

**Abiding Life Ministries International
Study Notes for Michael Wells' Basic Seminar DVD Set
--written by Connie Cutler**

**Fundamentals of the Abiding Life
Session #1**

A Ministry of Revealing

Instead of our creating something in someone, God has put Christ in us so . . . It's not a ministry of creating, but a ministry of revealing people's hearts. When persons are brought before Christ, their hearts are revealed.

The Divine Amen

The pressure is off because God is doing the speaking. If God is in the people we are witnessing to the Christ already in them. They respond with the *Divine Amen* (when a truth in you witnesses to a truth outside you – there is a divine explosion - *Amen*)

Follow God, Not Man

God allows every teacher to say things that are untrue so that we do not follow teachers, but instead, follow Him.

How do you (or any believer) respond to a rebuke?

1. Remain teachable and humble
2. If appropriate, point the "rebuking person" to Christ. You are not worth focusing on. Do not take offense.
3. When a man is right about *everything*, he is wrong about *everything*, not necessarily in what he says, but in the attitude, because *it is not what he does, it is why he does it*.

It is up to you to allow the peace of God to rule in your heart and judge what is being said to you, while always considering what is in the rebuke for you.

Central Theme

I have Christ on one hand and my problems on the other. When Christ is in front and my problems behind, no matter how big, they do not overwhelm me. But, when my problems are my focus, then I am completely undone and I lose hope.

If you listen to someone teach and preach long enough, he will reveal his weakness. The greatest weakness for all of us is: *keeping our focus*, keeping Christ before us and not all our other problems. When “me” is entrenched in “me,” it is so difficult to keep Christ in the forefront.

So . . . He keeps bringing situations into our life that we cannot handle that drive us to making Him our focus, so He has the opportunity to provide us that perfect peace.

******Truth is not preached, it is demonstrated.**

Can We Have Joy and Pain At The Same Time?

As we move toward Jesus even the most painful circumstances are not eliminated, but instead, are reconcilable, because He is now the focus, not us or our problem.

Our emotions run on different tracks simultaneously, but we try to run them on the *same track*.

Joy and the peace of God – are on one track

Mourning and concern – are on another track

Having the joy and peace of God does not eliminate the pain. They must run parallel in our lives. As we focus on Him we are able to do this.

Sometimes God will allow what He could have prevented to drive us to Him. Let all circumstances, even the horrific ones, cause you to focus on Christ. There is nothing His nearness will not cure in our lives.

Is Education The Key To Life?

Education is not the key. Three years of Jesus’ educating the disciples sent them into denying Him and hiding. We need revelation. It needs to be seen in our spirit. Christianity is the ugliest religion in the world when approached through education only.

Christianity is not made to be a religion, but to be a revelation in a relationship.

The only way the things of Christ are lived is through people. If you approach Christianity as an education, you will end up in condemnation, because you cannot keep it.

Jesus came to show us what we could not do, not what we could do. He came to do it through us.

Our Foundation

What is the system we are standing on?

1. A system that stands on the flesh is one of working *for* (we imitate Jesus and want to be like Him.)
2. A system that stands on the spirit is one of *working from*. Jesus does everything in me and through me as 1) I recognize my weaknesses, 2) say no to my fleshly response, and 3) say yes to the Christ in me. I have the hope of Glory--Christ in me.

Why Are We Here?

In a creature's life, power is dependent on the gestation period. The longer the gestation period for a creature, the longer is its life.

There is a purpose for our life on earth. We have approximately a 70 years' *gestation* to learn the things of Christ, and to gain spiritual truth . . . to become a safe person for heaven.

We must be careful how we seek spiritual truth:

1. It cannot be conceived in our *mind*, because if spiritual truth is conceived and given birth to in our mind, it is always powerless and will not do anything for us.
2. It cannot be conceived in our *emotions* lest when the stimulus stops, we believe God has stopped and has left us.
3. We do not want to conceive truth in our *will* because when we are weak and exhausted, when we become older and weary, we will find we cannot do those things either. Once again, we will conclude that God has let us down or is not there.
4. *Spiritual truth must be conceived in our spirit.*

How Much Does God Want To Have a Relationship With You?

God so desires to have a relationship with you that you could not come close to comparing any desire you have to the desire He has for intimacy with you. When that door to your life is opened, He races to take His place with you, planting a seed of life which will give birth to something that will live for eternity, and hence, the *gestation* period, or time it takes for us to grasp our real purpose is much longer than a few months or years. It is many years; probably close to 40.

Be Thankful For Whom God Has Made You To Be.

Do not abort the truth that is in you.

- Do not listen to the people standing in the "old system" where they stand on the "flesh" – where the goal of life is productivity in being used by God and the big and the spectacular.
- *Instead*, stand in the spirit as one working from the power of God in you. Here your goal will be the birth of Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We have all been put in the perfect place in the perfect situation, so that we can give birth to that truth. *This time on earth is in preparation for eternity in heaven with Him.* Ministry on earth is only a means to the true ministry we will have in heaven.

Our Unique Expression In Christ

He is using all circumstances to bring out the unique expression of the Christ in us. We will each have a unique expression and a unique realm of influence. Be thankful and pursue the person God has made you to be. He is not in the cookie-cutting business.

We do not compete, we complete!

Another person's truth will never give you any power. It is fine to observe and learn from others, but we need to pursue God about what truth He wants to give birth to in us. We should not abandon what He has given us for what He has given someone else.

We Stand and Fall In Our Definitions

Our understanding is limited by our vocabulary and definitions.

What is your definition of a spiritual person?

- Go to the places in your life where you feel condemned. Why did you feel condemned? What did you not measure up to? Answering these questions will reveal which *system* you stand in and which one you belong in.
- As you are looking for the fulfillment of that definition – if you do not have the proper definition, when you reach fulfillment of that you will find yourself dry, empty, confused, and lost.

Session 1 Scripture Verses: Gal 2:20, Eph. 3:16-17, II Pet. 1:3, Col. 3:15, I Cor. 1:30, II Cor. 5:17, Col. 3:3, Col. 1:27, Eph. 1:17-20, Rev. 3:20

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #2

What Is The Spiritual Person?

We must have our definitions right before we seek out something, otherwise our goal will not be met (example, if your definition of “gold” is a pile of leaves, that is what you will find when you go searching for gold – a pile of leaves).

Generally, we look to see the end result of the work to see if someone is spiritual or not. Is it the result of spiritual power or soul power? You cannot tell by looking at the end result. You have to go to the source. You would have to walk with the person to find out. You would have to know him or her more intimately to make that judgment.

The Problem Starting Out In Our Spiritual Life

People come to the church and build a pyramid. They stand on the top and list the things they do that make them a success. They set up a contrast between all the losers and themselves as the successes and then declare that you can be a winner like them if you will only do what they have done. We let people set the standard of spirituality for us and it always leads to bondage as we try to measure up to what they are doing.

Jesus tells us clearly what the **characteristics of spirituality** are so we do not have to be confused.

To:

1. be poor in spirit
2. mourn
3. be meek
4. hunger and thirst for righteousness
5. be merciful
6. be pure of heart
7. be peacemakers
8. have joy when you're persecuted
9. be salt and light of the earth
10. be free from anger
11. not have contemptuous words
12. not hold anything against another
13. have a spirit of agreement
14. be truthful in speech and attitude
15. turn the other cheek
16. go the second mile
17. love an enemy
18. pray for those who persecute us

*****The Sermon on the Mount is not a sermon, but a description of the life of Christ. Spirituality is not a teaching but a person, and it is exactly Jesus.**

*****To be spiritual is to have exactly Jesus flowing through you. It is the life on the Vine, the life of the branch. It is not acting like Jesus; it is exactly Jesus living through you. This comes not merely through an education; it must ultimately come through revelation.**

Light Of The World Living Through You

Even with bad eyes, where there is more light, you can see more clearly.

Never has there been a time in history when there was more “light” than now; even people with bad eyes are seeing it, and in their spirit there is a witness to it that Jesus is coming. There is a divine Amen in us that tells us He is coming.

The *Great Day* and the *Lesser Man*

In this *great day* God has chosen to use the *lesser man*. In *lesser days* God used great men. He’s been preparing the *lesser people* in the hidden place; those who can of themselves do nothing. They are beginning to see clearly that Christ can live through them (ie, Corrie ten Boom – she is the lesser person He called into the concentration camps to be His woman). Jesus is looking for the *lesser person*, not someone who will just look like Jesus, but someone who will allow exactly Jesus to live through him.

How Can God Be One and God Be Many?

If you want to understand God look at man because man is made in the image of God, and if you want to understand man look at God.

Man is many but is never one. Looking at man, he has several dimensions to his being:

1. body
2. mind
3. will
4. emotions
5. outer life
6. inner life
7. natural desires

Do all of those things in you agree all of the time? NO.

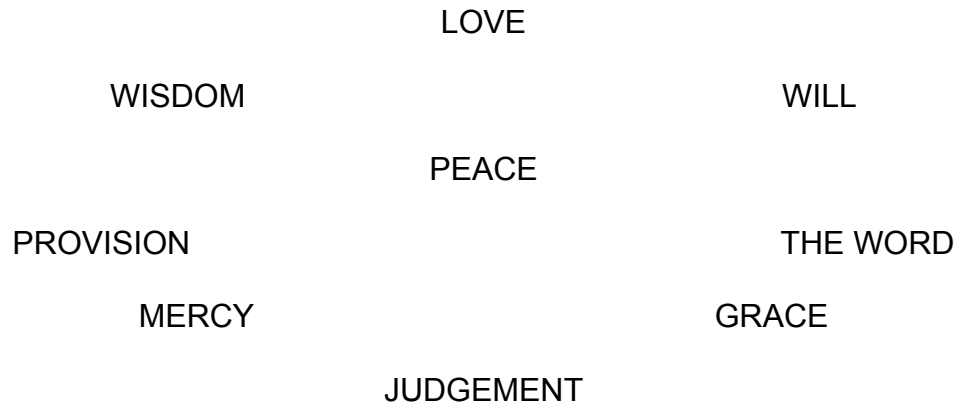
Therefore, we see that man is really many and one at the same time.

Are you ever doing something and thinking, “Why am I doing this?” Are you ever thinking something even while knowing it is stupid? Are you doing things you know are stupid? Are you feeling things you know are ridiculous? Are you feeling

down, depressed, hopeless, and yet you look around and know there is no reason for that? Man is many, but man is never one.

If everything in me agreed, could I look in the mirror and say, "Let us serve God?" I would be one and yet I would be many. In the same way God said, "Let *us* make man . . ." God is many and yet He is one, and everything in Him perfectly agrees in a perfect peace.

God is Many and God is One



All that God is agrees perfectly, so within Him God has a peace the world does not know.

God Would Like Us To Experience Unity and Peace In Him

In the Old Testament God sent down a little umbilical cord, and everything He is flowed into the temple, and there man could discover who God was. The problem was that the priests stood outside the temple and tried to represent the image of God to us. Really what they were giving us was an image of themselves and a false image of who God was.

Old Greek saying: "Show me your gods and I'll know your men."
People have a distorted concept of God. So God fixed that by sending Jesus.

He stopped flowing into the temple and sent a new umbilical cord that ended in a man named Jesus, and everything that God was flowed into Christ. Now nobody can distort it, because Jesus is the exact representation of God standing before man. "God with men." As He lived in this body we saw who God really **is**.

Through Jesus God does some other unique things in the body:

- he **attacks** and **conquers** the Unholy Trinity (the enemies of man: Sin, Satan, and the World) in the body

Why a Sacrifice and Why Jesus?

When Jesus said, "Let this cup pass from Me," He was referring to the break (the ceasing of the flow of God in His life) that would occur between Himself and the Father, something He had never experienced.

Why did Jesus have to experience this break?

Because the Man who was doing everything was doing nothing, because it was not Him doing it; it was the Father doing it through Him (Acts 2:22).

Jesus allowed Himself to be the vehicle through which God expresses His very life through Him, and now He has to be cut off because of sin.

The Purpose of the Sacrifice

The divine glue that holds us together is Jesus. It is in Him and by Him and for Him that all things are created and held together, both visible and invisible. Christ is in every created thing, but that does not mean Christ is your life, and it does not mean you are going to heaven. It does mean that Christ is in every unbeliever. When He stood in front of His own, they did not know Him, their own Creator! (Odd that a creature does not know the Creator.) But He walked up to the water and the water said, "We know who You are. We will carry You." At the wedding, the water became wine and people were shocked, but He does it every day in a vine. The eyes of a blind man opened as they do in the womb of an expectant mother every day. He is in all things. There is nothing in nature that will not preach to you about Jesus, because Christ is the divine glue holding all things together.

*****God speaks to us not only through the Bible, but in everything.**

When you Invite Sin into your Life

When you invite sin into your life, you repulse the life of Christ in you. Just as like magnetic poles repel and cannot be joined, so it is when you invite sin into your life. Sin fights right at the point at which Christ's life begins to withdraw. As His life withdraws, you reflect less and less the image of God. Some people are actually addicted to the passing pleasure of sin.

"If you hate what you are doing, I love you. If you love what you are doing, do not come."

If a Christian is struggling with his sin, there is hope for him because he hates his sin. But when someone deliberately continues inviting sin in and gives himself totally over to the sin, eventually there will be no distinction between him and his sin. He will become that sin even as he becomes less and less the image of God. (Examples: Hitler, Stalin)

God's Temporary Solution

God takes the sin out of the person and puts it on an innocent animal. Now, the sin only makes a person miserable, but the weight of that sin is so great that it distorts the innocent animal and it can no longer go on living. It has to die because of the distortion. The sin is lifted from the person and the glue can flow forward, so he can once again be more in the image of God. This was his fresh start. The sacrifice represented what the person lost. Why a little dove? He had lost his freedom, morning song, and peace. Why a bull? He had lost his strength.

God's Ultimate Solution For Mankind

The Old Testament never called for the sacrifice of a man, until in the fullness of time, all the sins past, present, and future were so great that the only sacrifice that would satisfy, the only one that could take it, would be the Lamb of God, the perfect Man. God had to cut Him off in order to lay on Him the sins of the world.

The sins of the whole world came onto Jesus, and He conquered sin, Satan, and the world. The sin upon Him was so great, it drove the very life of God out. Satan is afraid of "this life." He does not want "this life" to get into anyone, because it has conquered everything. In Jesus' blood is "this life."

The Life Is In the Blood

Analogy: We can live because as we breathe in oxygen and our blood takes the oxygen--which is life--all throughout our body, it gives us life and cleanses away the poison.

What if we had blood in us that did not need an outside source to get its life? We could live for eternity. The blood of Christ possesses life that does not need an outside source. As a Christian, His life flows in my spiritual being. That is why even though my outer body may die, my inner life will never die.

God's Ultimate Victory

Satan is afraid that this life will get into man and he will live for eternity. So what God does is cast all the sin upon Christ; in that moment He bore the sins of the whole world. Those sins drove the life of the Father right out of Him, and there His life stood, separate from the Father. Satan, not wanting that life to get into another man, took this opportunity, to defeat God once and for all. So they encompassed Him with the weight of sin, captivity, and Hell, and that drove Him down to the pit of Hell. What happened next shocked Satan and all his angels. There was a crack. The powers of sin, death, captivity, and Hell broke and there stood Jesus ready to plunder the place.

Aside: Punching someone in the chest can stop his heart momentarily. You will know when it happens because you can see his knees buckle.

Before Christ, whenever death met life, death won. But at the cross, life (Christ) meets death and hits it so hard in the chest that it buckles its knees and releases the saints who were in their graves. It could no longer hold them. He broke the power of sin, Satan, the world, captivity, Hell, and death. He stands there and refuses to budge without the Father, and the Father reconnects with Him and raises Him back into His body.

The Resurrection Body

Now the power of an indestructible life goes into the body and when it goes into the body, everything changes. Our body is stronger than our spirit, so our spirit must go where our body goes. Jesus' body is now transformed and His spirit is now superior to His body, and His spirit takes His body where He wants it to go (He can walk through walls). He takes a train of captives with Him to Heaven.

When captivity is taken captive, it can no longer take captives. When sin is taken captive, sin no longer holds power over those people.

Living As a "One As" . . . a Paradigm Shift

He conquered all things so that He can live His life through me as a "one as." Jesus prays that I might live with Him as He lives with the Father (John 17). "One as" means I connect to His life exactly as He was connected to the Father, then I will let His life come and flow through me.

--We no longer pray, "Jesus, help me _____"

--We pray instead, "Jesus, You come and be my _____. I do not have what I need. I want You to be all of that for me. I want to live with You as You lived with the Father." He can be everything to me because I am a "one as."

The Father cannot live directly through us in our sinful state. We need a mediator, and it is Christ. We can live in reliance upon Him and allow His life to flow through us. The vine and the branch teach this. We are born a branch in a vase, and we learn how to live while we die, and then one day we are grafted into the Vine, and His life then becomes our very life. His holiness, love, hope, endurance, steadfastness, purity, sacrifice, blood . . . everything is now ours.

Pray: "Jesus, thank You that You are my life."

What does it mean to you to be a "one as"? How do you apply that to your life and the way you live every day?

Session 2 Scripture Verses: Gal 2:20, Eph. 3:16-17, II Pet.1:3, Col. 3:15, I Cor. 1:30, II Cor. 5:17, Col.3:3, Col 1:27, Eph. 1:7-20, Rev. 3:20, Matt 27:52-53; 1 Pet. 3:18-20; Eph 4:8

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #3

What Was the Message When You Came To Christ?

- Was it that Jesus died for all your sins and now you have to work hard to show him how happy you are for that?
- In fact, what He did was so much better than that. The book of Hebrews tells us He came as actually a man with God's life in Him, and He was a new creation. He came down and conquered everything that was pitted against man. Yet He did not do it, but God did it through Him. He lived His life completely dependent on the Father.

What Kind Of Sacrifice Did God Make To Become a Man?

It must have been quite a shock for God to wake up in the body of a baby, an infinite God in a finite body. Jesus was a total reflection of the Father as He allowed the Father to live through Him without any hindrance whatsoever, and then He became the perfect sacrifice for us in the process. He conquered sin, Satan, and the world. [See Lesson #2 for a more detailed description.]

What is in it for me?

Now He wants to give that exact life to me and allow it to flow through me. It is a life of rest, peace, and joy. He wants to connect other people to Himself in the same way.

The Problem With Kingdom Builders

When you first come to Christ, people may tell you that all you need is Jesus, then they tell you that you need more than Jesus and list what you must do to maintain your status. People doing this want to connect you to their kingdom instead of to Jesus and His kingdom. As they build their kingdom, those under them begin to build their own kingdoms, and so rules must be put in place to keep everyone under control. Before you know it people are brought under bondage with rules and Christ is cast aside. They maintain that you must abide by these rules if you are ever to achieve or arrive; i.e., you will never be able to get out on your own. They use the Bible to keep people under their authority and in bondage. We want to see people attached to Christ, not to anyone else.

What did the Apostle Paul do?

Paul used his authority to bring us under Christ's authority, never his authority.

When you are in a group or organization where the word authority is used to bring you under their authority, you are in a cult. A cult is not a teaching; it is an attitude. A group may have all the right teaching, but it is the attitude that sets a cult apart. Being involved with this kind of group saps the life out of you.

Adam Life/Old Self Life, Flesh Life/Old Nature

Adam Life or Old Life vs. Christ's Life

You were born with a life in you that was cut off from God. When Adam and Eve fell away from God, you fell away from God, because your life was in them. You were born with Adam's life that was cut off from God.

What did Jesus do with your Adam Life/Old Life?

The day Jesus was crucified He moved your old life into Him, and wherever your relatives were, you were in them, and now you are in Christ. If you are in Him and He was there when the world was created, then you were there also. He knew you from the foundation of the earth. If He is seated in Heaven and you are in Him, then you are in Heaven. When He was killed and crucified, then your Old Life, too, was crucified. You received a brand new life, which is Christ's life. The Old Life or Adam Life was crucified with Christ.

What is the State of Affairs in the Heart Now?

Is it that Adam's life moved over to allow Christ's life to move in so that the two could fight each other, leaving us the job of helping Jesus win? NO! This is nothing more than Christian Buddhism, the yin and the yang fighting, which is represented by the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*.

Instead, it is crucial to see that the Adam/Old Life has been crucified and that Christ's life inhabits you and flows through you.

Self-Life

We are told to take up the cross and deny ourselves daily.

What is the self we should deny?

To understand your *self* we must go back and understand *God's self*. Your *self* is your very being. It is everything that you are. It is your very nature.

The character of God/God's Self--love, peace, will not worship another, the word of power (it is living), mercy, judgment, forgiveness, perfect law, protector, provider, guide, father, and wisdom.

The very nature and being of God . . . it is His image.

If God is going to make you in His image, then all of these qualities must be put into you.

Here is the problem:

He put those things in Adam and Adam chose to walk away from God. Adam had an outer life and an inner life, and his inner life chose not to be in fellowship with God, not to come under His authority, but to be God himself. When he chose that, he fell away from God and became something he was not before. Adam became a human being. Before the life in him ruled, but now the things around him rule. The Unholy trinity (sin, Satan, and the world) rule and conquer him, and he is defeated in every area.

If we take these characteristics of God and put those in a being, and that being falls, then those characteristics become distorted, because they are not created to be there. Put the character of God in a fallen man and the distortion comes, and man's self-life is actually his being or his humanity.

Self-Life is being a human. It is humanity. Humanity is the distortion of the characteristics of God living in this flesh and blood.

The Character of Man--conditional love, conflict, desire to be worshipped as God, words with no power, wrong judgments, full of unforgiveness, we make laws for control and not for protection or out of love, self-protection, self gratification, full of chaos, want master/slave relationship, foolishness, stupidity

Luke 9:23 refers to taking up the cross daily and denying the human being, what we are without Christ in charge of our life.

As the Father flows into the Son and the Son flows into me, and as I have the door open to Christ's life, His life flows out of me and I express His being and His fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of humanity. As that happens, Christ's life is multiplied on the earth, and greater things than He did we will be doing, because He already won the battle for us. He is living His life out of us unhindered because the final victory has already come. So we find ourselves doing greater things than He did--not us, but Him doing them through us.

Goal for Self

The goal for humanity, or self, is to close the door to Christ's life and let my humanity take over and block Christ's life, and then express humanity through my being. When that happens, then I will produce the deeds of the flesh. Now I am not living from spiritual power, but from the power of the flesh (a carnal or animal life).

As a Christian, if I close the door to Christ's life, even though my *position* is different from when I was an unbeliever, my *condition* is the same.

When you see the deeds of the flesh, do not be *consequence conscious* but *cause conscious* and go back to “Why?” Why is your self expressing the flesh? People think their drinking, drugs, lust, or slander is the problem. It is never the problem. The problem is that you shut the door to Christ’s life and you are living a situation in the power of your humanity.

How Do Sin, Satan, and the World Keep Us Operating In the Flesh?

Plan A – Satan gets you to close the door, by working in the area of *unbelief*. A situation arises and your first response is that Christ in you cannot handle it. The door closes and the power of humanity is what is left to fix the problem. This causes stress.

Plan B – Keep the door closed. As you live in your humanity, you are not expressing success, you are only building up the flesh, and your flesh builds up the flesh of others.

Satan often whispers to you from your past, not from your future, because he knows you will end well because of your *position* in Christ. In the meantime, he reminds you of all you have not done in hopes that you will “maintain” your *condition* of operating in the flesh.

Good and Bad Deeds of the Flesh

The bad deeds of the flesh will use the good deeds of the flesh to escape, because good and evil are the same side of one coin. They both come from the same tree, *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. What does that look like? A person will try to fix another’s flesh in the power of his own flesh, and in the process of letting out the good deeds will let out the bad as well. Our humanity never fixes a problem.

Our Fleshly Response When We Fall Out With God

When you get discouraged and go back to God and crack open the door to Christ’s life, Satan attacks and sets up a contrast between you and Christ. He whispers to you that if you go back to letting Christ live in you, you are going to have to live divinity in your humanity. He will remind you that you have fallen so far that if you go back, you will have to try in the power of your flesh to live divinity. All you see when you buy this lie are the obstacles to reconnecting with Jesus. The thought is too overwhelming; you know you cannot do it and you choose to stay in your sin, keeping the door closed to Christ’s life.

The Divine Escalator

We do not have to work to get back to God. There is a divine escalator we can catch with our toes and the power of the Blood of Christ will run us to the top,

right into the very presence of God. In addition, we learn things in failure that we do not learn in success. How can we learn the love of God without the failures in our life? Until we recognize we have no contribution--nothing to bring to God--we will not experience the love of God. There is power in that love. It frees us and the work we do, and it has ramifications in all aspects of our life.

The self-life that has to be denied is my being, or humanity, which is always willing to take over the whole world, just as Adam wanted to do in the garden.

So, What Is the Old Nature?

It is not the Adam life, but it is my humanity that is the Old Nature. This humanity must be denied daily because it is always tempted to take over and play God like Adam played God.

Humanity so badly wants to be God, but it cannot show us any good examples of a human playing God. So humanity scours the earth looking for someone who in his humanity has been a success in 5% of his life, and from listening to him, you would think he had been a success at 100%. That is why we idolize men for the mundane. (Example, someone climbs a mountain and is able to make a living for fifty years from that one event; Gandhi got rid of the British, but he was never able to break the caste system, which keeps people in bondage to horrific things to this day, yet people worshipped him; according to people who worked with her, Mother Theresa was a harsh taskmaster, yet all we were ever shown was her compassion.) We look at the 5%, amplify it, and justify the case for humanity by that.

We do the same thing in Christianity. We take people who have succeeded in the 5% (example, raising their kids, memorizing Scripture, witnessing to others), and we put them on a pedestal, amplifying the 5%. We are left having to accomplish these things in the power of *self*. (We are left with a "list," not a "life.") We are encouraged all the time to live out of the power of *self*, not the power of Christ.

When you try to fix things in your humanity, you try to protect your humanity. You spend half your time protecting yourself and the rest of the time hating yourself because of the failures you have had in the power of the flesh. The pain in hating yourself and protecting self is so great, you turn to a *sedative* to relieve the pain--drugs, alcohol, sex, obsessions, shopping--anything to get your mind off of your *self* and the pain of your *self's* being such a failure.

Lord, I cannot live divinity in my humanity. Jesus, You come and be divinity in me. Amen.

Session 3 Scripture Verses: Heb. 1:4, Eph. 1:3-4, Gal. 2:20, Luke 9:23, John 14:12, Eph. 5:25

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #4

God's Goal In Our Lives

God wants us to live as a "one as" with Christ, just as *Christ lived as one* with the Father.

All who God is flows through a divine umbilical cord into Christ and we see who God is, and now after Jesus conquered all things, He wants to connect us to Him and express exactly His life through us.

The Christian life is not difficult; it is impossible. Jesus is the only man who ever lived it, and the only way we will ever live it is if He lives it through us.

As the flow of God comes through Christ, it flows through me and into the world and I express Him; there is also a flow of God that works in reverse. I can come back through Christ and into the presence of God and live there.

Prayer Time

We should meditate on Jesus Christ, The Word. Do not let today's Hindu distortion of the word *meditation* scare you away from doing what God has intended for you in meditation. We have access to the one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. Come back to Christ and allow Him to bring you into the very presence of God, where there is perfect peace. In that place you can pray for everybody you know in under 30 seconds because He knows what you are going to say before you say it, and you know the answer before He says it (which explains the groaning of the spirit as we are in this place listening to Him).

Michael Wells says, "I go to God for the message God is giving me, and then I go to the Bible as a witness to what He has said. He is not dead."

Jesus is not "a way" to God; He is "The Way" into the very presence of God. God's goal is not only to live His life through us, but to bring us back to Him so we can be one with Him. God's goal is relationship.

Standing In God's System

We want to be standing in a relaxed system where we are a "one as" with God, not working *for* but working *from*. God wants to bring me to that place.

How Do We Get There?

Let's look at what the purpose of life is. God created the angels in heaven, not in His image, and many decided to take God's glory for their own; they were kicked out. If the angels who were not made in the image of God took God's Glory, how much more would we, who were made in the image of God, take the glory for ourselves? Are we safe for heaven?

No, the purpose of this life is for us to take a side trip to this fallen earth to lose our glory. This has always been God's *Plan A*. There never was a *Plan B*. God did not decide after Adam messed up in the Garden that He had to go to *Plan B*.

God always planned to bring us into something so much better. He was not bringing us into the relationship Adam had before the fall, but instead to a relationship the Son has had with Him for eternity. When I am brought into Christ, I am brought into Christ's relationship.

The Generational Curse?

We have all heard of the sins of the father visiting the sons of the future generations. Read on to where God said He would not do that. Regardless, the curse would have been broken as soon as you were in Christ, because you have a new lineage. Your lineage is in Christ. God has brought us into the very life and participation of Christ.

Adam was a man in transition. God had not created everything He wanted. He wanted to replace the old life with His life and bring us into Christ.

This fallen earth is the womb in which the child of God is birthed, and it is the perfect place to accomplish what He wants to accomplish: me coming to the end of my humanness, my humanity, my own strength. We need to learn to stand in the system in which we are working *from*.

The purpose of life on this earth is to:

1. lose my Kingdom
2. lose my Glory
3. lose my Image
4. lose my Strength
5. lose my Righteousness

When I lose these things, I will be a safe person for His Kingdom, Glory, Life, Strength, and Righteousness to flow through me.

God's Order

We have decided what our problem is, but we do not really know what our problem is, because we have things out of order.

God always works in order. We must recognize God's order. The number one thing in God's order is "my glory" vs. "His glory." He will not give His Glory to another (Isaiah 42:8). I am another, so I am a threat to the glory of God. As long as I take His glory, I am not a safe person. We cannot bargain with God to give Him glory. He never lost His glory. We cannot give Him His glory, because it already belongs to Him. Where I hold my image, I am a threat to God, because I will use the things around me for my image, not the glory of God.

Just when you think you have it all together, you will see all the glory you have taken. Glory-taking is what made Satan, Satan. Do not stand and watch God making changes in people's lives with His flow to others and then take the glory for your own.

The bravest man in the world must be the one who witnesses to what Christ is doing in another's life and then takes the glory for himself. Taking the glory of God is the worst thing you can do.

How Does God Accomplish Taking My Glory From Me?

First, I have got to lose this image and wanting to build images. The Christian Life is incredibly simple (Gen. 5:24). Enoch walked with God and he was not. We lose life when we *do not* walk with God. If we walk with God, we will not be *becoming somebody*; we (our flesh) will be disappearing and losing our glory.

Elisha (II Kings) was used by God to fill the widow's empty jars. Just as God filled those empty vessels, God is now looking for *someone* who is empty so that He can fill him. When you argue with someone who is full of himself, it is futile. God cannot fill him. We must empty ourselves on a daily and moment-by-moment basis. It is as simple as getting up and saying, "Jesus, I am empty; come and fill me." He is putting us in situations constantly where we have opportunity to lose our glory and our image, to become a "not." He does it through family, kids, and failures, so I will get rid of the thing I should never have been holding onto in the first place, His Glory.

The prophets complained to Elisha that they did not have a home, so when they began to build, one prophet swung his ax and his ax head fell off. In the Bible, steel represents the power of God and wood represents humanity. If you have the power of God (ax head), you can chop through human problems, but without it you have only humanity (the handle). All your chopping will only make a lot of noise without the ax head. Elisha made the prophet point to the exact place where the ax head went into the water, and then he was able to retrieve it for him.

In the same way, we have to point to the place where we fell out with God before God can extend forgiveness to us and flow freely through us again, and in essence restore our power.

We fall out with God and forget that we need to be offended until we can no longer be offended.

We surrender our peace to others, expecting them to provide what only God can provide. God whispers to us the fact that He has forgiven us so much, we need to forgive a little bit now in order to be restored with Him [Matthew 18]. So we must go back to the place where we lost our power, the place where we held onto our image, power, and glory, and surrender that. Your glory and pride will try to keep you in a place of misery and powerlessness. It will not *feel* good to lose your pride and glory, but when you do, you will be free and your power will be restored.

Self protection makes you so miserable because it gives others leverage to control you. The place where you hold your glory is your leverage point. If you have no leverage point--that is, if you do not hold onto your glory--people can poke and prod, but they will never be able to move you.

The extent to which you will experience peace in your life will be the extent to which you are willing to lose your glory. Misery will be the outcome if you are unwilling to let your glory go. Each offense is an opportunity for peace or misery; it is your choice.

It would be great to have a church that had a sign above its door that said, "This is a church where you cannot offend."

Session 4 Scripture Verses: Isaiah 65:24, Joshua 1:8, I Tim. 2:5, Rom 8:26, 1 John 3:2, II Cor. 12:19, Isaiah 42:8, Gen 5:24, II Kings 6:5, Matt. 18:23-25

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #5

Earth is the perfect place to accomplish what God wants to do in our lives when we stand in the right system (that of working *from* not *for*)

God's Order Is Important

This does not negate that there are other things that are important. We must get those things in the right order. We must look at all situations in light of what God is trying to do in a person's life. He never allows anything that will not bring me into greater revelation of Him. We as Christians only have the tools to walk in the spirit. We no longer are experts of the flesh. Abiding in Christ and thereby losing your flesh tools has disqualified you from operating in the flesh. Fleshly people are constantly trying to get us to fight in their "ring" with their rules, so they can beat us. We need to move them over to the "ring" of the spirit, where fleshly tools are useless and we are able to win. Loving your enemy is living in the ring of the spirit. There is no defense for that in the flesh.

*** Christ is the Way, and every other way is not the Way.**

There is a point in every situation at which we ask, "What does God want to do in me through this?" After He's done what He needs to do in me, then I am free to act in that situation. Once I have lost my kingdom, glory, image, strength, and righteousness, recognizing I am complete in Christ, then I can act in that situation and do what love wants me to do. Love does what is right for the other person.

God Wants Our Focus To Be Him, Not Sin

Man's order of what God Hates: 1.) Sin 2.) Unbelief 3.) Pride
God's order: 1) PRIDE . . . then everything else

*** The enemy loves it that our priority is sin first, because what gets our attention captures us. When our sin is what we focus on, we are self-defeating because we will never be free from that on which we focus. Focusing on sin has never freed anyone from sin. The day Christ becomes our focus will be the day we are free.**

When you put a donkey and a horse in the same pen, you will get a mule. A mule is not a created being; it is a "result" being. The mule therefore cannot reproduce and is bound into recruitment. In other words, it would be no threat to the survival of mules if all the mules were killed, because the source of the mules--the horse and the donkey--are still in existence. But if all the donkeys were to be killed, the mule would cease to exist. The donkey and the horse were created beings, and the mule is only a result being.

In the same way, God did not create sin. Sin is a result. The outer and inner lives of a person were created by God, but they did something very unnatural; they chose to disobey God, and the end result was sin.

Man can preach all he wants about sin, but in order to deal with sin, we have to go to the source of sin. Satan would like us to keep talking about sin, not the life that Christ crucified and the new life He gave believers, because when the life of Christ in us is released, it will not go along with our self-life *without a struggle* and sin will have to decrease.

The source of our sin is our “Adam life.” It *has been dealt with by Jesus* and it must be replaced by the life of Christ. Once it is replaced, when we sin we need to continue to bring our focus back to Jesus, which will bring conviction and then freedom from sin. Focusing on the sin will only bring condemnation, and we know that: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1 (See Conviction vs. Condemnation at the end)

We are under the false assumption that when God brings revelation to our hearts, the whole world would want to know. Quite the opposite is true. The world wants nothing to do with the truth.

*** No one goes to Hell because of sin. Christ died for the sins of the world. What sends people to Hell is pride, the pride that will not accept the Savior who died for them.**

*** Pride makes us blind and deaf to the truth.**

We could taunt Satan with the truth all day and he would never hear us, because pure unadulterated pride cannot hear. Satan moves on toward his end because he never hears any truth.

God wants to put me in situations where I will lose my pride.

God Wants To Eliminate Our Strength

He wants me to be in places where I do not have any strength.

Christians do not fail at their point of weakness; they fail where they think they are strong. Christians are therefore as weak as their strongest link.

Never say you would never do “such and such” sin. Just make sure you do not put yourself in the place where it could happen, because where you are strong, there you are weak.

The awareness that you are capable of any sin will keep you safe. It is all about becoming weak and letting Christ be your strength. We want to be weak people,

so we can be strong in Him. Power is perfected in weakness. We should be praying, “Is there any way, Lord, that I can be a weaker Christian this year than I was last year?” because the weaker I am, the stronger I am going to be in Him. If you cannot identify any weaknesses in your self or another, it can be assumed that you or they are operating in the power of the flesh; because power is perfected in weakness.

David always loved God but did not really know how much God loved him until he failed so greatly. Then God was able to demonstrate His love to David.

God Wants To Eliminate Our Kingdom

We need to lose our own kingdom, because there is already a Kingdom, we do not need to make one.

After we are born we draw a “circle” around us representing our kingdom. As we grow up and get married we allow our spouse to join our kingdom, then children enter our kingdom. Our kingdom becomes rather unruly. God allows our kingdom to crumble, so that we will recognize that there is only one true kingdom—HIS, called the Vine. We need to exist in that kingdom.

*** Any ministry should only be a “with” ministry. We are ministering “with each other”--all branches on the Vine. We all belong to Him and His Kingdom.**

God Wants To Eliminate Our Righteousness

We must lose our righteousness.

We believe we are standing before God with 2 bags.

- 1 bag holds the work of Christ
- 1 bag holds our works

The proof that someone believes he holds two bags is when he has a failure, he moves away from God, proving he is standing in his own work, not the work of Christ. The truth is we should be holding only one bag, and that bag is the work of Christ, so in failure and success we move forward in His strength.

When we fail, God is able to show us where we stand: in faith or in the flesh. There are things we can learn in failure that we cannot learn in success.

God Wants To Eliminate Our Pride

Pride wears more faces than Satan himself. The source of depression is pride. Lose your righteousness so Jesus can be your righteousness. When you have nothing left to give, He can be your all in all. We, in our flesh, want to have something to give Him, but we cannot offer Him anything except our emptiness, so that He can manifest Himself in us.

A Game of Poker with Jesus?

It is you against Jesus. Whoever wins gets righteousness, kingdom, strength, glory, and pride. If you think that you have a good hand, then you place bets.

Some people will go this far:

Jesus: "Bet you cannot keep the Ten Commandments."

You: "Yes, I can."

Jesus: "How about keeping the whole law?"

You: "Yes, I can."

Jesus: "If you think it in your heart, you have done it."

You: "I can keep playing."

Jesus: "If your hand offends you, cut it off."

You: "I will."

Jesus: "If you have ever blasphemed the Holy Spirit (attributing to Satan the work of God--the things we thought Satan caused that God allowed in our lives), there is no sacrifice to offer here or in Heaven."

You: "I FOLD!"

*** All of this is to bring us to the place where we fold and say we do not have any righteousness. It prepares us to receive His kingdom, glory, life, strength, and righteousness. This world is the womb in which the child of God is birthed. In getting things in order and in losing the things God wants to replace in us, He will then enable us to be a great success.**

Session 5 Scripture References: II Tim 1:7, II Cor. 10:3-5, John 14:6, Gal 2:20, II Cor. 12:9, Acts 13:22, Matt 5:28-30, Luke 12:10

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #6

How Do We Glorify God?

You cannot give God the glory because He already is the glory, and He will not give His glory to another. We will receive our rewards in heaven based not upon what we did do, but instead we will receive rewards based upon what we allowed the exact life of Jesus flowing through us to do. We are giving Him glory. If I close the door to His life, no matter how big I build my kingdom, it will all burn up in the end. There will be nothing to reward.

We need to allow God's Glory to pass through us. Like electricity, if we do not allow it to pass through without crossing the negative and positive wires, it will cause a short circuit and a fire. In the same way, we will short circuit, and all that we do will burn up if we keep the glory of God for ourselves and do not allow it to pass through.

*****We know we have short-circuited and crossed wires when the Bible is overemphasized and the peace of God is underemphasized.**

"Let the peace of God rule in your heart." When we don't have any peace, we know that we have crossed the line and are taking the glory for ourselves. No one loses his or her peace because he wonders whether or not his sin is wrong; he loses his peace because the unheeded thoughts that have been speaking to him are not his own, they are the voice of God. If God can speak through us to others, can He speak to you through you? Yes! When we hear things in our spirit that are light and life and liberty and freedom, we are hearing from God. When we ignore the voice of God and do not allow God's glory to flow through us and out to others, we lose our peace. At that point we are taking the glory for ourselves. We need to say, "No, Lord, You are the glory."

We will allow banks to take care of our money, but we never want the bank to pocket our money. That money must flow through the bank back to us. The same applies between us and the Glory of God.

We do not lead someone to Christ; we witness to the truth that is already in him. Do not make a disciple twice fit for Hell by trying to convert others in your own strength. Be available in all circumstances and allow God to bring people to you, and He will allow you to witness to the Christ already in them; then God will get the glory.

God Only Gives Us The Things We Are Safe For

God could do incredible miracles through us, but many times He does not choose to because we are not safe people. The problem is not that God cannot handle it, but the truth is we cannot handle it. We would take the glory for ourselves. So, for example, He does not beam us from one place to another, because we would not be talking about Christ when we arrived, but instead, our focus would be on our transportation ministry. We only want God to give us the things we are really safe for.

There Is One Mediator Between God and Man – Christ

We do not require a mediator between God and us. We should not solely depend on the prayers of others, because we will remain in the same place spiritually until they return. God wants us to be empowered to come to Him personally and continually, expecting Him to hear and answer. There is no one person who is *needed or required* in order for God to hear. The person who takes the glory for himself and does not allow God to get the glory is not a safe person for the things of God.

In John 14:12 Jesus says that anyone who has faith in Him will do what He did and even greater things. But, at the same time, He said in and of Himself He could do nothing! Life has taught us that when we are old and sick we cannot do anything, but here is the Son of God saying He cannot do anything, only that which the Father has told Him to do! You can tell how far away from God you are by how much you *can do* today. Can you fix your marriage, family, finances, or future? Can you make one hair of your head black or white? However much you think you can do measures how far away from God you are.

*****God's goal is for us to come to the end of ourselves and recognize we can do nothing; we rest in Him and He lives through us.**

Resting vs. Passivity

Resting is not passivity. Resting is the most difficult thing to do. Try to rest when your life is in trouble; it is one of the hardest things to do.

Example: *The Head in the Amazon*

*****Never preach anything that a Christian must do to be pleasing to God that *the Head* cannot do. The one thing *the Head* can do is rest in our Lord.**

God Does Not Want To Use Us

*****God wants to love us. God does not want us to surrender our will to be *used*. Surrender is passivity. It is not entering where God can work. He**

wants the activation of our will. He wants us to make the choice to come to Him . . . to say, “This is not a situation for humanity. It is a job only for divinity. Come, Lord, as the divine, and live through me.”

God wants us to see a situation, render ourselves useless in it, and recognize that it is a job for divinity. Then He wants our will to be activated and for us to enter that circumstance allowing Him to work through us.

We do not want to be *the glove* and God *the hand*, waiting for God to move us. God does not want to use us. We do not want to surrender to *the spirit of the place*. We do not want to participate in *Christian Possession*. The enemy loves those who surrender their will. God wants the activation of our will and wants us to choose Him, choosing to rest in Him.

*****We do not grow from a lifetime of experiences. We grow from our response to a lifetime of experiences. If our response is resting in the Lord, we grow.**

Kingdom builders are not comfortable with resting. It becomes a threat to their glory. God will bring situations to make you weak, because His perfection is revealed in our imperfection. God safeguards His glory in a man's weakness.

*****The last, or the weakest, will be first, and the first, or those strongest in themselves, will be last.**

Obstacles

Obstacles are not to overcome. They are there to show me what I cannot do, so that I can invite Him in that moment to be my life. My failure makes me safe for Him; it changes everything for me when I see that.

As we stand at the very feet of God and look up, we cannot really see Him or know Him. We are too close. God uses sin; He does not fight it. Satan has led more people to Christ than anyone because *we are driven away from God by our sin*, and only then can we get a right perspective of who God is. Then He pulls us back. We now know God better because of that circumstance.

String Illustration – Indian Story

A man is tied to a string. He cannot see the source that holds the string. When the man sins, the string goes loose. He does not yet know it, but the string has broken. God takes the two broken ends and ties them together, making the string taut and bringing the man closer to Himself. The cycle continues, and the man is drawn ever closer to Himself. Eventually, the man comes over the top of a hill and can see what God has been doing all along.

Oppression

Oppression comes from things that are totally true but are not the truth.

A lie is a thing that is made up of untrue things, but a deception is made up of things that are 100% true, but not the truth. The enemy loves to oppress us with things that are 100% true, but not the truth.

If we put true things at the center of our life, we will come to all the wrong conclusions. We must put *the truth*, Jesus, at the center and let the facts, which are true things, end at *the truth*.

Examples:

I do not know what kinds of situations await my children, but I do know that “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

It is true that sometimes we do not get along with our spouses, but the truth is God has made us one.

It is true that I run out of money, but the truth is He knows the plans He has for me, welfare, not calamity, a future and a hope.

It is true that someone is sick, but the truth is He causes all things to work together for good, even though a circumstance may be bad.

True things may prove we are hopeless, but when the truth is at the center of your life, the facts will not oppress you. Instead, you will attack them from a place of hope.

Session 6 Scripture Verses: 1 Cor. 3:11-13; Phil. 4:6-7; John 10:27; John 14:12; Matthew 10:30; Matt. 11:29; John 14:6; Prov. 22:6; Jeremiah 29:11; Rom. 8:28

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #7

The Room of Faith

Everyone has to enter a dark room, the Room of Faith, as a Christian. It is part of our spiritual growth, our spiritual pregnancy. Our faith is built in the dark room.

Isaiah 50:10, 11: "Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment."

We do not like entering dark rooms, but we must go. "If you think you know the perfect will of God, congratulations! You are an unbeliever." Faith is not knowing what will happen next. The darkness brings understanding to that. Unfortunately, we do not like the darkness and try to make our own light.

Illustration: A negative does not resemble the picture we took, but hidden in the negative is the positive we long for. How do we get it? We must be willing to enter the dark room. That is what Isaiah tells us.

Consider: How many negatives are there in your life? What did you think the Christian life would be like? What did you think it would be like to be married? To be a parent? Where did you think you would be at this point in your life?

Today we hold the negatives and we want to throw them all away, but God wants us to come into the dark room with Him, and in that place faith is built.

Negative Illustration (cont.): So you go into the dark room, put the negative in the fluid and an image begins to appear. You can see the positive in the negative, but it is still not over. It has to be put in a vat of acid that will be provided for you. The acid will kill the self-centeredness and self-life in you and fix the image. That is why you do not throw the negative away.

When you enter the dark room, God closes the door and all awareness of His presence is gone. You cannot feel or see anything. You walk in darkness for a long period of time, until you come to a place where you can say, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because You are with me." You do not feel God is with you, but you are tired of trying to light your own torch to see Him. You are at a place where you believe He is with you because you have no other option. Then the enemy is allowed to come in and

harass you and remind you of all you should have and could have done. Finally you come to a place where you can tell the Lord, “No, You are here with me because You say You are. I do not need to sense Your presence.” Then the light comes on and you find He’s been walking with you the whole time. It is all part of your spiritual pregnancy, as you begin to see the positives in the negatives.

The world is not out of control. It is not God fighting Satan and we wait to see who wins. If God is for you, than who can be against you?

Everything works for you. There is nothing working against you.

You dig into your Bible because you have been questioned. You have had to refine your thinking because you have had confrontations with others of differing values and faith. Even in coming to a place of grace and understanding how Christ’s grace is working in your life, you had to come through legalism, casting Christ aside to work to receive and test things your way. Even legalists work for us, because people have to listen to legalistic perspectives before they will receive *the truth*.

God permits what He could prevent. He permits failure for His glory. So when situations come, they are not to frustrate you, but to make you turn to Him so you can see what He can do in a situation. As the situation breaks you, it gets you out of the way, where Christ can be released. He is already more than a conqueror, and He will overcome the problem for you right away. He wants you to come to the place where you know and can say what you cannot do.

That Precious 10 Seconds

Prayer: “Lord, sometime today I will need 10 seconds to say no to my flesh and allow You to live through me before I say or do something stupid.”

God’s name is “I Am.” My name is “I am not.” God is to me everything I am not, but He will not be to me what I am not until I admit what I am not. He is putting me in situations, not to find out what *I am*, but to show me what *I am not*.

Moses

Moses was trained to be a god for 40 years, and he thought he would deliver the people in his own strength. Then God allowed him to spend 40 years in the wilderness to show him what he *was not*. Now he was prepared for God to deliver the people through him. When Moses came out of the wilderness “a not,” God called him and Moses questioned God. God’s response to him was “I AM.” Moses said, “I do not have any wisdom or strength.” God responded with, “I am wisdom and strength.”

Do not sit around going over all your weaknesses and everything you are not so that you will spiral down into despair, because everything you are not He can be to you. All you are doing is reciting your qualifications for productivity in the Christian life. God is the creator and He wants to create something in you.

Realize your Potential and Shift Gears!

You do not rule over your believing, your believing rules over you. We never realize our potential. Christians are identical in every way in terms of what God has given us in the Holy Spirit. God does not show partiality. Only wicked men show partiality. No one has a special dispensation from God. Christ is in all believers. We cannot bring anything new to a believer, we can only witness to what is already in him: the revelation of Christ.

The problem is that we live out of our humanity (in our own strength) remaining in 1st gear, never realizing what He can do for us. Westerners are so busy maintaining their comfort; they are not able to see what He will provide for them. They want to be spiritual, but they do not want anything to make them spiritual.

“I want to love my enemies,
but, do not give me any enemies.
I want to pray for those who persecute me,
but do not send anyone to persecute me.
I want to live like a sparrow so that God can provide everything, so that I can be free and live as a millionaire,
but, do not take my money.”

When my need is so small then my God is small. When my need is great then my God is great.

So He puts you in a place of need, so you just can no longer handle running in 1st gear. You have got to start realizing the potential you have in Him. It is annoying to drive with someone who does not shift when he should. In the same way, when you hear someone whining about his circumstances, he is just running in 1st gear.

Stop whining about your problems and shift gears so that you can realize the potential within you. See God in the situation instead of yourself.

Our Belief System

God always gives us a situation or a crisis bigger than our belief system can handle. You can choose to close the door to Christ's life and resolve it in your own strength, hoping you can shrink the crisis to fit your belief system. You will

just end up full of worry, manipulative, controlling, and working in the power of your flesh. When you finally give up and decide you cannot change anything, you can call on God. He will fill the gap between your belief system and your crisis with faith. Your new belief system will meet the situation and you will be filled with peace.

Those thorns in our life are blessings because they cause our belief system to explode to new levels of faith. The easy way out will provide nothing for us spiritually. If we want to exit this place knowing God is living thru us, we must allow the difficulties of life to mature us and bring us to a greater revelation of Christ in us

Admit Where You Are

Selflessness is the cure for selfishness. Admit that your “self” is not the answer. For example, you could say that the cure for all prejudice is to admit to God your hatred toward those others. When you do this in Christ, you are admitting that you do not have what it takes to love people different from you. Now you can invite Christ to be your love to them. This applies to any area of your life where you recognize your limitations.

**You cannot leave where you are until you admit where you are.
You cannot disown something until you own it.**

If you will admit to God where you are before you go to a person, you will not be:

- the adjusted person going
- the socially responsible person going
- an echo of the world going
- a compassionate person going
- a moral person going

Instead, it will be the very life of Christ that will flow through you to that person. People really need Christ and Him flowing through you. People do not need your love; they need the life of Christ flowing through you.

Session 7 Scripture Verses:

Exodus 3:14

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

1 Peter 1:17

Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

Questions:

- What did you think life held for you 20-30 years ago? Did it turn out different than you had hoped? Do you think the events in your life have worked out for the good? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
- Has legalism brought you to a place of receiving grace? If so, how?
- Has there been an area of life you wanted God to change, but you have not been receptive to His methods?
- In what areas can you admit where you are so that you can be what God wants you to be in the lives of others?

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #8

The Message of the Cross

I Corinthians 1:18-33

"I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognize this message as the very power of God. As the Scripture says, 'I will destroy human wisdom and discard their most brilliant ideas.' So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made them all look foolish and has shown their wisdom to be useless and nonsense. Since God in His wisdom saw to it that the world would never find Him through human wisdom, He has used our foolish preaching to save all who believe. God's way seems foolish to half of the people because they want a sign from heaven to prove it's true, and it also seems foolish to the other half, because they only believe what agrees with their own wisdom. So then we preach Christ crucified and half the people are offended and the other half say it is nonsense. But to those who are called to salvation, Christ is the mighty power of God and the wonderful wisdom of God. This foolish plan of God is far wiser than the wisest of human plans and God's weakness is far stronger than the greatest of human strengths. Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes, or powerful, or wealthy, when God called you. Instead God deliberately chose things of the world considered foolish in order to shame those things that we think are wise. And He chose those who are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important, so that no one can ever boast in the presence of God. God alone made it possible for you to be in Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made Christ to be wisdom itself. He is the one who made us acceptable to God, and He made us pure and holy, and He gave Himself to purchase our freedom, as the Scripture says, the person who wishes to boast should boast only of what the Lord has done."

God has chosen the lesser person for the greater day. He has been working in all the things in our lives, including the negatives, to bring about the positive.

God's IQ is 1 trillion and the better IQs are around 140. Our wisdom pales in comparison to His. When you do not have wisdom, ask the One who has an IQ of over 1 trillion. He will give you the answer.

God's Primary Will and His Permissive Will

We err when we come up with a plan instead of seeking His primary will. Believe it or not God does not need our plans! God operates by permitting what He could prevent.

Primary will--all the events of life push you through the doorway of the revelation of Christ.

Permissive will--on the way to the door of comfort, God allows bulldozers to destroy your plans; what you WANT resides behind that door, but God allows the things of this world to frustrate your plans so you will walk through His door.

God uses the things around you to destroy your plans: government, unbelieving world, evil, natural desire, sickness, war. Those things all move you forward and destroy your plans. You become undone because your plans are destroyed, but God has pushed you closer to the revelation of Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The Life of the Chosen

As you hear the truth and it witnesses to you, that is the evidence Christ is in you.

Many are called, but few are chosen. God will give you the desire of your heart. What do you want? Do you want the revelation of Christ or do you want something else?

You enter the room of *the chosen* where there are many doors to choose from. Some people choose and seemingly have made good choices. Things go their way. Life is easy when they open the door. But you may experience something different: a bad marriage, a lousy job, rebellious children, or bad health; success seems unavailable to you.

Who bricks these doors shut to you? Is it the enemy? No. God bricks the doors and leaves open only the door to the deeper life so you will go through it; but He allows you to make the choice to go this door. If you choose to enter the door leading to the deeper life, God may *unbrick* the other doors, but you will never again look at your desires the same way. You will always hold them with an open hand, realizing that their importance is secondary to the life of Christ in you.

Christ the Center

When you found Christ you were elated. You had life. Your behavior changed because of what your relationship to Christ meant to you. Your deeds flowed from your love and gratitude for Jesus. But then other believers may have tried to impose works on you, like baptism, Scripture memory, etc. Maybe you left your first love to try to produce the fruit God was already producing through you. In the

process you became a fringe believer, driven by legalism, moving from Christ—the center—to the outside of the wheel, where there are only the deeds of the flesh. Here you worked to get closer to God, competing with others instead of being completed by God. In order to get you back to the center, God brought or allowed situations to break you in your legalism and drive you back to the center: death, sickness, prison, failures, bad habits, rebellious children, broken relationships, depression, etc. Once you have gone back to the center, you will not leave again.

Changing Systems

You need to change systems. Your God is getting bigger and you are beginning to see Him in all things. That brings you to a place of choice. Your life is divided as long as you see good and evil. Eating from *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* divides you. Christ always saw God in everything. He did not see good or evil. The crown and the cross were one. He needed the crown for the cross to mean something, and He needed the cross for the crown to mean something. He did not eat from *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. He always ate from the tree of life, and He always saw God.

When you make a judgment that something in your life is bad, you have just eaten from *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. God will turn to you and say, “How do you know it is bad?” Eating from that tree will divide you and handcuff you to situations and circumstances, determining your happiness or misery. People who eat from that tree slowly spiral into bitterness and depression. You cannot live that way, believing other people and circumstances are the cause of your misery. That makes those things God.

You are your own Heaven or Hell, depending upon what tree you eat from: the tree of life or the tree of good and evil. We do not really know what is good or bad. We must see God in everything and never surrender His presence to a situation.

David had mighty men around him that would give their lives for him in any way at any time. One wanted to cut off the head of a man running along cursing David, but David ordered everyone to leave the man alone, it could be God.

When God sent a lion to Sampson and gave him the strength to overcome it, he found it was a source of sustenance for him. And so it is in our lives. *Out of the eater comes something to eat and out of the strong comes something sweet.* God wants to bring great things out of the difficult things in our lives.

God might strip you to clothe you. He might take you to a valley to move you to a mountain. He might give you a cross to give you a crown. But if you eat from *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, you will never see it. You must eat from the *Tree of Life* in order to know He is in charge and that His love for you is so

great that He permits only what is perfect for you. He is not working in Plan B for you, but in Plan A. Joseph saw this . . . that the way up is the way down. When you know, and you are not supposed to know, you are out of line with God and you will be split in two. You do not want to be standing in *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, because if you know good you will know evil, too (see pg. 2). If you stand in self-righteousness, then you will know unrighteousness, and you do not want that. Our focus must be on Christ (life), so that out of us will flow rivers of living water.

If you want to know about full salvation then you need to look to the only person who ever lived it, Jesus. The Man who did all the miracles did nothing, but the Father did it all through Him. All that Jesus ever did He never did. Full salvation is full dependence on God, coming to the revelation of your weakness, that on your own you can do nothing.

The Place of Decision

You can live in purpose or permission. The determining factor is choice. The caterpillar has to become a butterfly, but you do not have to become a spiritual man or woman. You choose that every day of your life.

*I think my life is a tame old duck,
Diddling around in the farmyard muck,
Fat and lazy with useless wings.
But sometimes when the North Wind sings,
And the wild ducks hurdle overhead,
Something stirs that was lost and dead.
And he cocks a weary and puzzled eye,
And makes a feeble attempt to fly.
He's fairly content with the state he's in,
But he's not the duck that he might have been.*

In I Chronicles 29:22, the people messed up so badly making Solomon king the first time, they made him king a second time to get it right.

There is something greater in us, but we must choose. You may have made God King of your glory, pride, kingdom, and righteousness, but maybe you need to make Him King a second time, this time King of your weaknesses.

If you construct a building on concrete footings or with only rebar, the first sign of a wind will cause the building to fall over. But if you pour concrete around that rebar, the concrete will absorb the strength of that steel that is not its own, and it will be able to withstand the storm. So it is with our lives. Our choice is represented by the concrete and Jesus is the rebar. Our choice alone is worthless, but when we pour ourselves around Him, we are able to take on a strength that is not our own and withstand the storms of life.

Session 8 Scripture References: *Isaiah 50:10-11; Exodus 3:14; Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 1:17*

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been a fringe believer? Can you describe the circumstances?
2. Discuss the difference between God's primary and permissive will?
3. Is there an eagle in you that wants to soar? What is it?
4. Have you ever made Jesus King a second time? A king of your weaknesses? What led you to that decision?
5. Can you think of a time when you poured your choice around Jesus and were able to love another with that divine love? What did it look like? What did it feel like? Do you need to do this?
6. Do you believe that God is in everything? Why? Why not?

God Is Using Suffering Session #9

Begin the day with:

Jesus, You are welcome here.

Holy Spirit, You are welcome here.

Father, You are welcome here.

Because one word from Him in your spirit is worth a thousand in your head.

If the Bible had the power in it that some say, it would move as many people to God as heard it preached, but it does not. Why? Because it is the Spirit of God who witnesses to what is in a person and moves him toward God, not just words on a page. It is a living and relational process. It is important to invite Him in to do His work.

Standing In a Different System

The flesh likes legalism--laws and rules--because self is a fallen being and self is playing God, so self wants a list of things to do that will make him like God. Self wants to keep those laws and rules and then boast in them. Legalism is one of the easiest sermons to preach because our very being, our self-life, is drawn to it. When people stand and preach in the 5% of success they have obtained through their humanness, power, and self-life, our own flesh is easily attracted to it.

Romans 3:19-20, Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

The other standard or system says no, God does not want us to fall into that trap. The Sermon on the Mount was not there to show us what we could do, but what we could not do. In fact, Jesus came to lock up all men with the standard that, as a human being, if you want to live like God, the Sermon on the Mount will have to be your goal. Would you like to try? No? It does not look so appealing, does it?

So after a lot of trying to accomplish living the Christian life you may come to a place of suicide, which is not a bad place to be. You just need to "move in one man" and say, "I cannot do it, only Christ in me can do it," denying the self-life, not killing the outer physical life. This begins the process of allowing Christ's life to flow through you and having a beautiful, wonderful life.

Madam Guyon, 1640

“The present way of dealing only with external manners in the life of the convert brings little fruit. Burdening the new Christian with countless rules and all sorts of standards does not help him grow in Christ. Here is what should be done: The new Christian should be led to God. How? By learning to turn within to Christ and by giving the Lord His whole heart. Lead them to the real inner knowledge of Jesus Christ. Oh, what a difference there would be in the lives of those Christians. Consider the results. We would see the simple farmer as he plowed his field spend his days in the blessings of the presence of God. The shepherd, while watching his flock, would have the same abandoned love for the Lord which marked the early Christians. The factory worker, while laboring with his outward man, would be renewed with strength in his inner man. You would see each of these people put away every kind of sin from his life. All would become spiritual men and women with hearts set on knowing and experiencing Jesus Christ. For a new Christian, for all of us, in fact, the heart is all-important if we are to go forward in Christ. Once the heart has been gained by God, everything else will eventually take care of itself. This is why He requires the heart above all else. Dear Reader, it is by the Lord gaining your heart, and no other way, that all your sins can be put away. If the heart could be gained, Jesus Christ would reign in peace and the whole church would be renewed.”

We are standing in a system where our goal is not acting like Jesus, but our goal is exactly Jesus and the release of Christ through the heart of man. As the heart pumps blood throughout our entire body and removes the poison from our systems, so through the open door of our heart, Jesus' life is pumped throughout us, cleansing us from our sin. Then we are able to express the life of Christ fully. This system allows us to see the world in a whole different light.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusts in Thee –Isaiah 26:3, KJV.

If you do not have peace, go to the root. Do not just sweep the cobwebs, but eliminate the spider. If you do not have peace, your mind is not on Christ. It is a promise He has given. Truth is not preached, it is demonstrated. When you place Christ in front of your problems, you have peace in the midst of the very worst situations. The enemy is busy stealing your peace, and you are always busy blaming others for stealing your peace. You surrender the presence of God, along with what little peace you have in your life, to other persons. At that point God has a tool He uses to bring you back to a focus on Him. You are completely self-concerned and self-absorbed, so He permits SUFFERING in your life. You begin by focusing on the suffering and those who bring it. After you have suffered long enough, your eyes are moved to Christ.

Phil. 3:8, What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ.

Do you have a distorted view of suffering? Do you think you should not have to suffer? Do you think if you are suffering, something is wrong? Many say, "I cannot believe in a God who allows this kind of suffering, but I am content to believe in man who causes it." Go figure!

When Is God Good?

Is God good when everything is going well? Is God still good when everything is going wrong? Are you able to see the blessing through the suffering?

If you can only say "God is good" when things are going well, you may be standing in the world's system where your goal is self-centeredness, comfort, and smooth sailing through life. Too often people laud the answers to prayer that satisfied a longing, and the message of Christ gets lost.

You should be thankful for the blessing in your life, but do not fall for the "Gospel of health, wealth and prosperity." Suffering can be used in your life, if you want to share in the power of His resurrection. The only way you can share in the power of His resurrection is to share in the fellowship of His suffering and be like Him in His death. No one welcomes suffering in the beginning. You must see it intellectually and then it has to bear witness to your spirit. You have to hear the "Divine Amen" in it. If you hear that, then you say with the words of your mouth, "Jesus, I want the revelation of You. I want to share in the power of Your resurrection, and I know that means the fellowship of Your suffering. I am crazy for asking. It is just as crazy as asking to sit at the right hand of Jesus." Do not back out!

What you are asking will take much suffering, but what follows will be wonderful. Your heart will sing following the suffering. God will work to bring the revelation of Christ in you.

Although you cannot live constantly under suffering, neither can you live constantly under comfort. If you do live under comfort too long, you will create a suffering for yourself.

The Caterpillar/Missionary

The caterpillar:

1. makes his own tomb,
2. cuts himself off from light,
3. and cuts himself off from water and food.

In that tomb he makes, God transforms him and reveals the true nature of the caterpillar. In the same way, one day you will come out of that tomb to fly, and it will be beautiful. We all make our own tomb and cut ourselves off. In that dark place God begins to reveal who you really are in Him and His purpose in your life.

You never know the end of a trial or situation by looking at the beginning of it. You do not know what God is working in you until the end of the trial. The mistake you can make is to look at the beginning of the trial and choose to focus on that, and in the process lose all your peace. Suffering has to be put in its proper perspective in order for you to embrace the perfect work it will do in you.

Philosophy

Philosophy, simply stated, is putting yourself at the center of the world and then wondering why you suffer. You question and have no answers. You want all the positives in life, no negatives.

Ultimately, your goal is comfort.

Ultimately, the follower of Christ desires maturity, attained when Christ's life is flowing through. In order for this to happen, you must view the negatives in life as just as important as the positives. You need to receive both.

Stressed Grapes

When grapevines are held at a delicate balance between life and death, the plant sends all its nourishment to the grapes. These grapes are small in size but intense in flavor and are used to make the \$200 bottles of wine. The grapes that appear big and beautiful are the grapes used to make the cheap wine.

How many of you are like the stressed grapes? There are those times when He holds you right on the line, and you are not sure you are going to recover unless He holds you. But in the process He is making something in you.

God Is Using the World Around Us

God does not fight what is going on in the world around us. He uses it. There have been times you thought you would die because of all that was happening around you, but out of those circumstances comes much fruit.

Grafting vines into the vineyard requires packing manure around the vine being grafted in to keep it in place and keep the bugs from killing the shoot being grafted in.

Have you ever felt like you were getting manure packed around you? God is using that suffering to hold you in place and keep you "disease free." All suffering is to drive us to the very presence of Christ.

The Transfiguration (Mark 9:1-8)

The disciples were with Jesus and saw the “the law, the prophets, and grace” all in one place. They wanted to build 3 temples.” But the cloud came and God spoke and basically said, “No, this is My Son. He is the issue. You are not coming under law or the prophets. You are coming under Him.” They put their eyes on Him again and the clouds disappeared, and so did “the law and the prophets.” He fulfilled everything in the law and the prophets.

You have a mount in your heart. The only thing that can stand there is Christ; if the law and the prophets are not good enough to stand there, then no person, thing, or situation in your life is worthy of standing there, either. When you allow other things to stand on the mount of your heart, a cloud comes.

This life is not that difficult. The answer is JESUS, JESUS, JESUS! The proof that He is the way and every other way is not the way is that you are constantly being offered something other than Jesus. God wants the heart. It is not programs, methods, and formulas that are going to bring fulfillment. Some places have every stick in place, but there is no spark. Nothing is happening. The goal is to have Christ on the mount of your heart. If that is the case, it does not matter what floods in. There will be a fire. (I Kings 18:23-24)

Self-Life: The Greatest Hindrance To The Presence Of God.

You must understand what self-life is, not so you can “wallow in it” or be a victim of it. But instead you want to be able to recognize self-life and see how God uses it as a stronghold in your life to keep you close to Him. As you begin to look at “self,” the goal is to begin to take up the cross and deny it. The goal is not to give it undue attention or become a victim of it.

Session 9 Scripture Verses: Rom. 3:19-20; Isaiah 26:3; Phil. 3:8; Mark 9:5; I Kings 18:23-24

God Meets All Our Needs

Session #10

The Christ in you will never be imposed on you through work, but He will be exposed in you through your response to life's situations.

The Spiritual Cell

You must come to a place where you have no hope in yourself, because when you have no hope in your ability to solve the problem(s), you will look to Christ.

We do not know Christ is all we need until Christ is all we have.

This fallen world is the perfect womb for the child of God to be birthed in. God will box us in until there is no place to look for hope other than up, to Him. He will do this by revealing our controlling lying emotions, what our self-life is, how we cannot deal with lying thoughts, how we are controlled by an identity, how we still live in our idolatry, and of course, our own unbelief.

Problems

Trouble is not in the trouble; it is in the heart's attitude toward the trouble. Nothing ever goes wrong. I just end up going wrong with it.

When you have a problem, you are the one with the problem. It is not somebody else's problem. If something is going on, what is it revealing in you? If you continue to look to others when you have a problem, you will only have a move in self; but if you will look at yourself, you will actually have a move in God when you encounter problems.

Problems are like *branches* on a tree. If we try to eliminate the problem by cutting off the *branch*, the life which is in the root system will only increasingly fortify other *branches* in the tree, and those *branches* (or *problems*) become bigger. You can continue to cut off all the *branches*, one by one, but ultimately new branches will sprout where the old ones had been cut off. We must go to the source and look at the root rot. What is feeding all this?

Circumstances can harden a person or soften him. *Sunlight can cause a tree that is alive to grow or it can cause a dead tree to rot.* If you have life in you, then whenever light shines on you, it will cause you to grow. If you are dead, that same light will just cause you to rot more quickly. Truth is not preached, it is demonstrated. Just so, people who deal with their problems by going to Christ are living proof that the peace of God is available if you deal with the root issues in your life.

Model of Man, I Thess. 5:23

Body	reproduction, defense, food
Soul	mind, will, emotions
Spirit	conscience, communion, intuition

Why Did God Create You?

I John 4:8 says God created you because He is love, and love must have an object. He created you because of the desire of love He has for you. He put spiritual needs in you that only He could meet.

He placed in you the need for:

- love
- acceptance
- assurance
- security
- total commitment
- significance

The day Adam and Eve ate from the tree, they died. They kept moving in their bodies, but a death took place in their spirit. It became impossible to get their deepest needs met. So you become a self-centered human being and distort the characteristics of God in you. As a distorted human you try to milk your needs out of other distorted human beings. You want them to meet the needs in you that only God can meet. You will become very, very self-centered and all that will matter is you.

"Everybody is too self-centered to think just about me!"

My Needs

Ways in which I try to get my needs met outside of Christ:

- the church or religion
- parties
- pornography (issue is acceptance for a man, not just a physical thing)
- family
- job
- knowledge
- understanding
- entertainment
- money

It is possible to milk a mouse, but will you get enough to make it worth it? When you get too obsessed on milking your needs out of others, you may perceive that you are making some progress, but is that milking getting you that much? Shift your eyes to Christ, to the Source where there is an abundance to satisfy you.

When you find yourself trying to milk your needs from another, stop and ask yourself, "What need am I trying to get met from this interaction?" Recognize it is pure self-centeredness.

A marriage where each person depends on the other to meet their God given needs is analogous to two ticks trying to live with no dog.

When Christ comes together in your life, the whole world comes together.

In Africa there are no maps for the jungle. The way through the jungle is a guide, a person. The translation for guide is "the way." Similarly, "the way" through life is the person of Jesus Christ. He is the One you follow.

Rom 6:21. What did you gain from all of the attempts to get your needs met apart from Christ? What did you gain by trying to milk your needs out of others? Just selfishness. If you continue in this way, you will actually develop a self you cannot stand.

The Chasm In My Heart

There is a chasm in your heart that can only be filled by Christ. If you try to fill it with anything else it will remain empty. To continue in this way will increase the appetite for the deeds of the flesh. A vicious cycle will ensue. The secret is to fill that chasm with Christ. If you do, then all of the desires you so desperately want to be rid of will drop off naturally. You must look at the root issues. Focus on *cause* not *consequences*. We, as fallen humans, are *consequence* driven, not *cause* driven because of our self-centeredness. Our first impulse is to ask ourselves, "How can I make myself feel better?" or "How can I get rid of these circumstances?" What you need to be asking is, "What is *causing* all this to happen?" If you go to the root your problems, you will always find self-centeredness.

Manifestations Of Self-Centeredness

Symptoms of living in your humanity:

Angry, argumentative, arrogant, blame others, boastful, bossy, can't receive love or compliments, compulsive, controlled by their emotions, critical, defensive, depressed, falsely humble, feel sorry for themselves, gossip, greedy, full of guilt, harsh, hate themselves, hate others, hold grudges, hypersensitive, impatient, feel inferior, feel insecure, introspective, jealous, judgmental, lack love, lust for power, manipulate, opinionated, overbearing, like to play God, do not listen, possessive,

proud, refuse to communicate, they withdraw, they are rude, self-absorbed, self-centered, self-condemning, self-confident, self-deprecating, self-motivated, self-indulgent, self-reliant, self-righteous, self-sufficient, slander, slow to forgive, quick to speak, subjective, too submissive, touchy, unreasonable, unreliable, unteachable, *and when they hear a list like this, they think of all the people who should be here to hear it.*

Self-centered people are like bad breath, stinking feet and body odor. It does not bother the person who has it, but it is killing everyone else.

The Creation And The Fall--What Happened? What Is Wrong With Me?

1. *When Adam fell away from God, we all fell away from God. We are born completely self-centered.* Self is the part of you made in the image of God, now distorted and living in flesh, and it expresses that thing called flesh and the deeds of the flesh, that animal life.
2. *You are born insane.* Your mind, will, and emotions without the rule of God are like an automobile without a driver.

Sanity – mind, will, and emotions in touch with reality.

Insanity – mind, will, and emotions out of touch with reality.

Born cut off from God, you are born out of touch with reality.

Eccl 9:3 says that insanity is in your heart. Where does that leave you?

- As a crazy person looking to have your needs met by other crazy people.

Have you ever questioned your thoughts?

- When you do not judge those thoughts, it will take you down a track that is incredible.

Satan's Voice

Satan attacks you by sounding and looking like you. You actually allow Satan to say things to you that you would not allow anyone else to say to you. You think it is you talking. You respond to that voice like it is your voice. When Satan has convinced you that his voice is your voice, he next gets you to buy into the deception that *temptation* = *heart's desire*. If we are denying Christ and are acting out of the flesh, there will be temptations of the flesh, and the deeds of the flesh will come out. But those temptations of the flesh are totally different from the temptations of the heart.

Is a temptation a revelation of a man's heart?

- If it is, then the most wicked person would have the most temptations. Jesus Christ was tempted in all things. Therefore, from this we know that a temptation is not a revelation of your heart, but the revelation of the enemy's heart.

Most people believe that Temptation = Desire

It is evident in the fact that people are not free about sharing their temptations for fear of being judged and rejected.

Believing that *temptation* = *desire* leads to obsession on that temptation until it is all you are thinking about, because your desire is to have a right heart and a pure thought life.

A study showed that 30% of men, after coming to Christ, were likely to be more abusive in their speech and behavior within the confines of the family. What was happening? They were trying to live the divine life in their human strength. It frustrated them that they could not keep the list of things they thought they had to.

Before Christ, your goals were low so your success rate was good in spite of the fact that you felt worthless and unacceptable. After coming to Christ, your expectations of yourself increase dramatically. You have to live like Jesus, but you still see yourself in the flesh (as that worthless unacceptable person), and now success is nowhere in reach. How frustrating is that?

Now the enemy has stolen the secret of the Christian life for you, the secret of focus. *Christ must come in front of all people and circumstances.*

Isaiah 26:3, "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."

What will get your attention? Something shocking! That is what the enemy brings your way, something that will get your eyes off of Christ. Instantly, you lose your peace.

What gets your attention gets you!

Self-life has its own voice. It steals your focus off of Christ. We need to recognize that voice, deny it, and put our focus back on Christ.

Session 10 Scripture References: *1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 4:8; John 14:6; Rom. 6:21; Eccl. 9:3; Isaiah 26:3*

The Choice Of Changing Your Focus

Session #11

Model of Man--Definition Of Self [Review]

God made you out of the dust of the earth. He breathed His Spirit into you. You became a soul with a mind, will, and emotions.

You have two problems:

1. You are self-centered, trying to get your needs met through something or someone other than God.
2. You are insane: your mind, will, and emotions are out of touch with reality. That causes you not to judge your thoughts or emotions.

The Battle For Focus

The battle that then ensues is the battle for your focus. The enemy is working to get your mind on anything other than Christ. His goal is to steal "life" from you.

Are we helping to keep people's focus on Christ?

- Are you continuing to bring others' sin before them, helping the enemy in his quest to keep their focus on their problems and off Christ? You need to keep people's eyes on Christ by listening to the voice of Truth.

Two types of people who deal with sheep: *shepherds* and *butchers*.

- The *Shepherd's* voice is light, life, liberty, and freedom.
- The *butcher's* voice is harsh, critical, driving, condemning, judgmental, and there is never a center to it.

You must ask the question: Whose voice am I listening to when I am thinking about myself, situations, or others? Is it the Shepherd (Jesus Christ) or the butcher (the enemy)? Is your intention to see the desire of the heart, whether it be yours or someone else's?

The real desire of your heart is revealed in your struggles not your failures. Everyone fails in their attempt to avoid sin. If your sin upsets you and you hate it, then it is obvious that sin is not the desire of your heart.

Judging Your Thoughts

You must learn how to judge your thoughts and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and under His authority. This takes time and practice.

Why? If 50% of your time is spent thinking about your problems and 50% of your time is spent thinking of your family, church, job, God . . . then if your problems disappeared, what would you do with that big gap? Some people would not know

what to do because they spent so much time dwelling on those problems, they do not know how to function without them. This is one reason why every thought should end at truth. Our focus must always be on Christ.

Good counseling does not tell you anything you do not know, but it reveals to you what you already know.

When someone says something that is just weird and does not resonate with your spirit, write it off. You know yourself better than others; Christ knows you better than others. If what they say does not produce a "Divine Amen" in you, then ignore it. Your mind is like a car on the hill. You know when you are breaking through the barriers and thinking about things you should not be, and when you are about to pass the point of no return, because the peace of God leaves you.

The peace of God is not that difficult. You may not know when it comes, but you always know when it leaves.

The problem comes when you do not listen to the gauge called "the peace of God in me." You end up recklessly heading down a track with your mind, breaking through the barriers by obsessing on things you should not be.

You must come to terms with the fact that some issues in your life cannot be settled right now. Closure, is not always possible. You must accept that it cannot be settled and move on. Your mind must not continually be going off the proverbial cliff by obsessing on things you cannot change.

If we allow our minds to get on the rollercoaster and go to certain situations or circumstances, we will not leave those thoughts without being beaten up by guilt and self-condemnation.

Paul says forget the past and look to the future. Jesus calls us to press forward leaving the past behind. Victimization is more addictive than drugs. Stay away!

As a believer, you must settle the fact that your deliverance will come before the sin, not in the middle of the sin. God will deliver an unbeliever in the middle of his sin to demonstrate His glory in spite of the person. But the glory of God for a believer is that He delivers the person before he sins. You cannot play the game where you look for deliverance in the middle of the problem. You will find yourself continually repeating the same sin. God will only deliver a believer before he commits the sin. So resolve in your mind that you are not going there by taking every thought captive and putting it under the authority of Christ.

Judging Your Emotions

It is much easier to judge a thought than to judge an emotion. An emotion can completely control you. The source of an emotion can be true or false, but the emotion will feel the same, regardless.

How do we tell the difference between true and false guilt?

- *True guilt* is caused by true sin. If you kill someone, you ought to feel bad, and the guilt should bring you to a place of repentance, which should lead you back to God.
- *False guilt* can cause you to confess a sin the second time. The first time you confess a sin, it is to God. The second time you confess the same sin, it is to Satan, and it is false guilt. Satan is more concerned with the guilt sin causes than with the sin itself. The sin only lasts for a moment, but the guilt can last for a lifetime and is an extremely effective tool for keeping your mind off the right focus. Some authorities may use false guilt to keep you under their authority instead of placing you under Christ's authority. They like to point out that God may forgive your sin, but the consequences will last a lifetime.

Consequences

Is it true that you can be forgiven, but the consequences will haunt you the rest of your life?

- If that is true, then it ought to be absolute. In other words, if someone gets drunk, then everyone who gets drunk should get in an accident and kill someone, but that is not what happens. The law of consequences is not absolute!

God is not interested in consequences. He is interested in results. He works to undo the consequences to cause all things to work together for good. His goal is a changed heart. A *thing* may be bad, but He is mixing it in with *all things* and causing it to work together for good. If we confess our sins once, that is enough. You can cut the legs out from under the enemy by eliminating multiple confessions. Who wants to live with the same sin continually over his head? God is faithful and true to forgive us of those things.

Judson Cornwall example:

Your greatest sin can qualify you for God's greatest assignment for you when Jesus Christ is at the center of it, making all things work together for good in you. With your cooperation, your weakness can become God's strength in you.

Jesus Forgets Our Sin

When you cannot remember, you cannot be angry. Jesus said, “And I will remember your sins no more.” God knew you at your worst and still picked you. God forgets our sins and begins each day fresh with us. His anger does not continue to burn against us for a sin He has forgiven. Your relationship starts with Him this morning and has nothing to do with yesterday.

It is so difficult to judge your emotions and bring them under His rule. Many people awaken feeling inferior, insecure, worthless, unacceptable, and hopeless. How long will it take the world to confirm this in them? Not long! They are looking for a reason for these feelings. Road rage is not because of traffic. People are getting up angry. The traffic is just a justification for the anger.

You could live a lifetime in guilt, and it will shut you down if you do not judge your emotions.

Depression--What Can You Do?

If you get locked into depression, you can get stuck there. Stand against those emotions by speaking truth to yourself. At the very point at which you think you will be swept away by them, the tide will reverse and go back out. As you continue to *stand* against the lying emotions and *walk* against those feelings, they will have less and less control over you until you can completely remove yourself from those waves and choose not to return to them.

Lying emotions bark to be fed, but the worst thing you can do is crack open the door and feed them. You will never get rid of them. They will eventually move in. There is work on our part to deny the emotions. We must discern what our part is and what God's part is in fighting these lying emotions. God will not make the choice for you. In the same way, we cannot make choices for others no matter how much they whine and cry for us to do it. Each person must decide in his own heart what he will do. God will allow you to stay in a place for years until you take the key from around your neck and open the door labeled “choice” to get rid of the lying emotions.

Your freedom is only a choice away.

Session 11 Scripture References: John 10:27; II Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:6,7; Phil. 3:13; Rom. 8:28; I John 1:9; Isaiah 1:18; Jeremiah 31:34

How Messages Form Your Identity

Session #12

Problems Man Has Being Born Dead To God In The Spirit

1. *Self-centeredness*
2. *Insanity*--mind, will, and emotions were created to be under His rule, and since they are not, you cannot trust your thoughts, emotions, and will.
3. *You do not know who you are because you were created for God and you are lost.* In our self-centered insane condition you go to other self-centered insane people to ask them to describe for us who we are, letting other people in their self-centered insane condition tell you who you are. Then you spend your life trying to change to meet their definition.

Two ways people give messages:

- a. Overtly--they can give you the message directly ("I hate you.")
- b. Covertly--they can just abandon you.

Either way you get the message that something is wrong with you.

When you look to others to meet your needs:

- if they meet those needs, you may develop a positive image and spend your life trying to maintain the image
- if they do not meet those needs, you may develop a negative image and spend your life attempting to change your image

Either way you are being controlled by the behavior of others through an identity or image they have given you.

Your Identity

Desired Identity: what you want people to think of you, such as spiritual, kind, loving, successful, a good mate, etc. You have an impression you want to leave with others. Image is dangerous because so much time is spent building that image. You even could use Jesus to build your own image.

What you are at your worst moment is the true condition of your self-life. When things are at their worst you need to be at your best, and what comes out of you could be the best or the worst.

Hudson Taylor talking to a missionary took a glass, filled with water, and hit it down so that water splashed out. He said, "Your life as a missionary is like this cup. You will be hit by many blows. I will be watching to see what comes out of you."

Marriage does not create problems; it reveals the problems in each person that were already there.

You hate to think that what you are at your worst moment is the true condition of your flesh, but failure is a given. Everyone fails. You will not abide perfectly, and when you do not, you will shut off the life of Christ. Your humanity will start reigning and you will express the deeds of the flesh. That is not a shock, and it will not disqualify you.

You have a self-life that needs to be denied daily. You will never get it all right. There will be times when you fail and you will grow from it.

A man held up an orange and asked his students what would come out of it if he squeezed it. They all responded, "Orange juice." He then squeezed the orange and black goo came out.

You do not know what is on the inside of something by looking at the outside. It must be squeezed first. Then you will see what comes out.

When you are squeezed what do you want to talk about?

- The injustice of being squeezed, or
- What God wants to talk about, "What came out of you?"

What You Are At Your Worst

How do you describe yourself at your worst moment? You are angry, a control freak, carnal, you feel like a failure, worthless, and unlovable. Who wants to be with someone like that?

So, what is your response?

You run to your emotional sewing machine and stitch up a success suit, and zip it all the way up so people cannot see any of the bad stuff, and you go out into the world a fake.

How long can you hop like a rabbit? Usually only as long as you absolutely have to, because you are not a rabbit, you are a human being. Where do you "stand up" and relax and let all the bad out? Usually in your home with your family. Why is it you can be polite to strangers, but then go home and abuse those closest to you? You will make the extra effort to someone else because you still think you can milk your needs out of those who do not really know you. Those people have not been squeezed by you, so they respond favorably toward you. Your family, on the other hand, has seen you at your worse. There is no trying to impress them, so why bother trying to hop when you are tired from hopping all day.

When you live controlled by others, they will control you using the negative by just hinting at your faults or by pandering to your strengths. Being controlled by the positives is much worse because it is the image you are trying to maintain.

The worst thing you can do to a thinker is to praise him for what he has done at a high standard. Now if he goes below it he will consider it a failure!

[Interesting statistic: 95% of all straight A students end up working for C or D students.]

How Do We Get The Image That We Are Trying To Protect and Maintain?

In your self-centered, insane condition you go to other self-centered, insane people and ask them to tell you who you are. You get identity messages from their behavior.

One of the 1st places you go to find your identity is Dad. You could have a passive Dad (never spends any time with you, never talks to you, is not there), or a dad that abandoned you. You could have been from a divorced family, a family that moved a lot, an abusive family (verbal, physical, sexual, emotional), an overprotective family, or a family in which you never measured up. What kind of identity message did you get? Worthless, unlovable, unwanted, abandoned, insecure, stupid, etc.

All these negative circumstances that surround us affect the development of our identity for the worst. You will work to cover it up and you will be controlled by it, if you are operating in the flesh. This false identity will become the focus for your life.

Mountain of Acceptance

To go from rejection to acceptance you must keep rule #1. If you keep rule #1, then instead of receiving love an acceptance, you get rule #2. You continue to “climb” until you can no longer stand it, at which point you jump off the mountain and decide it is better to live in rejection than to continue playing the game.

Do you do this to your children and mates? Is there always one more little thing they could do to make you happy? If so, they never arrive. All they give is never good enough. They never feel loved and accepted, but they feel controlled and rejected.

How Do People Accept You?

On the basis of *what you do* or *who you are*? Unfortunately, it is usually on the basis of what you do. People respond to the things you do. Interestingly, you can do several things right, but one wrong you do will cancel all the rights.

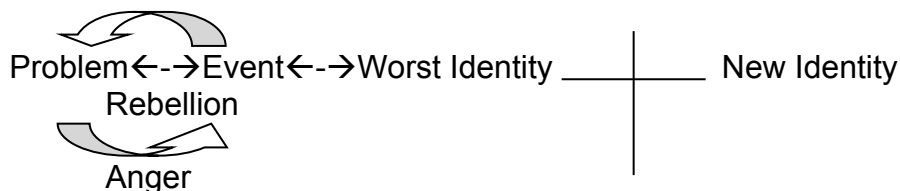
In this state, what happens when someone introduces Jesus and the love of God to you? You hear one thing, but feel another. You hear, “Come forward, let Jesus do it all,” and then when you get there you are given a list of things to do to stay close to God. They have just canceled the effect of a grace-based relationship

with Christ. Instead of your acceptance being based in your relationship with Christ, it is based in what you do. It is now all about working your way to Him in the power of flesh. Sound familiar? Furthermore, when you have a failure in your life, you do not even wait around to see what God will do, you just run. If you cannot handle the rejection of people, how much more painful will it be if you are rejected by God?

Identity Messages---→At Your Worst←--→ Desired Impression

Worthless	Angry	Spiritual
Unlovable	Controlling	Kind
Unwanted	Carnal	Loving
	Failure	Success
	Worthless	Good Mate
	Unlovable	

The messages that you get in your self-centered, insane condition begin to develop your identity and your image, and you spend your days consumed by covering it up and protecting it. When it is revealed, you come undone.



An event takes place triggering your worst identity, and you have to find some way to cope with those feelings you have.

Different Ways To Approach the Problems

1. The problem is the problem; the focus is on the problem. Approach the problem from every angle.
2. OR . . . There was an event that created the problem, so you need to look at the event instead of the problem (i.e., find a new wife if you are unhappy).

For you to have a problem, you have to rebel against God. Therefore, you want to justify your rebellion against God. In order to do that you must get angry. So you have to get angry at someone or something to justify your rebellion.

Whenever you are participating in the deeds of the flesh, you are always an angry person. But you do not want to take responsibility for that anger, so you find a scapegoat upon whom you can justify your rebellion (i.e., picking a fight with your spouse when you are having an affair to justify time spent with the other person).

When the pressure is building and you choose to move into the deeds of the flesh, there will always be some kind of internal anger to justify your rebellion.

3. OR . . . The problem is your unique self-life that has been developed through identity messages you received as you looked to other people in your self-centered, insane condition to get your spiritual needs met, those needs that only God can meet in you.

When you are consumed with self by changing or maintaining your image and recognize that your success suit has been stripped away, you have to find some way to cope with your nakedness. But what if your identity-at-your-worst could be killed, replaced by a life that had worth? You would not have to allow the event to bother you, you would not have to go into rebellion, you would not have to get angry, or in the end, you would not even have to “have a problem.”

Christ came to go to the very root of the issue. GET A LIFE! Take on your new identity in Christ

Session 12 Scripture References: Luke 9:27; John 6:63; Gal. 5:19; Genesis 4:5

Laying Aside Idols by Choice

Session #13

What Is 1st and Foremost?

Coming to a place where you can see that exactly Christ can flow through you as you are a branch on the Vine.

Review of Session #12

Reacting vs. Responding

We are constantly receiving “pills,” but we cannot handle them, not because of the “pills” themselves, but because of the messages attached to them.

If a statement such as “You are stupid” touches your identity and image, you will react to it.

We end up reacting to the world instead of responding to the world. Things that are said should not bother the child of God. You need to be offended until you cannot be offended anymore, because the offense is revealing something in you.

Anxiety Ruler

Everyone can handle up to 100% anxiety but blow because after that because of exceeding their limit.

Consider these two boys from different backgrounds:

<u>Boy A</u>		<u>Boy B</u>	
Abandoned	50%	Spanked in the hospital	5%
Breakup	20%	Breakup	5%
Marriage	25%	Marriage	25%
Some 6% event	6%	Some 6% event	6%
-----		-----	
101% → blowup		41%	

The event inside is what is important to evaluate when you are losing it and not coping well. The outside event is not the problem. It is the 50%, 20%, and 25% events that sent Boy A over the edge, not the 6% event. Consider: Would you be doing as well as some of these people are doing if you had happen to you what has happened to them?

When you live in the power of humanity that has been distorted and shaped by the things around you, it is like being in a living hell. Your thoughts may not be so concerned with avoiding eternal hell as in getting out of your daily Hell.

If the message of the gospel is going to be viable, you need to bring to people a way to escape their daily hell.

The Deeds Of the Flesh – Galatians 5:19-21

If you practice the deeds of the flesh, you will not inherit *the kingdom of God*.

What is *the Kingdom of God*?

- When the Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of Earth blended to make the *Kingdom of God* (Heaven on Earth), it existed only in the person of Christ. *Christ is the Kingdom of God*. The *Kingdom of God*—Jesus--suffered violence and violent men want to take what He has by force. So the *Kingdom of God* is where Heaven and Earth blend together, and when you are abiding in Christ and His life is flowing through you, you are living in the *Kingdom of God* and actually have heavenly power on earth and a life on Earth that has conquered all things.

If you move outside of Him you become a divided person and you go back to being an earthly person living in the power of your humanity, and the earth overcomes you. God then uses the earth and the suffering of earth to push you back into Christ again so you can have the Kingdom of God on earth. He uses everything around you.

Life to a Buddhist = Suffering → the goal → no longer to exist.

The Christian believes:

In Christ, Suffering → will bring → LIFE

To the degree you decrease suffering in your life, to that degree you will decrease life in you. Suffering is producing life in you. The earth is always pushing you back into Christ where you can have His victory and live in the Kingdom of God.

Other Aspects of Self

Gen 31:19--Jacob works for his Uncle Laban for 7 years to get the bride of the law, but at the end, all he receives is the law (Leah). What he wants is the bride of Grace (Rachel). So, he works 7 more years to get Rachel. Laban asks Jacob to stay because he recognizes that while Jacob is there he prospers from Jacob. So Jacob stayed, and every bad thing Laban brought on Jacob, God made into a good thing. Leah and Rachel watched as God continued to be faithful to their husband. Yet when it came time to leave and they had plundered the land, the

women still took their household idols. This was because they had always trusted their idols in their youth, and they wanted to keep the idols just in case God did not come through for them.

How many enter the Christian life with a bag full of idols behind their back? You all learned how to cope and live using idols before you knew Christ, since you were created for faith and trust. Christ is now in your life and can replace those idols. Do you continue to trust in those idols? Do you think God will let you down? Do not jump to conclusions before God can demonstrate He has been working all along!

God took the Israelites out of the wilderness in 8 days, but the Israelites took their idols with them and continued to trust in them, even after God so unreservedly demonstrated His power to deliver them (Ezekiel 20:8).

Jesus came and took you out of Hell in the future. It only takes about 8 days to forget that and try to gain the Promised Land in your own strength, depending upon your idols. You will use many of the things you used in your past to try to claim the victorious life in your own strength and power.

The secret is to travel with an empty bag. Do not try to know when God does not want you to know. Wait on Him to reveal things to you in His time. Do not jump to conclusions and begin to trust your idols again to get results. In your unbelief, you ask God for a full bag of knowledge and tools so you can handle all that comes your way. Instead, you must rely on Christ and all He has for you at that moment. You will never find the tool you need without the abiding presence of Christ. If you go to Him you will find in Him everything you have looked for elsewhere in vain.

In the abiding life, as you walk with Him, are aware of Him, and focus on Him, His wisdom will be your wisdom.

You think that if you just imitate Jesus then you can be like Him. Jesus prayed, fasted, helped, was kind, loved, and was righteous. If you do all these things you can be a little Jesus, too! Working to fill your bag and imitate never produces what you think. *It is only Christ in us that will reveal the true Jesus. You must lay aside the idols by choice.*

Model of Man - Old Testament Temple

<u>Temple</u>		<u>Man</u>
Holy of Holies	→	Spirit (intuition, communion, conscience)
The Holy Place	→	Soul (mind, will, emotions)
The Outer Court	→	Body (food, defense, reproduction)

As an event hits your body, you must attack and react to it in the soul and body in your own strength, because the veil is still in place. If the veil could be eliminated, then the spirit could be released and Christ could attack something He has already conquered.

What Is the Veil In Man That Keeps Christ Silent?

Begin with Adam and Eve. You were in your relatives back to Adam and Eve. When they fell out with God you fell out with God. Christ's life is eternal, no beginning, no end. When you were put into Christ's life, you were at that point with Him. So if He was there when the world was created, so were you. When He was crucified, you were crucified in Christ. When Christ was crucified the veil was ripped in two and the Glory that had been hidden flooded out. The veil represents your old Adam life, and when it was crucified with Christ and was taken away, it was then replaced with His life. Now His life can flood through you and meet any situation. The former veil was only as thick as a hand, but on the other side of it was the blocked presence of God. Now you have access and that veil is part of your old self that developed outside Christ. You need to understand that, not so you can wallow in it, but so that you can take up the cross and deny it.

Makeup Of the Veil

For every hurt in your life before Christ you had to find a way to cope. The world calls them coping mechanisms. God calls them idols. Since you were not created for idolatry, but instead for a belief in God, when you go to the idols to cope, it causes symptoms in you.

Example:

A child that watches his parents fight runs to hide and finds pornography under his parent's bed. He continues to escape to that when there is conflict to avoid the pain he is feeling. At 16 he becomes a Christian and goes to Bible School, laying pornography aside. At age 45 his children are rebelling, his wife wants to leave him, and the church wants to fire him. If you were Satan and your goal was to kill, steal, and destroy, what would you tempt him in? Pornography! The problem is that the idol worked a little when he did not have Christ, but now with Christ the idol will not work at all. Christ wants to drive the man and use the situation to bring him into His presence. He wants to use these circumstances to be glorified and to refine the man. As a Christian the man knows this and feels the conflict. So the enemy whispers he needs more of the idol. Moving into the idol more now produces visible symptoms such as worry, doubt, fear, anxiety, and depression. Meanwhile, God wants the man's focus to be on Him (I will keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee). He cannot put his focus on the things that are dead and find peace. If he continues to be consequence conscious instead of cause conscious, he will go to the world for answers, like medication.

The real root of the problem is not the problem itself, but that we go to idols to solve the problem.

Classes Of Idols

Bad Idols--pornography, sex, drugs, alcohol; these are bad but if you traffic in them at least everyone will be condemning you and you will know that they are wrong

Worse Idols--withdrawal, addicted to fantasy or reading, shopping, TV, music

Most Dangerous Idols--ministry, image, titles. These are the worst because if you lean on these, people will actually pat you on the back for doing them.

There are only 4 types of people in the world:

1. I, not Christ..... - unbeliever
2. I and Christ..... - ticket to heaven person
3. Christ and I..... - most miserable believers, because Christ does 95% and they insist on doing the remaining 5%.
4. Christ, not I..... - Christ lives through this person.

Jonah 2:8 says that those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could have been theirs.

A lot of people have a love/hate relationship with their idol. What they are really saying is: "Please take it away, if you can pry it out of my dead, cold hand." Some people have a vested interest in being a victim. They profit from their idol because they control others with it.

If you are not ready to give up your idol, God will not pry it out of your dead, cold hand.

Session 13 Scripture References: *1 Cor. 5:17; John 10:10; Galatians 5:19-21; Genesis 31:19; Ezekiel 20:8; James 1:5; Gal. 2:20; Jonah 2:8*

Coming to the End of Self

Session #14

Review

1. Creation of Man
2. Development of Self
3. Born dead to God in the Spirit, which makes you self-centered and insane
4. You do not know who you are
5. Because of the hurts and disappointments you had to find something to trust in and cope with, so now you are full of idolatry because you were apart from God.

Insanity Can Be An Idol

Many times medication is not the answer for mental problems. In some cases, medication can cause the body to slow down, and then the energy that was burnt up physically is driven into your mind where the problem is, causing you to focus on the problem even more.

There are times when medication is important to help people to be able to focus on the problem enough to work with it.

The Cave

Insanity: When the pressure is too high people retreat to the “back of the cave” and hide there. At the same time they usually secure themselves with a proverbial rope. Sometimes it is necessary to go in and get them because they may let go of “the rope,” but usually people have a vested interest in being in the cave holding onto their rope. There can be lots of benefits to insanity. They can do whatever they want and no one holds them accountable, because they are “crazy.”

One missionary told of how vexed he was at how self-centered people in mental institutions were. Before WWI, Spain had more mental institutions than any other place in Europe. When the war broke out their numbers dwindled. After the war the number grew again. When people had something greater than themselves to focus on they were able to function.

You can slowly go insane as you are consumed with yourself. The only way to be satisfied is to give yourself each day to something bigger than yourself. Since you were created in the image of God, the only thing bigger than you is God. If you give yourself over to yourself, you slowly become more and more self-centered and more and more insane.

Suicide Of the Soul

When the image you have of yourself is so bad, death may seem to be the only alternative. Some people choose to commit suicide of the soul and at that point take on an identity that they find desirable (i.e., Jesus). They are then medicated for this because they appear crazy, and they return to the identity from which they wanted to escape. They cycle between these.

Why not provide a third option to break the cycle? Present that person with the alternative of becoming something new, a child of God. Refute suicide of the soul and encourage the destruction of the Old Adam life. Become something new, a child of God.

Idols can end up working for you, because when the stress and pressure of life is up, your idols are what you cling to in order to cope. You may want to get rid of these idols, but where will you go if the idol is no longer there? You may have a love/hate relationship with your idols. Before you can leave where you are, or be free from your idols, you must admit where you are. Admit that you have become dependent on your idols and they serve a purpose in your life.

God Wants To Cure You Of Your Idolatry

1. Salvation
2. Conviction of Weakness
3. Life, Power, Gifts

***** *Salvation***

God saw I was going to hell and needed a Savior.

***** *Conviction of Weakness***

You head out to live the Christian life in your humanity with your idols, so God gives you something you cannot handle to make you come to the end of self and allow Him to work through you.

Many times you may want to rescue people, especially your children, as they spiral downward. In fact, in that spiral they may be headed toward recognizing their need for Christ. You may become part of the problem if you rescue, because by never allowing them to come to the end of themselves, you may actually be keeping them from finding Christ. Pray for wisdom and discernment. Set standards, discipline, and disciple. In addition, pray that God will allow enough in their life that they move toward God, but not too much that they would be destroyed.

If you fix the fix that God sent to fix you, God will send another fix to fix you, and brother you will be fixed.

Jesus said, "Come to Me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." [Matthew 11:28]

If you take on the yoke of God and do it the way Jesus did it--actually letting *the Man who did everything but did nothing* do it--then you will find real rest. This will be the point at which you finally come to a conviction of weakness.

Crucifixion

The driving force of the Cross is pride. Someone crucified is nailed to the cross at the wrists, knees bent, and nails through the feet. When the person begins to suffocate, he can push down on his feet to lift himself up to breathe, but then he is in pain from pushing on his feet. It is a futile cycle, because there is no escape. Some people have been known to live four days on the cross because of their pride. The Roman soldiers sometimes broke the legs of the person to stop the cycle. Jesus only lived minutes on the cross because He recognized it was where the Father had put Him. He did not fight the will of the Father.

Sometimes God just needs to break your legs so you will quit and bow your knee to Him.

Statue Of Jesus In Copenhagen

When you first see this statue, it looks like a normal statue, but when you kneel down the beauty of the statue is revealed. People from all different faiths come to the statue and are seen bending their knee to Jesus to see the beauty. Someday, everyone will bend their knee to the real Jesus, and they will see clearly who He is.

In this life, it is not until you are broken and you bend your knee to Jesus that you will really see the beauty of Christ and who He is. In your broken state, you will see Him and will forsake those idols.

How Do You Forsake Those Idols?

Simple. You give them up with the words of your mouth. "Jesus, they are yours."

You may think "I gave it to God, but I took it back, so I must give it to Him again." Each time you do that, the burden seems to get heavier and heavier until you decide you are stuck with it. The truth is, God took it the 1st time and He never gave it back! God will come and take those things from us when He is ready. We must rest in the fact that God heard us the 1st time and He is working in His time to resolve the issue. Our impatience is what makes us continue to lift the idols before Him.

How great is the power of God? You act as though if you crack the door to Satan, he will come barging in and overpower you. So you look for any little thing that may crack the door to Satan and stomp it out. On the other hand, you open the door wide to Jesus and you do not expect that anything will happen!

God will work on a commitment of anything above nothing! Do not wait until you are cleaned up to go to God. Go to Him as you are and let Him clean you up. The real issue is the act of presenting yourself to God, not the condition you are in when you do it.

***** Spiritual Life, Power and Gifts**

When you come to a place where you give up everything, you will begin to move up in spiritual power. Conviction of weakness is a necessary step, a part of the purpose of life to prepare you for the spiritual life.

Write all your worries on a piece of paper and hold them up to God. Keep it there about thirty-five minutes, until it weighs what it really is. Realize that you cannot even hold the paper the problems are written on, let alone the actual problems. Give them to God and let Him bear those burdens. He did not create you to hold them. Write on the paper that you have given those things to Him, sign it, date it, and when you doubt, take it out and remind yourself that He already took it.

How Do You Proceed In Life?

You pack your backpack full of your problems and head down the road, trying to tell others about Jesus. But all they see is a miserable person talking about the joy of Jesus. Who wants that? What hypocrisy. We are telling people that Jesus came so they may have life, and have it more abundantly. What life!?!

Jesus recognizes that you have those burdens and that you have asked Him to carry them. If you are riding with Him, so are your burdens. But instead of enjoying the ride, you keep the backpack of problems on while He drives. What is the point? Why not throw your backpack in the back and enjoy the ride. Jesus is already carrying you and your problems. Why do you feel like you have to help?

Do not say you have a God and then live like you do not have one.

Live like a sparrow. Offload onto God! Do not worry anymore! When it comes to the things of God, you either believe them or prove them. Believe and enter into the freedom and rest He wants you to have. You are born dead to God in the spirit. That made you self-centered and insane, controlled by your emotions. It gave you an image you cannot stand and you are trying to change. You have fallen into idolatry and are trusting in things that can never help you, and you are going crazy. If you operate in the flesh that is all you can expect.

Your self-life needs to be denied daily!

Our Concept of God

Session #15

Review:

All of life's experiences are driving you to Christ, and the world is the womb in which the child of God is birthed.

There is a wide path that leads to death and a narrow path that leads to life, Christ Himself. There is nothing that His nearness will not fix in our lives.

WWI Pilot Story - As a British pilot is flying his plane he notices a rat chewing on the control rope. He cannot leave his position to get the rat off the rope, but he cannot just let the rat continue to chew on it. He decides to gain altitude until it gets so cold, the rat freezes and drops off by itself.

In each life there are many "rats" gnawing at the control rope. If we focus on them and try to get control of them or just ignore them, either way we will lose even more control. What we need to do is gain altitude by moving toward Him, and those "rats" will be frozen and fall off. If we move toward the Lord, there is nothing His presence will not cure.

Problems

The narrow path consists of God's funnel, called *problems*. It does not matter where the problem comes from.

- God's activity
- World and circumstances
- Enemy's activity
- My own mistakes and stupidity

The goal of all problems is to drive us into His presence.

When discipling people and they relate the situation in their lives to you, the first thing you should be asking yourself as you listen to them is, "How will this drive them into the very presence of God?" In Him we will find everything we desire.

Madame Guyon

"If you are to branch out beyond just a time of prayer each day, other parts of your life and even your whole viewpoint of life will have to be altered. This new attitude must come for a very special reason so that you may go on deeper, still deeper, to another level with your Lord. To do this you must have a fresh attitude

toward yourself as well as toward the Lord. It is an attitude that must go much deeper than any you have known previously. To do this, I need to introduce you to a new word. The word is *abandonment*. To penetrate deeper into the experience of Jesus Christ, it is required that you begin to abandon your whole existence, giving it up to God. Let us take the daily occurrence of life as an illustration. You must utterly believe that the circumstances of your life, that is, every minute of your life, as well as the whole course of your life, anything, yes, anything that happens, has all come to you by His will and His permission. You must utterly believe that everything that has happened to you is from God and is exactly what you need. Such an outlook toward your circumstance and such a look of faith toward your Lord will make you content with everything. Once you believe this, you will then begin to take everything that comes into your life as being from the hand of God and not from the hand of man.”

We look at every situation and we are not divided because we see God in it. God is working to press us into the presence of His Son, where we find abundant life.

The Problem: We Do Not Want To Enter His Presence

Why? Why not let circumstances push you to Him? Why do you let it push you to others? Deeper into yourself? Deeper into your idolatry?

Jesus Christ needs to be the focus so that all the other things will drop away by themselves. (The best way to get something from a child who does not want to give it up is to show him something better.) Jesus Christ is the best! If your focus is on Him you will drop all other things by choice, not because someone dragged them out of your hands.

So what is the problem? *Many people are afraid of Jesus*. With one hand they beckon Him to come near. With the other hand they push Him away. Looking at the world it is evident you can talk of any other topic besides Jesus and there will not be an issue, but bring up the name of Christ and the room will go quiet.

John 6 [Moffatt Translation] The disciples are toiling away in the dark in a storm. They come to the end of their resources, the storm overwhelms them, and when Jesus comes they are frightened. But as soon as He enters the boat, they are at the other side.

How many times in your life have you been toiling away in the dark, in your own strength, not getting anywhere, but you will not let Jesus in the boat? You turn to everything else but Him. Herod said he was troubled in heart at the coming of Christ. How can someone be troubled at Jesus’ coming? It makes no sense.

Peter is with Jesus and says, “Depart from me. I am a wicked and sinful man.” If you are wicked and sinful, would you not want Jesus to come near?

Minister To Emotions, Not Just Intellect

There is no such thing as an intellectual atheist. Their unbelief is not rooted in what they know. Their unbelief is rooted in their emotions and what they feel about God. The questioning is just a symptom of their unbelief. No matter how many of their questions are answered, they will not choose to turn to God because of how they feel about Him.

We must make time to investigate how believers feel about God. With their minds, they are running to God, believing He is real, but with their emotions they are running away from God, believing He does not care. What emerges is a divided person in a condition of *Unbelieving Believer*, believing that God is real, but not believing God is there for him. It does not mean he will not go to Heaven if he is in that state. What it does mean is that his life will be a daily hell because of the continuous state of contradiction he lives in.

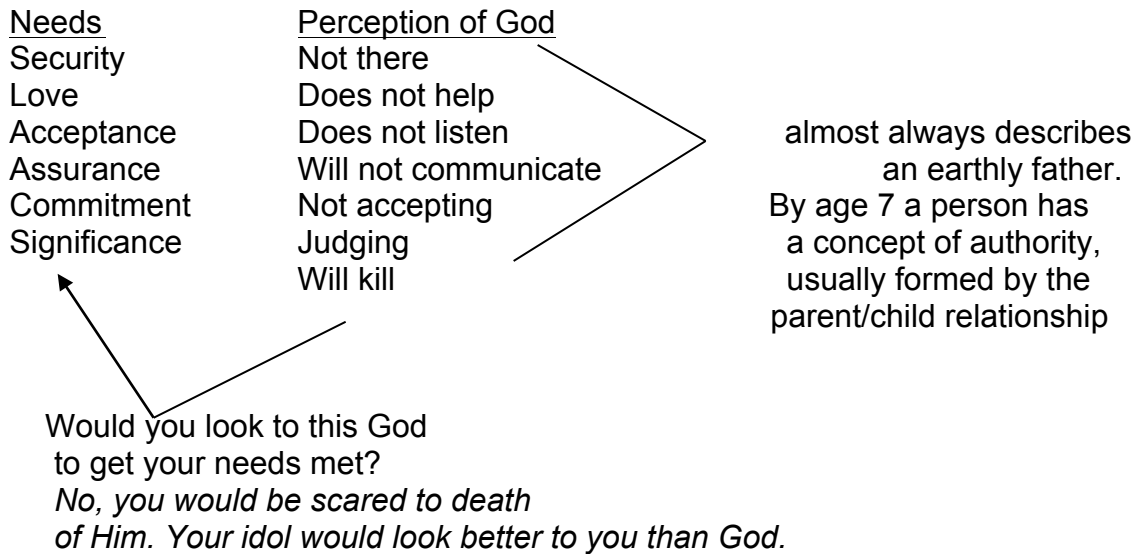
Faith Test: Who Is God?

Answer the following questions based on how you *feel* at your worst moment:

1. When I think about being with God I feel _____.
2. When I have to trust God I feel _____.
3. When I think about God I wish _____.
4. Sometimes I get angry with God when _____.
5. It frustrates me when God wants me to _____.
6. I really enjoy God when _____.
7. The one thing I would change about myself to please God is _____.
8. When I think about God's commandments I feel _____.
9. Sometimes I wish God would _____.
10. I can really depend on God when _____.
11. In my relationship with God I am always sure that He will _____.
12. The one thing that frightens me about God is _____.
13. God surprises me when _____.
14. The one thing I am afraid God will do is _____.

Are you a suicidal rapturist? That is, do you want Jesus to come just so He will take you out of the mess you are in? Are you that miserable? Can you only depend on God if you do everything right? Do you think He will make you pay?

Once the feelings are on the table, then you can look at:



Even though people know there is nothing the nearness of Jesus will not fix, they insist that human intervention is necessary to fix their problem. They have more confidence in the flesh than in the living person of Christ.

The truth is we must find something to trust because we were made for trust and faith. There are only two people you can trust in to have control of your life: Jesus Christ or your self-life. Who do you pick?

Three Types Of Christians

Rowboat Christians – Live life in their own strength and power because they do not have a God.

Sailboat Christians – Live life in the power and wind of someone else.

Powerboat Christians – Live life with Christ in them, living through them as though it is them.

The more confidence we have in God, the more power He has in our lives.

Why Do We Describe God So Negatively?

If your father was.....

Passive
Angry
Critical
Dead
Distant
Overpowering
Confusing
Lying
Materialistic
Preoccupied

You will think of God as.....

not being there
unpredictably angry and explosive
looking at the things you did wrong
not there
unreachable
imposing
indecisive
untrustworthy
valuing things above you
too busy

Is this who God is? NO!

God Is Love

I John 4:8 says that God is Love.

Replace the word *Love* with *God* and you have the description of perfect love.

I Cor. 13 – God (Love) is patient, kind, not jealous, does not brag, not arrogant, will never act unbecoming, will not seek His own, is not provoked, keeps no account of wrong, hates unrighteousness, loves the truth, bears with you, believes in you, hopes in you, endures with you, and never fails.

Believe this! It is the truth. God is love and that will never change. Know that God loves you. He's crazy about you. You are everything to Him. The fact is God loves you; He IS Love! Are your lying emotions telling you the opposite? How do we get our lying emotions to line up with the truth? It takes time. We want our emotions to swing like a bipolar person from depression to exultation, but it is not possible. Feelings do not change to agree with fact in an instant. If you hurry this process, you are not exercising faith. You will be undone quickly. Demonstrate faith by allowing God to take the allotted time to change your lying emotions, and your position in Him will not easily be shaken (3-5 years).

You must continue to deny the lies of who you feel God is and declare the true character of God in its place. Continue to move forward in the love of God.

Motivation

In the flesh we take the old concept of God and use it to beat others up. Because we know they feel these negative things about God, we try to manipulate them to obey God.

The world can motivate a Christian to act through:

1. Fear (what will happen if . . .)
2. Guilt
3. Punishment
4. Judgment
5. Comparisons
6. Condemnation

God motivates me to act by extending His:

1. love to me
2. grace to me
3. forgiveness to me
4. life to me
5. mercy to me
6. compassion to me

As you *put off the world's lies* and really *allow God to speak these truths* into your life, you will come to the revelation of **THE TRUTH** because you *fail* in all these areas (love, grace, forgiveness, bringing life to a circumstance, mercy, and compassion), and God will use those failures to teach you that He is all these things to you. If you stand in the right system, this fallen world is not the problem. Instead, it is the perfect place to produce what God wants to produce.

God created the world before man, and the Slain Lamb came before the foundation of the world. Therefore God's plan was always that redemption come via the Slain Lamb and to use a fallen world, fallen man, and our exact circumstances. He wants to use every bit of misery we have to produce something in us. God is not bothered by the mess the world is in; it was not a surprise to Him. He does not have a Plan B. Adam's failure, though God did not create it or cause it, was known to God, and He wanted to use it for the purpose of making a man who becomes a child of God through Christ, not a perfect Adam through self-effort. It all takes place in the love of God (Jesus). He is using all the things that have happened to us and the problems we have created to perfect what He wants to make. He is in charge of the whole thing!

Session 15 Scripture References: *Matt. 7:13-14; John 10:10; John 6:16-20; Matt 2:3; Luke 5:8; I John 4:8; I Cor. 13; I John 4:9*

Our Definition of Faith Session #16

When we see who God really is, why would we run from Him?

An atheist responds to questions about his past:

Was your dad there for you?

--“No, he was an alcoholic.”

Did he ever make you feel unacceptable?

--“He would joke that I wasn’t his son.”

Did he ever judge you or make your life miserable?

--“My dad would put me on his lap and put a gun to my head, threatening to kill me if my mother ever tried to leave. Then as she would walk out the door he would shoot up into the ceiling.”

Did you ever feel like you were good enough? Did he ever get you? Did he ever take anything you loved?

--The man cried and said, “My father came into my room and got me one night. He was dressed in a white hooded robe. He took me into the back yard. He had 3 black servants of ours tied up with their hands behind their back. I had spent time with these men. He shot every one of them in the back of the head and killed them. I can’t enjoy my life and family, because those 3 men were deprived of living and enjoying their lives and families.”

That man’s perception of God was one and the same with his father. The truth is, that is not who God is. After showing the man who God really was, he turned to Him and surrendered.

When you see who God really is, you can return to surrender and abandonment to Him, into His hands.

How Do You Define Faith?

What does it mean for you to be a faith person? What is faith? Faith relates primarily to the things of Christ. That is why it exists. So you can come to Him.

Your ears and eyes are created to receive. The ear receives sound and the eye receives light. If those organs begin to generate what they were meant to receive, it would drive you nuts.

Definition and purpose of faith:

In the same way, faith is the eyes and ears of your spirit. The purpose of faith is not to generate the things of God, but the purpose of faith is to receive the things of God.

Example:

A woman's husband has been ill with cancer for a while and he dies. The wife calls Mike to tell him. He asks where the funeral will be held, and she tells him the dead husband is still in the house. Why? Because the church leaders are there and have told her if she has enough faith, her husband will be raised from the dead.

What is wrong with this picture? The woman has been told to generate the work of God instead of resting and receiving the work of God.

God will tell you what He wants you to do. You need to rest and receive the things of God.

Example:

A man, 90 years of age, exclaims he has been "delivered from prayer." For 65 years he tried to generate the work of God by praying his lists to God. For the last 20 years he has given up praying his list and is receiving the things of God.

You are complete in Christ. You have everything pertaining to life and godliness. So why ask for all those things when what you need is to receive the things you already have. The real issue is not generating anything when you have not received anything yet. You need to usher people into a mindset in which they can receive the things of God.

Example:

A couple, both Christians, living together, not married, 3 kids. Man did not want to get married, she did. Mike did not see how things would progress unless there was a marriage commitment. The man was not listening at all. Mike turns to the woman and says, "You are my sister in Christ. I am not letting you go home with him." He told the man to sit there and shut up and listen to God, while Mike told the woman how to get along without him. The man tried to interrupt, but Mike would not let him unless he had something to say that God had revealed to Him. When he finally relented and received the answer from God, he dropped to one knee and asked her to marry him. They are still married today. He needed to hear from God.

What you receive from God will always have some power with it. The purpose of faith is to receive.

The Normal Progression of Faith

1. Receive the *promise*
2. *Reversal* comes
3. *Fulfillment* comes last

Example:

Joseph's Life:

1. Promise: sun, moon and stars bow down before him
2. Reversal: the pit and prison
3. Fulfillment: He becomes the second most powerful man in Egypt and saves his people.

It is in the reversal that faith is built.

******The greatness of your faith is determined not by how much you have received, but by how long you can wait and receive nothing.***

This cuts out all the faith teachers with their "Name It and Claim It" Gospel. How can there be faith without the passing of time? In the Old Testament the word "faith" is used twice, but the word "wait" is used 238 times. Waiting is faith and if a person cannot wait, he does not have any faith. In the life of faith and in our spiritual pregnancy, we need to clarify to ourselves and others that there will be times of waiting. That is where we look to Him and lean on Him to wait for things to take place.

Hebrews 11:1-35 talks of all the wonderful things that have happened to faith people, what all they received, and we thank God for them and their testimony. Hebrews 11:36 talks of a greater group of people who had believed God for something they did not receive. This group is called *the others* because they did not receive the things they longed for and still they believed. The world is not worthy of them. Are you one of *the others*?

***** *Faith is receiving the things of God, not generating the things of God.***

Listening to God

If Mother says stay in the yard, does she constantly interfere with the children about how they are staying in the yard? No, she just continues to watch and the children enjoy playing. But when the children move to the sidewalk, she speaks up and warns them, and if they venture out into the road, she runs out and grabs them.

When it comes to walking with God, you do not hear anything when you are in His perfect will. It is silent. As you step out of His will, you will begin to lose your peace. You will hear a voice to warn you, and if you get way outside His will, He will send a force called "problems" to drive you back into His presence.

Being at peace in the will of God is like a quiet pool, and as you start to move out of His will, there is a tap and a bit of a ripple that comes across your spirit. You are losing your peace. If you get way outside His will you feel as though you are

going to drown, and you get that sinking feeling. It is important not to look to the spectacular for confirmation of God's will. Is the spectacular the norm? No. Sometimes you set up a contrast and make the spectacular the norm. Do you think that if you could just see Jesus, your whole life would change? The natural way to walk with God is: the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not yet seen. So the natural way to walk with God is not in the spectacular, but in the *unseen*. That is faith. If you want to enter into a deeper walk with Him through the *seen*, you will be coming in with no faith. The problem with that is that faith is His goal. If you are coming in on the *seen*, you are coming in with no faith, and the only way to a deeper faith from that point is to bring greater unseen experiences (negatives) into your life where faith is produced.

Example:

The apostle Paul came to faith in the spectacular through a sudden blinding from the Spirit, then he was healed and taught out away from others. But then his life was a continuous series of difficult trials in order to boost him to a place of real faith. He needed to experience life without the physical manifestation of God in order to develop his faith.

Be happy if you have not had the spectacular. Thank Jesus that He is in you, ask Him to be your life today, and move on in your life believing Him for what you have not yet seen, all the while developing and growing in your faith. Spectacular is not the norm. The unseen, the way of faith, is the norm.

Decision Making

Deception says: Faith will make everything cloudy.

Truth says: Faith will make everything clear.

You think if you have to walk in faith it will be cloudy. But *indecision* is what is cloudy. Indecision causes more damage than a wrong decision. *Indecision* is what messes you up, not faith.

How do you make decisions?

1. Clarify God's goal for you. God's goal is a *plan*, the revelation of Christ, not a *place* or a *vocation*. He can use any situation to accomplish "the goal" he has for you.
2. As you move toward the *plan* there are 2 things that must work together:
 - a. *The sovereignty of God*. You must believe in the love of God to abandon yourself to this. You must be standing in the right system and believe that His sovereignty is working all things together for good. His sovereignty is working in the natural events of life. Believe that!

- b. *Your Free Will.* Your decisions are made in what you like and dislike. God works in your personality and leads through the natural events of life. You have to make a choice, because the goal of every decision is faith and trust in Him. If you know everything then you do not have faith.

Move from choice to choice. A faith choice will always be an explosion. It has to be because that is where your faith is built. In that explosion there is a bit of unknown. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and conviction of things not yet known. You do not know how things will turn out. You just know you have a God, and you put it in His hands. So do not loiter, make a decision. Ask God for His will, not yours, and wait 3 to 7 days before you act on the decision you already made. Then act and do not look back. In faith, God will deliver you before, not in. Just because there are reversals does not mean you made a wrong decision or that God didn't approve or is not working. The fulfillment will come.

Session 16 Scripture References: Col. 2:8-9; I Cor. 1:30; Gen. 37:5-9; Heb. 11:3-11; Heb. 11:1

The Goal of Relationships

Chapter #17

Review

When it comes to the things of God, we must remember that Jesus is the glue. He holds everything together. He is the Way, and every other way is not the Way. Your way is always going to be a solvent that will cause you to come undone.

You can either believe the things of God or prove the things of God. The truth is not something that is preached, it is demonstrated. Grace is free, but you will have to purchase truth. Truth will always be a confrontation. Truth is something that will have to be fertilized by the Holy Spirit in order to have any life in it at all. Everything that is true is not the truth, because THE TRUTH is Christ. Remember that you have not arrived, but you have left where you were. With every going there is a leaving. With every learning there is an unlearning. We are doing a bit of unlearning as we go along.

Adam was not Plan A and Jesus Plan B. Jesus was always Plan A. One day in heaven, Jesus said to the Father, "I would like to have a bride." He comes up with a plan. "Let us make man." In that plan, one day, man is going to become the very bride of God. He makes Adam as the first step, man in process. He made Adam in the image of God because if God is going to have a bride, man must be in the image of God. Adam fails; God knew what He would do with that failure and the world. In this fallen world, humanity, and flesh, God would do what the original plan was: to bring the Slain Lamb from the foundation of the world who conquered everything we would have to conquer. He did it as God and came to dwell in us to make us children of God, a completely brand new creation, something that far surpasses Adam. Now, we go back to Heaven as Christ's bride. Christ did it all. He came forward and made the whole thing happen.

The picture of God's plan should change your world. From this perspective, God is in charge of everything. He is not fighting Satan, He is using him. He is permitting everything He could have prevented, all for a reason. He works all things together for His good, to produce exactly what He wants to produce. All we have to do is rest! It will be the hardest thing you will ever do.

Take Up the Cross and Deny Yourself

God made man with spirit, soul and body. You were born dead to God in the spirit, which makes you self-centered and insane. It gives you an image and identity that you get from other self-centered, insane people. You spend your life changing or maintaining it. It becomes the focus of your life. In order to cope with

the pain you turn to idols, because you have a false concept of God. You were created to believe in Him, but you cannot believe in Him, because of the image you have of Him developed from the authority figures in your youth.

How Does This Affect Relationships Around Us?

In the new system

You can begin to see God in the relationships. When something goes wrong in the relationship, the first question you ask is, "Why did God permit this in my life? What does He want to teach me first?"

In the old system

You would have asked, "Why did you offend me? You need to change so my flesh will feel better."

Deep inside, you know the future, because you have the eternal Christ living in you. The things that happen in life should not be any real surprise. You may be shocked at the revelation of the love of God for you, but in terms of events in your life as a believer, nothing should really shock you. It should be comforting to know that God knows the future and nothing happens apart from His perfect will.

Will You End Well?

If God speaks a "yes" in you, do not worry! Just because you hit a dip along the way does not mean you will not end well. It comes because there is something in you that is going to make you miserable unless God brings it out and works on it. You may want to respond by *killing the messenger*. You have a cancer in you so God wants to dig it out and bring it to the top by using the people and circumstances around you. You respond by wanting to eliminate the people or circumstances doing the digging, but the love of God has allowed it for your refinement. God's order of things does not feel right to you, but God knows what must occur to bring you ultimately to a place of joy, peace, and contentment. You must respond with "What does God have for me in this circumstance?"

Everything in the world is working for us. Remember, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Relationships must be handled this way, because if they are not, you will be undone and will be trying to change other people's behavior to suit yours.

God gave you the exact _____, at the exact time, to do an exact thing in your life. Remember this when you approach relationships.

The Marriage "Y" (This can be used for any relationship.)

Every relationship comes to a "Y" in the road. You can go left and live in fantasy, focus on your mate, and make him or her your god and happiness your goal. If

so, you will be looking for a soulmate that does everything you do and likes everything you like, agrees with you, and thinks and feels the way you do. In the flesh you want someone just like your flesh. This ends in disaster!

You can approach relationships (marriage) differently. Go to the right. Start with the premise that marriage is there to make you miserable, as miserable as you are self-centered. Marriage will reveal your self-centeredness. Your goal in your marriage is to keep your focus on Christ and reality, and your satisfaction must come from the Lord. As you go this way marriage will hammer your pride. It will make you turn to Him and will cut away at your self-centeredness. Keep in mind that your goal is Christ, and He will lead you to a joy that will continue.

Happiness comes when Christ is the focus.

Make the Goal in your relationships the revelation of Christ in you, not happiness.

The Bags You Carry in Relationships

You carry two bags into relationships:

1. Your unique self--how God made you; the soul is the seat of your uniqueness.
2. Your flesh life--your past life, your humanity.

We are told to crucify self, deny self, and love self. Which is it?

Unique Personalities and Relationships

Thinker, Feeler, Doer

Each of these personalities sees the world differently and is found in the soul (mind, will, and emotions).

Thinkers--They live in their mind. Their mind gets busy when they are bored. When thinkers are quiet, they are generally thinking. They love truth.

Feelers--They live in their emotions. They love praise and words of encouragement. When feelers are quiet, they are generally angry.

Doers--They live in their will. They say what they think. You know what is on their mind. They can be caustic. They are goal driven.

Conflicts occur because we do not understand each other's uniqueness, then our flesh kicks in and we respond according to our past experiences.

Example of bringing something from the past

A woman grows up with a dominant mother. Therefore, when she gets married, all she has ever known is the wife in charge. She is a Christian and knows that

the husband should be the leader. She wants this in her spirit, but she is afraid to let go because of her past experience. Conflict occurs because of it.

Example of Unique-Self Conflict

A man who grew up with a critical mother gets married. He is a feeler and cleans the house to please his wife. His thinker wife comes home, looks around, and finds the one thing he did not do. When she speaks, he hears his mother talking, and all those feelings of worthlessness return. He responds in that condition. Neither of them considered the other's unique self before responding.

Example of Collisions between Unique Self and Past

A feeler man had an uncaring mother who ignored him whenever he was talking. He marries a thinker who walks off while he is speaking. He interprets her action as rejection, but really she is just thinking and has not heard him at all. He judged her motive and missed the whole thing.

Judgments

In your *unique self* and because of your *flesh life* that you carry, you will make others miserable. But is it your plan to make others miserable? No. Do you like being judged falsely? No. False judgments of others will cause you the most misery. Do not assume you know why others behave the way they do. Many times you will be wrong. *Do not play God. Only God's judgments are right.*

Example: Bethghalen

Our judgments will always be distorted because of the two bags we carry, our unique self and our flesh.

Session 17 Scripture References: Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 21:2; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 11:3-11; Rom. 8:31; Matt. 7:1

When We Judge, We Judge Wrongly

Session #18

Attaching Motives To Behavior and How That Affects Relationships

False Judgments

You hate the unknown, so once you make a judgment, you take all the facts and bring them together to prove the judgment that you have made. How often is that judgment right?

If you really want to find out what you are like and want a quick course in the death of image, just find the person that annoys you the most. Stand in front of him or her and you will see a reflection of yourself. Typically when you are uncomfortable around a person it is because you are seeing amplified in him the things in you.

Matthew 7:3, "Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and not notice the log in your own eye?"

Romans 2:1 says, "Therefore, you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the very same things."

Think of all the people you have judged. What you see in them is actually what is hidden in you. Your judgments reveal you.

If you want to know everything there is about a person, sit and listen to his judgments and you will know all about him.

You need to be offended until you cannot be offended.

You must:

1. recognize that your judgments are a reflection of you, and
2. recognize that when you take offense, that reveals something about you.

If you do these two things, you will have a move in God.

Esther

Do you think Haman would have been as thrilled about the gallows he built for Mordecai if he knew that the king would soon sentence him to hang from them?

Has this happened to you?

David

Do you think David would have said, "Surely that man should die!" if he knew that Nathan would respond with "You are that man!"? David was not a great man, he was a protected man, and if you are doing better than someone else, it is not because you are a great person, it is because you are a protected person. It is because the grace of God is upon you. If He lifts his hand of protection, it will be a totally different story.

Judging others:

1. is like throwing dirt on someone, and if you throw enough dirt, you will be stuck in a hole you cannot get out of.
2. is like sitting on a branch with someone and sawing away, only to find out that you are on the wrong side of the tree limb when it falls.

Judging will make your life most miserable! Live like Paul lived and vow to "know no man according to the flesh" (II Corinthians 5:16).

Why do people attribute sainthood to others after they die? When you are living with someone, every day your flesh is rubbing against his or her flesh, causing friction when you are not walking in the Spirit. When there is a death, the "rubbing" ends, and since your focus can no longer be on the flesh, the focus becomes the heart of the person you knew, and then you start to recognize all the good in them.

Conversely, Paul said he would not wait till believers die before he sainted them; he declared the truth that they were saints already, and he vowed to know no man according to the flesh, but instead he would look at their heart.

What we want to minister to in a person is the heart, not his flesh. Pray, "Jesus, reveal the heart of this person." Even if a person's flesh is very ugly, his heart could be beautiful. God can work in the situation.

Our judgments made out of our humanity--self-life--and our attempts to play God are never right.

How Do We End Well?

It is good to see someone old who loves Jesus.

Example:

An old man took two pens out of his pocket and stood one on end and laid the other one down. Then he asked:

- "Who is holding this pen up?" --You are.
- "Whose power is it?" --It is your power.
- "Whose strength is it?" --Your strength.
- "Who gets the glory?" --You do.

He said, "Listen as the standing pen talks to the fallen pen."

"I knew you were going fall. I knew you would fail. I was just waiting for you to fail. I saw what you were doing. I know what your devotional life is." The old man said, "You know, I am getting tired of hearing that," and he let the pen fall. Now there are two pens lying there, and he takes out another pen and holds it up and repeats the dialogue and then lets that pen fall.

Then he turns and says, "The reason why they begin well and do not end well is that they forget who is holding them. It is God's power, glory and strength, not theirs."

Psalms tells us that God is the judge and He puts down one and exalts the other.

If you are living with difficult, immature, struggling, or carnal people, and you are none of these things, why aren't you? This question should humble you. Divine humility is not saying, "I *am* nothing." Instead, it is saying, "I *have* nothing. I only have what God has given me." Jesus demonstrated divine humility.

All God has to do is lift His hand of protection and your self-life and your flesh expressions will come out, and they are no better than anyone else's. When you judge, it comes back on you.

Never say, "I would never _____." Jesus never made that statement. He just remained wholly dependent on the Father.

Revelation Of Your Sin

If God brings a revelation to you concerning your judgmental attitude, do not be discouraged and depressed. That is more self-centeredness and pride. Do not become upset over your humanity. (Elijah did not want the prophets of Baal or Jezebel to kill him, but when he discovers he is not better than others, he wants God to kill him.)

Christians fall, but they fall forward. God needs people that come back on a knockout punch. The point of discussing these things and witnessing the revelation of God in you is to bring you up. When you recognize your sin, look to Him and say, "Let the peace of God rule in my heart."

The Difference Between Knowledge and Revelation

Knowledge never has any power with it, but with revelation comes the power. The Prodigal Son can say in depression, "I am no longer worthy." When Jesus becomes your *worthy*, you will say that same statement with joy.

Not only have we judged, but we have been judged. People have said and thought untrue things of us. When we are judged, just say in the quietness of our heart, "God bless you." That's the release. We know we judge, too.

Ecclesiastes 7 says, “Do not pay attention to every word that people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you. You yourself know that in your hearts many times you have cursed others, too.”

You cannot avoid being wounded, but you can take responsibility for cleansing the wound and keeping it free from infection. “God bless you.” Let the whole thing go, and do not obsess over it.

Session 18 Scripture References: Matt. 7:3-5; Romans 2:1; Esther 6:4; II Sam. 12:1-7; II Cor. 5:15; I Kings 19:4; Col. 3:15; Luke 15:18-19

Introduction to the Unique Self

Session #19

All people have a Unique Self which we have been given and a flesh-life or self-life which we have been commanded to deny daily. There are distinct differences between the two, and they affect our relationships.

The Unique Self

God created our inmost being; He knit us together in our mother's womb. He made each one of us to be different. Every person is like a prism, receiving light and displaying it uniquely. You should not lose your uniqueness, the way God wants to display Himself through you. So do not imitate others. Be who you are in Christ. "Do not go about hatching everyone else's eggs. Instead, develop into who you are in Christ."

If you are a kingdom builder you want everyone to do it your way. Instead, you should freely give of what has been revealed to you. Allow others to take what you have given for their own. Recognize grace is free, but truth is purchased, and whatever someone else understands and takes hold of is their revelation, not your material. Who cares if you were the earthly source! The truth is that God was the original heavenly source! If you want to copyright your revelations from God, they will be the last ones you ever get. God's revelation is not to be kept, but has come to pass through you. Do not keep His Glory for yourself.

Love your uniqueness; enjoy what God made you to be. Stop trying to take the best out of everyone else and forcing all those pieces to fit together. God wants to take you and flow through your unique self.

God made me unique. He made me out of the dust of the earth, breathed His spirit into me, and gave me a mind, will, and emotions.

Body

Soul

seat of your personality

Spirit

Mind, Will, Emotions

Basic Three Types of Personalities

- Thinkers -- primarily live in their minds
- Feelers -- primarily live in their emotions
- Doers -- primarily live in their will power

Why 3 Personalities and Not 4?

The 3-personality model is more Biblical and is a better foundation, in that it follows the creation model more closely. The soul is the seat, so personality is made up of mind, will, and emotions. In order to express personality properly, you should use those three forms.

The 4-personality model has its roots in astrology (sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic). Hippocrates refined the astrological beliefs with “scientific research.” When people died, he would cut them open, and whatever type of body fluid emerged was what personality type he gave them (red was sanguine, yellow for choleric, etc.). This is not to say that every person that teaches the 4-personality model is into astrology, but a point could be made for that model’s possibly serving as a distraction when looking at the uniqueness of man.

Jesus reflected these three personalities when he said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| “I am the way.” | -- Doer |
| “I am the truth.” | -- Thinker |
| “I am the life.” | -- Feeler |

Caution! We are not looking at uniqueness so that you will obsess on it. It is only meant as a means to see how God made you unique. Your focus should always be on Jesus.

Personality Differences

Doers (muscle)

- task through others
- see people as tools
- don't try to fix things, just throw them away
- don't see obstacles
- love risk
- hate rules
- goal oriented
- hate to hear "no"
- conflict breaks up boredom

Feelers (senses)

- don't want to offend
- put us in touch with world around us
- "senses" of the church
- relationship = identity
- subjective
- blame takers
- sensitive
- people pleasers
- love to be heard to get things in order
- love to verbalize what's going on inside of them
- like to see people happy

Thinkers (head)

- judgmental
- obsessive
- get hung up on details
- perfectionists
- invisible glue that holds organizations together
- task = identity (must separate these)
- thinker wants 100% from everyone else to perform
- procrastinate out of fear of failure and do it last minute only to come in under their own mark

Your uniqueness is like a hammer. It is not bad or good; it is neutral. It can be a blessing if used by the Spirit of God, or a curse if used by the flesh, your humanity. Paul was a driven man, seeking to persecute Christians before he was saved, and he was a driven man after he was saved, driven to see men come to Christ. He saw no obstacles before in having Christians killed, and he saw no obstacles after in reaching them with the Gospel. *His personality did not change, just its source changed.*

Do not use your personality as an excuse. Every believer has something in common: the fruit of the Spirit. Just because you are a doer, that does not authorize you to bulldoze people. No matter what occurs you ought to be displaying love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, meekness, and self-control if Christ is in charge.

Personality/Spirituality

It is very difficult to operate outside your personality. Typically, you will try to bend the situation to fit your personality. In the church, we unfortunately use personality to judge spirituality. There is a difference between our uniqueness and our spiritual gifts. Most spiritual gift tests can be taken by an unbeliever, because they are nothing more than personality tests. Doers develop these tests, categorizing themselves as apostles, prophets, and leaders, and thinkers as their servants. How convenient!

Most people come to Christ through a friend or relative. Very few, in comparison, come in large meetings under the influence of a charismatic preacher. Personality is not the thing that draws others to Christ.

Let's not set up contrasts and hold everyone accountable to be like us, judging their spirituality by their personality.

Session 19 Scripture Verses: Psalm 139:13-16; Mark 12:33; John 14:6; Acts 15:36-39

The Feeler, Thinker, and Doer

Session #20

The Thinker, Feeler, and Doer all have different perspectives and all see the world differently. Many false judgments are rooted in the fact that you do not know the person you are judging. You should stand in his shoes before you judge.

God creatively expresses Himself through unique individuals using their mind, will, and emotions.

Thinker

1. Loves the truth.
2. Task = Identity
3. Mind works like a line of dominos. When confronted with an idea that is not in his plan, the dominos begin to fall and his reaction comes out of all the dominos falling. In other words, he thinks through his whole list of plans and then reacts to the fact that those plans will not be completed if he takes a detour presented. He does not like the agenda interrupted.
4. Is indecisive.
5. Is obsessive.
6. Is critical.
7. Loves to keep lists.
8. Sees things black and white.
9. Thinks before he talks.
10. Likes security; hates the unknown.
11. Hates complex relationships.
12. Likes verbal acceptance more than physical acceptance.
13. Is loyal (1-3 friends his whole life).
14. *Anger*--He has a pressure cooker inside, simmering awhile before exploding and losing his temper. The last event before the explosion is the last straw, not the cause.
15. Idols of the thinker are criticism and depression.
16. Is the ulcer "getter" in a relationship.
17. Money for a thinker is security.
18. Detail oriented and exact.
19. Often has a dry sense of humor.
20. *In being disciplined*--He wants to know how things will work out. He likes to know all the details and definitions. This is important to know when you are discipling one.
21. *In discipling others*—Thinker is the type to walk beside you and give you the facts to get you to move.
22. Likes to stay in one place; does not like change
23. *Energy Level*--Starts high and ends low.

Feelers

1. Their identity is in their relationships
2. They are subjective.
3. They are defensive.
4. They are blame takers.
5. They are enthusiastic and motivational.
6. They are very physically and verbally affectionate (love to hug and encourage)
7. *Anger*--They have minor explosions more frequently.
8. They are also ulcer "getters" in a relationship.
9. Money for feelers is freedom.
10. They are careless and carefree.
11. They pay no attention to detail.
12. They are easily discouraged.
13. *In being disciplined*--They are easily drawn into guilt and emotion. You need to move them into fact and faith. Important for discipleship.
14. *In discipling others*--They will stand in front of you and coax you to come along in your relationship with God.
15. *Energy Level*--Starts low and ends high.

Doer

1. "Self-made" person; does everything himself because no one can do it right.
2. Is able to separate issues, work through them, and move on.
3. Expects others to "buck up."
4. *Anger*--Has major explosions which affect everyone around him, and then he is done with it.
5. The ulcer "giver" in a relationship.
6. Money for a doer is a tool to get something else going, to fulfill the desire for risk taking.
7. Can be caustic.
8. Loves risk taking and excitement.
9. Loves conflict.
10. *When being disciplined*--Always positions himself above you. Wants his thumb on you. (You cannot let that happen.)
11. *When discipling someone*--He kicks someone from behind to get him to move.
12. He can usually get people to do things for him. He likes to be in charge.
13. He loves to embellish stories.
14. Hates to be caged in.
15. Inactivity kills him.
16. *Energy Level*--Starts high and ends high.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each personality. Each personality can be a plus when Christ rules over it and each can be a minus when self rules over it. If you understand that, you can come to a place of loving yourself, accepting and loving what God made you to be.

God does not show partiality in personality. Every person gets the full number of units; they just are distributed differently.

	Thinker	Doer	Feeler
Mind	8	1	1
Will	1	8	1
Emotions	1	1	8
Total Units	10	10	10

Crucify Yourself, Love Yourself, Deny Yourself

The things that drive your uniqueness are your talent, ability, and intellect, and they are based in the soul or the personality.

Old Self

You are born with an Old Man, Old Life, or Old Nature ruling over your personality. It expresses your flesh or fallen humanity, and as you do that you live in Hell and end up going to Hell.

Solution: Your Old Self must be crucified with Christ and you must get a new life.

New Life

Even after you get a new life, there is still a residue of the Old Life in you. In other words, baggage remains from the Adam life: idols and feelings. If you allow those things to rule over your uniqueness, you will still express the flesh, and the deeds of the flesh will be evident.

Solution: You must deny your baggage, letting Christ's life rule, not self-life.

Christ's Life – The Solution

In this condition you are living in Heaven and going to Heaven. Move over and let Christ drive. Christ is in charge of your uniqueness and if He is living through you, God can express Himself uniquely through your personality.

Be careful when you judge someone's flesh; just because he is expressing the flesh does not mean he is not a Christian. A carnal Christian and unbeliever can have the same expression of flesh. A carnal Christian is living in Hell, going to Heaven. An unbeliever is living in Hell, going to Hell.

To live victoriously in this life is a job for divinity. You cannot do it in the flesh. Deny it and invite Christ to come and live through your uniqueness.

Thinker, Feeler, Doer Pyramid

The thinker is at the top of the pyramid concerning the focus on detail. The doer comes in the middle, generally having a plan, and the feeler falls at the bottom of the pyramid, more concerned with his relationship with others than any notice to detail.

Opposites Attract

When couples marry, often they are opposites because the greatest ground for oneness is not compatibility but incompatibility. Many times the low point for the woman is the high point for the man. Opposites raise great kids, but they will be arguing all the time because they see things differently. Typically, one parent is compassion driven and the other is performance driven. Good balance.

When one person (A) makes headway in improvements, the other (B) does not acknowledge the improvement because A has not reached B's level of satisfaction. This inability to recognize the attempts at change made by each personality is discouraging and squelches any desire to pursue further change in either person.

Session 20 Scripture References: Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Prov. 28:21; Gal. 5:24; Luke 9:23-25; Mark 12:33; Gal. 2:20

Understanding the Unique Self

Session #21

God has created us and the world around us but has permitted the fallen world to squeeze you so you see that you have a need for Him. When you are squeezed, you discover that in your humanity you cannot live the divine life, so you invite Him to come and live through you.

Even after the world has accomplished the goal of squeezing you until you recognize your need for Him, God continues to allow the squeezing to release His life in you. In those circumstances exactly Christ is flowing through you in the midst of the world. In your innermost being flows rivers of living water and out of you comes something that somebody else can drink in the world.

The world will help to divide your soul from your spirit. This is part of your spiritual pregnancy. Hebrews 4:12 says that the word of God is living and active and sharper than a 2-edged sword, able to divide the soul from the spirit. This refers to Jesus Himself. The New Testament was not written then. It is Jesus who will come in and separate you from the world. He will *use* the world to *separate* you from the world.

If you are in the world long enough, the world will beat the love that you have for it right out of you.

Do you live to men or do you love men? There is a big difference between loving and living. You are to love everyone around you, but you may end up living to people and allowing them to control you. So God's normal progression of working with a man is that He takes you out of the world, He cuts you off from everything but Himself, and then you find Him, and in Him everything you have been looking for. Then you return to the world a completely different person. You will love people, but you will no longer live to people. It is a beautiful place to be. Wouldn't it be nice to be in a place where when someone offends or attacks you, there will be no move in your spirit, because you were not living for that person, but for God instead? No one would be able to have a hold on you, because you would always be living to God and loving others. All your preaching, teaching, and sharing would not be before men but before God. You would be sharing all you believe about Him, for Him.

How do you get to a place of perfect peace in all circumstances? The word of God that is living and active and sharper than any 2-edged sword begins to divide and cut you off from the world, so you have to look to the Spirit and find your answers there. God uses the fallen world and the people around us, including carnal Christians, to work His perfect will in us.

What Does It Look Like To Be Cut Off?

The soul is like a baby and it needs nourishment. If you give a baby water, it will not be satisfied, but if you give a baby milk, it will be happy. Your soul was created to feed on the Spirit, the pure milk of God, Jesus, the Word of God. Because you are born dead to God, you cannot feed on Jesus, you must feed on water.

Remember, your soul is made up of mind, will, and emotions. Instead of filling your mind with the wisdom of God, you fill it with the knowledge of the world. Your will is very hungry, and the only thing that will ultimately satisfy it in a deep way is His will, but you choose to fill it with your will and you get fussy. Your emotions need the peace of God, but you are cut off from God, so instead of peace, you end up striving for happiness.

Jesus In the Wilderness

When the Spirit came upon Jesus, it drove Him into the wilderness. Why would the Spirit do this? It appears that since He had the power, the logical place for Him to go would be into the world. Right? Wrong! Instead of being driven into the world, the sword comes, cuts Jesus off from the world and takes Him into the wilderness. Why was Jesus in the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights, and how did that wilderness experience prepare Him for His ministry and what was coming next?

The ***Mind, Will, Emotions*** model:

Mind: When you go in the wilderness, there is nothing that you can do, so you cannot fill your mind with knowledge; there is nothing to read. Instead you must fill your mind with the wisdom of God and become satiated on the pure milk of God.

Will: In addition, when you are in the wilderness there is nothing to do, so you might as well do His will.

Emotions: Also, there is nothing to make you happy, so you might as well feed on Him and have the peace of God.

Jesus' soul fed on the things of God (the Spirit) for 40 days and 40 nights until at the end of that time His soul was absolutely stuffed! What before may have been a temptation to Him would be a temptation no more. That is when Satan came to tempt Him. Jesus did not need people to follow Him, or kingdoms to rule over, or even food to eat. He did not need anything the world had to offer; He was stuffed with the things of God.

When you are fighting temptation, you are fighting the wrong thing. You should go back and ask, "Why is this a temptation?" You will find that it is because you are not full with the things of God, and you are trying to feed your soul on the things of the world, those things outside of yourself.

Effect On Emotions

Mind, will, and emotion are a beautiful thing as long as the events in the world are not dictating your body, which are, in turn, affecting your "emotions," and in doing so, blocking the Spirit. In contrast, when you are full and you let His Spirit flow through your mind, will, and emotions and feed them, then the body and the related activities are similarly affected. Your "emotions" are now a blessing. Peace must rule over you, and you are only at peace when you are being fed by Him.

As part of your spiritual pregnancy, a wilderness experience (being cut off from the world) is a good thing. It is His activity—God allows you to see Him in it. Remember, when you are in the wilderness and you cannot find knowledge, or your will, or happiness, it is because He did not intend you to find it. You need to go to God and have your mind filled with His wisdom, your will filled with His will, and your emotions filled with His peace.

How Does This Affect Our Relationships?

Now you will have a new paradigm to look at relationships through, a new way to look at how you treat others and how people treat you. You will see God in everything that is happening around you. The goal of your life has to be the revelation of Christ in you. Everything will fit into that goal.

When you understand that God has made each person unique, you will appreciate who God made you to be and stop making false judgments about the people around you. Then you will be able to love yourself and minister to others at their real point of need.

Energy Levels and Relationships

Refer to Session #20

Common Personality Blends

You may be primarily one type (thinker, feeler, doer) while being a lesser level of one or both of the other two, because most people are a blend, not compulsively high in any one trait.

The Unique Self Test looks at personality in different settings:

1. Social setting
2. Under stress
3. In the area of affection

Thinker/Feeler (these being equal while doer portion is lower)--amiable, friendly, disarming; the world's Valium; always thinking and feeling; under stress and pressure they stall out when making decisions. They cycle between "thinking and feeling" about a situation until they are too exhausted to make a decision.

High Thinker/Lower Doer--very creative; high standards for yourself. You recognize your faults and do not need to have them pointed out; you are acutely aware of them.

High Doer/Lower Thinker--have high standards that apply to others; rule the house with an iron fist; everything would run smoothly if everyone would do things their way and make them happy; always frustrated and ready to explode.

Feeler/Lower Doer--high emotional need for relationship but would like someone else to initiate the relationship. Good promotional people; they are excellent with people, as long as someone else organizes the meetings.

Doer/Lower Feeler--initiates relationships

Session 21 Scripture References: *John 7:38; Hebrews 4:12; I John 2:15; I Peter 2:2; Luke 4:1; Luke 4:9-12; Col. 1:27*

Self-Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

(Investigating the Two-Part Man)

Session #22

Self-Life--The Inner and Outer Man

You can discuss man from two models:

The Three-Part Man consisting of: *Body, Soul, and Spirit*.

The Two-Part Man consisting of: *Inner and Outer Life*.

You need to understand the *self-life*, developed in the inner man, so that you can take up the cross daily and deny it. In II Cor. 4:16 and Rom. 5:14-18, Paul talks about the two lives we have: the outer and inner lives.

Outer Life--the part that was made in the womb of your mother, the part we can see.

Inner Life--Adam's life formed in the womb of the world and taking on its own uniqueness.

Two races of people:

1. One has Adam's life in them--human being; powered by the flesh
2. The other has Christ's life in them--supernatural; the very life of God flows through them

People can only see the outer man; there are very few people who understand and know your inner life.

Development of the Inner Life or Self-Life

Born dead to God in the spirit; self-centered and insane, you do not know who you are so you go to other self-centered, insane people and ask them to tell you who you are.

Because of each person's unique personality, events outside each person will affect him or her differently. Our unique self or personality acts as a filter that surrounds the inner man. As we look to others to meet our needs, we will take in messages through our own unique filter.

Example:

Passive father (not involved)/Thinker daughter:

What may Satan try to convince her of? She may think she is unacceptable, unlovable, and unwanted. Add in alcoholic Dad and she will feel worthless. She looks to Mom, who is very dominant and overprotective. Thinkers do not respond

well to getting advice, because they already thought through it. Now she feels stupid, because Mom does not approve of her choices.

The Adam life takes shape as you move through life. You choose relationships that you have been shaped to handle. You only pursue people you have the tools to deal with. People tend to choose the same type of people who have shaped their lives.

People hate contrast. If others see you are making choices that are right and different from theirs, they are uncomfortable with that because they do not want to be confronted with their own sin. We do not want to see people above us so we try to bring them down. Peter and Judas both tried to bring Jesus down, but Jesus responded in a way to lift them up.

You do not change people or the world through conflict. You change them through contrast. When there is a contrast you either hang yourself like Judas, or you move up like Peter.

Interestingly, if you have been given messages by a certain type of person (i.e., abusive), you will look to that same type person (abusive) to remove the message. What happens is the person you choose only intensifies the message.

The Flesh and Change/Maintenance

Now that your distorted image has been developed, as you looked to others to meet your needs, it begins to take on its own shape. If your image is negative, you recognize this and do not accept what you have perceived your image to be, so you work hard to change in order to rid yourself of this image. If the image is positive, in some ways it is worse than a negative image, because you have to work yourself to death to maintain it. When you get married, you are equipped to handle only messages of love, not rejection. So when you are rejected, you do not know how to handle it. It can be very difficult to maintain your image as people and circumstances are always trying to undo it.

The flesh is flesh and hostile to God whether it is positive flesh or negative flesh. It is going to hang us up, because God is trying to get us to a place where we will allow His life to enter and flow through us. It is the only solution.

What People Do to Change/Maintain their Identity/Acceptable Deeds of the Flesh

- *People Pleasing*
- *Performance*
- *Counseling*
- *Prayer & vows*
- *New relationships*
- *New job*
- *New location*

- *Put their life into their children/grandchildren*
- *Experience*
- *Bible study*
- *Church Attendance*
- *Read Books*
- *Working harder*

You will not improve the flesh. The flesh is the expression of your condition of being cut off from God. You will not improve the flesh in the power of the flesh.

John 3:6 – What is born of the flesh is flesh.

John 6:63 – The flesh will profit nothing.

Romans 3:20 – By the works of the law, no flesh is justified.

John 5:6 – The flesh is flesh.

Romans 8:7-8 – The flesh is hostile to God.

The Flesh and Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Should a Christian avoid evil? Yes. Should a Christian avoid good? Yes. The flesh can be strengthened through good just as much as it can be strengthened through evil. There are the down-and-out people (bad/bad) and the up-and-out people (good/bad). The flesh is like a coin with two sides. One side is *self-righteousness*, and the other side is *unrighteousness*. Either one of these things will strengthen your flesh.

God's standard: If you are in Christ, you are accepted; if you are not in Christ you are rejected.

Good and evil come from the exact same tree. If you try to maintain or change your image by doing evil, it will not work. If you try to maintain or change your image by doing good, you would be nurturing the “fruit” from the same tree. If you water the “good” side of the tree, you will get more fruit on the “bad” side. The more good you do, the more evil you will do. If you eat from the tree of “good” you will know evil.

When you come to Christ, your behavior is at a minus 100. If you listen to those who would try to motivate you through guilt, judgments, comparisons, and what you do, you will try, in your flesh, to drive your behavior up to a plus 100. So eventually, to the level of self-righteousness you attain, it will drive you to an even deeper level of unrighteousness.

Jesus said there was hope for tax collectors and sinners, but as for the Scribes and Pharisees, he said they were twice fit for Hell. They pumped the flesh up to a plus 100, and their flesh became so strong that their self-righteousness and strong flesh actually allowed them to do evil beyond comprehension: They crucified the Son of God.

Up and out (good/bad) is a much more dangerous position to be in than down and out (bad/bad). The world applauds and encourages the sin of the up and out person, but clearly recognizes and points out the sin of the down and out person.

God's standard is that if you are in Christ you are accepted, and if you are not you are rejected. If you do evil and go below the line, you are unrighteous. If you do "good" and go above the line, you are self-righteous. God demands righteousness from you, yet if you try to give it to Him, He rejects it as a filthy rag, not because He does not require righteousness, but because He does not want *your* righteousness.

What He demands from you is the life of Christ flowing and living through you, His righteousness as though it is yours, but it is not yours. All along it was His. He does not need yours because it is produced in the power of Adam's life, humanity, and is the expression of flesh. It will not make God very happy at all.

The place where you find the most immorality will be the place where there is the most legalism.

*The solution to self is **not** to fix it in your own strength!*

Session 22 Scripture References: Rom. 7:18; II Cor. 4:16; Rom. 5:14-18

The Exchanged Life, A New Creation

Session #23

Review

The 2 bags you carry:

1. Unique Self--Created in us by God; He wants to express Himself through you in a unique way
2. Self-life--flesh life; developed uniquely in the world

You are made up of:

1. Outer Life--formed in the womb of your mother
2. Inner Life--formed in the womb of the world

You are born with Adam's life, cut off from God; also have your humanity, made in the image of God but distorted when Adam disobeyed God; your inner life is taking its own unique form.

The formation of the self-life: Messages you receive as you look to others to meet your needs in your self-centered, insane condition. If they do not meet your needs you begin to develop an identity or image. Most have developed a negative image they spend time trying to change, but some have developed a positive image they are working to maintain, which is even more difficult.

Problem: You try to change or maintain what you are in the power of the flesh. How can this be? This image has now become your flesh, so how is it possible to change your flesh in the power of the flesh?

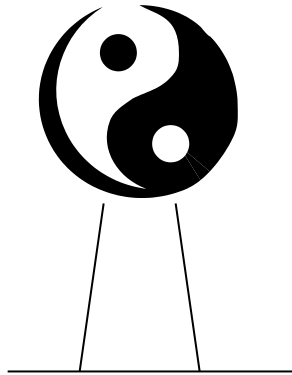
The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

One of the first places you go to change the flesh is: *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. The spirit wars against the flesh, so you define the spirit as the good side of the tree while the flesh is the evil side of the tree, and the two supposedly war against each other inside us. The truth of the matter is that the spirit is separate, and the flesh eats from both sides of the tree doing both good and evil to try to change or maintain itself. When this is not clear you will go from doing the negative to doing the positive. In reality, instead of eliminating the flesh life, you are increasing the flesh life in you. Sin is a coin with 2 sides. On one side is unrighteousness and on the other side is self-righteousness. Eating from the tree guarantees a gradual demise, regardless of which side you eat from.

Example: An alcoholic may drink at a level of 1, then 2, then 3, then 4, and decide in the power of the flesh he will stop. He does stop for a while, but then he "falls off the wagon" and returns to drinking, but now he binges at a level 9. He strengthened the flesh by trying to change in the power of the flesh.

Taoism

Taoism is the foundation of all religions, the good versus the bad. It teaches that no matter how much good you do, the bad is there right behind you; the two are always at war. The solution to this is to make a list of good things and *do* those. Then make a list of the bad things and *do not do* those. Your whole life will be a struggle of trying to do more good than bad.



If you put a trunk on the Taoist symbol, you have *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, the tree of lists. How much of your Christianity is just Christian Buddhism? It is list, after list, after list. Where is Jesus in all this? Couldn't you give that list to an unbeliever? If you are given a list of things you can do, how can it be Christian? Apart from Christ you can do nothing, so the list you receive should be an impossible list.

The Christian life is not difficult; it is impossible. The only way you will ever live it is if He lives it through you.

Holiness comes through Christ and is His holiness. God is responsible for our holiness. If He gets all the glory, He does all the work. It is His holiness coming through you, Christ's life in you. His holiness is a gift. What alone will help you is a relationship with Christ.

As acceptable deeds of the flesh, those you can hide in your heart (the deeds of self-righteousness: your bitterness, slander, unforgiveness, pride, self-centeredness, etc.), stoke the fire, they eventually give way and explode in the unacceptable deeds of the flesh. People use acceptable deeds of the flesh to change or maintain their image, and when it does not work, they turn to the unacceptable deeds of the flesh, which directs them back into the cycle again.

Acceptable Deeds: people-pleasing, performance, counseling, prayer and vows, new relationships, new job, new location, investment in children/grandchildren, exercise, Bible Study, church attendance, reading books, work harder

Unacceptable Deeds: withdraw, control, run, drugs, alcohol, spend \$, sex, television, reading, fantasize, worry, become moody, reject others, explode, romance, be the center of attention, critical of self, manipulate, critical of others

In the development of your inner-life, your Adam-life, which is part of your self-life, you receive messages and listen to them. You begin to feel worthless and unacceptable. You can always blame others for the feelings you have. After all, victimization is one of the most addictive vices there is. When you eat from the tree and do the good, it feeds the bad in you, and your own behavior begins to condemn you. Now you begin to blame yourself and move into self-hatred. So you work harder to change by doing the good things. In the process you end up doing more bad. You continue in this cycle until you spiral down into depression.

Depression--an internal temper tantrum. It is a little man lying on the floor of your heart, angry because he cannot perform enough or fix the situation and change your image. You are having a miserable time playing God. This scenario keeps spinning in you.

Top Analogy

Think of the spinning as a top. The Top spins because of the flesh, attempts to change, old idols, your old identity, and like messages that remind you of your old inner-life. Your goal is to get the top to stop spinning and lie down on its side. That would represent PEACE. So you look for events and people to disprove all the feelings you have. When your circumstances match that goal, the top lays on its side and you have peace, but it is false peace, a temporary absence of turmoil and internal conflict. If you were Satan you would like to get the top to start spinning and all he has to do is bring a message today that is similar to a message from the past. It just cannot be fixed in your own power.

“The Solution”

*God does not want to **improve** the flesh. He wants to **remove** it. Suicide is not so far off the mark, but not death of the outer life, death of the inner self-life.*

The Stanley Steamer car was beautiful but had a defective motor, so when the petrol engine was developed; the owners exchanged the steam engine for the petrol engine instead of getting rid of the vehicle altogether.

In the same way, God created man with an outer and inner life. Adam's inner life was defective and overcome by the Unholy Trinity: sin, Satan, and the world. Adam had a life that would lose. God decides that He will not destroy the outer man. Instead He will make a new inner man and replace the old man with the new man, Jesus. Jesus overcame Sin, Satan, and the World.

Get a life! Exchange the old self-life for the new life, the exact life of Christ!

Heaven will be full of unsaved people. Salvation in the Bible applies to our freedom and victory today. Jesus forgives us of our sin and delivers us from our sin. Paul says in I Cor. 1:18, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are *being saved*, it is the power of God." You will go to Heaven if you are born again. Salvation refers to initial salvation AND your daily salvation of living in victory.

Salvation is Now!

Israel is standing on the city wall, and the enemy is coming. Their reply is: "Where is the God of our Salvation?" These people were not talking about going to heaven; they wanted deliverance from their present circumstances! You want more than forgiveness when you go to Christ. Saved means saved from our sin AND freedom and deliverance today. There are people who are born again and going to heaven, but they have never been delivered or saved from a single thing in this life. Christ died, rose from the dead, and became your life to secure your eternal destiny, as well as deliver you from your daily hell.

Get a Life

Unbelievers cannot use this process. They must *get a life* to gain all that Christ offers and escape their daily hell.

The scare tactic of "turn or burn" is not helping people. Instead, let them know that they can escape their daily hell through a relationship with Christ.

Outer life and inner life make up what you are. If your outer or inner life died right now, it would "ruin the meeting." But, if your inner life is replaced with a new life, the exact life of Christ, you would become a brand new creation. That means that what you did, you never did, what happened to you never happened to you. What you were, you can no longer be. The proof in this is not in your victories, but in your struggles. Just as a man struggles with the thought of wearing women's clothing, so it is with a Christian. The person with an inner life that is the exact life of Christ will struggle with the sin he was once comfortable with. When you struggle with your sin, it is a sign that you have been delivered from it. You need to receive what is already available to you. You could put on depression, bitterness, anger, etc., but as a Christian it just does not suit you any more.

*Do not put on the things of the old nature. In cooperating with the spirit you are not **changing** who you are but **revealing** who you are.*

Paul, in all his writings, always tells the believer who he is before he ever tells him what to do. If you reverse the two things, you will be telling people what to do before telling them who they are, and it will be a very unnatural thing.

We put off so we can put on because we have been made something completely new in Christ Jesus. Accepting Christ is not getting something, it is becoming something that I never was before.

Isn't it wonderful that what you did, you never did? When you impose on your new life something you never did, you make yourself sick. As a new creation you cringe at what you used to do before.

Session 23 Scripture References: Rom. 7:18-25; I Cor. 1:30; Rom. 8:26; John 16:33; I Cor. 4:18; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:21-25

Understanding Our Relationship to Christ

Session #24

Accepting Christ is not just getting something, it is becoming something you never were before.

Example: The bird thought he was a rabbit, because he had been raised a rabbit, until one day he got knocked off a cliff and found he could fly. Only then did he realize he really was a bird.

God puts you in situations, so that He can knock you off the proverbial cliff and help you to discover that you were something more than you thought you were. You have become a new creation. Conversion is not getting a system; it is not getting something in your mind; it is becoming something you never were before. When you see you are something different, it changes everything. You recognize that your struggles and all of life have been speaking to you and proving to you that you are something different, something you never were before.

What is Victory?

Victory is not removing yourself from sin because someone will see you or even because of the truth that Jesus died for your sins. Victory is walking away because you do not want it any more. It just does not suit you as a child of God. You are not interested in the condemnation that is attached to the sin. Your spirit wants to be where Jesus is welcome.

When friends, family, the world, and Satan try to condemn you for your past sins, send them to the grave of your old self. You are no longer that person and you do not have to listen or receive any of that condemnation, because you have become something completely new.

Gal 2:20, I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

The Exchanged Life

Adam and Eve had children . . . all the way down to your father and mother, and then you were born. If your mother would have died before you were born, where would you be? You would not be here. That egg would have been missing. If she had died, you would have died.

Hebrews 7 says the same thing when they asked who the greatest priest was: Melchizedek or Levi. Levi came after Melchizedek. The writer says the greatest priest is Melchizedek, because Abraham gave money to Melchizedek, and when he gave the money, Levi was in Abraham.

It is a miracle you are here. Where were you when Adam and Eve were in the garden? You were in them. When they fell away from God, you fell away from God. You were born with a life that was cut off from God. You look to others to meet your needs and tell you who you are. They gave you an image. You ate from the tree to try to change it by doing good, and when you could not do that, you started doing bad and hence began to prove it.

What is eternal life? Eternal life refers to the person of Christ. You have eternal life if you have Jesus' life. He has the only life that has no beginning and no end. There is not anything that exists outside of Him. All things are created by Him, and for Him, and through Him, and in Him. All things are held together by Him. He is the eternal life and nothing exists outside of that. God can stand in the center of time, and wherever He looks He can be there in that moment. (Einstein's Theory of Relativity)

Adam and Eve had children . . . down to you. You were born dead to God and cut off from Him. You developed your Adam life in a unique way. Now you come to the time where you believe in Christ. God removes the old Adam life and replaces it with Christ's life. Wherever your relatives were, you were in them. Now that you are in Christ, wherever He is, you are in Him. So if He was there when the world was created, then you were there. He knew you from the foundations of the world. He is seated in Heaven, and so are you. He walked on earth and was rejected by men and even His own body and soul of a man, and you were there participating. His victories were becoming your victories. When He died, you died. You have been crucified with Christ and you no longer live, but Christ lives in you. You received a brand new life when He killed the Adam life.

If you have got a new life, then you have become something you never were before. Christ is in you and you are a new creation. What is true about Him is true about you. You were born a branch cut off from God, and when you were grafted in to the Vine, you received a brand new life. What is true about His life is true about your life.

Christ is acceptable to God.

If He is your Life, then you are acceptable to God.

If He is near to God, then you are near to God.

If He is holy, then you are holy.

You do not work to get His acceptance. You work because you are accepted.

You do not pray to get near to Him. You pray because you are near to Him.

You work from, not for.

If He is your life and you have become something new, why are you feeling all of these things? You do not want to go back to the thinking that the "old man" has moved over and Christ's life and the Adam life are battling each other, and the

one that you help the most will win. That is just another model of Buddhism or Taoism, the yin and the yang of those two lives fighting against each other.

The old man is not giving you trouble because he is alive. You are experiencing trouble and frustration because you trust something that is completely dead. What has the old man done for you lately? Nothing. What can he do? He has been crucified. Jesus crucified it. You did not crucify it yourself. Your frustration is coming from the fact that you trust something that is dead, not something alive and active that is fighting against you. How smart is it to trust in a dead person?

One of the greatest detriments to the marriage bed is that the two people who have a new life each keep the old, dead Adam-life in bed with them, also!

The Rag Doll

Take a rag doll and:

1. write on one arm the identity messages and hurts you have experienced
2. write on one arm the image you have developed (positive or negative)
3. write on one leg the negative you do when you are frustrated and cannot change
4. write on one leg the positive things you do to change or maintain
5. write across the head TRAPPED

Then get on your knees and pray to the doll to intervene and fix all the problems and circumstances in your life. How successful will you be? Not very!

Realize that the “old man” is dead and can do nothing for you and bury it! Get a real life! Remember, there is nothing that the nearness of Christ will not cure. When Christ is your focus your problems will not overwhelm you, but when your problems are the focus you become undone.

The One-Time Fix

Everyone wants a one-time fix. God, on the other hand, works slowly. Those things He slowly weaves into our lives will be undone slowly. In the slow things there is faith. He works slowly in your life as you come into the revelation of Christ in you and you are maturing and growing in what you *already have*. That is why this process of change takes 3-5 years.

Think of a block of wood as Jesus. You want to go deep into that block of wood. Would you want to be a screw or a nail? Most people want to be a nail, because they are looking for a “whacking meeting” where they can have that one experience that can drive the nail deep into Jesus, and their expectation is

that nothing will ever bother them again. Ironically, if nothing ever bothers them again, they would never go to Jesus in need.

David said, "It was in my distress that I went to the Lord . . ." and ". . . it was good that I was distressed, because in that, I sought the Lord . . ."

God knows what He is doing because He knows that your humanness still exists. You still want to play God, and in any instant you will walk away from God. So He leaves some emotions and feelings to drive you to Him, day by day and moment by moment.

What happens to the nail when winter comes? It loosens and comes back out. In the same way you encounter situations that distract you from focusing on Jesus. Now you have to attend another "whacking meeting" with some new proposition that will supposedly fix you. The cycle continues. Instead of a whack you need to go into that block of wood as a screw, thread by thread.

One Turn of the Screw

He takes you deeper as He shines a light on you. You might have a revelation of a failure or of something in your life that needs to change. When He permits that, the enemy will speak to you and cause you to question your salvation or your worth. That may move you into the flesh to work in the power of the flesh to overcome any problems you see, and you will work until you give up and realize that **WHAT GOD REVEALS, HE HEALS**. You put your focus back on Him and put the flesh doll in the ground. You become a faith person; your eyes are turned to Him; Christ flows, and the problem that you had naturally drops off. You go into Christ turn by turn by turn, deeper and deeper and deeper.

*If you are going to walk with Christ, you are going to get screwed!
Experiences He allows will show you what you cannot do, and at the same time they will bring the revelation of what Christ can and will do in you.*

Living in the Now

He wants to work moment by moment in your life. There is no one-time fix.

If it is now 9:15, can you snap your fingers and move to 10:00? No. How about 8:15? No. All that anyone has is this very moment. At 9:15, if Christ is your focus (you are abiding in Him) you can be assured that you will not be worried about the future or the past. You can have complete confidence for eternity. If Christ is not your focus at this moment, you will be worrying about the future or dwelling on the past for all eternity.

All Satan has to do to steal eternity from you is steal 9:15 (this moment).

God is the God of the here and now. If you move into the future or the past, you move alone. God will not go with you. God is love and he desires to love you moment by moment. Do you want to be free of the residue of the past, the flesh-residue that is left over from Adam's life (old man), humanity, moment by moment? Yes! God wants to love you moment by moment and you want to be free moment by moment, which is accomplished as you recognize Him and He becomes your focus.

Remove the Baggage?

You may think that if God removes the baggage that you carry from your old self, you will be able to serve him better. God does not agree. Even Paul asked that a thorn be removed from his side so that he could serve Christ more effectively, but God replied with, "My grace is sufficient for you . . . my power is made perfect in weakness . . ." When Christ is your focus, Christ's life flows through you; He locks those bags, and you do not feel any of those things. Truth is not preached, it is demonstrated. Is it true that when Christ is your focus all the turmoil that you are in ceases to consume you? Yes. The enemy would like to close the door to Christ's life, and then all that baggage begins to stir and you become as miserable as an unbeliever.

Is the baggage Satan's stronghold to make you miserable and keep you from God, or is it God's stronghold to keep you near to Him? God told Paul those were His strongholds to keep Him near. When you choose to close the door, you experience failure and misery, and you turn back to Him for victory. It is like walking in a muddy feedlot, picking up more and more mud until you walk out of the boots and it is time to go back to the house.

You cannot live a carnal life as a new creation; you will be miserable. You must return to Him. Those thorns in your life are God's strongholds to keep you near. All things work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to His purposes.

Session 24 Scripture References: *I John 1:2; I John 3:15; I John 5:11; Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:17; Heb. 10:36; Psalm 120:1; II Cor. 12:9*

The Inner Life, Outer Life, and Christ

Session #25

Purpose of Problems

This world is not out of control. God is using everything around us to push us into His presence. In His presence you will find perfect peace. "I will keep Him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." If you do not have peace, do not sweep cobwebs; go for the spider. A divided man is unstable in all his ways. The root of division is the inability to see God in any given situation. You lose your focus, and all you see is the situation. As soon as that happens, there is a ripple effect and you become unstable. It is important to step back and look at the world from a fresh perspective, remembering that God is in the midst of everything. Even the smallest situation is not a job for humanity; it is a job for divinity. Let Him live through you in each and every circumstance. Each time you see God in a circumstance, do not relinquish your peace; God is accomplishing His goal for you every day. His goal for you is not comfort; it is maturity. His goal is not that you act like Jesus. His goal is exactly Jesus in you.

To Imitate or Not

Paul says to imitate him because he imitates Jesus. Was Paul imitating all the works of Jesus or was he imitating the very heart and spirit of Jesus, which is going through the day and not saying "I can," but saying, "I can't." He was imitating divine humility of Christ; "apart from Him, He could do nothing at all." That is the right kind of imitation.

Self-life, The Obstacle

Adam-Life--the inner life that chose independence and fell away from God; it lived in me and was formed in the womb of the world.

Outer life--was formed in the womb of your mother.

You are also a human being. God did not create a human being. A human being is a result. God created man, and man was a being in the very image of God. When the Adam-life within this being, man, made in the image of God, chose against God, man stopped being a man and he became a human being. A human being is no longer the original creation under God's rule. The image of God is totally distorted in Him and he does not live from God, but from the distorted image instead. Out of his mind, will, and emotions, he is a soul being. Adam, the man, was to be ruled over and influenced by the spirit of God. The human being does not need God. He takes the things that have been distorted and tries to live a life like God.

Man also has a body, called the flesh. This body has its own desires.

When the a) Adam-life that has been cut off from God, b) the soul power or humanity (living out of your mind, will and emotions), and c) the body of flesh that has its own desires are in control, you will produce and express the deeds of the flesh. The deeds of the flesh can look good or bad. They are still the deeds of the flesh, produced from your Adam-life, your humanity, and your body, all of the world and apart from God.

You begin with an outer life and an inner life born dead to God in the spirit, you do not know who you are (“you are insane”), you are self-centered, always looking to get your needs met, expecting that other self-centered insane people will meet those needs. You want to play God and have others worship you.

You look to others to meet your needs; if they meet them, you develop a positive image, and if they do not meet your needs, you develop a negative image. You then begin either to change or maintain your image, eating from *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. When you cannot change or maintain, you will get angry, go into rebellion, and enter the bad deeds of the flesh. When you express the bad deeds, you feel even worse and spiral down until you may reach a place of depression. In the midst of all this, God is working in your life. They were the exact situations you needed to come to the end of yourself and look up instead of looking within.

That is why you can bless those who curse you. God can use the people who curse you in a positive way, and in their cursing much judgment will come upon them. They will be judged, but you are the one who will be blessed from their bad behavior. So, you do not have to be angry. You can bless those who curse you.

God's Solution

God will not fix or patch up your Adam-Life. You cannot attempt to bring the outer man in line with the inner man. Instead, God killed the old Adam-life and crucified it with Christ.

Adam-Life + Humanity + Body = Deeds of the Flesh

Jesus' new life breaks up the equation so there will no longer be the expression of the deeds of the flesh in the level they were at before.

Example: The donkey and horse breed mules. Mules cannot reproduce; they are a result being. They cannot reproduce; they must recruit; and they rely on the

horse and the donkey to continue their breed. If the donkey or horse were eliminated the mule would eventually cease to exist, because both are necessary for the resultant mule.

In the same way you have the outer life and inner life, or the Adam-life, that chose against God, chose the deeds of the flesh, sin. If you knock out the inner life and replace it with Christ's life, sin will naturally decrease.

If Christ is your life, why do you still experience problems?

1. You trust the old man, still carrying him around, even though he is dead. You refuse to agree with God that the Adam-life is dead.
2. Even though the Adam-life is gone, you still carry the baggage; your hurts, your image, and your attempts to change are still fresh in your mind. They are your focus.

When Christ is your focus, when He is your life, and exactly Christ is flowing through you, He locks up that baggage (residue of the old Adam-life) and it does not bother you. But when He is not flowing through you, the door closes and all the baggage is stirred up again. You become more miserable than you were as an unbeliever. When the Adam-life was in you, all the baggage agreed with it. Now with Christ replacing the Adam-life, there will be real conflict as you choose to live apart from Him.

Solution: 5 minutes with Jesus. Acknowledge that you are abiding. Admit you have been crucified with Christ, and the peace reappears.

How do we open and close the door to Christ's life?

Divine Humility – opens the door; simply says, "I can't."

Pride – closes the door; simply says, "I can."

- When your pride kicks in you begin to attempt to fix the situation in your humanity--your mind, will, and emotions--which were made in the image of God but were distorted. Will that work? No.
- Humanity takes the 5% they think they can do, puts it under a magnifying glass, and calls it 100%. You will do no better than anyone else living out of your humanity.
- You also move into the power of the body, the physical flesh, to fix the situation. You will end up expressing flesh in some way. You'll end up expressing yourself the way an animal expresses itself.

Expressions of the flesh can continue to increase after you become a Christian. If you close the door to Christ's life, live out of the baggage, live out of your humanity, and let your body rule over you, you will express the deeds of the flesh.

You need to recognize flesh life and “label” it so that when it reappears, you can recognize it and put it where it belongs. Your Adam-life, humanity, and body are not Satan’s strongholds to keep you away from God, but God’s strongholds to keep you near. He knew what the end result of creating Adam would be. Wouldn’t you rather be miserable or fail and have to go Jesus than never to be miserable or fail? When you go to Him and let His life flow out of you, there is no experience like it. *Don’t hate the “equation.”*

Adam-life + humanity + body = Sin

Instead, take up the cross and deny your “Self.”

--Every day you need to deny the desire to trust the old life or *Adam-life*, the desire to focus on it, and the desire to change the Adam-life

--Every day you need to deny wanting to live out of your *humanness*, your old nature.

--Every day you have to deny those challenges that surface concerning your *body*.

This is something you do daily, not a one-time fix. The reason those things are still a part of your life is to keep you near to Him moment by moment, so that peace may reign.

Hell on Earth

- A. Christ’s life is within. Everything that is true of Christ is true of you. He is now your life (Colossians 3:4). Exactly Christ’s life flows through you.
- B. Satan brings messages similar to messages from the past that push the button that closes off your new life, Christ’s life.
 - 1. First: the old identity feelings resident in the mind (worthlessness, unacceptable, and failure, or maybe self-righteousness) are stirred through events and messages similar to those.
 - 2. Second: Old attempts of improving your identity surface (people-pleasing and performance)
 - 3. Third: Pressure builds, causing a turning to idols, the coping mechanisms of the past (withdrawal, depression, sedatives, etc.)
 - 4. Fourth: As a believer, you begin to feel, perform, and cope exactly as an unbeliever. Though you are going to Heaven, your daily experience is Hell on earth as a miserable person. The problem at this point is not behavior, but rather the door, which when opened, releases Christ’s life and disposes of the baggage. He knows you are the happiest when His life is flowing through you.

Your Enemies

Man has many enemies:

1. the Adam-life
2. Humanity (mind, will, and emotions)
3. Flesh (desires of the body)
4. The Unholy Trinity (Sin, Satan, and the World)
5. Natural desires
6. Sickness
7. Emotions run wild
8. Other people
9. Circumstances, events, and the world outside you

Christ came, the Life that wins, and conquered every one of those enemies. All He had to do was conquer it at one point, and the whole thing was destroyed, because the whole thing rests on absolutes. When performing Chemistry experiments, you are looking for absolutes. When there is a deviation from the absolute, you must throw the experiment out. Before Jesus, those enemies were always able to conquer the human being. Jesus came and conquered it all at one point; the Divine Deviation conquered the whole thing. Christ was tempted in all things. He said no to all those things, and the power those things had over man was broken. When the day came for Christ to be crucified, He was 33 years old and had been tempted in everything. There was a life in Him that was never broken.

Communion

How do you get that life out of Jesus and into you?

Genesis 9:4--The life is in the blood. When He was crucified and His blood came out, in that blood there was a life that had conquered all those things. The blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins, but also it possesses a life that conquered all things. Mentioned 93 times in the New Testament.

In Communion

- You first take the loaf: His body. Remember, we were crucified with Him, so communion is a celebration of the fact that when He was crucified, you were crucified. Your old life is crushed and destroyed with Him. It is not transubstantiation, or a mere symbol. It is a spiritual reality that is connecting you to Heaven right now. The proof that it is a spiritual reality is that people were taking communion and dying when they took it wrongly.
- Next you take the cup: His blood. It represents the life that has conquered everything. If you were to cut the blood off to your hand, your hand would go numb because it is poisoned. There is enough poison in your body to kill ten people, but because the blood flows and filters out the poison, you are able to live a normal life, even though you are a poisoned being. The

“blood” of Jesus flows in a spiritually poisoned person. Your humanity, your mind, will, and emotions, your body, and your fleshly desires and expressions are poisoned, but as His blood flows, He cleanses all that and you can live a normal life with His life flowing through you. The blood of the Old Testament just covered up everything, but the blood of Jesus removes the sin. In Communion you celebrate the fact that you have been crucified with Christ and that the new life of Christ is flowing through you, the life that has conquered all the enemies you have.

Session 25 Scripture Verses: *Rom. 8:28; Isaiah 26:3; James 1:5; Jer. 17:6; I Cor. 11:1; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 6:11; Luke 9:23; Col. 3:4; Gen. 9:4; Eph. 1:7*

that was given to him. Providentially, Christ's cross was given to another man to carry as He was paraded through the city, pointing to His innocence.

You should take up the cross daily and deny yourself, because you have defined what *self* is; it is dead and just not worthy of being carried around. Interestingly, man does not believe he should die, but Jesus died on that day. The people thought, *He should die so that we can live. We do not want things stirred up here.* But there was one man who recognized He should not die, and that was the thief on the cross. He recognized that he ought to die, but Jesus should live. His reward was that on that day he would experience paradise with Jesus.

If you want to experience paradise every day, say the same thing the thief said, "Today, You ought to live through me, and my self should die." That is the principle of the cross. The only way to give life is to accept the fact that you have to die, and out of you will flow the river of living water.

How Do We Live That Out Day By Day?

Option #1--Example

Your mate offends you. You close the door to the life in you, dig up the old self, and respond in the flesh, focusing on the old self, and all those thoughts and feelings return. In turn, your mate closes the door to the life in him or her and answers your insult with another flesh response; the argument spirals down, accomplishing nothing and spreading death to everyone present.

Option #2--Example

Your mate offends you; you recognize the door is about to close and your peace is leaving you. Acknowledge that you cannot maintain your peace in your humanity; *choose* to focus on Christ, take up the cross and take 2 steps forward and offer a kind reply. Your mate's response may still be offensive, so you hold the cross a little harder and take 2 more steps and express love, continue to act in love, holding the cross closer following each offense, refusing to respond in your flesh. Eventually, the spiral will reverse and your mate may open up and share what has really been troubling him. The ending is different because of one person's taking up the cross and denying himself.

The test of a man is not in all that he has done but in taking up the cross, denying himself, and moving in love toward others who have offended him.

Taking up the cross and denying yourself is the most freeing thing there is. As long as another person's words and behavior can control your words and behavior, you are not spirit ruled, you are other-ruled.

Most people spend the majority of their lives being other-ruled. The practice of taking up the cross and denying self does not come quickly. It is a process that

takes years, but it is worth it because if you lose your life, you will be able to give life continually to others.

In II Cor. 4:10-12 Paul says, "Through suffering, these bodies of ours constantly share in the death of Jesus . . ." The cross is a daily experience. You will share in His death daily. To deny digging up the old life, and to deny humanism, and to deny living out of your body and resources feels like death. So we are constantly sharing in the death of Jesus, and here is why: ". . . so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies that it can be seen there. Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be obvious in our dying bodies. So we live in the face of death, but it has resulted in life for you."

*Death in you brings life to others. As you meet people head on in the world, and you take up the cross and deny yourself, refusing to fight on the flesh level, you can sail above the circumstances and win the battle from a higher place. Do not fight the battle with others in the realm where you cannot win; fight it in the spirit where you **will** win.*

*Christ is in me and I am in Christ, and I am in the very center of eternity. When you are in Him and He is in you, then all the victories He won are your victories, and so is a life of living "from" and not "for." **But**, if you let situations move you out of the center to the fringe, you will lose your power because you will no longer be in "Heaven on Earth." You move out from a place of abiding and all of His power in Heaven is no longer your power on earth. Now you are living on earth with only the power of the flesh as your weapon. You take out the "old tools" (try to walk like Jesus, fix relationships, help, find enjoyment, minister, and free yourself from habits and idols). Finally, you will get so disgusted with the defeat that you admit you cannot fix yourself or others. You again take up the cross on a daily basis. You acknowledge that you cannot, and that it has to be His power, not yours, that He creates and does all the work. Allow your misery to drive you back into His presence again, and once more you find the victory which is in Him.*

The Vine and the Branch (John 15)

The only reason that a branch can be grafted into a vine is because the pathetic attempt of the branch is rewarded with a power 1000x greater; the vine holds onto the branch. In addition, the vinedresser stabilizes it to make sure it stays in place.

In the same way your feeble attempts to abide are rewarded with Jesus' power to hold you in and the Father's power to keep you near.

Session 26 Scripture Verses: Heb. 9:3; Rom. 10:9-13; Gal. 2:20; Luke 9:23; Luke 23:39-40; John 7:38; II Cor. 4:10-12; Luke 17:21; John 15:1-5

The Abiding Life Session #27

As a Christian, Christ has entered into you, the old man has been crucified, and yet you are still in a body. So if you shut the door to Christ's life, you will end up living out of your own strength, your soul power or humanism, and you will try to cope with life in the strength of self. Therefore, you have to take up the cross daily and allow His life to flow through you. That daily walk is called the abiding life (John 15). You are born a branch in a vine, and every day you learn how to live while you die; one day He grafts you in, His very life becomes your life, and He flows through you. It is simple to get His life flowing; just say, "I can't, but You can," and the door will open. If you say, "I can," the door will close. God is constantly putting you in situations to reveal to you what you "can't do," so you will open the door to His life and invite Him to come and live through you so that you can live a supernatural life.

The Vine and the Branch--John 15

Andrew Murray said that the greatest heresy in the world is constant emphasis on what we do for God, never knowing what God does for us. Jesus was preparing us for that coming heresy when He taught about the vine and the branch. He did not want to leave us being only a teacher to us. He wanted to come back and be our very life.

Jesus is not teaching imitation. He is teaching participation in His life.

He uses parables to demonstrate, but in John 15, He does not say He is *like* a vine; He says "I *am* the vine." Every vine preaches and teaches Jesus. If you want to know all there is to know about Him, lie down in a vineyard on a cool day and look around. It will be amazing what you learn. He teaches that if you participate in Him, the fruit you will have will be natural, and in order to get that fruit He will prune you. In pruning, He does not cut away the bad things. They were cut away long ago. He cuts away the good things, the best, because good is the enemy of the best. The vinedresser cuts away the branches that bore the most fruit the year before. If he does not cut them away and lets new growth come, that branch will take more sap and give less fruit each year. At the end of 20 years that old branch will give 20 times less fruit and will take 20 times more sap from the vine.

In the abiding life, God will prune away from you those things that were the best so you will not trust in them or make them the focus of your life, which in turn would allow nothing new to happen. The abiding life is new and fresh every morning.

Let Him prune away the good; refuse to live in a system. Instead, live in a relationship. It is much more relaxing. Here is a plan: Do not have a plan! Keep

your eyes on Him. Put one foot in front of the other and let the Shepherd lead you as you go. When you are locked into your plan and system that takes the place of living on the Vine, something that really is alive, and you will not let Him cut those things away, nothing new is going to happen.

The life of faith is not that frightening. Just say, "Jesus, like a shepherd, lead me." Your relationship with Jesus is living. He is not dead. Do not say you have a God and then live like you do not have one. You have a God and He is leading you. A problem with Christians is that they want to know the will of God before they move. But if you know the will of God perfectly, congratulations, you are an unbeliever! He wants you to put one foot in front of the other, trusting Him to open the doors as He will. As you are on the Vine, He will cut away the system you trust in, the things that bore fruit last year, and keep you in the living dynamic where His life is flowing through you and He is leading you every day. He will never let go. He has too much invested in you. When you were grafted into the Vine, the Vine reached out and rewarded your pathetic attempt with a force 1000x greater to hold you in.

Just as a bank, having invested \$350 million dollars in someone, cannot afford to let him go, so it is with God. How much more has God invested in you? You have Christ Himself dwelling in your earthen vessel. An incomparable kind of treasure is in you. Do you want to die without the revelation of what it means that Christ is in you? Today, Christ is in you. Since there is so much invested in you, do you think He would ever let you go down the tubes or let you get away? Don't you think He will continue to work all things together for good in your life? There is so much invested in you, you can rest and say, "Like a shepherd, You lead me." It is living. It is a relationship.

Real Fruit Versus Fake Fruit

Plastic fruit looks real and pretty, but if you go to the factory where they make plastic fruit, it is hot, loud, and it smells. But if you go to a vineyard, it is cool, quiet, and calm, because it is the real thing, producing real fruit. In Christianity, if you are trying to manufacture the fruit of God, you will be hot, loud, smelly, and angry. If you learn the secret of abiding, of getting up each morning and saying, "Today is not a day where humanity should rule. Today is a day for divinity. Come and be the divine and live through me." You will then produce a natural fruit. Christians who do this are always quiet, cool, and calm. As Paul says, coming from them is a fragrant aroma, something very beautiful, because they are quietly abiding in Him.

As you abide:

Matt. 7 says a good tree will bring forth good fruit.

II Cor. 9:8 says you will abound in every good work.

Gal. 6:10 says you will do good.

Col. 1:10 says you will be faithful and fruitful in every good work.

Heb. 13 says you will be perfect in every good work.

What makes your work good and perfect is not the work itself, but the source of that work.

Christ is in you and He is your life. That is a revelation to you that you should grow in. Just as when you hold a baby boy, you hold a man, but you do not yet have the revelation of that. You are complete in Christ and there is nothing anyone has that you need. The revelation that is going to come to you will come slowly as you go through the process of taking up the cross day by day, moving back into the flesh, becoming miserable, and returning to Him again.

Wolf Boy

A boy was found living with wolves. He was brought to live with a couple in their home. His assimilation into the world of his own kind was slow and painful. He was told he was a boy, yet all he knew was how to be a wolf. Everything in him told him he was a wolf. The couple who took him in worked tirelessly for 5 years, trying to convince him that he was a boy. One day the boy was looking in the mirror and had the revelation that he must be a boy, not a wolf. He then made a decision to fight the wolf feelings and begin to live as a boy and was able to come out of that lifestyle. Only when he got around familiar old surroundings did those feelings stir inside, trying to draw him back in.

In the same way, Scriptures say you are a child of God, that you are righteous and a royal priest. He dwells in you. You are the temple of God. At some point you have to decide for yourself if all that is true or not, in spite of everything you are feeling. You must choose to walk in what you really are. Say no to the “old life.” When those situations that bring “like messages” from the past come, you must choose to walk in your new life with Christ at the center and say no to those lying emotions.

The Foundation of Relationships

You should see God in everything around you. When something takes place, the first thing to ask yourself is, “What is God working in me through this circumstance?” Do not try to change the person or circumstance so that your flesh life is more comfortable. Therefore, you need to be offended until you cannot be offended any more. Otherwise, you will want to talk about the person who offended you, how it affected you, and how you surrendered your peace to that person or circumstance. In this scenario, you are always a blame shifter, never really growing spiritually. Unless you lay the correct foundation, admitting God is in everything, you will only end up debating about which person is the worst.

The right foundation will foster discussion, not debate.

Living the abiding life and putting your focus on Christ does not mean avoiding the issues of life. If you are really abiding, you will be put in the very center of issues without succumbing to them, but instead dealing with them.

People should not use their spirituality to cover up their problems. For example: "It does not matter what my kids are doing. I'll just look to Jesus." It does matter what your kids are doing. You should look to Jesus first and let His life flow, so that the wisdom of God will be yours in dealing with your kids before you ever move into situations with them.

The right foundation must be in place in order to have healthy relationships.

The Clashing Of The Bags

You carry two invisible bags into every relationship:

1. Your uniqueness, the way God made you.
2. Your past life, your self-life.

The problem is that relationships start at a point of oneness and collisions begin to take place between the bags we carry, causing continually greater separation between the people.

Example: Thinker Wife (TW) vs. Feeler/Doer Husband (F/DH)

Clashes in Uniqueness:

TW loves by doing acts of service. She chooses to love her F/DH by making him a chocolate pie. F/DH loves through physical touch. He decides he wants to experience love by giving and getting a hug. TW is obsessive and can only do one thing at a time. She is focused on making the pie and pushes her "over zealous" husband away. F/DH is left feeling rejected, and TW is annoyed by the interruption. Is the visible outcome what really happened? No. It was a collision in their uniqueness that caused separation in that interaction. These happen daily because people do not understand each other.

Clashes in Flesh-life:

Other collisions occur in the flesh life. If you had a mother who ignored you as you grew up, you would probably feel rejected any time you were ignored by your mate, even if it was not justified.

These collisions cause people to spread further apart. People get married thinking they know everything about their mate. In reality, they do not know anything.

You view the mate and his/her behavior from the perspective of your unique self or personality and your past and flesh-life. You are drawing conclusions and making judgments, and you do not have a clue about the one you married. After 5 years of marriage, you probably do not know much about the person you married, but you are busy making a list of what you think he/she is because you hate the unknown.

Session 27 Scripture References: *John 15:5; Rom. 11:17; Lam. 3:22-23; Eph. 5:2; Matt. 7:17-20; II Cor. 9:8; Gal. 6:10; Col. 1:10; Heb. 13:21*

Marriage and the Emotional Divorce

Session #28

In discipleship, it is important to put yourself in the other person's shoes. It is a privilege to share in someone else's life. Generally, the only frame of reference you have is your own frame of reference, developed from your personality, past, and self. Therefore, this is the frame of reference you use to look at other people's behavior. As a result, your perception of people's motivations will be distorted. You think you know what everyone is thinking. When you are wronged, you are sure of the perpetrator's motivation. Does your spouse spend every spare moment thinking about what he or she can do to make you miserable? Of course not! But many people believe their mate is out to get them, trying to make their life miserable.

When judgments are the foundation of the relationship, collisions occur between people because of pride. Couples start at a point of oneness and begin to spread apart because of these collisions. If they spread far enough apart, they reach a place called *Emotional Divorce*, which is described like this: with your mind you run away from divorce because of the commitment you made to be married, but with your emotions you have dumped your mate and run toward divorce. We do this in marriages and in other relationships.

When mind and emotions run in two different directions:

1. Your emotions claim:
 - a. he/she never meets my needs
 - b. he/she never understands me
 - c. he/she will never be able to communicate
 - d. you and he/she will never be able to get along
2. Your mind, on the other hand, cannot justify divorce.

As those two forces run in different directions, there is a great deal of conflict; something has to change in you because you cannot handle the pressure any longer. Will you change what you think or what you feel? People will never change how they feel. They will only be able to change what they think.

Changing How You Think

In order to change what we think about others, we put them under a magnifying glass, have predetermined what they are like, and we search for the evidence to validate our feelings. Well, the other person is going to be in a lot of trouble, because once you decide what a person's motivations are, any evidence that may validate your feelings becomes a 10 on a scale of 1-10.

People have actually become physically sick as a result of what has taken place in their emotions and have used that as an excuse to abandon a relationship.

They are viewing others through their own unique self or personality, their past and their flesh, and yet they claim they know the other person. There is no backing out. They will stay in it to prove their perception of that person.

There are thousands of issues in marriage, but the three greatest stressors are:

1. money
2. kids
3. sex

A man is asked to describe his wife, and his response is:

1. Controlling
2. Self-centered
3. Very bitter
4. Unsupportive
5. Not able to please her
6. A complete hindrance

The wife is then asked to describe her husband, and she replies by repeating the list he just gave, plus more.

In this case, each time an issue surfaces the issue is not discussed, but is used as an avenue to confirm and debate what each person believes about the other person and to prove what is the worst about the other. All that occurs is a series of reactions that are rooted in events of the past, their deep hurts, and their perception of the other person. Unfortunately, they never deal with the real issue.

Look At Desire, Not Behavior

Is the goal of your marriage to prove how bad your mate is? How else can you approach this situation?

How about looking at the desire of the person's heart, instead of judging? Do not try to know someone according to the flesh. Ask: "What is the desire of your heart?" Do not focus on the flesh of a person. If you continue to point to a person's faults, you will cause him to focus on him, driving him farther and farther from the solution. Christ must be made the focus, and then all things will fall into place.

If people around you are walking in the flesh, take some time to set yourself apart and focus on Christ. His life will flow and you will see exactly Jesus. You will not get anywhere ministering to people's flesh.

If you minister to people's hearts, they will rise up to where their heart is really is, but if you minister to their flesh, they will go down in the flesh. Look at the desires of the heart, not the behavior. Do not spend all your time looking at the behavior; encourage what you know the desire of the heart to be. If you are looking at

desire and not behavior, you will not mistakenly judge the motivation of the other person, and consequently, a discussion over legitimate issues will ensue, instead of a debate over illegitimate issues.

The Abiding Life will not throw you out of legitimate discussions but will place you in the middle of them. It will throw you out of the debates and the illegitimate arguments of who is the worse person.

Above Or Below the Line?

You must decide where you will live. Will you live above the line, looking at and responding to the desire of your mate's heart, and encouraging him to be all God created him to be? OR will you live below the line, looking for proof that your mate is who you have decided he/she is and continuing to create in your mate the very things that you hate?

Marriage Spiral

Your marriage will spiral down if each of you continues to respond to one another in the flesh. One person may nag and the other will withdraw, which will tempt the one to nag more and the other to withdraw more. Figure out what is right with the relationship. Do not continue to focus on the negative. Marriage is not that difficult.

Where Faith and Facts Meet

Christ is the way and every other way is not the way. If you invite Him in, it is a homecoming, because He has created you. Man was made for Christ to dwell in him, not for Adam's life to dwell in him. Adam was the man in process. You are a child of God, a fulfillment of the real thing.

In Jesus the faith of heaven and the facts of earth meet.

Faith of Heaven:

1. *cast anxiety on Him*
2. *set mind on things above*
3. *faith in unseen*
4. *fear not*

Facts of Earth:

1. *carry anxiety*
2. *examine yourself*
3. *lean on my own ways*
4. *embrace fear*

He really is the way. It all fits, because He is the glue holding it all together. The facts of Earth and the faith of Heaven do not meet in any other religion. They meet in the person of Christ, in what He teaches us, in what He tells us, and how He was living. He has made life simple enough for us to live it.

If there are two major cracks in the foundation of a relationship, there will be hundreds of cracks in the walls of the relationship. Patching the walls will not get rid of the problem. The cracks will reappear. There are over 25,000 books published on marriage, which try to “patch the cracks of marriage.” They tell you what to do, do, do until you are up to your hips in doo-doo. The problem is that the cracks in the walls cannot be fixed in our humanity, in the power of the soul, or in the power of the flesh. The work has to be done by the Spirit in the foundation.

The two cracks in the foundation of marriage stem from the scriptural mandates:

1. “Husbands, love your wives . . .” *Example: If you love your wife, you do not have to listen to her any more.* Meaning: When a woman is emotionally stressed out, she just wants to be loved, not lectured and “fixed.” Husbands should not take to heart everything a woman says at times like that. Look at her heart and respond to that.

(To be continued in Lesson #29)

Scripture References: Matt. 7:1-5; II Cor. 5:16; Heb. 1:3

Matthew 7:1-5, *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*

II Corinthians 5:16, *So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.*

Hebrews 1:3, *The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

Christ and the No-Excuse Marriage

Session #29

Marriage is only simple if you keep the foundation of two simple commandments God has given us concerning marriage, and when those commandments are not kept, thousands of other cracks appear. It is an appealing thing to try to fix those cracks, because it is something you can go to work on in the power of the flesh, your humanity, or it is something someone else can fix. You need to get back to the root issue, the flawed foundation. The reason the foundation is so neglected is that the two commandments that form the foundation are impossible to keep in the power of humanity.

The foundational commandments for marriage are:

1. Husbands, love your wife.
2. Wives, respect your husband.

It is impossible to keep these commandments in the power of the flesh. The Christian life is not difficult; it is impossible. The only way to live it is to let the only Man who ever lived it perfectly, Jesus, live it through you. If you fall out with God, you will no longer be able to keep the commandments. But once you realize this, it is not that difficult. You abide in Christ, keeping your focus on Him, and you are able to allow Christ to love your wife/husband through you. This kind of love is a deep abiding love that meets the needs in a woman's/man's life. Women need to be loved. There are many women who have a 10-, 20-, or 30-year-old need to have been loved by their father.

Women just want to be loved!

If you want to control a man completely, respect him. Men love respect. Respect controls them. Sex is not just physical for men; it is a very acceptance-based thing.

Men love to be respected and women love to be loved, and they are the two things you cannot give if you are not abiding in Christ. You know you are rebelling against a basic command when you are not demonstrating love and respect in the power of Christ.

There is no excuse in the Bible for not loving your wife or respecting your husband. Disobedience stems from self-centeredness. Yield to Christ and go back to the foundation. Decide that you cannot love your wife or respect your husband and let Jesus do it through you. Let Him flow through you. When you rebel against the basic commandments to love and respect, you will justify your actions by making lists of why you cannot keep the commandment to love or respect your spouse that everyone else is required to keep. For those "justified reasons," you claim you are exempt. When you do this you are saying to God that love is merited. Do you want to live that way with Him? You know the love,

mercy, and grace you have received from Him which came with absolutely no contribution on your part. Don't you want to continue to live that way? If you show mercy, mercy will be shown to you. If you do not extend mercy, you will not receive mercy. Don't you want to live under mercy, in an unconditional mercy environment, not having to earn it? Then love with Christ's love, unconditionally, and allow Christ to respect your husband through you. Don't hinder Him. Don't stop the flow of love or respect God wants to extend to your mate because of the excuses you have.

Divine Glue

When you invite your own way of doing things in, which is love based on merit or respect based on merit, you will begin to go to pieces.

Colossians 1:16, 17--"Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see, kingdoms, kings, rulers and authorities, everything has been created through Him and for Him. He existed before everything else began, and He holds all creation together."

This means that Christ is the glue holding every single person together. He is in every person. It does not mean that every person is born again and has His life, but it does mean He is in every person. He is the glue.

If you invite your way in, you invite a solvent into yourself that will make you go to pieces.

Christ is not imposed on a person; Christ is exposed in a person.

If you do not believe that Jesus is the way, then take the challenge to live anti-Christ, and see if you do not fall to pieces. It is a lot like mathematics. If all the bank's computers worked in such a way that $2 + 2 = 4$ on one day and $4 + 4 = 4$ on another day, there would be chaos, because absolutes are written into mathematics, not imposed on mathematics. You cannot change it.

Every other religion in the world is imposed on man, but Christ's life is exposed in man.

Part of the glue that holds you together tells you to love and respect not based on merit. Inviting your way in is taking in a solvent that will cause you to go to pieces.

Therefore, sin and punishment are one and the same, and they happen at the exact same moment. When you go your own way, you will fall apart moment by moment, day after day. It is a process that will continue until repentance occurs.

You punish yourself. You end up with a pit in your stomach that moves to obsessive thoughts and finally to a deterioration of the physical body.

There is another problem with rebelling against the commands to love and respect, besides falling out with God. (When you fall out with God, you fall out with others.) That problem is a wrong view of oneness.

God created man, Adam, both male and female in the same body. There was no creature that could fellowship with Adam, so He took the female out of Adam and made Eve.

Twice the Bible uses the singular “man” to refer to His creation:

1. Before God created Eve:

(Adam)
MAN = MALE + FEMALE

2. After God created Eve:

(Adam) (Eve)
MAN = HUSBAND + WIFE

If you are unmarried then God fills up what is lacking:

MAN = PERSON + CHRIST

Those who have been widowed experience this most profoundly.

How Do We View Oneness?

People see oneness as two people living together with a line between them. Each person first attempts to meet his own needs and then give the leftovers to the mate. In actuality, a couple tries to live a life of oneness as two independent people. This is not Biblical. Marriage brings you to the end of individuality. Interestingly, it is a flawed but prevalent philosophy that feeds individuality and entitlement. Marriage, instead, should bring the death of individuality. This is not saying it should bring the death of your uniqueness, but the death of your entitlement to act as a separate entity without consideration of your spouse.

Session 29 Scripture Verses: Eph. 5:25; Eph. 5:22; Lam. 3:22; Col. 1:16-17; Gen. 2:24

The Blended Marriage and Christ

Session #30

We as people are not perfect and never will be perfect this side of eternity, but we should be pointing people to the one who is perfect, Jesus.

Individuality In Marriage?

In marriage you should not see yourself as an individual. God has made you and your spouse one. He has blended you together. When flour and milk are mixed together in a bowl, there really is no undoing it. So it is with marriage. The word for oneness is used to describe the Father and the Son, your life and Christ's life, the Body of Christ, and you and your spouse. Each of these is one; they are blended together.

The proof of your oneness in marriage is the ability to make the other person miserable.

What Does Being “Blended” and Becoming One Mean?

If you blend flour and milk and then add food coloring, what happens? It affects everything. It is the same way with marriage. If you throw dirt at your mate, you will get dirty. If you love your spouse, you will love yourself. As you see yourself and your mate as one, you will continue to invite the positive into your life. Many people refuse to die and take up the cross first. They are waiting for the other one to do it. That is the wrong attitude, because if God is revealing these things to you and you respond by receiving it and acting on it, you will invite that revelation into the life of the unbelieving spouse, who will be sanctified by you, the believing mate.

Your spouse *is* your life. Everything was taken from Job except his wife, because even Satan knows that a man's wife is his very life. He could not touch Job's life or his wife's.

The Three People In Marriage

In every believer's marriage we are dealing with three people: husband, wife, and the life of Christ.

You started out in marriage with two bags: the unique self given by God and the flesh life. You have an outer life and an inner life. The outer life is formed in the womb of your mother, and the inner life is formed in the womb of the world. You looked to others to meet your needs; they gave you messages. You developed an image (negative or positive), you tried to change or maintain it. When you could not, you turned to the deeds of the flesh. You spiraled down, and you needed to get a brand new life. After that, you had to walk in that new life each

day and let that life flow out of you. Whenever you said, "I can," the door closed and the baggage was stirred up. That served as a warning to you that you needed to return to Christ.

This same model can be applied to the husband and wife, who have been blended together and became one life. Your marriage has an outer and an inner marriage. The outer marriage is what everyone sees. The inner marriage is the reality of what a couple experiences. A couple could look very happy on the outside but have very little or no communication between them, feel as though they are in prison, not have their needs met, feel unhappy and hopeless, and/or experience no affection.

How did the marriage get that way? Each person comes into marriage with two bags: unique self and flesh. In that condition, both the husband and wife do things that are wrong and hurt the other person. The actual things that were done were probably not as harmful as the false perception of what each person was doing. If you take all those things together and feed them into your marriage, you will end up with an inner marriage like the one described in the previous paragraph. At this point, attempts to fix the marriage become desperate. The couple may do one or more of the following:

1. counseling
2. pointing out faults
3. blaming
4. trying harder
5. understanding
6. reading books
7. spending time together
8. talking to friends

They then discover that they cannot change their marriage, and they give up. The outcome of that could look something like this:

1. withdrawal
2. stop trying, become apathetic
3. stay at work
4. put life into kids
5. find a hobby
6. stay away
7. fantasize
8. look for acceptance in others

It is very common for couples with issues to withhold sex from one another for years. Sex becomes a tool to manipulate the other person. The Bible says it is not good to be apart. The longer people go without sex, the easier it becomes to be bitter. In couples who have nothing else in common but sex, a softness is there that allows them to be open to change. Bitterness cannot reign between two people who have an active sex life.

Once the cycle of hopelessness begins, one or both partners will claim it is hopeless by pointing to their inner marriage and all that they have done to change. The truth is that the marriage is really over. It cannot be changed, but it can be exchanged for the life of Christ. The solution is not to patch up your inner marriage, but to get a brand new marriage with the life of Christ at the center.

If the husband and wife are:

1. blended together and are one, and
2. if they will give up the old inner life of their marriage, and
3. exchange it for a new life, His life,
4. and take up the cross and deny themselves,

then the old marriage made up of the old lives will be pronounced dead, and a brand new marriage made up of Christ's life will replace it--one that is Christ-centered, not self-centered.

The baggage will remain, and when the old feelings and behaviors are stirred up it will be a warning sign that you as an individual have fallen out with Christ and have closed the door, and as a result, you as a couple have also fallen out with God. You must take your eyes off your marriage and put them back on Christ. Take up the cross and deny yourself. It is an amazing sight to see God working in the midst of a marriage where two people are abiding together in Christ.

Affairs In Marriage – Does It Mean It's Over?

You can be "one" in different ways:

1. in the ideas you have with another person
2. you can enjoy and do the same activities as another person
3. and you can even be one physically with another person

But there is no oneness or blending like the oneness that occurs between a husband and wife in marriage. Even though affairs are wrong, an affair does not break a married couple's oneness. As a believer, you have had affairs with someone other than Jesus. You were grafted into the Vine, but there have been times that you have closed the door to His life. It disturbed your fellowship with Him, yet it did not break the oneness you had with Him. If sex with someone outside your marriage could break the oneness you have with your mate, then rape should be enough to destroy a marriage. Paul warns people to stop going to the temple prostitutes, but he never tells them that because they have been going, their marriage is over. When there is an affair, the answer is not always divorcing and moving on to the next relationship with that baggage.

Aside: This teaching is not condemning those who are divorced. Divorce is a reality, and God uses it as well to bring people into the revelation of Himself. As Paul says, “I consider all things rubbish in view of the surpassing knowledge of knowing Him.” The focus is always on Christ. He is in all things.

The point here is that in spite of an affair, a couple is still one, and if they are willing they *can* move forward. Focus on Christ and discuss the issues. The issues must be discussed because there is value in discussing them.

Many of the issues that are part of the “Affair Stew” are:

1. the children
2. time to heal emotions
3. feelings of having wasted your life
4. embarrassment
5. feelings of being trapped
6. sex
7. justice
8. jealousy

With Christ at the center of a marriage, these issues are able to be navigated.

Coming Back To Oneness

You each come into marriage with two bags, the bags collide and cause you to spread apart. You end up in emotional divorce. Your goal is always to come back to oneness. There are two parts involved in coming back to oneness:

1. The lesser, understanding issues and one another.
2. The lesser gives way to the greater, the cross of Christ. He lives through you as though it is you, but it is not you. As He lives His life through you, the issues resolve themselves, and you end up at a place of oneness. You see Him in all things.

Session 30 Scripture Verses: New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)

Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

I Corinthians 7:5, “Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

Abiding Life Ministries International
Scripture References for Michael Wells' Basic Seminar
DVD Set
--written out by Connie Cutler

Fundamentals of the Abiding Life

Session #1 – Bible Verses

Galatians 2:20 (New International Version)

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Ephesians 3:16-17 (New International Version)

¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

2 Peter 1:3 (New International Version)

Making One's Calling and Election Sure

³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Colossians 3:15 (New International Version)

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (New International Version)

³⁰It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (New International Version)

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Colossians 3:3 (New International Version)

³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 1:27 (New International Version)

²⁷To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Ephesians 1:17-20 (New International Version)

¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^[a] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Revelation 3:20 (New International Version)

²⁰Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Session #2

Scriptures (New International Version)

Galatians 2:20

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Ephesians 3:16-18

¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

2 Peter 1:3

³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Colossians 3:15

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

1 Corinthians 1:30

³⁰It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Colossians 3:3

³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 1:27

²⁷To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Ephesians 1:7-20

⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹And he^[a] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. ¹¹In him we were also chosen,^[b] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. ¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^[c] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working

of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Revelation 3:20

²⁰Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Matthew 27:52-53

⁵²The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

1 Peter 3:18-20

¹⁸For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹through whom^[a] also he went and preached to the spirits in prison ²⁰who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,

Ephesians 4:8

⁸This is why it^[a] says: "When he ascended on high, and gave gifts to men."^[b]

John 15:1-8 (New International Version)

The Vine and the Branches

¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Matthew 5:3-12 (New International Version)

- ³"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
- ⁵Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
- ⁷Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
- ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
- ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Romans 7:23 (King James Version)

²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and **bringing me into captivity** to the law of sin which is in my members.

Leviticus 17:11 (New International Version)

¹¹ For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

Session #3

Scriptures (New International Version)

Hebrews 1:1-4

¹In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Ephesians 1:3-4

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Luke 9:23

²³Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

John 14:12

¹²I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Ephesians 5:25

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Session #4

Scriptures (New International Version)

Joshua 1:8 - ⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

1 Timothy 2:5 - ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Romans 8:26 - ²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

1 John 3:2 - ²Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears,^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

2 Corinthians 12:19 - ¹⁹Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening.

Isaiah 42:8 - ⁸ "I am the LORD; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another
or my praise to idols.

Genesis 5:24 - Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

2 Kings 6:5 - ⁵ As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. "Oh, my lord," he cried out, "it was borrowed!"

Matthew 18:23-25 - ²³"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents^[a] was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

Session #5

Scriptures (New International Version)

2 Timothy 1:7

⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Acts 13:22

²² After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

Matthew 5:28-30

²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Luke 12:10

¹⁰ And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Conviction vs. Condemnation

(Connie Cutler's own addition, further explanation of material on the DVD)

Conviction is from God and is known in the Bible as Godly sorrow. It shows you the answer (the Blood of Jesus, which washes away sin). Conviction is God calling to you, "Come to Me . . . and I will forgive you!"

Condemnation comes from Satan and is meant to tear you down, to continually point out what a failure you are, how badly you have messed up, and to drive you further from God and into sin, keeping you from focusing on your relationship with God. Satan yells, "You are such a failure! Look at what you did! You call yourself a Christian!" It shows you the problem (the sin, the past and your failures) and avoids the solutions.

*** The Lord convicts us because he deeply desires to forgive us of our sin. Do not get caught in condemnation by focusing on your sin. FOCUS ON HIM NOT YOUR SIN!!!**

Isaiah 30:18, Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Romans 2:4, Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

Session #6

Scriptures (New International Version)

1 Cor. 3:11-13 - ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

Phil. 4:6-7 - ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

John 10:27 - ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

John 14:12 - ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Matt 10:30 - ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matt 11:29 - ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

John 14:6 - ⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me

Prov. 22:6 - ⁶ Start children off on the way they should go,
and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Jeremiah 29:11 - ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Rom. 8:28 ²⁸ - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose.

Session #8

Scriptures (New International Version)

Isaiah 50:10-11

¹⁰ Who among you fears the LORD
and obeys the word of his servant?
Let the one who walks in the dark,
who has no light,
trust in the name of the LORD
and rely on their God.
¹¹ But now, all you who light fires
and provide yourselves with flaming torches,
go, walk in the light of your fires
and of the torches you have set ablaze.
This is what you shall receive from my hand:
You will lie down in torment.

Exodus 3:14

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

1 Peter 1:17

¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

II Samuel 16, David and the man cursing him.

Judges 14, Samson kills the lion and later finds honey in the carcass.

Genesis 50:20, Joseph sees God in his life's down circumstances.

Session #9

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

Romans 3:19-20

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

Isaiah 26:3

³ You will keep in perfect peace
those whose minds are steadfast,
because they trust in you.

Philippians 3:8

⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

Mark 9:5

⁵ Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

1 Kings 18:23-24

²³ Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

Session #10

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

1 Thessalonians 5:23

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:8

⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 6:21

²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!

Ecclesiastes 9:3

³ This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead.

Isaiah 26:3

³ You will keep in perfect peace
those whose minds are steadfast,
because they trust in you.

Session #11

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

John 10:27 ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

2 Corinthians 10:5 ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Philippians 4:6-7 ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14 ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28 ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose.

1 John 1:9 ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Isaiah 1:18 ¹⁸ "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Jeremiah 31:34 ³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Session #12

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

Luke 9:27

²⁷ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

John 6:63

⁶³ The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit^[a] and life.

Galatians 5:19

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

Genesis 4:5

⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Session #13

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

2 Corinthians 5:17 ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come.^[a] The old has gone, the new is here!

John 10:10 ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Galatians 5:19-21 ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Genesis 31:19 ¹⁹ When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods.

Ezekiel 20:8 ⁸ “But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt.

James 1:5 ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Galatians 2:20 ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Jonah 2:8 ⁸ “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them.

Session #14

Philippians 3:8 “What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.”

Session #15

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

Matthew 7:13-14 ¹³ “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

John 10:10 ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 6:16-20 ¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷ where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. ¹⁸ A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles,^[a] they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, “It is I; don’t be afraid.”

Matthew 2:3 ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

Luke 5:8 ⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”

1 John 4:8 ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 Corinthians 13

¹ If I speak in the tongues^[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,^[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 John 4:9 ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

Session #16

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

Colossians 2:8-9

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces^[a] of this world rather than on Christ.

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

1 Corinthians 1:30

³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Genesis 37:5-9

⁵ Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶ He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: ⁷ We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.”

⁸ His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹ Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

Hebrews 11:3-11

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.”^[a] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she^[b] considered him faithful who had made the promise.

Hebrews 11:1

¹ Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Session #17

Scriptures (New International Version 2010)

Colossians 1:16-17

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Revelation 21:2

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Revelation 13:8

⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.^[a]

Hebrews 11:3-11

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. ⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away."^[a] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. ⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. ⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she^[b] cons

Romans 8:31

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? I considered him faithful who had made the promise.

Matthew 7:1

¹ “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

Chapter #18

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

Matthew 7:3-5 - ³ “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Romans 2:1 - ¹ You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Esther 6:4 - ⁴ The king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had erected for him.

2 Samuel 12:1-7 - ¹ The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. ⁴ “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.” ⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.” ⁷ Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.

2 Corinthians 5:15 - And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

1 Kings 19:4 - ⁴ while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.”

Colossians 3:15 - ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Luke 15:18-19 - ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’

Chapter #19

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

Psalms 139:13-16

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

Mark 12:33

³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Acts 15:36-39

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸ but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹ They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,

Chapter #21

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

John 7:38

³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as^[a] the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

1 John 2:15

¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 Peter 2:2

² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

Luke 4:1

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,

Luke 4:9-12

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;
¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."^[a]

¹² Colossians 1:27

²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[b]"

Chapter #22

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

Romans 7:18

¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

2 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Romans 5:14-18

¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

Chapter #23

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

Romans 7:18-25 - ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

1 Corinthians 1:30 - ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Romans 8:26 - ²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

John 16:33 - ³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

1 Corinthians 4:18 - ¹⁸ Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Ephesians 4:21-25 - ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Chapter #24

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

1 John 1:2 - ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

1 John 3:15 - ¹⁵ Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

1 John 5:11 - ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Colossians 1:16 - ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Ephesians 1:4 - ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

Colossians 1:17 - ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 10:36 - ³⁶ You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Psalms 120:1

A song of ascents.

¹ I call on the LORD in my distress,
and he answers me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 - ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Chapter #25

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

Romans 8:28 - ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,^[a] who^[b] have been called according to his purpose.

Isaiah 26:3 - ³ You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

James 1:5 - ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Jeremiah 17:6 - ⁶ He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.

1 Corinthians 11 - ¹ Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Matthew 5:44 - ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies^[a] and pray for those who persecute you,

⁴⁴ Romans 6:11 - ¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Luke 9:23 - ²³ Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Colossians 3:4 - ⁴ When Christ, who is your^[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Genesis 9:4 - ⁴ "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.

Ephesians 1:7 - ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Chapter #26

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

Hebrews 9:3 - ³ Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place,

Romans 10:9-13 - ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."^[a] ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."^[b]

Galatians 2:20 - ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Luke 9:23 - ²³ Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Luke 23:39-40 - ³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?"

John 7:38 - ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as^[a] the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

2 Corinthians 4:10-12 - ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

John 15:1-5 - ¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Chapter #27

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

John 15:5 - ⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Romans 11:17 - ¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root,

Lamentations 3:22-23 - ²² Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Ephesians 5:2² - and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Matthew 7:17-20 - ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

2 Corinthians 9:8 - ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Galatians 6:10 - ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Colossians 1:10 - ¹⁰ And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Hebrews 13:21 - ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Chapter #29

Scriptures (NIV 1984)

Ephesians 5:25 - ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Ephesians 5:22 - ²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

Lamentations 3:22 - ²² Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

Colossians 1:16-17 - ⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Genesis 2:24 - ²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.