

“For They Shall All Know Me”

Developing a New Covenant Relationship with God

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Theme

God wants a relationship with people.

Key Passage

31 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the great-

est, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

(Jeremiah 31:31-34, ESV)

Class Objectives

- Know the big picture of the Bible:
God wants a relationship with a holy people who voluntarily choose Him
- Understand how the relationship between God and His people grew from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.
- Develop a relationship perspective in your own walk with God.

Scripture Reference

Old Testament		
Passage	Ls.	Message
Gen. 2:20-24	5	Husband and wife relationship is a very close bond
Gen. 6:17-18	4	God made a covenant with Noah
Gen. 22:15-19	7	Land, nation, seed promises to Abraham
Gen. 17:1-8	2	"I will be your God" to Abraham
Ex. 6:1-9	1	"I will be your God" to the Israelites
Lev. 22:31-33	1	"I am holy", "I am your God", to the Israelites
Lev. 26:1-45	6	Israel's consequences for rejecting God
Deut. 10:12-22	3	The Lord set aside a special people whos' hearts are His
I Sam. 16:7	9	Man looks at the outward appearance. God looks at the heart.
Ezra 7:10	9	Ezra chose what his heart would be like.

Psalm 8:1-9	2	What is man that You are mindful of him?
Eccl. 3:11	2	We know God because He set eternity in our heart
Jer. 31:31-34	1	Prophecy of the New Covenant
Ezek. 37:1-28	3	Dry bones & "I will be their God. They shall be my people"

New Testament

Passage	Ls.	Message
Matt. 7:7-12	10	Keep asking and it will be given you.
Matt. 20:1-16	11	Whether you come to God early or late, the reward is fixed.
Matt. 22:1-14	3	You can refuse the Lord's offer of a relationship
Luke 2:22-40	7	Simeon and Anna, two Israelites, were expecting Jesus
Luke 4:1-13	2	Jesus rebuffs Satan by using God as His moral anchor

New Testament

Passage	Ls.	Message
Luke 14:25-27	2	Loving God is the key to eternal life
Luke 22:14-23	8	Jesus' blood is the seal of the New Covenant
John 3:16	1	God's love is His motivation for our salvation
Rom. 3:5-31	12	Everyone is under sin, so that God may have mercy on all.
Rom. 4:1-25	10	Those who have the faith of Abraham are his children.
Rom. 7:1-25	12	Paul illustrates the impossibility perfect law keeping.
Rom. 8:1-11	12	There is no condemnation of sin for those in Christ Jesus.
Rom. 8:12-17	3	God adopts us as sons.
Rom. 8:18-23	7	Christians are still waiting for their coming glory.
Rom. 8:28-30	3	The Lord predestined the type of people who would be his
Rom. 9:30-33	6	Israel didn't have faith and, so, stumbled over Jesus.

New Testament

Passage	Ls.	Message
Rom. 11:25-32	8	God shut everyone up under sin, so He can show mercy.
Rom. 12:1-2	9	Christians commit to a total life transformation.
II Cor. 3:7-18	8	The temple veil has been removed. So we know God directly.
II Cor. 4:16-18	9	The outer person fades, but the inner person is renewed.
Gal. 3:1-29	4	Faith is the foundation of God's covenants
Eph. 2:1-21	8	Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God through Christ.
Eph. 3:1-6	11	The mystery of the Gospel is that Gentiles can enter heaven.
Eph. 3:14-18	10	Our heart is strengthened as we grow in knowing God's love.
Eph. 4:1-16	11	Christians are each part of a body, and work toward unity.

New Testament

Passage	Ls.	Message
Phil. 3:3-10	10	We are the true circumcision, and we focus on knowing Christ.
Heb. 1:1-2	2	We know God because He spoke by the prophets and His Son
Heb. 3:1-19	6	Israel hardened their hearts to God. Don't harden yours.
Heb. 4:1-13	9	Don't have the Israel's heart, rather faith guided by the Word.
Heb. 8:1-13	1	The Old Covenant had faults and is replaced with the New
Heb. 9:1-14	11	Jesus entered a spiritual Holy Place to bring true redemption.
Heb. 9:15-28	12	Jesus is the solution to the problem of sin.
Heb. 10:1-23	8	Jesus' sacrifice forgives and sanctifies, once for all.
Heb. 12:1-29	5	God's discipline and the greatness of his plan motivates us

New Testament

Passage	Ls.	Message
James 2:1-7	11	The church has both rich and poor and they should get along.
I Pet. 2:9-10	3	The Lord's people are a chosen race and a royal priesthood
I John 4:7-12	5	Love is the main characteristic of God ...and Christians
I John 3:19-24	9	A heart that has love and obedience gives us confidence.

Lesson 1: Introduction

Goals

- Become familiar with the class theme, key passage, and class objectives.
- Understand how each subsequent lesson fits into the class objectives.
- Do an initial evaluation of how relationship-focused your religion is.

Scripture Readings

Jeremiah 31:31–34

See page vi

Hebrews 8:1–13 (ESV)

1 Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. 4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest

at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. 5 They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." 6 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. 8 For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 9 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 11 And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the

greatest. 12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” 13 In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Exodus 6:1–9 (HCSB)

1 But the Lord replied to Moses, “Now you are going to see what I will do to Pharaoh: he will let them go because of My strong hand; he will drive them out of his land because of My strong hand.”

2 Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, “I am Yahweh. 3 I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but I did not reveal My name Yahweh to them. 4 I also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land they lived in as foreigners. 5 Furthermore, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are forcing to work as slaves, and I have remembered My covenant.

6 “Therefore tell the Israelites: I am Yahweh, and I will deliver you from the forced labor of the Egyptians and free you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment. 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am Yahweh

your God, who delivered you from the forced labor of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am Yahweh.” 9 Moses told this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and hard labor.

Leviticus 22:31–33 (HCSB)

31 “You are to keep My commands and do them; I am Yahweh. 32 You must not profane My holy name; I must be treated as holy among the Israelites. I am Yahweh who sets you apart, 33 the One who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am Yahweh.”

John 3:16 (ESV)

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

Questions

1. How do you know that God wants to have a relationship with you?
2. What does a relationship with God look like?
3. In what areas can I grow in my relationship with God?
4. How will I know that my relationship with God is improving?

Lesson 2: I Will Be Their God

Goals

- Consider who God is, and consider how He is similar and different from man.
- Explore the different ways God has revealed himself to man.
- Think about ways to improve my perspective on who God is.

Scripture Readings

Genesis 17:1–8 (ESV)

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” 3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 4 “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. 7 And

I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

Psalms 8:1–9 (ESV)

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. 9 Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (HCSB)

11 He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also put eternity in their hearts, but man cannot discover the work God has done from beginning to end.

Hebrews 1:1–2 (ESV)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 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.

Luke 4:1–13 (ESV)

1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” 4 And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’ ” 5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 6 and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their

glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” 8 And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’ ” 9 And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ 11 and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ” 12 And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” 13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Luke 10:25–27 (ESV)

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” 27 And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

Questions

1. When God says to Abraham “I will be your God”, what does he mean?
2. Explain how ‘eternity’ is set in the heart of man.
3. What does it mean in Hebrews 1:2 that God has spoken to us through His Son?
4. Describe in your own words who God is.

Lesson 3: They Shall Be My People

Goals

- Recognize that God wants a people who choose Him voluntarily
- Understand that God always provides for people to come to Him
- Appreciate how unique and special a Christian's relationship with God is

Scripture Readings

Matthew 22:1–14 (ESV)

1 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ 5 But they paid no attention and went off,

one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

Ezekiel 37:1–28 (ESV)

1 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. 2 And he led me around among them, and behold,

there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. 3 And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." 4 Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. 9 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 Then he said to me, "Son of man, these

bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' 12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord."

15 The word of the Lord came to me: 16 "Son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.' 17 And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. 18 And when your people say to you, 'Will you not tell us what you mean by these?' 19 say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. 20 When

the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, 21 then say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. 22 And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

24 "My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. 25 They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My dwelling place shall be with

them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”

Romans 8:12–17 (ESV)

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Deuteronomy 10:12–22 (HCSB)

12 “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you except to fear the Lord your God by walking in all His ways, to love Him, and to worship the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul?

13 Keep the Lord's commands and statutes I am giving you today, for your own good. 14 The heavens, indeed the highest heavens, belong to the Lord your God, as does the earth and everything in it. 15 Yet the Lord was devoted to your fathers and loved them. He chose their descendants after them—He chose you out of all the peoples, as it is today. 16 Therefore, circumcise your hearts and don't be stiff-necked any longer. 17 For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God, showing no partiality and taking no bribe. 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner, giving him food and clothing. 19 You also must love the foreigner, since you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. 20 You are to fear Yahweh your God and worship Him. Remain faithful to Him and take oaths in His name. 21 He is your praise and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome works your eyes have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt, 70 people in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of the sky."

Romans 8:28–30 (HCSB)

28 We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified.

1 Peter 2:9–10 (ESV)

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Questions

1. Interpret the 'Valley of Dry Bones' prophecy in Ezekiel 37.
2. What does it mean for God's chosen people to be 'predestined' as in Romans 8:29-30?
3. List some of the benefits of being one of God's 'chosen people'.
4. How would you answer a person who says, "Why would God create people at all if some of them will end up in hell?"

Lesson 4: The Covenant I Made With Their Fathers

Goals

- Examine the role that covenants play in God's relationship with man
- Establish the importance of faith in both the Old and New Covenants
- Reflect on any ways that Christians could 'return' to the weaknesses of Old Covenant

Scripture Readings

Genesis 6:17–18 (HCSB)

17 “Understand that I am bringing a flood – flood-waters on the earth to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will die. 18 But I will establish My covenant with you, and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives.

Galatians 3:1–29 (HCSB)

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has hypnotized you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified? 2 I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing? 5 So then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?

6 Just as Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness, 7 then understand that those who have faith are Abraham's sons. 8 Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and told the good news ahead of time to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed through you. 9 So those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith.

10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written: Everyone who does not continue doing everything written in the book of the law is cursed. 11 Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because

the righteous will live by faith. 12 But the law is not based on faith; instead, the one who does these things will live by them. 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written: Everyone who is hung on a tree is cursed. 14 The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith.

15 Brothers, I'm using a human illustration. No one sets aside or makes additions to even a human covenant that has been ratified. 16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say "and to seeds," as though referring to many, but referring to one, and to your seed, who is Christ. 17 And I say this: The law, which came 430 years later, does not revoke a covenant that was previously ratified by God and cancel the promise. 18 For if the inheritance is from the law, it is no longer from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

19 Why then was the law given? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come. The law was put into effect through angels by means of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not for just one person, but God is one. 21 Is the law therefore contrary

to God's promises? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that was able to give life, then righteousness would certainly be by the law. 22 But the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin's power, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed. 24 The law, then, was our guardian until Christ, so that we could be justified by faith. 25 But since that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ like a garment. 28 There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

Questions

1. What is a covenant?
2. List all the covenants God has made with man through time.
3. Covenants usually have responsibilities for both parties involved. For each covenant you listed in question 2, list God's responsibilities and man responsibilities.
4. Starting from Galatians 3:10-12 answer the following: What role did faith play under the Old Covenant?

Lesson 5: I Was Their Husband

Goals

- Examine what it means for God to be a husband to His people.
- Elaborate on how God's love motivates us
- Consider practical ways to recognize and respond to God's love

Scripture Readings

Genesis 2:20–24 (ESV)

20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones and
flesh of my flesh;

she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh

Hebrews 12:1–29 (ESV)

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. 14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; 16 that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though

he sought it with tears.

18 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest 19 and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. 20 For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." 21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

25 See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in

order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

1 John 4:7–12 (HCSB)

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and His love is perfected in us.

Questions

1. God says He was a 'husband' to the Israelites in Jeremiah 31:32. Drawing on the description of the first marriage (Genesis 2:20-24), make some comparisons between the closeness of earthly marriages and the closeness that God wants with us.
2. List from Hebrews 12 all the ways that God motivates us to follow Him.
3. Explain what love is using I John 1:10.
4. List some ways that God shows His 'husbandly' love for you in your everyday life.

Lesson 6: My Covenant They Broke

Goals

- Summarize how Israel rejected God's love under the Old Covenant
- Examine the consequences of rejecting God's love for Israel and for us
- Develop a plan to prevent falling away from God

Scripture Readings

Hebrews 3:1–19 (ESV)

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. 3 For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice,⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' 11 As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.' "

12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Romans 9:30–33 (HCSB)

30 What should we say then? Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness—namely the righteousness that comes from faith. 31 But Israel, pursuing the law for righteousness, has not achieved the righteousness of the law. 32 Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. 33 As it is written:

Look! I am putting a stone in Zion to stumble over and a rock to trip over, yet the one who believes on Him will not be put to shame.

Leviticus 26:1–45 (ESV)

“You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the Lord your God. 2 You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.

3 “If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, 4 then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall last to the time of the

grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely. 6 I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land. 7 You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. 8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. 9 I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you. 10 You shall eat old store long kept, and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new. 11 I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. 13 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

14 "But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, 15 if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, 16 then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that con-

sume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you. 18 And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, 19 and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

21 “Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins. 22 And I will let loose the wild beasts against you, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock and make you few in number, so that your roads shall be deserted.

23 “And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me, 24 then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute vengeance for the covenant. And if you gather within your cities, I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 When I break your sup-

ply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven and shall dole out your bread again by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied.

27 "But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me, 28 then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins. 29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. 30 And I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols, and my soul will abhor you. 31 And I will lay your cities waste and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing aromas. 32 And I myself will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

34 "Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths. 35 As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it. 36 And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. The sound of

a driven leaf shall put them to flight, and they shall flee as one flees from the sword, and they shall fall when none pursues. 37 They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though none pursues. And you shall have no power to stand before your enemies. 38 And you shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And those of you who are left shall rot away in your enemies' lands because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them.

40 "But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, 41 so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43 But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes. 44 Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither

will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God. 45 But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.”

Questions

1. List some of the ways in which Israel rejected God from Hebrew 3 and Romans 9.
2. List some of the physical consequences Israel faced for rejecting God's love from Leviticus 26.
3. In what ways did the Israelites stumble over the cornerstone, Jesus?
4. From Hebrews 3, what should we do to prevent losing our relationship with God?

Lesson 7: Behold The Days Are Coming

Goals

- Know some prophecies from the Old Testament about the New Covenant
- Analyze how New Covenant prophecies set the expectations and hopes for the faithful of the Old Covenant
- Evaluate Bible prophecies that are not yet fulfilled, and the expectations and hopes they set for us.

Scripture Readings

Genesis 22:15–19 (ESV)

15 And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in

your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

Luke 2:22–40 (HCSB)

22 And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord 23 (just as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord) 24 and to offer a sacrifice (according to what is stated in the law of the Lord: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons).

25 There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel’s consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah. 27 Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple complex. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for Him what was customary under the law, 28 Simeon took Him up in his arms, praised God, and said:

29 Now, Master, You can dismiss Your

slave in peace, as You promised. 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation. 31 You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples – 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to Your people Israel.

33 His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and told His mother Mary: “Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed– 35 and a sword will pierce your own soul—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and was a widow for 84 years. She did not leave the temple complex, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers. 38 At that very moment, she came up and began to thank God and to speak about Him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 When they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The boy

grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on Him.

Romans 8:18–23 (HCSB)

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it—in the hope 21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. 23 And not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Questions

1. What is the relationship between Abraham's 'seed' promise in Genesis 22:15-19 and the New Covenant prophecy in Jeremiah 31:31-34?
2. Compare the reaction of Anna and Simeon to Jesus against the reaction of the Pharisees later in Jesus' ministry.
3. Explain what Romans 8:19 means which it says that 'all creation' is waiting on God's sons to be revealed.
4. What are you looking forward to about Christ's second coming?

Lesson 8: I Will Make a New Covenant

Goals

- Understand what the New Covenant is
- Examine why the New Covenant was needed
- Assess how God's relationship with His people changed from the Old to the New Covenants

Scripture Readings

Luke 22:14–23 (ESV)

14 And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for

you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. 22 For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" 23 And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

Ephesians 2:1–21 (HCSB)

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient. 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, 5 made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! 6 Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens, 7 so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For you are saved by grace through faith,

and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

11 So then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh—called “the uncircumcised” by those called “the circumcised,” which is done in the flesh by human hands. 12 At that time you were without the Messiah, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. 14 For He is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In His flesh, 15 He made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that He might create in Himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace. 16 He did this so that He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross and put the hostility to death by it. 17 When the Messiah came, He proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer foreigners

and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. 21 The whole building, being put together by Him, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord.

Romans 11:25–32 (ESV)

25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;
27 “and this will be my covenant with
them
when I take away their sins.”

28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now been disobedient in order that

by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. 32 For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

Hebrews 10:1–18 (HCSB)

Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the actual form of those realities, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year. 2 Otherwise, wouldn't they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once purified, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3 But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, as He was coming into the world, He said:

You did not want sacrifice and offering, but You prepared a body for Me. 6 You did not delight in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings. 7 Then I said, "See— it is written about Me in the volume of the scroll— I have come to do Your will, God!"

8 After He says above, You did not want or delight in sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings (which are offered according

to the law), 9 He then says, See, I have come to do Your will. He takes away the first to establish the second. 10 By this will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.

11 Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins. 12 But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. 13 He is now waiting until His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. 15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. For after He says:

16 This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws on their hearts and write them on their minds,

17 He adds:

I will never again remember their sins and their lawless acts.

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

2 Corinthians 3:7–18 (HCSB)

7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stones, came with glory, so that the Israelites were not able to look directly at Moses' face because of the glory from his face—a fading glory— 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness overflows with even more glory. 10 In fact, what had been glorious is not glorious now by comparison because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was fading away was glorious, what endures will be even more glorious.

12 Therefore, having such a hope, we use great boldness. 13 We are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the Israelites could not stare at the the end of what was fading away, 14 but their minds were closed. For to this day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains; it is not lifted, because it is set aside only in Christ. 15 Even to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts, 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same

image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Questions

1. Describe in your own words. The New Covenant is ...
2. According to Romans 11:25-32 what purpose did the hardening of the Israelites' hearts toward Jesus serve?
3. Using Hebrews 10, compare the effectiveness of animal sacrifices and the effectiveness of Jesus' sacrifice.
4. Using II Corinthians 3:7-18, tell what the differences are between our closeness to God under the new Covenant and the Israelites' closeness to god under the Old Covenant?

Lesson 9: Written On Their Hearts

Goals

- Know what your ‘heart’ is and how the New Covenant is ‘written’ upon it
- Determine some internal and external ways to evaluate our hearts
- Commit to continual heart transformation as a way to draw closer to God

Scripture Readings

1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV)

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (HCSB)

16 Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely

incomparable eternal weight of glory. 18 So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Ezra 7:10 (ESV)

For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

Hebrews 4:1–13 (ESV)

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

“As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’”

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” 5 And again in this passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. 9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

1 John 3:19–24 (ESV)

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Romans 12:1–2 (HCSB)

1 Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Questions

1. What is your 'heart' as the term is used in the Bible?
2. List some of the ways that Hebrews 4:1-13 teaches us to avoid having a heart like the Israelites.
3. Think of a theme, intimately tied to our hearts, that connect Deuteronomy 10:12-22, and I John 3:19-24.
4. Think of a few practical ways that you can change your own heart in order to grow in your relationship with God.

Lesson 10: For They Shall All Know Me

Goals

- Show that God's people are now joined by a common faith not a common ancestry
- Elaborate on what it means to 'know' God
- Come up with a plan to know God better

Scripture Readings

Romans 4:1–25 (ESV)

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. 10 How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. 18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” 23 But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Philippians 3:3–10 (HCSB)

1 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh— 4 although I once also had confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; 6 regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless.

7 But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 My goal is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Ephesians 3:14–18 (ESV)

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

Matthew 7:7–12 (HCSB)

7 “Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 What man among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them—this is the Law and the Prophets.

Questions

1. Thinking about Romans 4, interpret the phrase “For they shall *all* know me” from Jeremiah 31:34
2. Explain the weakness of God’s special people being based on physical genealogy under the Old Covenant.
3. Given that Christians are now God’s special people, what should we focus on according to Philippians 3:3-10 and Ephesians 3:14-18.
4. List four practical you could try to know God better.

Lesson 11: From the Least to the Greatest

Goals

- Review the separation that existing under the Old Law between God and His people
- Appreciate the breadth of people that make up the New Testament church
- Propose godly ways we can enhance the inclusiveness of the Lord's church

Scripture Readings

Hebrews 9:1–14 (ESV)

1 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. 2 For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, 4 having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and

the tablets of the covenant. 5 Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6 These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, 7 but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. 8 By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing 9 (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, 10 but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much

more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Ephesians 3:1–6 (ESV)

1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 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. 6 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.

Matthew 20:1–16 (ESV)

1 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his

vineyard. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' 5 So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, 12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' 13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you

begrudge my generosity?’ 16 So the last will be first, and the first last.”

Ephesians 4:1–16 (HCSB)

1 Therefore I, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love, 3 diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

7 Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the Messiah’s gift. 8 For it says:

When He ascended on high, He took prisoners into captivity; He gave gifts to people.

9 But what does “He ascended” mean except that He descended to the lower parts of the earth? 10 The One who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. 11 And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists,

some pastors and teachers, 12 for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. 14 Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. 15 But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. 16 From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

James 2:1–7 (HCSB)

My brothers, do not show favoritism as you hold on to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. 2 For example, a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and a poor man dressed in dirty clothes also comes in. 3 If you look with favor on the man wearing the fine clothes and say, "Sit here in a good place," and yet you say to the poor man, "Stand over there," or, "Sit here on the floor by my footstool," 4 haven't you discrim-

inated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brothers: Didn't God choose the poor in this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that He has promised to those who love Him? 6 Yet you dishonored that poor man. Don't the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Don't they blaspheme the noble name that was pronounced over you at your baptism?

Questions

1. What is the mystery of the Gospel?
2. List some of the different types of people that could conflict with each other, but who must get along in the church (for example, rich and poor).
3. Paul lists some of the specific teaching roles that Ephesian Christians held (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers), but there are other areas where Christians may have personal strengths that are helpful to the body of Christ. List as many as you can think of.
4. What areas could we improve on to increase the inclusiveness of the Lord's church?

Lesson 12: I Will Forgive Their Iniquity

Goals

- Know what sin is, why it separates us from God, and what God has done about it in the New Covenant
- Examine why it is easy for us to strive for perfect lawkeeping rather than faithfulness
- Consider ways to keep the guilt of past sins from damaging your current relationship with God

Scripture Readings

Romans 3:5–31 (ESV)

5 But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slander-

ously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” 13 “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” 14 “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” 15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known.” 18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God has been

manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Hebrews 9:15–28 (ESV)

15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. 16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” 21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. 22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into

holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Romans 7:1–25 (ESV)

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might

be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Romans 8:1–11 (HCSB)

Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus, 2 because the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 What the law could not do since it was limited by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending His own Son in flesh like ours under sin's domain, and as a sin offering, 4 in order that the law's requirement would be accomplished in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, about the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 Now if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then He who raised Christ from the dead

will also bring your mortal bodies to life through His Spirit who lives in you.

Questions

1. Summarize the message of Romans 3:5-21.
2. Using Romans 7 as a reference, explain why striving to be justified by perfect lawkeeping is bound to fail.
3. Summarize the message of Romans 8:1-11.
4. List three practical ways you can prevent the guilt of past sins from ruining your present and future.

Lesson 13: Review

Goals

- See Class Objectives on page vii

Scripture Readings

Review Jeremiah 31:31-34 on page vi.

Questions

1. Pick three passages used in this class that have had the greatest impact on you and explain why they were meaningful to you.
2. Summarize the message of Jeremiah 31:31-34
3. Explain why developing an actual relationship with God is important.
4. How will you continue to grow your relationship with God?