

Revitalizing our  
Relationships

*becoming kingdom*  
**PEACEMAKERS**

Participant Workbook

WH

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Revitalizing our Relationships:

## **Becoming Kingdom Peacemakers**

An Introduction to the Biblical Calling to Live in Peace

**Blessed are the Peacemakers,  
For they shall be called children of God.**

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

### **What is the foundation of Revitalizing our Relationships: Becoming Kingdom Peacemakers?**

*Revitalizing our Relationships: Becoming Kingdom Peacemakers* is Woodland Hills' foundational course on the principles and practices of Kingdom relationships within the Church and among followers of Jesus. The theme of "peace" is central to the narrative of both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. And the kind of "peace" that the Bible speaks of is not merely a lack of conflict or a surface "niceness" between people or within groups. Biblical peace is a deep heart-posture of honor, care and esteem that reaches out to accept, include, care for and nurture the well-being of all others just as God has done for us. This peace leads to relating rightly with each other, which then results in mutual wholeness and thriving. But this peace does not come naturally or easily; it is something we must learn, together, in community.

### **Objectives of the Class:**

- Helping us as followers of Jesus to live out the relational ways of Jesus in our everyday lives
- Helping us to be peace-makers and agents of reconciliation, bringing God's shalom or peace to the world around us.
- The class is one of the 3 core courses for covenant membership in our Sojourners Community, which is an intentional covenant community within Woodland Hills Church.

### **Outline of the Class:**

- Class 1: Understanding Biblical Peace
- Classes 2-3: Peace with God
- Classes 4-7: Peace with Our Selves
- Classes 8-13: Peace with Others

## RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following is a list of resources for those interested in further understanding. Enjoy!

### Relationship with Others

#### **Author**

Aleaxander, John  
Augsburger, David  
Brown, Brene  
Crabb, Larry  
Gish, Arthur  
Intrater, Keith  
Jacobsen, Clay & Jacobsen, Wayne  
Lane, Tim & Tripp, Paul  
Lederach, John Paul  
Scazzero, Peter  
Sellon, Mary K. and Daniel P. Smith  
Smith, James Bryan  
Sande, Ken  
Strom, Bill

#### **Title**

Being Church  
Caring Enough to Confront  
The Power of Vulnerability  
Soul Talk  
Living in Christian Community  
Covenant Relationships  
Authentic Relationships  
Relationships, A Mess Worth Making  
Reconcile  
Emotionally Healthy Spirituality  
Practicing Right Relationship  
The Good and Beautiful Community  
The Peacemaker  
The Relationship Project

### Relationship with God

#### **Author**

Boyd, Greg  
Boyd, Greg  
Crabb, Larry  
Manning, Brennan  
Manning, Brennan  
Manning, Brennan  
McClung, Floyd  
Nouwen, Henri  
Nouwen, Henri  
Smith, Malcolm

#### **Title**

Seeing is Believing  
Present Perfect  
Soul Talk  
Abba's Child  
Ruthless Trust  
The Furious Longing of God  
The Father Heart of God  
Life of the Beloved  
The Return of the Prodigal Son  
The Power of the Blood Covenant

### Relationship with Self

#### **Author**

Bates, Maryiln and Keirse, David  
Brown, Brene  
Brown, Brene  
Kroeger, Otto  
Myers, Isabel and Peter  
Rath, Tom

#### **Title**

Please Understand Me  
Daring Greatly  
The Gifts of Imperfection  
Type Talk  
Gifts Differing  
StrenghtsFinder 2.0





CLASS ONE – PART ONE

# **THE CYCLE OF CONFLICT**

**Peacemakers are made, not born.**

## OVERVIEW

Welcome to your first class of *Becoming Kingdom Peacemakers*! In this class we will be talking about the cycle of conflict and the vision that Jesus taught his followers of radically transforming this cycle.

Our world is increasingly divided. Divisions, tensions and conflict of every kind are a hallmark of the human race. And yet, Jesus, who is known as the Prince of Peace and who called his followers to be peacemakers, came not merely to make a way for conflict-weary souls to make it to heaven someday, *but to teach and model a radically counter-cultural set of principles* that were to be learned and lived out by his followers in order to show the world another way to live together... *a way that effectively answers and ends the cycle of violence that holds the world in its destructive grip.*

### What is the cycle?

- Broken people create broken relationships and broken community.
- There are a few key ingredients at work in conflict that, when understood, can help us transform the cycle of conflict.
- Becoming Kingdom Peacemakers as Jesus demonstrated is needed in order to help us recognize and break this cycle. The Prince of Peace guides us toward true, biblical peace!

## NOTES

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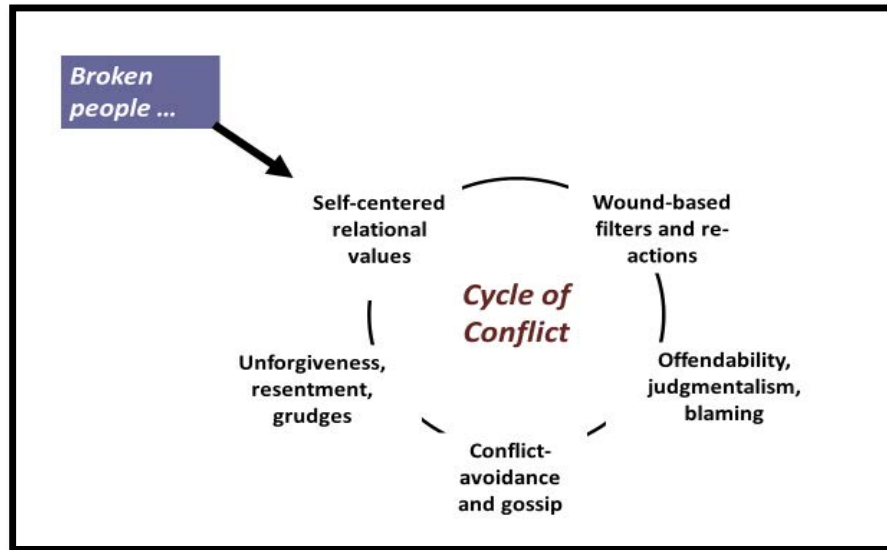
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## CLASS ONE – PART ONE

### I. Broken People Create Broken Community



- Five Key Ingredients at Work in Conflict:
  - Self-centered relational values (self-promotion, self-protection, self-provision)
  - Wound-based filters and reactions
  - Judgmentalism toward others
  - Conflict-avoidance and gossip
  - Unforgiveness and resentment

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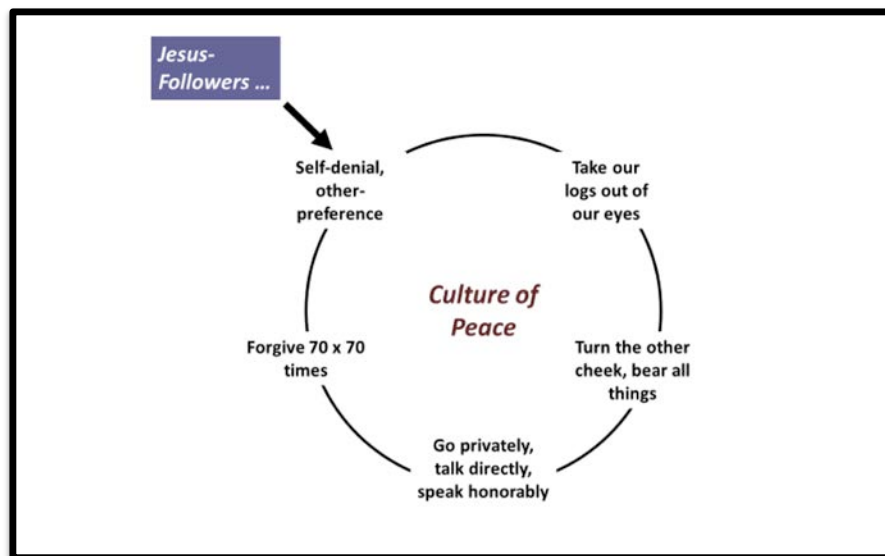
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## CLASS ONE – PART ONE

### II. *Jesus Came to Break the Cycle of Conflict*

- “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” - Matthew 5:9
- Jesus lived and taught clear ways of living out the opposite of the cycle of conflict and sent the Holy Spirit to empower us to live out these new ways.
- Jesus specifically address the five ingredients and provides a kingdom-alternative:
  - Self-denial
  - Addressing our own faults, dealing with our “logs”
  - Turning the other cheek
  - Speaking directly with the right people
  - Radical forgiveness
- We all help make conflict in our relationships and our world.
- Peacemaking has to be learned. We must *become* peacemakers.



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## REFLECTIONS

So much of understanding and living into what it means to be a Kingdom person living in community requires that we know the story of God. When we take the time to read the Bible as the grand narrative it was intended to be, we are drawn into a greater picture of God and his relationships with all of creation.

Many of our weekly reflections will be focused on building our relationship with the story of God. We encourage you to take time to marinate in the various bible passages highlighted in each class. Don't just read individual verses, go further! Read the chapter in which they are written, read the entire book/epistle/poem in which the chapter is enveloped. Take time to read the bible as a story from beginning, to middle, to end.

As we move forward together in gaining greater familiarity with the beautiful story of God, the potential to learn how to love and be loved only increases. – Shalom!

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- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Consider “learning partners”. With whom are you taking this class? With whom might you engage in dialogue about the material outside of class? Share a cup of cocoa and learn together!
- Bible Reading: Matthew 5:9
  - Read this passage each day this week. Intentionally set it to memory!
  - Read this passage in its larger context, what does the rest of the chapter read? Read the entire chapter in one sitting at least once this week.
- Before this class, how have you understood peace? Is your understanding similar or different to that articulated in this course? (PEACE as Pardon, Esteem, Acceptance, Compassion, Empowerment)
- Jesus provides the five ingredients of a kingdom alternative to the cycle of conflict (Self-denial, Log out of own eye first, Turn other cheek, Speak directly, Radical forgiveness).
  - Which of these five do you find to be most challenging? Why?
  - Can you recall a time when someone demonstrated one (or more) of these ingredients to you? What was that experience like?

CLASS ONE - PART TWO

## **THE HEART OF BIBLICAL PEACE**

**Peace begins as a reality made possible  
By the life, death, resurrection,  
Ascension and victory of Jesus  
Over Satan,  
Sin,  
And death.**



## OVERVIEW

What is biblical peace and how does it differ from the peace that the world offers? What does it take for genuine peace to be cultivated in our own hearts, in our personal relationships and out in the world around us?

In this session we will explore the true nature of biblical peace by looking to the person of Jesus; for peace begins as a reality made possible by the life, death, resurrection and ascension and victory of Jesus over Satan, sin and death.

### Why “Peacemakers”?

- *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” – Matthew 5:9*
- Peace begins as a reality that is made possible by the life, death, resurrection, ascension and victory of Jesus Christ over Satan, sin and death.
- We are known as God’s children only to the degree that we resemble our Father. And we are recipients of the very DNA of the God who is defined as, “the God of Peace”. (Romans 15:13)

## NOTES

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## CLASS ONE – PART TWO

### I. *The God of Peace Initiates Peacemaking*

- God is the peacemaker who extends and cultivates peace.
  - God takes the initiative to reach across the divide and reconcile himself with those who act as enemies.
    - *“But God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8)
    - While we act like enemies of God, God initiates the peace process!
  - After tearing down the dividing wall and offering the covenant of peace, God then calls us to extend peace to all others.
    - *“We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”* (2 Corinthians 5:20)
    - God offers peace to us then calls us to be peacemakers toward others.
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### II. *Biblical Peace*

- What is Peace?
    - *“Shalom”* in Hebrew
      - Personal and interpersonal wholeness and well-being.
      - Resulting from all things being rightly-related, rightly-ordered and in harmony.
    - *“Eirene”* in Greek
      - Harmony, concord, unity (from the verb “eiro” which means “to join”).
    - Biblically, peace means *harmony of human relationships resulting in human thriving and wholeness.*
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## CLASS ONE – PART TWO

### III. *The Importance of Peace*

- Every letter in the New Testament commands believers to live in peace!
    - *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people.”* (Romans 12:18)
    - *“Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (Ephesians 4:3)
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### IV. *From Where Does Peace Come?*

- Peace is not just an external condition. It is something that emerges from an internal condition. *It is a heart orientation.*
  - Ineffective Strategies to Bring Peace:
    - War and force to overcome perceived enemies.
    - Reduce or control conflict through legislating behavior or peace talks.
    - In the Old Testament we see God lamenting over the prophets’ and priests’ inability to bring genuine peace because they failed to address the *true* causes of war and violence.
      - *“They heal the brokenness of the daughter of my people superficially, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is not peace... From the least even to the greatest, everyone is greedy for gain; from the prophet even to the priest, everyone practices deceit.”* (Jeremiah 8:10-12)
    - In the New Testament Jesus strongly discusses the importance of peace as an internal condition.
      - *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.”* (Matthew 23:25-26)
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## CLASS ONE – PART TWO

- Righteousness will bring peace.
    - *“Look, a righteous king is coming! And honest princes will rule under him. Justice will rule in the wilderness, and righteousness in the fertile field. And this righteousness will bring peace.”* (Isaiah 32:1, 16-17)
    - Righteous and justice are closely related, and mean faithfulness to a covenant relationship.
      - Doing what is right and good
      - Treating others with dignity and respect
      - Working to promote the well-being of others
      - Right-relatedness and relational faithfulness results in peace!
    - Apart from Jesus we do not know how to walk in righteousness.
      - *“God guides me in the paths of righteousness.”* (Psalm 23:3)
      - *“Jesus came to guide our feet into the way of peace.”* (Luke 1:79)
      - Peace comes from rightly-relating and rightly-relating must be learned!
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### V. *The Gospel of Peace*

- The “Missing Peace” of the Gospel
  - The gospel has been reduced to individuals being reconciled with God in order to enter heaven after they die. However, the gospel is so much more! It’s about 4-Directional (Love God, Love Self, Love Others, Love Creation) reconciliation and love.
- Two Ways to Read the Bible:
  - *Storyline A:* Problem = Sin (falling short of laws) sends individuals to hell. Solution = The cross saves individuals from hell after they die. *How we relate is beside the point!*
  - *Storyline B:* Problem = Sin (falling short of love) breaks relationships and wounds people. Solution = The cross saves a community from sin (un-love) and reconciles them with God, themselves, each other and creation. *How we relate is the main point!*

## CLASS ONE – PART TWO

- God freely extends to us forgiveness, honor, acceptance, understanding, and promotion of wellbeing.
  - Luke 15:11-32 – The Prodigal Son (aka “The Peacemaking Father”!)
- The Peace that the God of Peace extends to us in Jesus means:
  - **Pardon** – God freely forgives our wrongs and overlooks our faults
  - **Esteem** – God treats us according to our true, infinite worth
  - **Acceptance** – God fully and unconditionally embraces us as we are
  - **Compassion** – God understands our weaknesses and is patient with us
  - **Empowerment** – God equips us to grow and become all we can be
- Jesus expressed this peace time and again, and offers it to us.
  - *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you; not as the world gives to I give you.”* (John 14:27)
  - *“Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”* (John 20:19)
- We must express this peace and offer it to others!
  - *“Whatever house you enter, say first, ‘Peace be to this house’.”* (Luke 10:5)
  - *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people.”* (Romans 12:18)
  - *“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”* (Romans 14:19)

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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Luke 15:11-32 *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*
  - Read the entire parable each day this week.
  - Take each letter of biblical peace (*Pardon, Esteem, Acceptance, Compassion, Empowerment*) and find examples of how each is demonstrated in the parable.
  - Do you resonate with the younger or older brother, or both, more intimately?
  - Have you experienced a time when someone in your life shared the same radical PEACE that the father extended toward his son(s)? What was that experience like?
- Read the 1st chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Exercise: Engaging the Imagination
  - Spend some time unlocking your imagination. Get in a quiet space and make yourself comfortable. Imagine God, the loving father, running to you. He runs to you with open arms, accepting you freely and fully just as you are. Imagine this love melting away your pain, your brokenness, your shame. Imagine you, dearly loved by the father. Imagine yourself liberated of your pain, your brokenness, your shame. Sit with this image for a while.
  - What does this feel like? Are you receptive? Is there something within you that resists this radical forgiving love? Try to allow yourself, both imaginatively and in reality, to simply be loved by the father God.
- Recommended for Further Reading:
  - Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

CLASS TWO – PART ONE

**RECEIVING GOD'S OFFER OF PEACE**

**Remember who you are.  
You are the beloved of God.**



## OVERVIEW

Before we can ever become authentic peacemakers, we must first become “Peace-takers”. That is, we are first to receive the full measure of God’s love - God’s Pardon, Esteem for us, Acceptance of us, Compassion and Empowerment for us to grow in loving as God loves. Only in this receiving of God’s peace are we then liberated to generously offer peace to others.

In this second session we will be discussing how having a secure identity in Christ, and thus being at peace with God and with our own selves, is the foundation of making peace and living at peace with others.

### Being a “Peace-Taker”

- “We love because God first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)
- We *become* like Jesus by first *being* with Jesus, then *doing* as Jesus did.
- Discipleship and transformation involve: Being – Doing – Becoming

## NOTES

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## CLASS TWO – PART ONE

### I. *Becoming Peace-Takers*

- We can only give peace if we have first received peace.
- *“We love because God first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19)
  - We give peace because God first gave us peace.
- Jesus was constantly speaking peace to his disciples.
- Discipleship is “being, doing and becoming”:
  - *Being* with Jesus
  - To begin *doing* as Jesus
  - For the purpose of *becoming* like Jesus
  - To carry on the mission of Jesus
- We can only *become* like Jesus by first *being* with Jesus and *doing* as Jesus did!
  - Being:
    - *“And Jesus appointed twelve so that they would be with him.”* (Mark 3:14)
  - Doing:
    - *“You are my friends if you do what I command you.”* (John 15:14)
    - *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”* (John 14:15)
  - Becoming:
    - *“It is enough for the disciple that they become like their teacher.”* (Matthew 10:25).
    - *“For those whom God foreknew, God also predestined to become conformed to the image of God’s son.”* (Romans 8:29).

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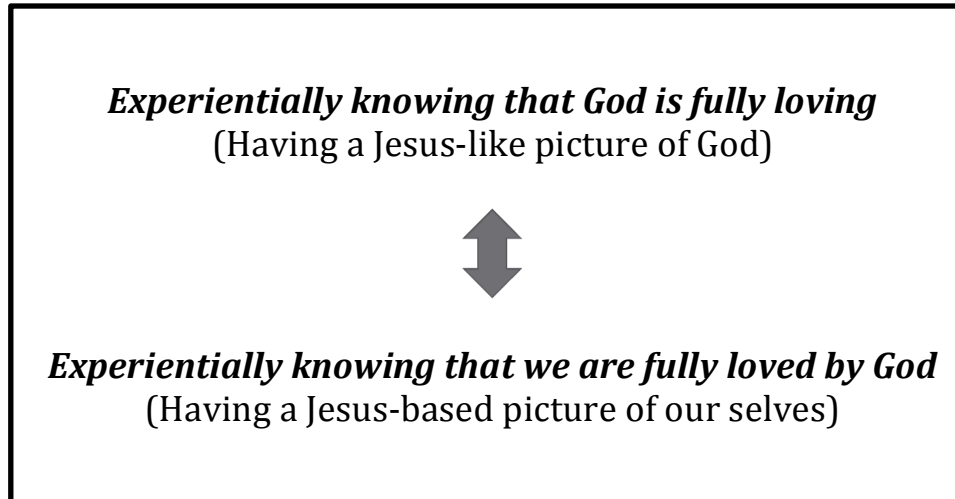
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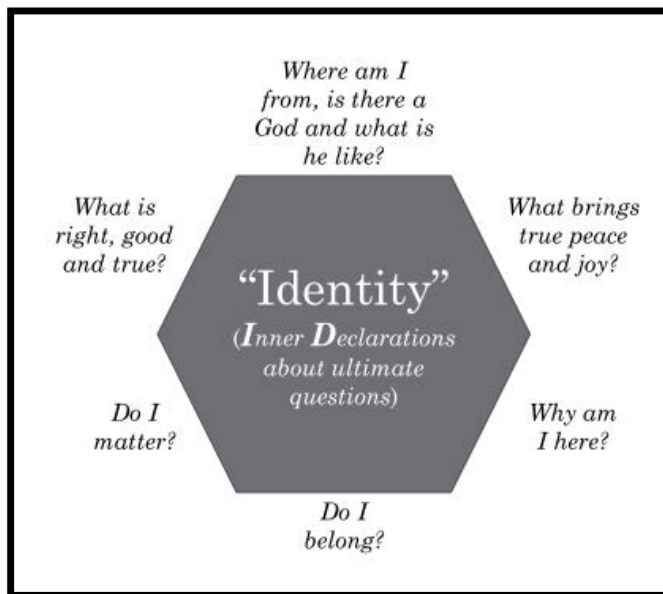
CLASS TWO – PART ONE

II. *Secure Identity in Christ*

- Two essential elements



- Six “Big Questions” of Life



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## CLASS TWO – PART ONE

- We make conclusions about these big questions and our conclusions become our core beliefs.
- Our basic sense of identity drives our lives, therefore Satan has a huge interest in mis-shaping this identity for destructive purposes.

### III. *Satan's Basic Tactics*

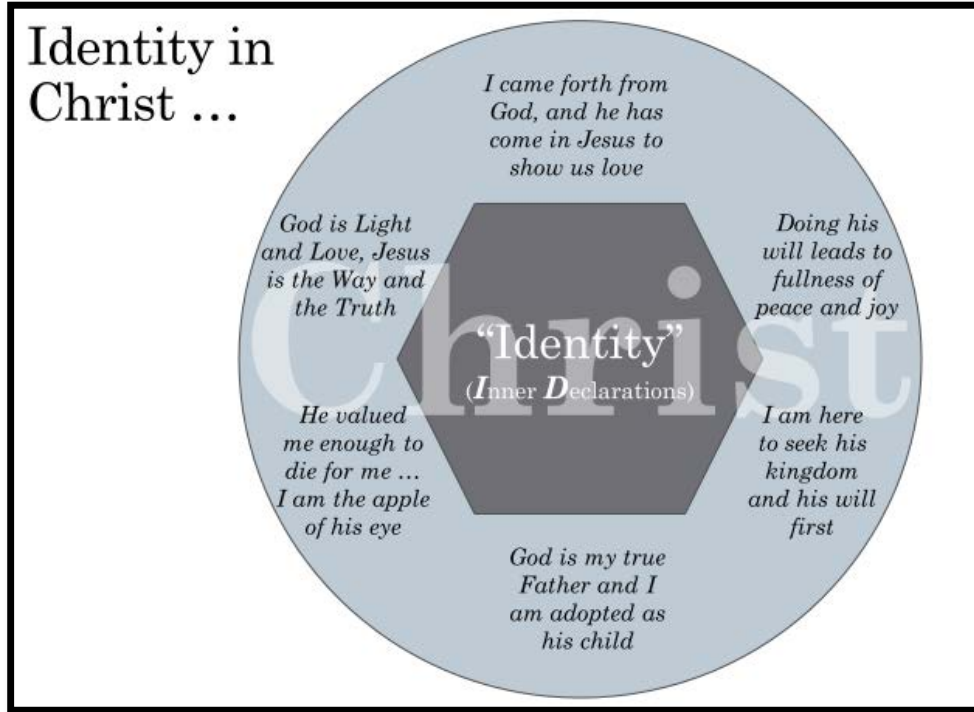
- Lies
    - Uses *deception* (lies) to get us to distrust God's goodness and our value.
  - Lures
    - Uses *temptation* (lures) to get us to place our trust in things other than God.
  - Three categories of Satan's lies:
    - Lies about God – he is not good, near, or reliable
    - Lies about ourselves – we are bad, unlovable, on our own
    - Lies about what satisfies – things of the world can satisfy us
  - After deceiving us about God, ourselves and what brings life, Satan then uses lures.
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### IV. *Having a Jesus Lens*

- Jesus becomes the lens through which we see God, ourselves, others and creation.
  - *"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:32)
  - *"The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* (John 10:10).
  - *"I am the way, the truth and the life."* (John 14:6)
- Jesus is the full revelation of God!
  - *"I and the Father are one."* (John 10:30)
  - *"If you've seen me you have seen the father."* (John 10:30)
  - *"He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's nature."* (Hebrews 1:3)
- Through time with Jesus, we learn the true answers to the big questions. THIS is "Peace-taking"!

CLASS TWO – PART ONE

- Our Secure Identity in Christ – “Inner Declarations” based in God’s Truth



- Our picture of God is one of a loving father.
- Our picture of ourselves is that we are God’s beloved child.
- *THIS* is the foundation of bringing peace to others and the world.
- Becoming peacemakers results from us first becoming peace-takers!

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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes
- Bible Reading: 1 John
  - Read through the entire epistle of 1 John in one sitting
  - Read 1 John 4:19 each day this week. Intentionally set it to memory!
- Meditate on the “Identity in Christ” table. Read each inner declaration each day this week along with your bible reading. Consider setting one (or more!) of these inner declarations to memory.
- Exercise: Set aside some time one day this week to call to mind the various lies and lures Satan uses in your life.
  - Can you identify them? Perhaps one lie says something like, “My sin is too big for God to forgive.” Or a lure might say something like, “My security is found in money.”
  - After identifying some lies and lures in your life, replace those lies with words of truth. For example - The lie, “My sin is too big for God to forgive” is replaced with the truth, “He has removed our sin as far as the east is from the west.” Find truths to replace is lie and lure. Share these with a friend or family member!

CLASS TWO – PART TWO

## **TRUSTING THE TRUST-WORTHY GOD**

**Becoming Kingdom peace activists  
Requires that we first take some time to become  
Kingdom peace-contemplatives.**



## OVERVIEW

Becoming Kingdom peace activists requires that we first take some time to become Kingdom peace-contemplatives. Peace-takers and peace-contemplatives are those who recognize that outward peace comes from inner peace; from the inner harmony of having our core identity rightly aligned with the truth about who God really is, and who we really are in God's eyes.

In this second class we will examine the importance of cultivating a deep trust in the trust-worthy God, and how this trust-based relationship with God matures our faith.

### What does it mean to be trust-worthy?

- *Goodness*: A person who is compassionate and has the best interest of others in mind.
- *Nearness*: A person who is available, attentive and responsive to others.
- *Reliability*: A person who has strength, wisdom and skill to help others in time of need.

## NOTES

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## CLASS TWO – PART TWO

### **I. Peace-Contemplatives**

- Outward peace comes from inward peace.
- Having a secure identity in Christ is the foundation of making peace.
- Jesus is the peacemaker and invites us to trust in God.
  - *“Believe in God, believe also in me.”* (John 14:1)
- From our brokenness, we live in distrustful, conflict-ridden world. Yet God is trust-worthy!

### **II. Three Aspects of a Trust-Worthy Person**

- *Goodness*: We know they care.
- *Nearness*: We know they are there for us.
- *Reliability*: We know we can count on them.
  - These are the very three qualities that God has revealed about himself in the person of Jesus.

### **III. Jesus is Good, Near and Reliable**

- Jesus reveals God’s goodness
    - *“Jesus... went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.”* (Acts 10:38)
  - Jesus reveals God’s nearness
    - *“What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands... we proclaim to you.”* (1 John 1:1-3)
    - Jesus is called Emmanuel – God with us.
  - Jesus reveals God’s reliability
    - *“He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to him, and such miracles as these performed by his hands?’”* (Mark 6:2)
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## CLASS TWO – PART TWO

### IV. *Old Testament Images of God's Goodness, Nearness, Reliability*

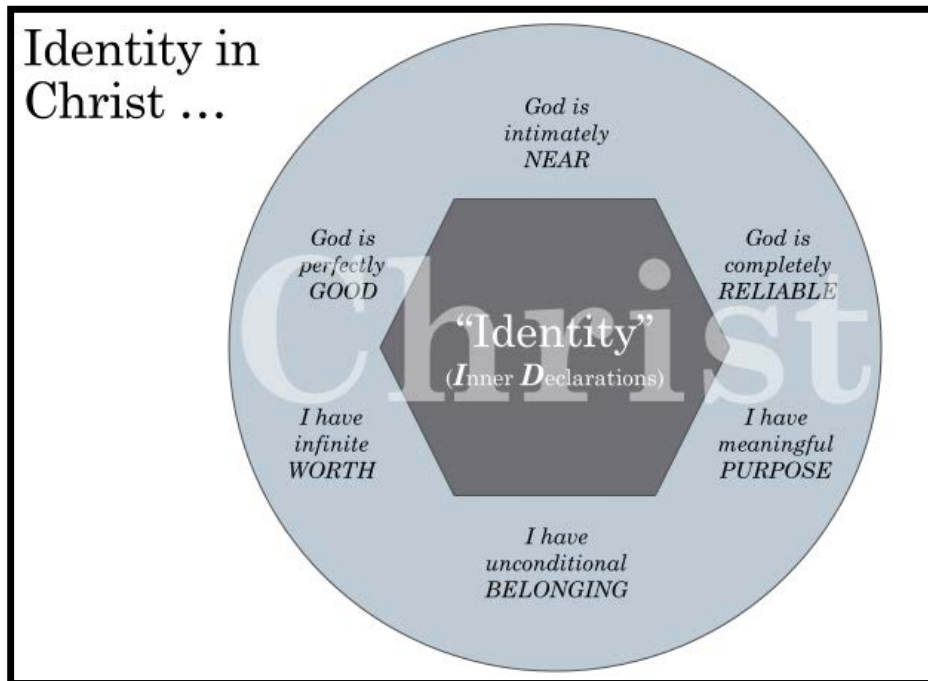
- Psalm 23 - David's Picture of God's Reliability
  - *"The lord is my shepherd, I shall not want..."*
  - *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies... My cup overflows..."*
  - *"He leads me beside quiet waters... He guides me in the path of righteousness..."*
- Psalm 23 – David's Picture of God's Nearness
  - *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me."*
  - *"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*
- Psalm 23 – David's Picture of God's Goodness
  - *"He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul."*
  - *"Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life."*
- Our picture of God makes all the difference! Peacemaking begins with an accurate picture of God.

### V. *Jesus Reveals the Fatherhood of God*

- Jesus refers to God as father 173 times.
- Jesus refers to the Kingdom 82 times.
- Jesus refers to salvation 26 times.
- Fatherhood is a central truth in the gospels!
- God the Father longs to satisfy our soul-thirsts for three key things:
  - God gives us *inherent worth and value*.
  - God gives us *unconditional belonging and acceptance*.
  - God gives us *meaningful purpose*.
- Jesus reveals that we have inherent worth and value
  - *"God so loved the world that he gave God's only son that whoever believes in God should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)
  - *"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. But the very hairs of your head are numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows."* (Matthew 10:29-31)
- Jesus reveals that we have unconditional belonging
  - *"Even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us."* (John 17:21)

## CLASS TWO – PART TWO

- Jesus reveals that we have meaningful purpose
  - *“Father, I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. As you sent me into the world, now I also have sent them in to the world.”* (John 17:4, 18)
  - We have been given an important job to fulfill, the very job that Jesus himself began!
- Jesus reveals that God is a Loving Father and I am God’s Beloved Child



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## RELATIONAL “PEACE-BREAKING” BEHAVIORS

- Pride
- Selfishness
- Self-preservation
- Ego
- Greed
- Superiority
- Entitlement
- Stubbornness
- Prejudice/Stereotype
- Cultural ignorance
- Lack of understanding
- Ignorance
- Anger
- Grudges
- Hatred
- Unforgiveness
- Not letting go
- Gossip
- Lying / dishonesty
- Negative words
- Criticism
- Sarcasm
- Name-calling
- Core wounds
- Insecurities
- Addictions
- Perfectionism
- Jealousy
- Intolerance
- Disrespect
- Judgment
- Focusing on faults
- Negativity
- Taking sides
- Rejection
- Violence
- Bullying
- Rudeness, meanness
- Shaming
- Aggression
- Bad behavior
- Not keeping your word
- Disloyalty
- Betrayal
- Apathy
- Not addressing issues
- Passive-aggression
- Undermining
- Control
- Intimidation
- Manipulation
- Physical abuse
- Interrupting
- Not listening
- Inattentiveness
- Misunderstanding
- Assumptions
- Non-verbals
- Insensitivity
- Stress
- Busyness
- Chaotic lives
- Time pressures

## REFLECTIONS

- Personally and prayerfully review your notes
- Bible Reading: Psalm 23
  - Read the entire psalm in one sitting
  - Meditate on one verse that demonstrates for each of the three aspects of trustworthiness (Good, Near, Reliable). Read your choice verse every day this week.
- Read the 2nd chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Meditate on the “Identity in Christ” table that declares the Goodness, Nearness and Reliability of God. Read each inner declaration each day this week along with your bible reading. Consider setting one (or more!) of these inner declarations to memory.
- God the father longs to satisfy your soul-thirsts. God is the only true source of this satisfaction! Revisiting the lies and lures that you identified in the last class, how do you see those lies and lures contrasting with what you learned this class regarding the ways in which we see Jesus satisfying our soul-thirsts throughout the New Testament? (See Roman Numeral V)

CLASS THREE – PART ONE  
**TRUE WORSHIP**

**God reaches out to reconcile us to himself,  
Regardless of what we have done,  
And God then calls us  
To reach to reconcile all others  
To ourselves  
Regardless of what they have done.**



## OVERVIEW

Making peace with God involves us surrendering our own will to do God's will, and seeking to know and to serve God's will actively. This is the biblical meaning of "worship".

In this third class of Becoming Kingdom Peacemakers we will look more closely at what the Bible means by "worship" and how we can align our lives with God's truth and God's will. We will see that Peace is alignment with God's truth and God's will. To be aligned with God's truth involves *having an accurate picture of who God really is and who I really am*. And to be aligned with God's will involves a *knowledge of what God's purposes are and submitting my heart to God's calling and purposes*.

### What is true worship?

- Reciprocating the love that God so lavishly pours into us.
- Aligning our lives with God's truth and God's will.
- When we align our lives with these two things; God's truth and God's will, the Kingdom of God can come more fully in and through us! For everything in God's kingdom plan for creation and humanity depends on this alignment.

## NOTES

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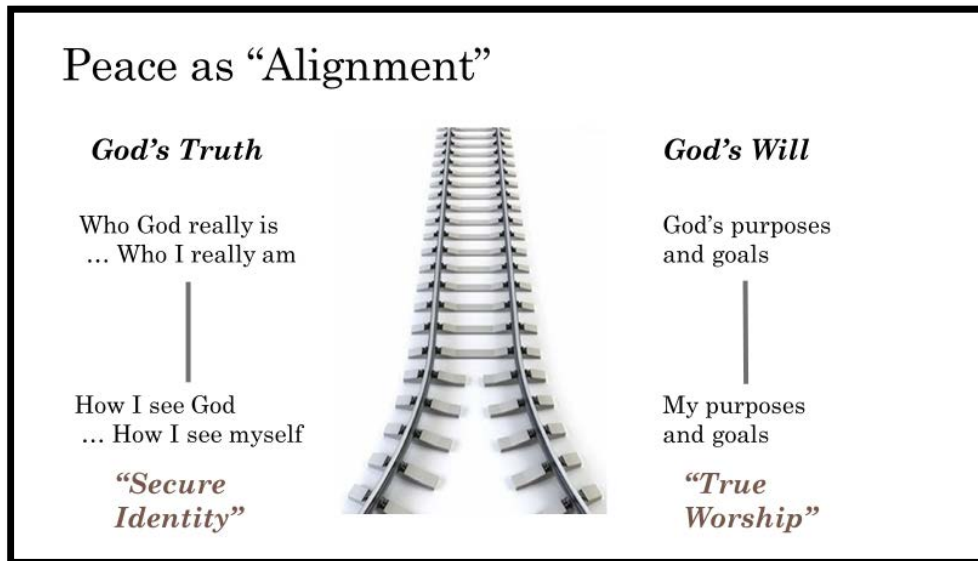
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## CLASS THREE – PART ONE

### I. Peace as “Right Alignment”



- Alignment with God's Truth: *A Secure Identity*
  - How we see God aligns with who he really is, and how we see ourselves aligns with who we really are in God's eyes.
- Alignment with God's Will: *True Worship*
  - My purposes and goals line up accurately with God's purposes and goals.
- With these two rails rightly aligned, God's Kingdom moves forward in and through us!

### II. True Worship

- The Samaritan woman's idea of worship
  - "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." (John 4:20)
  - Worship to the Samaritan woman was priests offering animal sacrifices on a sacred mountain; it was proper protocol and ritual done by certain people and in a certain place.
- Jesus' response to this idea of worship
  - "An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24)

- Jesus refers to “true worship” – thus indicating there can be false worship.

### CLASS THREE – PART ONE

- First occurrence of the word “worship”
  - Genesis 22: *“Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.”*
  - Abraham was about to sacrifice his only son Isaac in response to God’s command. This is what he calls “worship”
- Two essentials for “true worship”
  - Fully surrendering to God’s rule in our lives
  - Sacrificially serving God’s will through our lives
  - *Surrender and Service*
- Hebrew words for “worship”
  - *“Shachah”* – To bow or bend the knee; indicating *surrender* and obedience to God.
  - *“Abad”* – To labor or work for another; indicating *service* to God.
- Greek words for “worship”
  - *“Proskuneo”* – To kneel or kiss the hand
  - *“Latreuo”* – To serve
- Worship is surrender and service!
  - *“Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to [abad] it and keep it.”* (Genesis 2:15)
  - *“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”* (Ephesians 2:10).
  - From Genesis through Revelation, we see that humans were created for worship and to work!
- “Giving Glory” = Worship
  - *“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you have given me to do.”* (John 17:4)

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## CLASS THREE – PART ONE

### III. *True Worship Interrupted*

- Satan entered the garden and deceived humans into serving his will.
- God’s goal in rescuing humanity is to restore us to our created role of worshiping and working for God.
  - “Thus says the LORD, ‘Israel, is my son, my firstborn. So I said to you, ‘Let my son go that he may serve [abad] me.’” (Exodus 4:23)
  - Since the time sin entered the world, humanity has been kept from their true vocation of working for God’s kingdom.
  - Jesus comes into this brokenness to liberate his people to do the work they were created to do.

### IV. *Worship vs. “Works-Righteousness”*

- “Works-righteousness” = doing things to earn love from God
- “Worship” = doing things to express love for God and toward others
- Five different Levitical offerings that parallel what worship is and how it ties to peace between God, ourselves and others.
  - The Five Levitical Offerings (Leviticus chapters 1-5)
    - Sin offering: *Required* for *atonement* for our sins. God extends forgiveness and invites reconciliation; we must receive these gifts. The offering is our “yes” to God and reminds us of this gift.
    - Burnt Offering: Voluntary, symbolizes *entire surrender* and dedication. A fragrant aroma. We give back to God.
    - Meal Offering: Voluntary, symbolizes *restored relationship*. A fragrant aroma. We give back to God.
    - Peace Offering: Voluntary, symbolizes *gratitude and fellowship*. A fragrant aroma. We give back to God.
    - Guilt Offering: *Required* for restitution to victims of our sins. We give back to those we have harmed to restore what was lost and to reconcile relationship.
  - Only two of the five offerings of worship were required. The other three are all voluntary expressions of love.
  - “Fragrant aroma” applies only to the three voluntary offerings, indicating that our free-choice to make these offerings pleases God.
    - *This is true worship!* Us working for God’s purposes by receiving God’s gift of peace and extending this same peace to others and giving back to God our peace offering of thankfulness!

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes
- Bible Reading: John
  - Read through the entire gospel of John this week.
  - Read through John Chapter 4 in one sitting
  - Read John 4:23-24 each day this week. Intentionally set it to memory!
- Consider the two essentials of “true worship” (Surrender & Service).
  - Is this how you would have defined worship? If not, what was your idea/picture/definition of worship before this class?
  - In an earlier class discipleship is defined, as “being, doing and becoming” like Jesus. How does “true worship” fit into discipleship?
- Worship vs. Works-Righteousness
  - In what ways do you practice works-righteousness (trying to earn God’s love)? These ways can be obvious at times, but they can also be hidden or subconscious practices. (An example of works-righteousness is demonstrated in the elder son of the parable, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*).
  - After identifying one or more of your works-righteousness tendencies, imagine yourself submitting those tendencies to Jesus, laying them at the foot of the cross. As Jesus what he might want to say to you concerning these tendencies? Is there something keeping you from laying these down and receiving grace and true worship practices?

CLASS THREE - PART TWO  
**TRUE WORSHIP**

**This is true worship:  
The Passionate pursuit of knowing,  
Obeying and living out  
God's good and beautiful will.**

## OVERVIEW

The idea of “true worship” indicates that there can be something called “false worship”, a superficial counterfeit to the real thing. This false worship became the posture of the hearts of the Israelites, and it can happen in our worship as well if we allow it. It became what God called “lip-service” instead of true worship.

But we can grow into passionate true worshippers! True worship happens when we trust God’s character enough to obey God’s commands. Peacemaking involves us becoming true worshippers, those whose hearts and lives are more and more aligned in all areas with the true beauty and goodness of God’s heart and God’s will. When this happens, we can then be vessels of bringing God’s PEACE to others!

### Four Motives of Obeying God

- Fear – Obeying God to avoid punishment
- Favor – Obeying God to gain rewards
- Duty – Obeying God out of legal or moral obligation
- Devotion – Obeying God out of seeing God’s will as good and wanting to give God thanks and bring God joy.

## NOTES

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## CLASS THREE – PART TWO

### I. False Worship in the Old Testament

- *“Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22)*
- *“What are your multiplied sacrifices to me?” Says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle; and I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. When you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of my courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer..’” (Isaiah 1:11-13)*
- The Israelites had forgotten God’s faithful love. In turn, true worship to God became false worship of empty routine.
  - *“Even though you offer up to me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” (Amos 5:22-24)*
- God didn’t want just ceremony and ritual. God longs for true worshippers!
  - *“With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn child? He has showed you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:6-8)*
- Covenant, faithful relationship to God and others, is the true sacrifice that is pleasing to God.

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## CLASS THREE – PART TWO

### II. *Worship and Holiness*

- Holiness is a relational or covenantal word. It is about being fully given to someone!
- Holiness is:
  - Being *fully devoted to God's person*
  - Being *fully devoted to God's purposes* or mission
- God IS holy – total, whole-hearted covenant devotion to others.
  - *"For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy."* (Leviticus 11:45)
- Holiness is God's total devotion to us in covenant faithfulness and our total devotion back to God in response.
- The heart of true worship is total heart devotion or holiness.

### III. *David as a True Worshipper*

- David loved to do God's will!
- "The Law of the Lord is Perfect..." (Leviticus 11:45)
  - Restoring the soul
  - Making wise the simple
  - Rejoicing the heart
  - Enlightening the eyes
  - [God's Laws] are more desirable than gold
  - [God's Laws] are sweeter than honey
- True worship is the passionate pursuit of knowing, obeying and living out God's good and beautiful will.

### IV. *Growing as a True Worshipper*

- Four Stages of Spiritual Development [From Fear to Devotion]:
  - FEAR - Obeying God to avoid punishment
  - FAVOR – Obeying God to gain rewards
  - DUTY – Obeying God out of legal requirement
  - DEVOTION – Obeying God because God's will is seen as good, and we want to thank God and bring God joy.
- True worship happens when we trust God's character enough to obey God's commands.
- Fear-to-Devotion Illustrated in Revelation
  - *"After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.'"* (Revelation 4:1)
    - The worshippers first experience God's nearness with the invitation to "come near".

## CLASS THREE – PART TWO

- Because they are near they begin to experience something more:
  - *“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and one sitting on the throne. And he who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.”*  
(Revelation 4:2-3)
    - Having first come near, they then experience God’s goodness and beauty. Then they experience more:
  - *“Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God ... ”*  
(Revelation 4:4-5)
    - Now they experience God’s power, wisdom and reliability!  
Finally, they are liberated to give all they have back to God:
  - *“And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”* (Revelation 4:9-11)
    - They have now become true worshippers, surrendering themselves fully and gladly to God’s will.
- Peacemaking involves us becoming true worshippers!

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## PERSONAL WORSHIP REFLECTION

Reflect and respond with graceful honesty!

Connecting with God is the pathway to knowing him and his will better, and worshiping him from the heart. Think about how you best connect with God... Which practices come easy and which ones are more challenging for you? Place an "X" along the dashed lines to reflect your experience of each activity:

<b><u>Prayer Activities:</u></b>	<i>Easier</i>	<i>Challenging</i>
Offering praise and thanksgiving	----- -----	
Making requests and petitions	----- -----	
Conversational prayer, talking to Him	----- -----	
Reading written prayers, writing prayers	----- -----	
Silent, listening prayer, waiting on Him	----- -----	
Imaginative prayer, using mental imagery	----- -----	
Practicing His presence, just being aware	----- -----	
Other prayer activities: (list)	----- -----	
<b><u>Scripture Activities:</u></b>		
Scripture reading	----- -----	
Scripture study: passages, topics, words	----- -----	
Scripture meditation, deep reflection	----- -----	
Scripture memorization	----- -----	
Praying Scripture	----- -----	
Other Scripture activities: (list)	----- -----	
<b><u>Other Activities:</u></b>		
Reading spiritual books	----- -----	
Listening to sermons or podcasts	----- -----	
Listening-to/singing/playing worship music	----- -----	
Engaging in service of others	----- -----	
Gathering with others for any of the above	----- -----	

\*\*Place a star beside the 2-3 activities that are most enjoyable or appealing to you.

## What Can We Trust God For? What does God guarantee to give us?

Ephesians 1:3 – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*

In this verse, we are told that God has already given us “every spiritual blessing” possible, in Christ. What are spiritual blessings? What are these things God has already given to us and therefore guarantees to be reliable in providing and protecting on our behalf? Ephesians chapter 1:4 through the end of chapter 3 lays out an astonishing list of amazing spiritual blessings, that if we understand what they actually are and mean in our daily lives, would be far more desirable and valuable to us than the material and earthly blessings we often seek and settle for. The Christian spiritual life is in large part about understanding what these things are, and learning how to receive or actively live in them and walk them out.

- We have been *chosen* by him – v. 1:4
- We have been *adopted* as his children – v. 1:5
- We have been purchased or *redeemed from sin* and death by him – v. 1:7
- We have been *forgiven* fully by him – v. 1:7
- We are offered *revelation* of the mysteries of God and his will – v. 1:9
- All his *intentions* toward us are *kind and caring* – v. 1:9
- We are invited to be *co-workers* in the administration of his Kingdom on earth – v. 1:10
- We have a *future inheritance* when he returns, raises the dead and restores earth – v. 1:11
- We are given *hope* now because of the certainty of his future plans for us – v. 1:12
- Our present and future status and blessings are *sealed* and certified by him – v. 1:13
- We have been given the *fullness of his Holy Spirit*, his indwelling presence/power – v. 1:13-14
- We have been given a *spirit of wisdom* and revelation in the knowledge of him – v. 1:17
- We have been given *spiritual enlightenment* – v. 1:18
- We have been given a *meaningful calling and purpose* as co-workers with him – v. 1:18
- We have been given his *power to persevere* and to minister – v. 1:19
- We have been given *his authority over principalities* and powers of the enemy – v. 1:21
- We have a new kind of *spiritual life* within us, God’s “zoe” life-power – v. 2:5
- We have been *seated with Jesus* on the throne at God’s right hand – v. 2:6
- We have been given *meaningful work* to do for him – v. 2:10
- We have direct *access* to the father – v. 2:18
- We have been given *full citizenship* in his eternal kingdom – v. 2:19
- We have been given *full family membership* in his family – v. 2:19
- We have been given *boldness* in the face of challenges and threats – v. 3:12
- We have been given *confident access* to approach him any time we want or need to – v. 3:12
- We have been given Christ’s *full presence* dwelling within us – v. 3:17
- We have been given the ability to *know and comprehend* the love of God personally – v. 3:18
- We have been filled with all of *God’s fullness*, he holds nothing of himself back – v. 3:19

None of these things are earthly or material or temporal things. That means that nothing and no one on earth can touch them, threaten them, diminish them, or take them from us. They are freely offered to us and fully guaranteed for us by God.

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes
- Bible Reading: Amos 5:22-24 & Micah 6:6-8
  - False Worship: Read Amos 5:22-24 each day this week.
    - As you read through this passage, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if there are any areas of your life that you are offering as false worship. Are there any modern day “grain offerings, burnt offerings” that you’re offering to God (i.e. perfectionism, religiosity, personal piety, etc.). What is the “noise of your songs” that you may be singing to the Lord (are you offering praise with your lips but ceasing to offer your heart?)
  - True Worship: Read Micah 6:6-8 each day this week.
    - As you read through this passage, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you how you are or are not offering true worship. What might it look like for you to “Act justly, Love mercy, Walk humbly”?
- “The heart of true worship is total heart devotion.”
  - What does this statement mean to you? With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, take an honest assessment of your heart. Do you express a total heart devotion? What does that look like for you? If not, what is hindering you?

*\*\* NOTE: There is no shame in this practice of assessment. We journey the path of discipleship to become more like Christ! We all lack total devotion in different ways. Identifying where we feel fully devoted and where we feel less devoted will only encourage the cultivation for greater growth, grace, freedom and love!*
- Read the 3rd chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- “True worship happens when we trust God’s character enough to obey God’s commands.”
  - Do you trust or distrust God’s character; that God is as good, reliable, and near as he says he is? What experiences have you had that affirmed God’s character? Are there experiences that have caused you to question the true nature of God’s character?

CLASS FOUR – PART ONE  
**GETTING TO KNOW ME**

**God sees us as valuable and loveable,  
“Peace with God”  
Means coming to peace,  
Alignment or harmony  
With how God sees us.**



## OVERVIEW

As strange as this may sound, we all have a ‘relationship with our selves’. That is, a way of thinking about, feeling about and treating our “selves”. And this way of relating to our selves is either one of love, acceptance, harmony and peace; or one of judgment, rejection, criticism, or maybe just dismissing.

Throughout these next several sessions of Class 4 we will be examining the importance of being at peace with our selves. This dimension of peace involves deeply knowing and understanding the inner world of our personalities and coming to a fuller sense of self-understanding, self-acceptance and self-nurture.

### Why “self-love”?

- Because God loves and values us
- It is vital to authentic peacemaking
- “Self” is a gift of unique personhood, given to us by God

## NOTES

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## CLASS FOUR – PART ONE

### I. *Loving Our Selves*

- Distorted ideas of self
  - Worm theology
    - Idea that God sees humans as lowly and somehow God is honored when we speak negatively of our selves.
    - Example from Bildad: *“How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman? If even the moon has no brightness, and the stars are not pure in God’s sight, how much less man, that maggot, and the son of man, that worm.”* (Job 25:5-6)
  - Total depravity
    - St. Augustine’s concept of original sin.
    - People are inherently bad, we are born without any goodness
- God’s ideas of us
  - God redeems and rescues what has value to Him
    - *“Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.”* (Isaiah 49:15)
    - *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.”* (Matthew 3:37)
    - *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only son.”* (John 3:16)
  - God sees us as valuable and loveable!
  - “Peace with God” means coming to peace, alignment and harmony with how God sees us.
  - Becoming Peacemakers means we begin to love and accept our selves.

### II. *Self- Love = Selfish?!?*

- *Selfish*: Putting self above or ahead of others, pursuing our own interests at the expense of others.
- *Self-Love*: Active recognition of our own worth and cultivation of our own ultimate well-being along with that of other people
- David agrees with God’s high estimation of himself
  - *“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* (Psalm 139:14)
  - We are all fearfully and wonderfully made!

## CLASS FOUR – PART ONE

### III. *Self in the Bible*

- The Bible never calls us to “die to self.” Instead it instructs us to:
    - Deny Self: Matthew 16:24
    - Control Self: 1 Corinthians 9:25; Galatians 5:23
    - Not to be a lover of self: 2 Timothy 3:2
    - Not to be self-willed: Titus 1:7
    - Lay aside our “old person”: Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9; Romans 6:6
    - Lay down our life for others: 1 John 3:16
      - It takes a healthy, living “self” to choose to do these things!
  - The Bible calls us to die to:
    - The Law: Romans 7:4
    - Sin: 1 Peter 2:24
    - The World: Colossians 2:20
    - The Flesh: Galatians 5:24
      - Each of these are sources of false-self and threatens our true selves!
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### IV. *What is a “Self”?*

- Self: The overall set of inner faculties of the spirit, soul and body that make us uniquely human persons.
  - Thought, feeling, choice, memory, character...
- Biblical instructions about our inner-self:
  - Master our emotions: Genesis 4:6-7
  - Take our thoughts captive: 2 Corinthians 10:5
  - Set our minds on certain things: Colossians 3:2; Romans 8:6
  - Deepest desires satisfied in God: Psalm 37:4
  - Resist reactions: Matthew 5:39
  - Lay aside the “flesh”: Galatians 5:19-21
  - Practice self-control: Galatians 5:23
  - Put hope in God: Psalm 42:11

CLASS FOUR – PART ONE

- The enemy plays upon our desires: James 1:14-15
- Part of our “self” has awareness and choice: Proverbs 4:23
- Joy, hope, peace are crucial: Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Bitterness and jealousy are harmful: Hebrews 12:15; James 3:16
- Self is not the problem! Self is a wonderful gift of unique personhood.
  - False-Self is the problem – an unknown, un-nurtured and un-loved self is a source of so much brokenness and pain for us and others.
- One of the first steps to making peace with ourselves is the step of *self-discovery*, out of which then can come the step of *self-acceptance* and then *self-nurture* and *self-discipline*.

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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes
- Bible Reading: Psalm 139
  - Each day this week, read through the entirety of Psalm 139 in one sitting.
- Examine the list of “Biblical Instructions for the Inner-Self”
  - Which areas do you feel are your strongest? Which areas do you see as invitations for growth? After answering, as a close friend or family member what they see in you as your areas of strength and areas of growth.
  - Is there a particular area in which the Holy Spirit is presently growing you/challenging you?
- Exercise: Lectio Divina (Diving Reading)
  - Read through Psalm 139 three times slowly. Read it out loud the first time, then silently two times.
  - Highlight words/phrases that stand out to you.
  - Meditate on those words or phrases. What might God be speaking to you through these words/phrases? Slowly repeat these words to yourself over and over.
  - Rest in the truth that you are “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

CLASS FOUR – PART TWO  
**GETTING TO KNOW ME**

**Becoming peacemakers means that we will take  
Time to get to know ourselves, our own inner  
Worlds, our own wounds and triggers,  
So that we can invite  
God's love and truth into our inner world,  
Bringing healing, light, renewal and peace  
In the innermost parts.**

## OVERVIEW

The saying goes, “What you don’t know can’t hurt you.” However, the degree that we have within the recesses of our souls lies from the enemy, beliefs and values that are not based in truth, wounds from our past and aggressive or protective habits of reacting, and to the extent that we are not aware of these and how they impact us and others... what we don’t know about our own hearts and souls can and does in fact hurt us and others!

Becoming peacemakers in our relationships and in our world will mean that we engage in self-reflection and self-discovery in order to bring truth, healing and peace to all areas of our souls and then outwardly to others.

### What is a “self”?

- Behavior: Our actions, words and attitudes
- Mind: Our thoughts and feelings
- Character: Our heart habits and values
- Core Beliefs: Our convictions and wounds
- Temperament: Our “hard-wiring”
- Human Spirit: Our awareness and choice

## NOTES

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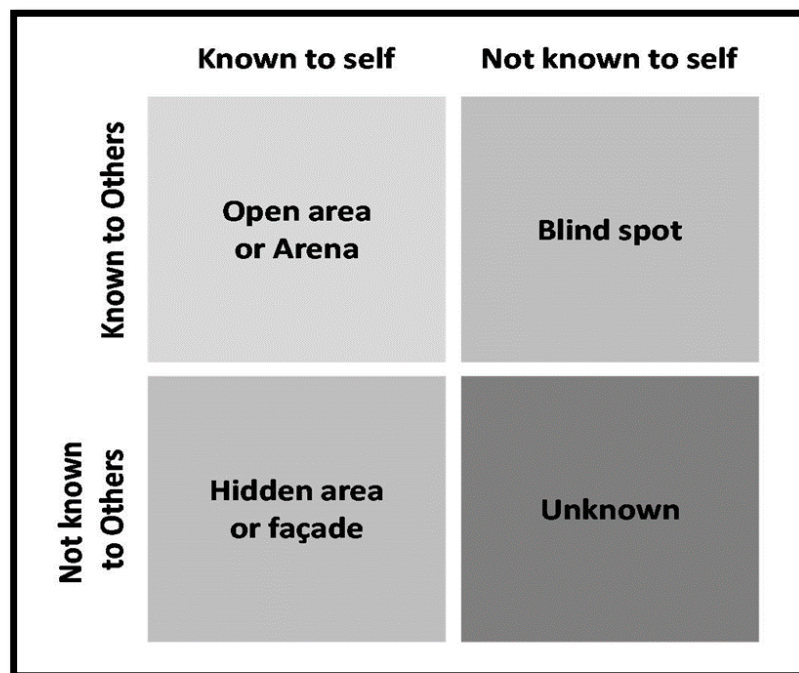
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## CLASS FOUR – PART TWO

### I. *Our Inner World*

- The degree to which we have lies from the enemy and past wounds, what we don't know about our own hearts and souls does, in fact, hurt others and ourselves.
  - *“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”* (Romans 13:10)
  - Yet, it is out of our personal unknown parts that we bring conflict and harm instead of love and peace to others.
  - Like an iceberg or landmine, the hidden or unknown parts of our inner worlds is what is most dangerous.
  - Becoming peacemakers means that we will take time to get to know our own inner worlds so that we can invite God's love into our innermost parts!
- The Johari Window



- The parts of us that cause the most conflict are those that are unknown to us, our blind spots and unknown areas.
- Becoming aware of our inner world
  - *“When you're jolted, what spills out is whatever is filling you. When you're suddenly put to the test and don't have time to think about how you're coming across, your real nature will come out... whatever fills you will spill out.”* (N.T. Wright)

## CLASS FOUR – PART TWO

- *“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the human. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.”* (Matthew 15:18-20).
- *“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.”* (James 4:1-2)
- Guarding and guiding our inner world
  - *“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”* (Proverbs 4:23)
  - *“Behold, you desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part you will make me know wisdom.”* (Psalm 51:6)
  - *“The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of his being.”* (Proverbs 20:27)
  - *“Who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?”* (1 Corinthians 2:11)
  - *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”* (Psalm 139: 23-24)
    - Through his own spirit, David is inviting God to reveal his heart to him. To expose his areas of darkness and wounding.
- Humans Have Layers
  - *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.”* (Matthew 23:25-28).
  - First, clean the inside!

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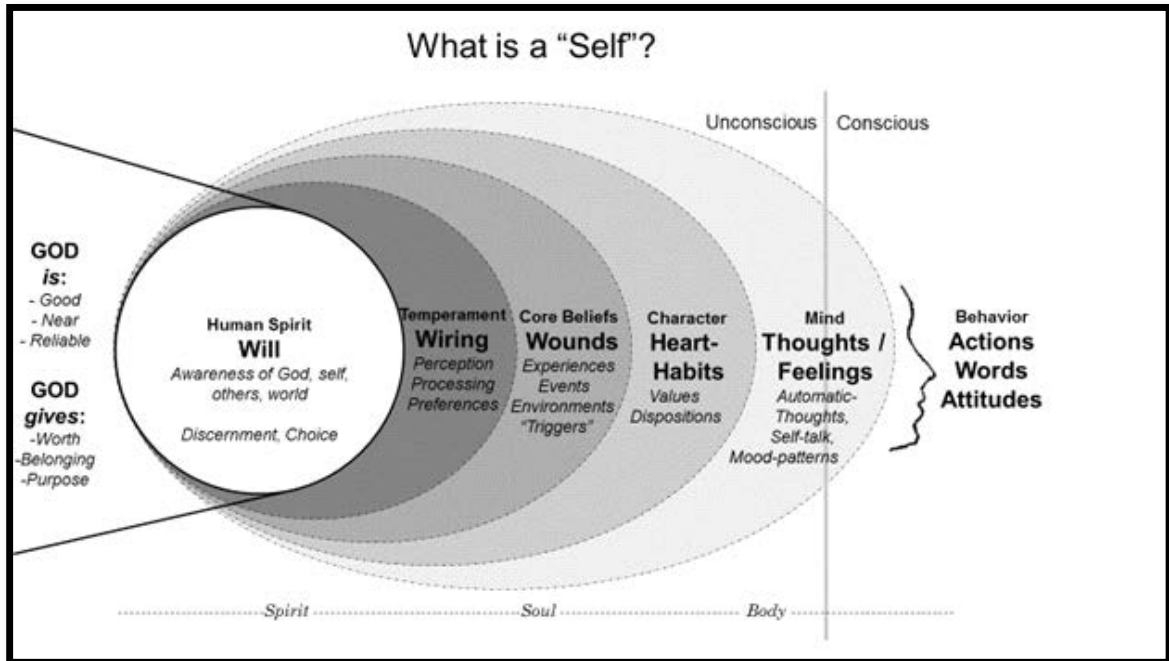
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## CLASS FOUR – PART TWO

### IV. What IS a “Self”?



#### Six Dimensions of the Self:

- **Behavior:** Our actions, words and attitudes
  - Our actions, words and attitudes are the end of a chain of inner processes and events going on outside of the visible realm.
- **The Mind:** Our thoughts and feelings
  - Conscious, intentionally chosen thoughts and automatic thoughts
  - Surface feelings and mood
- **Character:** Our heart habits and values
  - Character is a person’s steady quality of being and doing
- **Core Beliefs:** Our convictions and wounds
  - Our core belief system is the set of our deepest and strongest convictions and values, and also our deep wounds.
- **Temperament:** Our “hard-wiring”
  - Perceptions, processing styles and personal preferences
- **The Human Spirit:** Our awareness and choice
  - Our ability to choose and decide things
  - Our ability to be aware of things in order to decide between things
  - The part of us that can be God-aware

## CLASS FOUR – PART TWO

- Christian healing and renewal is the process of participating with God's project of the renovation of the human heart in all six dimensions. Our spirit, united with God and God's Spirit is now able to be aware of our inner faculties and processes!

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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Matthew
  - Read Matthew 15:18-20 each day this week. Consider committing it to memory!
  - Read all of Matthew 15 in one sitting.
- Read the 4th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Exercise: Prayer of Self-Examen
  - Read:
    - *“When you’re jolted, what spills out is whatever is filling you. When you’re suddenly put to the test and don’t have time to think about how you’re coming across, your real nature will come out... whatever fills you will spill out.”* (N.T. Wright)
    - *“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the human. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.”* (Matthew 15:18-20).
    - *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.”* (Matthew 23:25-28)
  - Pray:
    - *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”* (Psalm 139: 23-24)
    - Invite God to reveal your heart to you. Ask God to expose your own areas of darkness and wounding. Let the divine redeemer love you enough to reveal to you these areas! There is no shame here.
  - Release:
    - Imaginatively and, as best as you can in this present moment, literally release those areas to Christ.

CLASS FIVE – PART ONE

## **THE NEW HEART AND THE RENEWING MIND**

**When God is our “True North” our worth,  
Belonging, purpose, security,  
Goodness, choice  
And hope  
Are all drawn to God.**

## OVERVIEW

For some Christians, studying or seeking to understand the inner dynamics of the soul is seen as either a recent, modern obsession, or as an un-biblical or worldly trend. But “psychology” – which literally means “study of the soul” for the purpose of understanding and guiding both our inner and outer lives, is neither new, nor un-biblical.

In this session we will go deeper into the reality of the new life of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and how to live out that new life. *“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”* – Proverbs 4:23

### Guiding the Inner-Life

- Learn to understand yourselves.
- Have compassion for yourselves.
- Diligently watch over your heart.
- Cultivate a secure heart, rooted and grounded in God’s love.

## NOTES

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## CLASS FIVE – PART ONE

- I. *The New Heart: Understanding and guiding our souls*
  - Biblical instructions for guiding and guarding our souls
    - *“Sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”* (Genesis 4:7)
    - *“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”* (Proverbs 4:23)
    - The springs of our outer life will flow from the well of our inner life!
  - The human soul as an “interior castle”
    - *“Learn to understand yourselves. Have compassion for yourselves. What a wretched state the chamber castle have fallen into. How disturbed are the faculties of sense and reason that inhabit them: these are the servants of the place; they have grown blind and badly behaved. With self-awareness how could you not strive to lift the black veil that darkens the crystal of your soul.”* (St. Theresa of Avila)
  - The human soul as a garden
    - Our spirit, indwelt by God’s own Spirit, is meant to be the gardener of our soul; carefully weeding, watering and caring for it.
    - The garden is our soul and the gardener is our spirit
    - So how do we activate our spirit to be the gardener of our souls? By activating our own awareness of what’s going on in the garden of our soul! It begins with awareness then action.
- II. *The New Heart: Understanding our Motives*
  - Why do we do the things that we do?
    - *“Most of a person’s everyday life is determined not by their conscious intentions and deliberate choices, but by mental processes that are put into motion by features of the environment and that operate outside of conscious awareness and guidance.”* (Bargh and Chartrand, “The Unbearable Automaticity of Being”)
    - *“I decide to do good, but I don’t really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and it gets the better of me every time. It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.”* (Romans 7:20-23)

## CLASS FIVE – PART ONE

- If we're going to become peacemakers, we need to learn how to allow our spirit and God' Spirit to create Spirit-echoes.
- Beginning to understand our deep motives is the start to compassionate understanding and effective growth and change.
- Human behavior is an attempt to meet human desires. We all have longings that only God can provide. These are our core desires.

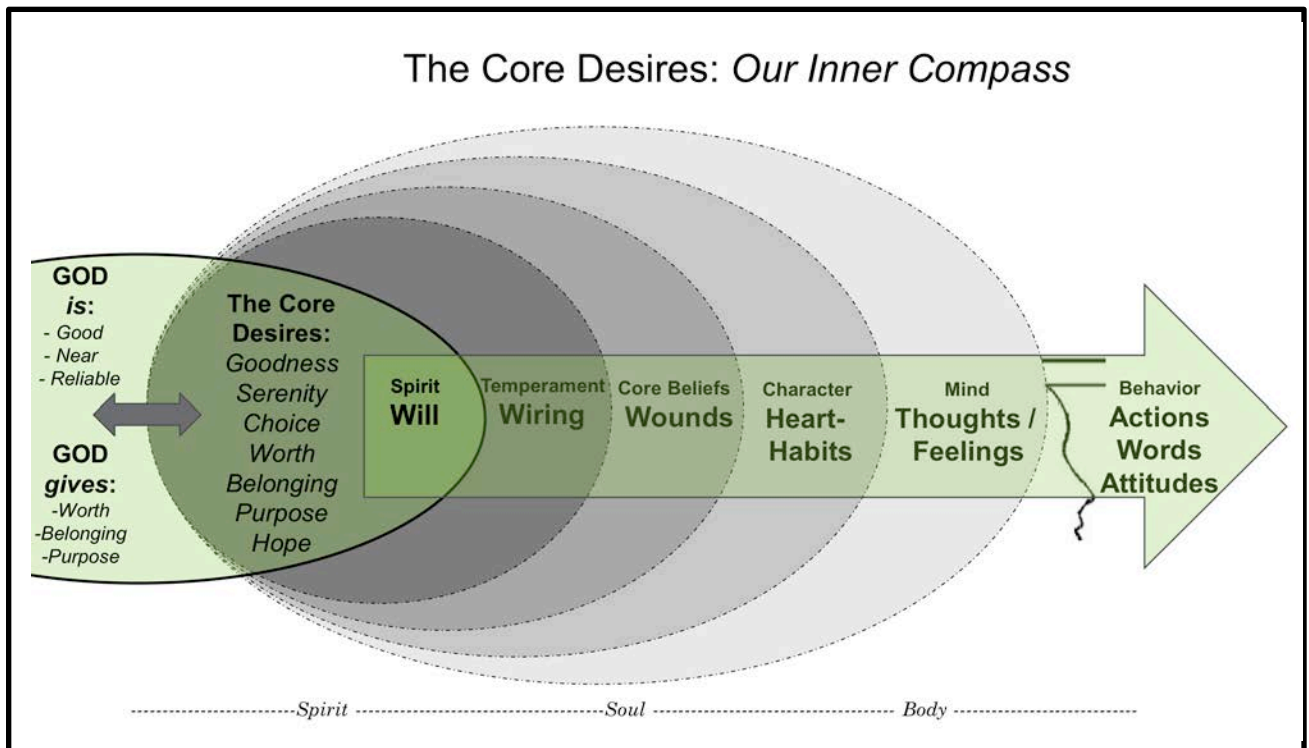
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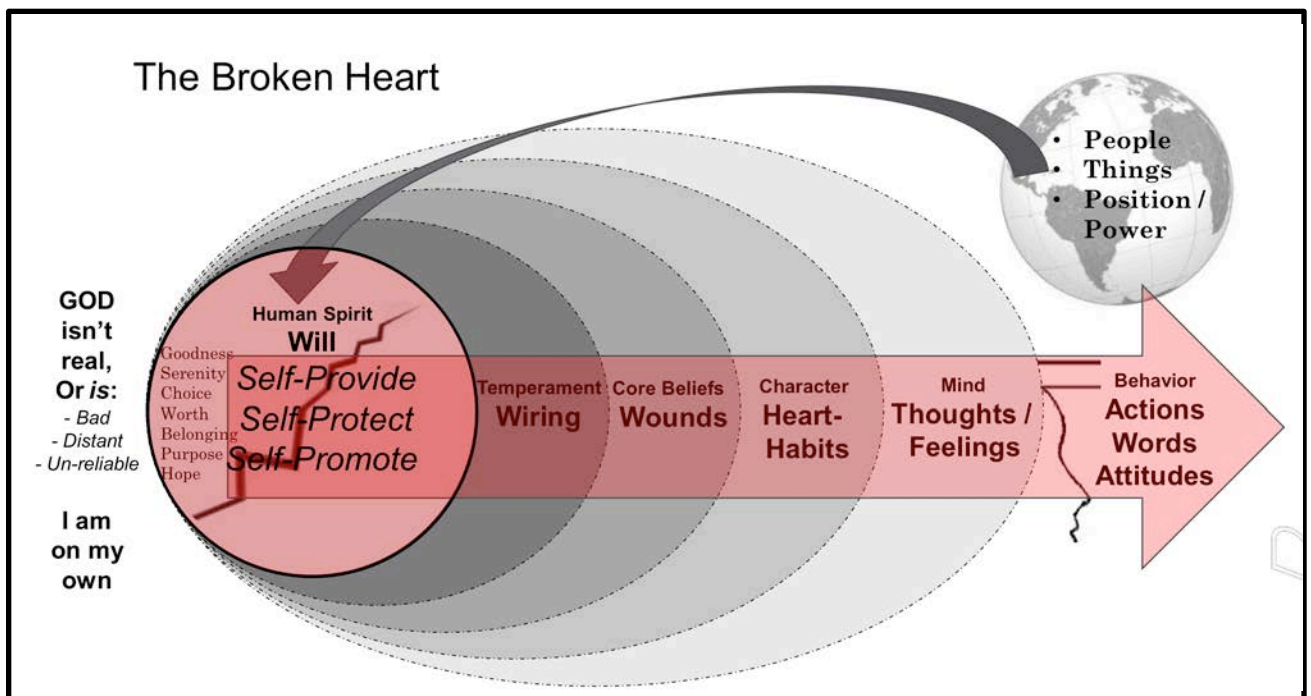
### III. *The New Heart: Understanding our Core Desires*



## CLASS FIVE – PART ONE

- Core Desires
  - Worth – the longing to be valued unconditionally
  - Belonging – the longing to be accepted and included in community
  - Purpose – the longing to be needed and to contribute meaningfully
  - Serenity – the longing for security and freedom from threat
  - Goodness – the longing for things to be as they should, just and right
  - Choice – the longing to be able to decide and to have say-so
  - Hope – the longing for ultimate restoration, reunion, and joy
- Our core desires as an “inner compass”
  - When God is our “True North” our worth, belonging, purpose, serenity, goodness, choice and hope are all satisfied in God.
    - *“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, the living God.”* (Psalm 42:1-2)
    - *“You have formed us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”* (St. Augustine)
  - The compass needle of our core desires will point us toward God.
    - *“Out of our innermost beings will flow rivers of living waters.”* (John 7:38)
    - To the degree that we see God as good, we will be drawn to the fulfillment of what we were meant to be. As we’re aligned with God, spirit-echoes will flow like living waters that come out like behaviors!

### IV. The New Heart: Understanding our Brokenness



## CLASS FIVE – PART ONE

- A broken heart
  - To the degree that we do not see God as good, near, and reliable, our compass loses our true north and we will be drawn to satisfy our core desires through people, things, position and powers. This is what the bible refers to as idolatry.
  - Out of this broken heart flows our peace-breaking behaviors.
  - We all live out our core wounds in various ways whether we know it or not.
    - *“Pain that is not transformed will be transferred.”* (Richard Rohr)
  - “Behind every bad behavior is a good core desire” - There is an inner logic that makes all behavior make sense, even if it’s wrong, so that we can compassionately begin the project of the renovation of the heart!

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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Psalm 142:1-2 and John 7:38
  - Read Psalm 142:1-2 and John 7:38 each day this week.
  - Read John 7 in one sitting.
- Understanding our Core Desires and Broken Heart
  - Examine the list of the core desires. In what ways have you experienced God meeting each of these core desires?
  - Examine the table of the broken heart. In what ways have you lived out of the broken heart/core wounds?
    - “Pain that is not transformed will be transferred.” (Richard Rohr). What pains in your broken heart need God’s transforming touch? Consider sharing these wounds with a trusted friend. Prayerfully ask God to heal and transform those wounds, for God is longing to do so!

CLASS FIVE – PARTS TWO and THREE  
**RENEWING THE SOUL**

**Inner peace-making will involve  
Re-alignment of our deepest core desires  
With God's love and truth,  
And then re-alignment of our inner and outer  
Faculties of  
Belief, character, and life-habits  
With those of Jesus and His Kingdom.**

## OVERVIEW

In our last session we said that cut off from God as our source, we develop soul wounds, heart-idols and fallen life-strategies. We all try to seek fulfillment of our shared core desires from things of the world: people, possessions, positions or power. Inner peace-making will involve re-alignment of our deepest core desires with God's love and truth, and then re-alignment of our inner and outer faculties of belief, character and life-habits with those of Jesus. This re-alignment is what the bible calls "renewing the mind".

### Mind-Renewal

- Understand every aspect of your inner world/hearts, as well as those of others.
- Do not be conformed to the patterns of the world, but rather be transformed, through discipleship and renewing your mind.
- Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

### NOTES

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CLASS FIVE - PARTS TWO and THREE

I. *Renewing Your Mind*

- The “Mind”: The whole set of inner faculties of the soul
  - Greek word for mind: “*Nous*”
    - Perceiving, understanding, feeling and judging.
  - Mind-renewal starts with understanding every aspect of our inner world or hearts, as well as those of others.
- Renew the mind into Kingdom patterns
  - “*Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” (Romans 12:1-2)
  - “*Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*” (2 Corinthians 5:10)
- Fallen behaviors are our strategies to fulfill our core desires apart from God.
- Our behaviors “make sense” when we look at the deeper “heart-idols” and “soul-wounds” connected to our core desires.
- “Back-tracking” from behaviors to core desires helps us understand behavior
- Our goal is to learn to seek fulfillment of core desires in God and his promises.

God-as-Source <i>(How God fulfills our core desires)</i>	Core Desire <i>(What we deeply long for)</i>	Soul-Wound <i>(Lie-based core beliefs)</i>	Heart-Idol <i>(What we value because we think it will fill voids or deaden pain)</i>	Life-Strategy <i>(How we seek to get what we value)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God alone can determine worth and value ...</li> <li>• God already declared me as worth the life of his Son!</li> </ul>	<p><b>“Worth”</b> – The longing to be unconditionally valued as we are</p>	<p>“I am ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Inferior</i></li> <li>• <i>Bad</i></li> <li>• <i>Defective</i></li> </ul>	<p>“I need ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To be better-than</i></li> <li>• <i>To be admired</i></li> <li>• <i>To be perfect</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bragging</li> <li>• Over-achieving</li> <li>• Being the “good guy”</li> <li>• Getting straight A’s</li> </ul>

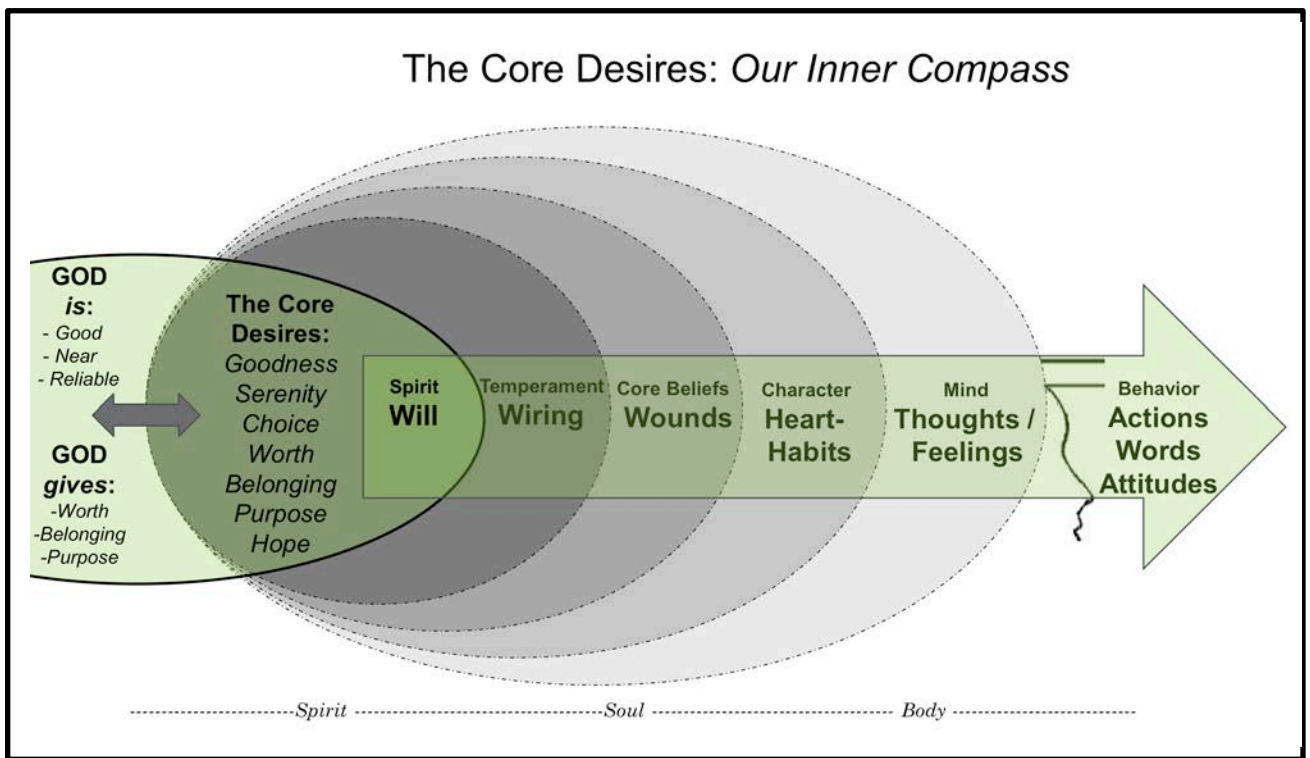
God-as-Source <i>(How God fulfills our core desires)</i>	Core Desire <i>(What we deeply long for)</i>	Soul-Wound <i>(Lie-based core beliefs)</i>	Heart-Idol <i>(What we value because we think it will fill voids or deaden pain)</i>	Life-Strategy <i>(How we seek to get what we value)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God alone can offer unconditional inclusion</li> <li>• God already has adopted me into his family</li> </ul>	<p><b>Belonging</b> – The longing for deep connection and inclusion with others</p>	<p>“I am ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Unwanted</i></li> <li>• <i>Doomed to be alone</i></li> <li>• <i>Unneeded</i></li> </ul>	<p>“I need ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Intimacy</i></li> <li>• <i>Closeness</i></li> <li>• <i>To be needed</i></li> <li>• <i>To not lose another</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promiscuity</li> <li>• Clinginess</li> <li>• Codependency</li> <li>• Controlling</li> </ul>



CLASS FIVE – PARTS TWO and THREE

II. *Jesus like posture*

- *“When you see people who are involved in wrong dealings, in behaviors you want nothing to do with, don’t condemn them. If you search and dig in the field of life, you will find hidden treasure. Fallen human beings lie in the dirt – yet they are precious stones. A diamond that lies in the dirt cannot glitter. But because it is a jewel, it cannot be spoiled by the dirt. It can be picked up and polished again and sparkle as before.”* (Christophe Blumhardt)
- *“Jesus saw straight into people’s lives, right into their inner thirsting (John 4:1-14). He was moved to compassion by how lost they had become... And because he saw their plight with eyes of mercy, they responded.”* (Christophe Blumhardt)
- When we connect our own behaviors and that of others to the deepest shared desires of the heart, we can collapse judgment of ourselves and others.



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CLASS FIVE – PARTS TWO and THREE

III. *The New Heart*

- Our hearts are made new by:
  - The Holy Spirit dwelling within us
  - “Writing” God’s law on our hearts
- This new heart recognizes that God is the only way to fulfill our core desires!
  - *“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.”* (Isaiah 55:1)
  - God created thirsts and hungers in our souls that can only be satisfied in God!
  - *“He who believes in me, as the scripture said, ‘from the innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”* (John 7:38)
    - THIS is the inner peacemaking, the reconnecting of our hearts with God as our life and our love source. And this inner peace-making is the foundation and source of all outward peacemaking!

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## **“Behaving Badly” Reflection Activity**

Below are listed a number of “bad behaviors” that we would all agree are wrong and would all probably have a hard time understanding. The goal is to try to identify some of the reasons people do the things they do, even terrible things.

For the behaviors listed below, see if you can dig down past each behavior to some of what may be the deepest possible goals or reasons a person might be doing this behavior.

Bad Behaviors:

***Premeditated murder; extra-marital affair; watching pornography; heavy drug addiction; rape; child-molestation; domestic assault; child abduction.***

Digging deeper: (Choose one behavior at a time to reflect on)

- 1) What might a person be trying to get for themselves through this behavior?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) For any of these reasons you came up with, why might they want to get those things? Why might having or getting these be important to them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) And if they get some of these things, what deeper desires might they be trying to meet?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) Is there some ultimate thing they may be trying to get through all of this? Can you connect the behavior to one or more of the core desires?

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Isaiah 55:1
  - Read through Isaiah 55:1 each day this week. Consider committing it to memory!
- Read the 5th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Exercise: Renewing the Mind
  - Throughout the day, take notice of your thoughts. Pay careful attention to them. What do they say? Write down the thoughts that most frequently run through your mind. Are these thoughts in alignments with truth?
  - Upon careful examination of your thoughts, practice “taking captive” the thoughts that cease to align with truth. (i.e. A frequent thought that might say, “My past is too messy for God to love.” Or, “I need to look a certain way to be accepted.” Or, “That person is always so ....”). Take these thoughts captive and replace them with truth. (i.e. “I am loved fully just as I am.” “My value is found in Christ.” “Every person is of infinite worth.” Repeat whatever truths you come up with over and over in your mind. Repetition is a key step to renewing the mind!

CLASS SIX – PART ONE

**FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE**

**Embracing ourselves fully  
As we are  
Is the key to embracing God and others  
Fully as they are!**

## OVERVIEW

In this session we will focus on the idea of “loving ourselves” and then out of that posture of self-acceptance, entering into a lifelong process of honest, self-discovery. Embracing ourselves fully as we are is the key to embracing God and others fully as they are. But in order to understand self-love, we first need to understand the essence of love! As we learn the essence of love, we are then liberated to practice four directional love – the idea that we are called to actively love God, others, self and creation.

### Essence of Love

- The lover so **values** the loved-one,
- That they are willing to **sacrifice** themselves and their resources,
- In the **active pursuit**,
- Of **expressing the value** of and promoting the good or **advancing the well-being** of the loved one.

## NOTES

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## CLASS SIX – PART ONE

### I. *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*

- Learning to love ourselves involves:
  - Self-acceptance – being at peace with ourselves as we are
  - Self-discovery – knowing our strengths, weaknesses and patterns
  - Self-direction – guiding our thoughts, emotions and behaviors
  - Self-nurture – cultivating healing, growth and maturity in Christ
- *“I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”* (Psalm 139:14)
- To understand self-love, we must first understand what biblical love actually is.

### II. *Biblical Love*

- *“We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us.”* (1 John 3:16)
- *“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”* (John 15:13)
- Biblical love:
  - *Values* the loved one
  - Is willing to *sacrifice* itself
  - *Actively pursues* expressing value and promoting well-being.
    - Love is treating someone according to their true value (not according to their behavior or their brokenness)
      - ❖ Seeing their dignity
      - ❖ Treating them with honor
      - ❖ Promoting their good
- Reflections:
  - How are you doing seeing your own dignity?
  - How are you doing at treating yourself with honor?
  - How are you doing in actively promoting your own well-being?
  - Are any of these difficult for you?
  - What has been getting in your way?

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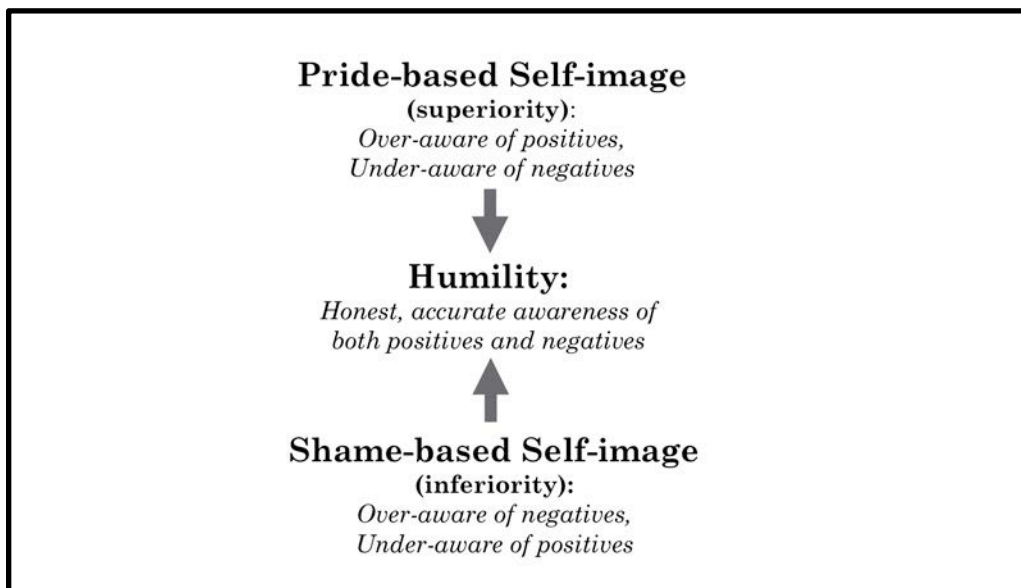
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## CLASS SIX – PART ONE

### III. Self-Image

- Our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and assumptions about ourselves based on our experiences.
- Our self-image, like our God-image, may be distorted and inaccurate.
- Two types of false self-image:
  - Superiority: Pride-based self-image
    - Over-aware of positives/under-aware of negatives
  - Inferiority: Shame-based self-image
    - Over-aware of negatives/under-aware of positives



- ALL of us have both areas of strength, gifting, ability AND areas of weakness, lack and wounding.
- ALL of us are a combination of a more or less similar blend of beauty and brokenness.
- Peacemaking with others involves living from a center of humility
  - Humility: Honest, accurate awareness of positives and negatives
    - Humility is the willingness to be known for who we truly are. This humility requires the peacemaking principles we've discussed thus far.
      - ❖ Seeing God as fully good, near and reliable
      - ❖ Seeing ourselves through God's own loving eyes as having unconditional worth, belonging and purpose in him.

CLASS SIX – PART ONE

- Healthy Self-Love
  - Radical self-acceptance
  - Honest self-discovery
  - Wise self-direction/discipline
  - Patient self-nurture
- *“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”*  
(Reinhold Niebuhr)

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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes
- Bible Reading: John 15
  - Read John 15:13 each day this week.
  - Read the entirety of John 15 in one sitting.
- Examine the table of false self-image
  - In what ways do you tend to have a superior view of self?
  - In what ways do you tend to have an inferior view of self?
    - Consider sharing these with a trusted friend. Then, together, ask how you might move forward in humility to cultivate healthy self-love!
- Exercise: Vine and the Branches
  - The key growing as a branch which is intimately connected to the vine is *surrender*. Surrender to the vine will provides for us true life, true satisfaction of our core desires, and an entirely true sense of self; the self that is fully devoted to the vine!
  - In his book on John 15 titled “*Absolute Surrender*”, Andrew Murray states that: God expects our surrender. God accepts our surrender. God accomplishes our surrender. God blesses our surrender.
    - What areas of your false self do you need to surrender to God?
    - In what ways are you unwilling to be known “for who you really are?”
    - Do you trust that the Vine (God) will sustain you if you surrender?
    - Imagine yourself surrendering your false-self to God. Then, imagine God replacing your false self with a self that is of unconditional worth, belonging and purpose. This is your true self!
- Recommended for Further Reading
  - Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender*

CLASS SIX – PART TWO

**FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE**

**In order for us to co-create a community of peace  
Where there is harmonizing of differences,  
We must understand our own and others' unique  
Temperaments and embrace, express and mutually  
Honor the differences.**

## **OVERVIEW**

Wholeness or integrity means that our core identity, our inner selves and our outer selves, are rightly aligned with each other and with God. Healing and growth, or what the bible calls, “renewing the mind,” is the realignment of all of these areas. This realignment starts by learning to exercise the God-given gift of spirit or will.

In this second portion of class six, we are going to take a look at our temperament, or our God-given “wiring” in order to gain greater self-discovery and thus greater peace.

### **Temperament**

- How we perceive and process things.
- The things we naturally prefer.
- Temperament is God-given, traits that are not learned, but rather innate.

## **NOTES**

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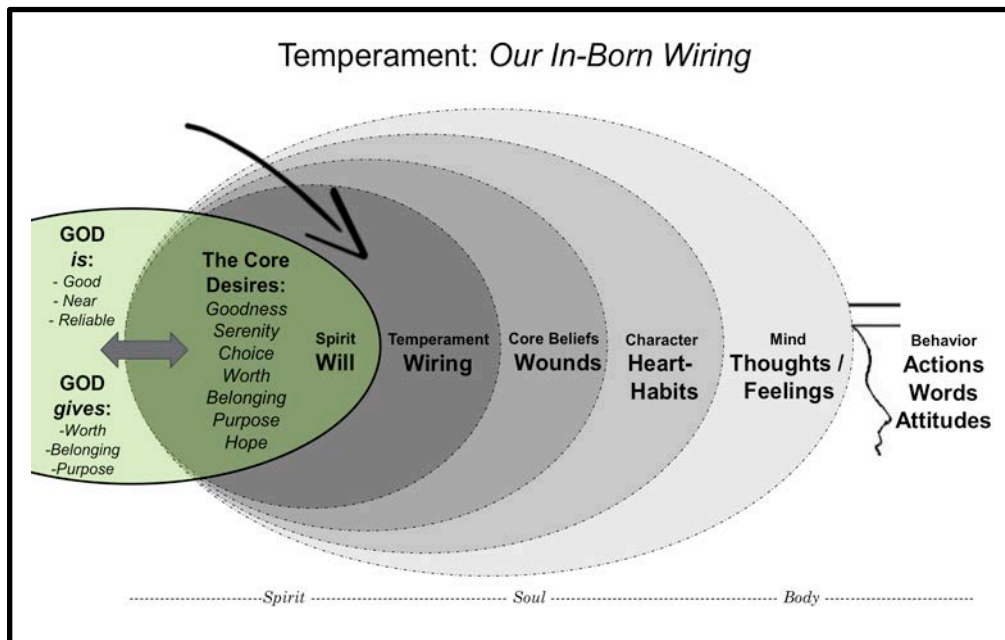
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## CLASS SIX – PART TWO

### I. *Our Will*

- Conscious awareness of our own inner-self, of God, and of others
- The ability to “watch-over” our souls in order to nurture and guide all our faculties in love and obedience to God’s will
- The ability to choose to respond to truth and act in love

### II. *Temperament*

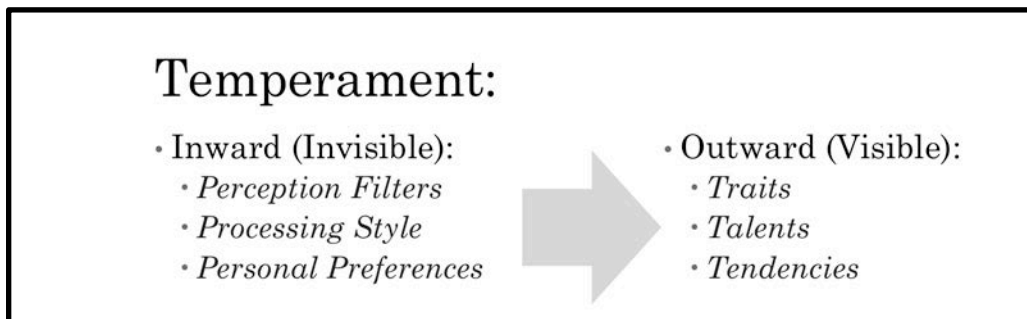


- Our God-given personality “hard-wiring”
  - Innate – it’s an inborn aspect of us
- Ancient theories of the temperament
  - The four “humors”, or body fluids, determine different types of temperaments:
    - Sanguine (optimistic, leader-like)
    - Choleric (hot-tempered, irritable)
    - Melancholic (analytical, quite)
    - Phlegmatic (relaxed, peaceful)
- Inward temperament differences
  - Perception
    - What we pay attention to or ignore
    - How we filter, delete or distort the “real world”
    - Determines the data our brains will process
  - Processing
    - How we think about and interpret the things we perceive



## CLASS SIX – PART TWO

- Preferences
  - Desires, goals and assumptions about the way things “should be”
- Outward temperament differences
  - Traits
    - Unique qualities (shy, outgoing, reflective, action-oriented...)
  - Talents
    - Unique abilities (organizing, creativity, ability to teach...)
  - Tendencies
    - Unique action patterns (on-time, late, night-owl, early-riser...)



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- So much of peace-breaking is judging differences rather than honoring them.
  - 2/3 of what couples disagree on and then fight about (and break-up over) are NOT things for which there is an agreed-upon standard of right and wrong.
  - What causes the conflicts is not differences, but rather it's judging the differences as “wrong” or “inferior”.
- In order for us to co-create a community of peace where there is harmonizing of differences, we must understand our own and others' unique temperaments and embrace, express and mutually honor the differences!

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes
- Read the 6th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Exercise: *Temperament Sorter*
  - Take a free assessment online at <http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx> or at <https://www.16personalities.com/>
  - Your results will be in the form of 4 letters that relate to traits:  

<u>Ex</u> travert / <u>I</u> ntrovert	<u>S</u> ensor / <u>I</u> ntuitor
<u>T</u> hinker / <u>F</u> eeler	<u>J</u> udger / <u>P</u> erceiver
  - Review the temperament descriptions and the strengths and weaknesses of your type below. Reflect on how you can build on your strengths and develop awareness of your areas of weakness.

.....

- **16 Temperament Types**

**ISTJ**

Quiet, serious, earns success by thoroughness and dependability. Practical, matter-of-fact, realistic, and responsible. Decide logically what should be done and work toward it steadily, regardless of distractions. Take pleasure in making everything orderly and organized – their work, their home, their life. Value traditions and loyalty.

**ISFJ**

Quiet, friendly, responsible, and conscientious. Committed and steady in meeting their obligations. Thorough, painstaking, and accurate. Loyal, considerate, notice and remember specifics about people who are important to them, concerned with how others feel. Strive to create an orderly and harmonious environment at work and at home.

**INFJ**

Seek meaning and connection in ideas, relationships, and material possessions. Want to understand what motivates people and are insightful about others. Conscientious and committed to their firm values. Develop a clear vision about how best to serve the common good. Organized and decisive in implementing their vision.

**INTJ**

Have original minds and great drive for implementing their ideas and achieving their goals. Quickly see patterns in external events and develop long-range explanatory perspectives. When committed, organize a job and carry it through. Skeptical and independent, have high standards of competence and performance – for themselves and others.

**ISTP**

Tolerant and flexible, quiet observers until a problem appears, then act quickly to find workable solutions. Analyze what makes things work and readily get through large amounts of data to isolate the core of practical problems. Interested in cause and effect, organize facts using logical principles, value efficiency.

**ISFP**

Quiet, friendly, sensitive, and kind. Enjoy the present moment, what's going on around them. Like to have their own space and to work within their own time frame. Loyal and committed to their values and to people who are important to them. Dislike disagreements and conflicts, do not force their opinions or values on others.

**INFP**

Idealistic, loyal to their values and to people who are important to them. Want an external life that is congruent with their values. Curious, quick to see possibilities, can be catalysts for implementing ideas. Seek to understand people and to help them fulfill their potential. Adaptable, flexible, and accepting unless a value is threatened.

**INTP**

Seek to develop logical explanations for everything that interests them. Theoretical and abstract, interested more in ideas than in social interaction. Quiet, contained, flexible, and adaptable. Have unusual ability to focus in depth to solve problems in their area of interest. Skeptical, sometimes critical, always analytical.

**ESTP**

Flexible and tolerant, they take a pragmatic approach focused on immediate results. Theories and conceptual explanations bore them – they want to act energetically to solve the problem. Focus on the here-and-now, spontaneous, enjoy each moment that they can be active with others. Enjoy material comforts and style. Learn best through doing.

**ESFP**

Outgoing, friendly, and accepting. Exuberant lovers of life, people, and material comforts. Enjoy working with others to make things happen. Bring common sense and a realistic approach to their work, and make work fun. Flexible and spontaneous, adapt readily to new people and environments. Learn best by trying a new skill with other people.

**ENFP**

Warmly enthusiastic and imaginative. See life as full of possibilities. Make connections between events and information very quickly, and confidently proceed based on the patterns they see. Want a lot of affirmation from others, and readily give appreciation and support. Spontaneous and flexible, often rely on their ability to improvise and their verbal fluency.

**ENTP**

Quick, ingenious, stimulating, alert, and outspoken. Resourceful in solving new and challenging problems. Adept at generating conceptual possibilities and then analyzing them strategically. Good at reading other people. Bored by routine, will seldom do the same thing the same way, apt to turn to one new interest after another.

**ESTJ**

Practical, realistic, matter-of-fact. Decisive, quickly move to implement decisions. Organize projects and people to get things done, focus on getting results in the most efficient way possible. Take care of routine details. Have a clear set of logical standards, systematically follow them and want others to also. Forceful in implementing their plans.

**ESFJ**

Warmhearted, conscientious, and cooperative. Want harmony in their environment, work with determination to establish it. Like to work with others to complete tasks accurately and on time. Loyal, follow through even in small matters. Notice what others need in their day-by-day lives and try to provide it. Want to be appreciated for who they are and for what they contribute.

**ENFJ**

Warm, empathetic, responsive, and responsible. Highly attuned to the emotions, needs, and motivations of others. Find potential in everyone, want to help others fulfill their potential. May act as catalysts for individual and group growth. Loyal, responsive to praise and criticism. Sociable, facilitate others in a group, and provide inspiring leadership.

**ENTJ**

Frank, decisive, assume leadership readily. Quickly see illogical and inefficient procedures and policies, develop and implement comprehensive systems to solve organizational problems. Enjoy long-term planning and goal setting. Usually well informed, well read, enjoy expanding their knowledge and passing it on to others. Forceful in presenting their ideas.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Temperament

### ISTJ Strengths

**Jacks of all trades** - very observant and good with facts

**Strong-willed and dutiful** - willing to work very hard to make sure that they fulfill all their obligations

**Very responsible.** a promise means everything, tend to be extremely loyal

**Good at creating and enforcing order** - loathe chaos and always seek to come up with structure

**Calm and practical** - rarely lose their temper, always approaching things from a calm perspective

**Honest and direct.** They do not mince their words, prefer an inconvenient truth over a reassuring lie

### ISTJ weaknesses

**Stubborn.** find it difficult to accept a different opinion, especially if it is not based on verifiable facts

**Insensitive.** prefer logic over emotions, may unknowingly hurt people who are more sensitive

**Judgmental.** facts are all that matters, they find it difficult to respect those who disagree with them

**Always by the book.** like having a clear set of rules and guidelines – cannot stand chaos

**May often unreasonably blame themselves.** difficult to relax and stop overloading themselves

### ISFJ strengths

**Very supportive.** are always willing to help other people

**Enthusiastic.** want to make a difference

**Loyal and hard-working.** are very loyal and often get emotionally attached

**Imaginative and observant.** very observant individuals, able to pick up the smallest cues

**Reliable and patient.** meticulous and careful, making sure that their work is completed

**Good practical skills.** do not shy away from mundane, routine tasks

### ISFJ weaknesses

**Humble and shy.** reluctant to say what they truly think or present their achievements.

**Overload themselves.** Perfectionism often pushes them to take on too much

**Take many things too personally.** very sensitive to conflict and criticism,

**Reluctant to change.** may be unwilling to try out new things or change their habits

**Too altruistic.** they are likely to find it difficult to refuse requests for help

**Repress their feelings.** they tend to repress their feelings instead of expressing them

### **ESTJ strengths**

**Dedicated.** take their duties very seriously and do not abandon tasks

**Enjoy creating order.** strongly dislike chaos and do their best to define rules

**Excellent organizers.** know how to manage people and distribute tasks and responsibilities.

**Loyal, patient and reliable.** value stability and security, and do their best to be responsible

**Strong-willed.** have strong beliefs and rarely give them up regardless of the opposition

**Direct and honest.** dislike reading between the lines and prefer simple and straightforward answers

### **ESTJ weaknesses**

**Often too inflexible and stubborn.** may hastily dismiss unconventional ideas or methods

**Judgmental.** have strong convictions about what is right and do not tolerate any deviations

**May seem insensitive.** may have difficulties understanding other people's feelings.

**Find it difficult to relax.** may focus too much on what is expected of them, forgetting to relax

**May focus too much on social status.** may often pay too little attention to their own needs

**Uncomfortable with unconventional solutions.** prefer tried and tested solutions

### **ESFJ strengths**

**Always look for win-win situations.** value harmony and do their best to avoid conflict

**Very loyal.** value relationships and stability very highly and try hard to not disturb the status quo

**Sensitive and warm.** seek harmony and care deeply about other people's feelings

**Know how to connect to people.** social and friendly individuals, have a strong need to belong

**Take their duties very seriously.** responsible and reliable, paying a lot of attention to their duties **Good with practical matters.** excellent practical skills and do not mind dealing with routine.

### **ESFJ weaknesses**

**Often obsessed with their social status.** strong need to be seen as responsible, respected

**May be inflexible.** place a lot of importance on traditions, critical regarding unconventional methods

**Unwilling to improvise.** dislike venturing outside their comfort zone and taking bold steps

**Very vulnerable to criticism.** strongly dislike conflicts and criticism – they can get very defensive

**Often too selfless.** care and worry too much about others, their own needs can be neglected.

**May be needy.** need to know that they are liked and their efforts are valued

### **ISTP strengths**

**Optimistic and energetic.** tend to be cheerful, energetic. They rarely get stressed  
**Good at dealing with crisis situations.** do not mind taking risks and can easily think on their feet

**Very creative and practical.** have a vivid imagination, especially when it comes to practical needs

**Relaxed.** live in the present and often simply go with the flow, not worrying too much about the future

**Know how to prioritize.** good at conserving their energy and releasing it only when necessary.

**Both spontaneous and rational.** combine spontaneity with logic, very flexible and versatile

### **ISTP weaknesses**

**Can be very stubborn.** not too sensitive when it comes to conflicts and criticism, can be very blunt

**Private and reserved.** difficult to get to know as they keep most of their thoughts to themselves

**Get bored quickly.** find it difficult to remain focused on something for an extended amount of time

**May be insensitive.** very practical and logical, and they may often hurt other people's feelings

**Enjoy taking risks.** big risk takers and may often do that simply for the sake of having fun

**Dislike commitments.** like to review their obligations on a daily basis instead of committing

### **ISFP strengths**

**Sensitive and observant.** find it easy to relate to other people and recognize their emotional states.

**Charming and open-minded.** relaxed, warm, rarely have difficulties making friends or fitting in

**Artistic.** good sense of aesthetics and beauty, their artistic skills are truly enviable

**Imaginative.** possess a creative mind, come up with bold and unusual ideas all the time

**Curious.** very inquisitive and willing to try out new things, rather take risks than miss an opportunity.

**Passionate and enthusiastic.** quiet and reserved, their passion and enthusiasm are usually hidden

### **ISFP weaknesses**

**May have low self-esteem.** have problems with self-confidence, especially earlier on in life

**Difficulties in the academic environment.** find scientific subjects and research quite difficult

**Get stressed easily.** intensely emotional individuals, have difficulties coping with conflicts or stress

**Very competitive.** very competitive in certain situations. This trait is very common among SP types.

**Unpredictable.** dislike long-term commitments and plans, often live in the present

**Fiercely independent.** value their freedom, do not really worry about traditions, rules or guidelines

### **ESTP strengths**

**Bold.** enjoy pushing the limits and discovering areas that they have not yet explored

**Honest and direct.** do not mince their words and prefer direct, honest answers

**Very perceptive.** easily pick up changes in someone's habits or appearance

**Original.** enjoy experimenting and coming up with ideas that no one has thought of before

**Rational and practical.** do not place importance on feelings, emotions or ideas that are philosophical

**Great people skills.** have excellent networking skills and make use of every social interaction

### **ESTP weaknesses**

**Do not care much about rules.** interested in what works. They loathe being constrained by rules

**Take a lot of risks.** do not mind taking risks and enjoy the rush of adrenaline

**Difficulties in the academic environment.** dislike tasks with repetition and theoretical knowledge

**May be insensitive.** put rationality above feelings, difficulty dealing with other people's emotions

**Impatient.** find it difficult to remain focused for an extended period of time

**Often miss the bigger picture.** jump in and deal with the problem, missing the bigger picture.

### **ESFP strengths**

**Bold.** want to experience things, to try everything there is to try

**Original.** like to experiment and enjoy standing out in the crowd

**Excellent people skills.** very witty and talkative. They also strongly dislike being alone

**Great sense of aesthetics and beauty.** very artistic, good at entertaining other people.

**Practical.** only interested in practical matters – they dislike theoretical or philosophical discussions

**Very observant.** live in the present moment and focus on what is happening "here and now"

### **ESFP weaknesses**

**Find it difficult to focus.** get bored very quickly and want to stay entertained for as long as possible

**Very sensitive.** are likely to react very emotionally in the face of criticism or if they are pushed



**Poor planners.** rarely think about the future and are more concerned about the present moment

**Always seek excitement.** often self-indulgent, putting the pleasures of the present above stability

**Difficulties in the academic environment.** difficult to stick to schedules, study is a waste of time

**Loathe conflicts.** ignore potential conflicts, pretending to be interested or concerned

### ***INTJ strengths***

**High self-confidence.** rarely doubt themselves, not afraid to voice their own opinions

**Quick and versatile mind.** take pleasure in tackling intellectual challenges, naturally curious

**Jacks of all trades.** excel at being able to analyze anything that life throws at them

**Independent and decisive.** efficient and impartial decision-makers, rational and calm

**Hard-working and determined.** patient and dedicated, work hard to achieve their goals

**Imaginative and strategic.** good strategic thinkers, like to plan ahead and be prepared

**Honest and direct.** hate social games and putting social expectations above honesty and facts

**Open-minded.** do not mind being proven wrong, will embrace a different view if it makes more sense

### ***INTJ weaknesses***

**Arrogant.** overestimate the importance of their knowledge, see most other people as irrational

**Perfectionists.** loathe inefficiency and imperfection, trying very hard to iron out all the flaws

**Likely to over-analyze everything.** may seek logical explanations and solutions in every situation

**Judgmental.** have little patience for things they consider illogical – e.g. decisions based on feelings

**May be insensitive.** their directness and honesty may easily hurt other people

**Difficulty with romantic relationships.** difficulty understanding how the other person thinks

**Loathe highly structured environments.** likely to challenge the status quo and clash with people

### **INTP strengths**

**Great analysts and abstract thinkers.** great at noticing patterns and seeing the big picture

**Honest and straightforward.** will clearly state their opinion, are fair and impartial

**Imaginative and original.** have no difficulties coming up with innovative, original solutions

**Open-minded.** willing to accept ideas different from their own, supported by facts and logic

**Enthusiastic.** eager to take time trying to figure out something they are interested in

### **INTP weaknesses**

**Absent-minded.** may be forgetful of things that have nothing to do with the object of their interest

**Second-guess themselves.** may find it quite difficult to decide which idea is the best one

**Insensitive.** may come across as insensitive when dealing with an emotionally-charged situation

**Very private and withdrawn.** reluctant to let anyone inside their minds, let alone their hearts

**May be condescending.** may get easily frustrated trying to describe their thoughts other people

**Loathe rules and guidelines.** have little respect for rules and traditions which limit them

### **ENTJ strengths**

**High self-confidence.** trust in their abilities and do not hesitate to express their opinion

**Strategic thinkers.** have no difficulties approaching problems from several different angles

**Energetic.** enjoy leading people and putting plans in action. This energizes and motivates them

**Charismatic and inspiring.** find it easy to convince and inspire other people

**Very efficient.** loathe inefficiency, irrationality and laziness

**Strong-willed.** very determined individuals, who rarely give up and abandon their vision

### **ENTJ weaknesses**

**Stubborn and dominant.** can be quite inflexible and seek to win all debates and arguments

**Arrogant.** look down on people who are less competent or unwilling to argue their points

**May be cold and ruthless.** obsessed with efficiency and rationality when it comes to work

**Poor handling of emotions.** have difficulties understanding and expressing their feelings

**Impatient.** lose patience quickly when dealing with people who need more time to make a decision

**Intolerant.** see little value in ideas that are based on emotional arguments

### **ENTP strengths**

**Quick thinkers.** find it easy to come up with arguments and counterarguments in any discussion

**Very knowledgeable.** enjoy learning new things and accumulating knowledge.

**Excellent brainstormers.** can easily see both sides of the coin enjoy looking for possible solutions

**Original.** not afraid to experiment and suggest ideas that are unconventional or even drastic

**Charismatic.** Quick-witted and confident, charming and popular, intriguing

**Energetic.** very enthusiastic and energetic if something excites them

### **ENTP weaknesses**

**Very argumentative.** enjoy debates and see them as mental exercises

**Insensitive.** difficult for them to recognize other people's feelings or express their own

**May find it difficult to focus.** may have difficulties staying focused on one specific topic

**Dislike practical matters.** more interested in ideas and solutions than practical, daily matters

**May be intolerant.** may sometimes be intolerant and dismissive

**Get bored quickly.** need to feel excited – routine tasks bore and frustrate them

### **INFJ strengths**

**Determined and passionate.** work very hard for causes they believe in

**Altruistic.** rarely do something for their personal benefit, tend to be very warm and altruistic

**Decisive.** they can come up with and also implement interesting and unusual ideas

**Creative.** possess a vivid imagination and rarely have any difficulties expressing it well

**Inspiring and convincing.** know their way with words can also be convincing speakers

**Very insightful.** find it easy to see other people's motives know whether someone is being honest

### **INFJ weaknesses**

**Extremely private.** find it quite difficult to trust a new friend or open up

**Can burn out easily.** tend to internalize most of their feelings, it deprives them of the "exhaust valve"

**Very sensitive.** highly vulnerable to criticism and conflict situations, and can get hurt very easily

**Perfectionistic.** are inherently idealistic and do their best to achieve their ideals

**Always need to have a cause.** find it difficult to complete tasks which are not linked to their goals

### **INFP strengths**

**Passionate and energetic.** tend to be very energetic when it comes to causes they believe in

**Very creative.** find it easy to interpret signs and hidden meanings, connecting the dots

**Open-minded and flexible.** tend to be fairly liberal, open-minded individuals

**Idealistic.** perhaps the most idealistic of all personality types

**Seek and value harmony.** work hard to ensure that everyone's opinion is valued and heard

**Can be very dedicated and hard-working.** can also be unbelievably dedicated to their cause

### **INFP weaknesses**

**Too altruistic.** may neglect their own needs, may fight for their cause ignoring everything else in life

**Dislike dealing with data.** are likely to have difficulties when it comes to dealing with facts and data

**Difficult to get to know.** tend to be private, reserved individuals, likely to be quite self-conscious

**Take many things personally.** find it very difficult to accept criticism, take things personally

**May be too idealistic.** prone to being too dreamy and idealistic

**Impractical.** do not really see practical things as important. They may even forget to eat and drink

### **ENFJ strengths**

**Very charismatic.** charming and popular – they know how to attract and keep people's attention

**Altruistic.** warm and selfless, willing to help other people, motivated by doing something good

**Skilled imitators.** find it very easy to notice what drives, motivates and worries other people

**Natural leaders.** do not seek to dominate or direct, but people are attracted to their charisma

**Tolerant.** open-minded and accepting, willing to consider competing ideas, get along with others

**Reliable.** work hard for causes they consider important – can be very patient and reliable

### **ENFJ weaknesses**

**Sometimes too selfless.** often take on too much, try too hard to not offend or disappoint anybody

**Very idealistic.** can often be too idealistic or even naïve, believing that everyone is good natured

**Often too sensitive.** can get hurt very easily, may also worry too much about other people's feelings

**Vulnerable to criticism.** may have difficulties reacting calmly to general criticism and negativity

**May find it difficult to make tough decisions.** may waver between different options  
**Fluctuating self-esteem.** self-esteem depends on whether everyone around them is happy

### **ENFP strengths**

**Observant.** try to notice everything, seeing all events as part of a big mysterious puzzle called life

**Very popular and friendly.** altruistic and cooperative, they can get along with nearly everyone  
**Energetic and enthusiastic.** eager to share their ideas with other people and get their opinions

**Know how to relax.** know how to switch off and have fun, simply experiencing life

**Excellent communicators.** have great people skills, can handle both small talk and deep talk  
**Curious.** very imaginative and open-minded, enjoy trying out new things

### **ENFP weaknesses**

**Highly emotional.** have very intense emotions, can react strongly to criticism, conflicts or tension

**May have poor practical skills.** find it difficult to follow through and deal with practical things

**Overthink things.** always look for hidden motives and tend to overthink even the simplest things

**Get stressed easily.** caring deeply about other people's feelings can cause them a lot of stress

**Find it difficult to focus.** lose interest quickly if their project shifts towards routine

**Very independent.** loathe being micromanaged or restrained by rules and guidelines

CLASS SEVEN – PARTS ONE and TWO  
**GUIDING OUR EMOTIONS**

**Spiritual maturity and wholeness involves  
Us anchoring our deepest desires in  
God's love and truth.**

Our “minds” include both our thoughts and feelings. Thoughts and feelings are very closely associated and each strongly impacts the other. Thoughts can produce feelings and feelings can generate thoughts. But perhaps the stronger, and usually more invisible aspect of our minds is our emotions. We live much of our lives driven by either pursuing positive feelings or avoiding negative ones. And this pursuit or avoidance is rooted in our deeper core desires. Spiritual maturity and wholeness involves us anchoring our deepest desires in God’s love and truth, and then guiding and regulating our emotions to pursue wisdom and love.

God designed us not to just live reactively out of our emotions, but to live responsibly from wisdom and truth. God has given us the ability to have self-awareness of our emotions, our situations, and also of his love and truth, and to then choose wise actions and loving responses as a result. Animals must live by instinct, but as humans who have received the gift of self-awareness, we can live instead by choice.

### **Two Ways of Life**

- Reacting: Situation – Emotional Urge – Action
- Responding: Situation – Emotional Urge – Wise Reflection on Kingdom Values and Convictions – Action

### **OVERVIEW – PART TWO**

Research shows that the biggest predictor of a person’s future happiness and fulfillment in life is their “EQ”, or level of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves our ability to be emotionally self-aware and other-aware, as well as our ability to manage our own emotions and relational interactions effectively. Awareness of another’s emotions and what they are most deeply about is what is called empathy.

Emotions make us aware of our deeper concerns and then motivate us to take actions to address these concerns. Lack of awareness of our emotions and their purpose results in them driving our lives in unhealthy ways instead of healthy ones and creates much interpersonal pain and conflict. An important aspect of us becoming peacemakers will involve us patiently seeking to cultivate the skills of awareness and wise guidance of and responsiveness to our ever-present flow of emotion.

### **Six Negative Emotions and Their Purpose**

- Fear: Alerts us to danger, motivates us to protect
- Anger: Alerts us to injustice, motivates us to intervene
- Sadness: Alerts us to loss, motivates us to reconnect
- Guilt: Alerts us to our own wrongdoing, motivates us to reconcile
- Shame: Alerts us to violating our community, motivates us to keep social norms
- Disgust: Alerts us to something unhealthy or harmful, motivates us to stay away

CLASS SEVEN – PARTS ONE and TWO



Reflection Time:

*This past week, did I:*

- *Do something I probably should not have, just because I felt like it in the moment?*
- *Not do something I probably should have, just because I didn't feel like it in the moment?*
- *What resulted?*

I. *Community = Unity in Diversity*

- *"If I do not want what you want, please try not to tell me that my want is wrong. Or if I believe other than you, at least pause before your correct my view. Or if my emotion is less than yours, or more, given the same circumstances, try not to ask me to feel more strongly or weakly. Understanding will come only when you are willing to give up changing me into a copy of you." (David Keirse, "Please Understand Me")*

II. *Our Emotional Training – Our culture trains us in two emotional habits:*

- If it feels good, do it. (Giving into urges to get a good feeling)
- If you don't feel like it, don't do it. (Giving into urges to avoid a bad feeling)
  - Personal Reflection: This past week, did you:
    - *Do something* you probably should not have, just because you felt like it in the moment?
    - *Not do something* you probably should have, just because you didn't feel like it in the moment?
      - ❖ What resulted?
- Emotions mastering us, instead of us mastering our emotions:
  - *"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate." (Genesis 3:6)*
  - *"And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering he had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the Lord said do Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.'" (Genesis 4:4-7)*

- Attitude
  - A posture or readiness for action
  - A mind-state of thoughts and feelings that emerges as our behaviors.
  - Latin: aptitude – ‘fitness’, or being well trained to perform an action.
  
- “The 7 Deadly Attitudes”
  - Being **Irritable**
  - Being **Impatient**
  - Being **Offended**
  - Being **Jealous**
  - Being **Resentful**
  - Being **Threatened**
  - Being **Critical**  
  - *Have I experienced any of these 7 attitudes in the past 24 hours?*
  - *Was I aware of this attitude at the time?*
  - *What resulted?*
  - *We have choice the attitude we will embrace everyday! Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I respond to it.*
  
- We are Response-Able Beings
  - Choose to live by Kingdom principles and goals!
  - Do you act or react?
    - *“Nobody is unhappier than the perpetual reactor. His center of emotional gravity is not rooted within himself, where it belongs, but in the world outside him. His spiritual temperature is always being raised or lowered by the social climate around him. To let another determine whether we shall be rude or gracious, elated or depressed is to relinquish control over our own personalities.” (Sidney J. Harris)*

### III. EQ: Emotional Intelligence

- *“Decades of research now point to emotional intelligence as the critical factor that sets star performers apart from the rest of the pack. It affects how we manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results.” (Travis Bradberry, “Emotional Intelligence 2.0)*

<b>Emotional and Social Intelligence</b>		
<b><i>Self Skills</i></b>	Self-Awareness	Self-Management
<b><i>Relational Skills</i></b>	Social-Awareness	Relationship Management

- Watching Over Your Heart: Self-Awareness
  - Ability to tune-in and recognize your emotions.
  - Able to understand what the emotion is and is trying to tell you.
- Self-Control: Self-Management
  - Tune-in to your own deeper concerns and needs.
  - Able to communicate and respond more effectively.
- Compassion: Social Awareness
  - Tune-in to the emotions of others
  - Able to empathetically understand what is going on with them.
- Righteousness and Justice: Relationship Management
  - Tune-in to the needs of the community
  - Able to use your awareness to engage in better communication and mutually honoring/mutually beneficial relationships.

Keeping an emotion record

- Pay attention to emotions that come and go throughout the day
- At the end of the day write down all the feelings you have had in the past day
- Rate the level of the emotion on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being very low emotion and 10 being very high emotion
- Write down some of the reasons you felt these things
- And then write down what you did as a result and what happened, good or bad.

<u>Feelings</u>	<u>Level 1-10</u>	<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Results</u>
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1)

2)

3)

#### IV. *The Purpose of Emotions*

- To *inform us* about needs, concerns or opportunities related to our wellbeing.
- To *motivate us* to action to promote or protect our wellbeing.
- Six Basic Negative Emotions
  - Fear: Alerts us to danger, motivates us to protect
  - Anger: Alerts us to injustice, motivates us to intervene
  - Sadness: Alerts us to loss, motivates us to reconnect
  - Guilt: Alerts us to our own wrongdoing, motivates us to reconcile
  - Shame: Alerts us to violating our community, motivates us to keep social norms
  - Disgust: Alerts us to something unhealthy or harmful, motivates us to stay away
- Blends of emotion and emotional intensity levels – being able to put words to our feelings and identify levels of emotion from 1-10.
- Brain “hijacking”
  - When our emotions get too intense (higher than an 8), the brain is “hijacked” and our feeling brain can override our thinking brain. We then react in a fight, flight or freeze mode.
  - In brain hijack, our pre-frontal cortex, the part of our brain associated with good judgment, future- and goal-oriented thinking, shuts down, and we get tunnel vision, focusing only on the immediate feeling and circumstance.
  - Reversing a brain-hijack involves taking a “time-out”, deep-breathing and relaxation techniques, and self-reflection questions to get our “thinking brain” back online.

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Read the 7th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Read the three articles below.

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### **Knowing our Psychological Blind Spots - Posted by Juli**

<http://psych-your-mind.blogspot.com/2011/08/friday-fun-psychological-blind-spots.html>

Just as we have visual blind spots when looking at the road through our car mirrors, we also have psychological blind spots - aspects of our personalities that are hidden from our view. These might be annoying habits like interrupting or bragging, or they might be deeper fears or desires that are too threatening to acknowledge. Although it's generally not pleasant to confront these aspects of ourselves, doing so can be very useful when it comes to personal growth, and when it comes to improving our relationships with others - there is undoubtedly something we do that, unbeknownst to us, drives our significant others, roommates, or coworkers a little crazy. So how do you know what your blind spots are?

One place that blind spots can be found is in strong reactions. An unusually strong negative or positive reaction or stance may suggest engagement in a process Freud called *reaction formation*. Reaction formation involves unconsciously transforming an unacceptable or undesirable impulse into its opposite. For example, according to this view, former New York governor Elliot Spitzer's efforts to crack down on prostitution when in office may have been a direct reaction to his own desire for and involvement with prostitutes.

Harsh judgments of others' behavior may reveal a personal insecurity - for example, that highly ambitious co-worker may especially irritate you because of your own unexpressed ambitions. Blind spots in these cases need not be objectively negative traits, just traits that are experienced as personally shameful or unacceptable.

Just as extreme negative reactions to a trait in others might suggest the presence of that trait in oneself, extremely positive attitudes or behaviors may suggest a lack, or a feared lack, of a desired trait. Research shows that people who want to appear non-prejudiced may go to great lengths to demonstrate their generosity and positive attitudes towards a stigmatized group, especially when their sense of themselves as a non-prejudiced

person is threatened. Other kinds of overly positive or rigid attitudes may also suggest underlying negativity, ambivalence, or doubt (as in the film with this title).

Another way to find your blind spots is to ask the people closest to you to give your honest, constructive feedback about your strengths and weaknesses. It turns out that when it comes to evaluating our behavior, other people sometimes know us better than we know ourselves. Asking for feedback can be hard to do, and to make things more complicated, people may not be totally honest for fear of being hurtful (hence the classic "it's not you, it's me" break-up line). On the other hand, loved ones may appreciate the opportunity to air their grievances.

Whether we do it on our own or with the help of others, uncovering blind spots can be a delicate process. An accepting and understanding attitude is likely to make it less painful and more effective.

### **Knowing Your Emotions: Internal Triggers - By Karyn Hall, PhD**

<http://blogs.psychcentral.com/emotionally-sensitive/2012/01/knowning-your-emotions-internal-triggers/>

Emotionally sensitive people react emotionally to most situations and often are quite aware of what triggered their emotions. Sometimes, though, they don't know why they are feeling what they are feeling.

Consumed by their feelings, they don't think to determine the cause. However, identifying what triggered their feelings is helpful in knowing how to manage and accept the feelings.

If an emotion is justified, like feeling fear because someone looks like they are ready to hit you, then the emotion is giving you important information to act on. Taking action on a justified emotion is helpful, like volunteering to help at a shelter for the homeless when you are feeling sad about their plight. If the emotion isn't justified, then managing the emotion so you feel less emotional turmoil or upset is important.

### **Thoughts**

When considering what triggers emotions, look at your internal experience as well as in the environment around you. Sometimes your emotions are triggered by thoughts that you have. That can confuse others because they can't see what is upsetting you. For example, let's say you are very concerned about the homeless and those who don't have enough to eat. You go with a friend to a restaurant and notice all the food they are throwing out. You become very upset because you think about the people who are hungry and are unable to enjoy your lunch. You feel an urge to isolate because of the pain you feel when you venture out.

Thoughts about others' actions are often triggering. You may spend time thinking about the reasons someone said what they did or why they didn't ask about something that happened to you. It can be easy to decide they don't like you or don't care about what happens to you. Sometimes emotionally sensitive people have high criteria for themselves as friends and may use this same criteria to determine whether others care about them. This leads to hurt feelings and lost relationships.

Thoughts about past events can also be triggering. A date on the calendar may trigger thoughts of a pet that died. Holidays could trigger thoughts of relationships that have been lost. Seeing someone volunteer could trigger thoughts of what you believe you haven't done to help others. Passing a church or place of worship could trigger thoughts that lead to guilt.

Thoughts about the future can also be upsetting. Thinking of painful outcomes that *might* happen triggers emotional pain.

### **Emotions**

Secondary emotions can be triggered by primary emotions. For example, suppose someone cuts in front of you in a long line to purchase tickets to a popular movie. Others might shrug it off or tell the person to go to the back of the line, then they're done with the incident.

You feel angry, but then you become frightened. Your anger scared you. Maybe because you know that your anger is more intense than others or perhaps because you've been frightened in the past by the anger of others. Maybe you're uncomfortable with anger because you have seen anger hurt others and you don't want to do that. You're likely to think about the incident over and over. Your emotions grow so intense you can't enjoy the movie.

**Emotional reasoning** can increase the intensity of your emotions. Emotional reasoning is the idea that because we feel something it must be true. If you feel like no one likes you, then it must be true. If you feel scared, then something bad must be going to happen. If you feel like you're going to fail the test, then you will. Accepting emotions as facts will create unnecessary upset. Acting on emotions as if they were facts can cause difficult situations and additional pain. Imagine not taking a test you had studied for because you felt like you would fail.

### **Initial Steps to Take**

The stress reaction that accompanies painful thoughts is damaging to the body. The brain reacts to thoughts almost the same as the real event. Learning to manage the thoughts and unjustified emotions can decrease your stress.

**Once you've identified the trigger, you may feel some relief immediately.** Sometimes understanding what upset you gives your rational mind the opportunity to manage the emotion. For example, knowing that you are upset about food being thrown away

allows you to remember that you volunteer at the food bank or that it isn't in your power to change the situation in that moment.

**Remember that thoughts are just thoughts.** People's thoughts may or may not be accurate. Keep in mind that you can't be sure your thoughts are facts until you get the evidence. Look for evidence before accepting thoughts as true.

**Remember feeling something doesn't necessarily mean it's true.** Or that it isn't true. Checking out the evidence is important.

**Be mindful.** Staying in the present, not thinking of the past or what might happen in the future, can help regulate emotions.

Being an emotionally sensitive person can be a gift. Learning to manage the emotions so they add to your life rather than make life more difficult is an important step to take.

## **Do You "Act" or "React"?**

by Sidney J. Harris

I walked with my friend, a Quaker, to the newsstand the other night, and he bought a paper, thanking the newsie politely. The newsie didn't even acknowledge it.

"A sullen fellow, isn't he?" I commented.

"Oh, he's that way every night," shrugged my friend.

"Then why do you continue to be so polite to him?" I asked.

"Why not?" inquired my friend. "Why should I let him decide how I'm going to act?"

As I thought about this little incident later, it occurred to me that the operating word was "act."

My friend acts toward people; most of us react toward them.

He has a sense of inner balance lacking in most of us frail and uncertain creatures: he knows who he is, what he stands for, and how he should behave. No boor is going to disturb the equilibrium of his nature; he simply refuses to return incivility with incivility, because then he would no longer be in command of his own conduct, but a mere responder to others.



When we are enjoined in the bible to return good for evil, we look upon this as a moral injunction, which it is, but it is also a psychological prescription for our emotional health. Nobody is unhappier than the perpetual reactor. His center of emotional gravity is not rooted within himself, where it belongs, but in the world outside him. His spiritual temperature is always being raised or lowered by the social climate around him, and he is a mere creature at the mercy of these elements.

Praise gives him a feeling of euphoria, which is false, because it does not last and it does not come from self-approval. Criticism depresses him more than it should, because it confirms his own secretly shaky opinion of himself. Snubs hurt him, and the merest suspicion of unpopularity in any quarter rouses him to bitterness or aggressiveness or querulousness.

Only a saint, of course, never reacts. But a serenity of spirit cannot be achieved until we become the masters of our own actions and attitudes, and not merely the passive reactors to other persons' feelings. To let another determine whether we shall be rude or gracious, elated or depressed, is to relinquish control over our own personalities, which is ultimately all we possess. The only true possession is self-possession.

My friend is a model of balanced conduct, and few of us can hope to attain his kind of surefootedness. But we can at least adjust our weight to lean less heavily upon the world's giddy gyrations.

*"As we observe our own mental and emotional flow over a period of disciplined time, we recognize that we largely create our own experiences. I know this is embarrassing and some of us deny it, but it's true.*

*We have the power to decide what each moment means and how we will respond to it . . . we have the ability to respond freely. We can decide if we are going to respond to something hatefully or lovingly . . . this free decision is a real source of power and self-esteem that nobody can take from us.*

*The primal freedom is the freedom to be the self, the freedom to live in the Truth despite all circumstances."*

-Richard Rohr, "Everything Belongs"

CLASS EIGHT – PART ONE

# **CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

**The health and maturity of a relationship are  
Not measured by an absence of problems,  
But by the way the inevitable problems  
Are handled.**

## OVERVIEW

Many people fear conflict, and think that having tensions in relationships or groups is a bad thing. But this is not necessarily the case. It is not conflict that is harmful. What is harmful is either the way conflict plays out, or the tendency to leave conflict unresolved.

In this first session of class eight we will be discussing “conflict transformation,” and how to not merely resolve conflicts one after another, but how to move toward actually transforming the way conflict plays out by learning and living out the radically peace-generating teachings of Jesus in regard to relationships in a fallen world.

### Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation

- Conflict Resolution: Solving the current surface issues, only changing the current problem.
- Conflict Transformation: Learning and living out new values about other people and about conflict, thus transforming how we address all problems.

## NOTES

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## CLASS EIGHT – PART ONE

### I. Conflict Transformation

- *“Whatever fills you spills out.”* – N.T. Wright
  - To the degree that the love and character of Jesus is what fills us, the fruit of the Spirit will spill out.
  - To the degree that wounds, lies, pain, anger and fear fill us, reaction and self-protection will spill out – this is what causes conflict among us.
  - *“Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don’t have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn’t yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it.”* – James 4:1-2
    - “You” and “Yours” appear four times in this passage, thus indicating that the source of conflicts is not “out there” but “within us”.
    - Peacemaking begins by taking a look at ourselves and our inner world!
- Conflict itself is not harmful, but rather the ways that conflict plays out or the tendency to leave conflicts unresolved.
- Moving toward conflict transformation involves:
  - Accepting conflict as *a normal part of life*.
  - Seeing conflict as *an opportunity for growth*.
- *“The health and maturity of a relationship are not measured by an absence of problems, but by the way the inevitable problems are handled.”* – Lane and Tripp, *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*
- *“To be human is to be in conflict, to offend and be offended. To be human in light of the gospel is to face conflict in redemptive dialogue.”* – John Howard Yoder

### Conflict Resolution

- Solving the current surface issues
- Only changes the current problem

### Conflict Transformation

- New values about other people and about conflict
  - Changes how we address all problems!
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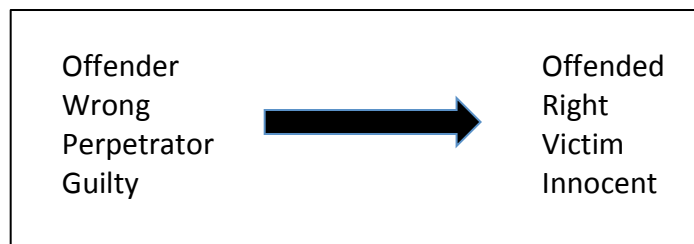
## CLASS EIGHT – PART ONE

### II. *First Order Change and Second Order Change*

- First Order Change
  - Involves changing the way we communicate during a conflict (i.e. using “I” statements, speaking softly, remaining calm, listening better.) in order to be more effective in getting what we both want.
- Second Order Change
  - Involves changing our deepest values and goals from mutually negotiating “what’s best for me”, to the cruciform values of “laying down our lives” and personal goals for each other’s true benefit.
- Jesus came to create a whole new way of being human!
  - *“So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” – 2 Corinthians 6:16-19*

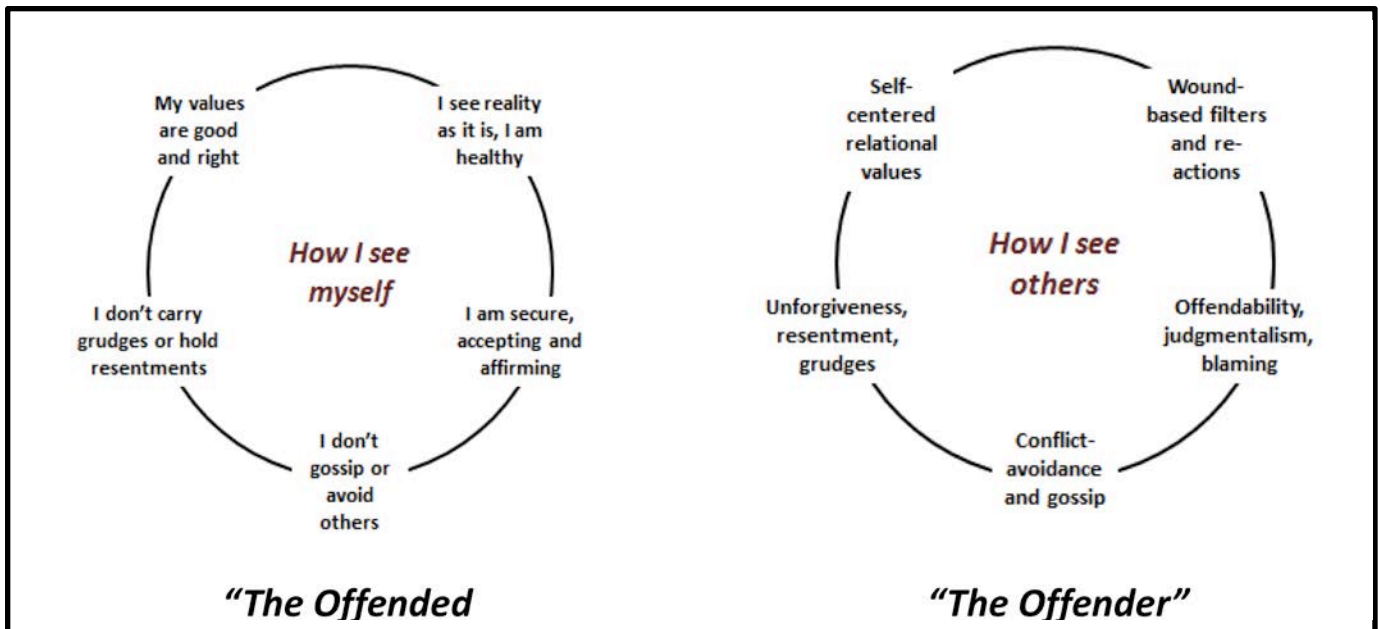
### III. *Adversarial Paradigm*

- Operates from a “right/wrong, good/bad” paradigm
- Everything is an “either/or” polarity



- *Adversary* = Latin for “turning against” someone
    - We see others as doing something bad or wrong to us, we see them as an adversary and we react accordingly.
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## CLASS EIGHT – PART ONE



- We tend to think conflict is something created by others
  - Wrongs Done to us by Others = Conflict
- But in reality, we co-create conflict. Here is the "conflict equation":

***Others' Wrongs + My Rights or Rightness + My Reactions = Conflict***

- If you simply change an ingredient or a variable, you can change the outcome!

### V. *Jesus Changed the Equation*

- Conflict transformation = changing the equation, second order change

***Absorb Wrongs + Lay Aside Rights + Forgive Wrongdoers = Conflict Transformation***

- Jesus' way of peace involved second order change
- Jesus taught and modeled an entirely different set of principles
  - Giving up rights and preferences
  - Taking the form of one being wrongly crucified and absorbing wrong
  - Praying for and forgiving wrongdoers, resulting in transformed lives and cultures!

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes
- Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:16-19
  - Read 2 Corinthians 6:16-19 each day this week
  - Read 2 Corinthians 6 in one sitting.
- What is your relationship to conflict? Is it something you try to avoid? Are you comfortable with conflict? What is your past experience with conflict and how has that shaped you as an adult?
- “Conflict itself is not harmful, but rather the ways that conflict plays out or the tendency to leave conflicts unresolved.”
  - Understanding that conflict itself is not harmful, review your notes on first order and second order change, and the ways Jesus instructed second order change, then brainstorm a list of ways in which you personally can engage in conflict in healthier ways.



CLASS EIGHT – PART TWO

## **CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

**You have heard that it was said,  
'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'  
But I say to you,  
'Do not resist an evil person;  
But whoever slaps you on your right cheek,  
Turn the other to him also.  
If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt,  
Let him have your coat also.  
Whoever forces you to go one mile,  
Go with him two.'**

## OVERVIEW

A cruciform response to conflict requires that we accept and absorb wrongs, we lay aside our rights and right-ness and we forgive the wrong. Each of these three cruciform principles paves the way for conflict transformation and greater peace-making.

To accept and absorb a wrong simply means we freely choose to bear the wrong upon ourselves in the same manner that Jesus bore our sin on the cross.

The second principle of laying aside our rights is ultimately about cultivating mutual “right-treatment” or “doing-right”

Third and finally, forgiving and freeing wrongdoers. This principle of forgiveness is a central teaching of Jesus. To forgive someone is to let go or release someone or something.

### Cruciform Conflict Transformation

- Accepting and absorbing wrongs
- Laying aside rights and right-ness
- Forgiving and freeing wrongdoers

## NOTES

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## CLASS EIGHT – PART TWO

### I. *Accepting and Absorbing Wrongs*

- To *accept* wrongs is not to believe that they are OK or that they don't matter.
  - It is, rather, to accept that fallen people will do fallen things and we cannot prevent this completely.
- To *absorb* wrongs does not mean that we pretend they did not happen or that we suppress or bury our thoughts or feelings about them.
  - It is, rather, that we freely choose to bear them upon ourselves the way Jesus bore our sin on the cross.
- *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.”* –Matthew 5:38-45
  - Slapping the cheek
    - Jesus teaches us to accept the insult of our wrongdoers and be willing to take on more if they choose.
  - Lawsuits over property
    - Jesus teaches us to offer more than what someone is suing you for.
  - Go the extra mile
    - Jesus teaches us to offer to go beyond what is legally required of us.

### II. *Jesus lived and modeled this kind of challenging lifestyle!*

- *“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross.”* – 1 Peter 2:21-24
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## CLASS EIGHT – PART TWO

- Jesus Accepted and Absorbed Wrongs
    - Jesus was betrayed by a close friend and yet he did not resist him
      - *“Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him.’ Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, “Hail, Rabbi!” and kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you have come for.’ – Matthew 26:48-50*
    - Jesus was lied about and falsely accused and yet did not defend
      - *“Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death. They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, and said, ‘This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’ The high priest stood up and said to Him, “Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?’ But Jesus kept silent.” – Matthew 26:59-63*
    - Jesus was mocked on the cross yet prayed for forgiveness for them
      - *“And even the rulers were sneering at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself if this is the Christ of God, his chosen one.’ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up to him, offering him sour wine and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’ Now there was also an inscription above him, ‘THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS’. But Jesus was saying, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’” - Matthew 23:35-38;34*
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### III. Accepting Other’s Wrongdoing

- Deliberately choosing to love, respect, honor and forgive those who wrong us.
- By the very act of suffering wrongdoing willingly, Jesus defeated Satan’s kingdom

## CLASS EIGHT – PART TWO

- *“When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through the cross.”  
– Colossians 2:15*
- *“After being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you ... accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.” – Hebrews 10:32-34*

### IV. *Laying Aside Our Rights*

- Rights are legal or moral claims on others for them to behave or treat us in certain ways.
- Rightness involves defending our view, proving our point, proving others wrong.
- Self-Righteousness is us taking the moral high-ground, feeling morally superior to others
- Ultimately “rights” should be about mutual “right-treatment” or “doing-right”, or what the bible refers to as righteousness and justice.
- Jesus’ demonstrated a life of freely laying aside rights for the benefit of others!
  - *“Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.” – Philippians 2:4-7*
    - **Although** ... we may have certain legal or cultural rights, positions, or privileges ...
    - **We do not** ... claim, exercise or defend these for our own advantage ...
    - **But instead** ... we seek to lay these aside in order to serve and benefit others.

### V. *Forgiving and Freeing Wrongdoers*

- To forgive someone is to let go or release someone or something.
- *Aphiemi* = Greek word for forgiveness
  - Releasing someone of their debt
  - Let go of blame, accusation and resentment toward them

- “Lord how many times shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’” – Matthew 18:21-22
- The three cruciform principles in *The Prodigal Son*
  - **The father accepts and absorbs wrongs:** In the culture of Jesus’ day, it was a great insult for a son to ask for his inheritance while his father was still alive. An inheritance was something you received after your father died, and in effect the son was saying to his father: “I wish you were dead ... your money is more important to me than you.” The father does not resist this mistreatment, or get offended by it. He simply accepts it and gives him the money.
  - **The father also lays aside rights:** Again, in his culture, the son had no right to receive his inheritance while the father was living, and the father had the cultural “right” to refuse his son’s request as well as to disown his son for dishonoring him in this way. That is why the son is prepared when he returns to be a slave instead of a son. And the father also had the cultural right to force his son to repay everything that was squandered. But the father refuses to enforce or defend these rights in any way.
  - **And finally, the father forgives and frees a wrongdoer:** And he does this unconditionally, before the son ever returned and finished his confession-speech. Every day the father looked and longed for his son’s return. And when the son’s silhouette appeared on the horizon the father ran to meet him, a very undignified act for an adult man in that culture. The father then does three culturally powerful things when the son returns:
    - He embraces and kisses him ... which are symbols of family belonging and acceptance.
    - He puts a ring, a robe and sandals on him ... which are symbols of full status within the family and bearing the dignity of the family name.
    - And he throws a feast for him ... which symbolizes covenant relationship being restored, full reconciliation taking place.
- The fact that Jesus taught, modeled and now sends the Spirit to empower us to learn and to live these very things so that we can become peacemakers as Jesus himself is!

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Matthew 5
  - Read Matthew 5:38-45 each day this week.
  - Read the entirety of Matthew 5 in one sitting.
- Read the 8th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Read and meditate on the following article, *Principles of Conflict*.
  - Spend time exploring and studying the various bible passages listed in the article.
  - What might each of these mean principles look like in an actual, real-life relational conflict of mine?

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## Scriptural Principles of Conflict Transformation

Being secure in Christ and aware of and in control of our inner life, we can, by the power of the Holy Spirit:

Lay aside rights, being right, and being self-righteous

- ***Lay down your life for your friends*** – John 15:13
- ***Take up your cross daily and follow Me*** – Luke 9:23
- ***Regard one another as more important than yourselves*** – Philippians 2:3
- ***Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others*** – Philippians 2:4
- ***Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant*** – Philippians 2:5-7
- ***First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye*** – Matthew 7:5

Accept and absorb wrongs

- ***Do not resist an evil person*** – Matthew 5:39
- ***But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also*** – Matthew 5:39
- ***If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also*** – Matthew 5:40
- ***Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two*** – Matthew 5:41
- ***Love your enemies*** – Matthew 5:44
- ***While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats*** – 1 Peter 2:23
- ***Love ... bears all things, endures all things*** – 1 Corinthians 13:7
- ***See that no one repays another with evil for evil*** – 1 Thessalonians 5:13

Understand, forgive, and free wrongdoers

- ***Do not judge*** – Matthew 7:1
- ***Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you*** – Luke 6:28
- ***Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful*** – Luke 6:36
- ***Forgive up to seventy times seven times*** – Matthew 18:22

CLASS NINE – PARTS ONE and TWO  
**THE FRUITS OF HUMILITY**

**In the Kingdom  
We're called  
To be intentional  
About our relationships.**

## OVERVIEW

The idea of love seems really nice. We all like the feelings of love. But when it comes down to actually doing the hard work of entering into the self-sacrificial, other-oriented, agape relationships that puts the well-being of the other ahead of ourselves, that's when things can get difficult. Perhaps more than anything else, humility is of utmost importance in practicing this Kingdom-like agape love.

In this session we will explore the importance and expression of humility and the ways in which it drives us toward being and becoming Kingdom Peacemakers.

## Humility

- Humility is not a form of “worm-theology”
- Humility IS “the willingness to be known for who I truly am”
- We are:
  - Worth dying for
  - A beloved child of God!

## NOTES

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## CLASS NINE - PARTS ONE and TWO

### I. Humility

- What is humility?
    - Humility is NOT pride
      - “Arrogant pride” (one form of pride)
      - “Reverse pride” (aka: shame)
    - Humility IS
      - “The willingness to be known for who I truly am” – Not higher than I am, not lower than I am.
        - ❖ We are: Worth dying for
        - ❖ We are: A beloved child of God!
      - A humble person is so focused on loving God and loving others they forget about themselves.
  - Because God tells us who we truly are, we can be open and honest with each other about our brokenness!
  - Jesus lived humility. He was willing to be known for who he truly was!
    - *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.”* – Matthew 11:29
  - Jesus instructs his disciples to be humble
    - Matthew 5:3-5
      - *“Blessed are the poor in spirit...”*
      - *“Blessed are those who mourn...”*
      - *“Blessed are the humble...”*
    - Humility is the quality that brings blessing into one’s life!
      - *“So the last will be first, and the first last...”* – Matthew 20:16
      - *“God gives grace to the humble, but opposes the proud.”* – James 4; 1 Peter 5
  - Humility helps us understand the paradoxical teachings of Jesus
    - *“For I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”* – Galatians 2:20
    - *“If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me; For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”* – Luke 9:23-24
    - Humility enables us to step out of self and love God and love neighbor!
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## CLASS NINE – PARTS ONE and TWO

### II. *Three Fruits of Humility*

- A servant's heart
- An unoffendable heart
- A teachable heart

### III. *A Servant's Heart*

- Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve
- Jesus gave his life for others
- Jesus is the king who serves, he washes the feet of his disciples
  - As we practice living with a servant's heart, we will come against idols of:
    - Position
    - Control
    - Power/Prestige
- A servant's heart practices "power under" rather than "power over"! We *serve* one another!
- We must learn how to follow well if we wish to lead others.

### IV. *An Unoffendable Heart*

- Jesus models for us an unoffendable heart by ceasing to defend himself.
- Jesus gave his Father alone the power to define who he is.
  - We are defined by the Father's love, and nothing else. This brings immense freedom!
  - As we practice living with an unoffendable heart, we will come against the idols of:
    - Personal Rights
    - Our Culture
- The positive practice of an unoffendable heart is extending mercy, grace and forgiveness.
  - *"Mercy triumphs over judgment."* – James 2:13
    - At the heart of love is the response of mercy forgiveness!
  - *"For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."* – Ephesians 6:12
    - Ephesians 6 teaches us that no human being is my enemy – EVER!

## CLASS NINE – PARTS ONE and TWO

### V. *A Teachable Heart*

- “Being open to God to teach me through anyone at anytime.”
- As we are in community, we are open to God to use our community to teach us!
- The Betrothal Period
  - We learn how to live in humble covenant community. THIS, this intentional relationality is our “wedding dress”
    - *“Let us rejoice and exult and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure. For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.”*  
– Revelation 19:7-8
    - The wedding dress we are preparing in this betrothal period is covenant relationships with the community of saints.
      - ❖ We create, learn and grow in love relationship with God and others for that eternal love relationship we will share with God and others!
      - ❖ Your relationships become part of everyone else’s’ business.
- Principles for giving correction to one another
  - First: Get alone with God and check your heart
  - Second: Be gentle and honoring
  - Third: Let go of the outcome
- Principles for receiving correction
  - First: Humbly invite correction
  - Second: Have an open, teachable heart
  - Third: Get alone with God and take it to others
- As we begin to have teachable, servant like hearts to one another, we can encourage, support, challenge and correct one another with openness and humility. And together, we can prepare our wedding dress!

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## A HUMILITY TEST

(Adapted from The Master's Institute)

Reflect on your growth in Christ's quality of humility and circle the number that reflects how well the statement aligns with how you see yourself, with 5 being highest

1. 1 2 3 4 5 I am usually good about accepting unfair criticism without resentment
2. 1 2 3 4 5 I can rejoice with those who rejoice, even if I don't like them
3. 1 2 3 4 5 I am OK with others hearing untrue things about me and not defending myself
4. 1 2 3 4 5 I often look for ways to be a servant, and am willing to do anything needed
5. 1 2 3 4 5 I don't expect to be honored simply because of my position or age
6. 1 2 3 4 5 I am willing to not get my way if it means that others truly benefit from it
7. 1 2 3 4 5 Deferring to others and giving them preference comes easily for me
8. 1 2 3 4 5 I am willing to admit fault or failure when I am wrong
9. 1 2 3 4 5 I can comfortably say, "Please forgive me; I was wrong."
10. 1 2 3 4 5 People consider me a good, careful and attentive listener
11. 1 2 3 4 5 I would just as soon ask a question than make a statement
12. 1 2 3 4 5 I am not afraid of inconvenience or sacrifice if another is in need
13. 1 2 3 4 5 I usually accept life's trials and disappointments without grumbling
14. 1 2 3 4 5 I don't often think about my status, position, or reputation among others
15. 1 2 3 4 5 I am considered by my spouse and others close to me as a positive person
16. 1 2 3 4 5 Praising others and seeing them shine is a joy for me
17. 1 2 3 4 5 I am not jealous, envious or judgmental toward others
18. 1 2 3 4 5 I am willing to be vulnerable and share struggles when appropriate
19. 1 2 3 4 5 "Transparent," "authentic," and "open" are words that describe me
20. 1 2 3 4 5 I am quicker to give praise than expecting it to come my way



## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Ephesians 6
  - Read Ephesians 6:12 each day this week
  - Read Ephesians 6 in one sitting.
- Read the 9th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- First things first. We must understand that our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Therefore, no human being is ever truly our enemy, but rather the powers and principalities of this present darkness.
  - How does this challenge your ideas about your enemy?
  - How might this encourage your ideas about your enemy?
  - Brainstorm ways in which this understanding found in Ephesians 6 can transform conflict.
- The three fruits of humility are a servant’s heart, a teachable heart and an unoffendable heart. Review your notes on each of these fruits, then take an honest assessment of your own heart.
  - In what ways have you practiced having a servant’s, teachable and unoffendable heart?
  - Is there anyone you admire or look up to who practices these fruits of humility? How have you witnessed it?
  - Ask a trusted friend what they see in your heart? Brainstorm together ways in which you might allow the Holy Spirit to grow you in these three fruits! Perhaps it’s through a spiritual discipline, or a mentor-mentee relationship.

CLASS TEN – PART ONE

**THE FREEDOM OF FORGIVENESS**

**For you, LORD,  
Are good,  
And ready to forgive,  
And abundant in lovingkindness  
To all who call upon you.**

## OVERVIEW

“Revenge is sweet”, says our culture. The temptation and habit of harboring unforgiveness may feel like some form of justice, but the reality is that “unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies.” It is ultimately self-imprisonment. If it is freedom that we want, if it is freedom we wish to give, then we must generously forgive.

Jesus teaches us that we are to forgive those who have wronged us not just once, or twice, but seventy times seven! Jesus was serious about forgiveness, for it is the central attribute of God. In this session we will examine the detrimental nature of unforgiveness, and then move forward in the peace-making practice of forgiveness.

### Forgiveness

- The cross is an act and symbol of God absorbing wrong
- Forgiveness is the very nature of God
- Forgiveness liberates and releases ourselves and others of wrongdoings

## NOTES

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## CLASS TEN – PART ONE

**In Jesus' Kingdom, *humility* is the cardinal character virtue,  
and *forgiveness* is the foundational ethical practice.**

### I. *Unforgiveness*

- Thinking about revenge results in increased activity in what's known as the brain's "pleasure center".
- Grudges are our way of punishing others... this makes us feel good.
- Thinking harsh thoughts about those whom we feel have wronged us releases anger and makes us feel better.
- Revenge is anything but sweet!
- Unforgiveness is self-imprisonment. It doesn't penalize the offender, but keeps us in pain and bondage!
  - *"Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies."* – Unknown

### II. *Justice*

- Justice according to the world
    - *A debt to be paid*
    - "Karma" – human wrongdoing must be punished in this life or the next.
    - Job's three friends – Job's suffering is God's punishment
    - Required consequences for wrongdoing.
  - Justice according to the Bible
    - *Doing good sets things right.*
    - A positive rather than a negative.
    - *Mishpat*: Hebrew for the standard of right-doing rather than the penalty for wrongdoing
      - *"You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute."* – Exodus 23:6
      - *"You are therefore to keep all my statutes and all my ordinance (mishpat) and do them."* – Leviticus 20:22
  - Divine justice is about setting things right! Punishment doesn't set things right.
    - Biblical justice is about setting things right.
      - Unforgiveness gets in the way of true biblical justice.
      - Forgiveness paves the way for setting things right!
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## CLASS TEN – PART ONE

### III. Forgiveness

- The cross is an act and symbol of God absorbing wrong.
  - Forgiveness is the central attribute of God!
    - *“Then the LORD passed by in front of Moses and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin.’”* – Exodus 34:6-7
      - *Yahweh: “I AM compassionate and forgiving!”*
    - *“But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; they became stubborn and would not listen to your commandments... But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; and you did not forsake them.”* – Nehemiah 9:16-17
    - *“For you, LORD, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon you.”* – Psalm 86:5
    - *“He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”* – Psalm 103:10
  - Forgiveness means:
    - Hebrew: *“To lift off of; to remove a burden; to cover; to carry away or bear.”*
    - Greek: *“To put away; to bestow grace or pardon; to let go; to disregard.”*
  - When God forgives, He:
    - Puts our sin behind his back
    - Covers them
    - Does not remember them
    - Sweeps them away
    - Removes them as far as the east is from the west
    - Blots them out
  - Forgiveness is about liberating others!
    - *“Be kind to one another, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”* – Ephesians 4:32
    - *“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone.”* – Mark 11:25
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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Psalm 86
  - Read Psalm 85:5 each day this week
  - Read the entirety of Psalm 86 in one sitting.
- Exercise: Miraslov Volf Videos
  - Look up the following video on Forgiveness with theologian, Miraslov Volf. Take notes as you watch and highlight anything that stands out to you! Consider watching the videos with a friend or family member.
    - Miroslav Volf – *Consider Forgiveness*
- Is there someone in your life that you need to forgive?
- Is there someone from whom you need to ask for forgiveness?
- Is there anything in your own life that you need to forgive yourself for?

CLASS TEN – PART TWO

## **THE FREEDOM OF FORGIVENESS**



**Whenever you stand praying,  
Forgive,  
If you have anything against anyone.**

## **OVERVIEW**

Jesus tells us that we are to forgive from our hearts, not just with our words. God doesn't just want surface or pretend forgiveness. Forgiveness is a heart posture toward another, a total stance toward them and letting go of offense and anger. It takes time, that's why it is a challenging discipline. But this discipline will forge greater Christ-like character within us.

In this second part of class ten we will look more closely at the practice of forgiveness. Jesus taught unconditional and unlimited forgiveness. With the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we are liberated and equipped to practice and extend this same radical forgiveness.

### **Jesus Modeled and Taught**

- Unconditional forgiveness
- Unlimited Forgiveness
- That our forgiveness is contingent on us forgiving others

## **NOTES**

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## CLASS TEN – PART TWO

### I. *Unconditional Forgiveness*

- Jesus offers full, free unconditional forgiveness
  - *“Jesus was saying, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots, dividing up his garments among themselves.” – Luke 23:34*
  - *“While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” – Luke 15:20*
    - The father forgave the son long before the son got close enough to offer a word of apology! The father did not wait for the son but extends FULL forgiveness!
  - *“And they brought to him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, ‘Take courage son; your sins are forgiven.’” – Matthew 9:2*
  - *“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘I do not condemn you either. Go. From now on sin no more.’” – John 8:10-11*

### II. *Unlimited Forgiveness*

- *“Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’” – Matthew 18:21-22*
  - Seven is the symbol of fullness. Jesus is saying to offer fully full forgiveness!
  - We are to forgive everything a person does, every time they do it.

### III. *Contingent Forgiveness*

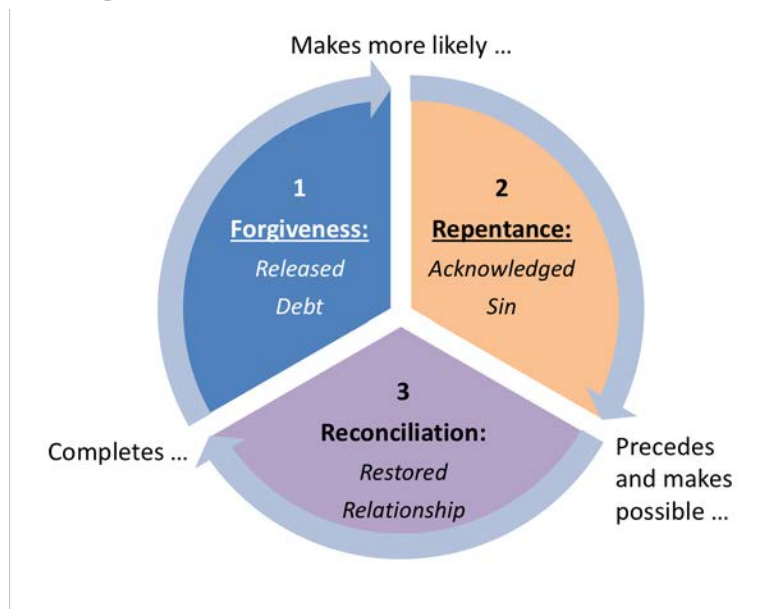
- *“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your father will not forgive your transgressions.” – Matthew 6:12,15*
    - If we do not forgive others, our father will not forgive us.
  - *“My heavenly father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” – Matthew 18:35*
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## CLASS TEN – PART TWO

### IV. *Forgiveness and The New Covenant*

- God invites us to:
  - A new state of being called Grace
  - A new status of being called Adoption
- *“Forgiveness is the generous release of a genuine debt.”* – Miroslav Volf
  - Two key elements:
    - To name the wrongdoing and to condemn it
    - To give wrongdoers the gift of not counting the wrongdoing against them.
- *“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through him.”* – Colossians 2:13-15
  - God forgives by first acknowledging the debt
  - God then suffers the loss and accepts the consequences of the debt
  - God takes the debt out of the way of our relationship
  - With God, forgiveness precedes our repentance!
    - *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.”* – Ephesians 2:4-5
  - God’s mercy leads us to repentance!
    - *“Or do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”* – Romans 2:4
- Forgiveness is not a guarantee
  - When we offer forgiveness it is an expression of God’s love
- Forgiveness and reconciliation
  - Forgiveness is a one-way extension of release from debt
  - Reconciliation is a two-way restoration of right-relatedness
  - Forgiveness is one person’s choice, while reconciliation involves two people’s choices.
  - The free offer of forgiveness often makes repentance more likely and repentance makes reconciliation more likely, and repentance and reconciliation completes forgiveness!

## CLASS TEN – PART TWO



- Research indicates there are two important qualities of people who are more likely to forgive:
  - *Humility* – The recognition that I am not without sin myself and that I have offended against and harmed others as well. I have done my own versions to others of what this person did to me.
  - *Empathy* – The recognition that the offender is not without good, and that they themselves have been broken by other’s wrongdoing. People do wrong things for deeper understandable reasons.
- Barriers to forgiveness – beliefs that keep people from forgiving:
  - It would negate the wrongness and accept the injustice
  - Somebody has to punish the person
  - All the pain and anger would be my fault
  - I would lose a part of me
- Forgiveness does NOT mean ...
  - That what they did was OK or didn’t matter
  - Forgetting or not remembering
  - That anger and pain must be gone
  - Reconciling with the offender
- Forgiveness means
  - Rebuilding the areas of life they impacted
  - Not being controlled by your emotions
  - Not requiring them to “pay for what they did”
- Genuine forgiveness is truly possible! Examples –

## Empathy Self-Assessment:

Mark the answer that best reflects how much the statement matches your experience.

1. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in his/her place.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

2. I have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the other person's point of view.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

4. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's viewpoints.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

5. If someone tells me about an event that made him/her happy, I can easily understand why that event made him/her happy.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

6. I try to look at both sides of a disagreement before I make a conclusion.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

7. I sometimes try to understand people better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

8. I believe that there are two sides to every story and try to look at them both.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

9. When I see that someone is sad about something, I easily feel sad as well.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

10. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his/her shoes for a while.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

When you are finished, take some time to reflect on what your answers may indicate in regards to how well you are able to empathize with others, and how this may relate to your ability to forgive and let go of wrongs done to you.

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Matthew 6
  - Read Matthew 6:9-15 each day this week
  - Read Matthew 6 in one sitting.
  - Consider reading the entire gospel of Matthew this week!
- Read the 10th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- While forgiveness is unconditional and unlimited, there is an element of contingency that can hinder us from receiving forgiveness in its fullest form. Examine the notes on Contingent Forgiveness and respond to the following questions:
  - Have you ever previously considered the contingent nature of forgiveness? When you think about forgiveness as contingent, what do you find to be the most challenging?
  - With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, revisit the question from last week and ask God if there is anyone in your life toward whom you are harboring unforgiveness. Then, if you are ready, ask God the appropriate and healthy path by which you can extend/receive forgiveness.
- Exercise: Miraslov Volf Videos
  - Look up the following video on Forgiveness with theologian, Miraslov Volf. Take notes as you watch and highlight anything that stands out to you! Consider watching the videos with a friend or family member.
    - Miraslov Volf, *Giving Forgiveness*



CLASS ELEVEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

**THE POWER OF WORDS**

**But I say to you who hear,  
Love your enemies,  
Do good to those who hate you,  
Bless those who curse you,  
Pray for those who mistreat you.**

## OVERVIEW

We live in a culture that often fails to recognize the value and importance of words. “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” we say. But we all have had experiences that tell us otherwise. Words really can hurt. They hold a lot of power. We’ve grown to be quick to speak and slow to listen. Life in the Kingdom invites us to a different way of sharing words.

Scripture tells us that words have the power to bless and to curse. And we are instructed, time and again, to use our words for blessing. We are to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Words matter. A lot. And we are to use them for the building up of the community of saints.

### Words

- What comes out of the mouth (words) is an extension and expression of what’s in the heart.
- Words have power. Words are important.
- We are to be active agents of verbal blessings!

### NOTES

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## CLASS ELEVEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

### I. *The Importance of Words*

- Our words have power. How we use our words in relationship, toward God, toward our selves is incredibly significant!
- Words have the power to bless or to curse
- Cultural ideas about words:
  - “Actions speak louder than words”
  - “Put your money where your mouth is.”
  - “Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me.”
- Relationships say much about words:
  - Communication is a frequent problem in relationships
  - Challenge in keeping our word, keeping our vows
- Gossip
  - We use gossip as primetime entertainment
  - Gentle words and covenant keeping are not entertainment. Our culture is drawn to breaking covenant and gossip.
- God’s concern over words
  - Two of the ten commandments are about words!
    - We are not to take God’s name in vain
    - We are not to lie, deceive others.
      - ❖ *“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth, keep watch over the door of my lips.” – Psalm 141:3*
  - Jesus emphasizes the importance of words
    - *“The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.” – Matthew 12:34*
      - ❖ What comes out of the mouth is really an expression of what’s in the heart
    - *“I say to you that every careless word that someone speaks, they will have to give an account for at the final judgment. For by our words we are justified, and by our words we are condemned.” –Matthew 12:36-37*
      - ❖ Every careless word has effects in this world!

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## CLASS ELEVEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

### II. *The Power of Words*

- Genesis 1 and 2: God spoke the world into being
  - “Let there be light”
  - “Let there be birds of the air”
    - God is a speaking God. When God speaks, new realities are born!
      - ❖ “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.” – John 1:1
      - ❖ Jesus is the word of God, the spoken reality of who God is.
    - God is a communicative, relational God!
- Humans are made in God’s image. Humans, then, are to reflect in their speech the way God speaks.
- Humans are given the power to bless or to curse with our words
  - Bless: The power to love and honor others with our words
  - Curse: The power to judge, dishonor others with our words
    - Our words create realities in our brains! What we think is crucial.

### III. *Words as Curse*

- “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me.”
  - Bones can heal, but the power of words can cause long-term harm.
  - Our words have the power to seriously damage
    - *“An unguarded tongue can corrupt and entire being. An uncontrolled tongue can set your life on fire, and that fire is the very fire of hell itself.”* – James 3:6
    - *“If you exercise self-control over your tongue, you can control everything else in your life as well.”*
    - *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* – Galatians 5:22-23
      - ❖ God gifts us with the power of the Spirit. This Spirit will empower us with self-control.

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## CLASS ELEVEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

- Destructive nature of gossip
  - Three different Greek words are used for the English word, “Gossip”:
    - Babblers = “senseless, not wise, not loving talk”
    - Whisperer = “talks about someone behind their back”
    - Diablos = “the devil”
      - ❖ Satan in the New Testament is represented primarily as an accuser! He speaks words of destruction into our lives.
      - ❖ Satan = Adversary, someone who is persecuting you (aka - prosecuting attorney)
      - ❖ Jesus and Holy Spirit = Paraclete/Advocate (aka - defense attorney)
- As brothers and sisters, will we be found on the adversary side of the courtroom or the advocate side? We are called to join each other’s defense team!
  - *“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”* – Matthew 7:12
  - *“[Agape love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”* – 1 Corinthians 13:7

### IV. Active Agents of Verbal Blessing

- Grow in awareness of the nature of gossip
  - Gossip begins in the mind/thoughts!
  - Gossip begins before it ever comes out of our mouth
  - We must “take our thoughts captive”
  - Become aware of the judgmental commentary in our brains
  - Start intentionally blessing others!
- Learn healthy communication/confrontation
  - *“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”* – Matthew 18:15
    - Go to your brother or sister! Do not gossip
    - Never say something about someone that you wouldn’t say if they were standing right next to you!
    - Cease “spiritualizing” gossip
    - Cease creating “us vs. them” relationships
    - When gossip happens, we can use the gift of repentance! Ask God what repentance might look like.

## CLASS ELEVEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

- Grow in awareness of the nature of words
  - “*Be quick to listen, slow to speak.*” – James 1:19
  - Intentionally speak positively about one another
    - “I will bless you and you will be a blessing.” – Genesis 12:2
      - ❖ God has always wanted to bless people SO THAT we turn and share the blessing with others.
      - ❖ Jesus instructs his disciples to speak words of blessing! (Luke 10)
      - ❖ Bless everyone! “*But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*” – Luke 6:27-28
- We are called to be a blessing to the world. With a sense of unoffendability, we are liberated to bless others.

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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: James 3:6 and Galatians 5:22-23
  - Read both passages each day this week. Consider committing them to memory!
  - Review each of the bible readings from the past ten weeks (keep that memory fresh!).
- Read the 11th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- Words as blessing and curse. Words are powerful and important.
  - How often do you think about the words coming out of your mouth?
  - Are you more prone to speak words of blessing or cursing?
  - What about your thoughts? Considering our words are an outpouring of what’s inside us, what is the nature of your thoughts – blessing or cursing? Practice “renewing the mind” by intentionally replacing any cursing thoughts with blessing thoughts.
- Exercise: Read the article below. Take notes on anything that stands out to you.

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## **MY NAME IS GOSSIP**

*Many people consider gossip to be a harmless pastime. What about you?*

by Janet Treadway

[http://www.1timothy4-13.com/files/chr\\_vik/mynameisgossip.html](http://www.1timothy4-13.com/files/chr_vik/mynameisgossip.html)

*"My Name Is Gossip. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age.*

*The more I am quoted the more I am believed. I flourish at every level of society. My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face.*

*To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become. I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same. I topple governments and ruin marriages. I ruin careers and cause sleepless nights, heartache and indigestion. I spawn suspicion and generate grief.*

*I make innocent people cry in their pillows. Even my name hisses. I AM CALLED GOSSIP."*

This eye-opening poem from an unknown author says a lot about the damage done through gossip. What about the famous phrase we all have heard. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me"? In our hearts, we know this is not true, even though it may be a useful attitude to take when insulted by others. Reciting those words does not take the hurt away.

Words do tremendous damage. So unless you've been a victim of violent crime or of a major illness or something else catastrophic, your deepest pains have probably come from hurtful words.

### **WORDS HAVE GREAT POWER**

Words carry great power. God created the world through His words. He said, "Let there be light" and there was light. Humans also use words in producing great novels that move us and music that warms our hearts. Writers put much thought into the right selection of words so their books or songs will sell.

We listen and communicate words every day that either lift us up or bring us down. Powerful, positive words can offer great healing, while negative words contain great destructive power.

Whenever we talk negatively about people or listen to someone else talk negatively about others, we unleash that harmful power. So how do we use this power of words with others? Do our words lift and inspire, or do they destroy? Are they words of truth? Do we disclose truth in a hurtful way? If someone paid us 10 cents for every kind word

we said about people, and collected five cents for every unkind word, would we be rich or poor?

Gossip and slander can ruin reputations, families, break up marriages, separate friends, destroy communities and, yes, even divide churches. Knowing that gossip is so destructive, why do we do it?

### **WHY DO WE GOSSIP?**

We often gossip to feel good about ourselves. We get an ego boost from others' sins and mistakes. To gossip makes us feel superior to the person we are talking about. (Pride)

We also gossip to draw people into our own hurt and anger. We want others to side with us so we must tell our side of the story. Then our friends repeat the story to their friends and on and on it goes. Even if you say the truth, it does not justify unnecessarily passing on hurtful information about someone.

### **FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS**

Gossip is a six-letter word that produces emotions of excitement, pain or guilt, depending on if you are the gossiper, or if you are the one being gossiped about. Excitement comes from gossip because it is human nature to want to hear dirt on others and repeat it. Look at all the tabloids sold at the grocery counters filled with dirt about the rich and famous. It is fun to read and listen to gossip about others until it is about us. Proverbs 20:19 says, *"He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips."*

We should realize that participating in negative conversations harms us spiritually; it creates confusion that can lead to deception.

Pain comes when we are on the receiving end of the gossip trail. Speaking ill of others is particularly bad because words, once uttered, can never be recalled. Consider the following story illustrating this point.

There was a man in a small town who went around slandering a minister. One day, feeling bad about what he had done, he went to the minister to ask for forgiveness.

"Take a pillow," said the minister, "cut it up and shake out the feathers." The man did as he was told and then he returned to the minister hoping to now be forgiven.

"First," said the minister, "go collect all the feathers."

"But that's impossible," said the man. "They've gone everywhere."

"It's as impossible to repair the damage done by your words as it is to recover all the feathers," said the minister.

President Reagan's first Labor Secretary, Raymond Donovan, resigned from his post after numerous rumors that he'd done wrong. After spending more than a million dollars in legal fees to defend himself, Donovan was cleared of all charges. Coming out of the courtroom to talk to reporters, he asked: "Where do I go to get my reputation back?"

Gossip also hurts the gossiper. According to psychiatrist Antonio Wood, when you speak ill of someone, you alienate yourself from that person. Say bad things about many people and your words will separate you from them.

Guilt is an emotion we feel when we know in our hearts that it is wrong to slander and talk about someone behind his or her back. Have you ever tried to look someone in the eye after you have talked about him or her behind his or her back?

Guilt also comes when we don't follow the biblical principle that says, *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."* (Matthew 18:15)

Gossip may be fun for a moment, but in the end it will only produce hurt, guilt and pain.

### **HOW CAN WE AVOID GOSSIPING?**

Seek a repentant and clean heart from God so you'll have the power to resist talking negatively about others. Take a look at the attitudes you hold and the comments you make. Examine why you are tempted to speak negatively and pray for God to give you the strength to confront and overcome those temptations. Confess the times you've gossiped or criticized in the past, and invite God to transform you. Release any pride or fear that is obstructing you from making the changes you would like, and be open to God's correction and guidance.

Pray for people you have hurt—either purposely or inadvertently by speaking negatively about them. Ask God to heal them. Also pray for people who have hurt you in the past through their negative words about you. Forgive them and ask God to let them be aware of His loving presence with them.

Pray for God to give you wisdom in such situations. James 1:5 says, *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."*

We can ask God to help us resist being pulled into negative conversations. How can we do this?

When someone approaches us and begins talking negatively about someone, we can try to determine the speaker's motivation and encourage accountability by asking questions such as, "Is this something I need to hear about?" "Who told you this information?" "Have you spoken to those people who are directly involved with this situation?" and "Before you share any further, what are you expecting from me?"

Use powerful positive words to heal when confronted with destructive, negative words. Respond to gossip or criticism with encouraging words about the person being talked about. As Ephesians 4:29 explains, " (Ephesians 4:29) *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”*

Think. Another key to positive communication is to subscribe to the simple formula "THINK" before speaking of any person or subject that is controversial.

T--Is it True?  
H--Is it Helpful?  
I--Is it Inspiring?  
N--Is it Necessary?  
K--Is it Kind?

If what we are about to say does not pass these tests, we should keep our mouths shut.

Finally, remember the little saying that tells us what kind of minds we have: Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people. The apostle Paul provides a key for incorporating these concepts, saying, (Philippians 4:8) *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

By applying his instruction, gossip can be stopped. Let us all strive to use the power of our words for healing.

CLASS 12 – PARTS ONE and TWO

## **TRUST AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

**Grace is not only acceptance of others as they are,  
But empowerment of others to become  
More than what they are!**

## **OVERVIEW**

What is trust? What are the elements of trust? Are we do trust just anybody? And what does Jesus say about trust? In this session we will explore the nature of trust and trustworthiness and how they can cultivate a deeper and truer reality of covenant community.

God trusts us only according to our current level of ability then helps us to be trusted with more! With gracious expectations we are able to accept one another where they are at, and empower them to become more than what they are.

### **Trust and Trustworthiness**

- Trust: The confident expectation of good from a person based on personal experience of their trustworthiness
- Trustworthiness: The worthiness of a person to be trusted

## NOTES

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## CLASS TWELVE – PARTS ONE and TWO

### I. *Grace Expectations*

- General definitions of trust:
  - The firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability or strength of someone or something.
  - The willingness to choose to be vulnerable and to risk
- How trust works
  - Does something look trustworthy? (i.e. a broken chair to hold you, an elevator, an airplane...)
  - Evidence and reason help us discern if something/someone is trustworthy.
  - Trust is a form of calculated, wise risk
- Definition of trust in relationship:
  - The confident expectation of good from a person based on personal experience of their trustworthiness.
    - Built into the idea of trust is expectation and trustworthiness
    - Trust is a form of expectation
    - Trustworthiness belongs with trust!
- Definition of trustworthiness:
  - The worthiness of a person to be trusted.
  - In relationships, trustworthiness involves three things:
    - *Ability* – the power, skills, and resources needed
    - *Character* – the goodness, maturity, and integrity needed
    - *Commitment* – a personal agreement to do what is expected
  - Our level of trust must be measured according to someone’s level of trustworthiness
    - It is unloving to place too much trust in someone if they are unable to provide based on their ability, character and commitment.
    - Our level of expectation matches their level of trustworthiness
    - Trustworthiness will vary!
  - Only God is 100% trustworthy!

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## CLASS TWELVE- PARTS ONE and TWO

- Matching trustworthiness and expectations
    - Over-trust: My level of expectation exceeds a person's level of trustworthiness
    - Distrust: My level of expectation is less than a person's level of trustworthiness
    - Healthy Trust: I know from experience what I can reasonably expect from this person in this specific area.
    - Both parties are equally responsible:
      - To discern the other's trustworthiness and adjust our expectations accordingly
      - To help each other become more trustworthy in all areas of our lives to the best of our potential.
  - God does not ask for our blind trust
    - Jacob's dream and bargain with God: Genesis 28:19-21
      - *"First prove yourself trustworthy to me, then I'll give you my trust."*
      - God proves his trustworthiness over 20 years: Genesis 29ff
    - God proves his trustworthiness to Israel:
      - Exodus 5-13: God demonstrates his trustworthiness in Egypt
        - ❖ 10 miraculous signs in Egypt and release from captivity.
      - Exodus 14:40: God demonstrates his trustworthiness in the wilderness
        - ❖ 40 years of provision and miracles in the desert
      - In Jesus, God himself comes to earth to prove his trustworthiness
      - God first demonstrates his trustworthiness then asks for our trust. So too we live out this trust and trustworthiness with God and others.
  - Relational practices to increase trustworthiness
    - Connect and invest in others relationally
    - Notice and observe their areas of trustworthiness
    - Patiently accept their areas of untrustworthiness
    - Lovingly adjust your expectations to who they currently are
    - Cultivate your own trustworthiness and offer the help them cultivate theirs
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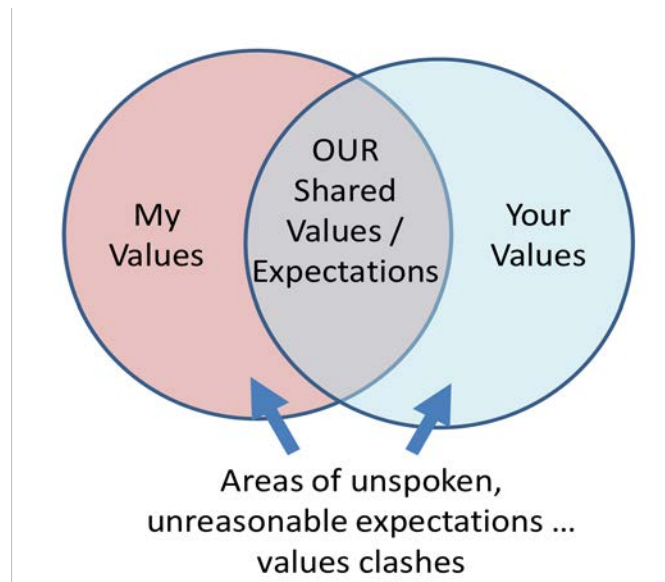
## CLASS TWELVE – PARTS ONE and TWO

### II. *Grace: Acceptance and Empowerment*

- What the Bible says about trusting people:
    - *“Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”* – Psalm 41:9
    - *“It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.”* – Psalm 118:8
    - *“Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation.”* – Psalm 146:3
    - *“Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.”* – Psalm 37:3
    - *“Many believed in his name, observing his sign which he was doing. But Jesus, on his part, was not entrusting himself to them, for he knew all men, and because he did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man.”* – John 2:23-24
      - Jesus risked entering into relationship with broken people!  
Jesus was able to be vulnerable with people because he fully entrusted himself to God.
  - God trusts us only according to our current level of ability then helps us to be trusted with more!
    - The parable of the talents in Matthew 25
      - *“To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability.”* – Matthew 25:15
      - He only entrusted each of the servants according to his own ability.
      - *“Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more.”* – Matthew 25:16-17
    - We need to trust wisely, ensuring both:
      - The care of what is of value to us
      - The cultivating of the other’s ability to be entrusted with more
  - Grace is not only acceptance of others as they are, but empowerment of others to become more than what they are!
    - God accommodates where we are at and assists us to grow
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## CLASS TWELVE – PARTS ONE and TWO

- Expectations in Relationships
  - Have you ever felt pressured by another person's expectation of you?
  - Have you ever been let down or frustrated by another person not fulfilling your expectations?



- Harmful expectations:
    - Unspoken expectations – ones we have never agreed on
    - Unfair expectations – imposing my own beliefs and values
    - Unrealistic expectations – ones that the other cannot meet
    - Unloving expectations – anything that makes the other feel coerced, manipulated, pressured
  - Covenant relationships are about mutually defined, agreed-upon and doable values and expectations!
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## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: Matthew 25:15-17
  - Read Matthew 25:15-17 each day this week
- Read the 12th chapter of “Our Passionate God” by Malcolm Smith, and answer the reflection questions that follow.
  - Jesus’ goal in telling this story was two-fold: 1) to help us experience God’s love for us, and 2) to help us extend God’s love toward each other. This is what peace-making is all about!
- What is your relationship with trust? Do you find it easy or challenging to trust others? Do you find it easy or difficult to trust God?
  - If you find it difficult to trust others, ask God to show you the experiences that have lead you to this place of difficulty.
  - If you find it difficult to trust God, what experiences formed this place of difficulty?
- “God trusts us only according to our current level of ability then helps us to be trusted with more!”
  - Read Matthew 25:15-17 again. Are there needs in your life that you are asking for from God? God longs to hear all of our requests and desires! Now, examine your present situation, to what degree are you being faithful with the gifts God has already given you? Ask God if there are ways you can grow in faithfully stewarding those gifts!
- Exercise: Read the article below. Take notes on anything that stands out to you.

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## **Unrealistic and Unspoken Expectations Harm Relationships**

*By Jacklyn Marcus, Ph,D Certified Life Skills Coach*

[http://www.rechargerelationships.com/expectations\\_chapter.pdf](http://www.rechargerelationships.com/expectations_chapter.pdf)

We all create expectations for ourselves.

It is a basic human trait to project our desires and thoughts onto those we are closest to. We tend to expect significant people in our lives to behave in a manner envisioned in our mind. Expectations in relationships can be harmful when unspoken ideals are projected onto the other person. Unspoken assumptions and unrealistic expectations commonly sabotage relationships.

How many times have your feelings been hurt because you mistakenly assumed someone else knew what you thought or expected? Do you ever become annoyed or angry with someone who acted differently than you expected?

Have you found yourself saying:

“If you really loved me, you would...”

“Why didn’t you...”

“You should...”

It doesn’t matter what kind of relationship you are in. Each person’s expectations plays a large part in determining the health of the relationship. Perceptions of a relationship change when there is a contrast between the ideal and the real. The partnership strengthens when one begins to see the relationship for what it really is.

Having unrealistic or unfulfilled expectations is a sure way to ruin a relationship. When an individual has a strong desire that their partner meet their impossible expectations they become blinded to who their partner really is. Even if the partner tries to meet the expectations, it will never be exactly what their partner wants. This is because expectations in relationships are most often unattainable. We all have a preconceived notion of what we want in our ideal mate, and this is how expectations are conceived. When someone harbors unclear or unspoken expectations, then they are likely going to surface at some point.

### **Types of Expectations on Relationships**

There are different types of relationships a person experiences in their life: parent/child, friendship, romantic, and business. Situations discussed in this chapter most directly involve persons in a romantic union, yet all these strategies apply to any type of relationship.

Different types of expectations can negatively affect our relationships. Expectations can be unrealistic, unclear, unfulfilled, unspoken, unexpressed, and misguided. These unrealistic expectations can come from:

- Our family values and traditions
- Past relationships
- Past experiences
- Expecting the other person to provide our personal happiness or fulfillment
- Projecting onto someone else how we want them to be.

Most importantly, problems in any relationship come from lack of communication and miscommunication.

### **How Past Experiences Influence Our Expectations**

Our past experiences shape how we think, feel and act. It is through various influences in life that we form unclear and even unrealistic expectations. Key influences that shape our beliefs include: childhood upbringing, gender, age, cultural differences, traumatic events, and religious and political beliefs. Each person is a compilation and product of their past history. Along the way, we each learn by trial and error how to get our needs met and desires fulfilled.

The quality of interactions with significant others from birth onward have an effect on the way we view the world. Our childhood upbringing influences who we become and plays a role in the formation of personal expectations. We learn through experimentation. We learn whether we can trust ourselves and others. We learn to feel worthy and confident, or ashamed and guilty of who we are. This is imprinted at an early age and is unconsciously set into motion. These lessons form the core of our belief system. This is where misguided relationship expectations begin.

Each person brings into a relationship their own family values. While growing up, you internalize your own family's beliefs. When a person grows up in a family where their parents don't take the time or interest to listen to them, this can lead to the child growing up feeling no one cares what they think. The domino effect of this is that the individual does not verbalize what they need or feel, yet still feel disappointed when their partner does not automatically figure out how they are feeling.

For example, if in your upbringing it was emphatic that you never bother your father or mother when they are busy, you learn to push your feelings down and keep them suppressed. As a consequence, entering a romantic relationship makes you feel unworthy of expressing your needs and feelings. Unfortunately, this can lead to resentment and anger because the other person does not automatically know how you are feeling and cannot possibly know how to help you.

Most of us are not aware of our unspoken rules and expectations, until the other person violates them. When our partner doesn't live up to our unrealistic expectations, we may become frustrated, disappointed or angry. Often we don't even know why we are upset because we don't know what is wrong. It is helpful to reflect on "the rules" of one's family so that misguided assumptions and expectations are brought out for examination.

Some examples of family-oriented rules are:

Big boys don't cry

Girls always look pretty and presentable Wait until your father gets home (father is the disciplinarian)

Don't speak unless you are spoken to.

### **Ways Expectations Effect Relationships**

The most common cause of relationship conflict comes from unrealistic and unexpressed expectations. Misguided assumptions pose the biggest danger when each person in a relationship brings their own, and sometimes conflicting, expectations to the relationship.

As we project our viewpoint onto others, we are assuming that they think and feel in a similar way that we would in the same situation, and we expect them to behave accordingly. Unrealistic expectations occur when an individual projects onto their partner what they want or need. Your partner cannot read your mind. When someone close to us does something that seems in deep contrast with the standards we have associated with that person, we often feel hurt, betrayed, angry and /or confused. Our disappointment gets expressed in the kinds of phrases we've heard or spoken:

"You're the last person I ever expected to do that."

"You really let me down."

"This is not like you at all."

We cleverly develop a tunnel vision where we only allow through information that supports the view we have of who we want that person to be. The truth is that people show us exactly who they are through their everyday behaviors. When we chose to break the illusion and replace assumptions with a truthful evaluation, freedom from expectation is carried with it. The opportunity to begin a more authentic and honest relationship is born.

Relationships end for a variety of reasons. The most common reason being that people enter relationships with certain expectations which, when unmet or unspoken, start and fuel the domino effect which may eventually leads to the end of the relationship. How one perceives the state of a relationship is altered by various conditions such as age, past experience, and personal background. Differentiating between what is real and what is imagined in a relationship is tailored by these experiences in life. An example to illustrate this is how many young girls grow up envisioning "happily ever after" with their "knight in shining armor". No one can live up to that fairy tale image. This unrealistic expectation quickly leads to relationship problems.

Both partners must be free to be themselves, to respectfully express their needs and feelings, and to know they are accepted for who they are. It is important for both parties in a relationship to take responsibility to mutually express their wishes. The

couple must learn how to meet each other's desires and needs, which usually requires compromise on each side. However, individuals may choose to cooperate – or not. If not, the relationship is ultimately doomed. If the partners agree to compromise, the payoff builds cohesiveness and intimacy. This is the glue that holds the relationship together.

The decision to cooperate is a decision of trust. Trust requires regular communication and sincere engagement with your partner. Once trust is developed, an ease in expressing one's needs and desires to one another can occur. Distrust occurs when one person fails to listen, support, and give feedback. When expectations are not met, trust becomes fragile.



CLASS THIRTEEN – PARTS ONE and TWO  
**COMMUNICATING WITH CARE**

**Let your speech always be with grace,  
As though seasoned with salt,  
So that you will know how you should respond to  
Each person.**

## **OVERVIEW**

Talking simply means putting words to our thoughts. Communicating means putting thoughts to our words. But talking and communicating does not necessarily equal communication. Communication is the effective creation of shared meaning and understanding with another. It is a shared, two-way process by which information is exchanged through a common system of symbols. Communication has a lot to do with peace-making, and in this session we will explore the ways in which we can more effectively speak and listen, and thus learn how to “Communicate with Care”.

### **Communicate with Care**

- Speak less often
- Speak more sensitively
- Speak more skillfully
- Listen actively
- Listen empathetically

## **NOTES**

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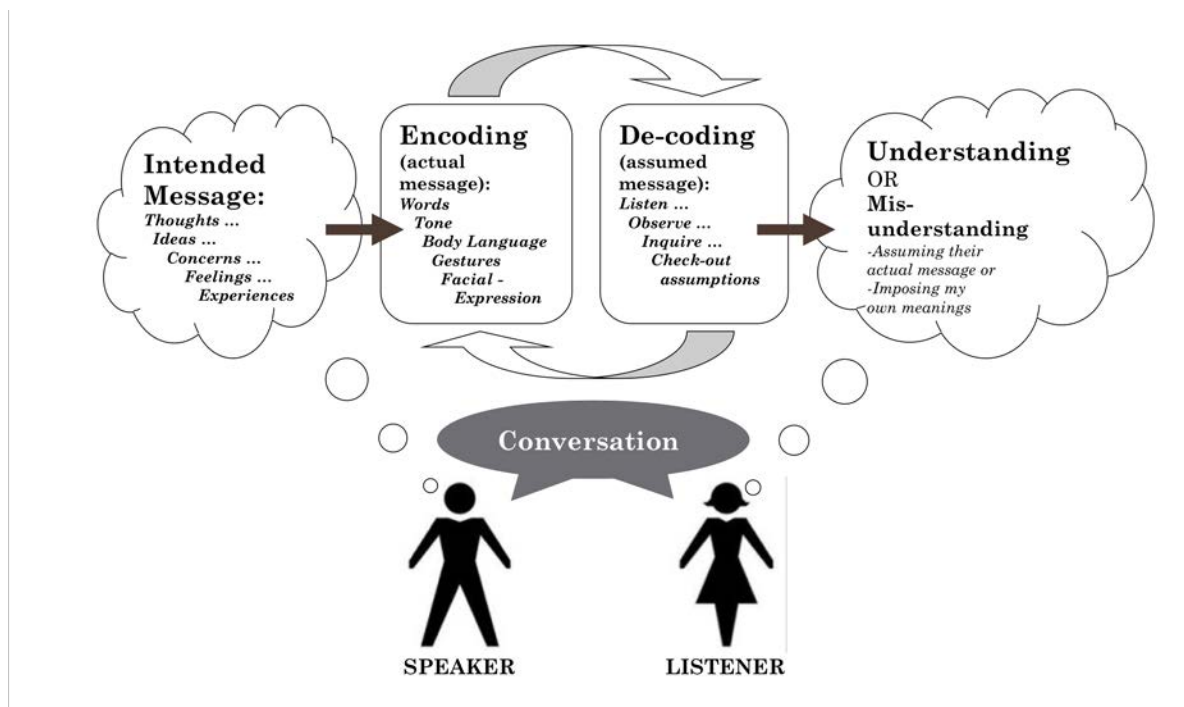
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## CLASS THIRTEEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

### I. *Communicating with Care*

- Talking: Putting words to thoughts
- Communicating: Putting thoughtfulness to our words
- Care: *An effort made to do something correctly, safely or without causing damage.*
- Communication is the effective creation of shared meaning and understanding with another. It is a shared, two-way process by which information is exchanged through a common system of symbols.
  - Meaning: Our deeper concerns, feelings, beliefs, convictions, desires, fears, hopes and dreams.
  - Our language is not the actual meaning. Language is like a map!
    - As the speaker, our deep, intended meaning needs to be encoded with words, tones, facial expressions, etc.
    - As the listener, we decode the intended meaning through listening, observing, inquiring, etc.
    - Through encoding and decoding, we come to either understanding or misunderstanding



### II. *Three keys for effective speaking*

- Speaking less often
  - *“When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable.” – Proverbs 10:9*

## CLASS THIRTEEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

- *“Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak.”* – James 1:19
- *“He who restrains his words has knowledge.”* – Proverbs 17:27
- Too much talking, too many words leads to problems. Less is more!
- Speaking more sensitively
  - *“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.”* – Matthew 12:36
  - Choosing carefully and wisely when and what to speak
  - *“Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”* – Colossians 4:6
- Speaking more skillfully
  - Skill: Distinction, making a difference
  - We speak with distinction in a way that makes a positive difference.
  - Three speaking skills:
    - Be honest and direct
    - Avoid triggering or threatening language
      - Observations: what a video camera could capture
      - Evaluations: our own interpretations and judgments
    - Speak for yourself and from your own experience, not for others

### III. Active Listening

- Active listening requires we pay attention. It’s costly to pay attention!
- To attend = To wait on or to be present with another person
  - *“He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.”* – Proverbs 18:13
- Help the other get in touch with what they want to say
- Active listening is practicing the presence of people while we are with them
  - Be present
  - Notice and eliminate “listening errors”
    - Deleting: Missing or blocking out what the other person is trying to say
    - Generalizing: Assuming what the other person is saying about a specific thing is what they mean about a broader thing
    - Personalizing: Applying something to ourselves that isn’t about us at all
    - Reading-Into: Going beyond what the other person is actually saying

## CLASS THIRTEEN – PARTS ONE and TWO

- Five skills of active listening
  - Practice silence
  - Pay attention to nonverbals
  - Listen to understand, not to respond
  - Listen beyond the words
  - Give the speaker cues that you are tracking, interested
- Six “C’s” of active listening
  - Curiosity – inquire for more information
  - Clarity – clarify what they are saying
  - Confirmation – confirm that what you heard is what they said
  - Compassion – tune into deeper feelings and concerns
  - Common ground – find a way to validate areas of agreement
  - Commentary or Critique – once you have done the above, share your own thoughts or responses to what they have shared

### IV. *Empathic Listening and Responding*

- Sympathy: experiencing *your own feelings* about the other’s situation
- Empathy: entering-into *the other’s feelings* and experience
- Imagining what it’s like to be in their situation, communicating their words and feelings back to them
- The Empathic God:
  - John 1:14 - *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us*
  - Hebrews 4:15 - *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are*
- Empathic Responding:
  - **You feel** [name the emotion] **and are concerned about** [name the deeper concern] **because of** [identify the event/situation] **, and that really makes sense to me”**
  - With practice and time, these skills can be developed and cultivated within our relationships greater peace-making!

### V. *Caring Enough to Confront*

- Ephesians 4:15 - *but **speaking the truth** in love, we are **to grow up** in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ*
- To love another is to care enough about them and the relationship to be willing to mirror-back to help them ...
  - *See things they don’t see*
  - *Understand the impact of these things on others*

- *When unchallenged, human beings often become self-centered, individualistic, self-absorbed ... You must care a good deal to risk challenging another person's routine behaviors (David Augsburger)*
- Guidelines for Care-Fronting:
  - **Minimally:** overlook most issues, address serious ones or ongoing patterns
  - **Respectfully:** don't impose feedback but ask their permission, offer it lightly
  - **Gently:** not accusingly or in blame; come humbly alongside, not "over" them
  - **Constructively:** don't just point out the negatives but help them see the benefits of change
  - **Objectively:** do not evaluate or interpret inner motives, stick to observable actions and their impact on you
  - **Clearly:** stick to the issue, give simple, clear, personal examples

## REFLECTIONS

- Intentionally and prayerfully review your notes.
- Bible Reading: James 1:19 and Proverbs 17:27
  - Read each of these verses every day this week. Consider committing them to memory.
- Review the notes on *Three Keys for Effective Speaking*.
  - Of the three, which do you find to be the easiest to practice? Which do you find to be the most difficult? Ask a trusted friend or family member which of the three they see in you to be strong, which is an area of growth?
- Review the notes on *Five Skills of Active Listening*.
  - Of the five, which do you find to be the easiest to practice? Which do you find to be the most difficult? Ask a trusted friend or family member which of the five they see in you to be strong, which is an area of growth?
- Consider reading the remaining chapters of Malcolm Smith's "Our Passionate God".
- Review the Course Summary below, and take the "Awareness Wheel" assessment and prayerfully discern what your next steps may be in becoming a Kingdom peacemaker.

## Course Summary

**Peace is:** relational respect, unity and harmony that results in individual and communal Shalom (Shalom: wholeness, thriving, and well-being)

- God is “the God of Peace”, Jesus is “the Prince of Peace”, and therefore as God’s image-bearer on earth, the church is to be “a Community of Peace” through which a foretaste of God’s dream of universal shalom can be embodied and experienced as a witness to the coming age of Peace.
- *But the ways of peace must be learned...*

### ***Becoming Peacemakers Involves:***

**Receiving Peace** – Living *in* Shalom: We seek inner peace through the active pursuit of healing, renewal and wholeness by embracing God’s offer of PEACE: pardon, esteem, acceptance, compassion and empowerment. We do this by cultivating a Cross-shaped, Jesus-like picture of God as a peace-making Father who is fully good, near, and reliable, and by cultivating a secure identity in Christ that is grounded in our unconditional worth, belonging, and purpose in Him.

**Extending Peace** – Living *out* Shalom: We seek to bring outward peace in all of our relationships, pursuing relational healing, reconciliation and wholeness through extending God’s offer of PEACE toward all others:

*Through Jesus, the God of Peace extends to us **his unconditional offer of PEACE:***

**PARDON** – He freely forgives our wrongs and overlooks our faults

**ESTEEM** – He sees our true worth and treats us with respect, honor and dignity

**ACCEPTANCE** – He radically and fully accepts us as we are with no conditions

**COMPASSION** – He understands our struggles and weaknesses and treats us with kindness and mercy

**EMPOWERMENT** – He equips us to overcome weaknesses and become all we are made to be.

*Through Jesus, the God of Peace calls us to **extend this same peace** toward all others, at all times in all places!*

.....



## Awareness-Wheel Self-Reflection:

Reflect on each statement below and circle the number that most closely reflects your level of agreement

- 1) **Vision for peacemaking:** I am clear on what biblical “peace” means, and see peace as a central attribute of God and peacemaking as a primary focus and calling for followers of Jesus  

*Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
  
- 2) **Jesus-like Picture of God:** I deeply know that what is most true about God is revealed in the life, teachings, and character of Jesus, and I personally know his goodness, nearness, and reliability  

*Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
  
- 3) **Secure Identity in Christ:** I look to who Jesus says I am to define me, and I am firmly grounded in him and his love as my source of worth, belonging, and purpose in life  

*Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
  
- 4) **Humility:** I see and accept myself as God sees and accepts me, with both my strengths and weaknesses, and I would say that I have a teachable, unoffendable, servant’s heart  

*Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
  
- 5) **Empathy:** I can easily enter into and imagine things from others’ perspectives and can understand what they are feeling, and I regularly communicate validation of others’ feelings, thoughts and experiences  

*Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
  
- 6) **Effective Communication:** I am sensitive, caring, and skillful in actively listening to and understanding others, as well as speaking to and helping them understand my thoughts, feelings, and concerns  

*Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*

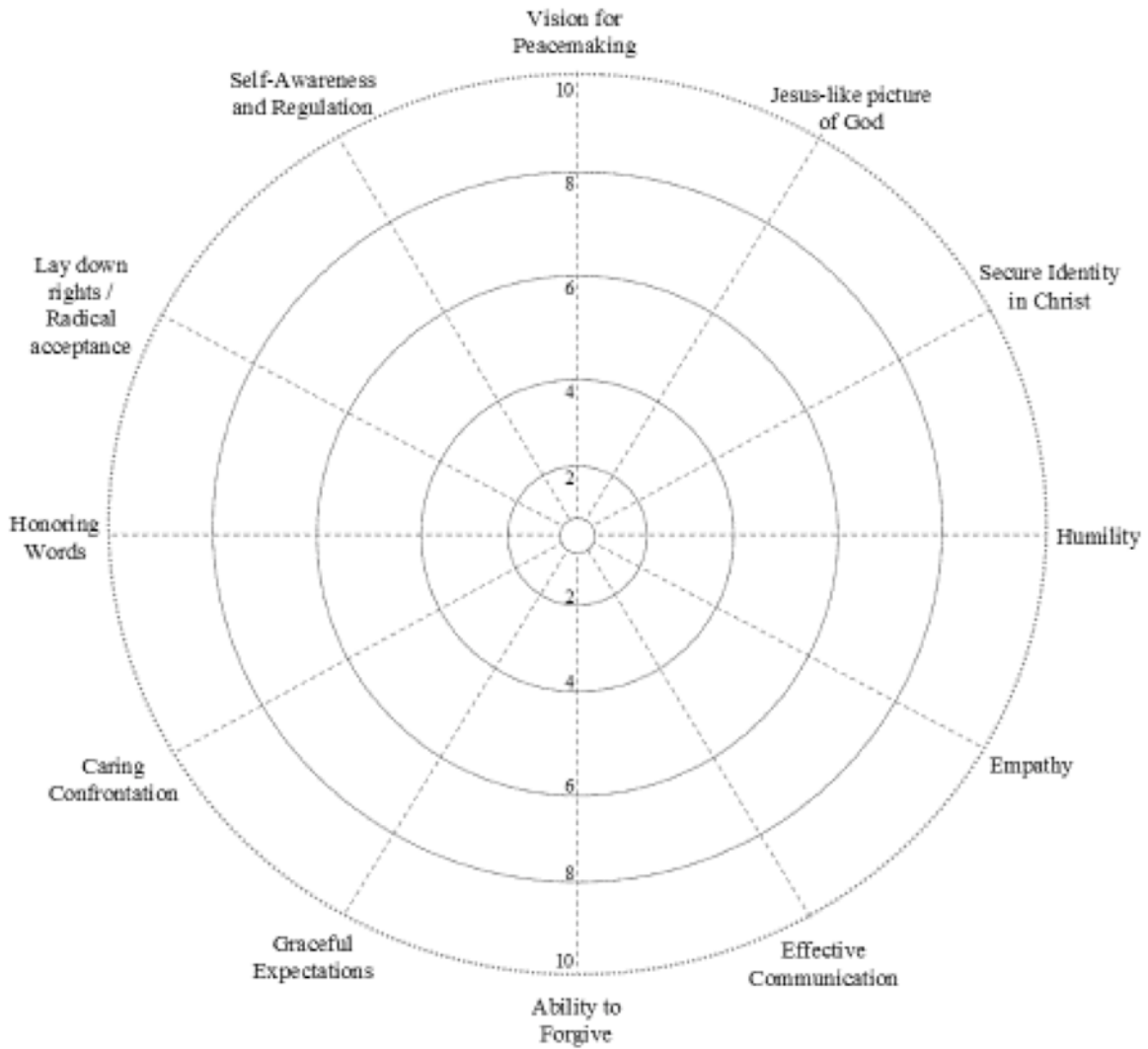
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

- 7) **Ability to Forgive:** I know that I have been radically, freely forgiven by God and that I am commanded to forgive, and I actively work towards letting go of others' offenses against me and extending forgiveness to them
- Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
- 
- 8) **Graceful Expectations:** I seek to adjust my level of trust / expectation of others to their current level of trustworthiness, to not impose unloving, unfair or unrealistic expectations on them, and to cultivate my own trustworthiness toward them
- Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
- 
- 9) **Caring Confrontation:** I overlook most faults and offenses and yet lovingly discern addressing issues with another that are damaging to them or our relationship, and I do this gently and sensitively out of concern for them
- Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
- 
- 10) **Honoring Words:** I avoid all forms of speaking or listening to gossip, words of criticism, blame and accusation, and speaking in anger and resentment to or about others, and I actively seek to speak words of respect and blessing
- Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
- 
- 11) **Laying Down Rights / Accepting Wrong:** I do not defend my rights but choose to lay them aside, and I am willing to suffer wrong in order to help free others from wrongdoing and to reconcile relationships
- Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
- 
- 12) **Self-Awareness and Regulation:** I am aware of my inner world and how it plays out in actions, attitudes and words, and I seek to lovingly guide and direct my desires, temperament, wounds, weaknesses, thoughts and emotions out of love for others
- Strongly Disagree* *Strongly Agree*
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

.....

## The “Awareness Wheel”

Take the numbers from your self-reflection questions and plot them in the circle below by placing a dot along the axis-line for each area. The center means “zero” and the outer circle means “10”. Once you have a dot on each axis-line, draw lines to “connect the dots”. A larger, more “well-rounded” circle indicates a more mature, balanced life as a peace-maker. Notice your areas of strength and celebrate these. Notice your growth areas and ask God what steps you can take in this next season of your life to grow in becoming a peacemaker.



## Awareness-Wheel Questions to Ponder:

1. Would your life-wheel result in a smooth or “bumpy” ride?
2. What are your clearest strength and growth areas?
3. Are there any surprises for you in your reflection results?
4. Which of these areas do you feel God pointing you toward as a focus of intentional growth in the coming season?
5. What would a score of 10 look like in this area (actions, attitudes, interactions with others, character qualities, values, habits)?
6. What are some initial steps you might take in one of these areas in order to grow?
7. How could you make space for these changes?
8. Can you effect the necessary changes on your own?
9. What help and cooperation from others might you need?





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