**A Profound Mystery**

**Seven Things**

**Every New**

**Bride**

**Should Learn**

**Book Two**

**Book Two**

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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 precious children and grandchildren

Luke wrote his letters, Luke and Acts, comprising one-fourth of the New Testament, for one man…Theophilus. I write this book for you. This is your inheritance. I record each cherished memory and my personal eyewitness accounts of the Lord Jesus Christ… so that you will know for certainty that He is God… the Way…The Truth…and… The Life!

**Psalm 102:18 (KJV)**

***This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.***

**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). It’s all about spiritual relationship. So please invite a friend or two to join you as together we discover the riches of God’s love through the study of the gospel message from the book of Ephesians.

**Forward**

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**Introduction**



**Ephesians 5:32 (NET)**

***This mystery is great – but I am actuallyspeaking with reference to Christ and the church.***

I was a new mother with a baby girl, when I was born again. As an infant in Christ, I had new found hunger for the Word of God. So, I did the only thing I knew to do to get the food I craved. I returned to the small church I was raised in and told the pastor, “I have rededicated my life to Christ. Give me a job to do.” This seems obvious to me now, but in my Biblical ignorance, what I was calling a rededication was, in reality my conversion.

Anyway, as you might imagine, the pastor was more than happy to oblige. After all, I had been a member of that church since my teens. And so, I was quickly assigned the task of teaching the teen-age girls mission class. The question that begs to be asked, though, is this: what happens when you task an infant in Christ with the job of teaching others, some of which, have not even come to faith yet? John Maxwell calls it, “The law of the lid”. What he meant was simply this - we can only lead someone to the level that we have obtained ourselves. All I knew as a babe in Christ was that we had better get ready for the wedding, because Jesus was coming back soon.

Honestly, I did not even know how to prepare myself to meet Christ, much less a group of teenagers. I remained a spiritual child in my faith for the next 20 years. I had no clue how to live the gospel in my broken home. As a matter of fact, for the most part, I could not even define what the gospel was, much less how to share it! How does a broken woman, from a broken home, learn how to love her husband and raise her own children and function as a wife and mother when all she knows is dysfunction? Something vital was missing but I hadn’t a clue what. Yet, whatever the missing element might be, it was something so important that it encompassed every aspect of my life.

Church programs cannot fix broken people or broken homes. This proves what I’ve always suspected; something vital is missing in the church. Now I know what it is…. It is Biblical discipleship. And so, the Lord has placed His burden upon my heart, fueling it through my own experience, to do something about it. Hence, the birth of this, the second book in a five-phase series of women’s discipling curriculum. From this perspective, we can think of discipleship as wedding preparation.

In fact, becoming the bride of Christ is much like getting married; everything is new, exciting and mysterious. Spiritually and physically speaking, though, we are treading on sacred, yet, uncharted ground. That is why a study of Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus is so helpful, because here, several mysteries are opened to us. I am ecstatic to continue this journey with you as we delve deeper into the treasure-trove of truth contained within the book of Ephesians. With this letter as our backdrop, we will uncover seven basics truths that every new believer needs to learn.

In keeping with the wedding theme of this series, I would like to set the tone for this second book by using a loose analogy comparing a new bride with the bride of Christ. But before we go there, let me speak to those who are single, divorced or widowed. This study is primarily about our union with God in Christ. So, if you are the bride of Christ, these principles are applicable to you. But, if you are married, or wish to be married, or doing this study with women who are married, you will find that these seven things are both practical, as well as beneficial life lessons that can also apply to any relationship. These seven Biblical principles both govern a marriage, and determine its success.

One, all of us would do well to learn how to speak the truth in love and how to listen with the intent to understand the other person.

Two, in any area of our lives, how well we communicate, and the depths of that interaction, will greatly determine the outcome. Especially when it comes to oneness in marriage.

Three, who hasn’t experienced an identity crises at one time or another? But this is certainly true when a person goes from singleness to the perplexities involved in living with another person.

Four, in marriage, you must leave your father and mother and *cleave* to your husband. And so, part of growing up is making the adjustments necessary to cut the apron strings of our parents. The leaving is not optional, if there is to be Biblical cleaving.

Five, when you learn people’s stories, it helps you understand what makes them tic. In marriage, it is very important to become a student of your spouse but be ready for a *big* learning curve.

Six, a bride is divinely and uniquely designed to be the “helpmate” of her husband. If we don’t understand this, we can greatly hinder instead of a help.

Seven, no one is an island unto themselves. We were made for community. And so, when you get married you need to learn to embrace his family because they are now your family too.

Now for the seven spiritual applications. First, it is impossible to overvalue the significance of the Bible in relationship between Christ and His bride. Prayer follows a close second in importance. These two lifelines are the internet connections by which we abide in Christ. The third parallel and spiritual application is this: when we become the bride of Christ, we are a new creation, therefore, we have a whole new identity. Forth, is that we are no longer separated from God; He is not only our Father, He is our Daddy. We need to learn to approach Him as such. The fifth thing we are going to learn in this study is who Jesus really is. Therefore, we will become His students, or disciples. Following our study of Jesus, we will meet the third person of the Trinity -God the Holy spirit and comprehend His role as our teacher and helper. Seventh, and finally, we will end this study by learning to embracing our new family in Christ.

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, as well as, profound lessons we can learn as we unpack treasure to embrace in the book of Ephesians. It matters not where we are in this journey, the walk of faith is all about changing us into the image of Christ the Heavenly Bridegroom. And that, my friend, is one of the main goals of our salvation, and the eternal good that results from knowing Christ. Prepare to be blessed!



**How to Use This Book**

Here is just a bit of instructions before we begin. While it is helpful if you have completed book number one, it is not required. The intent of this book is to grow in the knowledge of God through the study of His Word and thereby building a firm foundation for our relationship with God in Christ. So, you need a Bible, or at least, a Bible app such as Bible.is. The important thing is that you pick a 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 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. They are to stimulate conversation about what we have learned.

We want to take these 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**



**You Have Only Just Begun**

### 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**

Having been in the Bridal business for several years, I observed that women will spend a great deal of money and effort in planning a wedding. They will seek out people who have an expertise to help them achieve the most spectacular wedding day imaginable. By contrast, little thought or effort goes into preparing for what comes after the honeymoon. Consequently, many us find ourselves ill equipped for the married life and it can be quite the shock.

In my estimation, there are at least seven things every new bride would do well to learn. These are some things that I wish I had known. Number one on my list is the importance of learning how to communicate. John C. Maxwell wrote a book titled, *Everyone Communicates Few Connect.* Being connected to your spouse and staying connected, will be determined by the degree that you learn how to communicate and to speak one another’s love language.

Can I be honest? When Art and I were married, I didn’t know that there was such a thing as a love language. But what I 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 as I said before, I came from a broken home, and frankly, I didn’t know the difference. When finally, the Lord, in His mercy, saved me and 13 years later, saved Art, we sought out help. And so, we began by attending Family Life Weekend To Remember marriage conferences. Slow learners that we are, by the time we attended our third conference, we begin to see, 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.” Incidentally, as I write these words, Art and I are celebrating our thirty-first wedding anniversary. I might add also, we are still working on applying these important truths.

Now, let us turn our attention to the spiritual application. 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) Therefore, what is true in the realm of any marriage relationship is also true of our relationship with Jesus our heavenly Bridegroom. And so, we will spend the next few weeks learning how to communicate and stay connected to our Lord. Everything starts with that.

**The Bible…The Phone of God**

When we speak of communication, we are not talking about simply transferring information from one person to another. We are talking about real interaction which fosters deeper understanding and intimacy between two individuals. These are the terms of endearment. We know by experience that when communication is interrupted for any length of time, it is hard to maintain a relationship and love can grow cold. Sadly, that’s what happened to the saints at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-6). How can we forge lasting intimacy with Christ and avoid falling into the same loveless state of the church at Ephesus? By staying in close contact with Him through the lifelines of His written Word and prayer. The Holy Spirit who is the liaison between the two.

**John 15:7-10 (NET)**

***If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. My Father is honoredby this, thatyou bearmuch fruit and show that you are my disciples.  “Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you; remain in my love. If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyedmy Father’s commandments and remainin his love.***

As you can see in the passages above, as well as Proverbs 28:9, the Word of God and prayer are linked together. Granted, most of us, at least pray sometimes. But seldom do we open God’s Word to hear His reply. Have you ever wondered if God still speaks to people? He does, for as Jesus said, “My sheep 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 her His audible voice? Then read the Bible out loud!

**Revelation 1:12-16 (NET)**

***Iturned to see whose voice was speaking to me,and when I did so,I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands was one like a son of man.He was dressed in a robe extending down to his feet and he wore a wide golden belt******around his chest.  His head and hair were as white as wool, even as white as snow,and his eyes were like a fiery flame. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.  He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp double-edged sword extended out of his mouth. His face shone like the sun shining at full strength.***

A one-way conversation does not equal communication. George Muller was known as a man of prayer. But this is what he had to say on the subject, “Now what is food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again, not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water passes through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering it over and applying it to our hearts.” **Topics:**  **Source:** Spiritual Secrets of George Muller. If we desire to live out our few short days of life raising above a monotonous and arduous existence, then there is no substitute. It requires a daily encounter with the written Word of God.

Everything we need to live from here to eternity, is contained in the Bible. It is impossible to over-estimate it’s worth. In fact, there is no book in the world like it because it is alive, active and powerful, covering every facet of life. However, the source of the power is not found on the written page, but in a person. That person is Jesus Christ…*the Word who became flesh and made His dwelling with us* (John 1:1-14).

One of the women that I consider a spiritual mother, is Joney Caudill (you will hear more about her in another chapter). Just a few years ago, Joney lost the love of her life - her husband Calvin. They were married for 49 years. She has over 100 letters that he wrote to her while he was away in the U.S. Navy. These letters are treasured tangible expressions of his love for her. God’s word is like that. It is His love letter to us - His bride. The most important bit of information that God could communicate to us, as elementary as it sounds, is that He loves us. As the beloved children’s song goes, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” The lyrics come straight from the pages of the bestselling book of all times… the Holy Bible.

If given the opportunity to speak face to face with a new believer, I would place a Bible in their hands, look them in the eye and I would say, in all seriousness, “God communicates with you through this Living Book!” “It is your life; you can’t live without it!” It is my deep conviction that God’s Word is that vital. In case you have not yet come to the realization, of the importance of the Bible, we are going to do a review of some of the things that the Bible says about the Bible.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Genesis 1:1-3; Proverbs 28:9; John 1:1-14, 3:16, 6:44-70, 10:27-28, 15:7-8; Luke 24:27; Hebrews 1:1-13; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 4:9-10; Romans 5:6-10

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**The Bible is God Breathed**

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

***Moreover,wepossess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing. You do well if you pay attention to thisas you would to a light shining in a murky place, until the day dawns and the morning starrises in your hearts. Above all, you do well if you recognizethis: No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet’s own imagination, for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, mencarried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.***

Inevitably, someone will ask you this question: Where did we get the Bible? Perhaps you have had wondered this yourself. With over 20,000 manuscripts in existence of the New Testament alone, 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. Nevertheless, some may say that the Bible is just another book written by men. However, if anyone will take the time to learn the historical facts, they will learn that this is no ordinary book.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NET)**

***Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof,for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to Godmay be capableand equipped for every good work.***

In the two passages above, notice the words “inspired by God” (also translated God breathed) and men were “moved by the Holy Spirit”. The two 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) which is defined as: breath, to blow, Holy Spirit, Christ’s Spirit, life, Spirit and mind.

**Thessalonians 2:13 (NET)**

***And so,we too constantly thank God that when you received God’s message that you heard from us,you accepted it not as a human message,but God’s message, which is at work among you who believe.***

The sixty-six books that comprise the Bible were written by the Holy Spirit on the hearts of approximately 49 different writers over a span of 1000 plus years. These men did not come up with these words on their own. The Holy Spirit spoke the mind of God into their hearts. Part of their inspiration came from the fact that they studied the Word of God and quoted one another. If you wish to live an inspired life, you too will become a student of the Bible. And as you do, you will discover that every book of the Bible has correlating truths and principles taught over and over in various ways and different circumstances. Yet there is just one overarching narrative and it is just this: From the beginning of time (God is outside of time) God has always desired to have His people, living in His place, under His rule. That’s how the story begin, and that’s how it will end. In between the two, we find the plan and provision of God in the Son of God, who became then Son of Man.

**Colossians 2:1-3 (Net)**

***For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you,and for those in Laodicea, and for those who have not met me face to face.My goal is thattheir hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and that they may have all the riches that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ,in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 2 Timothy 3:13-4:4; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 Corinthians 2:4-16; 2 Corinthians 1:20-21

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**We Know God Through His Word**

**John 17:3 (NET)**

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

Just before He went to the cross, in the Lord’s Prayer Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:1-26). To know God the Father and God the Son is eternal life. As Paul asserted in Galatians 2:20, “Christ is our life!” And so, this should be the aim of any true seeker, to Know God.

Of all the innumerable benefits of the written Word of God, the most important is this: the entire Bible is the revelation of God. All we can know or will ever know about God is contained within the Bible. Therefore, paramount to maturing in the faith is to grow in the knowledge of God. And yet, as those who seek Him will tell you, even a glimpse of His glory through divine revelation, leaves you with an insatiable quest for more. All that we can or will ever know on this earth about the Lord Jesus is revealed within the pages of God’s Holy Word, and the Holy Spirit is the interpreter.

**Colossians 1:9-10 (Net)**

***For this reason we also, from the day we heard about you,have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fillyou with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may liveworthily of the Lord and please him in all respects – bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God.***

In the story of Eli and Samuel, found in 1 Samuel 3:1-21, we find two important principles. Number one, the Bible reveals God and number two, God speaks through His Word (our next point). In his book*, The Truth War,* John McArthur put it this way, “God has revealed Himself to humanity through Scripture and His Son–the Truth. Truth means nothing apart from God and His Word. Truth is the self-expression of God!”

**1 Samuel 3:19-21 (NET)**

***Samuel continued to grow, and the Lord was with him. None of his prophecies fell to the ground unfulfilled.All Israel from Dan to Beer Sheba realized that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord. Then the Lord again appeared in Shiloh, for it was in Shiloh that the Lord had revealed himself to Samuelthrough the word of the Lord.***

[*Acts 9:1*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27218) *Later called Paul*

1. [*Acts 9:1*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27218) *Lit threat*
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*

#### *Cross references:*

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3. [*Acts 9:2*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27219) *:* [*Acts 9:14, 21; 22:5; 26:10*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%209:14,%20Acts%209:21,%20Acts%2022:5,%20Acts%2026:10&version=NASB)
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5. [*Acts 9:2*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27219) *:* [*Gen 14:15; 2 Cor 11:32; Gal 1:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen%2014:15,%202Cor%2011:32,%20Gal%201:17&version=NASB)
6. [*Acts 9:2*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27219) *:* [*John 14:6; Acts 18:25f; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2014:6,%20Acts%2018:25-Acts%2018:28,%20Acts%2019:9,%20Acts%2019:23,%20Acts%2022:4,%20Acts%2024:14,%20Acts%2024:22&version=NASB)
7. [*Acts 9:3*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27220) *:* [*1 Cor 15:8*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1Cor%2015:8&version=NASB)
8. [*Acts 9:4*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27221) *:* [*Acts 22:7; 26:14*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2022:7,%20Acts%2026:14&version=NASB)
9. [*Acts 9:6*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27223) *:* [*Acts 9:16*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%209:16&version=NASB)
10. [*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) *:* [*Acts 26:14*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2026:14&version=NASB)
11. [*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) *:* [*John 12:29f; Acts 22:9*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2012:29-John%2012:50,%20Acts%2022:9&version=NASB)
12. [*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) *:* [*Acts 9:18; 22:11*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%209:18,%20Acts%2022:11&version=NASB)
13. [*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) *:* [*Gen 14:15; 2 Cor 11:32; Gal 1:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen%2014:15,%202Cor%2011:32,%20Gal%201:17&version=NASB)
14. [*Acts 9:10*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27227) *:* [*Gen 14:15; 2 Cor 11:32; Gal 1:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen%2014:15,%202Cor%2011:32,%20Gal%201:17&version=NASB)
15. [*Acts 9:10*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27227) *:* [*Acts 22:12*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2022:12&version=NASB)
16. [*Acts 9:10*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27227) *:* [*Acts 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5; 12:9; 16:9f; 18:9*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2010:3,%20Acts%2010:17,%20Acts%2010:19,%20Acts%2011:5,%20Acts%2012:9,%20Acts%2016:9-Acts%2016:40,%20Acts%2018:9&version=NASB)
17. [*Acts 9:11*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27228) *:* [*Acts 9:30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%209:30,%20Acts%2011:25,%20Acts%2021:39,%20Acts%2022:3&version=NASB)
18. [*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) *:* [*Mark 5:23; Acts 6:6; 9:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%205:23,%20Acts%206:6,%20Acts%209:17&version=NASB)
19. [*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) *:* [*Acts 8:3*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%208:3&version=NASB)
20. [*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) *:* [*Acts 9:32, 41; 26:10; Rom 1:7; 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2, 15; 1 Cor 1:2*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%209:32,%20Acts%209:41,%20Acts%2026:10,%20Rom%201:7,%20Rom%2015:25-Rom%2015:26,%20Rom%2015:31,%20Rom%2016:2,%20Rom%2016:15,%201Cor%201:2&version=NASB)
21. [*Acts 9:14*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27231) *:* [*Acts 9:2, 21*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%209:2,%20Acts%209:21&version=NASB)
22. [*Acts 9:14*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27231) *:* [*Acts 7:59*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%207:59&version=NASB)
23. [*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) *:* [*Acts 13:2; Rom 1:1; 9:23; Gal 1:15; Eph 3:7*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2013:2,%20Rom%201:1,%20Rom%209:23,%20Gal%201:15,%20Eph%203:7&version=NASB)
24. [*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) *:* [*Acts 22:21; 26:17; Rom 1:5; 11:13; 15:16; Gal 1:16; 2:7ff; Eph 3:1, 8; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 4:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2022:21,%20Acts%2026:17,%20Rom%201:5,%20Rom%2011:13,%20Rom%2015:16,%20Gal%201:16,%20Gal%202:7-Gal%202:21,%20Eph%203:1,%20Eph%203:8,%201Tim%202:7,%202Tim%204:17&version=NASB)
25. [*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) *:* [*Acts 25:22f; 26:1, 32; 2 Tim 4:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2025:22-Acts%2025:27,%20Acts%2026:1,%20Acts%2026:32,%202Tim%204:17&version=NASB)
26. [*Acts 9:16*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27233) *:* [*Acts 20:23; 21:4, 11, 13; 2 Cor 6:4f; 11:23-27; 1 Thess 3:3*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2020:23,%20Acts%2021:4,%20Acts%2021:11,%20Acts%2021:13,%202Cor%206:4-2Cor%206:18,%202Cor%2011:23-2Cor%2011:27,%201Thess%203:3&version=NASB)
27. [*Acts 9:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27234) *:* [*Mark 5:23; Acts 6:6; 9:12*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%205:23,%20Acts%206:6,%20Acts%209:12&version=NASB)
28. [*Acts 9:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27234) *:* [*Acts 22:13*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2022:13&version=NASB)
29. [*Acts 9:17*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.1:15-16;Joshua%201:8;Acts%209:1-18&version=NASB#en-NASB-27234) *:* [*Acts 2:4*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202:4&version=NASB)

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 1 Samuel 3:19-21; Isaiah 40:5-11; 45:17-25; John17:1-17; Revelation 1:1-8, 19:13; 1 John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-20; Hab. 2:1-2; Ps. 19:7-9; Ps. 119:105; 2 Cor. 4:2-6; Mat. 13:10-23; Isaiah 6:1-10, 2 Peter 1:10-21; Phi. 1:3-10; 3:7-11; 1 Cor. 2:9-10,16; 1 John 2:20,27

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

1. What is the difference in head knowledge and heart knowledge? The difference between the head and the heart is 18 inches. (1Samuel 16:7) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Read: 2 Cor. 4:3-6) When God opened the eyes in your heart to see His glory in the Face of Jesus, what was revealed to you? Be specific. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read: Revelation 1:1, 8, 12-19. What was revealed to John? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read: 1 John 1:1-4. What did John see that He wrote about? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Read: 1 Samuel 3: 1, 7, 19-21; Proverbs 29:16-18 and put into your own words what they say about the Bible. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### When the Word of God rare in your life, what are the effects? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### What do you think God meant when He said about his Word: “It is your life!” Read Deut. 32:46-47; Hebrew 4:12-14; Matthew 4:4; John 6:63. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Can you describe a time when the Holy Spirit opened your eyes of understanding to a passage that you had never understood before? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### What is the first call of every Saint? Mark 3:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did God choose to reveal Himself to Paul and the apostle John? (1 John1:1-4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Week # 2**

**The Bible… Is Your Life**

### Key Passage

**Ephesians 1:16-18 (NET)**

***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 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**

Seldom do we really appreciate anything until its gone. Take your sight for example. If you are vision impaired, like I am, then you understand this concept. Without my glasses, I can’t see past my hand. On a training mission trip to Guayaramerin Bolivia, because of the tireless work of Dr. Dylan Boundurant, over 400 people were fitted for eye glasses. The more serious the sight impairment, the more elated where the recipients of the glasses that gave them sight. Did you know that just as we have eyes in our head to see physically, we also have eyes in our hearts to see spiritually? But, until we are born again, we don’t have spiritual sight because the eyes of our heart are blinded.

This lesson, as the last, will help us to see the importance of God’s Word in the life of a believer. So here are some more things the Bible says about the Bible.

**Regeneration**

**1Peter 1:23-25 (NET)**

***You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.*** ***For all fleshis like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass;the grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lordendures forever. And this is the word that was proclaimed to you.***

The act of God in the regeneration is accomplished by the power of God’s Word. Or you might say, because it’s alive, living and active, it accomplishes resurrection of those who are spiritually dead. We find this principle throughout the Old Testament as well. Here is the word restoring in Hebrew:Shuwb: -*restoring converting, repent, turn, convert, recover, restores, rescues, and fetch home again, feed, lie down, and make rejoice, return* (Psalms 19:7, 23:3, 51:12, 119:159-160).

**Psalm 19:7 (NET)**

***The law of the Lord is perfect and preserves one’s life.The rules set down by the Lordare reliableand impart wisdom to the inexperienced.***

The Hebrew word most often used for God’s Word is Dabar and it is defined as follows: - *a word, a matter spoken of, act, advise, answer, book, commandment, communication, counsel, effect, language, message, oracle, power, promise, provision, purpose, say, talk, thought, word, work.* Note: The other words found in the Old Testament that refer to God’s Word are as follows: *Statues, Laws, (seen in the previous passage) Precepts, Commandments, Testimonies and ordinances.*

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Ezekiel 37:4-14; 2 Timothy 3:14-15; Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Acts 7:38; Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 2:1-8; John 3:1-18, 6:63- 68; Philippians 2:16

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**Illumination**

We have already seen the great love and concern the apostle Paul had for the saints with whom he had invested three years of his life. In Paul’s prison letters, we find the most powerful intercessory prayers we could ever pray on behalf of others. (Colossians 1:7-13) Theses are heavenly prayers. Through them we gain insight; insight that only comes from the Spirit of God, who is our great intercessor (Romans 8:26-34).

While in Ephesus, Paul wrote the letters to the saints in Corinth. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Paul tells his story of a divine encounter which happened sometime between his conversion and first missionary trip (Acts 9:30-13:1-3). He received visions and revelations from the Lord that left him with a thorn in his flesh. This affliction, it has been suggested, was an eye problem that led him to seek 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. He was the same one who recorded the events of Paul’s miraculous conversion in the book of Acts.

**Acts 9:15-18 (NET)**

***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.***

**Psalm 119:130 (KJV)**

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

At the moment of salvation, we get sight, but it takes the aid of the Holy Spirit to adjust our spiritual eyes to the light of revelation. While we will never fully comprehend all the treasures hidden in Christ, the Living Word of God, we can grow in grace and knowledge of God through the revelation of the Bible. Growing involves learning and learning requires having a teachable heart. And that will determine the receptivity of to the truth contained within the pages of the Bible.

**John 16:12-15 (Net)**

***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.***

There can be no sight until there first is light. God’s Word is the source of light! All spiritual vision begins when God Speaks “Let there be light.”

When the Holy Spirit puts God’s glasses on the eyes of our heart, we have spiritual illumination through the lens of the Word of God. Until this happens, we cannot see from God’s perspective. What does God see when He looks upon this world? He sees people who are perishing without a true knowledge of Him. These individuals are all around us, but without God’s sight, we don’t see them perishing. We need to put on His glasses to see what He sees and love what He loves and be moved and mobilized to action!

Why did God give you spiritual sight and hearing? (Luke 8:11-21) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Brother Herb Hodges is man who truly has spiritual vision. His gift to the body of Christ is a vision of Biblical disciple making. He is being used as an instrument of God to open the spiritual eyes of the Church, to our “great omission” of the Lord ‘s “Great Commission” to make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:19-20) All over the world people who have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church are being equipped with the tools to obey and follow the Lord in reaching the world. In His Chapter “How Vital is Vision?” based on Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) “Where there is no vision, the people Perish.” Brother Herb states:

“*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.*”

This is my paraphrase of Herb Hodges quote: Little Word of God in a life= little light to walk in the darkness of the world; little light = little vision; little vision = little knowledge of God. Without the knowledge of God people perish! Is the Word of God rare in your life? If so, you have little vision of God, and without a vision of God people will perish.

**Psalm 119:18 (Net)**

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

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Proverbs 29:15-18; 2 Cor. 4:2-6; 1:22; 1 Cor. 2:1-16; 1 John 2:20, 27

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**The Bible… Nutrition for the Soul**

**1Timothy 4:6 (NET)**

***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.***

Without proper nourishment, we will not grow up to maturity – the goal of God the Father for each of His children. I believe many of His children are malnourished. They are living off a once or twice a week spiritual meal consisting of whatever their pastor is serving up Sunday morning. How long do you think a person would live if they ate only one or two meals per week? If they continue to eat the “Bread of Life” only occasionally, then they will remain disconnected from the Lord and never grow up in the faith. How sad to never even get a taste of the nutrition found in the deeper mysteries hidden in God’s Word. Life, at its best, can be difficult. What do these half-starved folks do when Monday morning rolls around and the realities of life in this sin-cursed world hit them?

To live without the Bible is to live without Jesus! Yet, for those who have learned to live on “Every Word that comes from the mouth of God,” they can lay hold of God’s promises, find encouragement and strength, and get real help in times of need. (Matthew 4:4; Romans 15:4) Subsequently, a well-fed believer will become the source of spiritual food for a world full of starving souls.

**Deuteronomy 8:3 (NET)**

***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.***

As you will see next, there are two Greek words translated as the *Word of God*. It is important to understand how and where the Holy Spirit inspired their use. Logos generally refers to *Christ Jesus* as the mouth of God. But, the word Rhema is *a specific portion of the Bible*. If you look closely you will see how important the distinctions between these two words are. (You can hear the explanation of this on audio lessons titled, Building Your Life on The Solid Foundation of God’s Word, part one and part two.)

* Word: Greek word Logos-*The divine expression –i.e. Christ-communication-utterance-mouth. See* used in the following passages: John 1: 1-14; 1 Peter 1: 23; Hebrew 4:12; John 8:31, 14:23; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13
* Word: Greek word Rhema- *an utterance a specific a matter or topic command –Word*. See this used in the following verses: Matthew 4:4; Romans 10:8- 17; Ephesians 1:13, 5:26, 6:17; Hebrews 1:3; 11:3; John3:34, 6:63 & 68; John 15:7; 1Peter 1:25

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 1 Peter 2:2; 1Timothy 4:6; Matthew 4:4; Jeremiah 15:16; Hebrew 5:11-14; Psalm 119:103; Romans 15:4;1 Peter 2:2**;** Isaiah 55:1-3

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**Consultation**

**Psalm 19:7-11 (NASB)**

***The law of the Lord is perfect and preserves one’s life. The rules set down by the Lordare reliableand impart wisdom to the inexperienced. The Lord’s precepts are fairand make one joyful.The Lord’s commands are pure and give insight for life. The commands to fear the Lord are rightand endure forever.The judgments given by the Lord are trustworthy and absolutely just They are of greater valuethan gold, than even a great amount of pure gold; they bring greater delightthan honey, than even the sweetest honey from a honeycomb. Yes, your servant finds moral guidance there;those who obey them receive a rich reward.***

It is the very nature of God to give wisdom and counsel to those who seek Him. After all, wisdom is hidden in Christ Jesus…. His name is Wonderful Counselor. You may already be aware that we are living in the day of Facebook prophets, and for many people, this is their psychologist, their soapbox, their source of information and counsel. And unfortunately, it replaces true communication with the Lord and others. Besides this, it can be a real time consumer, and how many of us really have time to waste? Although I do appreciate those who use social media to proclaim God’s truth and shed light on the Face of Christ in “His book - the Bible.” All the wisdom we will ever need is found in the Bible. It not only informs our world view, it transforms it.

I’d like to interject a recent example of how l I found much needed counsel in the Word of God. I really should chronicle all the different diet plans I have tried and failed at. Recently I began to think to myself, “I must do something about this weight! What plan, approach, pill, and exercise partner can I get to help me?” If I had a dime for every time I have been in this exact place, I would be rich indeed! None of these plans have ever worked for very long. I would lose some weight, and then all my hard-won pounds lost were quickly regained - along with a few more. So, I began to dialog with the Lord about it, confessing all the emotional eating I’ve been doing, and then the wonderful counselor gave me His diet plan, custom made for my dilemma. It came in the form of a specific passage-a Rhema! I didn’t even have to open my Bible because this passage is hidden in my heart.

**Proverbs 3:1-8 (NET)**

***My child,do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keepmy commandments, for they will providea long and full life,and they will add well-being to you. Do not let truth and mercyleave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will find favor and good understanding, in the sight of God and people. Trustin the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.Acknowledgehim in all your ways,and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own estimation;fear the Lord and turn away from evil.This will bring healing to your body,and refreshmentto your inner self.***

So here is the diet plan: for starters, don’t lean on my own plans, acknowledge that I need Him to show me the way. As I seek His counsel and listen for His guidance, I find that I know when, what, and how much to eat at each meal. He is making my steps straight, and I am having success bringing health to my body and nourishment to my bones. His plan works! Thank you Lord for your wonderful counsel.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Psalms 33:8; 119:24-50; Colossians 2:2-3; Isaiah 9:6

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**Medication**

### Proverbs 4:20-23 (NET)

### *My child, pay attention to my words; listen attentively**to my sayings. Do not let them departfrom your sight, guardthem within your heart;* *for they are life to those who find them and healing to one’s entire body. Guard your heart with all vigilance,for from it are the sourcesof life.*

### Like medicine, God’s Word brings healing. Sometimes that healing is through correction, and other times it is by bringing balm to heal our brokenness. But medicine will not help unless you take it! One word in particular found in Proverbs 4:20 is evidence to the fact that *God’s Word is medicine*…. It’s the word *Health*. In Hebrew, the word is *Marpay* and this is the definition: *a cure, a remedy, a medicine.* One example of this healing is found in the lesson, The Health of My Countenance – dealing with depression.

**Psalm 107:15-22 (NET)**

***Let them give thanks to the Lord for his loyal love, and for the amazing things he has done for people! For he shattered the bronze gates, and hacked through the iron bars. They acted like fools in their rebellious ways,and suffered because of their sins. They lost their appetite for all food,and they drew near the gates of death. They cried out to the Lord in their distress; he delivered them from their troubles. He sent them an assuring wordand healed them; he rescued them from the pits where they were trapped.***

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Proverbs 4:20-22; Psalms 34:19, 42:11, 107:8-21; Jeremiah 8:8-22

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**Sanctification**

**Ephesians 5:25-27 (Net)**

***Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her to sanctify her by cleansing herwith the washing of the water by the word, so that he may present the church to himself as glorious – not having a stain or wrinkle, or any such blemish, but holy and blameless.***

God continually washes our minds with the truth of His Word and sets us free from the sins that so easily entangle our lives. Ruth Ann Bridges describes this process. When she was converted at almost fifty years old, she began to meditate and memorize the Word of God. A non-believer in her family said, with negative connotations, “That sounds like brain washing.” She responded: “That is exactly what memorizing Scripture does; it is washes my brain of lies and replaces them with the Truth!” It changes our old, carnal thinking and exchanges it for the mind of Christ. By memorizing passages, we give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to speak specific words (Greek-*Rhema)* to us. The Bible was written by the Holy Spirit; it is the dialect and language He speaks. Therefore, when we store up God’s Word in our hearts, we are increasing His vocabulary within us.

**John 17:17 (KJV)**

***Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.***

**John 6:63 (NET)**

***The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help! The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.***

Studying the Word of God will not make us sinless, but it certainly can make us sin less. How does that work? I can’t spend time in the Word of God and not have the Holy Spirit bring to light the sins that grieve Him. Sin keeps me from the Word of God; or the Word of God will keep me from sin. Oh, for the grace to choose the latter.

**Fortification**

**Ephesians 6:12-18 (NET)**

***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forcesof evil in the heavens. For this reason, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand. Stand firm therefore, by fasteningthe belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good newsof peace,and in all of this,by taking up the shieldof faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvationand the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this endbe alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.***

***Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousnessand having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.***

In spiritual warfare, the Word of God is the offensive weapon, and it has divine power to overcome the enemy. One of our lessons is titled: Woman of God Prepared for Battle. I wrote this lesson specifically for one trip to Nicaragua, but little did I know just how much I would need this lesson personally! I have named this trip “Pure Joy” because of all the trials and fiery darts which hit us even before we left. (James 1:2-12)

For this trip, we purchased a video camera to tape our lessons. Alva, the Nicaraguan pastor’s wife, began this discipling journey with me at my dining room table. She and I were on the balcony of our hotel trying to tape the lesson on spiritual warfare. At the very moment, we began to read the Bible, we encountered all kinds of commotion and loud noises that were drowning out the Word of God. That is when I stopped and said to Alva, “This is precisely my point; the Devil wants to silence God’s Word!” We moved inside so we could finish our lesson. (*You can see this on the video on our web-page.*)

When a new believer is not discipled, their faith could be shipwrecked when the enemy begins to assault their life. Who would leave a defenseless child outside in a storm and expect them to defend themselves? We would call this child abuse. A person who is an infant in their faith does not even know she has an enemy, much less that she has the “Sword of the Spirit” (literally, a specific passage of Scripture) to defend herself. It takes someone who loves them enough to establish them in Biblical truth and prepare them for battle. The Lord expects those who know how to use the Sword of the Spirit in battle to teach these truths to new believers. We will be held accountable at the judgment seat of Christ for the spiritual neglect of the babies in our sphere of influence.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 1 Corinthians 3:9-14; 2 Corinthian 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:17; Matthew 4:1-11; 1 John 2:14

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**Life**

**Hebrews 4:12-13 (NET)**

***For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart. And no creature is hidden from God,******but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.***

The longest chapter of the Bible is Psalms 119. It is uncertain who penned this chapter, although David, Daniel, Jeremiah and Ezra have been suggested. Whoever the writer was, he was passionately dedicated to the Scriptures, devoting 171 of the 176 verses to describe the importance of God’s Word. To the writer of this chapter, it was not just a collection of words on a page. He was zealous for it, meditated on it, and kept it within his heart so that he might *obey it.* It was more valuable to him than food, gold or silver. It was his life and life line to God and it is ours too. This Psalmist vividly describes what this “living book” can do for any believer, in any situation, who will take God at His Word.

One word in particular, used in Psalms 119:50, encompasses all the other words we could use to describe the Holy Scriptures. It is the word *revived.* “This is my comfort in my affliction; that Your Word has *revived* me.” It is translated as *quicken*, or *revive*, or *life.* It is also found in Psalms 23, “He *restores* my soul.” The Hebrew word:Chayah, also translated as revive, quicken or life, is defined as: -*To live-literally or fugitively, to revive-keep or make, alive, nourish, preserve, recover, repair, restore to life, save; life; and be whole.*

At the end of Moses’ life was approaching, he sang his final song. It is recorded in Deuteronomy chapter thirty-two. In this song, he chose the same Hebrew word the Psalmist used for revived. Moses was even more explicit in the importance of God’s Word to His people. He translated the Hebrew word Chayah as *life*.

**Deuteronomy 32:46-47 (NET)**

***He said to them, “Keep in mind all the words I am solemnly proclaiming to you today; you must command your children to observe carefully all the words of this law.  For this is no idle word for you – it is your life! By this word you will live a long time in the land you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”***

He chose the word “life” to describe God’s Word because, to him, it was the equivalent of life itself. When you think about all the incredible work God did on behalf of His people in bringing them through the wilderness and into the promise land, you can understand why God’s Word was life to them. (In 1 Samuel 2: 12- chapter 4:22 see the effects of a man of God who did not teach his sons this truth.) Take a moment and look back over this list of descriptive words, and then reflect on God’s provision for His people. *To live-literally or fugitively, to revive-keep or make, alive, nourish, preserve, recover, repair, restore to life, save; life; and be whole.* When I look at those words and remember the times His Words’ have preserved, repaired, nourished, restored and saved my life. Yes, it is life indeed.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Isaiah 55:1-12; Psalms 119:50, 85:6; Proverbs 4:20-22; Deuteronomy 32:46-47

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**Week #3**

**Key Passage**

# 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

***Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.***

**Introduction**

At the very core of disciple making is gaining Biblical knowledge. The Bible is the curriculum of the entire process. So, we will learn how to study the Bible, but, as we do, remember that the Bible will always demand a response to what we learn. We study the Bible in order to know the God of the Bible, apply His truth to our lives and then make Him well known to the ends of the earth.

Through study we gain insight, understanding and explanation of the unsearchable truths contained within the pages of Scriptures. As Jerry Bridges has said, “Reading gives us breadth, but study gives us depth.” Our lives will be transformed by having daily encounter with the *Living Word of God…The LORD Jesus Christ*. As we begin to study, remember this- the Bible will always demand a response to what we learn.

**Acts 17:11 (NET)**

***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.***

**Education**

We recommend using the NIV Chronological Bible as a daily reading plan to cover the Bible within a year. Or perhaps a three-year study plan that covers the Old Testament in the first year, followed by one book of the New Testament per month. By the end of a three-year study you should have a grasp of the Bible as a whole.

As you study, parallel the Old Testament to the New Testament. You will find Christ Jesus is revealed, although in types, figures and shadows. As you read, make notes of major themes of each book and in the margins, make notes of truths to remember. You may want to stop and list any questions that come to mind. These would be good starting points for more in-depth studies.

**Colossians 3:16 (NET)**

***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace******in your hearts to God.***

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Ezra 7:10; 1Timothy 4:13, 15-16; 2 Timothy 2:2, 3:16-17; Hebrew 5:12-14; Acts 17:2-11

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**Observation and Interpretation**

How do we find the meaning or interpretation of a passage? The most basic principle of interpretation is to let the Scripture interpret Scripture, and you do this by cross-referencing. There are numerous possible *applications* that apply to the Scriptures, but there is only one *correct interpretation*.We must understand the original context to faithfully apply the scriptures to our context because our application is always built on interpretation.

The writer of *The Jungle Book*, Rudyard Kipling, said, “I keep six honest serving-men (They taught me all I knew); Their names are What and Why and When and How and Where and Who.” As you study the full context and employ these six questions, you will have a good understanding of the background and purpose for which it was written. As you observe the text, ask yourself: “*who wrote it, what does it say, when, where, and how was it written,* and finally*, why was it written*?

A chronological study of the Babylon captivity, the return of the Jewish people and rebuilding of Jerusalem would be a great place to practice these principles. Timelines are also helpful. Read the following: (740-681 BC) - Isaiah 44:28; (626-586 BC) - Jeremiah 15:16, 20:9, 25:12-13,29:10, 31:33-34,38; (605-537 BC) - Daniel 5:30, 6:10,28, 7:13-14, 9:1-6; (440 BC) - Ezra 1:1, 7:6, 10; (430 BC) - Nehemiah 8:1, 6-8, 12, 13, 18, 9:2-5.

The following are terms used for the study of interpretation or explanation of the scriptures. Hermeneutics’ is basically the study of interpretation of written text. It can also be used for other forms of communication, including verbal. Jesus used this word in Luke 24:31, 32, 45, it is translated as: *opened their eyes* *or minds* and *explained.* The word hermeneutics comes from the Greek word hermeneuo. It means to *translate, interpret, to explain thoroughly, and expound.*

The next term, also interchanged with the word hermeneutics, is exegesis. Herb Hodges described the word exegesis to me, and this is what he said, “Exegesis means to take by the hand and lead out from invisibility to visibility”. Just before His ascension, Jesus did an exegesis of the entire Old Testament. *He explained that… the entire Bible is about Him!*  Wouldn’t you have loved to be part of that Bible Study?

**Luke 24:27 (NET)**

***Thenbeginning with Moses and all the prophets,he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the scriptures.***

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 2 Peter 1:19-21**;** Luke 4:14-21; John 5: 39-47; Matthew 5:17-19; Psalms 16:8, 40:7-8, 110:1, 22:1-31; Isaiah 7:14, 28:16, 53:1-12, 61:1-2; Joshua 23:14-15; 1 Kings 8:56

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**Application**

**Luke 24:45 (NET)**

***Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures.***

Have you ever asked this question, “What is God saying to me through this passage, and how does it apply to my life? It takes the mind of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible. To make relevant life application of a passage requires right belief and right action in response to the truth that is revealed. If what you believe doesn’t lead to action, it isn’t true belief.

Bible study is not just for information; it’s for life transformation. And yet, without proper interpretation and understanding we cannot make application. If you will allow God’s Word to penetrate your heart, by applying it to your attitude and actions, your life will be transformed! The following questions will help you as you study.

1. Is there a command to obey? Is there a sin to avoid, confess and repent of?
2. Is there a lesson to learn?
3. Is there a new truth to carry with me?
4. Is there specific counsel on an issue of my life?
5. Is there an example to follow?
6. Is there a promise to claim?
7. Is there a prayer to repeat?
8. Is there a verse to memorize?

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Matthew 13:12-23, 28:18; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Romans 12:1-2; James 1:21-25; Ephesians 1:17-19; 2 Corinthians 2:1-16; 1 John 2:27

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**Meditation** **and Transportation**

**Joshua 1:7-8 (NET)**

***Make sure you arevery strong and brave! Carefully obey all the law my servant Moses charged you to keep! Do not swerve from it to the right or to the left, so that you may be successfulin all you do. This law scroll must not leave your lips! You must memorize itday and night so you can carefully obey all that is written in it. Then you will prosperand be successful.***

In George Muller’s message, *Food for the inner man, he said, “Now what is food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again, not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water passes through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering it over and applying it to our hearts.”*

When you meditate on the Scriptures, it is like giving your mind a bath. Here are some helpful tips to help you in this process. Write down the verses and what you believe the Lord is saying to you. By meditating on the passage throughout the day, you can turn the passage into a prayer. When your study becomes further meditation, the Holy Spirit will bring the application into focus. Without meditation, you may walk away from your time in the Word and remember nothing of what He has said. We remember approximately twenty percent of what we hear, forty percent of what we read and eighty-five percent of what we write, but I believe we can remember almost all of what we share with others. So, take notes and share it with others.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 8:31-32; 17:7-17; Ephesians 5:26; Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3, Psalm 119:9-11,12-24, 97- 105; Romans 12:1-3

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**The Word of God Will Stand Forever**

**Matthew 24:35 (NET)**

***Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.***

Throughout the ages, God has preserved His Holy Book. Because of this, we can hold in our hands the very WORDS of GOD! Men have tried to destroy the Bible, and yet it is an indestructible document. It always will be as long as we obey the Lord’s last command to “Make Disciples of all Nations” and build our lives on the Bible. There are invaluable lessons that can be learned from those who treasured this *Eternal Book*, not the least of which is the fact that none of them died without passing God’s Truth onto others.

**Isaiah 40:8 (NET)**

***The grass dries up, the flowers wither, but the decree of our God is forever reliable.***

I hope you will bear with me as I unpack just one more descriptive word which is translated into English as “Stands.” The word is pregnant with meaning. Stand is the Hebrew word: Q*uwn*. Here is only a partial definition. The root word means: *to rise; get up; help; to lift up; set up; establish; strengthen; helps; holds; be clear; confirms; accomplishes; preforms; succeeds; makes good; makes new; makes sure; endures; makes to stand up; upholds.*

I urge you to stop and carefully consider each descriptive word that is used to communicate the importance of the fact that God’s Word will *stand* forever. If you do, then you will find it so vividly describes what the Bible has to say about the Bible. I wonder, as you read this list, if you need reviving, saving, nourishing, or repairing. May God take these words and cause your weary soul to rise up and soar!

The blessings for the person who will live in, live on and live out God’s Word are immeasurable! It is utterly impossible to overestimate the life changing power of God’s Word. We can bank our future on the solid fact that God will keep His every Word. The Living Word is Jesus…there is no life without Him.

**Revelation 19:11-13 (NET)**

***ThenI saw heaven opened and here came a white horse! The one riding it was called “Faithful” and “True,” and with justice he judges and goes to war.  His eyes are like a fiery flame and there are many diadem crowns on his head. He has a name written that no one knows except himself.  He is dressed in clothing dipped in blood, and he is called the Word of God.***

**A Holy Habit**

Each new day, as His bride, we have the honor of being invited to a private, intimate meeting with the King of Heaven. Can you even imagine?! Without this time with Jesus, we tend to drift to empty religious rituals. He wants us to experience a vibrant love relationship with Him. (Mark 7:6-8) Actions really do speak louder than words, so when we seek Him first in priority we say to Him, “I love You. I need You. I know that I can do nothing without You!”. As you read the following passages keep this thought in mind, the words *face* and *presence* are the same Hebrew word: Psalm 27:8; Exodus 33:14-23; Genesis 32:30. This is the first step to abiding in a life receiving relationship with Jesus (John 15:1-8). Yet, few new believers are taught how. I know I was not.

**John 7:37-38 (NET)**

***On the last day of the feast, the greatest day,Jesus stood up and shouted out,“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, ‘From within himwill flow rivers of living water.’’***

Think about this quote by Karen Conlee. (I heard at Downline Women’s Discipling Summit at Highpoint Church in Memphis, Tennessee on March 1, 2014) Why do I sin? – I don’t love God. Why don’t I love God? -I don’t know God. Why don’t I know God? -I don’t spend time with Him. Why don’t I spend time with God? -I don’t see the need. Why don’t I see the need? -pride!

**Psalm 10:4 (NIV)**

**In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts, there is no room for God.**

**Digging Deeper:**  Isaiah 55:1-5; Matthew 11:28-30, 22:1-10; Revelation 22:17

***Psalm 27:4(NIV)***

***“One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and seek Him in His temple.”***

***Psalms 27:8 (NIV)***

***“My heart says of You ‘Seek His face!’ Your face, LORD, I will seek.”***

**Digging Deeper:** Song of Songs 2:10-15; Psalm 90:14-17; Proverbs 8:17, 33-36; Lamentations 3:21-25

**When and Where?**

**Matthew 6:33 (KJV)**

***But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.***

The proper period will vary for each of us, but it is best to have some time at the first part of your day, because *Jesus is -- The FIRST -- The Beginning -- The Bright Morning Star!* As a matter of fact, Isaiah tells us that He wakens His disciples every morning with the ability to hear His voice. (Isaiah 50:4-5) *The Word of God is the lamp and light to guide us.* If we don’t come to Him first before we journey into each day, it will be as if we’re walking in the dark without a light. Should He not have the preeminent place in the life of every believer?

***Psalm 63:1-8 (HCSB)***

***Oh, God you are MY God, earnestly/early will I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.***

**Digging Deeper:** Jeremiah 10:21-23, 29:11-14; Psalms 1:2-3, 5:1-3, 10:4, 14:2, 15:1-13, 19:12-13, 53:2, 119:105; John 4:22-23; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Hebrews 11:6;Isaiah 50:4-5; Matthew 6:6-33; Mark 1:35; Proverbs 3:5-10, 28:13; 1 John 1:6-9; Luke 6:46-49

***Matthew 6:6 (NIV)***

***“But when you pray, go into your private room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.***

The proper place to meet with God is a quiet place, where you can be alone and you can focus your attention on Him. Guard this time well, and be aware of distractions that can interrupt this time. Solomon called the distractions (little foxes) in Song of Songs 2:10-16.

**What and How?**

There are basically three key elements of quiet time. They are: time in the Word of God, worship and then prayer. The “ACTS” of prayer are: adoration, confession, thanksgiving and lastly, supplication. These are the proper provisions for your quiet time. You will need a readable Bible, and use two translations if you have them. A great resource to use, to read or to hear, the Bible in many languages is the free app. called **Bible.is**. In addition, the **Biblehub.com** has many different translations that you may find useful. A journal is another important tool for your quiet time. This is where you will write down what God says to you and your response to Him in prayer. If you don’t write it down, you will forget.

In Luke 10:39-42 Jesus told Martha the one thing most needed in her life was what her sister Mary was doing. What was this one thing? She was sitting at Jesus feet, listening to His Word.

***Psalm 24:3-6 (HCSB)***

***Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not set his mind on what is false, and who has not sworn deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of*** *his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek Him. Who seek the face of the God of* ***Jacob.***

These are some procedures for your quiet time that may be of help as you learn to develop this essential spiritual discipline. First, clear your mind and quiet your heart. Recognize you are in the presence of your Lord who is holy. Second, read the Bible first -perhaps a Proverb and read through a book of the New Testament. Third, ask the following questions: Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to confess or avoid? Is there a lesson to learn? Is there a new truth to carry you? Forth, write it down, and then pray about what He has said to you. Last, share with someone the truth you have learned.

***Psalm 119:10-16 (HCSB)***

***I have sought You with all my heart; don’t let me wander from your commands. I have treasured Your word in my heart so that I may not sin against You. LORD, may You be praised; teach me Your statutes. With my lips I proclaim all the judgments from Your mouth. I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts and think about Your ways. I will delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your Word.***

## 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. As you seek to make this a priority in you daily life, who will you ask to hold you accountable?

5. What did you learn about the Bible that you did not know?

6. The benefits of God’s Word are many, and yet these blessings are conditional. In the next four passages what is the common denominator to receive blessings and success? Luke 6:46-49; Joshua 1:7-9; Psalms 1:1-3; James 1:21-23

7. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:11-13. Looking back over the 12 points and make a list of where you see God’s Word at work in your life.

8. Make a list of people who have impacted your life because they loved and lived God’s Word.

**Week #4**

[Matthew 13:15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2013:15-17&version=NASB#en-NASB-23555) : [Is 6:10; Ps 119:70; Zech 7:11; Luke 19:42; John 8:43, 44; 2 Tim 4:4; Heb 5:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isa%206:10,%20Ps%20119:70,%20Zech%207:11,%20Luke%2019:42,%20John%208:43-John%208:44,%202Tim%204:4,%20Heb%205:11&version=NASB)

[Matthew 13:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2013:15-17&version=NASB#en-NASB-23556) : [Matt 13:16-17: *Luke 10:23, 24*; Matt 16:17; John 20:29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010:23-Luke%2010:24,%20Matt%2016:17,%20John%2020:29&version=NASB)

1. [Matthew 13:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2013:15-17&version=NASB#en-NASB-23557) : [John 8:56; Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 1:10-12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%208:56,%20Heb%2011:13,%201Pet%201:10-1Pet%201:12&version=NASB)

**I Remember You in My Prayers**

**Key Passages**

***Ephesians 6:18-20 (NIV)***

***With every prayer and petition, prayat 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 known***[***41***](https://net.bible.org/)***the 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.***

There are a few aspects of the Christian life that are non-negotiable - prayer is one of them. However, often prayer is oversimplified with statements such as, “Prayer is talking to God.” But it is so much more than that. It’s multifaceted - like a diamond. Yet quite frankly, there are somethings about prayer that are mysterious, heavenly, supernatural even. Paul understood this. Therefore, his prayers for the saints in Ephesus, as well as the other prison epistles, merit a closer look. They afford us an opportunity to gain a deeper comprehension of this weighty and valuable privilege purchased for us by the Lord Jesus. That being said, the ultimate goal for this lesson is not to learn a new set of rote prayers to recite, nor to study prayer for the sake of information. This is about increasing our prayer lives as we partake in communion with our Lord, thus becoming, as it were, “a house of prayer”.

**Isaiah 56:6-7 (NET)**

***As for foreigners who become followers ofthe Lord and serve him, who love the name of the Lord and want to be his servants – all who observe the Sabbath and do not defile it,***

***and who are faithful tomy covenant – I will bring them to my holy mountain; I will make them happy in the temple where people pray to me.Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my temple will be known as a temple where all nations may pray.”***

**Teach us to Pray**

**Luke 11:1-13 (NET)**

***NowJesuswas praying in a certain place. When he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as Johntaught his disciples.” So he said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, may your name be honored;may your kingdom come.Give us each day our daily bread,and forgive us our sins,***

***for we also forgive everyone who sinsagainst us. And do not lead us into temptation.” Then he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,because a friend of mine has stopped here while on a journey,and I have nothing to set before him.’ Thenhe will replyfrom inside, ‘Do not bother me. The door is already shut, and my children and I are in bed.I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though the man inside will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of the first man’ssheer persistencehe will get up and give him whatever he needs. “So I tell you: Ask,and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asksreceives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the doorwill be opened. What father among you, if your son asks fora fish, will give him a snakeinstead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spiritto those who ask him!”***

Thanks to the movie The War Room, the church has been awakened to the need for discipleship in the area 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 come to me. But what they don’t know is that all I have learned about prayer, I learned at the knees of some mature godly women who come to my home for discipleship. They are my teachers.

Every event in our lives can be an occasion to ascertain life transforming truths. That is, if we will avail ourselves of these teachable moments. This was Paul’s mindset. 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. Actually, thanks and praise 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.

What is inferred in the above passage is that disciple makers are the ones who teach others how to pray – not only in a formal setting but by “bowing the knees together” and praying. This was first modeled by John the Baptist and Jesus. In this kind of relationship, we are privy to some intimate conversations between the Father and His children. We learn to pray by praying with, and for, others. Sure, there are times when we prayer by ourselves. After all, we have been commanded to pray without ceasing. However, as my pastor, David Lawrence, pointed out in a message on prayer, 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. He then took us through the book of Acts and showed us clearly 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.

**DIGGING DEEPER:** 1 Timothy 1:2, 2:1, 4:5, 5:5; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 4-7, 22-24; Colossians 1:3, 4:2-3, 12; Ephesians 6:18; Matthew 6:5-6; Acts 1:14, 2:42, 3:1, 6:4, 10:4, 12:5 -12, 16:13-16, 20:36; 1 Peter 3:12; Philippians 1:3-10, 19, 4:6; Romans 10:1, 12:12; James 5:13-18

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**Intersession**

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 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).

***2 Timothy 1:2-3 (NASB)***

***To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.***

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 5:16-17 (NIV)***

***Be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.***

* In the following passage, how does the Lord feel about the prayers of those who refuse to hear His Words? *Proverbs 28:9 (NIV) If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
* 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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you’ll remember from the lesson, “Signs of Life,” 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.

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 4:7-8 (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? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?***

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. But, in reality, we are already near God. Remember- the saints are already “seated with Christ in the heavenly!” 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 hears us.

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

***The LORD is near to all who call on 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.***

* Read Psalms 73:28 and 16:11. At the right hand of God, the Father is the Lord Jesus. There is joy in the presence of Jesus. Now reread Isaiah 56:5-6, printed above. What is the connection with prayer and joy in these verses? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* How should the knowledge of our proximity to Christ affect how we pray? (Ephesians 2:5-6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***John 14:2 (NASB)***

***In My Father’s house is many (dwelling places); if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you.”***

***John 14:12-15 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. "Whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, so 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. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be IN YOU.”***

***John 14:21 “He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and disclose Myself to him.” 23 He said “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our (home) with him.”***

There is a prerequisite to the presence and power of God in prayer. The Father and Son never promised to make their earthly dwelling in people who merely *say* God’s word in prayer, but they live with those who *obey* His Word. What’s the purest motivation for obedience? It is love for Him.

## 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)

## 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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When it comes to prayer, we presuppose that the Lord of creation desires to fellowship with us and furthermore – His willingness to hear us and answer our prayers. And lastly, we believe, as Paul asserted, that Jesus Christ is all powerful and is actively engaged in the details of our lives. Without this kind of confidence, we simply will not approach Him in prayer. (1 John 5:14-15)

**Week #**

# New Identity



**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:1-5 (NET)**

***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 youfrom God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! Blessedisthe God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessedus 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 unblemishedin his sight in love. He did this by predestiningus to adoption as his sonsthrough Jesus Christ, according to the pleasureof his will.***

**Introduction**

When a woman goes from her parents’ home, or from living on her own, to the static of “married”, it can create a crisis of identity. It is not something we are cognizant of, but it is real. I did not really think about it until I became an empty nester and observed the phenomena of being a mother and care giver one day, to being out of work the next, when the chicks all left the nest. Now what? I am still a mother, but roles change. When we get married, we are still someone’s daughter, but we are now someone’s wife. It can be a real crisis trying to make this identity adjustment.

Likewise, when we go from separation from God and a life marked by sin, to the next moment, being inhabited by the Holy Spirit, we too can experience an identity crisis. We still have the propensity to sin, but we no longer love it as we once did. Paul addresses this predicament in Romans chapter 7. However, in this lesson we will not focus of who we once where, but who we are in Christ.

You have probably heard it said, or perhaps you have made this statement, “I am no saint”, or, “I am just a sinner, saved by grace.” Well, if you are in Christ, you have a new identity. Truth is, you *where* (past-tense) a sinner. But, now you are a saint. And, because you are a saint, you are holy!

**Identity Theft**

It’s alarming to think of all the evil inventions that are conceived in the hearts of man. But this is nothing new. Two-thousand years ago the Holy Spirit warned us through Paul’s letter to the Romans of just such a time as this.

**Romans 1:28-31 (NET)**

***And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God,God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what should not be done. They are filled with every kind of unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice. They are rife withenvy, murder, strife, deceit, hostility. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, contrivers of all sorts of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, covenant-breakers, heartless, ruthless. Although they fully knowGod’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die,they not only do them but also approve of those who practice them.***

Thanks to the internet, there is a plethora of new criminal enterprises, not the least of which is identity theft. Have you been one of the unfortunate victims of this crime? If so, then you know that it robs you of security and leaves you feeling vulnerable, fearful and distrusting. This lesson is about another kind of travesty: when believers are robbed of their spiritual identity. Perhaps you have never been discipled, and you are not even aware of your identity in Christ. In this case, ignorance of who you are spiritually is not bliss - it’s emotional bondage. Its high time to take back what sin and the devil have taken from us and whole heartedly embrace the Truth, and when we do, the Truth will set us free.

### Saints in Christ

**Colossians 1:21-22 (NET)**

***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.***

As was his custom, Paul address his letters to the *saints****.*** Now you may find this term confusing if you have always believed that saints were holy people who have died. But if the recipients of this letter are dead, then why is Paul writing letters to them? So, you may be wondering how does a person become a saint, or what is a saint? To get to the bottom of these important questions is to discover one spiritual blessing after another. The first blessing I would like for us to contemplate is this: although we were born sinners, if we’re in Christ, we are saints. And when we become saints, we are holy. If you fall into the following category, though, you may find the truths we will uncover intensely evocative and deeply personal.

In Ephesians 4:12, the word translated as *equipping* the saints, has deep and significant meaning. It is rooted in another Greek word which means to bind up, or to mend, what has been broken. Since so many of us have been affected by the subject matter we are about to address, only magnifies the immense need for this Truth. Because at the very core of disciple making, is learning how to apply the gospel message to the wounded soul. That’s exactly what this lesson is intended to do.

In over twenty years of experience in women’s ministry, nearly half of the women I meet in the Church have had their innocence robbed of them at an early age by sexual abuse. Now mind you, these are women who are *in the Church*. But for those of us who have worked with women in prison, and in other countries, (especially third-world countries) the statistics are even higher. A staggering 85 percent of these women were abused as children. Ironically, many of the ones who perpetrate such vile acts were molested themselves as children. The psychological effects of this despicable sin are innumerable, and the casualties are escalating at an alarming rate. Did you know that statistics now show that 1 in 6 children will be sexually abused? What that means is that you or several people you know are victims. May the Lord have mercy upon us! Satan, seizing the opportunity afforded him through the internet, is appealing to the most debased cravings of our sinful nature. Thus, entrapping men (as well as women) in the soul-destroying addiction to pornography.

**Digging Deeper**: Matthew 5:22-28; Mark 7:21; Jeremiah 23:10-37; Revelation 2:18-29; 2

Peter 2:10-15; Galatians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 6:1-10; Hebrew 13:4

I recently sat next to a brother in Christ on a plane, and as we discussed this heinous problem, he wrote down his personal testimony. I sat in shock reading his painful life story. In chronological order, he listed one horror after another - the kind of things that no child should ever have to endure. As I realized the shame and pain he had suffered, the tears began to flow, and I was unable to speak for fear that my tears would become open sobs. Tragically, his story is not the exception… it has become the rule in a world spiraling toward hell.

The fastest growing global criminal enterprise today is not the buying and selling of drugs or weapons, as you might think. It’s something much more lucrative - the trafficking of women and children as sex slaves. Truly, “The love of money,” Paul wrote to Timothy, “is the root of all evil” (1Timothy 6:10). The victims of this horrific evil, represent an estimated 21 to 27 million human beings! About half of these are defenseless children. And moreover, these numbers do not even reflect the growing numbers of people being sold as slave laborers. Thankfully, the plight of those captive in these hopeless situations, have reached the ears and hearts of believers. As tangible expressions of God’s love and concern, many are actively working to do something about it. This includes buying their freedom, as well as binding up the physical, emotional and physiological wounds of these victims. The Christian origination I am most familiar with is International Justice Mission. (For more information, go to ijm.org)

If you don’t know God’s love personally, you may be cynical… believing the lie that God does not care. And yet, as many who have been rescued by His love will tell you, His heart is grieved by this evil. Furthermore, Jesus came, in part, to destroy the insidious work of the devil. In case you are wondering about how He feels about the perpetrators of this heinous treatment of women and children; the following passage should bring clarification.

**Matthew 18:5-14 (NET)**

***And whoever welcomesa child like this in my name welcomes me.***

***“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea. Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come.  Ifyour hand or your foot causes you to sin,cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.  And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to havetwo eyes and be thrown into fiery hell.***

***“See that you do not disdain one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.  What do you think? If someoneowns a hundredsheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go look for the one that went astray? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth,he will rejoice more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.  In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that one of these little ones be lost.***

I have heard this statement often repeated by those whose lives have been destroyed by such horror. They say: “I feel so dirty, unclean and worthless.” Consequently, many of these victims spend their lives treating themselves, or allowing others to treat them, as worthless. Moreover, it’s not just the abused who feel dirty and worthless. If you have lived a life of shame and guilt for sins you have committed, then you know personally the words of the prophet Jeremiah are true. *The heart is more deceitful than all else and it is desperately sick; who can understand it?* (Jeremiah 17:9)As you read these words, I wonder if you are feeling a stab of pain from wounds that may have been bandaged… but never truly healed. You may not even be aware of the many ways these wounds have shaped your life. If this is the case, then most likely you already know that there is no quick–fix for these kinds of wounds.

* If you have personally suffered this way, have you believed the lie that you are somehow blemished for life or that you were “damaged goods?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Have you ever confided in a trusted friend about why you feel this way? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* If you are in Christ, these words apply to you. (Romans 8:1; John 3:16-18) Fill in the blank: “There is now no condemnation for those who are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* Do you think that opening your heart and sharing your story with others might bring cathartic relief and help others find healing in Christ? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

After living through the atrocities of war and concentration camps, Cory Ten Boom surely knew depression and despair, and yet she survived it all with her faith intact. This is one of her quotes: “There is no pit so deep, that God’s love is not deeper still.” If you, or someone close to you, has suffered these unspeakable traumas, then take heart. The love of God is deeper, and the Great Physician still makes house calls.

**Luke 4:16-21 (NET)**

***NowJesuscame to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogueon the Sabbath day, as was his custom.Hestood up to read,and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. Heunrolledthe scroll and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good newsto the poor. He has sent meto proclaim release to the captives***

***and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the yearof the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled upthe scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. Thenhe began to tell them, “Todaythis scripture has been fulfilled even as you heard it being read.”***

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

4:12-13

Isn’t it time to take back what’s been robbed from us and discover our true identity? Those who are in Christ, are clean, pure, blameless and holy. Yes, you heard that correctly*. If you are a saint, then you are holy!* As you look at the following word search from Strong’s Concordance, you will see that the words holy and saint mean the same thing. In fact, they are translated from the exact same Greek word - Hagios.

**Zechariah 3:1-5 (NET)**

***Next I saw Joshua the high prieststanding before the angel of the Lord, with Satanstanding at his right hand to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, “May the Lord rebuke you, Satan! May the Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Isn’t this man like a burning stick snatched from the fire?”***

***Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood there before the angel. The angel spoke up to those standing all around, “Remove his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “I have freely forgiven your iniquity and will dress you in fine clothing.”  Then I spoke up, “Let a clean turban be put on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood nearby.***

The passage above is a beautiful metaphor that illustrates the heavenly reality that takes place when the Lord forgives us and dresses us in His righteousness. Next you will find a list of Greek words and their definitions. Take a moment and look up some of the passages to see how they were used.

###### **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

**Psalms 103:1-5 (NET)**

***Praise the Lord, O my soul! With all that is within me, praise his holy name!***

***Praise the Lord, O my soul! Do not forget all his kind deeds! He is the one who forgives all your sins, who heals all your diseases, who delivers your life from the Pit,who crowns you with his loyal love and compassion, who satisfies your life with good things,so your youth is renewed like an eagle’s.***

I don’t know about you, but given the sins of my past, it’s quite difficult to see myself as blameless, and yet that is what the Bible calls me. Although, at one time we were as guilty as sin, but now we are clean and blameless in His sight. Do you think of yourself that way? My guess is not, because there is someone who loves to bring up our past to taunt us. Also called “the accuser of the brethren,” Satan loves to remind us of our shameful past.

**Acts 10:15b (NET)**

***What God has made clean, you must not consider ritually unclean.***

Before conversion, Saul was the same man who had held the cloaks for the men who stoned saint Steven to death. And this was in addition to all the other Christians who he hunted down, persecuted and had killed. Just consider how Paul must have felt as the Holy Spirit inspired him to write these words, in light of the facts of his past. How could Paul possibly go forward to serve the Lord unless he truly believed what God said about him in the face of the painful reminders of the accuser? Thankfully, precious few of the saints have the kind of painful past to deal with that Paul did. Nonetheless, our shameful past can haunt us just the same. Regardless of how dirty we may feel, that is not how God sees us. When God looks at us, He sees us in Jesus – the sinless One.

**Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NET)**

***I will sprinkle you with pure waterand you will be clean from all your impurities. I will purify you from all your idols.  I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you; I will take the initiative and you will obey my statutes and carefully observe my regulations.***

**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

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NET)**

***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.***

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 (NET)**

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

**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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Week #**

## Redeemed by Love



### Key Passages

**Ephesians 1:7-8 (NET)**

***In himwe have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight.***

### Introduction

Chances are, the word redemption is not a word you are familiar with. For those of us who live in suburban America, the only time we are likely to use that word is when we “redeem a coupon.” In case you don’t know what that means, it’s a piece of paper that is used to get a discounted price on an item. However, for the saints at Ephesus, the word redemption had great significance. The following commentary on Ephesians 1:7 from the (N.I.V.) Study Bible, sheds light on the customs in Ephesus (1 Timothy 6).

*Ephesians were familiar with the Greco-Roman practice of redemption: Slaves were freed by the payment of a ransom. Similarly, the ransom necessary to free sinners from the bondage of sin and the resulting curse imposed by the law was the death of Christ (called here “his blood”).*

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. (You may want to read through the first three chapters of Hosea.) The hero 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 is not. And it’s His story that gives us eternal hope for our future, regardless of our past. In fact, the underlying theme of the Bible is God’s redeeming Love.

**Redeemed from a Sinful Past**

We live in the information age; and because of this, through the internet, there is an abundance of sites that afford us the opportunity to trace the steps of our family’s blood-line. Have you ever done a search of your ancestry to see where in the world your forefathers came from? If you have, then you probably found all sorts of interesting folks. There are some who you would be proud to hang their picture on your family’s hall of fame - while others you would rather keep hidden in the closet of shame. Nevertheless, every family has it’s proverbial “skeletons in the closets.” The apostle Peter aptly describes our earthly ancestry this way: “An empty way of life handed down to us from our forefathers.” Perhaps, the word empty doesn’t quite describe your heritage, because what your family “handed–down” to you was a life filled with pain and shame. If you don’t have a Godly heritage, please do not lose heart. As we are about to learn, in Christ, we have a new blood line, and in Him we’ve been given life to the full. Through the encouragement of Scripture there is hope for us all.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (NET)**

***Think about the circumstances of your call,brothers and sisters. Not many were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were born to a privileged position. But God chose what the world thinks foolish to shame the wise, and God chose what the world thinks weak to shame the strong. God chosewhat is low and despised in the world, what is regarded as nothing, to set aside what is regarded as something, so that no one can boast in his presence. He is the reason you have a relationship with Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”***

I would like to do a quick review of the women listed in the earthly genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:3-6). For starters, you should know that women were hardly ever listed in the family tree. So, the fact that the Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to list them by name speaks volumes, not to mention, the *kind of women* that are listed here. But before we look at these women, there are three significant points that we don’t want to miss, and these are directed toward all kinds of people.

Number one: God chooses all kinds of people, even those who others deem insignificant.

Number two: God chooses sinful people, for only sinners can be saved.

Number three: God gives honor and dignity to “these kind” of people.

Just look at the scandalous list of women chosen to be in the royal blood line of Jesus. The first one listed had a sordid past. Tamar was the widow of one of Judah’s sons; she was cheated out of a kinsman to redeem her, so she posed as a prostitute and had sex with her father- in- law. This produced twin boys; the first born was Perez (Genius 38:1-30; Ruth 4:1-22). Now Perez became the great, great, great-grandfather to Salmon. Salmon married a Canaanite prostitute named Rahab. She was the one whose scarlet cord was used to lower the Hebrew spies out of the window of her “house of ill repute.” Not only did her act, save her whole family before the walls of Jericho fell, it also won the heart of Salmon.

Incidentally, the line or cord that hung out her window in Hebrew means *hope*. Through her marriage, this former prostitute now began a new honorable bloodline for her descendants. She had a baby who would grow up to become a kinsman redeemer; his name was Boaz (Ruth 4). Boaz redeemed a Moabite widow named Ruth. Now Ruth’s family heritage was also marred by sexual sin. The Moabites were the product of Lot's incestuous relationship with his own daughters (Genius 19). But because Boaz chooses to redeem Ruth, she was promised that one of her offspring would be a famous redeemer in Bethlehem - the city of David. Bethlehem, by the way, means house of bread - a foreshadowing of the coming Redeemer, also called the Bread of Life. The kinsman redeemer and Ruth had a child. His name was Obed. He was the father of Jesse whose son was King David.

* Read the book of Ruth and see how Jesus is foreshadowed as the “Kinsmen Redeemer.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Although we know that David was a “a man after God’s own heart,” David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then he got her pregnant, then killed her husband, and because of all this sin - their baby died (2 Samuel 11). Yet, despite their checkered past, God had mercy on these adulterers. He gave them a son, wise King Solomon. While we read about his wedding in Psalms 45, the book of Hebrews attributes this passage of scripture to one of Solomon’s offspring… His name is the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews chapter one).

Ironically, all of these women had a shameful past; yet, each one was chosen by God to be in the royal lineage of Jesus, right up to the Virgin Mary who would give birth to our Redeemer. Jesus’ earthly ancestry so poignantly stresses a weighty reality. Regardless of how dishonorable our heritage may be, our earthly family’s past does not have to dictate the future of a child of God. Please don’t miss this! For those who have had a spiritual birth, they have an opportunity to begin a new legacy and leave a godly inheritance for their offspring. What God did for these women - He can do for you. How do I know this? He has done this for me.

Sometime has passed since I penned the above record of Jesus’ earthly lineage. Meanwhile, we have celebrated the wedding of my first-born son. My precious, beautiful and godly daughter-in-law, has been around this family of ours long enough to know about our shameful past. I will refrain from sharing the details, but trust me when I tell you, it’s not a lovely story. Jessica was forewarned of what she was getting herself into when she married into this family. At their rehearsal dinner, there was no shortage of tears as Jessica’s brother, followed by my husband, gave the couple encouraging words of wisdom and admonition. Amid this joyful, yet highly emotional moment, it became apparent to all of us that God was giving our two families a second chance, a do-over, and a fresh start. Jessica’s brother and my husband both said the same thing in different ways. In essence, what they said was this: “Ethan and Jessica, regardless of our family’s past, God is giving you the opportunity and responsibility to break the cycles of generational sin and start a godly legacy. The only reason this is even possible is that Christ Jesus is Lord of their lives. And if they will love the Lord their God and keep His commandments, then by God’s grace, there home will be built upon the Rock.

**Exodus 20:1-6 (KJV)**

***And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.***

***Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou***

***shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.***

###### **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.

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

1. Could you relate to any of the women listed in Jesus’ lineage? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. If so, how has this chapter given you hope? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. 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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. When God said that He would show His love to a thousand generations, it was contingent upon two things. What are they? (Exodus 20:1-6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Can you think of anyone who needs to hear this truth? Would you prayerfully consider sharing this with them? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Jesus came to redeem us from the “empty way of life” handed down from our forefathers. What kind of “hand-me-downs’ did you get? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. How could this lesson help someone dealing with feelings of worthlessness? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. The following is a case study that illustrates the principle in these lessons. Read the following accounts Genesis 36:1-5; Exodus 6:21-24; Numbers 16:1-40, 26:9-11,58.

What do you learn about the sons of Korah? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Now read the Psalms 44-49, 84-85, 87-88. Considering who they were, what stands out to you in the writings of the sons of Korah? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Week #**

**Abba Father**

#### Key Passages

**Ephesians 1:3-7 (NET)**

***Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessedus 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 unblemishedin his sight in love. He did this by predestiningus to adoption as his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasureof his will –  to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son. In him we have redemption through his blood,the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.***

#### Introduction

Just the mention of the name father can conjure up a myriad of emotions - some good and some bad. Most of us base our concept of God as a Father on our experience with our earthly fathers. For those who were raised by a loving father, this lesson will bring up fond memories. Whereas, if you were raised in a family with an ungodly, abusive, absent or emotionally disconnected father, then what we’re about to study may evoke memories that are anything but pleasant. Does that last statement describe your father in any way? If it does, you may be thinking, “If God is anything like my father, then I want no part of Him!” And frankly, who could blame you? Thinking that is tainted by haunting memories of an abusive or absent father and by the wounds inflicted by him is understandable. If this is the scenario that you most easily relate to, then your concept of God may also be tainted. Regrettably, that experience may have left you with a false image of God that in no way resembles the God of the Bible. Therefore, it cannot be stressed enough the crucial role a father plays in the lives of his children.

The truth is, many us are quite familiar with difficult family dynamics. As already discussed, these are the effects of the fall and part of the curse. However, as we deal with what could be for some, an extremely sensitive subject, let me assure you on the front end, our goal is healing. There is a God - placed intrinsic need in all of us to know God our Father as He *really* is… a God of love, real, unending, soul healing love. So, if you are apt to become depressed or despondent when thinking about your earthly father, when you come to know God as your *real Father* your glum will be turned to gladness. With that being said, you may need to get your tissue box handy, not because of tears of sorrow, but tears of joy when you meet your *heavenly Father*.

**Jeremiah 8:20-22 (NET)**

***“They cry,‘Harvest time has come and gone, and the summer is over,***

***and still we have not been delivered.’ My heart is crushed because my dear peopleare being crushed.I go about crying and grieving. I am overwhelmed with dismay.******There is still medicinal ointmentavailable in Gilead!***

***There is still a physician there!Why then have my dear people***

***not been restored to health?***

##### **The Father Chose the Bride for His Son**

Father is the first word in the Hebrew dictionary. And, the first time in the Bible that the word father is mentioned is at the wedding of Adam and Eve. Here, God, Himself, presided over that 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). Perhaps they were a bit confused by this statement. If you’ll remember, they didn’t have any parents - only God the Father. Genesis 2:24 is a passage that is typically used in marriage ceremonies, and it’s quite relevant to me. As previously mentioned, Ethan, my first-born son, has recently left his father and I to become united with his new wife Jessica. And while the “uniting” part gives me great joy, the “leaving” part evokes other emotions in this mother’s heart. At the time of this writing, both of my sons had just graduated from the University of Memphis and promptly left my “nest.” I’m officially an “empty nester.”

In a further lesson, we will gain a better understanding of the implications of leaving and cleaving. But for now, let’s focus our attention on the one who ordained marriage in the first place - God the Father. As foreign as the custom may sound to us, in many cultures the father is the one who selects the bride for his son. The same can be said for the bride of Christ. God the Father chose us as the bride for His Son. Furthermore, the Father not only selects us for Jesus, but He is the One who draws us to Him (John 6:39-65; Ephesians 1:3-5). And it is through Jesus that we can have the same intimacy, familiarity and tender affection that exists between God the Father and God the Son. Nowhere is this relationship displayed more poignantly than the moment on the cross when Jesus, cried out in Aramaic, “Abba,” which is translated… *Daddy*.

**John 6:44-46 (NET)**

***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.)***

The prophet Isaiah called Jesus, “The Everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:2-17). Incidentally, some seven-hundred and fifty years before Christ’s birth, the prophet described, in vivid details, the passion of Christ. In verse ten of this passage, what is the stated will of the Father?

**Isaiah 53:10-12 (NET)**

***Though the Lord desired to crush him and make him ill,***

***once restitution is made,he will see descendants and enjoy long life,***

***and the Lord’s purpose will be accomplished through him.***

***Having suffered, he will reflect on his work, he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done.“My servantwill acquit many,***

***for he carried their sins. So I will assign him a portion with the multitudes,***

***he will divide the spoils of victory with the powerful,because he willingly submittedto death and was numbered with the rebels, when he lifted up the sin of many and intervened on behalf of the rebels.”***

**Ephesians 1:5b (KJV)**

***“The good pleasure of His will.”***

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

* **Pleasure:** Strong’s # 2107 Greek word Eduokia: *satisfaction, delight, kindness, wish, purpose, desire, good pleasure, will.* See: Eph. 1:5 &9 from # 2106 **Well Pleased:** See: Luke 3:22; Matthew 3:17, 12:18, 17:5; Mark 1:11
* **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: Ephesians 1:4; John 13:18, 15:16 -19; 1 Peter 2:4-9

Let’s use our holy imagination here for a moment. In eternity past, God the Father looked through all of time and He saw you - warts, blemishes, hurts and all. Then He looked to His right hand at His Precious Son Jesus, and He said, “My Beloved, I have chosen for you a Bride, and her name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” (If you belong to Him, place your name there.)

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Matthew 3:13-17, 25:31-34; John 1:1-18, 3:1-18, 6:45-65, 8:16-58, 10:25-

38, 14:1-26, 17:1-6; Isaiah 49:14-16, 53:1-12, 54:13; 1 Peter 1:9-25, 2:4; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28;

Ephesians 2:11-14; Colossians1:1-13; 1 John 3:1-10, 4:10-19; Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:3-7; Titus 1:2-4; 3:4-7; Jeremiah 31:3, 31-34

##### **Our Daddy in Heaven**

**Ephesians 3:14-19 (NET)**

***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.***

Paul’s prayer, in the above passage, stands out like an artesian well in the midst of a desert wasteland. To those who are fatherless, powerless, empty and thirsty for love, these truths are an oasis to the barren soul. At least, that’s how David described his thirst for the love of God in Psalm 42:1-3 and Psalm 63:1-8. The above prayer could possibly be the most meaningful prayer that one could ever pray for another individual. Because God’s Word is alive, living and active, these words have the potential to unleash a flood of miraculous healing power (Hebrews 4:12-13).

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. Therefore, for now, we’ll focus on just a few statements such as, “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” And…. “I have revealed you to those whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours: you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word” (John 17:3-6) (NIV). We think of eternal life as living forever, yet that is not what the passage says. “Eternal life,” Jesus said, is “knowing God the Father.” But, how is it possible to know the unseen God? Apart from knowing the Lord Jesus, we can’t. Because, as 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).

**Romans 8:14-16 (NET)**

***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.***

While working on this chapter, my husband and I attended a mission conference where we met three brothers in Christ, each from different Muslim countries. One was from Morocco, one from Iran and one from Lebanon. We were riveted by their compelling stories. Gilbert, an Iranian Christian, endured the martyrdom of his father for the gospel. Brother Rachid, the son of a Moroccan Imam, was disowned by his family when he believed in Jesus. And then there was André Houssney, whose believing parents still live in Beirut. Even though they are hated by their Muslim neighbors, they faithfully share the gospel. These three brothers in Christ taught us so much about Islam and how to love and reach those who are enslaved by the fastest growing religion in the world.

We learned that Muslims adhere to Five Pillars of Faith. Each one stands in stark contrast to the Christian faith with numerous differences. For instance, take Islam’s second pillar - prayer. Five times a day they must bow down and recite rote prayers in Aramaic - a language that few Muslims speak - much less understand. For them, prayer is a religious duty, an obligation, and to refuse to pray is an offence punishable by death! It’s little wonder, because the word Islam means submission. Conversely, for the child of God, prayer is communion with God our Father (Hebrews 4:16). Although He is our creator, and the King of the universe, He knows us each personally and intimately. It’s a privilege to talk to Him - not an obligation. But this is not so for a Muslim; they don’t even know who they are praying to.

At the conference, André told the story of Maha an Egyptian girl who was raised in a devout Muslim home. One night while praying with her mother, Maha asked her mother, “Who are we praying to?” Her mother did not know. So, because Maha had a loving father, she began to picture in her mind that she was praying to her loving daddy (in Aramaic - Abba.) One day, as she walked along the street, a lady drove up beside her and gave her a little white New Testament. Then she simply drove away. (That’s one way to evangelize.) Maha was curious, so she secretly read the forbidden book. As she got older, one day she passed a Christian church and heard singing. She drew near to listen. After the singing stopped, she heard the pastor say, “Let us pray.” She thought to herself, “I wonder who Christians pray to.” That’s when she heard in Aramaic: “Our Father (Abba) who art in heaven, hollowed be thy name.” The Lord had tendered her heart even before she knew Him personally. Her heavenly Father was speaking to her. Andre’s Lebanese parents led her to the Lord. Now Maha knows the intimacy of a personal relationship with God, her loving Father… her *Abba*.

In his book *Engaging Islam*, (page 84) Andrés’ father, Georges Houssney said, “Those in Christ see themselves as adopted children, whereas Muslims see themselves as slaves who have no choice but to perform their preordained duties.” Also, in his book he mentioned the story of Bilquis Sheikh, a Pakistani who was born in a Muslim noble family. She turned from the Qur’an and started reading the Bible. Like Maha, she too was overwhelmed when she learned that the Christians worship a God who is a loving Father. She was amazed that He desires an intimate relationship with His children, and that He is actively involved in their lives. You can read her story in her book titled *I Dared to Call Him Father*.

##### **Adopted to Himself**

**Psalms 68:5-6 (Net)**

***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.***

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 inflicted upon those who are rejected and abandoned. This is especially true for the orphaned child or women who have been deserted by their husbands. Quite often these could be haunted by some nagging questions like: “Why I am not wanted?” or “Am I not worthy of love?” When 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 His song of love. May He quiet and comfort you with His love as He sings over you (Isaiah 66:13).

**Zephaniah 3:14-18 (NET)**

***Shout for joy, Daughter Zion!Shout out, Israel! Be happy and boast with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has removed the judgment against you;he has turned back your enemy. Israel’s king, the Lord, is in your midst!***

***You no longer need to fear disaster. On that day they will sayto Jerusalem,***

***“Don’t be afraid, Zion! Your hands must not be paralyzed from panic!***

***The Lord your God is in your midst; e is a warrior who can deliver.***

***He takes great delight in you;he renews you by his love;he shouts for joy over you.”“As for those who grieve because they cannot attend the festivals –***

***I took them away from you; they became tribute and were a source of shame to you.***

Have you experienced adoption as an adoptee, or been an adoptive parent? If so, then you have first-hand knowledge of what it means to be selected. But before we delve into what it means to be chosen and adopted by God the Father, we must clarify a few things. Every one’s situation is unique. These points don’t apply to every person who is orphaned or abandoned, or those who have been widowed by the death of a spouse or orphaned by the death of a parent. There are situations when a parent will sacrificially give up their child because they could not feed them or care for them as they ought.

Such is the case of the two babies who were found in a mud hut in Ethiopia, still sucking on the breast of their dead mother. With her last breath, this woman was caring for her babies. These beautiful children are now part of my family. My cousin and her husband went to great expense to adopt them. They welcomed them into their hearts and home that is now comprised of *eight* multi-ethnic children. What a beautiful picture of God’s family they are. I’m just beginning to work with a young woman whose name is Ellen Humerickhouse. Ellen 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 (NET)**

***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.***

Think about this: The hands of God the Father hold you, and the hands of Jesus formed you in the womb. When His hands were pierced on the cross, you were forever engraved there. No one will ever snatch you away from Him. Now, that is security! You are God’s child, precious to Him and loved by Him from eternity past. Because you are His, you are blessed with every spiritual blessing. You inherited them, not from your earthy father, but from your heavenly Father. That fact alone, makes you pretty special, don’t you think?

**DIGGING DEEPER:** John 6:37-47; 1 Peter 1:2, 2:9-10; James 1:27; Romans 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; Deut. 10:18

What does the name Father mean to you, and how do you feel about God being a Father? Were you, or anyone close to you, adopted? If so, then describe ways that this has impacted your or their lives. Does God’s love end? Why or why not? (Romans 8:31-39) The first time in the Bible the word Love is used in in Genesis 22:2. What is the context and why in this significant? In your own words, state why you are loved by God the Father. What are the differences in being born into a family and being adopted? Read Romans 3:9-31.

##### **Joney’s Story**

One of my spiritual mothers in Christ is Joney Caudill. She 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 effects abandonment has on children. But today, as many of us know all too well, the damage cannot be underestimated. It’s catastrophic! Wikipedia gives this very insightful information about abandoned children.*

*Abandoned child syndrome is a behavioral or psychological condition that results primarily from the loss of one or both parents or sexual abuse. (In my case, it would include both loss and sexual abuse) Abandonment may be physical (the parent is not present in the child's life) or emotional (the parent withholds affection, nurturing, or stimulation). (Ironically, my mother would often withhold affection as a way of punishing me.) Parents who leave their children, with or without good reason, can cause psychological damage to the child. This damage is reversible, but only with appropriate assistance. Abandonment experiences and boundary violations are in no way indictments of a child's innate goodness and value. Instead, they reveal the flawed thinking, false beliefs, and impaired behaviors of those who hurt them. Still, the wounds are struck deep in their young hearts and minds, and the very real pain can still be felt today. The causes of emotional injury need to be understood and accepted so they can heal. Until that occurs, the pain will stay with them, becoming a driving force in their adult lives.*

*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.*

**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.”***

*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!*

**Joel 2:25-26 (NET)**

***I will make up for the yearsthat the ‘arbeh-locustconsumed your crops –***

***the yeleq-locust, the hasil-locust, and the gazam-locust – my great armythat I sent against you. You will have plenty to eat, and your hunger will be fully satisfied;you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has acted wondrously in your behalf. My people will never again be put to shame.***

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.

**Isaiah 48:10 (KJV)**

***Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.***

**Flowers for the King’s Daughter**

Before we end this lesson, I have a story to share with you. Before I became a grandmother, God brought a beautiful young woman named Jamie into the family of faith that I am part of. Jamie was a wife and the 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 over to my home so that I could get to know her. I discovered that she did not have a father for most of her life. He was imprisoned for acts he had committed against her and her sisters. Jamie’s mother lived in another part of the state and was undergoing radiation and chemo for stage four cancer. Shortly after Teagan was born, Jamie’s mother passed away. My heart went out to her, so we began the process of disciple making. I have learned new truths from every person that I have attempted to disciple. These are a few lessons that I learned from Jamie.

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. Kirk and Donna Bishop, who were 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. Kirk and Donna were the only ones with them to pray over them in this very frightening time. Praise the Lord, they came safely through this delivery. The next day, I was on my way to get some cheap flowers to take to Jamie at the hospital. I was thinking about my own daughter and what it would be like when she gives birth to her babies. I was thinking about how many people would be at the hospital to welcome this new life into the world. And then I was thinking about Jamie and Kyle 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:

**Psalms 45:10-11 (NET)**

***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 the King 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 if you are the bride of Christ, then I believe these words certainly can apply to you.

As a fitting conclusion to this lesson, 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. What does the name Father mean to you, and how do you feel about God being a Father? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Were you, or anyone close to you, adopted? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. If so, then describe ways that this has impacted your or their lives. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. How does God feel about widows and orphans? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Read the following passages and then paraphrase a statement on each. (James 1:27; Psalms 68:5-6; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 23:3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you ever felt that you had to earn God’s love? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. If so, how do you relate to God when you sin? Do you hide from Him? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. Read Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV) and fill in the blanks: “In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ He predestined us to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_as His sons through Jesus Christ.”
9. In the last words of the Old Testament, the Lord speaks to the issue of fathers and their children. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. 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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
11. 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) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Can you think of anyone who needs to hear this truth? Would you prayerfully consider sharing this with them? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Jesus came to redeem us from the “empty way of life” handed down from our forefathers. What kind of “hand-me-downs’ did you get? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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## 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 Peter 1:18-19 (NASB)**

***Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold***

***from futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood,***

***as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.***

**Week #**

**Accepted in the Beloved**



**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 1:6b (KJV)**

***Wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.***

**Introduction**

Some have compared the first fourteen verses of the book of Ephesians to the Grand Canyon. Having had the joy of experiencing this wonder only once, I concur with this comparison. But here is the dilemma: The more I study, the more I am convinced that it is simply impossible to reach the bottom of the riches contained within these few verses because 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. That is how I feel as I endeavor this daunting task of writing about my God and King…. He is simply indescribable. The great theologian, Thomas Aquinas, summarized man’s attempt to write about God this way, he said, “It feels like straw.” These are my sentiments exactly.

Even if it were possible for finite humans to explain or define God their Creator, that is not the point. Besides that, our goal for this study of the book of Ephesians is not to define or explain God, but to know Him personally and to experience intimacy and fellowship with Him (2 Corinthians 13:14). Honestly, I could easily skip over this lesson and stick to subjects which are easier to grasp. And yet, compelled by that still small voice reverberating within me, I am reminded that He is the Author, Teacher and Translator of the Bible. It’s a little comforting to know that even 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!

##### **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.

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. (We will look at this, and other essential doctrines, in detail in another chapter). There are really three ways to approach this complex subject. We can deny it, ignore it or minimize it. And yet, those who remain in ignorance because they refuse to let the Scriptures inform them will be held as culpable as the ones who erroneously deny the doctrine of the Trinity all together. Therefore, rather than ignoring or minimizing this truth we will simply let the Scripture speak for itself.

**Genesis 1:1-2 (NET)**

***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.***

Right there in Genesis 1:1-2 is the Triune God - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Albeit, they are not so obvious unless you have some knowledge of Hebrew grammar. I’ll explain.

In Genesis one the Hebrew word for God is Elohim, and it’s used here in the plural form - referring to *God the Father and God the Son*. Now the puzzling thing is this, the verb *created* is singular. If you will take a moment to read each of the following passages you will see that there is no doubt that Jesus *is* Creator God. (John 1:1-10; Colossians 1:13-20; Hebrews 1:1-10) So now, in the second verse of the Bible, is the third person of the Trinity - God the Holy Spirit and He is “Hovering over the waters.”

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 (NET)**

***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.***

This would be a good place to stop and insert some commentary on the subject from a Biblical scholar. 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)*

* Are you familiar with the Apostles Creed? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Are you still struggling to grasp all of this? May I suggest that you do some research on your own. One trusted resource that I recommend is 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.*

**DIGGGING DEEPER**: Job 33:4; Isaiah 44:3,24, 45:18, 48:16-18; John 1:29-34; Luke

3:21-22, 9:28-36; Mark 1:19-11, 9:2-13; Matthew 3:13-17, 17:1-13

**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. To the casual reader, its’ just a simple clause. Yet when you approach it with prayerful consideration, digging just below the surface, you find a diamond. Case in point, is Ephesians 1:6. We are going to hold this jewel up to the light and be amazed with wonder at the riches the prisms reveal. Be prepared to be blessed… favored one!

The interpreters of the King James Bible, picked a seemingly inconspicuous word to describe the honor bestowed upon the ones who have been placed *in Christ…*the Beloved.

But in King James, the word is accepted, however, some other translators choose the word favored. When you think about the word accepted, don’t you normally think in terms of receiving something half-heartedly? If you’re a person like me who tends to see the glass half empty instead of half full, the word *accepted* has negative connotations. For example, “She accepted the position, although it was not the job she wanted.” Or perhaps, “He accepted the fact that he didn’t have long to live.” Yet as we explore the deeper truths contained in this tiny passage, it becomes apparent - the Holy Spirit had an altogether different message in mind.

To discover the gems in this lesson, we need to look closely at the original Greek words translated as *highly* *favored* or *accepted*. But before we do, let’s focus on two other key words: *pleased or well pleased.* Almost exclusively these words are 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.”

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

* **Highly** **Favored**/ **Accepted:** The Greek word is charitoo. (It comes from the word grace.) It means to: *to grace, i.e. endue with special honor, make accepted, and be highly favored.*  As a side note: the words gift and forgiveness relate to both words.
* **Good Will/ Good Pleasure:** The Greek words areedudokia or eudokeo. 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.*

**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

As we have just seen in the passages above, every 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. And so, because of this, we are not just accepted by God, but, in Christ, we are highly favored and enormously blessed.

Remember that 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? Because Christ Jesus now lives “in us,” and God the Father is *well please with Him*, the Father’s *favor* now rest “upon us.” It’s mind boggling - is it not? Now if you find these facts hard to comprehend, then just wait till you see what comes next!

In order to make some personal applications, perhaps we need to step aside for a moment to think through the implications of these wonders. Do you struggle with feeling insignificant? When you read the Bible, do you think about the people listed as super humans? Well - they were not. They were every bit as human and you and me, granted they lived in another time in history. Take Mary, the mother of Jesus, for example. 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, in fact, the Holy of Holies,” he declared her standing with God. Gabriel said: “Greetings, you who are *highly favored.* The Lord is with you.” Luke 1:28 (NIV) 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 the Virgin Mary!

**Isaiah 43:3-4 (NET)**

***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. Don’t you think this truth could liberate the person who struggles with feeling of insignificance?

**DIGGGING DEEPER**: Romans 8:28-32; Luke 12:32; John 1:10-18, 14:6-24, 16:27; Matthew 3:17, 12:18, 17:5; Colossians 1:12-19

The value of anything is set by one criteria. Do you know what that is? An item’s value is appraised by the price that someone is willing to pay to have it. Every living soul is valuable. Not only because, they are made in God’s image, but also because of the price He paid to redeem us. Dr. Adrian Rogers, put it this way, he said: “We are not loved because we are valuable; we are valuable because God loved us.” If you will look to the cross of Christ, you will know exactly how valuable you are to God, because of the price He paid to have you. The catalyst that drove Him to the cross, and held Him there, was His matchless love.

**1 Peter 1:18-19 (NET)**

***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.***

**DIGGING DEEPER:** Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 21:28-32; John 8:1-11; Luke 5:27-32; Colossians

1:14; Galatians 3:13, 4:5; Revelation 5:9; Read 1 Corinthians 15:10

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

## 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 # 8**

**Behold The Bridegroom**



**Key Passage**

**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**

Without a doubt, Jesus Christ is the most polarizing figure in all of history. And yet, for reasons we will discuss in another lesson, a large portion of the world’s population has never even heard the name Jesus. 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. But all that changed when he was stopped in his tracks while on the road to Damascus. 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. In this lesson, we’ll be answering that question from both a Biblical, as well as a personal perspective.

For this reason, we’ll be taking a different approach to this lesson than the previous ones. Since we can’t describe who Jesus is, we’ll just have to allow the Bible to do so. Having said that, we’ll be covering a significant amount of Scriptures, and while this may be an exhausting list, it is by no means an exhaustive list; so, you’ve been forewarned. But here is our aspiration, to encounter the ***Living Word of God*** within the pages of the ***written Word of God***.

Although many passages have been printed for you, I urge you to be like the believers in Berea, and search the scriptures for yourself. (Acts 17:11) You may want to use a highlighter to mark the references to Jesus we will find throughout these passages. Additionally, you may want to start a list of everything you learn about Him. I apologize for all the extra word searches in this lesson, but I promise it will be well worth our time.

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.” And so this is our lofty goal… to gain a fresh vision of Christ and behold Him as He truly is our God and King.

**Who Is Jesus Really?**

**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.***

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. But when He does, you’ll be forced to decide what you will do with Him. Who do you say Jesus is to you personally? Your response to that question will set the trajectory for your life now, as well as your eternity. So don’t you think we need to get this right?

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.”

**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.***

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!

**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: Strong’s #3982 and #3983 an Aramaic word meaning, command, or appointment. It comes from the Aramaic: Strong’s #565 Imrah or Emrah. It means: *commandment, speech, or word*. (Ps. 147:15, Is. 55:10-11) It is the equivalent of Logos/ The Word. (Source: from Bible word.org) John 1:1-3, 10, 14; Psalm 33:6; Gen. 1:27; 9:17; 28:20-21

### Word: Greek: Strong’s #3056 Logos; *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: Hebrew: Strong’s #1696 and #1697, Dabar*; 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: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

* 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: ***T****he 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*?

* After you read the following passages, give an explanation as to why Jesus called Him-self the *Son of Man*. (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.***

**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.***

**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 #**

**He’s Alive and Active**

**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.

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

* 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 Strong’s** #747 in Greek is Archegos-arkhay-gos *a chief leader*: *author, captain, prince*. See this word translated *prince or Author* in the following verse.
* **Beginning**: Strong’s # 746 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** Strong’s #4416 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** Strong’s #1088 in Greek is Genos: kin, born, generation, and offspring. (Hebrews 1:5, Acts 13:33
* **Only** **begotten**: Strong’s # 3438 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. So 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 Corin-thians 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 #**

**God Within Her**

**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**

**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.***

Thus far, we have met God the Father - our Daddy. And then we beheld God the Son - our Redeemer. So now we will turn our attention to God the Holy Spirit (also called “Jesus’ other self.”) (Galatians 4:6) I chose the title of this lesson based upon the above passage in Psalms because it encompasses so many of the attributes of the Holy Spirit. Here are just 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) He *is* the river of Living Water. We are baptized in Him and cleaned 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)

Love and Joy, the first two fruits of the Spirit, not only makes glad the City of God, but you and I who are filled with Him here 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. He is our Fortress and Protection. 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. He prays for us! (Romans 8:9-27)

And 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.***

**Where on Earth Does God Dwell?**

**Ephesians 2:22 (NET)**

***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.***

In his devotional book entitled In The Presence of God, Izak De Villiers speaks of the day that the Holy Spirit was given and says, “God through His Spirit, would be with all who believe in Him from then onwards. This Presence comforts us, guides us, delivers us from Evil, makes us aware of the Lord’s guidance. It casts a glow in and around us. It is as if electricity was turned on in eternity. It not only dries our tears but prepares us for battle every day. Use it!”

I’m wondering if you grew up in a church where the Holy Spirit was seldom mentioned. On the other hand, it is possible to hear many sermons about Him and yet not really know or understand His activities in your life. I’m ashamed to admit it, but 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.

**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 never had the opportunity to even be introduced to the Holy Spirit. And so he began to teach them, but in reality, someone else what 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.***

The skeptic will say of the Word of God, “It’s just a book written by fallible men.” In part they are correct. However, if anyone will take the time to study the historical facts, they will learn that this is no ordinary book. Written over a span of 1000 plus years, the sixty-six books of the Bible were written and recorded by the Holy Spirit on the hearts of approximately 40-49 different writers. Doctor Luke, was one who penned two of these books. He called the Words the Holy Spirit had inspired him to write “Living Oracles.” (Acts 7:38; Luke 1:1-4; Hebrews 4:12)

**John 6:63 (NIV)**

***The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—***

***they are full of the Spirit and life.***

What makes the Word of God “Living” is the One who authored, inspired and breathed His life into it -- He is God the Holy Spirit! Have you ever heard of a ghost writer? In this case, we are talking about the *Holy Ghost writer!*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)**

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

If you’ll recall, Paul wrote his two letters to Timothy while Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus. Here, Paul teaches his spiritual son that God the Holy Spirit breathed all Scripture, and Peter adds that the Spirit moved upon the hearts of each writer. And of course, this includes inspiring Paul and Peter to tell us these things. 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 teaching them at the moment, will become like a “Fire in his bones.” At least that is how the prophet Jeremiah described it. (Jeremiah 20:9) In other words, he had to share them. 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 be-ing 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.” So which one is correct? Well, in reality, 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.”

**Joel 2:28-29 (ESV)**

***And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.***

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. Are you a saint? If so, then this includes you! He’s still at work “doing and teaching” in and through His body.

* Read all of Acts chapter two and make notes of everything you can find that the Holy Spirit was doing when He entered the believers. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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)
* 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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* 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. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* 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. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*“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?

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

* John 3:5-8, 4:22-24, 6:63, 7:37-39; 14:2-26, 16:7-15, 17:17-23; 1 John 5:6-8; Revelation 2:7-29, 3:6-22 19:7-10; Luke 1:4-33, 12:12; Romans 5:5, 8:1-12; Galatians 1:15-16, 2:20, 3:14, 4:19-26; Colossians 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:10, 3:13-4:4; 1 Peter 3:3-7; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 Corinthians 1:26-36, 2:4-16; 4:6-19, 12:1-27; 2 Corinthians 1:20-21, 6:6, 4:4-11; 13:5-14; Titus 3:3-7; James 2:26

**Week #**

**The Holy Spirit Will Teach You**

**Key Passages**

**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.***

Because you have spent all these hours with me working our way through this study, I hope you will not mind if I share a personal example of the work of the Holy Spirit in my life. It’s my desire to be very 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.” I am not sure what in the world a six-year old had to talk about. So talking has never been my problem. Because you have made it thus far in this study, then you can see that my problem is...I can’t tell a short story because the details are too important! When God told Moses to, “Go tell the people,” Moses replied, “Lord, you know I don’t speak well!” Now for me, this is not my problem. The gifts the Holy Spirit has given me to use for His body and Bride are speaking and teaching.

Before I began to write this study, I went to hear Beth Moore with the ladies from my church. The texts she taught from were from Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39. It is the story of the Demonic. For the sake of time I will not share all the things the Lord spoke to me through Beth that day, but let me please share just two. Number one, Beth said, “Where Satan has His way, people have no voice. In their oppression, he says to them, “SHUT UP!”

**Mark 5:18-20 (ESV)**

***As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.***

Have you ever had any one tell you, “You talk too much about God and the Bible?” Or “Why don’t you just shut up?” Where do you think that comes from? Satan wants to silence us from glorifying God and telling our story so that others will believe in Him.

Beth ended the conference with these words, “Where Jesus has His way; people go and tell their story!” She said, “Have an outline prepared to narrate your story!” Following the example of the Berrien’s in Acts 17:11, I went home and studied her lesson further. And, as always, the Holy Spirit revealed even more treasure and personal applications. What I discovered within the story of the Demonic was the word ***tell***/***Proclaim***, or in King James, ***Publish***. In Greek the word is Kerusso. Strong’s Concordance gives this definition: To herald, as a public crier, especially, divine truth, i.e. the gospel. The words leapt off the page. God’s phone, the Holy Spirit, was vibrating in my heart, and He was saying, “PUBLISHEVERYWHERE, HOW MUCH GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU!”

* When was the last time you heard the unmistakable voice of the Holy Spirit, giving you clear direction? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**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.***

Three times within three years the Lord impressed on my heart His desire for me to publish the truths He has taught me in a book. And as wonderful as it was to have some clear direction for my life, I was petrified. Now why would this terrify me, you may ask? Because this would require *writing*! For reasons that I will explain in the next lesson, 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. I felt 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. Please don’t misunderstand what I am trying to communicate. 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. One year ago when I started to work on this book, I gave Beverly, a precious lady who had done some editing, a few copies of the lessons. She was joining our disciple group and now works with Jordan’s Lighthouse Prison Ministry. 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.” And, bless her heart, she tried to help me.

But perhaps my written response to a love note I received when I was twelve years old was the coup de grace of embarrassments. If my memory serves me well, I remember thinking, “Now what is it, like or lick”? So I chose the infamous words, “I lick you a lot!” To add insult to injury, my sister Sybil and my cousin Renita got their hands on this note, and they never let me live it down. As I type those words, I am humiliated all over again. And then there was the time that I listed the name of my church on a job application as Lucy *Babtist* Church! I got the job; but how embarrassing is that! As I reminisce about these “exposures” I am reminded that there are numerous accounts in my hall of shame. You’ll understand now why I praise God for Spell Check, for along with the Holy Spirit, these are my best friends when I am writing. I have not reached any literary heights, 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!

**Philippians 2:13 (NIV)**

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

When the Lord impressed His desire for me to write, I protested… “Lord of all things, you know this is one thing I do not have the skills to do, as you know full well!” He never told me I could, He just told me to be obedient. I am not alone in this insurmountable task. I have the help of a “**G*host writer…the Holy Ghost!”*** However, He is doing this through my friend Cathy. The *Helper,* as Jesus called Him*,* is not only teaching me how to write through her, He is also editing each page through Cathy! My friendship with her began some twenty years ago when the Holy Spirit was at work in me, *witnessing to her and bringing her to Christ*. How wonderful a plan is that? He is teaching me and writing this study so that other women can be discipled. And furthermore, if any of us are learning from the Word of God as we study, it’s because the Holy Spirit is at work teaching us.

Why do I share all of this? In order to demonstrate to you that it is God the Holy Spirit who is at work in my life. And if He gives you a job to do that is far beyond your capabilities, then you can know for sure, He has already supplied you with a helper and teacher. His name is the Holy Spirit. So when the job is done, He gets all the credit, for it was Him all along who was at work within you!

Herb Hodge’s message entitled “The Hand in the Glove,” is perhaps one of 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. I’ve heard him preach this message twice, and based on his testimony, this message was birthed in his heart as 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 will summarize his explanation. We are the lifeless, useless glove. The Holy Spirt, is the hand that must be fully formed within the glove. 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? (I Corinthians 2:16; Galatians 4:19-20) So, to apply this personally, the Holy Spirit is the hand, I am just an ordinary pencil.

Many years ago, before the Lord saved my husband, I was alone with the Lord 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. Because of the personal and intimate words the Lord spoke to me that night, it’s one of those passages that I hold very near and dear to my heart. I never quite made the connection between the first verse of this wedding Psalm. And even now, I am under no delusions that these words apply to me, but oh how I desire to be a good student, make my teacher proud… learn to write in such a way that brings glory to my King!

**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.***

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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**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.***

Now I would like to seize the opportunity to return to the wedding theme of this study. The moment we were born again spiritually; we were sealed by the Holy Spirit. And, as you will see in the following word search, the seal not only marks us as being authentic, it also protects us. (Ephesians 6:13-18) We could think of it as a signet ring that belongs to a King, and it’s used to seal his letters or important documents. The word pledge is the word used in Greek for engagement ring! So now we know that 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! So what is our inheritance? We are about to discover the greatest blessing of all for those who are in Christ. 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: Read the following passages and make notes of any insights and personal applications.**

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

* 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

**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? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## 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 #**

**One Nation in Christ**

**Key Passages**

**Ephesians 2:11-22 (NET)**

***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.  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.***

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

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

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

* 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 #**

**The Church is Not A Building**

**Key Passages**

**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.***

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.

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.

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. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

The point to this little parable is this: 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!*

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)

To summarize, spiritual gifts are not for you. In fact, they are given to you to serve the body of Christ; but to do 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,” mean-ing 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 discri-mination 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.***

**Afterthoughts**

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