing this truth we will simply let the Scripture speak for itself.

**Genesis 1:1-2**

***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darknesswas over the surface of the watery deep,but the Spirit of Godwas movingover the surfaceof the water.***

The doctrine of the Trinity is supported by Genesis 1:1-2. Yet unless you have some knowledge of Hebrew grammar, it is not so apparent. I’ll explain. In Genesis one the Hebrew word for God is Elohim. It’s used here in the plural form - referring to *God the Father and God the Son*. The puzzling thing is, the verb *created* is singular. Now reading the passages in context, you see all three persons of the Trinity. The “Us” referred to here is God the Father and God the Son. The third person of the Trinity - God the Holy Spirit is there at creation with the Father and Son. He’s hovering over the waters.

Now read the following passages and there is no doubt that Jesus Christ *is* Creator God (John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:13-20; Hebrews 1:1-10; 1 john 1:1; Revelation 3:14)

Since the Bible states that God is One, the question that begs to be asked is, why is the name Elohim plural? Clearly, God Creator and King is both Father, Son and Spirit. And all three persons of the Trinity took part in creation, including the creation of man. This is evident in Genesis 1:26 where it is written: *“*Let Usmake man in our image,” and then again in Genesis 11:7, “Let Us go down”. We find one more example is Isaiah’s commission where they asked, “Who will go for Us?*”* (Genesis 3:22; Isaiah 6:8). As a side note, in the Great Commission, the Lord Jesus told us to, “Go and make disciples of all nations and to baptize them in the name (not names) of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

**Ephesians 4:4-6**

***There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***

In his message from Ephesians 4:1-6 entitled, The Lowly Walk, (page 131) John MacArthur makes this statement, and I’ll quote: *The basic doctrine of Judaism has always been, “The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!” (Deut. 6:4; see also 4:35; 32:39; Isaiah 45:14; 46:9), and God’s oneness is just as foundational to Christianity (see 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Eph. 4:3-6; James 2:19). Yet the New Testament also reveals the more complete truth that the one God is in three Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; John 6:27; 20:28; Acts 5:3-4)*

Many learned people have tried to come up with analogies to explain the Trinity. And while these explanations may seem a bit over simplified, here are a few examples: Some say, “The Trinity is like H2O, no matter the form, be it steam, ice or liquid -- it’s still water.” And then there is this analogy, “The Trinity is like the sun - fire - light and heat.” And lastly, there is this example: Just as a man can be a father, a son, and a brother, the God and King of the universes can be Father, Son and Spirit, three but One in the same.

* Do you have another analogy to compare the Trinity? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are you still struggling to grasp all of this? May I suggest that you do some research on your own. Here are a few trusted resources: Preceptaustin.org and www.gotquestions.org. Additionally, there is a simple children’s book by Joanne Marxhausen that may be of benefit to help adults, as well as children, understand this concept. The book is entitled *3 in One: A Picture of God.*

* 1. As you look at the list of activities of the Holy Spirit, can you think of some people through whom the Spirit has worked in your life? If so, then will you make a list of His work through these people? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  2. Take a moment and read Galatians 5:16-25. Make a list of what it looks like when we are not filled with the Spirit verses being filled with the Holy Spirit. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  3. Give one recent example that you have observed of someone walking in the flesh and someone who is walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Now list one personal example from your own life. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Week #8**



**The Holy Spirit Will Teach You**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:13 -14 (ESV)**

***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, who is the guarantee***

***of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.***

**John 14:25-26 (NIV)**

***All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,***

***whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things***

***and will remind you of everything I have said to you.***

In this lesson, I would like to share a personal example of how the Holy Spirit has worked in my life. It’s my desire to be transparent with you and so, that being said, I have a confession to make. It’s my shameful secret.

When I was in kindergarten, my grades were not so bad. I colored between the lines pretty good, or so my report card said. But then there were those frowning-face marks beside these words, “Ginny needs to learn how to be quiet.” Talking has never been my problem. Because you have made it thus far in this study, then you know I can’t tell a short story. The details are too important. When God told Moses to, “Go tell the people,” Moses replied, “Lord, you know I don’t speak well!” Not that I am a great speaker, but I believe my spiritual gift is teaching.

I sure do love to study God’s Word and share what I find. One day, while studying the encounter between Jesus and the demon possessed man, the word tells, proclaim, or, in King James English, publish leapt off the page. In Greek the word is kerusso and it means to herald as a public crier, especially, divine truth like the gospel. That about sums up the definition of my maiden name Page. God’s phone -voice -was vibrating in my heart: “PUBLISH EVERYWHERE HOW MUCH GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU”.

**God’s Glory on Display through Weakness**

**2 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV)**

***But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power***

***is from God and not from us.***

Actually, three times within three years the Lord impressed on my heart to publish the truths He has been teaching me over the last 30 years or so. As wonderful as it was to have some clear direction for my life, I was petrified. Why would this terrify me, you may ask? Because this would require *writing*! For reasons that I will explain later, written communication is not one of my strong points. In fact, I can’t spell, and my grammar is atrocious! This shameful secret has kept me in bondage to paralyzing fear and shame for most of my adult life. Fear that someone would read my writing and know how deficient and inadequate I was, and shame because I am painfully aware that it is true. Don’t misunderstand. This is an honest evaluation of my writing skills, not my mental capacities.

Now lest you think I am being immodest, let me give you a few examples. Before I ever started on the book, I gave a lady in our disciple group a copy of my lessons because, she had done some editing. We talked a few days later, and she prefaced her comment with these words, “I don’t mean to hurt your feelings but…your writing is pretty bad.” Bless her heart, she tried to help me.

But coup de grace of embarrassments was my written response to a love note I received when I was twelve years old. I distinctly remember thinking, “Now what is it, like or lick”? Then I chose the infamous words, “I lick you a lot!” Adding insult to injury, my sister Sybil and my cousin Renita got their hands on the note, and they never let me live it down. As I type those words, I am humiliated all over again. How embarrassing is that! This is just a small sampling, in my hall of shame. You’ll understand now why Spell Check is my best writing buddy. I have not reached any literary heights by a long shot, but the Holy Spirit is teaching me; and as long as I stay close and dependent upon Him, I am learning and growing. So, there it is. The cat is out of the bag…. the world knows my shameful secret! What a relief.

When the Lord impressed His desire for me to write, I protested… “Lord, writing, of all things, as you well know, is my Achilles heel. I can’t do it.” He never said I could, He just told me to be obedient. Without the aid of a g*host writer…the Holy Ghost,* this would be an insurmountable task. The *Helper,* as Jesus called Him*,* has also supplied a collaborator and writing instructor - my dear friend Cathy. Our friendship began some twenty years ago when the Holy Spirit was at work in me, witnessing to her and leading her to Christ. Because of His work in both of us, women are being discipled on three continents. How wonderful a plan is that? The bottom line is this: if any of us are learning from the Word of God as we study, it’s because the Holy Spirit is teaching us.

**Philippians 2:13 (NIV)**

***For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.***

Why do I share all of this? If God gives you a job to do that is far beyond your capabilities, then you can be certain, He will accomplish it in you through the power of the Holy Spirit. When it’s done, He, who alone is worthy, gets all the credit.

Many years ago, before the Lord saved my husband, I was alone one night and I knelt beside my bed and asked the Lord if He would speak to me. I just wanted to hear His voice. And so, I got up in bed and opened my Bible anticipating what He might say. The page opened to Psalm 45. It’s one of those passages that I hold very near and dear to my heart. Until I began to write, I never quite made the connection between the first verse of this wedding Psalm and God’s calling on my life.

**Psalm 45:1 (NIV)**

***My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the King;***

***my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.***

This is a wedding Psalm that Hebrews chapter one ascribes ultimately to the Lord Jesus. Don’t get me wrong, I am under no delusions that these words apply to me, nor is that a proper interpretation. It is an instance where, as far as it pertains to my writing, I can make some personal application. And that is, I desire, above all, to be a good student of Christ, and make my teacher proud. At the end of the day, I am writing for an audience of One… my God and King, Jesus Christ.

Herb Hodge gave the best illustrations I’ve ever seen depicting the futility of trying to do anything for God without being filled with the Spirit of God. His message, “The Hand in the Glove,” according to Herb, was birthed at a time in his life when he struggled in vain to do the work of God in his own strength.

He uses a glove to demonstrate. Picture with me if you will, a limp glove, trying to move on its own. I’ll summarize his explanation. We are the lifeless, useless glove. The Holy Spirt, is the hand that must be fully formed within the glove (I Corinthians 2:16; Galatians 4:19-20). The mind that tells the hand what to do, is the mind of Christ. When the hand is fully formed inside the glove, it can do anything and everything that the mind tells it to do. It is a clear analogy; don’t you think? So, to apply this personally, the Holy Spirit is the hand, I am just an ordinary pencil.

Read the following passages; describe a time when you had one of each of the following impressions on your mind. 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; Romans 8:5-6, 10-11, 14-16, 26-27

* Our own carnal mind: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Someone else’s: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* The Devil: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* The mind of Christ: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Has God given you a job to do that you feel you are incapable of doing? If so, what is God telling you about doing it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*“Revival,” said the late Dr.* Stephen Olford, “*is ultimately-CHRIST HIMSELF, seen, felt, heard, living, active, moving in and through, His body on Earth.”* This quote is a perfect summary of what it is like when the Holy Spirit is at work in and among God’s people. But sadly, most believers will live and die without ever experiencing this kind of revival. Oh, but what would our homes and gatherings be like if we were totally yielded and filled with Him?

To give credit where credit is due, I’m certain that there’s not a single truth I have written that originated with me. All of it has been invested in my heart by the Holy Spirit through others to whom I’m eternally indebted. I stand on the shoulders of some people I consider to be giants of the faith. To name a few, I was saved under the preaching of Dr. Adrian Rodgers. My first Bible teacher was J. Vernon Magee. I was on his “Bible Bus” daily on the commute back and forth to the Bridal shop. After I was saved, my first pastor was Bill Irvin who confirmed God’s calling on my life and edited the first Bible study I ever wrote. I’d be amiss not to mention my pastor, David Lawrence, who was humble and teachable enough to catch the vision, reexamine the biblical mandate to make disciples, and lead his flock to obey the Great Commission.

Then there’s Herb Hodges, the man who discipled Cheri Holcomb. She cast the vision of disciple making for me. Brother Herb went home to the Father’s house the week after my daddy. Once asked brother Herb if he would mind looking over my manuscripts and give me permission to share from the wealth, he taught me. To which he replied, “If I ever had an original thought, it would die of loneliness!” Heaven only know the souls that will be in there because of this man’s obedience to follow His Lord and make disciples. In his lesson “What does Jesus see when He looks at me,” he notes the sad fact that people go to the grave with unfulfilled potential-- like books in them that were never written. I’m over fifty now so I don’t have time to waste.

We’ll end on this note: there’s an African proverb that says “you cannot pick up a stone with one finger.” I’m just a finger who’s been blessed to have more than a handful of people endowed by the Holy Spirit to help me write.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.**

1. If the filling of the Spirit is for a purpose, what are some of the purposes we have found in Acts 1-2? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. When the last time you knew the Holy Spirit was in action in you to fulfill one of the above ministries?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you ever had an event in your life that could only be described as an intervention of God’s protection? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is our inheritance? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Read the following passages and then state what you think it means to be a royal priest-hood. 1 Peter 1:23-25; Revelation 1:4-6, 5:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. How well do you think you understand the role of the Holy Spirit in your life? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you learning how to listen and cooperate with His leading? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. In the following passages, who was the Holy Spirit teaching and giving orders to? Acts 1-3; Mark 3:13-14; John 14:11-12, 16-23, 26, 15:15, 16:12-13, 17:18, John 20:21-22 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. The Holy Spirit is the guide and interpreter of the Word of God. He expresses spiritual thoughts with spiritual words through what kind of people? (1 Corinthians 2:4-16; John 6:63\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. Acts 1:13-15,24-26 How many disciples were present in this prayer meeting? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
11. When was the last time you heard the unmistakable voice of the Holy Spirit, giving you clear direction? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Think On These Things

Did you learn something new? Did you find a new promise to claim as your own? Did you find a command to obey, a sin to confess or avoid? Is there a passage you could turn into a prayer? How did the Lord speak personally to you through this lesson? What action will you take in obedience to God’s voice? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Memory Verses**

**1 Corinthians 12:13 (NASB)**

***For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks,***

***whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.***

**Week #9**



**Prayer for Vision**

**Key Passage**

**Ephesians 1:15-18**

***For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember youin my prayers. I pray thatthe God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,may give you spiritual wisdom and revelationin your growing knowledge of him, – since the eyes of yourheart have been enlightened – so that you may know what is the hope of his calling,what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints.***

**Introduction**

This week we will talk about an aspect of the Christian life that is non-negotiable – prayer. On the shelves of my study, there are no less than eight books on prayer. But what’s the point in reading books on prayer if you don’t pray?

Thanks to the movie The War Room, the church has been awakened to the need for discipleship in the arena of prayer. What a novel idea--that older women should teach the younger women to pray. It’s brilliant. It’s even Biblical! But sadly, it’s rare. Since the move hit the big screen, young women have come out of the wood work searching for mature Christian women to teach them how to pray. A couple have approached me with the request. The truth is, all I have learned about prayer, I learned from some mature godly women who come to my home for discipleship. They discipled me in prayer.

When we come together and bombard the throne of the King in prayer, the most amazing thing happens. The presence of God is almost palatable. There is a reason for that. Prayer is not just bringing request to God, although, that is certainly part of it. The very essence of prayer is drawing near to God in worship and adoration.

Admittedly though, there are somethings about prayer that I find mysterious, heavenly, even supernatural. Prayer, like a diamond, is multifaceted. You have no idea how hard it is to restrain myself from looking at every single aspect of it. The subject is inexhaustible - kind of like the book of Ephesians.

Luke 11:1-4 has been referred to as The Lord’s Prayer, when in fact, it is more of a model prayer. We will study the Lord’s Prayer next (John 17). Now, to aid us and keep us from turning this into a rote prayer, let’s break it down and begin by reading **Luke 11:1-4.** I would like to draw to your attention some obvious, yet pertinent facts. First being, Jesus prayed. That alone speaks volumes, does it not?

Whose job is it to teach people to pray? Disciple makers, like John the Baptist and Jesus. The anonymous disciple asking the question was most likely the apostle John, who himself was discipled by John the Baptist (John 1:35-37; Luke 9:28-36). The Greek word didasko, translated as *teach* here and Matthew 28:19-20, is defined as: to learn, to teach. What does that tell us about disciple-making? Hint, the aim of this lesson. Jesus said, “When you pray,” inferring that saved people *will* pray.

Now, before we go any farther, here is a question: what exactly is prayer? One might say that prayer is a sacred communion between God, who needs nothing, and His people who can do nothing without Him (Philippians 4:6). Moreover, the sin of prayerlessness is my declaration of independence from God. To quote a Facebook prophet, “Worry is me having a conversation with myself about things I have no control over. Prayer is me having a conversation with God who can change everything!” If true, we presuppose that the Lord of all creation desires to meet with us; having full assurance in the fact that He is all powerful and is actively engaged with His people on earth. In the words of Brother Lawrence, the sixteenth century monk, “Prayer is the practice of the presence of God.” He taught that prayer brings God’s presence into every dimension of our lives. If we don’t believe that, then we’ll not make it a practice to pray.

Our aim in this lesson is not to learn a new set of rote prayers to recite, nor to study prayer for the sake of information. But rather, to gain a deeper comprehension of this weighty and valuable privilege purchased for us by the Lord Jesus. This is about increasing our prayer lives as we partake in communion with our Lord.

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intersession**

Paul was a man of prayer. There is much we can learn by studying his prayer life. First, we see gratitude and thankfulness for theses believers. They bore the birthmark of every born-again child of God. They loved God’s family. The same could be said of the saints in Philippi and Colossae. Read these other two prison epistles Paul wrote. Colossians 1:1-8 and Philippians 1:3-11. To connects a few dots, the church at Colossae was founded by a man who was born-again and discipled by Paul in Ephesus. His name is Epaphras. He may have been one of the first disciples in Ephesus, or, even a disciple of these disciples (see Acts 19:1-10; 20:17-38). Ether way, he took the Great Commission seriously.

Interestingly, according to tradition, Luke was the leader of the church at Philippi for 6 years (Acts 16:10-13).

**Ephesians 6:18-20**

***With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints. Prayfor me also, that I may be given the message when I begin to speak – that I may confidently make knownthe mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may be able to speak boldly as I ought to speak.***

**A Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding**

Saints wisdom is, truth applied or obeyed.

Lost pray open blinded eyes to Christ, and their sin. Fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom.

**Eternal Life is the Know Him**

John 17:1-3; Psalms 36:9, 119:18,130

To know God personally is salvation. Can’t know Him without the Word of God.

For, “Eternal life,” said Jesus, is to know God as Father (John 17:1-4).

**Eyes in Your Heart**

A fresh vision of His glory, and heavenly perspective. Show Jesus for who He really is Proverbs 28:19; 2 Corinthians 3:1-6; Job 43:32; Hab. 2:2

It’s comforting to know that Paul felt it necessary to include this prayer in his letter to the saints. He asked*, I pray thatthe God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him* (Ephesians 1:17). I’m praying this prayer in earnest, not only for each reader who picks up this study, but also for the one who is writing it!

**Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)**

***Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.***

In his exposition on Proverbs 29:18, Herb Hodges points out the tragic implications of Proverbs 29:18. The word translated as *perish*, in Hebrew (Strong’s concordance #6544) Is deep indeed. In part, here is the definition: to loosen; to expose, dismiss; absolve, avenge, bare, go back, make naked, perish, uncover. In short, without the Bible informing us of who God our creator truly is, people throw off all restraints, go wild and naked. There is no restraining influence of righteousness, and everyone does what is right in their own sight. They are spiritually blind, and, as it was before the flood, every inclination of their hearts are on evil all the time (Genesis 6:1-7; Proverbs 5:19-23; Hosea 4:6). Case in point, let’s see what happens when people are unrestrained and in the dark about God. Even righteous people can become defiled by the world’s influence. Read Genesis 13:10-13, 19:1, 20-38; Romans 1:18-32; 2 Peter 2:1-9.

The Model Prayer

**Intersession**

**2 Timothy 1:2-3**

***To Timothy, my dear child. Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I am thankful to God, whom I have served with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I remember you in my prayers as I do constantly night and day.***

As previously noted, Ephesians was the first of four prison letters. So, one might think Paul would be wallowing in self-pity while he languished there on house arrest (Acts 28:16-31). But not Paul. “A thankful heart, is a happy heart!”, as the adage goes. Why was Paul so happy despite his circumstances? He was happy because of the news he received from the churches, from Ephesus, Philippi and Colossae - the church planted by Epaphras - one of Paul’s disciples from Ephesus. Even though he was in Rome, Paul heard about their faith and love, which prompted praise, thanks and prayers on their behalf. Let’s point out several things about prayer from Paul’s example. For one, we see that one facet of prayer is praise and worship. This is what ushers us into the presence of God.

**Psalm 100:4 (KJV)**

***Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.***

Moreover, David said that God, “inhabits the praises of Israel” (Psalms 22:3) (KJV). In other words, when we worship and praise God, regardless of the situation, the Holy Spirit feels “at home” with us. After all, worshiping God is the main activity in heaven. Certainly, worship can be singing songs of praise; that’s what Paul and Silas were doing in Acts 16:22-29. But, as we will see in the following word search, prayer is a form of worship. What? “I though prayer was asking God for things I need” you may say. That’s only a small part of it.

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Is there a person in your life that you can count on when you need prayer? Can others count on you? In my estimation, prayer is one the most unselfish acts one person could do for another, because you can’t focus on yourself and someone else at the same time. No one exemplified this more than our Lord as He made intersessions for us, even His enemies, upon the cross. But His prayers did not end while He was on earth. As we learned in the lesson, Abba Father, as our Great High Priest, Jesus is praying for us even now (Hebrew 7:25; Romans 8:26-27,34). Yes, we are physically apart, while we’re on earth, we are connected to Him through prayer and joined to the very heart of God (Ephesians 3:14-21).

Now let’s look at Paul’s example from our key passage. Did this prayer include their physical needs? In other places, he did. But his greatest concern was for their spiritual needs. So often, though, we are putting the cart before the horse in prayer by seeking temporal things before eternal things. Yet we forget that if we would seek first His kingdom and righteousness, everything else will fall into place. (Matthew 6:33) Since worship is the priority in the kingdom of God, should it not take the preeminence in our lives also?

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

***Always rejoice, constantly pray, in everything give thanks. For this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.***

* In Proverbs 28:9, how does the Lord feel about the prayers of those who refuse to hear His Words? *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* Describe a time in your life where you spent time in prayer but neglected to open your Bible. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Read Song of Songs 2:10-14. Here the king speaks to his beloved. What mental picture can you draw relating to Jesus and you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Remaining in God’s Word is a prerequisite for answered prayers and an indication of salvation. Although, we may not always see discernible results when we pray, nonetheless, we can be sure that God hears us. Besides that, prayer changes us. It brings the Prince of Peace into the chaos, confusions and conflicts of life.

**Psalm 27:8 (KJV)**

***When though sadist, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.***

Curiously enough, in the Hebrew language, the words face, and presence are the same word. Take a moment and look up these passages and see how the word was translated: Psalm 16:11; Genesis 32:30, Exodus 33:11-23. Now let’s differentiate between what it means to seek the face of God as opposed to seeking the hand of God. If we do not understand this, we could be deluded into thinking we are seeking God, when in reality we are just seeking what He can give us. Essentially, to seek God’s face is to come into His presence. In other words, to seek *Him*.

**Psalm 27:4**

***I have asked the Lord for one thing – this is what I desire! I want to live in the Lord’s house all the days of my life, so I can gaze at the splendor of the Lord and contemplate in his temple.***

Whereas, when we seek His hand, we are coming to Him to get something. That is supplication. I don’t know about you, but, ashamedly, too often I am prone to seek God when I am in need. And the greater the need, the more earnestly I seek Him. Don’t get me wrong, it is not necessarily a bad thing to seek the Lord in times of need. He is a loving Father who desires to help His children. But, if we only seek Him for what He can give us, then we have missed the point entirely. And furthermore, this is a marker that we are not abiding in Him (John 15:1-12).

**Psalm 119:10-16**

***With all my heart, I seek you. Do not allow me to stray from your commands!In my heart, I store up your words, so I might not sin against you. You deserve praise, O Lord! Teach me your statutes! With my lips I proclaim all the regulations you have revealed. I rejoice in the lifestyle prescribed by your rules as if they were riches of all kinds. I will meditate on your precepts and focus on your behavior. I find delight in your statutes; I do not forget your instructions.***

Prayer, it has been said, is practicing the presence of God. What’s the motivation of Prayer? It is communication with God. The result of prayer is an intimate relationship with Him. However, the reward of prayer is God himself! Therefore, if we truly desire to stay connected to God, there are no shortcuts. To cultivate a divine romance with the Lord Jesus, we must join ourselves to Him through prayer and His word. How precious is God’s Word to you? It’s where we seek and find Him, hear His voice and get to know Him – to really know Him. And this was Paul’s request on behalf of the saints -supernatural ability to grow in the knowledge of Jesus.

**WORD SEARCH: from Strong’s Concordance:**

* **Pray/Prayers**: Greek Strong’s # 4335 pros-euche /4336Proseuchomai; prayer an oratory chapel pray earnestly; prayer. To pray to god, i.e. supplicate; worship: pray earnestly for. To approach; come near; visit; worship; draw near unto. (Ephesians 1:6; Luke 11:1-2; 18:1;10; Philippians 1:9; 4:6; James 5:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 8:26; Colossians 1:9;
* **Pray:** Greek Strong’s #1162 Deesis; petition-prayer; request; supplication (2 Timothy 1:3; Philippians 1:4; 19; 2 Corinthians 8:4)

**Draw near**: pros-Euchmai; to approach; come near; visit; worship; assent to; draw near; go near to. (Hebrew 10:19-22, 11:6)

* **Face/ Presence** Greek Strong’s # 4383 Pros -open: The front, countenance, presence, face. (Hebrew 9:24; Acts 2:28, 3:19; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:4)
* **Worship**: Greek Strong’s #4352 Pros-kuneo-(#2965- a dog a hound.) WORSHIP: to kiss like a dog licking his master’s hand; to fawn or crouch; to prostrate oneself in homage do reverence to adore; worship. (John 4:20-24)
* **Continually**: Greek # 4342 Pros-Katereo: earnest toward; persevere, constantly diligently; attend assiduously to all the exercise or to a person; to adhere closely to (As a servitor) attend give self continually, continue with; wait on continually. (Acts 6:4)
* **Seek:** Greek Strong’s #2212 Zeteo: to seek; to worship (GOD); desire; enquire; endeavor; require; seek after. (Luke 11:9; 12:31)
* **Face / Presence** Hebrew Strong’s # 6440 Paneh: The face, before, presence, shewbread, (bread of His presence). (This is only a small portion of the definition.) (Psalms 16:11, 27:8, 45:12, 95:2; Genesis 32:30; Exodus 33:14)

You may be wondering why we have all these Greek and Hebrew word searches. Because, when we see why the Holy Spirit uses certain words in certain places, it gives us the proper context and can help us to better apply the passage. For instance, in both Hebrew and Greek, the words face and presence are the same words. Hence, to seek the face of God is to seek to be in His presence.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 45:5-6, 53:12; Ezekiel 18:3-4; Psalm 24:1; 1 Samuel 2:1-6; Luke 23:33-34; Romans 8:9-15,26-34; Hebrews 7:24-25; 9:22-24; 10:19-25; John 17:1-26; James 4:6-10: Colossians 3:15-16

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**What Happens When We Pray?**

**Deuteronomy 4:7**

***In fact, what other great nation has a god so near to them like the Lord our God whenever we call on Him?***

“Who are you talking to?”, said Ada, my sassy 2-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter. She had stayed the night with us and woke up at 6 am calling for her Nonie… that’s my name. When she calls, I come running because that’s what Nonnie does. I scoop her up out of her little bed and bring her down stairs and put her in bed between her Poppy and I, hoping that we might all get to sleep a little longer. She doesn’t say a word, she just lays there looking back and forth between us. Art, thinking that she may be getting a little home sick, starts talking about the big pancake breakfast he is going to fix. Then, out of the clear blue, she says those now famous words, “Who are you talking too.!?” I don’t know why it is but adults, love to quote babies. It’s so bad that, not only do Art and I say that to each other, but when he told his boss what Ada said, his boss now says it too! You see children learn from adults and adults also learn from children.

Where am I going will all of this? Just to point out that sometimes we think we are praying, when in reality, we are not connecting to God at all. I imagine His saying, “Who are you talking to?” “Do you even know who I am?” You see, in prayer, we presuppose that the Lord of all creation desires to commune with us - to hear and answer our prayers. Furthermore, we must know who it is we are talking to and have full assurance in the fact that our God is all powerful and is actively engaged in the details of our lives. Without this kind of confidence, we simply will not approach Him (1 John 5:14-15). Although, He is ever so approachable.

A.W. Tozer said, “Prayer,” said A.W. Tozer, “is the greatest power on earth if it is practiced in the true fear of the Lord.” Tozer brings up an important aspect of prayer, it is humility. In this posture, we’re as close to God as we can be on this earth. (James 4:8-10) For when we pray, we not only come near to God, but He draws near to us. Yet, we are already near God. Remember- the saints are already “seated with Christ in the heavenly places”. We could not get much closer than that! So, when we pray, we are joining ourselves to the Lord and trafficking in the realm of the spiritual. And when our prayers are based upon God’s written Word and we align our lives to it, He has promised to hear us.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.

1. Do you have a spiritual parent who loves you and has your back in prayer? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Does this person bring you with them before the mercy seat of God in prayer? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. According to the following passage: who teaches others to pray? (Luke 11:1-13) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. If you were locked up, would your prayers be all about yourself or focused on others? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. How much of your prayers are focused on people’s eternal souls? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. In the following passages, whose prayers are heard by God? (1 John 5:12-15; John 15:7-8,16; Heb. 10:19-23; Eph. 2:12-22; Gal. 6:4; Romans 8:9-15) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you sometimes feel far away from God when you pray? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. Read the Isaiah 59:1-2. What blocks our prayers? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. In the following passages what Priority does Jesus place on prayer? (Isaiah 56:6-7; Luke 19:46; Rev. 5:8-9; Matthew 28:18-19) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. Have you ever experienced God’s presence manifest to you through prayer? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
11. Read the following passages and explain this statement: The prayers that originate in Heaven will be heard on earth. (1 Peter. 3:12; Proverbs 15:8, 29; Isaiah 59:1-3; James 5:16-18; Psalm 145:18) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Hope of His Calling**

Philippians; Colossians 3:1-3; Hebrews 6:1; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 9:24

**His Inharitance in the Saints**

**His Power is to CAccomplish His Purposes**

**If I am not fishing for men and women by proclaiming the gospel and doing His work, making disciples, I have no right to expect His power in my life just to exist! Matthew 28:117-20; 2 Corinthians 15:18-20; 2 Corinthians 4:1-7**

Seldom do we appreciate anything until it’s gone. Take sight for example. I’m extremely near sighted. I never really valued my sight until it began to detartrate. On a training mission trip to Guayaramerin, Bolivia, while the rest of our team trained the pastors and leaders, Dr. Dylan Boundurant worked for hours to fit over 400 people with eye glasses. Some of the patients’ sight was so seriously impairment, that they wept with joy when they put on a pair of glasses and could see clearly, perhaps, for the first time in their lives.

**Acts 9:15-18**

***But the Lord said to him, “Go, because this man is my chosen instrumentto carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So, Ananias departed and entered the house, placedhis hands-on Sauland said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came here,has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediatelysomething like scalesfell from his eyes, and he could see again. Hegot up and was baptized.***

The apostle Paul had a similar experience, both physically and spiritually. Sometime between his conversion and first missionary trip, Paul tells of a supernatural encounter with the Lord where he received visions and revelations that left him with a thorn in his flesh (Acts 9:30-13:1-3). It’s been suggested that the affliction was an eye problem, and that was the divine appointment where he sought the medical service of a Greek doctor named Luke. While Luke treated Paul’s physical eyes, Paul opened Luke’s spiritual eyes to the revelation of Jesus Christ. It was the “beloved doctor, as Paul called him, who wrote the gospel of Luke, the events of Paul’s miraculous conversion, and therefore, He providentially joined Paul in Ephesus. Perhaps the visions and revelations that Paul spoke of were the same ones he wrote of the saints in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 2:1-16; 2 Corinthians 1:22, 4:2-6).

* Read Luke 8:11-21 and state the reason God gives us spiritual sight and hearing. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Psalm 119:130 (KJV)**

***The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.***

Just as we have eyes in our head to see physically, we also have eyes in our hearts to see spiritually. But the eyes of our hearts are blinded until we are born again. As we learned in last week’s lesson, the Bible gives us revelation - the disclosure of what was previously unknown. Likewise, it’s the Bible, added by the Holy Spirit, that puts the glasses on the eyes of our hearts. Thus, curing us of our spiritual nearsightedness. Be it physical or spiritual sight, both require light. God’s Word is the source of spiritual light, we receive vision the moment God speaks “Let there be light.” That is illumination.

**John 16:12-15**

***I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bearthem now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority,but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell youwhat is to come. He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you.***

Herb Hodges is a man with spiritual vision. He is the one who opened the eyes of our church to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). This illumination of God’s Word has led me to follow Jesus and make disciples of many nations. Through Catalyst Missions, men and women are being equipped with the tools to obey the Lord’s last command to make disciples. In his lesson, How Vital is Vision, from Proverbs 29:18, Herb Hodges said:

“*Human intelligence will always* ***give you your point of view. Only a miracle of illumination will give you God’s point of******view. Therein lies the difference between ‘no Vision,’ without which ‘the people perish,’*** *and ‘vision,’ by means of which the people flourish.”* He gives this formula concerning vision: *“No vision = total failure; Limited vision = little success; A vision - a plan – action = only a dream; A vision + a plan – action = a haunting dream (guilt); but A vision + a plan + action = a spiritually productive ministry. Note that the test of a person’s vision is in the action that is stimulated by the vision. Without action, both you and your gifts will remain in the category of “potential.” Potential is dormant ability that is never mobilized through vision.*”

When there is a scarcity of the Word of God, there is little light to walk in the darkness of the world. Consequently, little light, equals little vision; little vision equals little knowledge of God. Consequently, without the knowledge of God - people perish. What we read, what we gaze at is what the eyes of our hearts see… what we let into to our hearts is what we will think about and what we think about is what we become. As René Descartes said, “I think, therefore I am.”

**Psalm 119:18**

***Open my eyes so I can truly see the marvelous things in your law!***

**Who are You Talking to?**

I have a video on my phone of my six, four, and two-year-old granddaughters singing the Lord’s prayer. To hear their angelic voices singing God’s Word is music to my ears. The cry of my heart is that all my grandchildren will come to know their heavenly Father intimately.

When Ada, the middle child, was two-and-a-half she stayed the night with us and woke up at 6 am calling for her Noonie… that’s my name. When she calls, I come running because that’s what Noonie does. Hoping we might all get to sleep a little longer, I scooped her up out of her little bed and brought her down stairs and put her in bed between her Poppy and me. The silly little thing doesn’t say a word. She just lays there looking back and forth between us. My husband Art, thinking that she may be getting a little home sick, starts talking about the big pancake breakfast he is going to fix. Then, out of the clear blue, she says those now famous words, “Poppy, who are you talking too.!?” Every adult in this family quotes these little girls. It’s so bad that Art and I say it to one another. When he told his boss what Ada said, his boss now quotes her too!

Ada got me to thinking about my prayer life. I wonder if the Lord ever looks down and says, “Ginny, who are you talking to?!” “Surely not I.” He’s the King of King and Lord of lords--the Almighty God. He’s all that and so much more but, in Christ, He is our Father… our Poppy… our Daddy. That’s intimacy (Galatians 4:6; 1 John 5:14-15). Within this familiarity, though, we mustn’t forget that equal to the attribute of love, is God’s holiness. That’s what hollowed means. He lives in a high and holy place that is set apart from sinners (Isaiah 57:15, 59:1-2).

When we pray “Your kingdom come and Your will be done,” we are talking about His sovereign power, authority and rule to be established on earth as it is in heaven (Luke 17:21; Ephesians 1:19-24).

**Let *Us* Pray**

Hinting that this is not an individual prayer, look closer at Jesus’ instructions, “Give *us* this day *our* daily bread.” In a message on prayer, my pastor, David Lawrence, pointed out that of the 37 times in scripture where Jesus taught on prayer, 33 of those passages were speaking of corporate prayer. Additionally, he noted that the prayer closet was a private meeting space like the upper-room where a small group of people prayed together (Acts 2:1-7, 42-47). Walking through the book of Acts, it was apparent why the gospel was advancing with such great power. Every great movement of God was preceded by a group of people who were devoted to prayer.

The Greek word for pray is *pros-euche*. It means, to pray earnestly, supplicate and worship. Even the word for draw near as used in Hebrews 10:19-23, is akin to prayer. It’s pros-*erchomai* and means to come near and worship. Another related word translated in Acts 6:4 as *continually* (KJV), is pros-katteroe and means to persevere, constantly, diligently attend assiduously to a task. In this context, *they* devoted themselves continually to prayer and God’s Word. As saints, we are already seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6-8). How could we be any closer than that? When God’s children pray together, not only are we coming near to God, but He comes near to us (Matthew 18:20).

**Deuteronomy 4:7 (NIV)**

***What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to Him.***

Even the Lord Jesus made it a practice to go up on a mountain to be as close as possible to His Father. Through prayer, we do the same. For when our souls are in tune with the frequency of the Holy Spirit, our prayers are the portal that ushers us into His presence.

When we know the Word of God, believe it, and obey it, we can confidently pray it (**John 15:7-8, 16; Proverbs 28:9).** When our lives are aligned with the Lord and His Word, like Elijah, our prayers are a powerful force to be reckoned with (1 Peter 3:10-12; 1 John 5:13-15).

**God Gives Grace to the Humble**

“Prayer,” said A.W. Tozer, “is the greatest power on earth if it is practiced in the true fear of the Lord.” Tozer brings up an important aspect of prayer. Read **1 Peter 5:5-7**. Humility is the key component of the next part of Jesus’ model prayer -- confession. Read **James 4:2-10** and **1 John 1:7-10**. If you are not quite sure of what specific sins you are guilty of, then ask God to show you (Psalm 139:23-24). To obtain forgiveness requires confessing sins and forsaking them - including the sins of anger, bitterness and unforgiveness (Proverbs 28:13). If we realize how serious unforgiveness is, and the open door it gives to the enemy, we might not be so apt to fall for his trap of temptation. Bottom line is, if we want to be forgiven, we must forgive others and pray for them (**Matthew 5:43-46; 6:14-15**).

Confessing our sins to the Lord, the one we sin against, is part of the process (Psalm 51:1-19). But, read **James 5:13-20.** If you don’t share your burdens of sin, others can’t bare your burdens. With precious few exceptions, I have never seen confession practiced outside of Biblical discipling relationships. When the discipler confesses her sins, then the ones they are discipling will feel safe to do likewise. No proud person is going to own-up to their sin. Case in point, see **Luke 18:9-14**. Just the opposite is true for those who humble themselves, confess their sins and forsake them. Read **2 Chronicles 7:14.**

**We Have Not-- Because We Ask Not**

**Luke 11:5-13**

Let’s compare these parables in Luke 11:5-13 to **Luke 18:1-8.** There are times when our faith is tested, and it seems as though God’s not listening to our prayers. When this happens, we mustn’t jump to the conclusion that He did not hear us or that He doesn’t care. It may be that there’s an unconfessed sin in the way. As Donna, a sister in our disciple group so fittingly put it, “Sin is like a blessing blocker!” Furthermore, God’s answer might be no, or yes, but not now. Or, perhaps the answer is coming, and it will be even better than we dared to ask (Ephesians 3:20). What do we do while we wait? We diligently seek the Lord in prayer and get to know Him more personally through His Word. This is where we find Him, and He is the greatest reward of prayer (**Jeremiah 29:11-16)**.

Sisters, God has so much He desires to give us, and yet, we have not because we ask not (**James 4:2-30**). Prayer is an honor and a privilege that Jesus purchased for us by His blood. Since He made prayer a priority, shouldn’t we?

**Further Passages on Prayer**

* We pray *to* the Father: Matthew 6:9; Galatians 6:4.
* We pray *in the Name* of the Son: John 14:6,13-14, 16:23-24; 1 John 2:1-2.
* We pray *in the Spirit* with all prayers and supplications: Ephesians 6:14-18.
* Pray about everything giving thanks, we make our request known to God: Philippians 4:4-7; Colossians 1:3.
* We devote ourselves to prayer: Romans 12:9-12; Colossians 4:2-3, 12.
* Pray persistently with boldness: Luke 11:5-13; Mark 7:24-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-19.
* Pray for our needs: James 4:1-10, 5:13-20.
* Pray when in despair and in times of trouble: Psalms 35; 42; 46; Isaiah 50:6-11; 1 Peter 1:21-23, 4:14-18.
* Pray for our physical and spiritual children: Lamentations 2:19; Isaiah 49:22-25, 54:1-5, 13; 3 John 2-5.

**Psalm 145:18-19 (NIV)**

***The LORD is near to all who cry out to Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.***

As we conclude this lesson, here is a powerful story that illustrates the reality of the above passage. In May 22, 2011, a catastrophic EF5-tornado struck Joplin, Missouri. There was a group of people hunkered down in a convenient store beer cooler. As the killer tornado barreled towards them, someone pulled out their cell phone and videoed what took place. (If you Google “First Person video of Joplin MO tornado,” you will find two short videos of this.) It was pitch black, so you can’t see much, but the sounds are deafening. In the chaos you hear people screaming and crying out to “god.” They don’t even know His Name. Then you hear the voice of one woman calling on the only One who has the power to save (Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 1:20-21; Philippians 2:9-11). In a calm voice, you can hear her saying… “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus... oh Heavenly Father… Jesus watch over us… thank you Jesus.” You know what? The Father heard His daughter’s cry, came near to her in that beer cooler. Consequently, they were all saved.

We’ll end with some food for thought: What if you’re the only one in a current situation who can call on God your Father and bring Him near. How many people might be saved if you do?

**Memory Verse**

**Luke 11:1-4**

**Week #10**

**Resurrection Power**

**Key Passage**

**Ephesians 1:19-23**

**Ephesians 1:19-22 (HCSB)**

***And what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe,***

***according to the working of His vast strength. He demonstrated this power in the Messiah***

***by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens—***

***far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given,***

***not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put everything under His feet***

***and appointed Him as head over everything for the church.***

**Introduction**

It has been a particularly long, sunless, rainy winter here in the south. The deficit of light reflects my mood with a condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder. Besides that, Spring is my favorite time of the year. The buttercups, the blossoms of the cherry tree in my front yard, all that’s been brown and dead, resurrects in buds of green and color. But the best part of Spring is the celebration of the very pinnacle of our faith, the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Inaugurated with the Passover celebration, followed by the darkest day in history, Good Friday, then the subsequent life that burst forth from the tomb three days later. Funny how interdependent life and death are. It was on a cold Good Friday that my firstborn son entered the world. And before the years up, he and his wife will have their first child. Our daughter, who has three little girls, gave birth to our first grandson. I was so blessed to get to witness his birth. Our tribe is growing rapidly. What a miracle and gift life is. Last Easter, my family gathered at my daddy’s house after church, as we always do, to eat way too much, hide eggs, and feed all the little ones too much sugar.

As I write this, we are just a few weeks away from that special weekend. It is bittersweet. You see, last year my daddy was here to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord with all of us, and within two weeks he was gone home to the Fathers house. This year, while we are eating our ham, eggs and carrot cake, daddy will be eating a real feast at the Father’s table. Truth is, because of the resurrection of Christ, all the saints in Christ, will be at that table.

It is amazing how praise and worship can life your spirit. A thankful heart is good medicine (Proverbs 17:22). As I was meditating on all the Lord is doing and has done for my family, it spilled over in a rare post on Facebook. The Psalmist wrote, “*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so*” (Psalm 107:1-2). I could not help myself, and so I said so. Here it is.

Dear friends,

If you’ll give me a moment, I would love to catch you up on how the Lord has so graciously blessed us in this season. Psalm 103:1-22 resonates with me as I count my many blessings. As I do, you’ll know why my heart is overflowing with praise and gratitude this morning.  
  
1. On March 18 we celebrated Art’s mom’s 97th birthday. Can you believe that?  
  
2. At 11:58 pm on March 20th we welcomed Zane Everett Tucker, our first grandson. Allie and Justin have already blessed our family with 3 of the sweetest little girls in the world.  
  
3. Today, March 29, twenty- eight years ago on a snowy Good Friday, our son Ethan was born.  
Happy birthday Ethan!!️  
  
4. April 12 marks the one-year anniversary of my Daddy’s home going. I miss him every day, but I am eternally grateful that he’s alive and well in the Father’s house and I will see him there one day. And this is all because of blessing number 5.  
  
5. On April 19-21 we’ll be celebrating two pivotal events that inaugurated salvation and hope of life beyond the grave – the sacrificial death of our Lord and HIs resurrection three days later (1 Corinthians 15; John 11).   
  
In fact, if it weren’t for Jesus interrupting my godless/ hopeless life at 26 years of age, and saving me by His grace, none of these milestones’ markers would even exist. And I’m not done counting my blessings, yet!  
  
6. On April 20th Ethan and Jessica will be having a gender reveal and we’ll find out if our 5th grandchild will be a boy or a girl. Either way, they are already loved!  
  
7. April 25 we will celebrate Art’s 59th birthday. His 18th spiritual birthday was February 14.  
It’s that birthday that makes the 8th blessings possible.  
  
8. On May 3, to the praise of God’s mercy and grace, Art and I will be married for 33 years. Once again, without the Lord stepping into our horrible mess of sin, and saving us, I would not even be here to testify to the fact that God still resurrects dead things. Now, with the Lord on the throne of our lives, we have never been more in love.  
  
9. The day after our anniversary, May 4, we will be celebrating our youngest son Robbie’s 26th birthday.   
  
Friends... it’s all because of Jesus! He’s the creator and sustainer of life. He’s unfailing love. He’s all we want and all we will ever need.   
  
Do you know this Jesus? I would love to introduce you to Him. Private message me!

**1 Peter 1:3-9 (ESV)**

***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, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed***

***in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him.***

***Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.***

As we have already observed in previous lessons, faith and belief must have an object to rest upon. The Christian’s faith rests securely upon the Rock of Ages… the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 3:20-22) Yet, without a clear understanding of who He truly is, we have no security whatsoever, and therefore, we are no different than those who worship any other dead god.

Therefore, the single most important thing that sets Christianity apart from all other religions is this: our God conquered death…. He is alive! Furthermore, belief in the fact of Christ’s resurrection is foundational to true saving faith.

**Romans 10:9 (NASB)**

***That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart***

***that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.***

Let’s make some application here. What does the resurrection of Christ have to do with your life and mine as believers? The answer is absolutely *everything*! In his book entitled, Sacred Marriage, (page 150) Gary Thomas said, “Christianity doesn’t make much sense without the reality of heaven.” Let’s ponder that statement for just a moment. Having recently buried several loved ones, I can attest to the fact that without the prospect of life beyond the grave, the rest of Jesus’ claims are a moot point. Likewise, the prospect of living in this sin cursed world and then nothing, makes this option pretty bleak, wouldn’t you say?

You’ll find an extensive explanation of this in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians in chapter fifteen. As Paul said, “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” (1 Corinthians 15:18) (NIV) And besides that, how can we endure the trials of this life, much less have a hope beyond the grave. (Those who are not “in Christ” are without hope!) (Ephesians 2:1-13)

So, here’s some food for thought for the scoffer. For the sake of the argument, let’s suppose Jesus is dead. There is no heaven, and there is no hell. If Christians have believed in a lie, then how do you reconcile the justice of someone, say, an Adolf Hitler? He certainly did not receive his due penalty on earth, did he? And what about someone like Mother Teresa? Where’s her reward?

* Explain why God’s justice is so important? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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* Why do people get so worked up when justice is not served? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* As you read these passages, can you determine who will ultimately Judge of the world? Isaiah 33:22; Revelation 19:11; Matt. 10:28, 16:21; Romans 1:18-32 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**1 Timothy 4:10-11 (NIV)**

***That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things.***

Yet, Christ has risen - just as He said He would! (Luke 24:6-7; Matthew 27:63, 28:6; Mark 16:6) And we are not without hope because Jesus conquered death. He walked out of the tomb. He is alive, and through faith in Him, we too have life beyond the grave. We can walk confidently through the valley of the shadow of death with hope and without fear. The fact that Jesus is alive has a great deal to do with how we face death. We have hope for living and hope for dying, and because He lives, as Bill Gaither wrote in the song by this title, “I can face tomorrow.”

* Why is the fact of Christ’s resurrection so important to believers? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* If you were told today that you had a terminal illness, would you face death with fear or with faith? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**1 Corinthians 15:25-27 (NASB)**

***For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy***

***that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet.***

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* 2 Corinthians 1:18-20; Colossians 1:1-20; John 11:25-26; 10:15-18; Matthew 27:33- 28:20; Revelation 1:5-18, 19:13-16,21:3-6 22:16-21; Hebrew 6:19-20; 2 Timothy 1:10-12

**He Is Seated at the Right Hand of God**

**Hebrews 12:2 (NASB)**

***Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

If you’ll recall, Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this letter. Nevertheless, despite his situation, Paul reminded the saints (as well as himself) of this life sustaining truth: ***God is in control!*** The Lord God -- the Almighty -- Jesus Christ rules and reigns over all. Not a single minute detail of our lives, nor the tiniest molecule in the universe is outside of His sovereign dominion. His providence extends to every detail of our lives. He has a divine plan that will not be thwarted and the plan is hidden in the Son of Man Christ (Read Romans 8:29-8-29; Jeremiah 29:11-15.)

Grace Gems January 10, 17 Spurgeon's Morning by Morning, January 11  
The smallest trifles are as much arranged by the God of Providence!  
"In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to *the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will."* Ephesians 1:11   
It is most important for us to learn that the smallest trifles are as much arranged by the God of Providence--as the most momentous events!   
He who counts the *stars*--has also numbered the *hairs* of our heads!  
Our lives and deaths are predestined--but so, also, are our sitting down and our rising up.   
I believe that every particle of *dust* that dances in the sunbeam, does not move an atom more or less than God wishes.

For example, as I write this, I am experiencing a health crisis, of sorts. I was recently diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, and now my long blond/gray hair is falling out by the handfuls. According to my doctors, it is caused by stress, hormone imbalance or medicine. In other words -- they don’t know. But Jesus does. It is vanity, but nevertheless, as you might imagine, it is greatly disturbing to me. For one thing, in the King James Bible it says, “But, if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering” (1 Corinthians 11:15). And just today, I saw a young mother who obviously took this verse to heart. Her hair was so long and glorious that she had to move it to sit down! (If you are close to my age, and you remember the singer Crystal Gayle, then you get the picture).

**Colossians 1:27 (HCSB)**

***God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery,***

***which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

Anyway, I’ve been wondering what am I going to do when I lose my cover, and worse yet, my glory!  But then the Lord, ever so gently, reminded me of yet another extraordinary mystery, and this is it: Christ, who lives in me, *is my hope of Glory.* Yes! Jesus is my glory! And furthermore, it has not escaped His attention that my hair is falling out. So, does God really care about my hair? Well, whether you take Jesus’ words in the following passage as hyperbole or not, the principle is the same. Jesus knows us, He cares for us, and He is in control of our lives…he has even numbered the strands of our hair.

**Luke 12:4-7 (NIV)**

***I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that***

***can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who,***

***after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.***

***Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid;***

***you are worth more than many sparrows.***

The One who is seated at the right hand of God is the Head, and we the Church collectively make up His body. How can we appropriate this truth? If you belong to Him, then everything that concerns you is under His nail scarred feet! No matter what your need is, no matter how big or how small, because of who He is, you can rest secure in His provision.  As Paul reminded the saints in Philippi, “For my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19 NIV).

**Psalm 68:19 (NIV)**

***Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.***

***Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death.***

The Lord Jesus Christ, the one who created this world and holds everything in it together. He has numbered, not only the days of our lives, but also the hairs on our head. We were once separate from him, but now we’re part of His Body -- His blood bought Bride. He loves us and daily bears our burdens (Psalm 68:19). Because of who He is, not even death can separate us from Him and His great love. When, by faith, we believe His Word, even though our circumstances leave us quaking in fear, we have a rope of hope anchored at the right hand of God.  He is the Lord Jesus…the beloved Bridegroom.

Beyond a shadow of doubt, Paul was convinced of Jesus’ true identity. So much so that, in reading the end of chapter one, you might even think Paul got a little carried away with adjectives. Now, if he was describing anyone else, the chapter could have ended something like this: “Well, that about sums him up.”  But Jesus is not like anyone else; He has no equal. You can’t simply “sum Him up” with words! The fact is: one day *all things* will be *summed up* and *filled up*… *in* Jesus! But what about the here and now -- where is Jesus? Just where He said He would be – on His throne at the Right hand of His Father, with all the power and authority in all of heaven and all of earth under His feet.

          The writer of the book of Hebrews, who most believe was Paul, collected no less than seventeen Old Testament passages to shine the spotlight on the One who is seated at the right hand of God – King Jesus!

**Hebrews 1:1-13 (ESV)**

***Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,***

***but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God***

***and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”***

***Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”***

***But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”***

***And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are***

***the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.” And to which of the angels has he ever said,***

***“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?***

* Read Ephesians 1:19-23; Laminations 3:22-23; Isaiah 40:25-31, 41:9-10 and make a list of everything that concerns you at the moment. Now, based upon these passages, do you think the Lord Jesus’ power is sufficient to handle your problems? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What current situations in your life seem to be over your head? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Do you feel overwhelmed by these things? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Now, make a list and when you are done, take every situation and find several passages that apply and begin to pray God’s Word over them. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**DIGGING DEEPER:** John 1:14, 3:17, 4:24-26, 42, 5:39-46, 8:29,58; 10:26-30; 14:6, 17:1-3, 20:26-28; Luke 24:25-27; Mark 12:29-37; Matthew 1:21; 16:13-16; Isaiah 5:16, 9:6-7, 40:1-31, 42:1-12, 45:15-22, 43:11, 49:26; 60:16; Exodus 3:6-18; Revelation 1:8,11, 17-18, 2:23, 21:3-6, 22:13-16; Titus 2:10-13; Jude 25; Acts 2:33-38, 4:8; 1 John 4:14; 1 Peter 2:9, 2 Peter 1:11; Romans 10:7-18

**Revelation 1:8 (NASB)**

***I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God,***

***“who is and who was and who is to come, The Almighty.”***

**Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV)**

***The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him***

***all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,***

***whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head***

***of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead,***

***so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things***

***on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.***

**WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance**

**Acts 3:15 (NIV)**

***But you put to death the author of life, the one whom God raised from the dead,***

***a fact to which we are witnesses.***

* **Author*/*Prince: i**n Greek is Archegos-arkhay-gos *a chief leader*: *author, captain, prince*. See this word translated *prince or Author* in the following verse.
* **Beginning**: in Greek is Arche: commencement, or chief, in order, time, place or rank, beginning, at the first, magistrate, power, principality, principle, and rule. (Colossians 1:15-18, John 1:1-2, 1 John 1:1, Revelation, 1:8,3:14,21:6,22:13)
* **First** **Begotten**/**Born:** in Greek is Prototokos, and #4413 Protos: *foremost (first place in time, place or importance) before, beginning, best, chief, first, of all, former.* From #4253 Pro: *fore, i.e. in front of, prior, superior to above ago before or ever*. # 4250 Prin: *prior, sooner before that era*. (John 8:58) #4386: prorteron: *previously-before, at the first, former.* (John 6:62, 17:5, 24; Colossians 1:15,17,18; Hebrew 1:6, 11:28-12:23; Matthew 1:25; Romans 8:29; Rev. 1:5)
* **Begotten:** in Greek is Genos: *kin, born, generation, and offspring*. (Hebrews 1:5, Acts 13:33
* **Only** **begotten**: in Greek is Monogenes: *only born, sole-only begotten child.*; John 1:14,1; 3:16,18, 36; Hebrew 11:17; 1 John 4:9; John 8:24; 28; 12:32-34; 19:37. Please make note of the fact that the titles “only begotten” or “firstborn” are only used in reference to Jesus.

As we conclude, I want to end with some very practical, yet personal applications. I’m curious to learn what might be going on in your life at this moment. What are the situations that weigh you down emotionally, physically and mentally? I hope this lesson has given you an arsenal full of uplifting passages to meditate on.

For me, I suppose there is nothing that rocks my world quite like knowing that someone I love deeply does not really know or believe in Jesus. I get a lump in my throat just thinking about a recent conversation with a person who is very dear to my heart. The topic of discussion was “what is truth” and “who is Jesus Christ.” It was not so difficult to open the Bible and show them who Jesus is, but when it comes to answering the more personal question of, “Who is Jesus to me?” I’m at a loss for words, because when you come right down to it… I don’t quite know how to articulate Him. But I can honestly, unashamedly and unequivocally tell you this: The Lord Jesus Christ is my Savior and my God! He is not only the love of my life, He is my life! (Colossians 3:3-4) So the question was posed: “What if you are wrong about Jesus?” Here was my response: “I know Him personally, and I’m not wrong about Jesus. But to answer the question, if I were wrong, I will live with love, joy, purpose and peace, and then I’ll die *a very happy fool*!”

This person knows quite well my sorrows, pains and tears. This removes any delusion that I only believe in Jesus because He has blessed me. But make no mistake about it, He has blessed me… some of these blessings come disguised as life crushing sorrows. Is Jesus worth it? Oh, *yes He is*… a thousand times - *yes He is*! And I’m living for the day, when I behold Him face- to-face at the wedding, and I can hardly wait! (1 John 3:2-3; Revelation 1:7, 22:4; 1 John 3:2-3; 1 Corinthians 13:12)

**Job 19:23-27 (ESV)**

***Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives,***

***and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed,***

***yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold,***

***and not another. My heart faints within me!***

In every generation, there is a song inspired by Scripture, a spiritual song that resonates within the hearts of believers. These kinds of songs become anthems of praise that will endure the test of time. In my estimation, the song “In Christ Alone,” that was written by Donald A. Koch and Andrew Shawn Craig, is one of those songs. It is the gospel, put to music and you will find it on YouTube.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.**

1. In C.S. Lewis’ quote, what are the three conclusions he came to about Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Read the following passages: John: 9:35-38 20:27-28; Matthew 4:11, 28:16-18; Luke 2:9-14; Deut. 6:13, 10:20; Ex. 34:14; Psalm 2:6-12 Did Jesus receive worship? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. If so, who was He declaring Himself to be? Read Hebrews 1:6; Luke 2:9-14. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read the following passages: Psalm 2:2-7, 83:18; John 1:14-18, 12:15; Heb.1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Zechariah 9:9; Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 19:16. Since God will not give His Glory to another, why is Jesus full of Glory? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do those who believe in Jesus worship a different God than the one in the Old Testa-ment? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. In light of everything we have discovered, what in this world is not under the sovereign control and rule of the Lord Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Jesus our Lord is the Great I AM. What are the greatest needs in your life at this moment? Can you apply any of the many passages about Him to these situations? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. How does Jesus’ position in Heaven relate to our position? (Ephesians 2:5-6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. Now it’s *your* turn, who do you say Jesus is? But more importantly, who is He to you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Think On These Things

Did you learn something new? Did you find a new promise to claim as your own? Did you find a command to obey, a sin to confess or avoid? Is there a passage you could turn into a prayer? How did the Lord speak personally to you through this lesson? What action will you take in obedience to God’s voice? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Colossians 3:1-4***

***Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.***

**Week #9**

**Not Saved by Works -But for Good Works**

**Ephesians 2:1-10**

**Galatians 3:26-28 (ESV)**

***For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s,***

***then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.***

**He Gave Gifts to His Family**

**Ephesians 4:1-16 (ESV)**

***I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling***

***to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing***

***with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.***

***There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs***

***to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all***

***and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure***

***of Christ’s gift. Therefore, it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,***  
***and he gave gifts to men. (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles,***

***the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work***

***of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith***

***and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature***

***of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him***

***who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together***

***by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly,***

***makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.***

Finally, in this last section, we have come to a turning point in the book of Ephesians. The first three chapters primarily addressed doctrine, but the last three are all about how to apply these truths to our everyday lives. So, thus far in this lesson we have learned that we are part of one big global family. This family is sometimes called the body, the bride of Christ, or the church, but whatever name you choose, the important thing is that we understand we are *one* in Christ.

But the real issue at hand is this: we cannot overestimate the importance of being part of the church. In order to participate in the body, we must be part of a local community of believers. For within these communities there is to be an orderly administration of authority, accountability and submission to one another. This is evident by numerous passages such as the entire book of Titus; Ephesians 5:18-21 and 1 Timothy chapters two and three, just to name a few. Otherwise there is no communion of the Spirit or accountability to the rest of the body of Christ.

**Romans 12:4-9 (HCSB)**

***Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function.***

***In the same way we who are many are one body of Christ and individually members***

***of one another. According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy,***

***use it according to the standard of faith; if service, in service; if teaching, in teaching;***

***if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence;***

***showing mercy, with cheerfulness.***

In Robert Colman’s book The Masters Plan of Evangelism, he speaks of the wisdom of God in putting us together as the church. He says:

Really the whole problem of giving personal care to every believer is only resolved in a thorough understanding of the nature and mission of the church. It is important here to observe that the emergence of the church principle around Jesus, whereby one believer was brought into fellowship with all others, was the practice in a larger dimension of the same thing that he was doing with the Twelve. Actually, it was the church that was the means of following up with all those who followed him. That is, the group of believers became the body of Christ, and as such ministered to each other individually and collectively. Every member of the community had a part to fulfill in this ministry. But this they could only do as they themselves were trained and inspired. As long as Jesus was with them in the flesh, he was the Leader, but thereafter, it was necessary for those in the church to assume this leadership. Again this meant that Jesus had to train them to do it, which involved his own constant personal association with a few chosen men.

**Speaking Gifts and Serving Gifts**

**1 Corinthians 12:4-14 (HCSB)**

***Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same LORD. And there are different activities, but the same God is active IN EVERYONE and EVERYTHING. A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person to produce what is beneficial: to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message***

***of knowledge by the Spirit, to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, prophecy,***

***to another, distinguishing between the spirits, to another different kinds of languages,***

***to another, interpretation of languages. But one and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each one as He will.For as the body is one and has many parts, and all***

***the parts of that body, though many, are one body -- so also is Christ. For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, weather slave or free—***

***and we are all made to drink of one Spirit. So the body is not one part but many.***

Imagine a baby girl was given a gift on the day she was born. Her benefactor was a wealthy distant relative. Her parents never opened the gift; they simply placed it into a safety deposit box. As the child grew, no one knew what was in the box except the giver, and they had long since passed away. As the years went on, the parents forgot about the box, and the child never knew she had a gift. Although the girl and her family had many financial needs, it never crossed their minds to open the gift. If they only knew the wealth it contained, more than enough to meet their needs. In fact, it was so plentiful, that it could bless her family for generations to come. But, regrettably, she never knew that she had such a valuable gift.

What is the point to this little parable? When a person is born again into God’s family, they have been endowed with valuable spiritual gifts. And like the girl in the story, we could live our entire Christian lives and never even open them. Furthermore, the entire family of God will be cheated out of the blessings that would have come to them through you!In Paul’s words: “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles- if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you” (Ephesians 3:1-16).

Now, I hate to disappoint you, but we will not be looking at each individual gift. However, for those of you who are curious, here are just a couple of resources that offer tests you can take to discover your spiritual gifts.

* http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcf\_mycs\_030526\_spiritual\_gifts\_survey.pdf
* [www.spiritualgiftstest.com](http://www.spiritualgiftstest.com)

The spiritual gifts don’t belong to us, we are just stewards of them. They are entrusted to us to serve the body of Christ. This takes humility. And “Humility,” someone has said, “is not thinking less of yourself, it’s not thinking of yourself at all!” In our lesson titled “Who are Your Yous?” we talk about the self-centered lifestyle or Satan’s lifestyle. This is called the outside *in* lifestyle or the lifestyle that is all about *me*. This person can never be happy or get enough. Everything she gets is for self-use, and in the end, this life implodes into self. This is the only life a sinner can live. It is impossible to follow Jesus and live this kind of life.

**Philippians 2:1-8 (ESV)**

***So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation***

***in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind,***

***having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,***

***did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form,***

***he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.***

To follow Jesus’ example, we live an inside *out* lifestyle. What do we mean? A person who lives inside out realizes that everything they have belongs to the Lord. And because of this, everything in our life, time, energy, wisdom, and resources are used for the growth and benefit of *others*. This kind of lifestyle explodes the gospel all over the world.

Having said that, even though the gifts are for others, as you begin to see others being built up through your gifts, you will find that being used as Jesus’ vessel to meet the needs of others will bring you great joy. Chuck Swindoll, paraphrasing a quote by Mark Twain, said: “The two most important days in the life of a child of God are one - the day we are born again, and two is the day we discover why.” It is through our discipling relationships that we learn what our gifts are and what to do with them. But whatever your gifts are, if they are not being used in a Spirit of love, then these gifts become useless! (Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7)

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* Luke 9:22-23, 26-27, 14:25-35; Gal. 2:20; John 13:12-17, 34-35; Mark 10:44-45; Romans 12:9-16

**1 Peter 4:8-11 (NKJV)**

***And above all things have fervent love one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.***

***Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift,***

***minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as the ability***

***which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ,***

***to whom belongs the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

In his commentary on 1 Peter 4:10 from John Macarthur’s Study Bible, he said:

*A special gift or spiritual gift is a graciously given supernaturally designed ability granted to every believer by the Holy Spirit by which the Holy Spirit ministers to the body of Christ. A spiritual gift cannot be earned, pursued, or worked up. It is merely received through the grace of God. (1 Cor. 12:4, 7, 11, 18) Each believer has one specific gift, often a combination of various categories of gifts blended together uniquely for each Christian (Roman 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-10)” Spiritual gifts were used not for the exaltation of the person with the gift, but in loving concern for the benefit of others in the church (Romans 5:5; 1 Cor.12:7; 13:2) “A steward is responsible for another’s resources. A Christian does not own his gifts, but God has given him gifts to manage for the church and His glory.*

Before we move on, let’s clear up some misconceptions. Consider the following questions. Number one, do you believe that there a division between the secular life and the spiritual life? More importantly, does the Bible make this distinction? And number two, is there such thing as a layperson, and furthermore, are there some people who are more gifted and important in the church than the rest? Can God use all of us to do the work of ministry to His church or only just a few? Notice I did not say *in* the church, but *to* the church. There is a difference. In actuality, the church is not a building or organization; it is a living organism. You were added to God’s family so that you could bear much fruit. But it is just not going to happen if you are disconnected from His church -- local communities of faith. (In next week’s lesson, we will take a closer look at how this works.)

In his message entitled, *The Comma that Caused a Disciple-making Coma in Christians!* Rev. Wade Trimmer gives a thought provoking explanation. He says:

No, I am not trying to be cute with my play on the words “comma” and “coma.” The stark reality is the translator’s insertion of the commas in Ephesians 4:12, have literally resulted in the majority of Christians going into a spiritual coma as far as doing ministry is concerned.

Our English word, “coma” is derived from the Greek word “koma,” meaning deep sleep. Medically this is a state of extreme unresponsiveness to outward stimuli. Spiritually, it’s an unresponsiveness to Jesus’ assignment based primarily upon being taught that they were only members of the church whose responsibility was to help those called to the ministry.

What prompted the King James translators to insert these three commas in this sentence?  It was not because the Greek text mandated commas here. The original Greek text did not use any punctuation marks. They did so, based upon the truth that the Church as a whole had been functioning for 1700 years on a misunderstanding of who was responsible for doing the work of the ministry.

Taking the implications of Ephesians 4:7 into our interpretation, i.e.  that every believer is gifted and contributes to the building up of the body, then the five gifted persons — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers — are given the task of equipping every member of the church to do the work of ministry or service. (The word translated ministry is the word most often used for serving and service.)

The three commas created two classes of persons in the church, the clergy and the laity, the minister and the members. It divided life into the sacred and the secular. Institutional church work on Sunday was considered sacred and laymen’s work during the week was labeled secular. It created two callings a higher verses a lower calling, or a sacred verses a secular calling.

We know from the book of Acts and the history of the first 200 years of the church that it was growing and multiplying exponentially. Then something happened. As is always the case, Satan had a strategy to counteract any advance in the Kingdom of God. The plan was set in motion when Constantine, the first Roman Emperor *to profess* Christianity, began a massive building program. He erected church buildings on the site of every important location in Christendom. What looked like a very noble cause became an instrument in the hands of the evil one to stop the multiplication. The tragic effect of this was that all of the believers stopped going everywhere to “tell a person.” Now they came into these extravagant buildings to sit and “hear a person” (priests and only well-educated speakers.) They were told, in essence, you are not important or smart or powerful enough to be used of God. So, they stopped making disciples. The workforce was no longer being equipped to “go and tell a person.” And so they were “benched” or “pewed,” if you will. In other words, the majority of people who made up the church were put out of co-mission.

However, if you were to ask most Christians what the Great Commission is, they would most likely say evangelism. But is that what Jesus told us to do? Well not exactly. He did not say, “Some of you go evangelize the nations.”  He did not say, “Some of you go make converts.” He did *not s*ay: “Go and build buildings.” He said, “Go and turn people into disciples.” It was never His intent that just a few in the body of Christ would enter His labor force while everyone else sat on their hands and watched them work! But, if we are honest, isn’t that what we have done? Furthermore, is it really realistic to think a handful of foreign missionaries can make disciples of all nations? Every believer from every ethnic group must be equipped and mobilized with the strategy of Jesus.

He did not say make *a* disciple. He said, “Go” (present participle) meaning, as you go, wherever you go in your everyday life…make disciples of *all* nations. You do this with someone. And furthermore, we have not made disciples unless the ones we disciple reproduce.

This is how it works. Hypothetically speaking, let’s say that you could win one person to the Lord every day for 16 years; that equals 5846 souls. But, if you were to disciple only two people per year, and they do the same, in 16 years you could impact 65,536 souls. Impressive isn’t it? But how many people have this kind of impact? It is time for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ to leave the building with the good news and build “the Church” by making disciples who will reproduce! Kingdom building is people building; there is no other plan -- this is the mission!

To wrap up this week’s lesson, I would like to end with a song written in 1866 by Samuel J. Stone. In it he beautifully describes the life of the church and her final victory over the world and death.

**The Church’s One Foundation**

**1 Corinthians 3:11**

***For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.***

*The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her LORD*

*She is His new creation by water and the word.*

*From heaven He came and sought her to be His Holy Bride,*

*with His own blood He bought her and for her life He died.*

*Elect from every nation yet one o’er all the earth.*

*Her charter of Salvation, One LORD, One Faith, one birth,*

*one Holy Name she blesses, partakes one Holy food,*

*and to one Hope she presses with every grace endues.*

*Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,*

*she waits the consummation of peace forevermore till,*

*with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest*

*and the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.**

1. How can selfishness and pride hinder peace and reconciliation? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Now it is your turn. In the following list of passages, we see two categories of gifts - speaking and serving. As you read through this list, see if you can determine what verses are talking about serving gifts and which ones are speaking gifts, and list them below. Ephesians 2:10, 20-21, 4:11-16, 25, 5:18-25, 11:18-20; 1 Corinthians 2:1-15, 3:1-16, 4:14-19, 12:4-18, 14:1-5,19; 2 Corinthians 3:2-9, 4:7; Philippians 2:13-25, 3:3, 4:13-19; 1 Peter 4:11; Colossians 1:9-11, 16, 27-29; Romans 3:2; Acts 7:38; James 2:14-22

Speaking gifts: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Serving gifts: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Discuss with your group situations where you have personally been affected by discrimination or prejudice. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. In what ways can you foster unity and fellowship within the body of Christ, outside of your comfort zone? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Looking back over the many quotes in this lesson, which one was the most informative and meaningful to you and why? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Think On These Things

Did you learn something new? Did you find a new promise to claim as your own? Did you find a command to obey, a sin to confess or avoid? Is there a passage you could turn into a prayer? How did the Lord speak personally to you through this lesson? What action will you take in obedience to God’s voice? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Memory Passages**

**Colossians 1:24-29 (ESV)**

***Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word***

***of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.***

**Week #10**

**One Nation in a Holy Location**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 2:11-18**

***Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh – who are called “uncircumcision” by the so-called “circumcision” that is performed on the body  by human hands – that you were at that time without the Messiah, alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.  But now in Christ Jesus you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into oneand who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility, when he nullified in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself one new manout of two, thus making peace,  and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, so that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.***

**Introduction**

I will never forget the time our youth pastor taught from the above passage and then had us break into small groups for discussion. I was assigned the “younger” youth boys. You can imagine how uncomfortable I was when they ask me, “What does it mean to be circumcised?” At first, all the color drained from my face, and then I turned several shades of red as I stammered my way through that conversation (Colossians 2:6-15; Romans 2:28-29). But, you’ll be happy to know, this lesson is not about circumcision per se. It’s about a circumcision that changes the human heart, ushers in peace on earth, racial reconciliation and then results in the growth and building up of God’s household. You may be thinking, “How in the world is she going to pull all of that together?” Well, with the help of the Holy Spirt, all things are possible!

But for the sake of illustration, I hope you will forgive me for taking the liberty of using our key passage out of context for just a moment to make a personal application. Then, in bite sized chunks, we will try to synthesize chapters two, three and four of the book of Ephesians. And in doing so, we’ll uncover just one of the divine mysteries found within the treasure chest of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

**Broken Together**

Peace…. We so often use the word, but do we have even the slightest notion of its true significance? For example, we talk about world peace or peace on earth and good will towards men, and then we hear talk of peace treaties that never seem to materialize. Or some say, “I need some peace of mind,” or, “Can’t I just get some peace and quiet?” A priest or pastor may ask a dying person, “Do you want to make peace with your maker?” We find these words engraved on tomb stones, “rest in peace.” Yet the only ones who die and *rest in peace* are those who are *in Christ* because, as we just read, *He is Peace*! In a world that seems to be in perpetual conflict, it seems that peace is nowhere to be found. But, in our heart of hearts, wouldn’t you agree that peace is something that none of us can live very long without?

Now it’s one thing when the walls of hostility exist between nations, but it’s altogether different when the walls of hostility become the four walls in which you live. Our homes should be havens of rest -- a place to escape a harsh and cruel world, not battlefields. Yet when there is hostility among the ones who live with you, the war can escalate to the point of domestic violence. Thankfully, I have not known this extreme, but I have worked with women who have, and they all have scars, be they emotional, physical or both. They don’t always survive. The day after I wrote much of this lesson, I got the tragic news that a disciple and sister in Christ, who lives in Nicaragua, was killed by her husband. Dorcas, who is vital part of our ministry, was discipling her. It is heartbreaking! Yet this woman truly is at rest and peace with Jesus. Some of you know quite well what I am talking about. If so, I plead with you, seek help before it’s too late. This is the number for Focus on the Family where you can find some help 1-800-232-6459. This is the only counsel I have to offer you. However, I think you will find both wisdom and encouragement from the following passages.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Hebrews 12:1-3; John 8:12, 31-36, 10:1-10; 1Corinthians 1-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:12-14; Galatians 4:28-29; 1 Peter 1:15-16

When Art and I got married, we were equally yoked. Both of us were separated from God and one another because of our sins. Consequently, it was not the happily ever after we had hoped for. But then again, it seldom is for lost people. For us, I guess it was as good as it was ever going to get without the peace and love of Jesus to bind us together. Then, two years later when the Lord in His grace saved me, things went from bad to worse, and the dividing walls of hostility came up in our marriage. Because now I was yoked to the Lord Jesus, but Art remained yoked to sin. I had been rescued from the kingdom of darkness, but Art was still under the dominion of the one who comes to kill, steal and destroy. Light and dark don’t mix. And this went on for thirteen years as I prayed for my husband’s salvation.

Then, when he was forty years old, Art bowed his knees to the Prince of Peace, and through repentance and surrender he was born again. At that point, we had been married for about 16 years. As we suffered through the consequences of these years of sin, we had a lot of brokenness that only the Lord could heal. So, about a year and a half later, at the suggestion of a counselor, we renewed our wedding vows. It was our seventeenth wedding anniversary. The passage we choose for our wedding program was Ephesians 2:14-18, and this is what was written on our program:

On the third day of May, seventeen years ago, we took our vows before God, whom we only knew from afar. Today, we take great joy in sharing with you our vows before the One who is our Father, Lord, Savior and God. How fitting it is that Jesus first miracle was at a wedding on the “third day”. Today you are our witness to another display of His miraculous grace. He, who is our peace, has redeemed our marriage and brought us together as one. The greatest miracle of all is new-birth through Christ Jesus and redemption from sins. Through Him all things are made new! It is our desire to give Him, who alone is worthy, all the praise and honor and glory. Jesus is the reason we are here today. Thank you for making our joy complete with your presence!

**Ephesians 2:14-18 (ESV)**

***For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh***

***the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,***

***and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.***

If you knew our whole story, you might understand just how applicable, these verses are to us. There is a new song by Casting Crowns that poignantly describes our marriage union. In fact, we could have written these lyrics. It is titled *Broken* *Together*. Not only did the Lord break us together, but He is building us together, and in Him…we are held together. We really are a miracle.

* Can you give a few examples of what it means to be unequally yoked? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* How do you use the word “peace” in your everyday life, and what does it means to you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Do you need some peace? Then this exercise may be the single most important part of this lesson. You will find much personal application if you will read the following passages and then list everything you discover about peace. But remember, it will require you becoming a doer of the Word and not just a hearer of the Word! Ephesians 6:15; Colossians 1:20, 3:15; Hebrews 12:11-14; 1 Peter 3:11-14; John 16:33, 14:27; Psalm 29:1-11, 34:14, 85:10, 119:165, Proverbs 14:30, 16:7, 17:1; Isaiah 26:3, 32:17; 48:18-22; 53:5; 57:2-21; Micah 5:5; Romans 5:1; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 13:11

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**Pride and Prejudice**

**Ephesians 3:1-22 (ESV)**

***For this reason, I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets***

***by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made***

***a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.***

***So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.***

***For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven***

***and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell***

***in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,***

***and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask***

***or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church***

***and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***

So now that we have talked about peace on the home front, let’s broaden the scope a little and talk about another area of peace and reconciliation available to those who are part of God’s family.

Prejudice comes in many shapes and sizes: the intellectuals versus the uneducated, the haves versus the have nots, blacks versus whites, one tribe or ethnic group versus another. But in Bible times, the great dividing wall of hostility was between the Jews and all other races – the Gentiles. Yes, it is true that the Jews are God’s chosen people, and Jesus came to this world through their blood-line. However, if you’ll remember from a previous lesson, there were several other ethnic groups included in His family lineage.

When you think about Paul, or Saul as he was known in his “B.C.” days, his bragging rights included his physical circumcision that marked him as a Jew, his education and his expertise as an Old Testament scholar, and a proud one at that. He was also a bigot. But God has a sense of humor, and He delights in humbling the proud. Nowhere is this more evident than in Paul’s life. After the Lord circumcised his heart, his life was turned upside down. Then, armed with the gospel of peace, Paul became an evangelist to the Gentiles. Of course, this included the pagans in the city of Ephesus.

* Read Paul’s testimony in Philippians 3:1-13; make a list of the things he was proud of. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Colossians 3:11-15 (ESV)**

***Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 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. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,***

***to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.***

Reading through the narratives found in the gospels and observing how Jesus interacted with people, it becomes clear that He was not a respecter of men, or even certain ethnic groups. He loved everyone, and the goal of our salvation is that we become just like Him. (Romans 5:1-11, 8:28-29) Repeatedly, Jesus demonstrated racial reconciliation before His disciples, although it took them a while to catch on. Luke, the only Gentile writer of the Bible, recorded Jesus’ last words before returning to heaven. (Acts 1:8) He said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you *will be* My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the World.” His commission to them (and us) was total world impact. As the passage below indicates, His intent all along was to include people from every nation in His family.

**John 10:14-16 (ESV)**

***I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,***

***just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life***

***for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also,***

***and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.***

Perhaps the clearest lesson Jesus taught on racial reconciliation, is seen when Jesus and His disciples went to Samaria. (John 4:3-26) While the disciples went there to get food, Jesus, as noted in the last lesson, had a completely different agenda. You see, the Jews and the Samaritans had a long history of animosity. The Jews had intermarried with Gentiles, and so Samaritans were a mixed race.

Imagine the disciples shock when they found Jesus alone with a Samaritan woman at the well. It was considered taboo, even scandalous, for Jesus to speak to her because Samaritans were considered to be “unclean.” Furthermore, to keep from becoming *unclean*, a devout Jew would normally walk seventy miles out of the way to stay out of Samaria! And yet, Jesus purposely went to there to find her and change both her identity and her destiny. But that is not all. This despised woman from this despised place had the great honor of being the first person to whom Jesus revealed His true identity as the Christ…the long awaited Savior of the world. Maybe the disciples were a bit jealous of her receiving this honor.

As I was preparing to write this lesson, my pastor was preaching through the book of Luke, and we were studying chapter nine. I always take notes so that I can spend some time digesting all that the Lord wants to teach me through this godly shepherd. The Lord is so good this way. What my pastor pointed out to us from these passages is how prideful and arrogant the disciples where towards “outsiders,” this included the Gentiles. (Luke 9:46-56)

Even after all they had heard and saw, they still didn’t get it. For instance, in Luke nine, when the Samaritans, whom they hated anyway, refused Jesus, it was James and His brother John (nicknamed The Sons of Thunder) who were only too happy to retaliate. They ask the Lord if He wanted them to add lightning to their repertoire of thunder and annihilate the Samaritans.

Based on the fact that it was John who told us this story of the Woman at the Well, I think it is safe to say the Lord had taken the “thunder” of hatred out of John and replaced it with love. After all, it was John who wrote more about God’s love for the world than any other gospel writer. Moreover, when John was much older and wiser, he received the Revelation. What the Lord Jesus showed him was one big, beautiful, multi-racial family, with no divisions, schisms or isms what so ever. Reconciliation is just one of the many benefits that come as a result of God flooding our hearts with His love and peace.

**Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV)**

***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, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!***

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Luke 8:1-4, 9:28-56; John 4:3-42, 10:16, 11:50-51, 13:1-35, 17:11-23; 1 John 4:7-21, 5:1-2; Acts 13:46-48, 26:1-23; Isaiah 49:6, 56:3-8; Psalm 98:2

**Red and Yellow, Black and White**

**Romans 12:5 (ESV)**

***So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.***

The branches of God’s family tree include all people groups. He purchased us and grafted us in to His family through the Tree of Life. (The one cut down to make a cross.) The peace treaty that binds us together was signed in His blood. We are not just one nation under God. We are One holy nation *in God*. (1 Peter 2:5-9; Isaiah 56:3-8) So, there you have it…the divine mystery. It’s no longer hidden, except to those who are so blinded by sin that they refuse to see.

**Revelation 5:9-10 (ESV)**

***And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,***

***for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe***

***and language and people and nation, and you have made them***

***a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”***

I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee during a time when the United States, especially the southern part, was divided by racism. As ridiculous as it seems now to my generation, people built walls of segregation in order to keep others in -- or keep them out. How could anyone think God would approve of this?

In 1968, I was in kindergarten and oblivious to the fires of hate that ultimately led to the assignation of Dr. Martin Luther King in our home town. My husband was in the second grade at the time, and he remembers the National Guard tanks coming down his street under the guise of “keeping the peace.” One of the few memories I have from my first year in school was running hand in hand with my friend to the playground. His skin was brown and mine was white, and we did not know we were different. We were color blind…and that was a good thing.

By the time I started the fourth grade, the powers that be though it would be a good idea to integrate our public school system. Because we were going to be bussed to a school on the other side of town, some of the churches formed a school called “Citizens Against Bussing School.” To make a long story short, I missed the forth-grade and spent the fifth through the ninth grades in a private church school where, instead of being taught, I worked on packets and then when outside to play. This void in the formative years of my education was coupled by the fact that I did not wear the glasses that were prescribed to me in the first grade. I was twenty-four years old when I realized how blind I had been, and I’ve been wearing glasses ever since. Any educator knows how important and foundational these years are to a child’s education. And so now you know the root cause of my “shameful secret.” To be brutally honest, my own insecurities became a justification for a sinful prejudice against those who were well educated. As I said before, sin comes in many shapes and sizes.

Without sugarcoating it, and if we are honest, we will call racism what it really is– it is sin. It’s, ugly, vile, Spirit quenching sin, and God hates it! And sure, it is found in all levels of society, but it ought not be accepted or condoned within the body of Christ. It’s a little hypocritical to think of the segregated churches in the south teaching songs in Sunday school about God’s love for the world and then living as if they don’t believe it. Take for example, this song: “Jesus loves the little children.” It goes like this: “Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world.” The song was inspired by Matthew 19:14 and was written to the tune of a Civil War song. Ironic isn’t it?

I love hearing my granddaughters sing this song. They are only two and three years-old, but my prayer for them is that the profound theology found in that song will be imbedded deep within their hearts. And I know it will because their parents and grandparents have been changed by the “gospel of peace,” as Paul called it, and this gospel makes us color blind. And thankfully, this is one sin that we have not handed down to our children.

With all that being said, this only magnifies the beauty of the gospel. In Christ, the walls that divide us are obliterated. Although we come from many different cultures, and we don’t speak the same language, we are all washed in the blood of Jesus, and His love transcends all our differences. And, as we learned in the lesson entitled “Signs of Life,” love is the one tangible mark that identifies us as a child of God.

Now, can you think of anything the world has to offer that can change animosity and hatred into love and peace? If there were such a thing, how much do you think people would pay to have it? It would be priceless -- would it not? The only real hope for peace on earth and good will toward mankind is to be reconciled to God through Jesus…. For He Himself is our Peace. When we are at peace with God in Christ, this ushers in the possibility of peace, healing and reconciliation with others. Oh, how this world could use some healing! Besides that, isn’t our ministry one of reconciliation? (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)

**DIGGING DEEPER:** John 4:3-42, 11:50-52, 17:11; Luke 18:9-14; Acts 10:34-48, 22:21; Romans 2:11, 5:1-11, 10:9-16, 11:1-36; Ephesians 3:1,13, 6:19-20; Colossians 1:25-27; Hebrews 3:6; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Peter 2:5-16; Isaiah 28:16

**Week #14**

**The Church is Not A Building**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 2:19-22**

***So then you are no longer foreigners and noncitizens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household, because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,  in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.***

What’s in a name? Well, just as each name of God reveals something about His character and nature, so do the specific names given to His family. For instance, we are called Saints, Disciples, Christians, the Elect, the Chosen, the House of God, the Temple of God, The Building and Dwelling of God, the Body of Christ, Living Stones, A Kingdom, A Holy Priesthood, and the Bride of Christ. But when we finally arrive at our eternal home in heaven, we’ll be called the Wife of the Lamb.

**Ephesians 3:14-19**

***For this reason I kneelbefore the Father,fromwhom every familyin heaven and on the earth is named. I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love,  you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.***

Additionally, there is something quite unique about this passage. In the entirety of the New Testament, the one and only time the word *family* is used is in that prayer. And did you notice the location of the family? We’re a family in heaven and on earth, and we have the honor of bearing our Father’s name.

Paul’s prayer is impressive, but it doesn’t even compare to the Lord’s Prayer, recorded in John 17:1-26. It was just before Jesus went to the cross that He had a conversation with the Father about those the Father had given to Him. In the prayer, we have a rare opportunity to know the specific request Jesus made on our behalf. This prayer is chockfull of truths too numerous to ponder in one chapter, so we’ll focus on just a few statements such as,

Note, if you will, that both the Hebrew and Greek words for *house* beautifully describe the church. But the Hebrew word for house is even more descriptive. It means, in part, a family (like a royal court) a door, or a steward. But the most interesting descriptions for house are these: *a palace*, a *temple and a daughter.* The two Greek words for house or household both imply not only a dwelling or residence, but also a family. This makes sense because when we think of home, don’t we think of the people we love? Our family *is* our home. Curiously enough, as we’ve already mentioned, the word family is used just once in the New Testament, and it is right there in Ephesians 3:14.

**Ephesians 3:14-15 (ESV)**

***For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.***

**Where on Earth Does God Dwell?**

**Ephesians 2:22**

***In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.***

As Jesus approached the end of His time on earth, He had a lot of theology left to impart to His disciples. For example, in John, chapter fourteen, He not only explained the Trinity, but also His eternal plan to continue to work in and through them by the power of the Holy Spirit. And yet, they obviously could not comprehend all that He was telling them until the promised Holy Spirit had been given on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-47; John 7:37-39, 15:28, 16:6)

**John 14:8-24 (ESV)**

***Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him,***

***“Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am***

***in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. “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. Whatever you ask in my name,***

***this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name,***

***I will do it. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father,***

***and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom***

***the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him,***

***for he dwells with you and will be in you. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live,***

***you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me,***

***and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.***

***And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself***

***to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,***

***and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.***

***Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear***

***is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.***

Recently, while reading through the Chronological Bible, I came to the account of the building of Solomon’s temple and I found three things that are fitting comparisons to the building of God’s house. Number one was how specific and meticulous the instructions were that God gave for its construction. Number two was that non-Jews took part in the building of it, and number three was that this temple was to be a place for *His Name*. (1 Kings 5:1-8 and 1 Chronicles) Now I don’t want to stretch the interpretation too far, but here is the point I am trying to make. As we are about to see, every individual, from every race and people group who are part of God’s family, needs to be equipped in the work of the ministry to *build God’s family*. No one is excluded.

Now, with all this information, let’s paint a Biblical family portrait. The house the Lord is building, through local communities of believers, is a family. This family is functional because the love of Christ not only binds us together, it will keep us together forever. God’s family is made up of people from every nation. Although some are already home in heaven. The gates of hell will not prevail against it. It will still be standing when the storms of this life are over because the foundation on which it is built is the Lord Jesus Christ -- the Rock of Ages. Randy Alcorn so aptly put it in his book The Treasure Principle (page 48).

When the Kings wedding day comes, the universe will screech to a halt (Revelation 19:7-9). Nothing else will be on heaven’s calendar. The Groom from Nazareth and His beloved bride will take the center stage. Every day of our lives we’re traveling toward that wedding – our wedding! It’s closer today than it was yesterday. Our Bridegroom, the Carpenter, is building a place for us in heaven. Everything we send on ahead will be waiting there for us. It’s our gift to Him, but in His generosity He will give those treasures back to us. Jesus is a builder by trade. He’s also omniscient and omnipotent, qualities that come in handy on a building project! Don’t you think that the home He’s been building for us the last two thousand years is something incredible? Paradoxically, our home is a place we’ve never been. But it’s the place we were made for, the place made for us. If we would let this really sink in, it would forever change the way we think and live. We would stop laying up treasures in our earthly hotel rooms and start sending more ahead to our true home.

**DIGGING DEEPER: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* John 14:2-23, 15:4-10; 1 John 2:6-14, 3:17-24, 4:12-16, 2 John 2; Psalm 90:1, 91:1; Philippians 3:20-21

**WORD SEARCH: From Strong’s Concordance**

* **Nation** Strong’s #1484 The Greek word Ethnos: - *a race, i.e. a tribe; specifically, a foreign (non-Jewish) one, Gentile, nation, people.* (See Acts 2:5, 10:35; 1 Peter 2:9-11; Revelation 5:8-9, 7:9; Matthew 28:19)
* **Family** Strong’s # 3965 The Greek word Patria: - *paternal descent i.e. a group of families or a whole race (nation) family, kindred, linage.* (This is the only time this word is used for family in Ephesians 3:15.)
* **House** Strong’s # 3609 The Greek word Oikeios: - *domestic, i.e. a relative, adherent: - those of his own household.* (Eph. 2:19)
* **House** Strong’s #1004 The Hebrew word Bayith: - *a house, especially Family: - court, daughter, home born, inside, palace, steward+ tablet, temple within.* (Psalm 45)
* **Church** Strong’s # 1577 The Greek word Ekklesia: - *a calling out of, community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both, assembly, church.* (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; 1 Timothy 3:5-16; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 22:16)

**Hebrews 2:10-13 (NIV)**

***In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom***

***and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.***

***He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly***

***I will sing your praises.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says,***

***“Here am I, and the children God has given me.”***

* Generally speaking, our upbringing will shape the way we treat other people. Were you raised in a family that brought you up to love all people or one that fostered bigotry? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Be honest, is there a certain people group you tend to look down on or stay away from? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* If so, what is the reason that you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Do you welcome people from other cultures into your home? If so, list them here and how you came about developing these relationships. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Week #15

**Ephesians 2:17-22**

**Building a House of Prayer for All Nations**

# Key Passage

***Isaiah 56:6-7***

***“And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the Name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant-these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my House of PRAYER. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My alter; for my house will be called a HOUSE of PRAYER for ALL NATIONS.”***

**Introduction**

My daddy was a carpenter. He build close to 100 homes and businesses. I live in a house that my daddy built. The last time I saw him, he was working on the foundation of my house. On the morning of April 12, 2018, daddy woke up, and, as was his custom, he went into his prayer closet, got out his prayer list and prayed. When he was done interceding for others, he walked into his kitchen and Jesus took him home to the Father’s house. At his memorial service, with full assurance of where he was, I read John 14:1-6 and John 11:25-26. As nearly 600 people filed past the wooden box that held daddy’s earthly tent, they saw his prayer list.

I also have several well-worn prayer lists. My husband Art and my daddy’s names are at the top of those lists. From the moment the Lord saved me, I pleaded with my Father in heaven on their behalf (Romans 10:1). After thirteen years of persistent prayers, to the praise of His mercy and grace, in less than a month the Lord miraculously saved them both (February 14 Art, and March 27th daddy). What role did my prayers play in their salvation? I cannot say. There is so much about prayer that I don’t understand. But this I know is true… prayer changes things. It changes the person who prays. Aside from the Word of God, prayer just may be the most powerful key to unlock the kingdom of God.

**The Temple of God Is Holy**

Jesus was a carpenter (**Matthew 16:15-19)**. Himself being the Chief Cornerstone, He said, “On this rock I will build my church” (**1 Peter 2:4-9**). Before He build His church, though, He built His 12 disciples. Prayer played a significant role in His work. He prayed before He chose them (Mark 3:13-19). He prayed with them and taught them to pray. Then, just prior to His work of redemption, He prayed His High Priestly prayer on their behalf. Because it is the only written record of Jesus’ intercessory prayer, it merits a closer look. Noting the fact that you, and those you disciple, are on His list, read **John 17:1-26.** His finished work at this point was building His disciples.

At its core, disciple-making is about building people to be life-long learners and followers of Christ. Read **1 Corinthians 3:9-17 and Hebrews 3:3-6.** Obedience to the Greatest Command to love Him with all our hearts, propels us to obey Jesus’ last command to make disciples of all nations (**John 14:10-24**; Matthew 28:18-20). The question is, do I love Him? If I do, I will be a fisher of men and I will be part of ***God’s construction crew*** building people and they will become houses of prayer. In the Hebrew and Greek languages, the words *house* and *family* are interchangeable. Each time a precious child is added to His family, the kingdom of God advances. Multiplication happens when God’s children are discipled. The entire project of disciple-making, must be bathed in prayer. I would even venture to say that none of His work can be done without it (1 Timothy 2:1-8).

**A Prototype of Prayer**

The blueprints for building a “house of prayer,” are found in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and the articles in the Tent of Meetings (found in Exodus 25-31). What was so special about this place? In it, we see Christ from a heavenly vantagepoint as the true Tabernacle. Additionally, the tabernacle, and the temple that followed, are replicas of heaven -- the permanent home of the saints. To discover the purpose of this temporary structure, let’s read **Exodus 25:8**. Before we look at the Tabernacle, I would like you to see why Jesus was so zealous for His house.

The most basic principle of Biblical interpretation is cross referencing -- allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. To practice this skill, and to observe the cohesion between the Old Testament and New Testament, let’s begin by reading the following passages: **Matthew 21:12-14; Acts 8:26-40; Isaiah 53:7-8, 9-12; Isaiah 54:1-5, 56:3-8.**

Just like the Ethiopian eunuch, we were all born separated from God, outside the gates, without Him and without hope (Ephesians 2:11-22; Hebrews 13:12). Now, through prayer, we draw near to God our Father through the door - Jesus (John 10:1-16). The Hebrew word for *draw near* is qarob or qurab. It means *the nearest place*, or even, *the next of kin*. (See the following verses: Jeremiah 30:21; Psalm 73:27-28, 145:18-19; Deuteronomy 4:7). The only one worthy to draw near to God is His next of kin – His Son Jesus. We draw near the Father in prayer because we are *in Christ* His Son*.* Therefore, we can boldly come and cast our cares upon Him because everything that concerns us is under His feet (**Ephesians 1:19-23**). Christ is seated at the right hand of God as Prophet, Priest, and King. As such, He continues a ministry of prayer for His disciples (Hebrews 4:15-16, 6:19-20, 7:24-26, 8:1-2, 31-39, 9:22-24, 10:10-18; 1 John 2:1-2; Romans 8:34). He has bequeathed this ministry to the saints, as we too are a holy priesthood (Isaiah 61:4-6; **1 Peter 2:5-10; Revelation 1:6, 5:6-10, 8:3-4**).

Now, as we observe this holy meeting place, you may want to do some research to find a rendering of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Primarily from the book of Hebrews, we’ll assign some specific passages on prayer to the articles and discuss the symbolisms.

**The outer Court**

* **The Gate:** We enter His gates with **thanksgiving and His courts with praise:** Psalms, 95:2, 100:1-5; **Hebrew 13:11-15**
* **The Brazen Alter in the inner courts:** Praise and adoration for **Jesus’ blood atonement:** Leviticus 11:45, 16:1-3, 17:11; **Hebrews 9:22-24**; John 1:29; Ephesians 5:2
* **Laver in the outer courts:** a place of cleansing and **confession:** Exodus 40:30-32; Psalms 24:4; 50:8-9;Ephesians 5:26; James 1:22-25; **Hebrews 10:19-23, 13:11-15**; James 4:6-10; **1 John 1:7-10**

**The Holy Place in the Tent of Meetings**

* **Door: Jesus** our **High Priest:** John 10:1-4, 9; **Hebrews 7:24-26; 8:1-2, 10:11-18**
* **Golden Candlestick: Holy Spirit Illumination:** John 6:63,68, Colossians 3:15; Ephesians 5:18 **Hebrews 9:2**; Romans 8:9-15, 14-16,26-27; Acts 1:14, 2:1-7,
* **Table of Showbread: The presence of Jesus - the Word:** Matthew 4:4; John 6:31-35, 48-51 (Presence, face, and shewbread are the same word in Hebrew – paneh). Here are some passages where it is used: Exodus 25:30, 33:9-17; Numbers 4:7; Psalms 16:11, 42:11, 45:12-13, 95:2
* **Alter of Incense:** Prayers of praise and worship: **Exodus 30:6-7** Acts 10:1-6**;** Psalm 141:2; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16; Revelations 5:8-14, 8:3-4; Daniel 9:17-23

**The Holy of Holies**

**This represents the throne of God the Father and God the Son at His Right hand**

* **The Veil:** His body: Hebrews 7:12-27; 10:19-23
* **The Ark of the Covenant: Exodus 25:20-22; Hebrews 9:4, 11-14, 22-24**
* **The Mercy Seat: Supplication and Intersession:** 1 Timothy 2:1-8;James 5:13-18; Romans 3:25; 8:9-15, 34; 1 John 2:2; **Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:19-20**; Acts 12:5-12
* **The Cherubim’s:** Psalms 80:1, 91:11-16, 99:1-3; **Hebrews 1:2-8, 13-14**

In conclusion, I would like to make some personal applications. First, we might think of the Tabernacle as a holy mobile home, if you will. It was a temporary place for God to dwell with His people on earth. We too, are just passing through the wilderness of a dry and thirsty world on the way to the promise land – our home in the Father’s house. With twenty-four-hour a day access to the throne of God, His saints are like mobile houses of prayer, carrying His presence wherever we go. Just as the Tabernacle was constructed by skilled hands of men and women, disciple-makers are God’s construction crews building people into houses of prayer.

When at last, God’s kingdom comes and His will is done on earth, all the prayers of the saints will be answered. Here is the family portrait: **Revelation 5:8-9**.How are we to appropriate all this truth? Saints of God, let’s add our prayers to the incense, and practice His presence and pray **Ephesians 3:14-21**!

**The Bible God’s Facebook**

**Key Passage**

**Ephesians 1:16-18**

***I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember youin my prayers. I pray thatthe God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,may give you spiritual wisdom and revelationin your growing knowledge of him, – since the eyes of yourheart have been enlightened – so that you may know what is the hope of his calling,what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints.***

**Introduction**

**Application Holy Spirit**

**Luke 24:45**

***Then he opened their minds, so they could understand the scriptures.***

Now that we have been educated on some big terms and study tools, it’s time to put the cookies on the bottom shelve, as J. Vernon McGee put it. As a babe in Christ, I listened in to his radio program Thru the Bible, so he was my teacher. One of the things I learned from him and others was the importance of being able to make practical application of God’s Word. To find out what God is saying to us personally through a passage, here is a simple acronym that I learned from my sister in Christ. (Her blog is Arabah Joy.) She called it the apple plan.

A – Look for the attributes of God in a passage.

P – Praise Him for who He is and what He has done. Is there a prayer to repeat?

P – What are the principles for living in the passage? Is there a promise that I can claim?

L - Lesson learned from the passage or a sin to avoid.

E - Is there an example to follow or emulate?

Because we have been given the mind of Christ, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, we can understand the Bible and find out its relevance to our everyday lives 1 Corinthians 2:14-16). Bible study is not just for information; it’s for life transformation. Without proper interpretation, though, we cannot discern the correct application. Yet when you allow God’s Word to penetrate your heart (core beliefs), transformation will occur in your attitudes (how we think). Only then you will notice the effects God’s Word is having on your actions.

For instance, several years ago we had a very frightening experience with a woman who belonged to satan. She and her two children moved into the hotel Art and I were managing for my father. From the moment she moved in, it was apparent that she belonged to the one who comes to kill, steal and destroy. One morning, she was chasing her own children with a butcher knife and when they ran from her, she got in her car and tried to run them over! The police were called, and they made her pack up and leave the hotel, but with her poor children.

Shortly thereafter, we began receiving calls at the hotel from a man related to this woman. His said that he knew where my son went to school (the woman’s daughter, went to school with my youngest son). The man was threatening that he would kill my son! The enemy of my soul has attacked me personally many times but when he came after my child, the battle was on! We went to the school and police pleading for their help to protect our son, our church family come and prayed for us and my husband sat up with a gun all night to protect his family. But the weapons of defense in spiritual battle are not the weapons of this world.

The weapons that we fight with, Paul wrote to the Ephesians, are the Word of God and prayer. The word used for the Sword of the Spirit, was the same word Jesus used in battling the devil in Matthew 4. The Greek word for the Word of God is *Rhema*. It is defined as: *an utterance (individual, collection or specific word) a matter or topic, command*. My point is this, when Jesus was tempted by the devil he used very specific scriptures to respond to each specific temptation. To take your stand on the Word of God is not simply throw the Bible at the devil; you must fight his fiery darts with specific scriptures. That is what Jesus did.

And so, knowing that Jesus has all power and authority, I prayed, “Lord Jesus, please tell me what to do? Your Word says in Proverbs 16:7, that, “If a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord he will make his enemies be at peace with them.” What shall I do to please you?” His answer? Read Luke 6:27-36 and do what I say! I prayed for spiritual deliverance for this family and that God would protect the children and bring salvation to all of them. Of course, I also prayed for Robbie’s protection. Fortunately, we overcame the enemy with obedience to God’s Word - He made our enemy be at peace with us and no harm came to my child. I cannot impress this point enough, the divine power to overcome in every situation is not just knowing what God says to do but in doing it (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)! Hearing what God says always demands a response. When God has clearly reviled His will on a matter, but we chose not to align our lives with this Truth, we invite the Lord’s discipline (James 1:21-27).

* After reading James 1:19-27, make a list of the clear directions in this passage and the benefits of obeying these stated instructions. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If we are ever going to have confidence in the authenticity and inerrancy of the Bible, (meaning - it is without error) then we need to understand its origins. Here are some historical facts: With over 20,000 manuscripts of the New Testament alone in existence, not to mention the ten Dead Sea Scrolls containing fragments of most of the Old Testament, there is more evidence from antiquity to validate the Bible than all the other historical literature put together. Point being, history bears witness to the authenticity of the Bible. Sir Isaac Newton said, “There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.” Echoing Newton, Charles Dickens, had this to say about the Bible, “The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world.”

Given the well documented facts that the Bible was written over a span of 1000 plus years, on three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe, by approximately 40-49 different writers, makes the Bible’s symmetry and prophetic accuracy that much more astonishing. However, let’s get to the heart of the matter, and talk about the inspiration of the words found in the pages of these ancient text.

If you’ll recall, Timothy pastored the church at Ephesus for approximately one and a half years. The spiritual clement of the city had changed dramatically by the power of the gospel. Nevertheless, it was still steeped in superstitions that governed the fabric of their society. The believers had turned from idolatry and burned their books on witchcraft. But, obviously not all these “evil-spirit” inspired books were destroyed. We know this because Paul address this issue often in his letters to Timothy. You may want to stop and read the following passages (1 Timothy 1:3-11, 3:14-16, 4:1-16; 2 Timothy 3:1-13).

* Read Acts chapter 19:11-20 and Acts 12:24. What happened to the Word of God because of the miracles in Ephesus? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* With this context in mind, why do you think it was so important to these believers to know that the “Holy Spirit” was the inspiration for the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In 2 Peter 1:19-21 and 2 Timothy 3:16, notice the words “inspired by God” (also translated God breathed) and men were “carried along by the Holy Spirit”. The two concepts are closely connected. In Greek, the word translated as inspired by or God breathed, is Theopneustos. The word itself is made up of two words. They are: God (Theo) and Spirit (Pneuma). The latter is defined as: breath, to blow, Holy Spirit, Christ’s Spirit, life, Spirit and mind. To get a visual, read what happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-7).

* We have just read Peter’s and Paul’s declarations about God’s Word. Now read what Jesus said about His Word. And summarize what he declared about the Bible. John 8:58, 10:35, 14:26; Matthew 22:31; Luke 24:44 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The Bible… Nutrition for the Soul**

**1Timothy 4:6**

***By pointing our such things to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, having nourished yourself on the Words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.***

When my first granddaughter Naomi was born, I had the privilege of keeping her while her mother worked one day a week as a nurse. I learned much about discipling through caring for her. Babies and children are dependent on adults for everything (1 Thessalonians 2:7-13). Likewise, infants in Christ cannot grow unless someone feeds them spiritually. Without proper nourishment, they will not grow to maturity. That’s the goal of the heavenly Father for all His children.

When I was first born again, I craved the pure milk of the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2). From that moment on, when I opened the Bible, I heard the voice of the Lord speaking to me – but in words that an infant in Christ could understand. Sadly, it was years latter before I was ready for any meat because I remained a child in the faith.

**Deuteronomy 8:3**

***So he humbled you by making you hungry and then feeding you with unfamiliar manna.He did this to teach you that humankindcannot live by breadalone, but also by everything that comes from the Lord’s mouth.***

There are two Greek words used in the New Testament that are translated as the *Word of God*. One is Logos and the other is rhema. When you learn to differentiate between these words, it will greatly enhance your ability to appropriate Scripture. Here is the difference. In general, the Greek word logos refers to Christ Jesus as the mouth of God, or the means of communication with God. On the other hand, the word rhema, is *a specific portion of the Bible*.



**God communicates to the world through Jesus ... *the Logos*. But He communicates with His saints through specific passages …*Rhemas***



* This is a list of passage were logos is translated for the Word of God. Make a note of how each of them are used: John 1:1-14, 8:31, 14:23; 1 Peter 1:23; Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 1:1; Revelation 19:13. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Here is a sampling of passages where you will find the word rhema translated as the Word of God. Consider the context of each of the following and see if you can distinguish between logos and rhema: Matthew 4:4; Romans 10:8-17; Ephesians 1:13, 5:26, 6:17; Hebrews 1:3; 11:3; John 3:34, 6:63 & 68, 15:7; 1 Peter 1:25. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Ephesians 4:17-23**

***So I say this, and insistin the Lord, that you no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts. Because they are callous, they have given themselves over to indecency for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn about Christ like this, if indeed you heard about him and were taught in him, just as the truth is in Jesus. You were taught with reference to your former way of life to lay aside the old man who is being corrupted in accordance with deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man who has been created in God’s image – in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth.***

* From the following passages, make note of how God feels about the world’s wisdom. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Romans 1:15-25, 8:1-8; Colossians 3:1-3

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.

### Can you describe a time when the Holy Spirit opened your mind to comprehend a passage that you had never understood before? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. From these passages, list the verbs associated with God’s Word. Isaiah 55:1-12; Psalms 119:50, 85:6 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Take the following descriptive words and think of times that God’s Word has done just that in your life. *To live-literally or fugitively, to revive-keep or make, alive, nourish, preserve, recover, repair, restore to life, save; life; and make or be whole: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
3. From 2 Timothy 3:14-17, make a list of every attribute of God’s Word.

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1. Now think of an instance where God’s Word to accomplished each of the previous attributes personally in your life. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What do the following scriptures say about God’s Word? Read Deuteronomy 32:46-47; Hebrew 4:12-14; Matthew 4:4; John 6:63. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Behind Closed Doors**

**Matthew 6:5-8**

***“Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray while standing in synagoguesand on street corners so that people can see them. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. Whenyou pray, do not babble repetitiously like the Gentiles, because they think that by their many words they will be heard. Donot be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.***

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.**

1. Let’s search our hearts and answer this question, “Why don’t I prioritize time alone with God?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. From the following passages, what does God seek as He looks upon the earth? (Psalm 53:2, 14:2; John 4:19-24.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Psalms 27: 8 say, “…I will seek Your face.” What other Hebrew word means the same thing as seeking God’s face? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why do you think it is important to seek God the first part of the day? List everything that comes to mind. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Being realistic and creative, list some ways that you can carveout time in your everyday life to make time to be alone with Jesus in His Word. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Without looking, list some of the tools and tips given in this lesson to help in quiet time. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Can you think of any other helpful tips not already mentioned? If so, list them here. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. Read Luke 5:16 and Mathew 11:27-29. What insights can you glean from Jesus’ words and example?

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**Week #13**

**The Author**

Mingled among cherished memories, and a few I would rather forget, there is a wedding theme woven throughout my life story. My husband and I had just gotten married when we decided to open a wedding boutique. So, for the first seven years of our marriage, my career was preparing brides for their weddings. Sound’s wonderful, does it not? Love, marriage, and happily ever after are the kinds of things little girls dream of, right? Yet something very important was missing. It was the One who created marriage in the first place–God, who is the source of love! And, without love as the key ingredient, inevitably, dreams fall apart. So here I was, a broken woman, from a broken home, in a broken marriage, dressing brides for their most important day. When I was twenty-seven years old, I met the love of my life, the Lord Jesus Christ, and I became His bride. The next thirteen years were spent growing in intimacy with my Savior and persistently praying for my husband. After many painful trials and heartaches, Art also met the Lord Jesus. Finally, the two of us became one. By God’s grace, and His grace alone, Art and I have now been married for 30 years. The Lord has blessed us with three beautiful children, a son-in-law and a daughter-in-law that God handpicked for our children. But that’s not all, He has given us two of the sweetest granddaughters in the world. I can testify that God is the healer of broken lives. I am humbled and honored to have the joy of sharing with you, not only the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ but also bits and pieces of my life story as well.

Today, I am the Women’s Discipleship Coordinator for Catalyst Missions. My life is all about dressing the bride of Christ by making disciples, from my home to the nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Revelation 21:1-2).

**Afterthoughts**

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