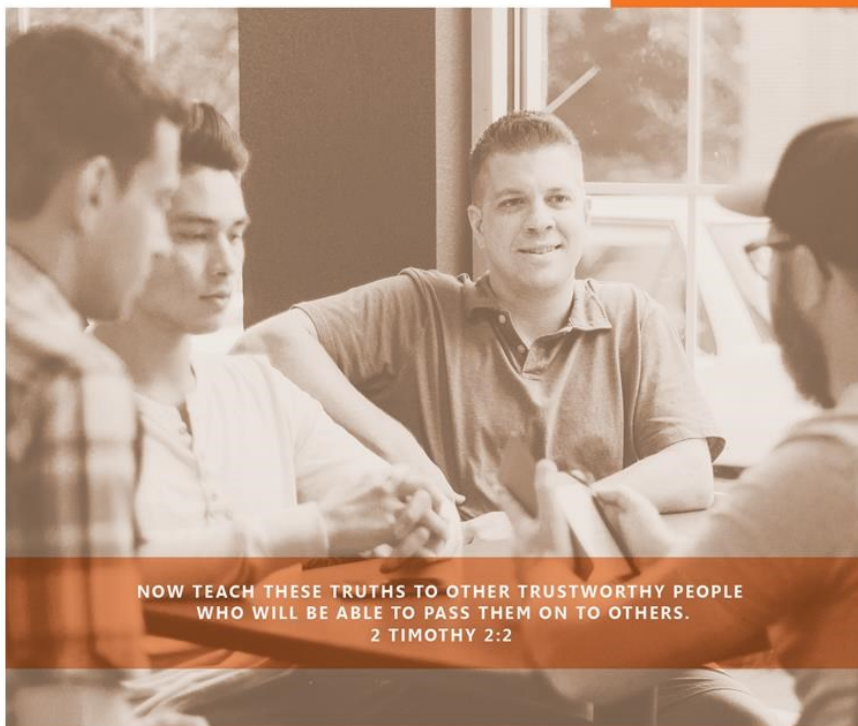


2²

2 SQUARED DISCIPLESHIP

BOOK III

LIFET
Living In Faith Together



NOW TEACH THESE TRUTHS TO OTHER TRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE
WHO WILL BE ABLE TO PASS THEM ON TO OTHERS.
2 TIMOTHY 2:2

WELCOME!

The Bible is a love story in the middle of a great adventure, and so is your life. But, the events of our lives rarely feel like a grand adventure story. Most of us choose cheap thrills and mere survival just to get by. Satan wants you to believe that your life is boring and pointless, but God wants you to see life as exciting and victorious. And, He wants you to share the adventure with others. He wants us to Live In Faith Together.

Throughout this study we will explore how we can share this adventure together and stand beside each other in the battles of life. We will seek to take the Bible's truths about this awesome adventure and make them real in our lives. This may be the most personal study in 2² so far. But don't worry you have everything you need to make it on the journey, and to guide others along the same way. You have Grace and you have Truth. In other words , you have Jesus who has blazed the trail as your guide.

The goal of 2 Squared Discipleship is that you are able to share what you have learned with someone else one day, and in so doing you will be making a disciple as Christ commanded. But discipleship is much more than just knowing truths, it is really about sharing your life with someone. Don't lose sight of that as you complete this study. Let it be a time to learn how to share the truths of the Gospel, but also how to share your heart and soul with others as well. We want to be able to say with Paul,

“so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. “ 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Are you ready to go? Are you ready to make disciples? Are you ready to obey 2 Timothy 2:2?

“what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men [and women] who will be able to teach others also”

Table of Contents

Lesson 1: Growth 101 (A Review)	p. 3
Lesson 2: Created to Share Glory	p. 8
Lesson 3: A Wedding In A War	p. 18
Lesson 4: Your Adventure Story	p. 26
Lesson 5: Spiritual Inventory	p. 35
Lesson 6: Deep Healing	p. 39
Lesson 7: Guide To The Guide	p. 43
Lesson 8: Sustaining In Suffering	p. 54
Lesson 9: Healing In Suffering	p. 60
Bonus Lesson: Grief	p. 67
Lesson 10: Reconciling Sinners	p. 70
Lesson 11: Guiding Past Sin	p. 78
Lesson 12: Spiritual Warfare	p. 87

2² Lesson 1: Growth 101 (A Review)

If you have been working through the 2² materials then you have come a long way in your journey of faith. Living In Faith Together (LIFT) is all about discipleship. This first lesson of LIFT will serve to give you a basic **review guide** for discipleship. All discipleship must be rooted in the Gospel– the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our union with Christ. The Gospel doesn't just save us from Hell, it is the basis for all Christian growth. Growth occurs by faith in the grace of God. It's all about God and it's all about you– working out our salvation as God works it out in us (Philippians 2:12-13).

I. THE CROSS: WE ARE DEAD TO SIN

A. Everyone is born a sinner– an enemy of God.

*Romans 5:10. For if **while we were enemies** we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

B. Despite our sin, God pursued us (This is the Story of the Bible).

*1 John 4:10. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that **he loved us and sent his Son** to be the propitiation for our sins.*

C. At the cross, God provided **JUSTIFICATION**– this means we are declared **NOT GUILTY** for our sins.

*2 Corinthians 5:21. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him **we might become the righteousness of God.***

*Romans 5:1. Therefore, since we have been **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Satan says “You’re guilty”, God says “You’re not guilty.”

D. Also, at the cross, God provided **REDEMPTION**– this means we are set free from the power of sin.

*Romans 6:17-18. But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,¹⁸ and, having been **set free from sin**, have become slaves of righteousness.*

Satan says “You’re a victim”, God says “You’re a victor.”

E. Moreover, God also provided **REGENERATION; this means you are cleansed from all of sin's corruption.**

*Titus 3:5. [God] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration** and renewal of the Holy Spirit,*

*2 Peter 1:3-4. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them **you may become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*

Satan says “You’re a sinner”, God says “You’re a saint.”

F. On top of all this, God provided **RECONCILIATION; this means there is no more barrier between us and God. We are sons, we are his bride, we have direct access to God’s throne.**

*Romans 8:15-17. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of **adoption as sons**, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and **if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ**, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

*Hebrews 10:19-22. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith**, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Satan says “God doesn’t like you, try harder”, God says “I love you and I love spending time with you.”

2. THE EMPTY TOMB: WE LIVE TO LOVE

A. Spiritual growth isn’t instant, it is hard because we are still living in the flesh.

B. Self effort will never bring true change. Behavior modification may bring outward change but it won’t change our desires. Often we just replace one sin with another.

C. **RESURRECTION POWER is what changes us.**

*Ephesians 1:19-20. ...and what is the immeasurable greatness of **his power toward us** who believe, **according to the working of his great might** ²⁰ **that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,*

Philippians 3:10. ...that **I may know him and the power of his resurrection**, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

D. FAITH is the conduit of Resurrection Power.

Galatians 2:20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

When you believe that the old you is crucified with Christ, and yet the new you lives as Christ lives in you, this faith will empower you to obtain all that God's grace has for you.

E. We are transformed by beholding Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18. And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

To behold him is to gaze at him longingly. This can only be done in his presence (now spiritually, later physically– the ultimate transformation).

WE ONLY CHANGE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

F. Growth does require us to work from our faith. All of the power for growth comes from Resurrection Power, but that does not mean we do nothing. We cooperatively work with God's power.

Phil. 2:12-13. I work out my salvation as God works in me.

Col. 1:28-29. I labor to present everyone mature in Christ.

2 Tim. 2:1-13. I work and strive and endure as a soldier and farmer does.

2 Peter 1:5-9. I make every effort to add to my faith.

Rom. 6:12-13. I don't let sin reign in my body and I present it to God.

Rom. 12:1-2. I present my body as a living sacrifice.

3. 100% God. 100% ME.

A. Growing in Christ and being changed into His likeness is a partnership between God and you. As seen in the verses above, God provides all the power, but you still work from His power.

100% me= "Try Harder"

100% God= "Super spiritual," "Let go and let God"

100% God and 100% Me= "I live as Christ lives in me."

Example	100% Me– Try Hard	100% God– Let Go	100% God and 100% Me
Bible Reading	Academic effort. Check List. Counting on the ritual to grow me.	Just read, no study. Mystical approach. Very little reading of the Bible because feelings guide me.	I use the Word to get into the presence of God. I study hard to deepen my relationship with God. I let the Word capture my imagination with the Gospel.

B. The Christian life is about working to REST in the finished work of Christ and all of its results as seen on pages 3 and 4.

Once I have learned to rest, **I WORK FROM FAITH:** I count on God’s work to give me rest, and from my rest I work as God works in me.

C. Growth is not by “trying harder” or by “letting go and letting God.” It occurs as we come face to face with God and work as one with Christ through faith in His grace. i.e. we connect to the conduits of His grace and power (see Book 1: LIFE lessons 9-12).

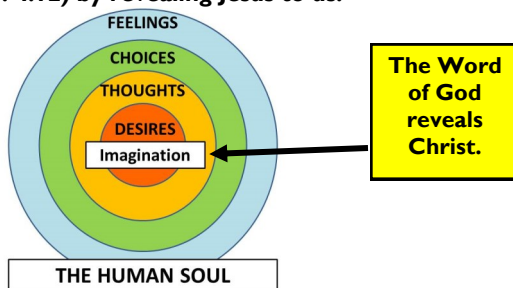
What area of your life is still characterized by “trying harder?”

4. FAITH AND THE CONDUITS OF GRACE AND POWER

So How Do We Grow? By tapping into God’s power and grace through faith in Christ: His person and work. This power and grace is already inside of you. You access grace and power when you live in the presence of God. This **LIVING FACE TO FACE WITH GOD** is done through encountering God through the conduits of His grace and power. But what are these conduits of God’s grace and power?

A. Truth– this is the foundation. All change begins with truth.

I. Hear, Read and Study the Word of God– God uses His word to capture our imagination, change our desires, beliefs, thoughts, choices and feelings (Heb. 4:12) by revealing Jesus to us.



B. Love– We can't grow without love. We need deep relationships with God and others in order to experience God's grace and power.

1. Godly Families– Marriages reflect God's love for us as his bride, and parent child relationships reflect God's love for us as his sons.

2. Fellowship– Meeting with the body of Christ in both small and large groups will allow us to experience the love of God.

3. Spiritual Friendship– God uses the compassion of our spiritual friends to show us His grace and power.

C. Spiritual Discipline– We commune with the Holy Spirit through spiritual disciplines.

1. Connecting with God– Bible Study, Meditation, Singing, Worship, Silence, Fasting.

2. Keeping In Step with the Spirit– letting the Spirit guide us by the truth of the Gospel and our dependence upon Jesus.

3. Spiritual Warfare– Standing in the armor of God in time of temptation and suffering.

4. Service– Letting the Spirit empower us to serve actually changes us along the way.

5. MIND RENEWAL

Simply put, Growing In Christ is about **MIND RENEWAL**. It is allowing God to apply resurrection power to our minds. As we tap into the conduits of Resurrection Power (see above), we let God capture our imaginations.

A. Ask God to capture your imagination with Himself.

Our hearts are lost when we let Satan trick us into seeing God as bad, or mean, or unkind. Sin begins with a distorted image of God. But repentance begins with a renewed image of God. Jesus captures our imagination with God.

B. Ask God to capture your imagination with the Gospel.

Our hearts are lost when we fail to see our new position in Christ through His life, death, and resurrection. Sin begins when we forget who we are and what Christ has done. Repentance begins with resting in Christ.

Christ will be faithful to complete the good work He has begun in you. The path goes on and on into glory. Are you ready to travel this path with a spiritual friend? Are you ready to live in faith together?

2² Lesson 2: Created To Share Glory

The great love story of life begins in the Garden of Eden. That is where your story and the story of those you disciple begins too. In the Garden of Eden, God placed mankind to delight in Him and to bring Him delight by displaying His divine life. We do this by imaging Him. We weren't just made to be bodies, but also hearts and souls that deeply desire a relationship with God; the kind of relationship the Trinity enjoys. We all want to get back to the Garden. Everything we desire, believe, think, choose and feel is our attempt to fill the void in our souls that our broken relationship with God has left behind. If we are going to Live In Faith Together, then we have to see past the visible to the invisible parts of man; the heart and soul. To do this, we have to first see our design; that is, the way God made us. God made you and your spiritual friend to share His glory and display His glory by receiving His life.

I. THE TRINITY: SHARING GLORY

A. God is a TRINITY. This means He is 3 persons in one God. God is the Hero of life's redemption story; a love story set in the middle of a war story. The question is, "what kind of person would write and be the Hero of a love story set in a war story?" i.e. "What is God like?"

Think about God as a Trinity, and then answer this question: "What is God like?"

B. The Trinity shares perfect INTIMACY.

John 1:1-2. In the beginning was [eternally] the Word, and the Word was with [face to face] God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:18. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side [bosom], he has made him known.

1. Notice: The Father and Son have eternally been at each other's side in a perfect, intimate, and relaxed embrace. They have always been "with" each other face to face.

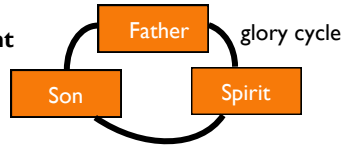
2. God is the most relational being in the universe and He wrote "the book" on how we are to relate to one another. The Trinity exists in a perfect dance of love and respect for each other.

C. The Trinity shares perfect **ADMIRATION**.

John 17:1-5. When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

1. Jesus repeats the word **GLORY** 5 times. This Greek word (*doxa*) denotes reputation and good standing. At its root it means to have weight or value.

2. The Trinity has eternally enjoyed and admired each other. They delight in their mutual glory.



2. SHARING GOD'S GLORY

A. The Trinity wants to share **INTIMACY** with you.

John 1:14. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus left His perfect embrace with the Father and came to live among us. **Why?** Because He wants us to be alive and to share His life and love intimately.

B. The Trinity wants to share **ADMIRATION** with you.

John 17:22. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,

God the Father admires you the same way He admires Jesus!

C. The Trinity is sharing glory with you.

1. We were given God's glory at **CREATION**. When God created mankind He crowned us with glory and honor.

Psalms 8:5. Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

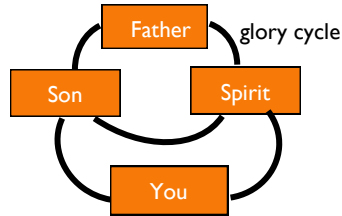
2. But at the **FALL** we lost that true glory.

Romans 3:23. for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

3. Now through REDEMPTION, by the blood of Jesus, we can share the glory of the Trinity once again.

2 Corinthians 3:18. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

That's what being a Christian is all about- **SHARING THE GLORY OF THE TRINITY**; giving and receiving glory. It's **NOT** about trying hard to not sin, or going to church, or even being nice.



D. We are not what we were meant to be. Many of us have no idea what it means to share glory with the Trinity or to be in anything close to that kind of relationship. We must embrace our glory. But this is a process. A process that comes paradoxically through weakness and dependency.

What false view of yourself have you struggled with, and how is it veiling the glory of God in you?

3. WE ARE INVITED INTO GOD'S BIG STORY

A. The Bible is ONE BIG STORY of God's plan to rescue us through the work of our Hero, Jesus Christ.

1. Things around you are not what they seem. Your life is not what it appears to be. Satan wants you to believe that your life is boring, and therefore, the solution is to chase after anything that will bring temporary satisfaction or numbing of pain.

2. But in reality God has written a love story in the middle of a war story that you are a part of. Jesus is the Hero but you are the sidekick. Jesus is the lover and you are the beloved.

How do you view your life?

3. In Luke 24 Jesus walked with two men on a road. They thought they understood what happened in Jerusalem that weekend when they watched Jesus die. They thought they understood the Bible. But then Jesus “opened their eyes” and showed them that all of life and all of the Bible is about Him and the hope of his death and resurrection.

“And their hearts BURNED within them.”

Oh how they wanted it to be true– that this life is not pointless and hopeless. That there is meaning. That there is real life available.

Do you feel like Jesus has opened your eyes?

B. Your life is not as it appears– it is a Wedding in the middle of a War. It’s a Great Adventure moving you from one world to the next, or as Paul puts it, “from one degree of glory to the next.”

C. Creation tells us what we were meant to be.

1. God’s adventure for us began at Creation. Why were we created? What is our purpose? How do we complete the adventure?

*Genesis 1:26a,27. Then God said, “Let us make man in our **image, after our likeness...** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

2. We were created to image the Triune God. But what does this mean? If I am in God’s image how does that define who I am and who we are as a group? How does it impact our journey?

4. WE WERE CREATED FOR DESIRE

A. WE ARE DESIRE– Because we are in God’s image we have desires but beyond this we are desire. It is at the heart of the life God breathed into us.

*Genesis 2:7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the **man became a living soul** (desire).*

*Psalm 42:1-2. As a deer pants for flowing streams, **so pants my soul for you, O God.**
² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

1. The soul that God breathed into us (Gen. 2:7) desires God like a thirsty deer desires water.

***Note:** The Hebrew word for soul (*nephesh*) is also the word for **THROAT**. Just like the throat is the means by which physical desires are satisfied, our soul is the means by which spiritual desires are satisfied.

2. We all desire something or someone bigger than ourselves. We have a God shaped hole in our hearts. Spiritual maturity means having an increased desire for God.

3. **DESIRE IS NOT BAD**. God wants us to desire Him. He wants you to be happy and have what you truly desire, which is, of course, God himself.

B. We desire INTIMACY– Everyone wants an intimate relationship with God. To be created in His image is to desire His compassion and His power. We want to know and be known.

C. We desire IMPACT - Everyone wants to make an impact for God. We want God to be proud of us. We want to have significance and respect from God and others.

D. We desire SHALOM– This is a Hebrew word that is often translated as peace. But it goes far deeper than that. It means harmony, oneness, communion, fullness and serenity with God. Our goal should be to help each other find Shalom as we experience intimacy and purpose through God.

In what ways have you seen you heart desiring intimacy, purpose, or shalom?

5. WE WERE CREATED FOR RELATIONSHIPS

A. As you just read, we are created to desire God and to receive Shalom through intimacy with God and purpose from God. This Shalom is realized through relationships with others.

Genesis 2:18. Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

B. Alone we could never experience what the Trinity experiences. Only in community can we love like the Trinity and share the adventure of life.

C. In our relationship with others we desire three things:

1. **INTIMACY**– We want acceptance, closeness, romance, friendship, and security. We want to hang out and give hugs. We long for people.

2. **IMPACT**– We want, dominion, a quest, adventure, and meaning. We want to be a hero and have a mission. We want to give high fives and hear “Good job.”

3. **SHALOM**– Serenity. Peace. Fulfillment. We know who we are and why we exist. Our relationships are healthy and we even love ourselves.

D. But where does this **SHALOM** come from? High self -esteem? No, it comes from image bearing. Read Gen. 2:25. Why do you think Adam and Eve were unashamed? Read Psalm 8:3-8. From where does our glory come? Our Shalom comes from bearing the image of God.

Genesis 2:25. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

*Psalm 8:4-5 what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?*

*5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.*

In what personal relationships have you found intimacy, purpose, or shalom? What traits characterize this relationship?

6. WE WERE CREATED FOR STORIES

Every life is an adventure story being written by God day by day. But most of us don't feel or act like we are part of God's big adventure story. Why is that? It's because we simply don't imagine our lives to be an adventure, or a wedding, or a war. We find life, and God, to be boring and as a result we are bored. But how can all that change?

We were created to view life as a story and to be a part of that story. Within the story we were created to **BELIEVE**, **THINK**, **CHOOSE**, and **FEEL**.

A. BELIEVE

1. Belief begins in the **IMAGINATION**. Your imagination takes images, interprets them and forms ideas from them.

IMAGINATION = IMAGES → INTERPRETATION → IDEAS

2. These **IDEAS** become what you believe about God, your own life, others, the world, everything. You may say you believe God to be good, but if you imagine Him to be mean or indifferent, then that is how you will react to Him day to day. Your imagination creates your life story, either for the good (Isaiah 26:3), or for the bad (Gen. 6:5).

***Note:** The Hebrew word for imagination is *yatsar*. It is the same word used of a potter who molds clay. **YOUR IMAGINATION MOLDS YOU INTO SOMETHING**, depending on what story you imagine yourself within.

What kind of story have you imagined yourself in? Comedy? Horror? Drama? Romance?

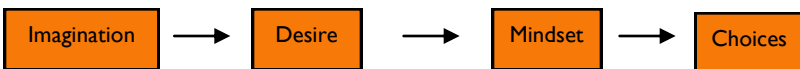
B. THINK

1. Your beliefs become what you think about and they determine how you think about things. The Bible calls this your **MINDSET**.

Romans 8:5. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

2. Our mindset operates from our imaginations and our desires. This becomes the reality of your story. Your mindset is what you like to think about and it always flows from your desires. Soon you begin to make choices (or write your story) based on your mindset.

WE CHOOSE WHAT WE BELIEVE IS MOST PLEASING.



Can you think of an example from your life of a choice you made because you believed it would be most pleasing to you?

3. The key is to let the **TRUTH** overwhelm your imagination, and mindsets.

Philippians 4:8-9. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

4. This is what the Bible calls **MIND RENEWAL**.

Romans 12:2a. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,

C. CHOOSE

1. Do you remember the formula? “We choose what we believe is most pleasing.” Over time these choices become **HABITS**. The plot of your story may be boring because you are in a “rut.” That means your choices have you habitually making the same decisions and mistakes over and over again.

Can you name any habits or “ruts” you may be in?

2. There’s 2 things to remember about our choices:

a. Our choices are driven by our desires.

*Isaiah 9:26 With my soul I have desired you in the night
Yes, by my spirit within me I will intensely seek you early*

*Notice how the seat of our desire is called the **SOUL** in the OT, and our **SPIRIT** drives our choices. In the OT this is not the Holy Spirit, it is your own human spirit. However, under the **NEW COVENANT**, the Holy Spirit drives your human spirit or that is to say, the Holy Spirit changes your desires and thus your choices.

b. Our choices become habits. The Bible calls our habits **PATHS** or our **WALK** or **FRUIT** or **CHARACTER**.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

How do the verses above describe character traits, but also habits or choices?

D. FEEL

1. Not only were we created to Relate, Believe, Think, and Choose, you were also created to Feel. In the Bible God actually commands us to feel certain things, and He holds us accountable for our emotions. But aren’t my emotions out of my control? Aren’t they bad? Not according to God. They are actually a huge part of your story.

2. Emotions are like lights on your car dashboard– they reveal what’s going on inside of your engine (your thinking).

3. The Trinity is emotional. We can have the JOY of Yahweh (Nehemiah 8:10) and we can GRIEVE the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).

Mark. 3:5. And [Jesus] looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Notice that Jesus exhibits emotions (anger and grief). And these emotions led him to help someone else.

Hebrews 12:2. ...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Here too we see that Jesus was motivated by the emotion of joy. Jesus had strong emotions both pleasant and painful. But He also exhibited control over his emotions and remained ministry focused.

4. EMOTIONS reflect our BELIEFS about what we DESIRE.

For example:

Negative Situation + Biblical Belief = Legitimate painful emotion

Example: You're criticized + "I'd like approval, but I'm accepted by God"=

Legitimate Sorrow/disappointment

Negative Situation + Unbiblical Belief = Illegitimate painful emotion

Example: You're criticized + "I MUST have their approval"=

Illegitimate Anger/Hatred/Self-pity

Positive Situation + Biblical Belief = Legitimate positive emotion

Example: You're praised + "I'd like approval, but I'm accepted by God"=

Joy, peace

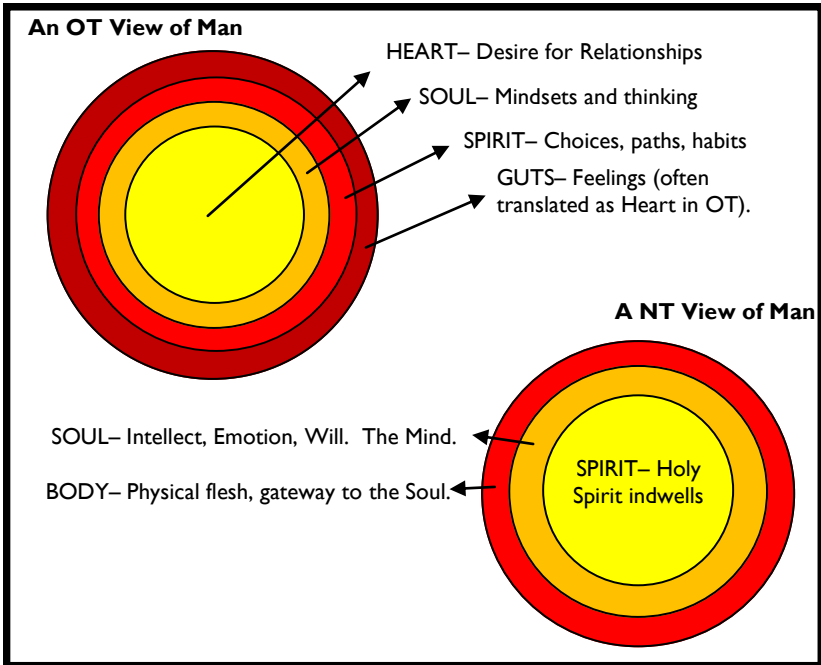
Positive Situation + Unbiblical Belief = Illegitimate positive emotion

Example: You're praised + "I MUST have their approval"=

Pride, self-sufficiency

5. When we exhibit the same emotions over a period of time they become our MOOD. Your mood is your emotional outlook on life.

**How would you describe your mood (ongoing emotional state)?
Angry? Sorrowful? Self Pity? Proud? Joyful? Peaceful?**



6. God can judge and command your emotions and moods because they reflect what you desire, believe, and think. (Read Jeremiah 17:10 – it says God judges our “minds” or “hearts,” but it literally says God judges our emotions or “guts”).

7. RE-WRITING YOUR STORY

A. By creating us in His image, God is inviting each of us into the story of the Trinity. He created us to relate with and be like the Trinity; to desire, believe, imagine and think like the Trinity, to choose like the Trinity and feel like the Trinity.

B. When God regenerates us He gives us His divine life. It is the life of Christ inside of us that allows us to imagine, desire, think, choose, and feel like the Trinity. This is what Jesus calls abundant life (Jn 10:10).

God wants to use this **ABUNDANT LIFE** to re-write your life story.

D. Often we judge each other’s lives based on what we see: choices and emotions, rather than on what we can’t see: desires, beliefs, thoughts. **OUR GOAL IN LIFT IS TO DIG DEEPER INTO EACH OTHER’S STORIES AS WE DIG DEEPER INTO OUR OWN STORY.**

This will take love and patience. Together we can begin to connect our stories to God’s story and experience what it means to image God and have the abundant life He created us for.

2² Lesson 3: A Wedding In A War

Your life is a wedding in the middle of a war. Because we were made to glorify God, and because Satan hates it when we glorify God, we are locked in a battle for our hearts and minds. That's what makes your life a War Story. But your life isn't just a War Story, it's also a Wedding Story. Our Hero, Jesus pursued us, redeemed us, and freed us from Sin and Satan. We are now the children of God and the lover of Jesus. The big question that will come from all of this grace is "how do I respond?" The answer is "love that flows from faith." The desire we had for God in the Garden has been renewed, and the ability to choose and feel love has been granted to us by the God who is madly in love with us. The key to the abundant life is to remember the tension of these two great truths: Your life is a battle, but it is also an engagement. It's a love story in a war story, and Jesus is our groom and our general.

I. WAR: THE FALL, SIN, AND SUFFERING

Life is a War Story. It is a war that is being fought for the hearts of men and women everywhere. It is the war of desire.

ALL SIN BEGINS WITH DESIRE. Satan lured Adam and Eve away from God with desire (the desire for knowledge over life).

*James 1:14. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own **desire**.*

Because of the Fall, the world is also full of suffering, and...

THIS FALLEN WORLD OFTEN FALLS ON US.

The Fall effects us in every area of our lives. It takes us from being glory sharers to glory chasers.

A. **DESIRE**

I. We were made for connection with God but because of sin there is a disconnection. All sin begins with desire. That is, we exchange our desire for God with a desire for a million lesser things.

Jeremiah 2:23-25

23 How can you say, 'I am not unclean, I have not gone after the Baals?'

Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done— a restless young camel running here and there,

24 a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind!

Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her.

25 Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst.

But you said, 'It is hopeless, for I have loved foreigners, and after them I will go.'

James 4:4 *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Jeremiah 2:13 *for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

2. Remember: Desire is not bad– but often we have WRONG DESIRES for things we shouldn't want in the first place, or we have OVER DESIRES for good things that replace God.

B. INTIMACY

1. At the FALL man lost intimacy with God.

Genesis 3:7-10. *7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."*

2. Rather than having pure intimacy with the Trinity we have a broken relationship and are separated from God (kicked out of the Garden).

a. The Father: We run from Him like the prodigal, we're afraid of Him, we don't trust Him, He doesn't satisfy us.

b. The Son: He is our groom but we cheat on him, we betray him by ignoring or mocking him, we love many things more than Him.

c. The Spirit: We rely on our own power rather than His, we try everything else first before Him, we are self-dependent and self sufficient rather than Spirit led.

C. PURPOSE OR DOMINION

1. The fallen world keeps causing us to suffer. Rather than using creation for good we use it for our own selfish gain. We find our value and define success by WHAT WE DO RATHER THAN WHAT WE ARE (image bearers). We make ourselves sovereign over God.

D. SHALOM

1. We have no peace or serenity: NO REST. When we become our own God everything hinges on us, and the pressure mounts. Since we think this life is all that matters we chase after every pleasure and every "high" that comes our way. There is no unity with God or His purpose for us.

Since we desire all these things (intimacy, dominion, and shalom) but can't find them, we are drawn away to sin.

2. RELATIONSHIPS AT WAR

A. One huge result of the Fall is that our relationships are at war.

*James 4:1-4. What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that **your passions are at war within you**? 2 **You desire and do not have**, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. **You do not have, because you do not ask**. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 4 **You adulterous people!** Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?*

Notice that our relational wars come from our desires. We demand that our spiritual desires be met by people rather than by God.

James 4:1-2 speaks of desires twice, but uses two different words:

Verse 1 passions= bad desires, lust, greed (corrupted good desires).

Verse 2 desire= good desires that are unmet.

This is very important: Relational conflicts are caused by **BAD DESIRES and **UNMET GOOD DESIRES**.**

In our relationship with others we desire three things: **INTIMACY, **IMPACT** and **SHALOM**.**

1. **INTIMACY– We want acceptance, closeness, romance, friendship, and security. We want to hang out and give hugs. We long for people.**

2. **IMPACT– We want, dominion, a quest, adventure, and meaning. We want to be a hero and have a mission. We want to give high fives and hear “Good job.”**

3. **SHALOM– We want peace and serenity. We want to know who we are and why we exist. We want fulfillment.**

Where have you seen **BAD DESIRES an **UNMET GOOD DESIRES** harm your relationships? Can you list some examples?**

B. In a nutshell: WE FIGHT EACH OTHER BECAUSE WE FIGHT GOD. We demand others to fill desires, that only God can fill (see James 4:2). Rather than having relationships that look like the Trinity we develop all kinds of harmful relationships:

Shallow Relationships: distant, aloof, no spiritual conversations

Shaming Relationships: Confrontational not caring, judgmental

Power Trip: have to be in charge, manipulating, center of attention

Self Sufficient: never ask for help, loner

Self Protective: fearful, hiding, obsessed with what others think of you

Legalistic: burden others with rules, legal not loving

Needy: manipulative, exploit each other to get needs met

Spiteful: we get angry and vengeful when needs aren't met.

Which of the relationships listed above can you identify with?

C. Remember: The Trinity is radically OTHERS CENTERED. When we live according to the FLESH we are radically SELF CENTERED.

When you suffer do you tend to lash out at others or have unrealistic expectations of others? Can you think of an example?

Re-read James 4:2. What demands do you make of others in your life, that only God should fill?

3. WEDDING: REDEMPTION, LOVE, AND WORSHIP

A. Redemption through Jesus our Hero renews our love for God. We can now fulfill God's great command and realize our ultimate desire.

Deuteronomy 6:5. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

1. DESIRE

a. We can't love God unless we **DESIRE** to love Him. Jesus frees us from our desire for false lovers, and empowers us to love God.

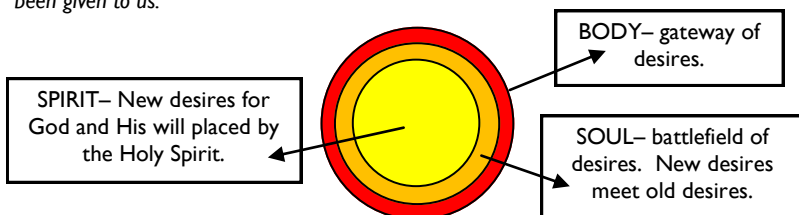
b. This is possible because God crucified the idolatrous you with Jesus, and resurrected the living, worshipping you with Jesus.

Galatians 2:20. *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

c. Our desire is now dominated by the love God has within us.

1 John 4:16. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Romans 5:5. ...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.



B. INTIMACY

1. Instead of being separated from the Trinity we are re-united with God.

a. Father: We trust Him. We run home to him. We have the sonship of Jesus. In tough times we cry Abba.

b. Son: We are faithful lovers. We enjoy Jesus more than any other joy in life. We trust him– this is the ultimate act of faithful self surrender.

c. Spirit: We rely on Him. He makes us beautiful, holy, and guide us. We realize that life is short and that we don't have to figure it all out on our own. We listen to the Spirit whisper to us about Christ and our rest in Him.

C. IMPACT

1. Our Marriage to Jesus gives us back our purpose. You now know the meaning of life– Glorifying God. This is everyone's purpose. It's the KINGDOM.

Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. The Kingdom is our prayer and our purpose.

2. God has revealed His plan to us– to use the Church in uniting all things under Jesus.

Ephesians 1:9-10. [God is] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

3. Our role is to do the good works God planned for us.

Ephesians 2:10. For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus for good works*, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

4. God's purpose is for you to make disciples.

Matthew 28:19-29 *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

YOU NEVER HAVE TO SAY "MY LIFE HAS NO MEANING" AGAIN!

D. SHALOM

1. Do you want peace with God? YOU HAVE IT!

Romans 5:1. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. Do you want oneness with God? YOU HAVE IT!

Colossians 3:3-4. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When *Christ who is your life* appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

3. Do you want rest in Christ? YOU HAVE IT!

Matthew 11:28-30. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest.* 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

4. REDEEMED RELATIONSHIPS

A. God re-created you with new desires and a new love for one another, but often all we see is Christians destroying each other through gossip, apathy, and manipulation.

1 Peter 1:22-23. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, *love one another earnestly from a pure heart*, 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

Notice how Peter connects our new nature to our love for each other.

WE LOVE BY FIRST TAPPING INTO CHRIST'S LOVE, AND THEN BY CONNECTING TO OTHER BELIEVERS.

B. Redeemed people realize that God uses our interdependent, sacrificial, non-demanding relationships to meet our desires:

1. INTIMACY– We want acceptance, closeness, romance, friendship, and security. We want to hang out and give hugs. We long for people.

In Christ: Our relationships are filled with Jesus' love and can now imitate his love.

John 13:34. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

2. IMPACT– We want, dominion, a quest, adventure, and meaning. We want to be a hero and have a mission. We want to give high fives and hear “Good job.”

In Christ: Our relationships become our purpose. We seek to make disciples and guide people to Jesus. Serving others is our mission.

3. SHALOM- We want peace and serenity. We want to know who we are and why we exist. We want fulfillment.

In Christ: Our shalom comes from within so that we can have the courage and the humility to seek relationship.

5. STAYING DESPERATE

WE PURSUE WHAT WE BELIEVE IS MOST PLEASURABLE.

THE KEY TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS STAYING DESPERATE.

1. Do you long for Christ with desperate desire? Is He the most pleasurable thing in your life? How can we stir up love for Christ and fan the flames of faith together?

2. Do you feel your thirst for God? In LIFT we will help each other identify their desires. Often we think that HOLINESS comes from a lack of desire, but the opposite is true. Only when we are thirsty will we seek Living Water. Help each other identify and label wants. Ask: What do you really want?

3. Do you fix your eyes on Jesus? In LIFT we will help each other see Jesus as the lover who satisfies their deepest desires. Help each other see how Christ alone brings INTIMACY, PURPOSE, and SHALOM.

4. Do you feed your soul? In LIFT we will learn the benefit of the Means of Grace.

*see page 74 for more on Desire.

How would you summarize to someone the idea that life is a Wedding in the middle of a War? What book or movie could you use to illustrate this concept?

When you are suffering what do you desire? Can you think of a recent example?

In your suffering, do you want God more than you want relief?

When recently have you found yourself thirsting for God?

Did you run home to the Father?

Did you enjoy Christ the Bridegroom?

Did you depend on the Spirit?

2² Lesson 4: Your Adventure Story

In the last lesson we learned that life is a Love Story in the middle of a War Story. Because of the Fall (Genesis 3) we all start out separated from God. Even as Christians, much of our life is spent battling the effects of SIN in the world and in our souls. But your life is also a Wedding story. Your marriage to Christ has brought a whole new set of desires to your heart. You now have the love of God inside you, causing you to desire Jesus your bridegroom. In this lesson we will begin to explore how your personal story has been affected by the War that is raging all around you. and we will explore together how our new desires for Christ will change us into His likeness.

I. BELIEVE

God's story for you is written by what you **BELIEVE, THINK, CHOOSE, and FEEL**. Because of the Fall, **SIN** and **SUFFERING** have opened doorways for Satan to attack you in each of these areas.

A. The War for Your Beliefs.

SIN ENTERS WHEN WE ARE DECEIVED ABOUT WHO GOD IS.

*James 4:14-17. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then **desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin**, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. 16 **Do not be deceived**, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

1. Sin starts with **DESIRE**. But how do these wrong desires get inside of me? When we fail to see God as the Father of Lights (wrong belief), who gives all good gifts, we are easily tempted by our desires to find a new god; a new source of glory and goodness (idols).

2. Belief begins in the **IMAGINATION**. Therefore, sin begins with the deception of the imagination.

Can you think of an example of this? Possibly a time you desired something but imagined God to be withholding it from you so you turned to an idol?

3. When we have a false view of God the story changes dramatically. Instead of Living God's Story (If God is For Me Who Can Be Against Me?), you start living a false story (God is Against Me– I'm On My Own).

Of course that's when we start looking for **IDOLS** to replace God.

B. Redeemed Beliefs

1. Our redeemed belief is called **FAITH. Now that I am married to Jesus and reconciled to the Father and guided by the Spirit, I begin to imagine God as good, loving, and a rewarder.**

*Hebrews 11:6. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for **whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.***

2. As our beliefs about God begin to change our desire for God will grow and grow. One day you will desire God more than anything else in the universe.

2. THINK

A. The War for Your Thoughts.

1. When we have a false view of God it quickly becomes our **MINDSET.**

*Romans 1:18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth.***

*Romans 1:21. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became **futile in their thinking**, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

*Romans 1:25...because **they exchanged the truth about God for a lie** and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

*Romans 1:28. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a **debased mind** to do what ought not to be done.*

We believe lies about the Creator and the Creation.

2. What is the truth that gets suppressed?

*Hebrews 11:6. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for **whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.***

The truth is that God exists and that He is good.

THE ESSENCE OF SIN IS TO BELITTLE GOD'S GLORY.

B. Redeemed Thinking

1. My new **DESIRE** leads to my new **MINDSET**. This flows from your new heart.

Ephesians 4:22-24. ...to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Notice how Paul takes us from desire (22) to mindset (23) to action (24). If I desire Christ, I will be renewed in the “spirit of my mind.”
*Note: “spirit” here most likely refers to human spirit, not Holy Spirit.

2. There are two mindsets a person can have: **FLESH** or **SPIRIT**.

Romans 8:5-6. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Flesh	Spirit
Thinks about here and now.	Thinks about future glory.
Focus is selfish desires.	Focus is serving others.
Tries to work to please God.	Trusts the finished work of Christ.

3. To have a redeemed **SPIRIT MINDSET** is to live by **FAITH**.

a. **FAITH** more than anything else is what propels us forward. Faith in our great reward yet to come. Our **MINDSET** must be on this. But what is our great reward?

Philippians 3:8-14. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, *not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ*, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, *because Christ Jesus has made me his own*. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*.

Paul wants to know and experience Christ (10), and he presses on toward perfection (12). This perfection comes from being Christ's (12). This is the prize that he presses on towards (14)- His union with Christ!

b. The SPIRIT MINDSET or FAITH presses us forward towards our WEDDING DAY! One day the WAR will end and we will be united with Jesus forever!

4. Spiritual growth begins with MIND RENEWAL.

Romans 12:1-2. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6. For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Notice here that Paul calls our mindsets STRONGHOLDS. A stronghold is any area of your thinking where you have agreed with what Satan says and rejected or ignored what God says (the Gospel).

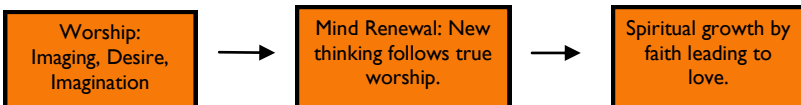
For example: Satan says, “You’ll never overcome that sin.” God says, “Christ has overcome that sin for you already.”

What personal strongholds (agreements with Satan) have you made that need to be torn down?

5. Mind renewal begins with Worship.

1 Corinthians 3:18. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

We become like the thing we worship or focus on the most. If we focus on ourselves we become more and more selfish. If we worship or “behold” Jesus we will become like Him.



3. CHOOSE

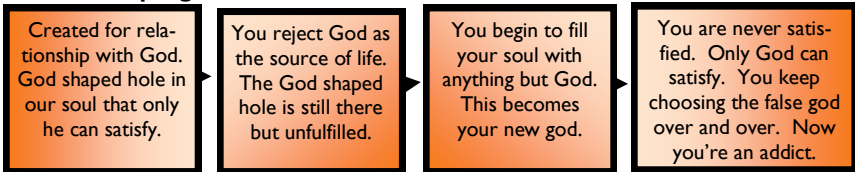
A. The War for Your Choices.

We choose what we believe is most pleasing. When we choose things other than God, things that cannot satisfy our soul's **DESIRE**, we fall into **SLAVERY** to things like, money, beauty, pride, hypocrisy, praise, sex, materialism, hobbies, etc.– all of which are false gods or **IDOLS**.

1. When we choose idols, the Bible calls this **SLAVERY**; today we call it **ADDICTION**.

2 Peter 2:19,22. *They (false teachers) promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.* 22 *What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."*

2. The progression into **SLAVERY** or **ADDICTION** looks like this:



a. Yes **YOU** are an addict too. All of us are. Maybe not to drugs or alcohol, but to pride, praise, acceptance, control, or Facebook or work.

b. As our lives are dominated by these false gods we make more and more bad **CHOICES** in order to fulfill us. Serving others and worshipping God are suddenly not part of your **STORY** anymore. Soon you look like Galatians 5:19-21 instead of Galatians 5:22-23. Read it.

c. Why are there over 3,000 imperatives in the NT? Because your choices count! They reflect what you believe and think.

The question is: How do we **TAKE OFF** fleshly choices and **PUT ON** Christ?

B. Redeemed Choices.

1. Our redeemed choices start with our new desires.

We choose what we believe is most pleasing. Now that you **DESIRE** God with your new heart, and **IMAGINE** Him to be good and a rewarder, and your **MINDSET** is on the gospel, you begin to make **CHOICES** that reflect this new life that you've been given by grace.

2. Our redeemed choices are motivated by faith or belief.

Now the motivation for our good deeds is **FAITH**. Often we try to make gratitude our motivation for doing good. But the true motivator is faith in God's **FUTURE GRACE**. We must believe that as we **CHOOSE** to obey, God will reward us with **GRACE** for that moment.

3. Faith will change our thinking and thus change our choices.

a. Notice the progression from thinking to choosing in these verses.

1 Peter 4:1-3. 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, (THINK) because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. 2 As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. (CHOOSE) 3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.

1 Peter 1:13-15. Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober (THINK), set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. (FUTURE GRACE) 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; (CHOOSE)

Romans 12:1-2. Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy (THINK), to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God (CHOOSE)—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (THINK) Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (CHOOSE)

b. Notice how faith in the **GOSPEL** frees us to serve.

Galatians 5:13. For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Only someone who is completely and unconditionally loved by Christ can truly be free to love and serve others who will never love you completely or unconditionally like He will.

Philippians 2:3-8. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (THINK), 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant (CHOOSE), being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Christ's servant actions were preceded by a servant mindset.

Can you identify ways that your thinking is affecting the choices you make or have made in the past?

4. Our redeemed choices over time are called “Keeping In Step with the Spirit.”

Galatians 5:16-25. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

a. To Walk by the Spirit is to live in complete dependence on your union with Christ, His death and resurrection, rather than the law.

b. It is from our union with the death of Jesus that we can “crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.”

c. This occurs when Jesus becomes our greatest desire.

d. The result is the “Fruit of the Spirit” which is the character of Christ, i.e. you are becoming like Christ.

4. FEEL

A. The War for Your Emotions.

Earlier we learned that our emotions work like lights on a car dashboard. If we are connected to **GOD'S BIG STORY** then our emotions will be good, but if we are disconnected from God's story then they will be bad. Sinful or Fallen emotions reflect sinful desires.

Ephesians 4:17-19. Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are deceived in their thinking, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become emotionless and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

When people are disconnected from God (4:18) they become deceived in their thinking (4:18) and thus they are “emotionless” (4:19).

1. Emotions are supposed to help us connect to God's story and experience the **LIFE He desires for us. Instead we use them to run from God:**

a. **STOICS**– repress feelings. Insensitive, no hurt, no grief, apathy toward God and others.

b. **EMOS**– wear emotions on their sleeve. Blindly obeying your negative emotions, hurling our emotions at others, no self control.

c. **PLEASURE SEEKERS**– anesthetize emotions. Instead of dealing with emotions we drug ourselves with pleasure. The pleasure might be a bad desire (porn, drunkenness) or an over desire (food, movies, shopping).

Which of these 3 emotional responses do you tend to lean towards in order to escape your emotions?

2. **FAITH** takes emotions to God, anger and grief are shared with Him.

Psalm 62:8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

FACING YOUR EMOTIONS FORCES YOU TO FACE YOUR NEED.

B. Redeemed Emotions.

1. Love isn't just an action, it is also a feeling.

1 Peter 1:22. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

Peter says “love each other earnestly from a pure heart.” But the word heart is actually **GUTS** (emotions).

The Christian life is a deeply emotional journey. Just like any **WEDDING** in the middle of a **WAR** it is full of **JOY** and **SORROW**.

2. Our emotions are a gift from God to help us to experience Him:

a. Identify the emotion (hurt, anger, nervous, etc..)

b. Feel the emotion - don't suppress it

c. Share it with God

James 5:13. Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

Psalm 62:8b. ...pour out your heart before him;

d. Let the emotion show you the **DESIRE and **BELIEF** behind it.**

Psalm 42:11. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?

Note: See how the Psalmist talks to his own soul/questions himself.

Can you recall an emotional response you had recently, or maybe a time that you “bottled up” your emotions? What deeper desire do you think those emotions were trying to reveal?

3. Our emotions help us love and serve others:

John 11:34-36, 38,39,43. And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”

a. They make you real to others. (36)

b. They allow us to empathize with other’s pain and sorrow. (35)

c. They motivate us to action. (39,43).

Can you recall a time that you were able to emotionally connect and empathize with someone else recently?

Have your emotions ever motivated you to ministry or service?

****Important:** Before I share my emotions with others recklessly, I must practice **SELF CONTROL**. Often sharing emotions can do more harm than good. Venting our feelings is not Biblical. Once we have experienced God through our emotions and allowed Him to satisfy our souls, then we will have the self control needed to share our emotions. And this sharing should result in benefit for others.

What are some ways you have recklessly shared emotions in the past?

Do you exhibit Spirit empowered Self Control over your emotions?

2² Lesson 5: Spiritual Inventory

You are living in the middle of a great cosmic War being fought against your enemy Satan. Satan uses lies, accusations and deceptions to cause you to agree with him about who you are and what your life is. Most of what you believe about yourself comes from the Devil. He has been firing arrows at your heart since you were a child. Identifying these arrows is the first step to quenching them with the shield of faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ our warrior king.

Through this inventory we will begin to name these arrows– it will require great courage and honesty. Arrows need to be named so they can be removed by the Gospel. Use the guide below to list your arrows and any additional thoughts.

2 Corinthians 2:11. so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

PRAY PRAY PRAY throughout.

Be ready to share your answers with your spiritual friend.

I. Naming Arrows

A. List Arrows of Resentment: people, institutions, or ideas you feel resentment towards. Example: “I resent my father for...”. “I resent my work for...”

B. List Arrows of Pride and Selfishness: Ask God to show you where pride and selfishness have hurt others and separated you from God’s love, causing you to act unloving or hypocritical (judgmental, blaming, boasting, consumed with your own agenda, unwilling to compromise, etc...)

C. List Arrows from Relational/Emotional Struggles: List all relationships where you've had ongoing emotional struggles. Beside their name write feelings their name calls up (fear, pain, guilt, shame, anger, envy, sadness).

D. List Arrows of Fear: all the fears you can remember since childhood. Write why you are afraid.

E. List Arrows of Guilt: areas where you feel guilt for past sins, dishonesty, cheating, sexual impurity, greed, revenge, etc... Repent of sins that still hold your thoughts and desires captive.

F. Now, go back and review your answers and write what lies Satan is using on your heart. What scheme of Satan are you up against? How is he deceiving you?

2. Evaluating Your Choices.

A. Identify your excuses: who do you blame for your failures or mistakes? Who do you blame for your suffering (God, Parents, Circumstances, Yourself)?

B. Inventory your choice patterns: make a list of choice patterns you see in your life– Ask God to reveal these to you. Ask those you trust for help.

**C. Identify your idols: - “I have a tendency to run towards ____.”
Make a list of idols below. What lies are you believing about God, creation, and these idols? What truth can replace the lies?**

D. Submit your choices and behaviors to God. What area of your life do you need to submit to God right now? What will your life look like when this happens?

Romans 6:13. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

E. Begin to make choices based on the Gospel and God’s will. What new choices can you make based on your death and resurrection with Christ?

3. Evaluating Your Emotions.

A. Identify and name your emotional moods (ongoing state of emotions). Be honest– face your feelings, list them, and share them with God.

1. What emotions have you been wrestling with lately?

2. If you were going to be totally honest with God, what would you say?

B. Ask yourself the WHY question: “Why do I do what I do?” Ex: Why am I so anxious? Why am I afraid? Why am I so concerned with what others think about me? Etc.

1. What is your WHY question?

2. What is the answer to your Why question?

C. Connect your emotions to your beliefs– understand why you are feeling the way you are.

1. Ask: what do my feelings and moods reveal about my beliefs?

2² Lesson 6: Deep Healing

The Gospel of Jesus Christ offers you a forgiveness so deep and so powerful that God can declare over you that there is NOW NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus. But Jesus doesn't just offer you forgiveness, he offers deep healing. We are each a house divided. We are each brokenhearted. To experience the deep healing of Jesus you must go there with Him. And you must allow Him in to do His healing work. You must invite Him in and walk with Him there. As we live in faith together we can help each other open the door to Jesus. We can guide each other to The Guide and back to Eden where our hearts belong and where the divine life of God is waiting for you.

I. HEALING HOPE

In the last lesson you completed the difficult but hopefully enlightening “Spiritual Inventory.” This inventory has the potential to leave us in despair because it reveals the **SIN** that is inside of us.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Jesus never wants to leave us at despair or guilt. He wants to lead us into hope, for it is hope that heals us. It is possible to hope because there is an invisible reality that goes beyond what we can see with our physical eyes. There is a glory being prepared for us beyond all comparison!

A. Deep Healing communicates that it is possible to hope. It shifts our mindset from Law to Grace, from the Now to the Future, from Self to God and Others. Deep Healing removes the blinders and opens up our perspective to see the whole **BIG STORY of God. It opens our eyes to the Resurrection and future glory.**

Romans 8:28. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

B. Hope comes from **RESSURRECTION POWER. This is what allows us to believe that God exists and that He is a rewarder (Heb. 11:6). Resurrection power is what heals us by delivering our **DESIRES**.**

C. **HEALING focuses on our desires. Suffering exposes our thirsts, but Healing takes us to the **LIVING WATER**.**

John 7:37 Jesus...cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.”

2. JESUS WANTS TO HEAL YOU

A. Each of us is broken hearted. If you haven't admitted your own brokenness yet, you need to start there. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost– that includes everyone.

Why do you do what you do?

Why do you freeze when your dad calls?

Why do you bite your nails?

Why do you fear public speaking, or heights, or intimacy?

Why do you hate it when someone criticizes your work?

Why do you work so many hours?

Why do you not work at all?

Why do you refuse to go out without makeup?

Why do you demand perfection?

Why do you have such high highs and low lows?

Why do you

?

BECAUSE YOU'RE BROKEN!

B. Your brokenness has you seeking idols: Comfort, Control, Power, Acceptance, Approval. These lead to Guilt, Anger, and Worry.

*Matthew 13:15. For **this people's heart has grown dull**, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ear and understand with their heart and turn, and **I would heal them.**'*

Jesus is offering to Heal all of us. But our “dull hearts” prevent his healing.

Have you experienced a “dull heart?” Think about your Spiritual Inventory. Where did it reveal a “dull heart?” Think about the last argument you had or conflict you experienced. How are you failing to let God capture your imagination in this area? What is He saying that you are ignoring?

3. LETTING JESUS HEAL YOU– HOW?*

We must go back to the place of wounding with Jesus. Invite Him to join you at that memory. Ask for healing. What would Jesus say to you in that memory/moment? How does his grace cover it? How does his love affirm you and accept you? What look is he giving you? What fear is he comforting? What sin is he forgiving?

STOP: What area of your heart needs healing right now? (Choose an area from you Spiritual Inventory or a recent wound).

A. Get away with God. Get to a safe, quiet place for at least an hour and pray:

Jesus, I come into your presence and ask you to surround me. I come under your authority and give myself to you— Spirit, Soul, Body. I give the broken places of my heart to you. I declare that you have authority over my heart.

B. Give Jesus access to your brokenness. Rev. 3:20— open the door and invite Christ in. There are many broken places in your heart, but you must deal with ONE AT A TIME. Invite Jesus to meet you at each one.

2 Corinthians 4:6. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ask Jesus to shine his light in your heart. Pray:

Jesus, I invite you into this broken place in my heart (this wound this memory). Lord Jesus shine your light there. Reveal to me all that is going on in my heart.

The broken place in my heart that needs healing is:

C. Ask Jesus what he is saying to this wounded part of you. Listen for the healing word that the Gospel will speak. Jesus will bring words of truth, love, and kindness and grace, not condemnation or accusation.

Jesus often speaks to us through memories. As you go back to the point of the wound, ask Jesus what he would say in that moment.

Pray:

Jesus, come and lead me into healing of this wound in my heart. Speak to me here. Open my eyes to see what you saw in that moment. Open my heart to see what you are revealing now. Let me hear no other voice but yours.

D. Confess. Since we have handled the broken areas of our heart so poorly for so long, Jesus will reveal areas of idolatry to us. As he does this, confess and renounce these idols— be specific. Pray:

Jesus, I realize that I have not handled my brokenness with faith. Reveal the idols that I have set up in place of you. Apply your shed blood to my mind and renew my mind. I renounce the sin of ___ and turn to you. Thank you for forgiving me at the cross.

E. Break any agreements you’ve made with Satan. Often unknowingly we believe the lies of Satan and these turn into “strongholds” in our hearts. Satan has suggested something, and you have said “Yes.”

*Many of the thoughts and prayers in this section are adapted from John Eldredge’s book *Waking the Dead*.

Ex:

- “Don’t ever trust anyone”
- “Your heart is bad”
- “Don’t share you feelings with others”
- “You’re so dirty, addicted, lustful– you’ll never be free”
- “Jesus is mad at you about your sin”
- “God is recording all your sins”
- “God doesn’t really love you”
- “Others are to blame for your problems”
- “No one cares about me, everyone is my enemy”
- “My problems are bigger than God”
- “God is never there when I need Him”

The agreements I have made with Satan are:

F. Renounce these lies specifically and in the power of Christ’s NAME and his BLOOD. Pray:

I now renounce every agreement I have made with Satan and his lies. I renounce Satan’s lie of _____, and in the name of Jesus I command him to flee.

G. Ask Jesus to heal the wounded place in your heart. Again, listen for what Jesus is saying through the Gospel.

Read, Meditate upon, and journal Ephesians 1-3, Colossians 1-2, and Romans 8.

Let your union with Christ guide you into the truth about the wound or the memory or emotion that you are experiencing. Repentance, Confession, and the dismantling of Satan’s lies will make Jesus’ voice so much easier to hear. Pray:

Jesus, come and do what you promised to do– heal my broken heart and set me free by your grace and truth. Bring the broken place of my heart into your love and healing. I want to be whole and I want this part of my heart to come home to the Father. Come, bind me up and make me whole.

What specific Gospel truth can be applied to the agreement you have made with Satan? How can it set you free.

Remember: This process is not a quick-fix. Sanctification is always a slow and steady growth process. But, this process does open the door for continued growth.

DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINES CAN NEVER BRING GROWTH WITHOUT HEALING.

2² Lesson 7: Guide To The Guide

Living in Faith Together means Walking with God together. We have new, good hearts. Christ is at home in our hearts and the Spirit guides our steps. Our story does not end with forgiveness, that is only the beginning. Our story ends with growth and glory: the glory that the TRINITY shared with us! Our role is to point each other back to Christ. We do this by guiding each other's stories back to faith in the Gospel. We do this by listening and asking questions. And we do this by bringing truth into the hearts of those we love. Our role in discipleship is to constantly point each other back to the Gospel. In this lesson we will begin to practice doing this with our spiritual friend. Remember discipleship is about loving each other NOT changing each other— only God can do that!

I. WE NEED A GUIDE

If you're not on a dangerous quest through a war torn world, journeying from glory to glory, then you don't need a guide. If you are simply trying to live life as best you can and be nice until you die, then you don't need a captain. **BUT** if your **STORY** is linked to the story that God is writing (an adventurous love story in the middle of a war), then you need much more than a set of principles and rules to get you through. You need a Captain and a Guide.

DISCIPLESHIP IS LEARNING TO WALK WITH GOD.

A. Letting God guide you means learning to **TRUST** Him completely.

To follow God is to go through dark and dangerous places. Discipleship is not just learning a bunch of facts, principles or steps. It is a life of faith lived with God and others. If discipleship does not lead to deeper trust and intimacy with God, then it has failed.

What part of following God do you struggle with?

B. Just because we have a new heart, and a good heart, does not mean that we are not still prone to be **FOOLS**.

Ephesians 1:16-17. I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

I. Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would have wisdom and revelation through knowledge of Christ.

2. We constantly need to be guided back to the WISDOM of the GOSPEL. Why? Because we so easily forget.

2 Peter 1:9. For whoever lacks these qualities [previously listed] is so nearsighted that he is blind, *having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*

C. We need a guide during the trial of good times and bad times.

2 Count it all joy, my brothers, *when you meet trials of various kinds*, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith *produces steadfastness*. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that *you may be perfect* and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God*, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the *lowly* brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the *rich* in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

1. Trials should be expected and should be considered a time for joy because they will increase our dependency on our Guide (v2).

2. Trials are never God guiding us into SIN but always God guiding us away from SIN (v13).

3. Trials can come in the form of "The Test of Failure" and "The Test of Success." Suffering and blessing are both a form of trial (v9-11).

4. To survive the trial we must:

a. Ask for WISDOM (v5)

God's wisdom is not specifically knowing what to do in a situation (choice A or Choice B), it is however inner character that leads to peace.

James 3:13-18. 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But *the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere*. 18 *And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

God's wisdom is Christ himself.

1 Corinthians 1:23-24. ...but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

James 3:17-18 describes the character of Christ, which is the wisdom of God. He makes us foolish so that we can receive Christ's wisdom by being transformed into His likeness.

b. Have FAITH in FUTURE GRACE (1:12).

We make it through trials by trusting in God's wisdom for the present and His grace for the future (the Crown of Life). Remember: God is a rewarder of all who seek Him (Heb. 11:6).

D. How do we let God guide us? How do we walk with Him?

1. **ASK** Him to guide you– submit to His leading, admit your need.
2. **LISTEN** to your heart– God's answers come from within us. Christ is in our hearts so to hear him means listening to your desires.

YOU MUST BELIEVE YOUR HEART IS GOOD.

3. **TEST** what you hear with God's written word (Bible) and Living Word (Jesus)– Satan will try to deceive you, and use your freedom for sin. God will never speak accusation, condemnation, or discouragement.

4. **WALK** with others who walk with God– In other words LIFT.

2. WE GUIDE EACH OTHER TO THE GUIDE**A. We need spiritual friends who will point us to Jesus.**

Hebrews 12:1-2. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

WE GUIDE TO THE GUIDE: JESUS**B. We guide each other in FAITH.**

1. Living in faith together means guiding each other in faith. We need to help them unite their story with the story God is writing for them. We need to see them the way God does. Your spiritual friend is...

Regenerate– purified from sin

Reconciled– the barrier of sin is destroyed forever

Redeemed– they are freed from the power of sin

Justified– they are freed from the penalty of sin

They are dead with Christ to sin– the “old man” is gone

They are alive with Christ to God– the “new creation” is resurrected

They are New Creations– new Heart, Thinking, Choices, Feelings

They are saints– holy in Christ

They are sons and daughters of God– they are dear to Christ.

They are more than conquerors of the world, the flesh, and the Devil

They can grow in grace by taking off the old and putting on the new.

2. Do you envision who your friends are and who they can be? That vision comes from God and it needs to be spoken into their lives.

Often what believers ARE and CAN BE does not match what they LOOK LIKE (our condition does not match our position). But FAITH sees past the CONDITION to the truth of the POSITION.

John 21:15-17. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” 16 He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.

This conversation takes place after Peter had denied Jesus three times. But Jesus saw past the failures of Peter and SPOKE FORGIVENESS AND FUTURE GRACE into his life.

THE GRACE THAT YOU SPEAK INTO SOMEONE'S LIFE COULD CHANGE THEM FOREVER.

Can you remember a time that someone spoke faith and truth into your life and it changed you forever?

3. Faith Questions:

a. These questions can be used to awaken desire in each other's lives.

"If there were no restraints what would you do with your life?"

"Perhaps God designed you to do _____"

"Tell me about a time you let God use you to change someone's life."

"How has God been showing you that you need Him?"

"What have you done in the past that God has really used?"

"Tell me about your spiritual gifts."

"How are you using your gifts to serve others?"

"What impact do you want to make?" "Who do you want to impact?"

"More than anything else, what do you long to do for God?"

"How do you make decisions?" "What scriptures help you?"

"How would this decision please God?"

"In what ways are you living by faith in God's grace?"

"Are you doing anything contrary to your conscience or beliefs?"

"What does the Bible say about your decision?"

"I know God has a plan for you, I can see you doing ____ one day."

"Do you know Christ loves you? How does this affect your life?"

"Are you connected to community?"

"You share Jesus' freedom and purity– do you feel this?"

"God has declared you to be righteous– do you believe this?"

"What victories over sin do you long for?"

"How are you confronting sin in your life?"

"How does knowing that you are a New Creation change your desires?"

"If you really started to believe that Grace gives you all you need, how would you start relating to others differently?"

"Do you imagine yourself IN CHRIST– as a son? Bride? Conqueror? Saint?"

Here are some passages you can study together: Rom 6:11-13, 8:13, 12:1-2, 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 9:24-27, 2 Cor. 4:18, 7:1, 10:3-7; Gal. 2:20, 5:16-25, 6:8-9; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 1:9-12, 3:1-17; 1 Pt. 1:13-18.

3. WE GUIDE BY ASKING AND LISTENING

The story your spiritual friend is writing is either their own story or part of God's Big Story. Listening will help you to determine which story is being written.

A. We listen for **DESIRE**.

1. Talk to each other about passions and desires. What are your needs and thirsts?
2. Ask: What do you really want?
3. Ask: How has life recently stirred up your passion for God?
4. Ask: What attracts you to Jesus?
5. Ask: How have spiritual disciplines helped or hurt your desire for God?
6. Ask: How does being connected to Jesus increase your desire to connect to spiritual friends?

B. We listen for **BELIEF**.

1. Talk to each other about what you believe about God, others and yourself.
2. Ask: What do you believe about yourself?
3. Ask: Do you believe in your new identity in Christ?
4. Ask: Do you believe you are guilty or guiltless?
5. Ask: Do you believe you can love and serve others?

C. Listen for **MINDSET**.

1. Talk to each other about **MIND RENEWAL**.
2. Ask: Is your mind prepared for what's coming?
3. Ask: What lies do you need to dismantle or take apart?
4. Ask: Do you have the same mind as Christ? Are you thinking about the truths of who you are in Christ? The truths of His grace?
5. Ask: Are you looking at the situations of life the way God looks at them?
6. Ask: What is the "worst case scenario?" How could God's grace still shine in that situation?

D. Listen for CHOICES.

1. Talk to each other about choosing a life of love and service.
2. Ask: Have you confessed your neediness to God? Are you trying to do things in your own power or God's power through faith?
3. Ask: Are you being guided by the Spirit? Are you constantly asking God to show you how to respond or act in each situation of life?
4. Ask: If your faith was producing the **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT** what actions would that result in? Be specific?

E. Listen for FEELINGS.

1. Talk to each other about how you're feeling.
2. Ask: Have you admitted and labeled your emotions? How can renewed thinking change your emotions?
3. Ask: Have you taken your feelings to God? If you have, what has that been like?
4. Ask: How has talking to God about your feelings helped bring **SELF CONTROL** to your life?
5. Ask: How have your emotions helped you in ministry?
6. Ask: How have your emotions helped you to empathize with others?

4. WE GUIDE INTO GOD'S BIG STORY

Often the story we are writing is centered in the Law, the Now, and Ourselves. The story God is writing is centered in Grace, in the Future, and in Sacrifice.

A. We guide from LAW to GRACE.

Does your spiritual friend talk mostly about "trying harder," "deserving," "pleasing God." OR do they talk about receiving grace, trusting God and believing His promises?

Do you hear "Do Do Do" or "Done Done Done?"

Do you hear frustration with all the "rules" and "principles" of religion, or do you see them striving for the LIFE of Christ.

Romans 6:14. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Gal. 5:1. For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

B. We guide from NOW to FUTURE.

Does your spiritual friend focus only on the present situation? Are they worried about earthly things? Is their desire for their own kingdom in the NOW. Or do they look forward to what God will do in the future? Are they focused on FUTURE GRACE? Are their eyes on a heavenly inheritance and reward?

Do you hear impatience or waiting?

Do you hear anxiety or hope?

Do they see their trial as a means to an end (Christ likeness)?

Colossians 3:1-4. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

C. We guide from SELF to SACRIFICE.

Does your spiritual friend focus only on their problem or how their situation affects them? Do they take credit for all the blessings in their life? Or do they thank God in the good and bad times. Do they look for ways to help others, using their own suffering as a way to comfort others?

Do you hear hiding or helping?

Do you hear problems or opportunities?

Philippians 2:3-4. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have a conversation with your Spiritual Friend. Talk about one of the topics in the Spiritual Inventory. Listen for Desires, Beliefs, Mindsets, Choices, and Feelings.

Listen for Law v. Grace, Now v. Future, and Self v. Sacrifice.

Use the worksheet on the next pages to record what you hear from your spiritual friend.

Evaluate Your Conversation.

1. Did you listen well? Did you listen more than you talked?

2. How did you try to discern your spiritual friend's desires?

3. How did you try to awaken desire in your spiritual friend?

4. Summarize your friend's:

Mindset:

Choices:

Feelings:

5. In what ways did you guide your friend to The Guide?

As you listen to your spiritual friend record what you hear in the appropriate box. Also label what you hear as **D**: Desire, **B**: Belief, **M**: Mindset, **C**: Choices, **F**: Feeling. Practice your listening skills and asking questions. Note the example sin red below.

<p>Law <i>B: Believes bad job is a punishment</i></p>	<p>Now <i>D: Wants a new job</i></p>	<p>Self <i>F: Feels like they are useless at work</i></p>
<p>Grace <i>M: Grateful to have the job</i></p>	<p>Future <i>B: Believes God will guide them at work</i></p>	<p>Sacrifice <i>C: Chose to start a Bible study</i></p>

HOW TO BE A SPIRITUAL FRIEND

Spiritual friendship is bringing people face-to-face with God. But what does that look like on the “ground level?” What does it look like in “real life?”

First it looks like wrestling with **SUFFERING**.

SUSTAINING– Sustaining allows people to grieve. We send the message that “It’s normal to hurt.” It gives permission to sorrow. True sustaining is happening when the other person feels that you feel their pain. It is not enough to understand it intellectually or even to feel it with them. It is feeling the thing that they are feeling.

HEALING– Healing send the message that “It’s possible to hope.” As we move through the comforting process we do not want to leave them in grief. We don’t want to just weep with those who weep, but also we want them to find hope in Christ. We want our friends to see their situation and their suffering from God’s perspective. Healing in essence is helping our friends bring God into the equation.

Second, it looks like wrestling with real life sin.

RECONCILING– We usually call this “confronting.” But the word reconcile keep in view the idea that we want to be reconciled to God. We are restoring a broken connection. Reconciling says, “It’s horrible to sin– but it’s wonderful to be forgiven.” We want our friend to feel the sorrow of sin, but also the wonder of grace.

GUIDING– We send the message, “It’s supernatural to grow.” In other words, guiding, is helping our spiritual friend to take steps toward spiritual growth. Guiding includes encouraging and fanning into flame the goodness that you see God already doing in their heart. It is a vision of what the person can become by God’s grace.

2² Lesson 8: Sustaining In Suffering

Our lives are a Wedding in the middle of a War. Life is hard. If Living in faith together means “Guiding to the Guide,” then that means we have to help each other through hard times of suffering. Like we’ve said, we are writing our stories into God’s Big Story. It is crucial that we help each other see life through God’s eyes. We do this in two ways: Sustaining and Healing. First we will stand next to our spiritual friend and share their pain. Then, we will help them to experience the presence of God in the middle of their pain.

I. WE ARE ALL BROKENHEARTED

A. Everybody Hurts.

That’s right. All of us suffer. We all have wounds in our hearts. We all have tried to write our own story. Every person you disciple or guide as a spiritual friend has experienced a broken heart at some point.

B. Guide to the Guide.

Remember, it is **NOT** your job to fix people or diagnose them or change people— only the Spirit can do that. Your job is to guide to **THE GUIDE**, to point your friend to **THE FRIEND**. Your job is to relate.

WE ARE ONLY TRANSFORMED IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

C. Share you life.

If the above statement is true, then Living in Faith Together means guiding our friends into the presence of God. There is **NO FORMULA** for this. It’s all about loving people and relating to them and being real with them and guiding their hearts to Christ and the Gospel.

Paul says he shared not only the truth of the Gospel with the Thessalonians but also his very self (soul). He gave his life for them.

I Thessalonians 2:8. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Jesus ministered in this same way. He didn’t just dispense knowledge, He gave his life for us in order to one day end all pain and suffering.

Who are you sharing your life with?

2. WHY WE SUFFER*

*Here is a short theology of suffering. There are many good books on the theology of suffering including: *If God Is Good* by Randy Alcorn, *Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering* by Tim Keller, *The Problem of Pain* by C.S. Lewis, and *God's Healing For Life's Losses* by Robert Kelleman.

A. There are 2 levels of suffering:

1. **External Suffering**– something that is happening to us.
Lost job, death of loved one, physical illness, breakup, situations.
2. **Internal Suffering**– something that is happening inside of us.
Grief, sorrow, mental illness, discouragement, guilt, loss.

ALL SUFFERING IS CAUSED BY UNMET DESIRE.

Remember: your internal response is determined by what you believe about what you desire. So something that is external suffering may not cause much internal suffering or something that is not really a big deal could cause a lot of internal suffering depending on what we desire and believe about that desire.

Ex: Someone who really desires the job promotion is devastated when they are passed over. But someone who is content with their current position is not that bothered by the same “trial.”

Both levels of suffering are important. As spiritual friends we must address the external situations and/or physical needs. But most importantly we must move from the external to the HEART.

B. Why do we suffer?

Hot water reveals what is inside a tea bag. Suffering reveals what is in your heart. God uses this revelation to heal and transform us.

1. **Sometimes we suffer because God is disciplining us.**

Hebrews 12:6. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives..

God's discipline is built into CREATION. Our choices have natural consequences which often lead to EXTERNAL SUFFERING and then to INTERNAL SUFFERING.

Can you think of a time in your life when God used a trial to discipline or correct you through suffering?

2. Mostly we suffer because it increases our thirst for God.

a. Trials are used by God to test the desires of our heart.

Deuteronomy 8:2. *And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.*

b. Trials cause us to groan for the future glory that awaits us. We develop a greater thirst for Christ and his glory through our trials.

Romans 8:18-27. *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

c. Suffering causes us to rely on God and trust Him fully.

2 Corinthians 1:8-10. *For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.*

3. We suffer so that we can be transformed into Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18, 4: 7-12. 16-18. *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

4:7 *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For *this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison*, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

a. Paul tells us that we are transformed into the image of Christ “from one degree of glory to another.” Glory is what transforms us.

b. As we suffer we realize our dependence and weakness. As we depend on Christ we look to Christ. As we look to Christ we behold His glory. This glory changes us; it is LIFE giving, resurrection power.

c. In other words, the suffering we experience causes us to behold Christ and his glory, and in so doing we are changed into the likeness of Christ.

Philippians 3:10. that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

d. Paul says the same thing here. Shared sufferings with Christ cause us to know him and become like him.

Hebrews 2:10. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation (Jesus) perfect through suffering.

e. Even Jesus was made perfect through suffering. His suffering didn't make him sinless, but it did make him mature and able to bear our sins and sympathize with us as our brother and High Priest. It made him dependent upon the Father for everything.

If Jesus was made perfect in suffering and we are being transformed into His glory, then we too must suffer to fully image Him. Just as He depended on the Father we depend on Jesus.

Where do you see your suffering transforming you into Christlike-ness? Is it causing you to desire God more and more?

3. SUSTAINING IN SUFFERING

A. Our message in suffering: “It’s normal to hurt.”

That is the message we must start with as we help our spiritual friends that are suffering. The NT assumes that we are all struggling:

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 12:15. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

B. God uses us to sustain each other in suffering.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and **God of all comfort**, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, **so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction**, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

1. It is assumed that we all experience affliction.

2. God wants to comfort us.

3. God uses us to comfort each other.

In verse 4 we are told to comfort those in “any trouble.” We don’t have to have experienced the same exact suffering in order to comfort someone else. All suffering originates from loss and should make us desperate for God. Because we all suffer, we can all comfort each other.

C. Sustaining means sharing in suffering.

2 Corinthians 1:5-7. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that **as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort**.

SHARED SUFFERING IS ENDURABLE SUFFERING.

8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

Paul wants the church to know about his sufferings. Often we try to hide our sorrows from others.

Why is it so important to share our suffering with our spiritual friends?

What are ways that you can comfort others with the comfort you have received from God?

Note: Don't be like Job's friends (see Job 16:2). They didn't know that it is normal to hurt (they blamed Job), and they arrogantly tried to explain his suffering. Focus more on the result of the suffering (Christlikeness) than the cause.

4. STEPS TO SUSTAINING

A. Face your own suffering.

1. The first step to **SUSTAINING** begins as you learn to face your own suffering with integrity, hope and faith. You don't have to have experienced the same exact situation as your friend. But you do need to face your own suffering face-to-face with God.

2. Remember, first we **CRY OU TO GOD**. This will allow us to have **SELF CONTROL** as we sustain others.

B. Understand your friend's situation.

1. Next, listen and ask questions to get information about their **EXTERNAL SUFFERING**. Without this information you can't empathize with their **INTERNAL SUFFERING**.

b. Listening and asking meaningful questions will build trust.

C. Empathize with them.

1. **SHARED PAIN IS ENDURABLE PAIN**. Your friend must believe that you are sharing their pain with them.

2. To empathize with others ask:

a. How would any person be affected by this suffering?

b. How would I be affected by this suffering?

3. Move from universal empathy to specific empathy.

a. How is my friend uniquely affected by this suffering .

b. Ask God to help you see what your friend sees.

c. Adopt your friend's point of view. Do not condone or condemn, agree or disagree— just see what it must be like to be that person.

d. Express your friend's point of view in your own words. Make sure they agree with how you are seeing it.

e. Help them to express their point of view.

f. Gently begin to evaluate their viewpoint (how near or far is it from reality?).

Don't worry in the next lesson we will practice this.

2² Lesson 9: Healing In Suffering

Living in Faith Together means guiding our spiritual friend through seasons of suffering. As we said already, this requires sustaining, but it also requires healing. In this lesson we will learn to ask the questions that will keep our story connected to God's big story. In the process we will learn to grieve alongside those we love, while also letting them know that there is always HOPE.

I. IT'S POSSIBLE TO HOPE

In our last lesson we learned that "It's normal to hurt." Now healing begins when we learn that "it's possible to hope."

It's possible to hope because there is an invisible reality that goes beyond what we can see with our physical eyes. There is a glory being prepared for us beyond all comparison!

2 Corinthians 4:16-18. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

A. Hope shifts our mindset.

1. It shifts our mindset from Law to Grace, from the Now to the Future, from Self to Sacrifice for God and Others.

2. It shifts our mindset to God's Big Story. He's in control and writing a Love Story in the middle of a War Story.

3. It shifts our mindset to the resurrection and future glory.

B. Hope brings healing by letting us focus on our DESIRES. Suffering exposes our thirsts, but healing takes us to the Living Water.

John 7:37 Jesus...cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."

In a nutshell: SUSTAINING helps us face the badness of life, but HEALING helps us run to the goodness of God.

C. Hope is not blind to suffering and sin, but it sees suffering and sin through God's eyes.

Re-writing the stories of the hopeless means guiding our spiritual friends towards the HOPE that is in Christ and his resurrection power. The Bible never denies pain and suffering, but it is also the most hope filled book in the world.

2 Corinthians. 12:9 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:4b. ...he who is in you is *greater* than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:4. For everyone who has been born of God *overcomes the world*. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

2. HEALING CONVERSATIONS

Re-writing stories through Sustaining begins with listening and continues by having conversations that bring hope.

The first step in helping our spiritual friends to heal is to listen. Listen for needs, desires, and broken relationships.

Listen for a **LOSS OF INTIMACY, PURPOSE, and SHALOM**.

But mostly listen for the lies that your friend is believing.

Remember, our stories are written by what we **DESIRE, BELIEVE, THINK, CHOOSE, and FEEL**:

A. DESIRE: Listen for **GROANING v. GRATIFICATION**.

Does your friend groan for God or does he demand instant gratification? Does he want God to be a butler or Santa Clause to meet his every demand?

Facing our desires should lead us to God. The desire does not lead us to make demands of God and others, rather it leads us to a deeper relationship with God

B. BELIEVE and THINK: Listen for **HONESTY v. DENIAL**

Does your friend deny that they are suffering? Do they only see the earthly rather than the heavenly reality. Is he seeking pleasure to mask suffering?

Facing God keeps us from being shallow. Bravely we face the confusion of a good God who allows evil. Our imagination allows us to see the hope of seeing Jesus face to face. By **FAITH** we believe what we cannot see.

C. CHOOSE: Listen for **STRENGTH v. WEAKNESS.**

Does your friend barely make it through the day? Are they selfishly hoarding rather than giving?

Facing God will bring courage and self sacrifice even when we feel empty. We will choose to escape bondage rather than remain in slavery.

D. FEEL: Listen for **CRYING v. SILENCE.**

Does your friend keep their suffering bottled up? Do they deny their feelings or wear “masks” around other people?

Facing God means dealing with loss honestly and with deep emotion. We are free to sorrow and be sad but we also are content with God.

3. MOVING YOUR SPIRITUAL FRIEND FROM A HORRO STORY TO A LOVE STORY

A. As we help our friend re-write their story there are 3 things we want to do:

I. Start CONVERSATIONS OF HOPE.

- “What are ways you can relate to God **DIFFERENTLY?**”
- “What are ways you can think **DIFFERENTLY?**”
- “What will you long for/ think about/ choosing **INSTEAD?**”
- “If God answered your prayer what would be **DIFFERENT?**”
- “What **SPECIFIC** changes will you make?”
- “ What would **CHANGE** look like?”
- “ How is this happening in small ways **ALREADY?**”
- “ When are you **ALREADY** living the way you want to live?”
- “ How are you **ALREADY** having victory?”
- “**HOW** is your thought life improving?”
- “**HOW** are your decisions becoming more courageous?”
- “**HOW** are you enjoying God more these days?”
- “**HOW** are you managing so far?”
- “**HOW** did you decide to do that (good thing)?”
- “It’s normal to hurt/ have setbacks.”
- “It’s not unusual to fail, even (David/Moses/Paul) had failures.”

2. **BUILD UP** your friend.

a. There is no “one” way to communicate hope. Letters, email, cards, conversations, hugs, high fives all work. The one **RULE** is that all our words must build up.

Ephesians 4:29. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

b. Words that **TEAR DOWN**:

- Deny the other person’s feeling
- Make light of their circumstance
- Offer quick advice
- Judge and condemn
- Change the subject
- Talk **AT** instead of talk **TO**.

c. Words that **BUILD UP**:

- Reflect what your friend has said to you
- Ask clarifying questions
- Explore your friends heart
- Offer empathy and intimacy
- Silence– stop talking and listen, listen, listen!

3. **RE-WRITE** the story- From a **HORROR STORY** to a **LOVE STORY**.

a. Recognize the **HORROR STORY**. As your friend is talking ask:

- “What lie is being believed?”
- “What defeat is driving them to despair?”
- “What hopelessness is torturing them?”

b. Give their story a metaphor– sports, war, cooking (whatever may interest them)- or another story to help them **IMAGINE** their desire and their belief. “Speak their language.”

- “It sounds like you feel pinned down” (wrestler)
- “Do you ever feel like Cinderella?” (story)
- “Do you feel like your lost in the woods?” (hiking)
- “Are you surrounded by your enemy?” (war)
- “Have you been left at the altar?” (wedding)

c. Then ask the most important question:

“WHEN DID YOU COME TO SEE YOURSELF THIS WAY?”

d. Expose **THE LIAR**- “Who is behind you thinking this way?” “Who told you that you are pinned down/ lost/ Cinderella/ surrounded/ jilted/ naked?” Was it.....**SATAN???**

e. **LOVE STORY**: Now move your friend into the story of **HOPE**.

Help them get started on Lesson 5 and 6. Help them to claim victory—the victory of Christ!

4. PUTTING ON CHRIST’S STORY OF GRACE*

*For more in depth study take your spiritual friend through the LIFE and LIVE studies.

Moving from a Horror Story to a Love Story means putting on the grace of Christ.

Galatians 2:20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

A. Recognize your constant need for grace.

“I have been crucified” - Without this crucifixion we would all suffer without hope for the future.

B. Recognize that you are united with Christ and share all His blessings.

“with Christ” -Grace permanently alters who you are and who you will continue to be.

C. Recognize that you can respond to every situation in life in a new way.

“but Christ who lives in me” -We are not replaced with a better us, we are replaced with Christ.

D. Recognize that you have everything you need to live since Christ is in you.

“I live by faith” - Faith in the grace of Jesus will produce courage in suffering, and desire for more and more of God.

Continue the Conversation: Can you help your spiritual friend move from a Horror Story to a Love Story? Use the chart on the next page to record your thoughts. Have you asked the most important question: “When did you start believing ___?” or “When did you start seeing yourself as ___?”

Evaluate Your Conversation.

1. Did you listen well? Did you listen more than you talked?
2. How did you try to start conversations of HOPE?
3. Did you use any words that TEAR DOWN? BUILD UP?
4. What metaphor did you use to communicate with your friend—how did you speak their language?
5. Summarize your friend’s:

Imagination:

Desires:

Mindset:

Choices:

Feelings:

5. In what ways did you guide your friend to The Guide and His grace?

As you listen to your spiritual friend record what you hear in the appropriate box. Also label what you hear as **D**: Desire, **B**: Belief, **M**: Mindset, **C**: Choices, **F**: Feeling. Practice your listening skills and asking questions. Note the example sin red below.

Law	Now	Self	Gratification/ Denial	Weakness/ Silence
Grace	Future	Sacrifice	Groaning/ Honesty	Strength/ Crying

2² Bonus Lesson: Grief

Living in faith together means giving your friend permission to grieve. You can do this by grieving with them. We want to guide them as they face their loss and face God. They need to wrestle with God while not losing faith. This bonus lesson will give a brief overview of grief and some ideas on how we can sustain and bring healing hope in these extra hard times.

I. FROM GRIEF TO FAITH

Here are some questions that can help you guide your friend from grief to faith.*

Facing Loss

- **Say:** “I’m so sorry you’re going through this.”
- **Ask:** How are you feeling right now?
- **Ask:** What’s the worst case scenario? What if that happened?
- **Say:** If it were me I would be feeling _____. Is that how you feel?
- **Ask:** Have you ever faced anything like this before?

Facing God

- **Ask:** Where is God in all this? What do you think God is doing?
- **Ask:** Have you cried out to God? Do you think He’s listening?
- **Ask:** Do you believe God is faithful?
- **Ask:** What is this experience teaching you about God’s power?
- **Ask:** If you knew God would say YES, what would you ask Him for?
- **Ask:** Have you faced something like this before? What did you learn then? How did you find comfort then?

Keeping Faith

- **Ask:** Has this experience changed how you feel about God?
- **Ask:** Do you believe God is good even when life is hard or bad?
- **Ask:** How does faith in Jesus fit with your belief about this loss?
- **Ask:** Are you reluctant to tell God how you feel?
- **Ask:** How does the Gospel (the cross and resurrection) help or change your perspective on this situation?

* This list is taken from *The Emotionally Healthy Church* by Peter Scazzero.

How does faith respond in suffering? How can we help guide the heart of faith to **THE GUIDE? By listening, and asking guiding questions we can empathize with our friends and allow them to grieve in faith. But How?**

- Know that grief teaches us to wait on God
- Know that grief makes us kinder and more compassionate
- Know that grief removes idols.
- Know that grief frees us from having to impress others.
- Know that grief brings humility and brokenness.
- Know that grief causes us to appreciate what we have.
- Know that grief helps us to embrace the mystery of God.
- Know that grief helps us know ourselves and God better.
- Know that grief causes us to groan for Jesus and Heaven.
- Know that grief opens our hearts to resurrection! *

GRIEVING IS NOT AN INTERRUPTION TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH, IT IS THE CATALYST.

Is there anything in your life that is causing you to grieve? Is there a loss that you never took the time to grieve biblically?

Note: What you consider an insignificant loss still needs to be grieved. To just “get over” these losses will prevent us from being honest with God and others.

2. Stages of Grief

Many Christians either hide their grief or move through the stages of grief without faith and end up in depression (see chart below).

In order to deal with loss without losing faith we need to:

A. Pay attention to our grief: be honest about it, complain about it to God, be vulnerable, mourn.

B. Wait: often God is silent, don't “get over it,” listen to what God is teaching you, ask God for help and wait patiently for it.

C. Allow God's comfort and resurrection power to bring new life: follow the path of grief towards compassion and ministry.*

* This list is taken from *The Emotionally Healthy Church* by Peter Scazzero.

This chart below was taken from Dr. Bob Kellemen’s book *Grieving Life’s Losses*. Use it as a reference when helping others with grief.

<p>“Normal” Response According to secular psychology</p>	<p>Biblical Faith Response</p>	<p>Scripture</p>
<p>DENIAL Hardships are often met with denial at first – that’s fine– but for the long term it is dishonesty and faithless.</p>	<p>HONESTY Grieve and sorrow rather than deny. Allow yourself to be humbled. Being honest about hurts allows you to run to God.</p>	<p>1 Th. 4:13– Sorrow with Hope Ps. 73, 88 Lam. 3:1-20</p>
<p>ANGER Anger at God is Satan’s twist on complaint. Anger reflects a small view of God.</p>	<p>COMPLAINT Being honest with yourself allows you to be honest with God. Complaining to God shows that we trust Him.</p>	<p>Ps. 73, 88 Job 3:1-26, 7:1-10, 10:1-22 Ps. 62:8– Pour out your heart to God.</p>
<p>BARGAINING “If I’m good, God will be good to me.” This is works not grace. This is pride and self sufficiency.</p>	<p>ASKING FOR HELP When we’ve been honest with ourselves and God, we can then cry out to God for help. I admit I cannot do things myself. Crying to God shows faith that He will respond.</p>	<p>Ps. 72:12, Ps. 34:17-18 Ps. 13 Ps. 56: 8</p>
<p>DEPRESSION We feel alienated and separated from God. We may accept the reality of the loss but there is no higher purpose for it.</p>	<p>COMFORT Faith sees that God feels our pain, joins us in our pain, and shares our pain. God rescues us with comfort. Comfort is experiencing the presence of God in the presence of suffering. Like Jacob we are limping joyfully.</p>	<p>2 Corinthians 1:5 Rom. 8:17-28 Is. 63:9</p>

What losses do you need to help your spiritual friend to grieve? How can you begin to move them from HONESTY to COMFORT? How can you sustain them through the WAITING?

2² Lesson 10: Reconciling Sinners

Living in faith together means “Guiding to the Guide.” We are traveling along a path and writing a story together with God. Sometimes we try to write this story alone, and sometimes we stray from the path. We lose faith and turn toward self effort and self sufficiency. It is in those moments that we must confront sin in each other’s lives. This is never easy, but it is one of the most important parts of discipleship. We must help broken, sinning people return to a God who loves them dearly.

I. IT’S HORRIBLE TO SIN

A. We confronting sin because the Gospel has made us **NEW.**

Because life is a **WAR, walking together means we are going to have to confront each other about sin. The Church at Corinth was known for its sinful behavior (just read 1 and 2 Corinthians some time). Yet, Paul kept confronting them on their sin. Why? Because he knew that the **GOSPEL** had changed them.**

2 Corinthians 5: 11, 14-21. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

*16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.** The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God.** 21 **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.***

1. Jesus reconciles the world to God. He did this by becoming sin for us (v21).

2. We have the message of reconciliation for the world.

We carry this message of restored relationship with God. Sin no longer has to keep us from God!

CONFRONTING SIN IS ABOUT RESTORING A RELATIONSHIP.

B. We confront sin humbly and gently.

2 Timothy 2:22-25. So *flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.* 23 *Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.* 24 *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,* 25 *correcting his opponents with gentleness.* God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and *escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

In this passage we find some important principles for confronting sin:

1. Face your own sin– and flee from it. (22-24)

What are some ways that you must do self evaluation BEFORE confronting your spiritual friend's sin?

2. Identify the true enemy (25-26). Attack Satan not the person.

What agreements have you/your friend made with Satan?

3. Gently instruct (25). How? By listening and guiding. Ask questions – get to the **HEART** and the **DESIRES**.

C. Expose **HEART SINS**/ lies.

What kind of lies? Lies about relationships. Remember confronting sin means restoring relationships. What lies are being believed about God? About others?

James 4:1-6. *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

1. Use James 4 to ask guiding questions:

- 4:1-2- What relational desires are not being met?
- 4:2-3 - How are relationships with people being damaged?
- 4:3-5 - How is the relationship with God being damaged?
- 4:6 - How has pride crept in?

2. Example: Your spiritual friend is struggling to maintain healthy relationships and keeps being drawn into harmful friendships or romances.

- **Ask: What do you desire from these relationships? What expectations are unmet?**
- **Ask: How has your relationship been damaged or damaged you?**
- **Discern: What lies are believed about the person in the relationship?**
- **Discern: What lies are being believed about God?**
- **Identify Discrepancies: How are your spiritual friend's DESIRES not matching up to their CHOICES?**
- **Identify Pride: It might be denial, blame shifting, excuses, insincere agreement. If these things happen it is time to...**

D. Soften Stubbornness- If you have exposed lies, deceit, and pride and your spiritual friend's heart is still hard, it's time to dig deeper.

1. Stubbornness= refusing to trust God. It usually shows itself in two extremes: **FIX ME or **STAY AWAY FROM ME.****

- **Fix Me= Magically make all my problems disappear. No discipline. Tell me what I want to hear.**
- **Stay Away From Me= Don't confront me. I'm not wrong. Self sufficiency, hostility, anger. Conscience is seared.**

2. The most important thing here is to **USE THE BIBLE.**

The **WORD of GOD** will discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. It is the Spirit's primary tool for uncovering sinful desires and imaginations.

Hebrews 4:12-13. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- **Ask: What does scripture say about your problem/attitude/choice?**
- **Ask: How would you feel in the other person's shoes?**
- **Identify Patterns: Point out examples of the same attitude or choice being repeated.**
- **Predict: Show them what is likely to happen if they continue with the same pattern of sinful choices and attitude.**

c. If stubbornness persists use Matthew 18:15-17.

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

- **Confront along with those involved with the problem.**
- **Bring in a neutral “third party” to help.**
- **Ask church leadership for help.**
- **Cut off the relationship (see also 1 Corinthians 5).**
- **Treat them like an unbeliever = love, love, love.**
- **If there is repentance, restore the person fully (2 Cor. 2:5-11).**

2. It’s Wonderful To Be Forgiven.

IT’S HORRIBLE TO SIN BUT IT’S WONDERFUL TO BE FORGIVEN.

So far we have confronted sin by **LOADING THE CONSCIENCE WITH GUILT**. We start by seeing that we are more wicked than we ever imagined.

Next, we will confront sin by **LIGHTENING THE CONSCIENCE WITH GRACE**. Now we see that we are more loved than we ever dared to believe.

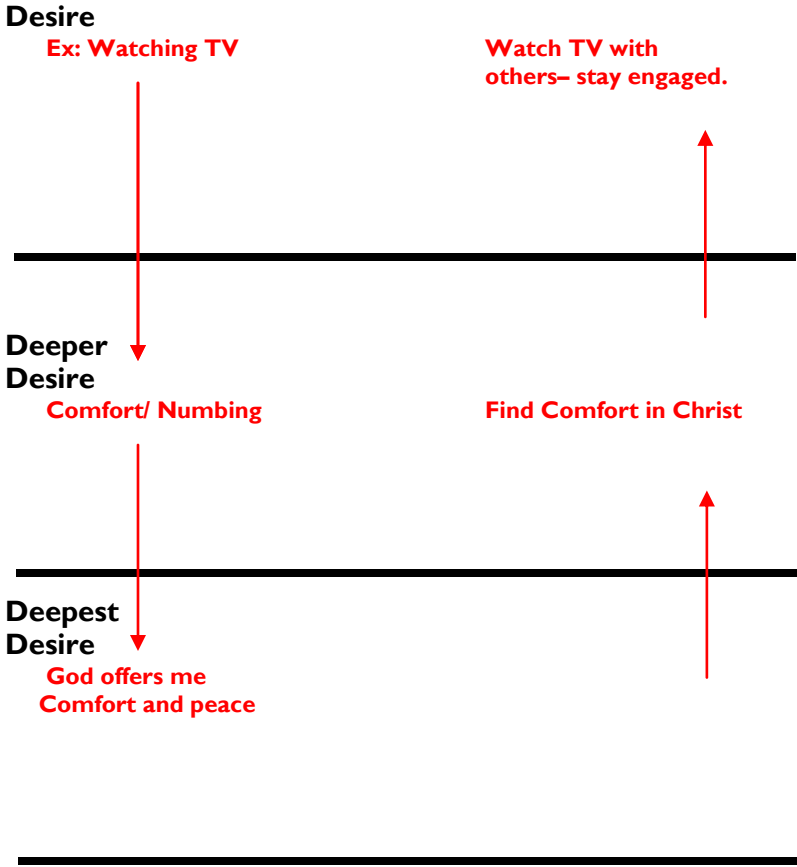
A guilty conscience that is not lightened by grace, is an opening for Satan to bring despair to your spiritual friend.

A. Sin reveals our needs and desires and drives us back to GRACE.

Romans 5:18-21. 18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- 1. Let the sin (idols/addictions/patterns) identify what you desire.**
- 2. Let the unmet desire lead you to grace. Not just second chances, but knowing that Christ provides all we need.**
- 3. This is how grace abounds much more where sin abounds.**

Where Sin Abounds Grace Abounds Much More: Using desire to find God.



What desires from your own life can you plug into this diagram? How can these desires lead you to God, love, and sacrifice?

B. When we sin we can go confidently to God in confession.

Hebrews 4:14-16. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

It is when we are deep in sin that it should be the easiest for us to run towards God.

C. Our sin should produce **GODLY GRIEF**.

2 Corinthians 7:8-13. For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. 9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

Note: Paul is writing about the Church's godly grief over sin that was found in their church. In 1 Corinthians they acted as if they did not care (No Grief). After Paul confronted them, they displayed Godly Grief (repentance) rather than just Worldly Grief (embarrassment or guilt).

Worldly Grief	Godly Grief
Leads to death	Leads to repentance, and rescue
Run away from God	Run back to God
Works	Faith
Condemnation	Comfort
Separation	Reconciliation
Slavery	Freedom

1. **WORLDLY GRIEF**– Sad you got caught, sorrow over consequences of sin, frustrated with the shame sin brings, longing for relief from pain of sin, self focused, self pity.

2. **GODLY GRIEF**– Hates the sin itself, sorrow over hurting God, longing to know God better and experience grace, others and God focused, zeal and eagerness to make things right.

When have you experienced Worldly Grief over sin? Godly Grief?

3. RECONCILING WITH GOD AND OTHERS

A. Faith: See who you are in Christ

1 John 2:1-2. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

1. We will continue to sin.

2. But we stand legally righteous before God.

3. God treats us as if we have never sinned.

1 John 3:1-3. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

4. God is no longer our judge, He is our Father.

5. We have hope of future perfection.

6. This should lead to honest repentance now.

B. Repentance: Admit and Turn from Sin.

Luke 15:11-32. And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. 14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' 20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29 but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Jesus told this story about a Father and two sons in order to teach us about sin, repentance, and God's grace.

1. We need to come to our senses (17) about our sin– your biggest problem is YOU, not your circumstance.

2. We need to admit our sin– and the SIN beneath the sin. Every sin is rooted in a lack of faith in who God is and what He says.

3. Express Godly sorrow– The younger brother saw that His sin was offensive to the Father (18).

4. Repent of your sin and your righteousness. Like the younger son you may be trying to escape God by sinning. Like the older brother you may be trying to earn God by being self righteous (29). True repentance includes confessing our good and our evil.

5. Experience God's love. This is what will prevent further sin– realizing that God offers all we want or need– Himself.

6. Focus on Christ and your new identity, not on sin.

Go back to your Spiritual Inventory (lesson 5). As you look at some of the idols in your life, what is it about Christ that is more attractive than what you have settled for?

In the 6 steps listed above, where do you fall with your sin? How can you continue to make movement back to the Father?

2² Lesson 11: Guiding Past Sin

It's horrible to sin, but it's wonderful to be forgiven. As we Live In Faith Together, we will need to help each other confront and repent of sin. As we saw in the last lesson, first we will load the conscience with guilt. However, we must NEVER stop there. We must next lighten the conscience with grace. This is the pattern of the entire Bible. God uses the LAW to show us our sin, and then shows us His GRACE at the cross. In this lesson we will use listening and questions to help each re-write our stories as we explore our sin and God's forgiveness even more.

I. FROM FORGIVENESS TO GLORY

When God saved you He didn't just forgive you. That is just the beginning. He saved you FROM SIN but also TO GLORY. God's intention is that you would move past sin to LIFE— living His life here on earth.

Romans 6: 11. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

WE PURSUE WHAT WE BELIEVE IS MOST PLEASING.

A. Your Heart Is Good

We are not just forgiven— our desires are changed. As we focus on sin it is crucial that we remember that our hearts are good. In fact it is usually because we forget that our hearts are NEW that we fall back into deep sin.

1. Most of what you believe about your heart was handed to you by people other than God.
2. God is telling you that your heart is good but everyone around you is telling you that you're worthless or silly. Like Joseph, David, or Cinderella, you've listened to others try to destroy your desires. They've given you a false belief about yourself.

B. You must let Jesus dislodge false beliefs.

1. Invite Jesus to meet you at each false belief, each lie, each wound of the heart. Go with Him one by one. Let the Gospel heal each wound. This will take time and be hard but the result will be freedom.

What false beliefs about yourself have you been enslaved to? How have these beliefs empowered your sin?

2. GUIDING CONVERSATIONS

When we confront sin we are helping our friends to re-write their story and bring it into **GOD'S STORY**. This is what Paul called “gently instructing” (2 Timothy 2:25). Remember our stories are written by what we **DESIRE, BELIEVE, THINK, CHOOSE, and FEEL**.

A. DESIRE

1. Re-writing stories (also known as repentance) starts with our **DESIRE** for God. Do you remember the Prodigal Son story? The younger brother realized that what he was desiring did not satisfy him. On the other hand, His desire for his **FATHER** began to return. Remember, confronting sin is all about **RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS**, and it starts with the desire for a healthy relationship with God.

- Ask: How has this idol/ other desire dissatisfied you? Harmed you?
- Ask: What would it look like for you to return home like the younger brother?
- Ask: What would your prayer of repentance to God sound like?

2. In addition to our desire for God we also **DESIRE RELATIONSHIPS** with others. Re-writing stories includes restoring relationships with the people around us.

What relationship do you need to restore (God, parent, child, friend, etc...)?

- Ask: In what way are you expecting others to meet your desires/needs?
- Ask: In what ways are you manipulating others/ being demanding?
- Ask: How do you need to make restitution for your sin?
- Ask: Who do you need to confess to for a specific sin?
- Ask: How do you plan to make things right?
- Ask: What reconciliation are you praying for?
- Ask: How could you show a desire to be different in your relationships?

B. BELIEVE

1. Re-writing stories means exposing sinful **BELIEFS** from a sinful **IMAGINATION**. Satan dresses up sin and makes it look beautiful. We imagine sin as good and we imagine God as evil.

2. We must re- capture our friend's imagination of a Holy God and the horrors of sin. They must see how sin wounds Jesus and spits in His face. They must see how sin grieves the Holy Spirit.

3. But we must also capture the imagination with GRACE. We must see the Father with arms wide open and Jesus as dying and resurrecting with us. We must see the Holy Spirit living inside of us .

- Ask: How do you imagine God feels when you sin?
- Ask: Do you consider the sin of ____ to be of greater value than God?
- Ask: Can you see how sin steals your joy and usefulness for God?
- Ask: Do you believe that God is Holy and that your sin disgusts Him?
- Ask: Can you see the Father running to you with open arms?
- Ask: Can you see Jesus on the cross in your place?
- Ask: Do you believe God has forgiven you?
- Ask: Do you believe that your record is clear of all charges? (No condemnation)

C. THINK

1. Re-writing stories means creating new **MINDSETS** (mind renewal). Mental **STRONGHOLDS** must be identified and broken down (2 Cor. 10:4).

2. Repentance means “to change your mind.” A change in thinking must occur as we confront sin. When we **BELIEVE** God is better than sin, we are **TAKING OFF** sinful mindsets and **PUTTING ON** faith in God.

- Ask: What lies do I believe about God? Others?
- Ask: When did I first start to believe this lie?
- Ask: What is my image of God? How does it reflect what I believe?
- Ask: How do my relationships reflect what I believe and think?
- Ask: How do I typically try to solve problems without God?
- Ask: What patterns of thinking have become sinful strongholds in my mind?
- Ask: How can GRACE replace these sinful mindsets?

D. CHOOSE

1. Often we blame our choices and actions on our personality or even our upbringing. Re-writing stories means connecting your friend’s will (choices) to God’s will. Remember that confronting sinful **CHOICES** means identifying sinful **DESIRES** and **MINDSETS** too.

- **Ask:** What are the reasons for the sinful choices you have made?
- **Ask:** What excuses have you made for your sinful choices?
- **Ask:** What false stories about God are making you fall into sin?
- **Ask:** How can you surrender to God's will?
- **Ask:** How can GRACE make that sinful choice seem disgusting to you?

Hear the answer. Ask God to show you that the New Covenant is true. Ask Him to show you that your heart matters to Him and that your desires are truly for Him. You can't talk yourself into this— Jesus must show you. Ask Him to now.

D. FEEL

Finally re-writing stories means confronting sinful emotional responses.

- **Ask:** Where have you stopped being real? Where are you pretending?
- **Ask:** Where do you find yourself apathetic toward s God?
- **Ask:** What feelings are you dishonest about?
- **Ask:** How are your emotions hurting others?
- **Ask:** How are your emotions hurting God's reputation?
- **Ask:** How can GRACE bring about emotional healing in your life?

3. FROM SIN TO OBEDIENCE

A. Obedience is LOVE.

In the end, we were saved to love. True faith will always produce obedient love; loving the way God intends for us to love— sacrificially.

1 Peter 1:13-21. 13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. 22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

1. Obedience starts with our mindset (13). Because of who we are in our union with Christ (19) we are able to be self controlled.

2. Obedience is our new identity (14). Peter tells them that they ARE obedient children.

3. Obedience means putting off ignorant evil desires (14). Now we replace these old desires with faith, hope, and the glory of Jesus (21)

4. Obedience produces holiness (15). This means we are separated to God from the world by our new character and outlook.

5. Holiness produces genuine brotherly love (22). This is deep emotion love (from the guts), produced by purity.

When we are purified, we no longer need to pursue sin, idols, and addictions (selfishness), and instead we can pursue self sacrificing love.

4. FREE TO SERVE

Sure, freedom can produce more sin, but it can also produce true love. In fact without freedom we could never truly love. So God gives us freedom so that we can be fully alive and fully free to love Him and others.

1 Peter 2:16. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

1 Peter 4:10. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

Galatians 5:1. For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:6. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

Galatians 5:13. For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Mark 10:45. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Philippians 2:3-8. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

1. Freedom brings a responsibility to serve others.

2. Freedom brings the ability to serve others.

- We depend on the Messiah’s sufficiency not our own.
- We choose courageously not compulsively.
- We no longer relate with self protection but are able to empower others.
- We focus on Jesus and others, not ME ME ME!

5. TAKING OFF SIN AND PUTTING ON CHRIST

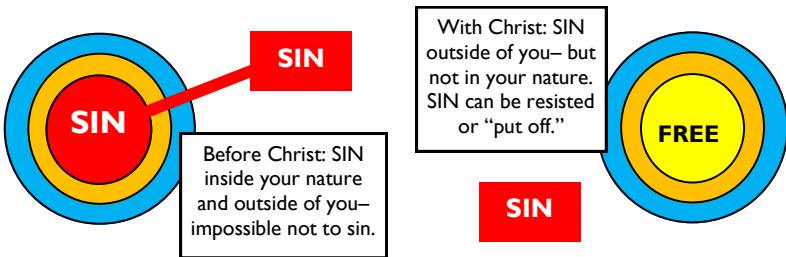
One of the greatest metaphors for spiritual growth in the Bible is that of getting dressed. We are called to “Take off” the old clothes of sin and “Put on” the new clothes of Christ’s righteousness.”

A. Know that the old self life was crucified with Jesus.

Romans 6:6. *We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.*

1. We can only take off a sin that has already been crucified.

2. Sin cannot enslave us (it can be taken off) because it can only get at me from outside of me– not from inside of me.



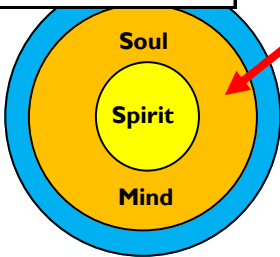
B. The death of the old self life and the resurrection of the new Christ life are one time events that occurred at Calvary. But the putting off of sin and putting on of the new man are daily occurrences for the believer.

Ephesians 4:21-24. *21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

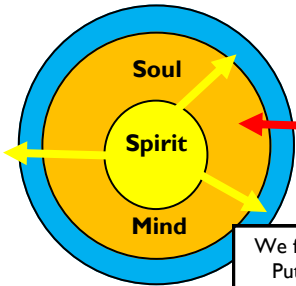
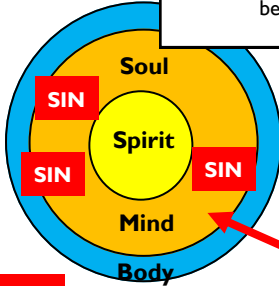
Colossians 3:8-11. But now you must **put them all away**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and **have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge** after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Hebrews 12:1-2. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also **lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

With Christ: SIN outside of you
– but can enter our mindsets, desires, imagination, through the body: eyes, ears, etc.



Sin that enters into our Soul is called “indwelling sin” or “the Flesh.” This is the SIN that must be “Put Off.”



We fight SIN not simply by Taking Off, but more importantly by Putting On– putting on the character of Christ by the Spirit.

1. Notice that in Ephesians and Colossians “putting off and putting on” are connected to **MIND RENEWAL**.

2. Discipleship is about helping your spiritual friend “Take Off” sin and “Put On” Christ.

Continue the Conversation: Can you help your spiritual friend move from SIN to GLORY? Use the chart on the next page to record your thoughts.

Evaluate Your Conversation.

1. **Did you listen well? Did you listen more than you talked?**

2. **Were you able to talk about unmet desires? Overdesires?**

3. **Were you able to identify idols?**

4. **Were you able to guide them from sin to desire and to Christ?**

5. **Did you experience any stubbornness from your spiritual friend?**

6. **Summarize your friend's:**

Imagination:

Desires:

Mindset:

Choices:

Feelings:

7. **In what ways did you guide your friend from Sin to Glory/Love/Service?**

As you listen to your spiritual friend record what you hear in the appropriate box. Also label what you hear as **D**: Desire, **B**: Belief, **M**: Mindset, **C**: Choices, **F**: Feeling. Practice your listening skills and asking questions. Note the example sin red below.

Law	Now	Self	Worldly Sorrow	Repentance
Grace	Future	Sacrifice	Godly Sorrow	Faith

2² Lesson 12: Spiritual Warfare

The suffering and sin we face each day is part of a much larger spiritual war that is raging all around us. Life is a Wedding inside of a War and your enemy wants you to leave your lover and chase after false lovers and idols that will never satisfy. Living In Faith Together means helping each other navigate the dangerous battle field called life. We do this with the weapons of grace and truth. We do this with faith and love. We fight side by side following our Brother, our Captain, our King—Jesus.

I. SATAN IS YOUR ENEMY

A. We were made for intimacy and dominion; to love God and to rule his creation. You are part of GOD'S BIG STORY. Satan will do whatever it takes to get you to forget this. He wants you bored, sinning, and/or feeling guilty.

*Revelation 12:7-12. Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and **Satan, the deceiver of the whole world**—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, **for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.** 11 **And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.** 12 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”*

1. This can be a confusing scripture, but it gives us a look into the plan of Satan. Notice how Satan is described as an accuser and deceiver. God will never accuse you and He will never deceive you.

2. Read verse 11 again. We conquer Satan by the BLOOD OF THE LAMB (no more accusations) and the WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY (no more deception).

**When have you experienced the accusations of Satan in your life?
What triggers these accusations?**

B. How is Satan described in each of these scriptures?

1 Peter 5:8 Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring **lion**, seeking someone to devour

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a **murderer** from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the **father of lies**.

John 10:10 The **thief** (Satan) comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I (Jesus) came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an **angel of light**.

C. Satan wants to re-write your story. He wants to sell you a lie. Mostly he wants you to agree with him. Most of what we are trying hard to “work through” or overcome are simply agreements we have made with Satan. Instead we need to overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony– ie: trust and obey the truth.

What agreements that you’ve made with Satan are you having difficulty overcoming?

2. GOD IS FIGHTING FOR YOU

1 John 3:8. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.**

A. The ministry of Jesus is one of spiritual warfare against the works of Satan. Jesus came to destroy **SIN and its power over you.**

B. Jesus is still at **WAR and he is calling us to join him. Yes he has already won the victory, but the battle is not over yet.**

1 Corinthians 15:24-28. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father **after destroying every rule and every authority and power**. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28 **When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.**

C. What is left for Jesus to do? He still needs to put all things, including death, under his complete control. This will happen at the Second Coming of Christ.

Example: In World War 2 the D-Day invasion of 1944 was the beginning of the end for the German Empire. The invasion sent Allied soldiers all over enemy territory to slowly and systematically push the enemy back until the final surrender. The death of Jesus was the invasion that resulted in Christian soldiers (you and me) being sent all over enemy territory until the final surrender of death, sin, and Satan when Jesus returns.

D. So the WAR is still raging, and God is fighting for your heart! He is the LORD of Hosts– or the God of angel armies.

Isaiah 1:24. Therefore the Lord declares, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: "Ah, I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes."

The God of Angel Armies who will rule forever (Isaiah 9:7) is also the Servant who will heal the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1).

Stop and meditate: How does it feel to know that the all powerful God who rules an army of spirit beings is the one who is also fighting for your heart?

WHY DOESN'T GOD JUST END THE WAR NOW?

E. God is teaching us to rule. He is teaching us to Love. He is teaching us to be Kings and Priests in His Kingdom. That is why we remain at war. That is why our enemy remains "At Large." It is all for HIS GLORY.

As God fights for our hearts, we learn to fight alongside Him. As we learn to fight we experience more and more of the victory. This brings others to Christ and grows His kingdom!

How have you experienced God fighting for your heart recently?

3. SIT THEN STAND

A. Ephesians 6:10-20 describes spiritual warfare more vividly than any other passage of scripture. But before Paul ever commands his readers to **STAND against Satan, he first calls them to **SIT**.**

1. Ephesians 1:1-3:21 is the **SIT section of the letter.**

Ephesians 2:5-6. ...even when we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

2. Before we can stand against Satan we must sit above him with Jesus.

B. This means we are to receive and experience the multi-faceted gift of God's love through His son Jesus Christ.

This will impact our **HEART, SOUL, SPIRIT, and GUTS. It will a change our **DESIRE, IMAGINATION, BELIEFS, THINKING, CHOICES, and FEELINGS**.**

Ephesians 1:3-21. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

1. Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with one of the greatest sections of scripture ever written. These detail the spiritual blessings of God's grace for those who are **IN CHRIST**.

Below make a list of the spiritual blessings that you see in verses 1-14.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Re-read verses 15-20. Paul prays that we would understand 3 things:

- a. The hope to which He has called us.
- b. The riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (Note: many scholars believe this refers to Jesus' inheritance [US]- we are Christ's reward!)
- c. The immeasurable greatness of His power (Resurrection Power).

Ephesians 3:14-19. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

3. Paul continues in chapter 3 with another prayer, asking God that we would experience:

- a. Power in our inner being (SPIRIT).
- b. The love of Christ.
- c. The fullness of God.

4. When we understand and experience these many glorious truths from Ephesians 1-3 we are **SITTING**, or **RESTING** in God's grace alone for our growth and glory.

5. So first we believe God's love (SIT), then we trust His love (STAND) as we battle, resist, and ultimately defeat Satan and his schemes. Standing involves two important attitudes concerning spiritual warfare: Be Ready and Be Confident!

Ephesians 6:10-13. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

4. THE ARMOR OF GOD

The Armor of God is a picture of Christ himself. Paul possibly got his analogy from the Roman Soldiers (He was probably chained to one as he wrote this) and from the book of Isaiah. Each piece of armor describes a resource you have in Christ (remember SIT)

A. The Belt of Truth

Ephesians 6:14a. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth,

1. The belt was key to holding everything else in place (sword, breastplate, etc...). Our belt is truth. This is the renewed MIND or THINKING that comes from the truth of the Gospel.

How does the Gospel hold everything in your life in place? Think about Intimacy, Purpose, and Shalom.

2. The message of Christ fills our lives. Focusing on anything else (even good things) makes you vulnerable to attack.

B. Breastplate (Body Armor) of Righteousness

Eph. 6:14b. and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

1. The breastplate protected the vital organs and repelled arrows and swords. This is Christ's imputed righteousness, NOT yours! As soon as we rely on our own righteousness rather than Christ's we are in for defeat.

2. If your security is based on your achievements and feelings you will inevitably be open to discouragement or self righteous pride. Instead we need to daily rejoice in the fact that God the Father accepts, loves, and delights in me as much as he does Jesus.

Are you daily living in the righteousness of Christ? Do you believe that God sees you the way He sees Jesus? Have you begun to identify ways you rely on your own self righteousness (ex: criticizing others to feel better about yourself)?

C. Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

Ephesians 6:15. and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

1. A soldier's shoes were very important. They provided stability. To fall in battle is to die in battle. The Gospel gives you peace and keeps worry and fear from knocking you off your feet. Nothing happens to you that God does not plan or allow for.

How has the gospel made you ready to run into ministry and share your faith? How can you imagine it giving you peace in the future?

2. Putting on the shoes is daily affirming God's sovereignty in your life. Peace comes from trusting God fully.

D. Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

1. The Roman shield covered the whole body and was often soaked in water to deflect and quench the fiery arrows of the enemy. The Devil is shooting arrows at your heart. Lies he tells you to destroy you in battle.

2. What do I do when Satan assaults me with these lies and accusations? **I SIT IN ORDER TO STAND!** Go back to Ephesians 1-3 and recall everything God says about you— in other words recall the truth and have the **FAITH** to believe it. When you do this the Devil will flee (James 4:7). In this way Jesus, and His work on the cross becomes your shield.

Have you experienced victory in this are? Have you been able to use Faith in your position **IN CHRIST** to fight off the accusations and agreements that you are facing from Satan? (Lesson 14 will explore this in more detail).

E. Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17a. and take the helmet of salvation

1. The helmet protected from a crushing blow. Jesus is the “Hope of our salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). This means that even the fear of death cannot crush us (Heb. 2:14-15).

2. Jesus conquered death through his death and guarantees life through his resurrection. Persecution, fear of our own mortality, and physical illness can no longer drag us to compromise and despair. Having our eternal destiny secured cuts hardships down to size by comparison.

3. The Helmet or Crown represents our glory. Salvation restores to us the glory we forfeited in the Garden. Our crown of glory comes to us by the Crown of Thorns that Christ wore. He is our glory!

Do you live by the glory of your salvation in Jesus, or are you seeking glory from another source? Have you experienced the joy that comes from trusting in Christ as your glory (this is salvation).

F. Sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17b. and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

1. The Romans soldier carried a short sword that would stab into the gaps of enemy armor. The Word of God exposes the gaps in Satan’s lie. It reveals truth. We use the Word as a weapon to bring truth into other people’s lives. It is the main thing we have to offer to other people. The Word of God exposes our hearts and the agreements we’ve made with the enemy.

What scriptures have you used to expose the lies and accusations of Satan?

G. Prayer

Ephesians 6:18-19a. praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me,

1. Prayer is personal dependence on God: letting God know that you need Christ and His armor every day and in every situation.

What role has prayer played in your life so far? Do you recognize your constant dependence on God? Do your prayers reflect this?

Congratulations,

You have completed the L.I.F.T. book!

It is our prayer that this resource will help you personally in your growth in Christ, but also as you guide others to The Guide.

If you're in ministry now, or want to start serving, or even if you just know another human being, your job is to love them and serve them and invite them into the Life that the Trinity offers to each and every one of us.

Remember you can never change anyone by your power– they are only transformed by the presence of God. But we can invite people to go into God's presence with us. That is to Live In Faith Together.

In Christ,

The Pastoral Team

APPENDIX A: ONE ANOTHERING SCRIPTURES

Romans 12:10—Honor one another.

Romans 12:15—Rejoice with one another.

Romans 12:15—Weep with one another.

Romans 12:16—Live in harmony with one another.

Romans 13:8-10—Love one another.

Romans 14:13—Stop passing judgment on one another.

Romans 14:19—Edify one another.

Romans 15:1—Bear with one another.

Romans 15:2—Please one another.

Romans 15:2—Build up one another.

Romans 15:7—Accept one another.

Romans 15:14—Instruct one another.

1 Corinthians 12:26—Suffer with one another.

1 Corinthians 12:26—Rejoice with one another.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8—Love one another.

2 Corinthians 1:3-11—Comfort one another.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21—Live for one another.

Galatians 5:13—Serve one another in love.

Galatians 5:15—Stop biting and devouring one another.

Galatians 5:26—Stop provoking and envying one another.

Galatians 6:1-3—Restore one another.

Galatians 6:1-3—Carry each other's burdens.

Ephesians 4:1-7—Bear with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:25—Speak truthfully to one another.

Ephesians 4:29—Speak words that build up one another.

Ephesians 4:32—Be kind and compassionate to one another.

Ephesians 4:32—Forgive each other.

Ephesians 5:19—Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Ephesians 5:21—Submit to one another.

Philippians 2:1-5—Consider others better than self.

Philippians 4:2—Agree with each other in the Lord.

Colossians 3:12-14—Bear with one another.

Colossians 3:12-14—Forgive one another.

Colossians 3:15-17—Teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.

1 Thess 2:12—Encourage, comfort, and urge one another.

1 Thess 4:9—Love each other.

1 Thess 5:11—Build up each other.

1 Thess 5:13—Live in peace with one another.

1 Thess 5:14—Urge, warn, encourage, help, and be patient with one another.

1 Thess 5:15—Be kind to each other.

2 Thess 1:3—Love one another.

2 Thess 3:15—Warn one another as brothers.

1 Tim 5:20—Rebuke one another.

2 Tim 2:2—Disciple and teach one another.

2 Tim 2:22-26—Gently instruct one another in kindness.

Titus 2:1-15—Mentor one another.

Heb 3:7-19—Encourage one another daily.

Heb 10:24—Consider how to spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Heb 10:25—Do not give up meeting with one another.

James 2:8—Love one another.

James 4:11—Do not slander one another.

James 5:9—Do not grumble against one another.

James 5:13-16—Pray for one another.

James 5:16—Confess your sins to one another.

1 Pet 1:22—Love one another deeply from the heart.

1 Pet 3:8—Live in harmony with one another.

1 Pet 4:10—Use all gifts to serve one another.

1 John 1:7—Have fellowship with one another.

1 John 2:7-17—Love one another.

APPENDIX B: WHO I AM IN CHRIST SCRIPTURES

John 10:10—I have abundant life in Christ.

John 15:1—I My joy is complete in Christ.

John 16:33—I have overcome the world

Rom 3:24, —I am justified freely and fully.

Rom 4:3, —I have Christ's righteousness.

Rom 6:2—I am dead to sin.

Rom 6:4—I have been raised to new life

Rom 6:11—I am alive to God.

Rom 7:4—I have died to the law.

Rom 8:37 —I am more than a conqueror

Rom 15:14—I am competent to disciple

Rom 15:16—I am acceptable to God in Christ.

1 Cor 1:2—I am sanctified in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor 6:19—I am the temple of the Holy Spirit.

2 Cor 3:18—I am increasingly being transformed into Christ's likeness.

2 Cor 5:17—I am a new creation in Christ.

2 Cor 5:18—I am a minister of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20—I am Christ's ambassador.

Galatians 2:20—I am crucified with Christ.

Ephesians 1:4—I am holy in Christ.

Ephesians 1:17-19—I have God's resurrection power actively working in me.

Ephesians 2:5—I am alive with Christ.

Ephesians 2:6—I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 2:10—I am Christ's workmanship, his opus, his poem, his masterpiece.

Phil 2:13—God works in me

Phil 4:13—I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Col 2:10—I have been given fullness in Christ.

Col 2:11—My old sinful nature/man/self/person has been put off.

Col 2:13—God made me alive with Christ.

Col 3:3—My life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Col 3:10—I have put on the new self in Christ.

1 Thess 3:13—I am blameless and holy before God's presence.

1 Thess 5:23—God is sanctifying me through and through.

2 Tim 1:7—God placed within me his spirit of power, love, and wisdom.

Heb 2:11—I am made holy in and by Christ.

Heb 7:25—I am saved completely.

Heb 8:10; 10:16—God's law is in my mind, written on my heart.

Heb 9:12—I have eternal redemption in Christ.

Heb 9:14—My conscience is cleansed in Christ.

1 Peter 1:23—I have been born again of imperishable seed.

1 Peter 2:9—I am called out of darkness into Christ's wonderful light.

2 Peter 1:3—God's Divine power has given me everything I need for life and godliness.

2 Peter 1:4—Through God's great and precious promises I participate in the Divine nature.