



**Truth Seekers
Fellowship**

Equipping The Faithful To Be Fruitful

MilktoMeat
PHASE 1

Discovering THE WAY Part 02 Enlightened By The Gospel

AWARE > **ALIVE** > AWAKE > FREE > FAITHFUL > FRUITFUL



DISCOVERING THE WAY

Part 2: Enlightened By The Gospel

“I am **The Way**, The Truth and The Life;

No one comes to the Father

except through me.”

Jesus the Messiah

[John 14:6]

| AWARE | **ALIVE** | AWAKE | FREE | FAITHFUL | FRUITFUL |

Discovering the Way | Part 2: Enlightened By The Gospel

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For
Tom Murray
who taught us the importance of
teaching the truth, in the right order, at the right time.

And many thanks to
all our students over the years
who have served as our
editors, encouragers and supporters.

CHRIST we proclaim
by warning and teaching all people with all wisdom
so that we may present every person mature in Christ.
Toward this goal we also labor,
struggling according to His power
that powerfully works in us.
| Colossians 1:28-29 |

The MilktoMeat Map		
Phase 1 Discovering The Way	1. Recovering The Master Story	Aware
	2. Enlightened By The Gospel	Alive
Phase 2 Walking In The Truth	3. Realizing Your New Identity in Christ	Awake
	4. Rooted and Growing in Christ	Free
Phase 3 Living The Life	5. Empowered By The Presence of the Spirit	Faithful
	6. Serving as the Body of Christ	Fruitful

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Introduction to MilktoMeat

“Christ we proclaim,
warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

~ COLOSSIANS 1:28, OUR TRANSLATION ~

Who is This Study For?

We have designed this study around a simple idea: *these are the truths that we wished someone had taught us as new believers, new followers of Jesus.*

» *If you are a new follower of Jesus, or*

» *If you have never been trained how to follow Jesus, or*

» *If you want to learn how to train others to follow Jesus...*

then you are PERFECT for this study.

***This study follows our first series workbook *Discovering The Way Part 1: Recovering the Master Story*. If you have not completed that study, we would highly recommend doing that one first.**

What is The Story Behind MilktoMeat?

Do you want to grow spiritually but aren't sure where to start or what will work? For over twenty years we have been developing and refining MilktoMeat based upon what makes a difference in people's lives. Many men and women, from various walks of life, ages, and backgrounds have been transformed while going through this study. This study is an invitation to experience how Father-God working in Jesus Christ through the power and presence of His Holy Spirit will transform You.

We believe that this is a powerful tool and resource for anyone who wants to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). We pray that this study will become a means for you to connect more deeply with Father-God's love and purposes for you in Christ so that *you make your life's journey worthy of your destination!*

Tom Murray, the founder of Truth Seekers Fellowship, began to follow Jesus in his late twenties. At that point, he was what all new followers of Jesus are: *a blank sheet of paper*. Although Tom was hungry and willing to pursue spiritual growth, he found that his early years as a student of Jesus were not as fulfilling and productive as they could have been. Tom got bits and pieces of important truth and practices, but he had no one to lead him and train him in a logical and sequential way with the goal of spiritual maturity in sight.

After many years of searching, learning, and growing through trial and error, Tom decided to put together a study that would, “*teach others what I wish older, more mature Christians had taught me as a new believer*.” This study and curriculum became MilktoMeat. The guiding principle behind all of MilktoMeat is simple: *teaching the truth in the right order at the right time*.

What are Our Core Commitments?

» **Bible Based** | The Bible has been given to us by God to instruct us in His Ways and give us hope. This study is **Bible Based** because we are confident that the Message of the Bible (the Written Word) gives us hope by guiding us to Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures *we may have hope*. {NET}

2 Timothy 3:14–15 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

» **Christ Focused** | Jesus Christ is the Creator, Savior, and King of all creation and therefore the ONLY Way that leads us to the One True God. Therefore, this study is **Christ Focused** because we are confident that He is Creator, Savior, and King of all Creation and therefore central to all things:

Hebrews 12:1b–2 ...Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, 12:2 **keeping our eyes on Jesus**, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God’s throne.

» **Life Transforming** | Father-God Works in Christ His Son through the Holy Spirit to transform our lives. When anyone is presented with the truth and goodness of God in the glory of Jesus Christ, that person will be affected. The Lord-God has revealed Himself to us in His Written Word—*The Bible*—and this Word points us to the Living Word—*Our Savior and Lord Jesus*—so that we can see Him. We are confident that Father-God has given us His Word and is working in Christ through His Spirit to set free, heal, and transform anyone who is willing to turn from their old way of life and to trust and follow Jesus Christ who leads us in *the way of true life*.

2 Corinthians 3:16–18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 3:18 We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

What is the Larger Structure of MilktoMeat?

MilktoMeat is divided into three Phases: 1) Discovering the Way, 2) Walking in the Truth and 3) Living the Life. Each of these Phases consist of two 7 Session study units. These units are designed to lead you in the process of Spiritual Transformation that takes place as you grow in your relationship with Father-God in Christ.

» **Phase 1 | DISCOVERING THE WAY**

In this first phase, our goal is *to build a frame of reference* for life by recovering The Master Story of the Bible. This Master Story sets the context for understanding The Gospel—the Good News about Jesus and The Kingdom which enlightens our lives. We focus on the three core life questions: 1) *Where have we come from?* 2) *Why are we here?* And 3) *How will our lives turn out?* We then turn to explore the major Gospel Questions: 1) Why Did God Create Us? 2) What Went Wrong? 3) What Did God Do? 4) What is God Doing? 5) What will God Do? and 6) How Should We Respond? Our Father-God working in Christ through The Spirit has provided answers to these questions that give us the one thing that we need more than anything else: **HOPE**. This phase is divided into two seven-session workbooks: *Recovering the Master Story* and *Enlightened by the Gospel*

» Phase 2 | WALKING IN THE TRUTH

In our second phase, we explore what it means to trust and follow Jesus ALONE as our only Savior. We focus on our **new identity** and **position** in Christ and how this new reality fulfills our need for 1) *Security*, 2) *Significance* and 3) *Fulfillment* as people created in the image and likeness of God. We also explore issues related to The Great Spiritual War in which we find ourselves—broken and wounded by sin, but now being transformed to be like Christ Jesus. Our lives are journeys of FAITH; we are all **trusting** in someone to show us The Way. This phase is divided into two seven-session workbooks: *Realizing Your New Identity in Christ* and *Rooted and Growing in Christ*

» Phase 3 | LIVING THE LIFE

In our final phase, we consider what it means to be a life-long disciple/student/apprentice of Jesus. We focus on the significant role everyone “in Christ” has. “In Christ” we are each gifted and empowered to serve *as* the Body of Christ (The Church) *in* the World where Jesus is leading His mission to seek and save those who are spiritually lost, dead, and enslaved in the Dominion of Darkness. God is love. As we come to know Jesus Christ truly, following Him wherever He may lead, we too become people characterized by His self-sacrificial **LOVE**. This phase is divided into two seven-session studies: *Empowered by The Presence of the Spirit* and *Serving as The Body of Christ*.

Session 1

Question 1: **Why Did the Lord-God Create Us?**

- Core Truth:** The One True God designed us—humanity—to be His image and likeness in His Creation. We were designed and created to hold a unique and significant place in Father-God’s plans and purposes.
- To Remember:** Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth.” [Genesis 1:26]
- Objective:** It is important to know who and what we were intended to be as human beings in general before we can understand who we are as individuals. The One True God has designed us and created us to represent Himself in Creation. All that we are was designed to display the truth (reality), goodness (virtue) and glory (beautiful praiseworthiness) of our Creator.
- Prayer:** “Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have designed us and created us out of your great wisdom and love. Help us to understand what you have revealed to us and enable us to have the humility to receive to Your Truth. Amen.”

WORDwork | Day 1

1.1 **Why Did God Create Us?**

This study picks up where our first study *Discovering The Way Part 1: Recovering the Master Story* left off. If you have not completed that study, we would highly recommend completing it before you engage with this study. In *Recovering the Master Story*, we dealt with two big questions: *Who are We?* and *Who is God?* Here are short answers to those questions:

1. The One True God has revealed Himself in the Bible and in the person of Jesus. He exists as Father, Son, and Spirit and is uniquely characterized by His love, justice, and grace.
2. We as human beings were created in the image and likeness of the One True God to fill and rule over the Earth as stewards (overseers, caretakers) of His creation.

As we begin this study unit, we are doing to dig a little more deeply into these truths and relate them back to the Master Story that we developed in Part 1. So to get started, take a look at the following passage and then answer the questions.

Genesis 1:26-28* Now God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth.” 27 God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.” {NET}

? 01 In whose “image and likeness” did God create humankind?

? 02 Why did God create humankind “in his image, after his likeness”?

? 03 How did God create humankind, as one person or two? (1:27)

1.1.3 **We were created to enjoy life, communion, fellowship with God and one another.**

Finally, notice that God designs humanity as *male* and *female* to accomplish His purposes. *God creates us for relationship.* Just as God Himself exists in the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Spirit, so also we were given the ability and the need to live in fellowship. The first man and the woman would have the capacity to know and share the life of God. They would also be able to know and share life with one another. Out of these relationships, humanity would find its meaning and purpose.

When God “blesses” the first two humans, Adam and Eve, He is empowering them to be able to accomplish His desires according to His purposes. So God then tells them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule...” As humanity multiplied through the birth of children, they would spread over the Earth to extend and maintain the Glorious Kingdom of God in whose image and likeness they had been created.

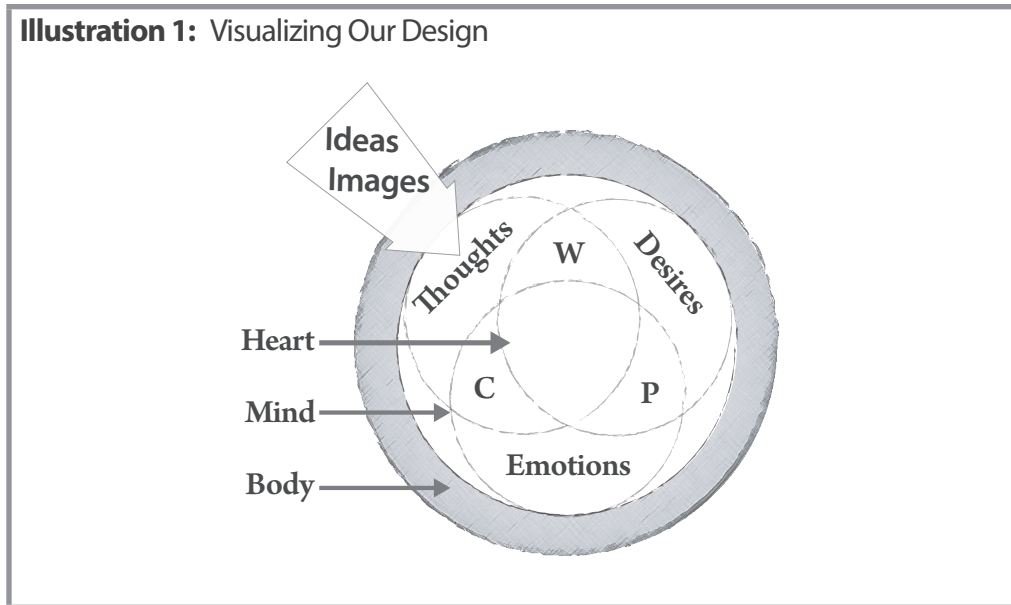
- ? 05 What were the key points that stuck out to you in today’s reading?
Was there anything that caused you to rethink what you know?

WORDwork | Day 2

1.2 How Did the Lord-God Design Us?

Hopefully the circle illustration below looks familiar to you. We introduced it in *Part 1: Recovering the Master Story*. One of our main goals is to help you understand and visualize the process of spiritual formation and transformation that Father-God works in Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in us. These circles will help us do that.

Here is a brief review of each of the elements of the diagram:



- 1] **The Body.** The most obvious part about all of us is the fact that we all have a body. When the Lord-God created the first man, one part of him was created from the soil of the ground; this is our physical body. In the picture, the body is represented by the darker, outer circle. The physical body is the “vehicle” for our inner spiritual selves. Our bodies allow us to connect with one another and our physical world.
- 2] **The Mind.** The “Spiritual Organ” that is the “gatekeeper,” “manager,” “gardener” of our inner spiritual selves, particularly the Heart. Your mind is the place where you have access to all your thoughts (ideas, images), emotions and desires.

- 3] **The Heart.** The “Spiritual Organ” that produces our life—our thoughts, feelings, desires, etc. We are not talking about your physical heart. But just as your physical heart pumps blood and life through your physical body, all of our spiritual life flows from our hearts. In biblical terms, your Heart is not just the place of your emotions, it is the deep “spring” of your life—the core of your whole being.
- 4] **Spiritual, Inner Self.** We all know that there is something happening on the “inside”—This is the spiritual part of us. In our illustration, this represented by the white inner circles.
- 5] **Thoughts.** *We are guided by our thoughts.* We process information from the “outside” in our thoughts. Our thoughts are words, images, sounds, memories, etc. that help us process and make sense of our world. The way we order and organize our thoughts is called *logic*. **Father-God wants our thoughts to be shaped by The Truth.**
- 6] **Emotions.** *We are moved by our emotions.* Our emotions are “movements” that take place very deep within us; in fact, they may be closer to our hearts—the core of who we are—than almost anything else. Our emotions serve as the “barometer” for our hearts. Our emotions give us clues as to what is going on deep within us. **Father-God wants our emotions to be shaped by His Goodness.**
- 7] **Desires.** *We are driven by our desires.* Our desires motivate us. We act and think in certain ways because we want to. Our desires are central to who we are and so they are a key part of what makes you a unique individual. **Father-God designed our desires to be patterned after His and He wants our desires to be shaped by His Glory.**
- 8] **W—Will.** This important part of who you are is the determining factor in your life. Your will gives you the ability to choose.
- 9] **C—Conscience.** We all have a sense of right and wrong. Often this sense does not come to us as a thought, but as more of a feeling—a movement deep with us. Your conscience is shaped by your thoughts and emotions.

10] **P—Passion.** There are some desires that drive us deeply. There are some things that we want to do; there are other things that we have to do to feel alive.

11] **Ideas and Images.** In almost everything we are going to discuss, it is important to remember that we are influenced and affected by the ideas and images that enter our “inner person” through the doorway of the thoughts.



The “tools” that we are introducing in this session give us a framework for understanding some basic realities of life. These tools are helpful in becoming more AWARE of reality. Cultivating a sense of Awareness is the first stage spiritual growth.

Key Growth Stage: Becoming **AWARE**. All that we experience in life is built on the basic attitude and mental posture of being **aware** of what is really going on **around** and **within** us.



Today we want you to study the illustration of our design so that you are familiar with it and can reproduce it. See if you can draw your own version of the circles and think about explaining it to someone else.

WORDwork | Day 3**1.3 How Do We Share in God's Image and Likeness?**

Genesis 6:6 And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his **heart**. {ESV}

Romans 11:34 “For who has known the **mind** of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

We have been thinking about who we are as human beings this week. As we finish this session, we need to go back to where we started and consider how we display the image and likeness of God in our design.

Notice in the passages above, God is presented as having both a **heart** (a deep, core, inner self) and a **mind** (the place of thought, wisdom, intellect). As we have seen and understand, we too have these “spiritual organs.” As we move through this study, we are going to talk a lot about our hearts and minds, so it is important that you understand what we mean when we talk about these things.

The primary thing that we want you to understand is that God has designed and desires for our hearts—the source of our lives—to *be completely dependent on Him* to produce the same quality of life that He Himself possesses and expresses. He has also designed our minds to work like His. He designed us to be completely captivated by His Truth, Goodness, and Glory in all that we are so that we could also express those same things.

There is one last thing that we want you to understand about your inner self as it relates to your heart: *you do not have direct access to your heart*. You have access to your Heart *through* your Mind, but you do not have *direct* access to it; your heart is very “deep” within you. When you think, “I don’t know where that thought, emotion or desire came from,” you are realizing the depth of your heart. Only God himself can work and deal with your Heart directly. This is because He has reserved this deep inner part of us for Himself. Your Heart is that deep place at the core of your being designed by God to be captivated and illuminated by His Truth, Goodness, and Glory.

Many years ago, Augustine—one of the great theologians—wrote:

“You have created us for yourself O Lord,
and restless are our hearts until they find their rest in You.”

{AUGUSTINE, *CONFESSIONS*}

Each and every one of us desires to be a full and whole person. The only way we will ever become who we desire to be is through a living relationship with the Father-God who created us. He has sent His One Unique Son Jesus to show us the way back to our Heavenly Father and He has also sent His Spirit to enable us to find Him and know Him.

In our first study unit *Recovering the Master Story*, we discussed the true nature of Father-God's love for us. His love is not *smack* "love"—He is not going to beat us into submission. His love is not *candy* "love"—He is not going to bribe us to love Him. His love is divine love, given freely in the hope that we will love Him freely. His love for us is ultimately expressed in all that Jesus has done for us. As we think about all of this throughout this study, we will find that this love "surpasses knowledge."



This is also a good place to review your LifeMap.* Before you move forward, think about all the major events you have charted and think about the question, "How was Father-God present in these situations drawing me to Himself?"

*We discussed the LifeMap in our first workbook, *Recovering the Master Story*.

WORDwork | Day 4

Ephesians 3:14–19 ... I kneel before the Father, 3:15 from whom every family in heaven and on the earth is named. 3:16 I pray that according to the wealth of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner person, 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, 3:18 you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 3:19 and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.
{NET}

? 06 How does Paul address God in Ephesians 3:14 above—what does He call Him?

? 07 What is Paul's first request to Father-God in 3:16?

? 08 What is the reason for Paul's first request given in 3:17?

? 09 According to what Paul says in 3:18-19, what does he want the people he is praying for to be able to do?

1.4 How Does All of This Fit Into The Master Story?

In the passage above, Paul prays for all the Christians at Ephesus, many of whom had come to know Christ through Paul's teaching. But this prayer is not just for those people; the letter to the Ephesians was meant to be passed around in all the house churches in that area. Paul's prayer can be applied to and prayed for "all the saints"—everyone who has been set apart for the One True God and trust in Him.

Let’s chart this out so we can see it a little more clearly. The major statements are on the left; the modifiers on the right:

I pray that (Father-God) may grant you to be <i>strengthened</i>	> <i>Strengthened</i> : With Power (How) > <i>Strengthened</i> : According to the wealth of His glory > <i>Strengthened</i> : Through His Spirt (Means) > <i>Strengthened</i> : In the Inner Person (Where)
<hr/>	
SO THAT Christ may dwell	>In your hearts (Where) >Through Faith (How)
<hr/>	
SO THAT You may be able <i>to comprehend and to know the love of Christ</i>	> with all the Saints (Who) > the breadth and length and height and depth (Measure) >that surpasses knowledge (Quality)
<hr/>	
SO THAT <i>You may be filled up to all the fullness of God.</i>	

First, notice how Paul addresses God: “The *Father* from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.” This simply means that every living being has its origin and beginning in the creative, “fatherly” work of the Lord-God. Notice also, this is *every* family in *heaven* and on *earth* which means everywhere. One of the oldest descriptions of the angels and heavenly beings is “the sons of God” (see Job 1:6. 2:1). As human beings, we were also created to be part of Father-God’s great family. Even though we are now “a little lower than the heavenly beings/angels” (Psalm 8:5), in the Age to Come all of us who belong to Father-God through faith in Christ will rule with Him (see Revelation 20:6, 22:5).

In our times, “father” is a word and concept that doesn’t immediately stir up feelings of love and mercy for many. Our Adversary, the Devil, has done a great job stealing and destroying the very idea of “father” in our culture. This is not by accident. *Our view of our Heavenly Father is largely shaped by our relationship with our earthly fathers.* The Bible teaches us that our Heavenly Father is far more than

any of our earthly fathers could have ever been. For some, coming to know God as a loving, merciful, and gracious Father is a difficult process. We have to hear what He has said to us in His Word, but we also have to be open to the ways He moves in our lives so that we can truly experience His love and care.

Now take note of *what* Paul prays. If I could sum up this prayer in a short statement, I would say that Paul is praying that Father-God would empower us through the Spirit and through our deep relationship with Jesus Christ to be able to know the boundless and limitless way in which Christ loves us! His love for us “surpasses knowledge.” This means that you will never be able to “get your mind around” how much Father-God and Christ loves you. This is something we have to get inside of us and only the power of the Holy Spirit is able to do this for us.

At the end, Paul prays all of this so that we could be “filled up to all the fullness of God.” This does not mean that Father-God is going to pour all of Himself into us so that we become “gods.” It does mean that Father-God wants to pour His love into us through our relationship with Him in Christ so that we can be filled by love just as they are filled by love. God has lived as a Father who loves a Son through His Spirit forever. God has lived as a Son who knows what it is to be loved by a Father and love that Father in return forever. God has lived as The Spirit who has limitless power and chooses to love, forever.



You may want to go back and review the section “Who is the One True God” in our first workbook *Discovering the Way: Recovering the Master Story*. There we discuss the three types of love and how Father-God’s love is unique.



Scan back over or reflect on this week’s reading and ask yourself:

1. What have I learned that gave me new ideas and images?
2. How do these truths call me to change the way I am thinking?
3. How do these truths call me to trust Father-God more?

Session 2

Question 2: What Went Wrong?

- Core Truth:** The Lord God gave us an incredible **gift** and **responsibility**: the ability to choose. The first man Adam, the physical “father” of us all, chose to rebel against God and brought sin, death, and condemnation into our human experience.
- To Remember:** Therefore, sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... [Romans 5:12]
- Objective:** If we want to understand all the violence, hatred, chaos, and confusion that exists in our world (and in us) we need to understand the reality of the choices that the first man Adam made. Adam is not a mythological figure from the land of make-believe; He was the first human, the physical “father” of us all, and the choices that he made have had devastating consequences for us all.
- Prayer:** “Father-God, you have created us for yourself and we want to know you more deeply. Give us the knowledge and courage we need to understand what has gone wrong with us and our world. Help us to search ourselves—our thoughts, our desires, our emotions—so we can be aware of the ways we turn away from You. For Jesus’ sake, AMEN.”

WORDwork | Day 1

2.1 **How Did God Test Adam?**

So far we have seen that God created us to be His image and likeness in Creation. In fact, when God finished his creative work He said, “This is all very good” (see Genesis 1:31). There was nothing wrong with the first human beings that God created. We have also heard that God is love and desires to be loved. God is not an Tyrant Father, nor is He a Divine Sugar Daddy; he really cares for us and desires for us to live according to His truth, goodness, and glory.

So as we look at our world we see the evil and suffering we have to ask ourselves, “How did this happen?” In this session, we will explore what went wrong at the beginning of the human experience and see how our common ORIGIN has set the framework for our existence as human beings.

In these sessions, we are going to focus on the choices that Adam—the first man, the physical father of us all—made. Although Eve was technically the first to rebel, it was Adam who was given the responsibility in overseeing all things in the beginning and thus he is the one who is blamed for all our problems (see Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45). We are going to consider four key questions:

1. How Did God Test Adam?
2. How Did Adam Respond?
3. How Did Adam’s Response Affect Him?
4. How Did Adam’s Response Affect the World?

Genesis 2:8–17 The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He placed the man He had formed. 2:9 The Lord God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ...

2:15 The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 2:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 2:17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”

- ? 10 What was in the middle of the Garden in Eden?
- ? 11 For what two purposes did God “rest” the man in the Garden? (v15)
- ? 12 What commands did God give to the man? What would be the consequences of Adam’s response?

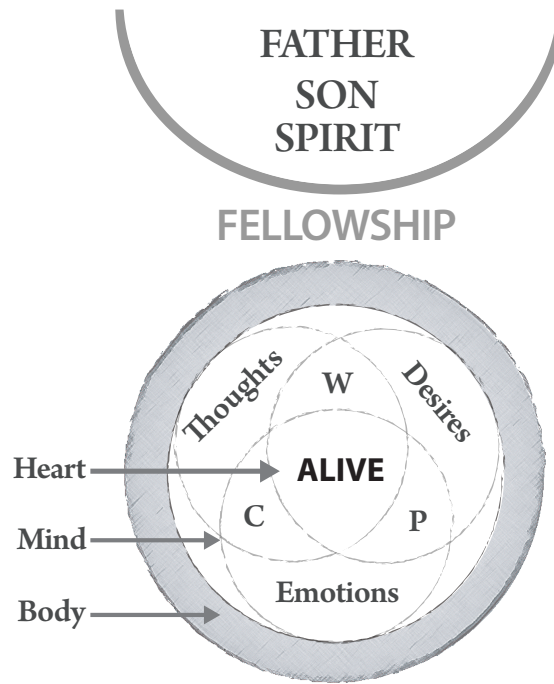
Immediately after God creates Adam, He places (“rests”) Adam in the Garden in Eden so that Adam can “work” and “watch” (the same Hebrew word for “protect” or “guard”) the Garden. Here, God grants Adam certain *responsibilities*. As Adam and Eve kept company with God they would rule the Earth in God’s truth, goodness, and glory as these virtues captivated all their thoughts.

It is very important for you to understand that there was nothing wrong with Adam or Eve at their creation. There was nothing flawed about either of them. They are both judged to be “very good” by God which means that they are equipped and able to carry out the purposes for which God had made them. They had not yet been tested to see if they would live in line with God’s reality.

The only command that God gives Adam is “You can eat from any tree, but don’t eat from the one tree—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” The way Adam responds to God’s instruction will set the course for human history. Adam’s response would bring either great glory or great shame. The only question he will have to answer is, “Will I be careful to hear and accept God’s wise counsel and live according to His reality?”

God also grants the power of choice to Adam and Eve. With the ability of choice also comes great *responsibility*. The destiny of the whole human race would be shaped by the choices that these first two humans would make. God had equipped them and empowered them to fulfill His purposes if this is what they chose to do. *Their choices would result in either life or death, freedom or slavery.*

If you look at the circle diagrams we have added a couple of things. First is the relationship of fellowship that exists between God—Father, Son, and Spirit—and humanity. The second thing to notice is that Adam had LIFE flowing out of his depths, his heart, while in right relationship with God.

Illustration 2: Adam: Fellowship With God

In this passage, God makes it clear what will happen if Adam chooses one way or another. If He follows God's instruction, He and Eve will live (and be free). Yet if they choose to eat from the one forbidden Tree they will die (and become enslaved). As we just said, Adam's soul was created good. This is to say that he had the ability and capacity to live for the glory and pleasure of God. Adam has everything working for his advantage. The only question is "*How will he respond to his God given responsibilities?*"

WORDwork | Day 2

2.2 How Did Adam Respond?

Genesis 3:1–6 Now the serpent was the most cunning [shrewd, crafty] of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’”

3:2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. 3:3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’”

3:4 “No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman. 3:5 “In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

3:6 Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

? 13 What is the first question that the serpent asks the woman (Eve)?

? 14 How does Eve respond?

? 15 How does the serpent respond in verses 4 and 5?
How does this response fit with what God had commanded?

? 16 How does the woman respond in verse 6?
How does the man (the husband, Adam) respond in verse 6?

We have an Enemy, an Adversary. Here we see him enter the story for the first time. Satan comes, using the body of a serpent, to deceive the first man and woman. He is called many things in the Bible—a murder, a liar, the first sinner—but here we see Him at His best in his role as the Great Deceiver (see Revelation 12:9).

God allowed Satan to offer Adam and Eve an alternative to serving Him and submitting to His instruction and counsel. We know from the Bible that Satan persuaded one third of the angels to rebel against God with him (see Revelation 12:3). Now he entices the first man and woman—Adam and Eve—to rebel against God as well. In later studies, we are going to come back and look at this in some detail as it relates to key issues in the Great Spiritual War that is going on around us. For now, just notice some key points of Adam’s failure:

2.2.1 Adam believes the Enemy’s lies about God and His truth.

The Enemy attacks the God’s Truth through the *Thoughts*.

First, we see that the Adversary challenges everything that God had said. In verse 1, he says, “Is it really true that God said...” As a master persuader, the Adversary calls God’s very words into question to raise doubts in the heart and mind of Adam and Eve. Then, once the doubts are raised, he contradicts what God has said—“Surely you will not die...” The Adversary is blatantly saying, “God is lying to you!” This moves him to the next step.

2.2.2 Adam believes the lie and becomes discontent with God’s provision.

The Enemy attacks God’s Goodness through the *Emotions*.

Once the doubts are placed, Satan aggravates the confusion—“for God knows that when you eat from this fruit your eyes will open and you will be like divine beings who know good and evil.” Satan is saying, “God is holding you back from something better!” The first step in moving away from God is to doubt His concern and care for you. Satan tempts the man and the woman with the idea, “There is a better life for you, but God is holding you back, He doesn’t want you to have it!!!”

Satan assured them that it would not hurt them to disobey God and that their active disobedience would actually benefit them by making them become as or like God. It was Satan’s way of telling Adam and Eve that if they rejected God’s rule, they would be free to rule themselves.

2.2.3 **Adam believe's the Enemy's alternative option to God's wise counsel. He attacks God's Glory through the *Desires*.**

Once there is doubt and confusion, the Enemy moves in for the kill. Notice how all of this comes together. God's wise instruction and God's good provision have been called into question. So the Adversary offers them an alternative—"Reach out, take the fruit and become like God!!!" The subtle and subversive idea here is, "God is not going to provide the best for you, you have to grasp that for yourself!!!"

As we have already seen, God uses the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to test Adam and Eve to confirm their relationship with Him. Yet the Adversary twists this test into a temptation to walk away from God, to rebel against Him and His good desires and purposes. Eve chooses the fruit. But where is Adam during all of this? He is there the whole time (3:6)!!! He also chose the fruit rather than God.

Because he was given the responsibility of watching, guarding the Garden (and his wife!!!) he is blamed for all that happens. He had failed miserably. Unwittingly, he had just allied himself with the Devil, the Adversary—the Enemy of God and all that is true, good, and glorious.

Adam had willfully rejected the rule of God and asserted his own self-rule. Instead of living for God's purposes, he would now live for his own purposes. No longer Deo-centric (God-centered), he now became ego-centric (self-conscious or self-centered). But their change of attitude and declared independence from God and His rule over them did not bring Adam and Eve the benefits the Serpent had promised.



As you think about your own life, do you see similar patterns of temptation? Take a minute to think about the following questions:

What **thoughts** do you have that you know are in conflict with Father-God's Word?

What **emotions** do you struggle with that keep you from trusting in Father-God's goodness completely?

What **desires** do you struggle with that drive you to put yourself first before others and before Father-God?

WORDwork | Day 3**2.3 How Did Adam's Response Affect Him?**

God had given Adam everything he needed to make the right choices. If Adam chose to follow God's voice, it would have resulted in glorious freedom. Yet since He foolishly chose to follow the Enemy he would now be subject to death and slavery. These are the same choices and options that we all face:

Choice 1: Follow God >> **Consequence:** Life and Freedom

Choice 2: Follow The Enemy >> **Consequence:** Death and Slavery

Since God had created Adam and Eve with *the ability of contrary choice*—the ability to choose what is not in line with the truth, goodness, and glory of God—God honored their decision. Let's look at the three main consequences for their choice.

2.3.1 Adam's rebellion brought Sin into the world.

Romans 5:12 So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, ... {NET}

God had established the consequences if Adam chose to rebel against His commands—"in the day that you eat (from the forbidden fruit), you will surely die." When Adam chose to eat the fruit, he willfully chose to reject God's counsel and instruction (TRUTH) and follow the counsel of the Enemy (LIE). In this one act, *sin* entered into the world.

This is a good place to define *sin*. In the Hebrew Scriptures, there are about 8 words that define and explain the general idea of sin. In the Greek Scriptures, there are around 12. So there are around 20 terms in the Bible that define the many different *forms* and *expressions* of *sin*. But there are a couple of passages that give us descriptions of the *root* of sin.

In 1 John 3:4 we hear, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; indeed, *sin is lawlessness*." This means that sin is an attitude or way of thinking that totally disregards God's *wise commandments* as a means of *instruction* or *counsel*. Generally speaking, a *law* is a command that also has a penalty for disobedience. God commands Adam not to eat from The Tree and says that he will be penalized with death if he disobeys that command. Adam sins when he disobeys God's law.

But disobedience is not Adam's biggest problem. In fact, *obedience or disobedience is only the result* of another more fundamental mind-set. In Romans 14:23 we hear, "... whatever is not from faith is sin." This truth gives us the **root** for all sin—*lack of faith*. For now, let's just define faith as *belief that leads to confident trust*. So when Adam sins, when he is disobedient to God's commands, *he does so because he does not first believe what God had said is true nor does he apparently trust in God's goodness*. Sin is always produced when God's counsel and instruction (TRUTH) are rejected due to a lack of faith—*belief and trust in God*.

Key Definition: Sin is always rooted in *not trusting* the Lord-God to be wise or good. Sin takes hold in any activity of thought, desire, or action that rejects truth, twists goodness, or corrupts what is glorious. Ultimately, sin rejects the good character of God and His wise instruction.

2.3.2 Adam's rebellion brought death into the world.

Adam's sinful rebellion brought death into the World. *In the Bible, death never means extinction or annihilation or ceasing to exist*. In fact, every human being who has ever been conceived still exists. Our human spirits were designed by God to be immortal which is to say that once we came into existence, we would never cease to exist. Everyone who has ever lived will exist forever. But not everyone who exists forever will *live* (in joy, peace, and blessing) forever.

When we consider death from a biblical perspective, we see that the idea has at its root the concept of *separation*. So when someone dies physically, this means that his or her *spiritual self separates from the physical body* and goes into eternity. The physical body is dead because its life-giving "power" or "energy" is removed.

But notice that Adam did not "drop dead" when he ate the fruit. In fact, he would live for another 900 years!!! Adam did experience another form of death that day—**spiritual death**. If you will remember, our spiritual selves were designed to receive their life from God. When our spiritual component is separated from God—the root and source of all life—it dies. **Spiritual death is simply separation and alienation from God, the source of all life.**

As Paul says, the heart of all those who reject God's truth becomes darkened (Romans 1:18). Instead of being the wellspring of life, it is now empty and void. Adam's physical body was also *corrupted by the power of sin*. He would grow old, get sick, and eventually die physically. From the day that Adam ate the fruit until the day he died, he would have seen everything in his world coming unraveled.

Because he did not trust the wisdom and goodness of Father-God, his act of disobedience brought sin, death, and separation from God into the human experience.

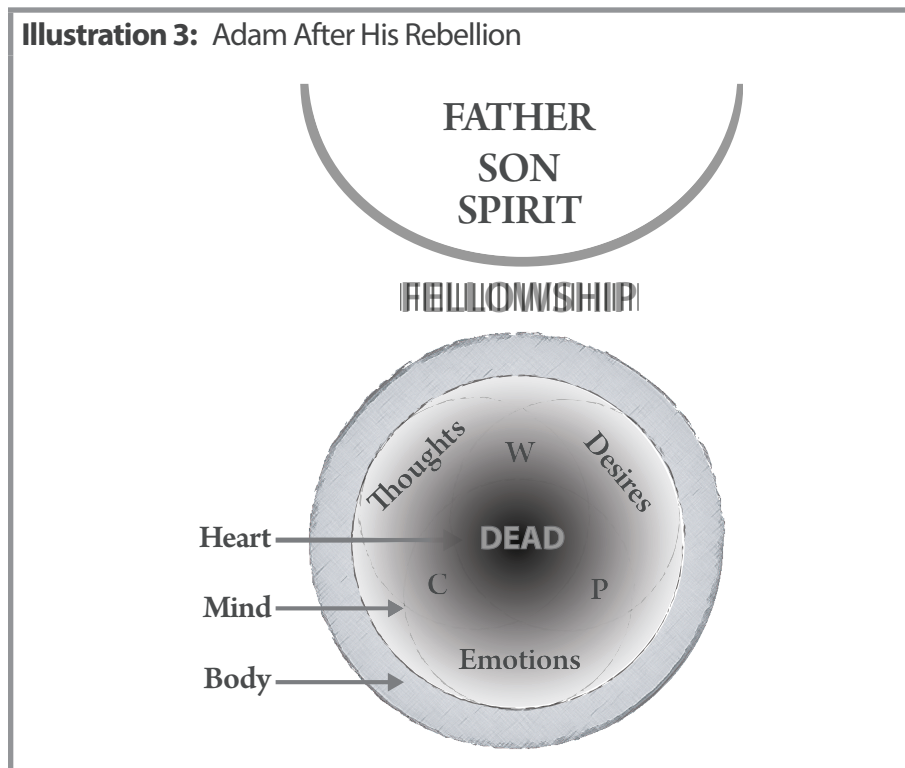
2.3.3 Adam's rebellion brought slavery to sin into the human experience.

Far from gaining the freedom and god-like status The Serpent had promised, Adam and Eve had become hopelessly enslaved to sin under the dominion of the Devil. John tells us:

1 John 3:8 The one who commits sin is of the Devil, for the Devil has sinned from the beginning....

It doesn't take long to see the effects of this reality unfold in the next episodes of the human race. Cain and Abel are the first sons born to Adam and Eve. Cain murders Abel. In the stories from Genesis 4—11 we see murder, violence, and treachery spread deep and wide throughout the world. Sin and shame have taken deep root in the human experience.

Take a look at our circle diagram now—this represents what happened to Adam after his rebellion.



WORDwork | Day 4

2.4 **How Did Adam's Response Affect the World?**

So, what does this have to do with us today? The answer to that question can be found in the following passage:

Romans 5:12-19 Now, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and **so death spread to all people, because all sinned** ... For by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, ... So then through one transgression **there resulted condemnation to all men**, ... For through the one man's disobedience **the many were made sinners** ... {NET}

After their rebellion and fall, Adam and Eve could not pass to their descendants what they no longer possessed. Instead of giving their children a glorious inheritance of life, goodness, and peace (rest) they passed on the shameful effects of sin, death, and condemnation. The reality of this terrible tragedy comes home when Cain, the first human born after the Fall, murders his brother Abel (Genesis 4).

Every human being has been born into this terrible state. Consider the following passage and three main consequences for us:

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were (1) **dead in the trespasses and sins** 2:2 in which you once walked, (2) following the course of this world, **following the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 2:3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and (3) **were by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind. {ESV}

2.4.1 **We are all born physically alive, but spiritually dead.**

This is one of the most important points we want you to understand in this study. *The first thing you need to figure out about life is not whether you are good or bad, but whether you are dead or alive!!!* This spiritual death is closely associated with trespasses/transgressions and sin. Notice also that Paul says we were dead *in* our trespasses and sins. Our own personal sins did not cause our spiritual death; we were already spiritually dead and our sins simply give evidence that this is true. I

have two daughters and I never had to teach them how to do what is wrong; they were born with that ability and tendency!

2.4.2 **We are all born under the tyranny of Satan (The Devil) completely enslaved to our own sinful desires.**

We can never forget that we have a powerful and restless spiritual adversary who is called Satan (The Accuser) and The Devil (The Slanderer). Because of Adam's choices, we come into this world enslaved under his wicked dominion. In Ephesians 2:2 he is called the "prince of the power of the air." In other places he is called the "god of this age":

2 Corinthians 4:4 ... the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The Scriptures make it absolutely clear that every human comes into this world "bent" toward what is evil. Left own our own, we would follow "the course of this world" which will one day come to an end when The Kingdom of Christ comes. The message of this world is, "Do what YOU want to do; don't let anyone tell you otherwise!"

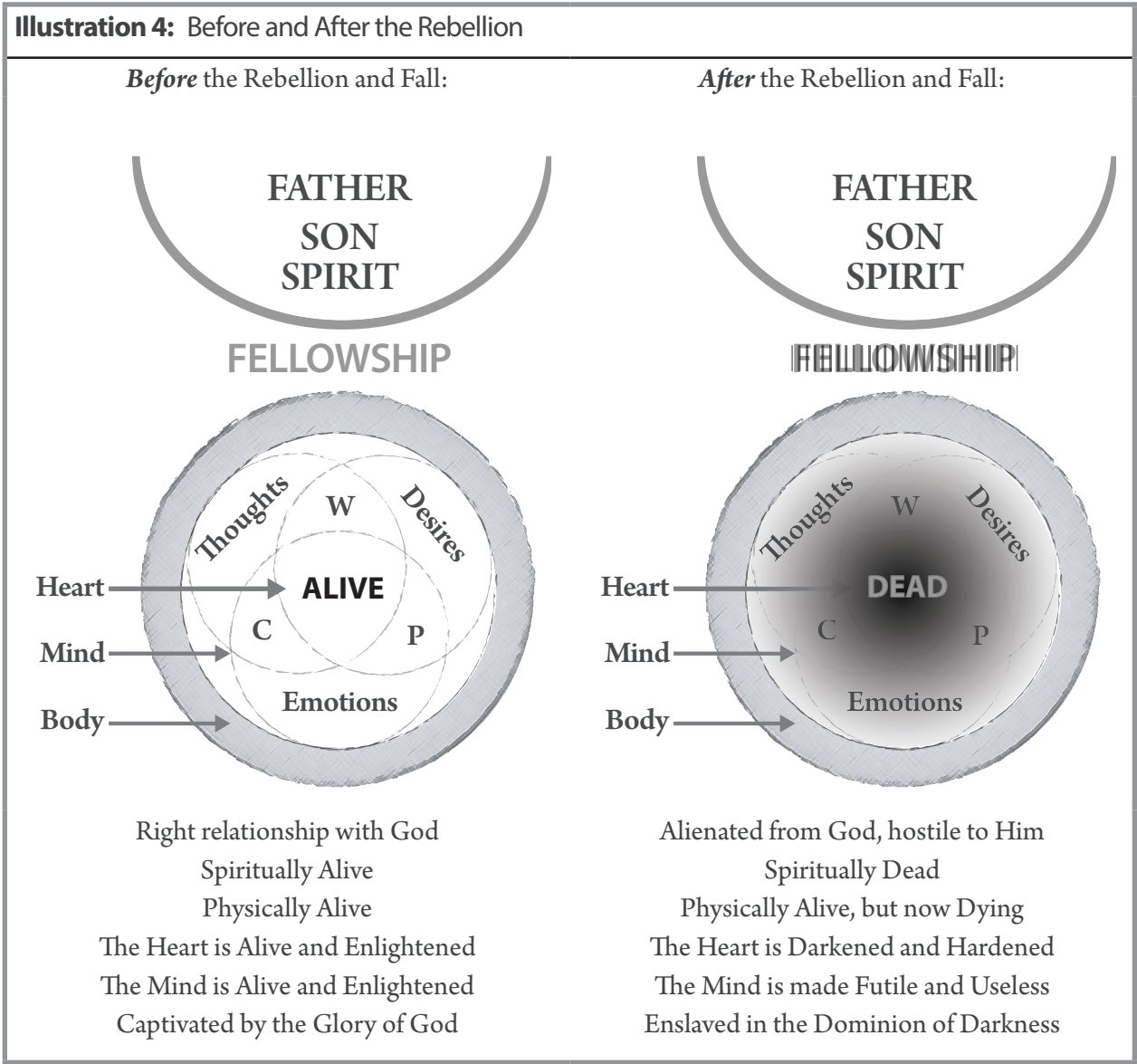
2.4.3 **We are all children of wrath by nature.**

So Paul's terrifying description of our predicament "dead in Adam" comes to this conclusion: we were all by nature children of wrath. Because the One True God loves all that is good and glorious, He hates what is evil and shameful. In the present time, God reveals His "present wrath" in allowing people to continue in their rejection of His truth and their foolish and stubborn rebellion against Him (see Romans 1:18-28 on the next page). There will be a time of His "future wrath" when all God's enemies will "pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength" (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10).

To be "children of wrath" means that we are, each and everyone of us, deserving to *receive* God's present wrath and *inherit* His wrath in the future. The only way that anyone could be free of this terrible state *is for God to intervene*. We are completely *helpless* and *hopeless* on our own. We are born completely powerless to free ourselves from the powers that enslave us and hold us captive. We are born spiritual dead, alienated, and hostile to God. We are all **sinners by birth and we are sinners by choice**.

2.5 **What Does All This Mean in the Master Story?**

It is critical to understand that when Adam rebelled, he did not lose his ability to be the image and likeness of God. Now, God’s reality would be marred and distorted as it is reflected in *fallen humanity*. In fact after the rebellion, God did not destroy Adam and Eve but he did let them bear the consequences of their choices and so He expelled them from the Garden and from His personal presence. Adam and Eve, as well as their descendants (all humanity), would continue to display the image and likeness of God in creation, but the reality would be *distorted* (see Genesis 9:6; James 3:9). Take a look at our diagram:



It is important to understand that Adam and Eve, like us all, chose to reject or suppress the truth of God in their rebellion. *It is not that they did not know the truth, they knew it and rejected it.* Take a look at the following passage. It gives an outline of what went wrong in the rebellion:

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people **who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness**, 1:19 because what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 1:20 For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, because they are understood through what has been made. So people are without excuse. {NET}

First of all, take note of this very important reality: *God has clearly revealed Himself and His Truth to us but we suppress it—we hold it down, cover it over so that we don't have to hear it.* It is not like we don't have the Truth or can't know it. We have the Truth and reject it. This has been made clear to us so that we are all *without excuse*. The passage continues:

Romans 1:21-28 For although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts and **their senseless hearts were darkened**. 1:22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 1:23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image resembling mortal human beings or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles... 1:25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ... 1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a **depraved mind**, to do what should not be done. {NET}

We hear that rejection of God's truth, goodness, and glory leads to two deep spiritual consequences: 1] our **minds** are made enslaved to a futile and worthless way of thinking (a *depraved mind*), and 2] our senseless **hearts** are darkened. This affects everything else. Our thoughts, desires, and emotions are warped, turned in on themselves. We want to focus on ourselves, rather than focusing on the One True God and His good and glorious purposes for us. We all need to be spiritually renewed, renovated, healed to be right with God again. *The good news*

is that Father-God has provided all that we need to be restored to Him and that is what we will consider next.

? 17 The “alternative option” of serving self rather than serving God is always a tempting offer. Can you see how sin, death, and condemnation have affected and “ruled” your life?



Scan back over or reflect on this week’s reading and ask yourself:

1. What have I learned that gave me new ideas and images?
2. How do these truths call me to change the way I am thinking?
3. How do these truths call me to trust Father-God more?

Session 3

Question 3: What Did Father-God Do To Save Us?

Core Truth: Father-God was not obligated to intervene after Adam chose to rebel against Him. However, Father-God chose to send His One Unique Son Jesus to call us back to Himself, cleanse us of our sins, and heal us of our rebellious and darkened hearts.

To Remember: “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Objective: As we have already heard, The One True God wants us to know Him. Yet we rejected Him and rebelled against Him. Instead of rejecting us, our Holy Heavenly Father sent His One Unique Son Jesus to find us and to save us from sin, death, and condemnation to give us **righteousness** (right relationship with God), **life** and **peace**.

In this session, we are going to ask the same basic questions about Jesus that we asked about Adam:

1. How Was Jesus Equipped to Function?
2. How Did God Test Jesus?
3. How Did Jesus Respond?
4. How Did Jesus’ Response Affect Him?
5. How Did Jesus’ Response Affect the World?

Prayer: “Father-God help us to see clearly what Jesus has done for us. Help us to know and experience your great and never-ending love. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts; open our ears to your truth; fill us with your love. For Jesus’ sake, Amen.”

WORDwork | Day 1

3.1 How Was Jesus Equipped to Function?

1 Timothy 2:5–6 For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, Himself human, 2:6 who gave Himself—a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.

? 18 How is Jesus described in this passage?
(You should notice three things Paul says about Him)

3.1.1 Jesus was truly a human.

In this session we want you to understand two things: 1] Jesus was a human just like all of us, and 2] Jesus was God in human form (*not like us*). These two truths are central to Christianity.

In the Timothy passage above, Paul tells us three things about Jesus: 1) He is the one mediator between God and Humanity, 2) He is Himself Human, 3) He gave Himself as a ransom. The first thing that we want you to notice is that Paul affirms clearly that Jesus was in fact a human being. One of the first major false teachings that entered Christianity denied Jesus' humanity. But is clear in the Gospels that Jesus had a body and He lived as a human among humans. If Jesus is not human, He could not function as a true mediator and substitute for other humans. This takes us to our next point: Jesus was human, but He was also the Son of God.

3.1.2 Jesus was truly God as the Son of God.

Take a look at the following passage; it is the message that Mary the mother of Jesus received announcing what God would do in and through her:

Luke 1:30–33 Then the angel told her: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 1:31 Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call His name Jesus. 1:32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 1:33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.

1:34 Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not

been intimate with a man?” 1:35 The angel replied to her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.

Jesus was not conceived by a human father, but by the power of His Heavenly Father. In one of the most profound mysteries revealed in the Bible, God takes the egg of a young virgin, Mary, and uses it to implant His divine nature and life so that God Himself—the Second person of the Trinity, the Eternal Son—becomes a human being!!! *Jesus is literally the Son of God and this means that He possesses the very nature of God.*

Mary was Jesus’ human, physical mother, but God is His father. The Bible clearly teaches that the virgin birth of Jesus is not up for debate! If Jesus had been conceived from an earthly father, He too would have been born spiritually dead and in bondage to the power of sin and He could not therefore possibly be our Savior. If Jesus were a fallen descendant of Adam, He would have needed a Savior too!

Jesus *was* (and is) fully human just as Adam was and just as you and I are. However, since Jesus was not a descendant of Adam *he was born free from the effects of sin and death.* The Bible makes it clear that both the guilt of Adam’s sin and the corruption of Adam’s sin is passed through the father. Since Jesus had no human father, he was not born a sinner as you and I are.

Also, Jesus possessed ***eternal life***. Notice what Jesus himself said about this:

John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to the Son to have life in Himself.

Jesus was granted the type of life that the Father Himself possessed. For now, let’s just call this *eternal life* since it is a type of life that is not dependent on anything else. When God created Adam, Adam was dependent on God for His life. When Jesus was conceived, He possessed the very life of God Himself, eternal life.

Physically Jesus is just like any other human being. However, His Spiritual Self was perfect and He possessed life *in* and *of* Himself. Jesus is fully human and fully God. All the teaching of Christianity hangs on this point.

3.1.3 **Jesus was the Perfect Sacrifice, Once and for all.**

1 John 3:5 You know that He was revealed so that He might take away sins, and **there is no sin in Him.**

In some of the best news in the whole Bible, we hear that Father-God chose not to let Adam continue in his fallen state. Instead, in His love and grace Father-God chose to intervene and save Adam from the tragedy of his fall. Immediately after the Rebellion and Fall of Adam, we hear, “The LORD God made garments from skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them” [Genesis 3:21].

Where did God get skins to clothe Adam and Eve? Apparently, he killed animals to provide the skins. When sin occurs, something or someone must die to pay the price that God requires for sin. But God in His mercy spares Adam from physical death and graciously chooses to kill two animals instead.

This introduces us to the idea of **sacrifice** and **redemption**. Let’s consider three points that we will explore in the remainder of this study:

1. When sin occurs, a **death** must be given as a payment because the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).
2. God allows a **substitute**—a sacrifice—to make the payment for sinners who deserve His condemnation and wrath.
3. The **benefits** of the substitute’s payment are given to those who do not deserve it—sinners.

Although God had graciously allowed the sacrifice of animals to be the “substitute payment” for Adam’s sin, this was not enough. In the Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament, the writer says that it is impossible for the sacrifice of animals to take away sins (10:4, 19:11). To deal completely with the effects of Adam’s sin, another type of sacrifice would need to be made. This is where we must turn to look at the life and works of Jesus Christ—the Savior, Redeemer, and King of all Humanity.

In the Timothy passage above, Paul says that Jesus is the only mediator between God and humanity *who gave Himself* as a ransom—a payment for sin—for us. It is His willing and joyous self-sacrifice that opens our way back to Father-God. Jesus was equipped to be our perfect representative, sacrifice, and savior.

? 19 How was Jesus like other humans?

? 20 How was Jesus different from other humans?

WORDwork | Day 2

3.2 How Did Father-God Test Jesus?

3.2.1 Jesus was tested and tempted in the Wilderness.

Just as Adam was tested, so also Jesus was tested to see if He would choose to live faithfully to His Heavenly Father or if He would choose some “alternative option.” In the beginning, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil (Matthew 4:1ff; Luke 4:1ff). Unlike Adam, Jesus passes his first test.

This first set of temptations was not the end of Jesus’ testing however. Luke tells us, “So when the Devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him until a more opportune time” [Luke 4:13]. This more opportune time came in the Garden of Gethsemane.

3.2.2 Jesus was tested and tempted in the Garden of Gethsemane.

At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus faced His greatest test and temptation. Just as Adam had been tested and tempted in a Garden of Eden in relation to a Tree, so also Jesus was tempted in the Garden of Gethsemane with the reality of another tree—the Cross. We are going to discuss some key elements that took place in the Garden from the accounts that you find in Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42 and Luke 22:39-46.

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus took part in the Passover with his disciples. He redefined one of the four cups of wine they drank together—the Cup of Redemption—as “His blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins.” The next day, at the Cross, He would drink a very different Cup—the Cup of Judgment, the Cup of Plagues, poured by God against all sin for all time. As Jesus prayed about this in the Garden he said,

Mark 14:36 And He said, “Abba, Father! All things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”

In Mark 14:33-34 we hear, “[Jesus] began to be *greatly distressed and troubled*” when he first entered the Garden to pray. He also said, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death.’ These terms “distressed” and “troubled” do not do justice what is intended here. Jesus experiences a “shuddering horror” and

this sends Him into great anguish and distress, even to the point of death. This distress becomes so intense He begins to sweat drops of blood (Luke 22:44).

We know from what Jesus prays that His terror and anguish is related to the “Cup” that He must now drink. What is this cup? For now, understand that the “Cup” that Jesus is referring to is what will take place on the Cross on the following day. We are convinced that Jesus is not dreading the physical torment alone; there is something greater weighing on Him. Jesus is now faced with the reality that He will be *separated* from the Father, *abandoned* to sin, death, and condemnation to pay for our sins, defeat the powers of evil and bring peace between God and man. This is no small task, and the reality of this great work is terrifying to Jesus.

In this context, Jesus warns the disciples at least three times to be alert and pray that they not enter into *temptation* (see Luke 22:40 and Matthew 26:41). This whole scene is one of temptation. We are convinced that in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is being tormented (perhaps directly by Satan himself) with the reality of having to drink the Cup of God’s Judgment poured out against all sin for all time. But this is also a test, to see if Jesus will stay the course and do what no one else has done. Let’s consider three things here that parallel Adam’s temptation, but in light of Jesus’ faithfulness.

3.2.3 **Jesus commits Himself to the truth of His mission. (Thoughts)**

Jesus *knew* that He had been sent by the Father to accomplish salvation. For some time now, Jesus had been speaking to the disciples about the reality and necessity of His suffering and death:

Matthew 20:28 “...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.”

We even see that Jesus was ready and willing to die for his people, His sheep, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” [John 10:11]. Jesus did not accept any “alternative option” to His true mission.

3.2.4 **Jesus did not allow His anguish to overcome His trust; He entrusted Himself fully to the goodness/justice of the Father. (Emotions)**

1 Peter 2:22–23 He [Jesus] did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth; 2:23 when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He was suffering, He did not threaten but **entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly.**

In all that we see Jesus do, He continually submits Himself to the wisdom, goodness, and justice of His Heavenly Father. He trusted that His father's plans and purposes for Him were indeed good.

3.2.5 **Jesus submits His desires to the Father's will for His glory. (Desire)**

Notice finally that despite Jesus' fear and agony over doing what His Father calls Him to do, each time He responds with "Yet not what I desire, but what You desire" and "Let Your Will be done." Earlier, thinking about all that was about to take place, Jesus prayed to the Father:

John 17:1 ... "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son,
so that The Son may glorify You ..."

Unlike Adam, Jesus remained faithful to the Father in all things to the end.

? 21 Can you see how Jesus' anguish in the Garden mirrors Adam's temptation in Eden?

WORDwork | Day 3**3.3 How Did Jesus Respond?**

John 8:29 “The One who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him.”

For the entirety of His earthly life, Jesus never once said “no” to the desires and will of His Father. *Jesus was totally dependent upon and subject to His Father.* Jesus was completely available to the Father and the Father was completely available to the Son. This means that Jesus *never sinned*, He always did the things that brought pleasure and glory to His Father. Peter clearly tells us, “*He committed no sin nor was deceit found in his mouth*” (see 1 Peter 2:22).

As Jesus faced the torture and death of the Cross, He was convinced that it was the Father’s desire and will for Him to drink the terrible Cup of Judgment to accomplish His redemptive plans. At his crucifixion, Jesus, would fulfill part of His destiny, part of His purpose for coming to Earth, by *paying the full payment for all sin for all time*. This means that Jesus would have to experience the full force of death. Just as Adam first experienced *spiritual death* and then *physical death*, so also would Christ. For Christ to taste spiritual death, He would be “separated” from the Source of all life—God the Father. For the first time in His existence, Jesus the Son would experience God as the Righteous Judge who would pour upon Him the sins of all people for all time. Jesus would bear our death and guilt and shame in a way that we never could. He would bear these things for us, so that we could be free of them.

3.4 How Did Jesus’ Response Affect Him?

The New Testament accounts allow us to know that Jesus was nailed to the Cross at approximately 9 AM, Friday in the year AD 30. From 9 AM until Noon Jesus suffered the wrath of men as they mocked Him, spat upon Him, and taunted Him to free Himself from the Cross, as proof of His claim to be the Son of God, Israel’s King, and humanity’s only Savior. But then from Noon till about 3 PM Jesus suffered under the wrath of God as God dealt with the problem of sin once and for all.

As we survey what we know about this time, it is important to take note of **WHAT** Jesus says and **WHEN** He says it. This will give us some insight into what is going on. Let’s look at the critical statements Jesus makes:

3.4.1 **Jesus addressed God as His “Father” before the noon darkness.**

Luke 23:34 Then Jesus said, “**Father**, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided His clothes and cast lots.

Jesus called God “Father” as the Romans were dividing his clothes among themselves. Even when suffering at the hands of godless men, Jesus still prays for them asking the Father to forgive them.

3.4.2 **Darkness covered the whole earth from Noon until around 3PM.**

Luke 23:44–45 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three, because the sun’s light failed.

From the Noon to the 3 PM, Jesus drank the Cup that he feared. Jesus experienced *spiritual death* (separation from God) as God dealt with Jesus not as His beloved Son, but with Jesus as “sin for us.” The darkness gives us the indication that what is happening is very “dark” indeed. In the three hours of His being separated from the Father, Jesus became by choice what we had become by birth—spiritually dead and separated from the source of life. In these hours, Jesus takes upon Himself the sins of all people for all time.

3.4.3 **In the darkness, Jesus addressed God as “My God” and not “My Father.**

Matthew 27:46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Elí, Elí, lemá sabachtháni?” that is, “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”

In the darkness in his suffering, Jesus cried out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” This is a quote from Psalm 22:1, which was a recognized Messianic Psalm by the Jewish world. What Jesus cries out here is significant.

This is the only time during His earthly life that Jesus ever addressed God as “My God.” Jesus addressed God 170 times in the New Testament as “Father,” 19 times as “My Father” and 2 times as “Abba Father.” 191 times Jesus calls God “Father,” but never “God.” So why is this the only time that Jesus addressed God as “my God”?

During those three hours of darkness, Jesus was not in a Father-Son relationship with God, but a judicial relationship. Remember, in these hours He became so identified with the sinfulness of fallen humanity that He became sin for you and for me! He drank the Cup of Wrath that signified His spiritual death (separa-

tion from God) so that we as the fallen heirs of fallen Adam could drink from the Cup of Salvation and have access to His eternal kind of life.

It is difficult for us to understand and fully appreciate Jesus' agony because we were born spiritually dead and separated from God. Jesus, however, for all of His eternal existence had only known a continuous fellowship with His Father in love and glory. For Jesus, separation from His Father was the worst possible agony He could imagine or endure.

3.4.4 **Jesus cries out victoriously “It is finished!”**

John 19:28–30 After this, **when Jesus knew that everything was now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled**, He said, “I’m thirsty!” 19:29 A jar full of sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on hyssop and held it up to His mouth. 19:30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, **“It is finished!”** Then bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

At approximately 3 PM, Jesus realized that “everything had already been accomplished” and He cries out, “It is finished!!!” Notice that He did not say “I am finished,” but “**It is finished.**” Jesus had fulfilled the eternal purposes for which He had been sent to earth. Christ had made the perfect payment for sin for all time and had opened a way for fallen humanity to have complete and unhindered access to God in a personal relationship with Him.

And take note: *Jesus’ cry of victory came before His physical death!!!* In the hours that Jesus had spent under the wrath of God, separated from the Father, He had experienced *spiritual death*. But now that was over. With His relationship with the Father restored, we could say that before Jesus died physically, He experienced a “spiritual resurrection.” Even before He died physically, He had made the complete payment for sin, He had drained the Cup of God’s Judgment for all time, and He had provided the basis for a “new and living way” to God (Hebrews 10:20).

Also, Matthew tells us that after Jesus said His last words and gave us His Spirit, “Suddenly, the curtain of the sanctuary was split in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked and the rocks were split” (Matthew 27:51). This curtain in the Temple in Jerusalem separated the Holy Place from The Most Holy Place/Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed enter this most holy place once a year. This curtain was 60 feet tall and 30 feet wide and it represented the separation of the Lord-God from “common people.” *It is clear that Jesus has*

opened up a “new way” for everyone to come directly into the presence of the Lord-God (see Hebrews 10:19-22).

3.4.5 **Jesus again addressed God as “Father.”**

Luke 23:46 And Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit.” Saying this, He breathed His last.

When Jesus addressed God as “Father” again just before He released His spirit, He gave evidence that He was once again in right relationship with the Father—Jesus was spiritually alive. Just as Jesus had said, the Father had given Him the power to lay down His life and take it up again, so here He is in total control of His death. Jesus “yielded up His spirit” to the care of His father and His body entered into physical death.

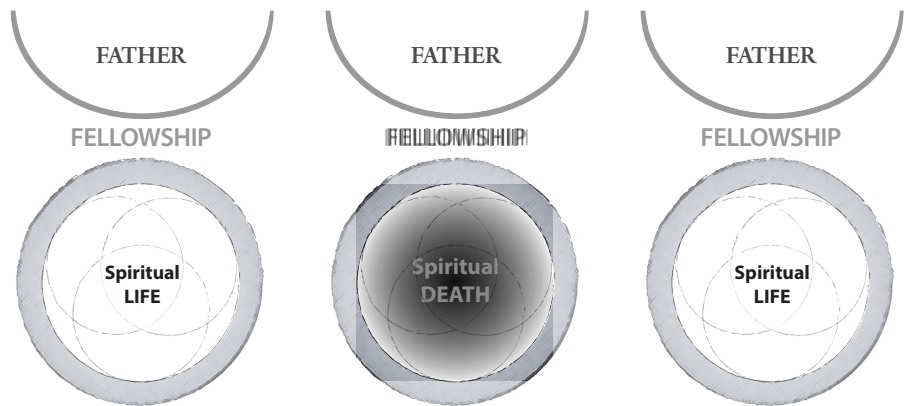
3.4.6 **Three Days later, Jesus was resurrected from the dead.**

1 Corinthians 15:20–22 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep... 15:22
For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

On the Sunday after his crucifixion, Jesus’ Spirit returned to his physical body which was then resurrected and transformed into a new body. Jesus died, He was buried, and He was raised to new life.

Today, it is important that you see what happened on the Cross and understand the significance of these key statements that Jesus made. On the following page, there is a chart that lays this out with some corresponding Scripture to give you a better picture of what happened. Take some time to work through the chart.

Illustration 5: Christ On The Cross



Friday—9AM	12 Noon	3 PM	The 3rd Day
The Wrath of Men <i>"Father forgive them..."</i> (Luke 23:34) Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; He was despised, and we didn't value Him.	The Wrath of God <i>"My God, My God Why have you forsaken me?"</i> (Matthew 27:46) Jesus Drains the Cup of Wrath Poured Out Against All Sin!!! Isaiah 53:4 Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. Hebrews 9:26 <i>But now he (Jesus Christ) has appeared once for all at the consummation of the ages to put away sin by his sacrifice.</i>	Salvation Completed <i>"It is finished..."</i> <i>"Father, Into your hands I commit my spirit..."</i> (John 19:28-30, Luke 23:46) Isaiah 53:5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds.	Resurrected <i>"I was dead, but look, now I am alive—forever and ever—and I hold the keys of death and of Hell!"</i> (Revelation 1:17-18) Isaiah 53:10–11 Yet the Lord was pleased to crush Him severely. When You make Him a restitution offering, He will see His seed, He will prolong His days, and by His hand, the Lord's pleasure will be accomplished. He will see it out of His anguish, and He will be satisfied with His knowledge. My righteous Servant will justify many, and He will carry their iniquities.

WORDwork | Day 4

3.5 How Did Jesus' Response Affect the World (Us)?

2 Corinthians 5:21 He (Father-God) made the One who did not know sin (Jesus) to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This verse may be one of the most profound verses in the entire Bible. For now, you should just understand that Jesus became so completely identified with fallen humanity and sin on the cross, that God as the Righteous Judge dealt with Christ as if He himself were the sum total of all sin and sinfulness. On the Cross, God dealt with the issue of the sin that separates fallen humanity from Him in One Man, at One Time, for All people. As you should know by now, we have been contrasting how Christ came to redeem the terrible effects of Adam's Rebellion in the Garden. If you remember, we looked at Romans 5 which explains the universal and catastrophic effects of Adam's sin. Now let's return to that passage, but this time let's take note of how Christ has come as the "Last Adam" to counter all that Adam did:

Romans 5:12-21 So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned ... 15 But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if the many died through the transgression of the one man, **how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ multiply to the many!** 16 And the gift is not like the one who sinned. For judgment, resulting from the one transgression, led to condemnation, **but the gracious gift from the many failures led to God making things right.** 17 For if, by the transgression of the one man, death reigned through the one, **how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ!**

18 Consequently, just as condemnation for all people came through one transgression, **so too through the one righteous act came the ability to be right with God leading to life for all people.** 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, **so also through the obedience of one man many will be made right with God.** 20 Now the law came in so that the

transgression may increase, but where sin increased, grace multiplied all the more, 21 so that just as sin reigned in death, **so also grace will reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** {NET}

We are going to return to define a lot of these words like “righteousness” in a later study. For now, just take note of how Christ has completely reversed the effects of the Fall of Adam. *From a place of blessing Adam brought curse into the human experience; from the place of curse, Christ brings blessing to the human experience.* The following chart highlights the difference in Adam and Christ:

Illustration 6: Adam vs. Christ	
What Adam did <i>to</i> us:	What Christ did <i>for</i> us:
Brought sin to the world	Revealed the right way to God
Brought death through sin	Defeated death, brought life
Brought condemnation from God	Established Peace with God
Brought slavery to sin	Freed us from slavery to sin
Brought captivity under Satan	Destroyed the power of Satan, released us from that dark captivity

Every human being is born “Dead in Adam.” We gain the inheritance of Adam’s choice by birth. However, God desires that we trust in Christ so that we can inherit the benefits of Christ’s perfect life.

As we close out this week, we want you to understand that Jesus is our perfect substitute. He paid the price (the IOU) for our sins, He bore our punishment, He was abandoned to the forces of evil and darkness so that we would never be abandoned (see Hebrews 13:5). Jesus experienced the full force of death, both spiritual and physical, for us so that we could be free from the tyranny of both. Consider this:

Hebrews 2:9, 17 Now we see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God’s grace **he would experience death on behalf of everyone....** Therefore he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make atonement [*a perfectly satisfying sacrifice*] for the sins of the people. {our translation}

Jesus' complete obedience to the Father and submission to Him has qualified Him to be our Savior. Part of the Good News of the Gospel is that Father-God is calling us to give our allegiance, our trust to Christ and allow Him to be our representative, our mediator, who brings us back to the Father:

1 Timothy 2:4–6 [God Our Savior] wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, Himself human, 2:6 who gave Himself—a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.

? 22 How has this lesson helped you to understand what Jesus has accomplished for you?

? 23 Does this lesson give you more insight into what Jesus means when He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)?

? 24 Can you see that what Jesus offers us is so far greater than what we could accomplish on our own?



Scan back over or reflect on this week's reading and ask yourself:

1. What have I learned that gave me new ideas and images?
2. How do these truths call me to change the way I am thinking?
3. How do these truths call me to trust Father-God more?

Session 4

Question 4: **How Are The Father, Son and Spirit At Work Now?**

- Core Truth:** Jesus has now been declared “Son-of-God-in-power” which means that all power and authority over all things have been given to Him in the present age. The Father and the Son have sent the Holy Spirit to give witness to the Truth of Jesus and to indwell His people, equipping, and empowering them to live as His children.
- To Remember:** “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”
[2 Corinthians 13:13]
- Objective:** It is important to realize that Jesus is still at work in our world. As the Father and Son oversee all things from the Heavenly Realm, they have sent the Holy Spirit to work powerfully in our world. For all those who are “in Christ”, the Spirit brings the personal presence of Christ Himself so that Christ indwells us and empowers us to do all things for the glory and pleasure of the Father.
- Prayer:** “Father, you have given us everything we need to live and be pleasing to you through our personal knowledge of Jesus. Enable us to be sensitive to the work of your Spirit as He enables us to follow Christ. Amen”

WORDwork | Day 1

4.1 **How are the Father and Son at Work in the World?**

In our last session, we focused on what God *has done in the past* for us. The Father sent the Son to find us in our lostness, to bring the opportunity of new life to us, and to be the completely satisfying sacrifice for our sins. This week we want to take a look at what the Father, Son, and Spirit are presently doing in our world. Let's begin by saying a few more things about Jesus' past and present ministry to us and for us.

4.1.1 **Jesus was raised from the Dead as the Son-of-God-in-Power and now has all authority/power in Heaven and on Earth.**

Romans 1:4 ...and [He] was **declared to be the Son-of-God-in-power** according to the Spirit of holiness *by his resurrection from the dead*, Jesus Christ our Lord, ... {NET}

On the Sunday morning following His Friday crucifixion, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus returned to His physical body buried in a tomb near Jerusalem. By the power of God's glory in the Holy Spirit, Christ was physically raised from the dead to an entirely new kind of life in which He would never experience death again:

Romans 6:9–10 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 6:10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. {ESV}

In His resurrection, Jesus has also been declared to be the “Son-of-God-in-power” which means that Jesus is now The One who has all authority and power over all things. Hear what Jesus himself said about this:

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came up and said to them, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me ...*”

Christianity affirms two key truths about Jesus. First, He is Savior meaning that He is the one and only Savior of all mankind. Secondly, He is Lord meaning He has been given all ruling authority; there is nothing that exists that is not under Jesus power.

4.1.2 **Jesus has defeated the Devil
and stripped and shamed His Dominion of Darkness.**

In the background of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion, we see the Enemy, the Devil hard at work. He enters Judas to betray Jesus; he brings confusion to the other disciples. All of this was orchestrated to kill Jesus and put an end to His mission.

However, the Devil unwittingly orchestrated his own undoing. For in working to bring Jesus to the Cross, he provided just the right opportunity for Christ to defeat his evil and gain back the rights to this Earth and to all of us who were lost in the Rebellion of Adam:

Hebrews 2:14–15 Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the Devil— 2:15 and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.

In his death, Jesus was not destroyed by the Devil—He destroyed the power of the Devil!!! Jesus also stripped and shamed the fallen angelic rulers and authorities of this world that oversee the Dominion of Darkness:

Colossians 2:15 Stripping the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross. {our translation}

Now we know from other portions of Scripture that the Devil is still prowling about here on Earth, with His minions opposing God's work in all things—they have not yet been deposed or destroyed. In the present age, God has seen fit in His wisdom to allow these enemies to remain for a while. However, we must realize that Jesus has provided the victory over these dark forces by His death on the Cross.

4.1.3 **Jesus ascended back to Heaven and is now the Head of All things!**

Ephesians 1:20-23 ... [God the Father] raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms 1:21 far above every rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 1:22 And God put all things under Christ's feet, and he gave him to the church as head over all things. 1:23 Now the church is his Body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

For forty days following His resurrection, Jesus showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs and taught His disciples in preparation for their ministry follow-

ing His soon departure back to His Father. When the forty days had ended, Jesus ascended out of their sight from the Mount of Olives and returned to Heaven to be seated at the right hand of God. Jesus is now seated, not because He is tired, but because His work of redemption is totally completed on your behalf. It is finished! For this reason, the writer of Hebrews encourages us with these words:

Hebrews 12:1–2 ... Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, 12:2 **keeping our eyes on Jesus**, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne.

Now in the present time, Jesus lives as the Head of His Body—the Church—and He lives in His people, filling His people by the Holy Spirit, uniting His people to be of one heart and mind in the things that are pleasing to God. As we will see, Christ comes to live in us when we place our faith (*ultimate confidence*) in Him and so we are also “in Him.” This means that *all that Jesus has is available to us all the time in all things*.

? 25 Is there anything new that you learned in this lesson?

? 26 What is the significance of the things we have discussed today?

WORDwork | Day 2

4.2 How is the Holy Spirit at work in the World?

John 16:7–11 [Jesus said] I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you. 16:8 When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: 16:9 About sin, because they do not believe in Me; 16:10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me; 16:11 and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

? 27 Why is it an advantage that Jesus returned to Heaven?
Who did He promise to send?

? 28 What three things will the Spirit do to the World when He comes?
How does Jesus explain these three works of the Spirit?

4.2.1 The Spirit Was Sent by Jesus.

When Jesus returned to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to begin a new phase of His ministry on Earth. The Spirit had already been “with” Jesus and His disciples (He was even present in the Old Testament era) but after Jesus’ ascension, the Spirit would be sent for two purposes: 1] to *indwell* and *empower* Jesus’ people, and 2] to prove to the World that Jesus is The True Way of Life. We will discuss the Spirit’s indwelling Jesus’ followers in the next couple of lessons. Today, we are going to discuss the Spirit’s work in the world.

The Holy Spirit has both an “*internal ministry*” to all those who are In Christ and He has an “*external ministry*.” In this passage, Jesus teaches about The Spirit’s “external ministry” to the World. Jesus refers to the Spirit as the “Counselor” in this passage. The term has also been translated as “Helper” or “Comforter” or “Advocate.” In the context of John 14-16, Jesus speaks about the Spirit as His final witness; the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth is present in the World comforting and counseling those in Christ with the Truth of Jesus. He is also present *in the*

World rebuking and proving that those who *reject* Jesus are not living in line with the truth, in line with reality.

4.2.2 **The Spirit proves the World wrong concerning Sin.**

This first thing that Jesus tells us about the Spirit's work *to* the World is that He "proves the world wrong concerning sin, because they do not believe in me." When the Truth of Jesus is spoken and proclaimed, the Holy Spirit is present giving witness that this is indeed truth. When people reject this truth, the Spirit "convicts" them, witnesses to their spirit that what they are doing is wrong. The Holy Spirit is telling those who reject Jesus that what they are doing is wrong. Before we placed our ultimate and final confidence in Jesus, we all experienced this ministry of the Holy Spirit.

4.2.3 **The Spirit proves the World wrong concerning Righteousness.**

Jesus also says that the Holy Spirit will, "prove the world wrong concerning righteousness because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer." Remember our definition for righteousness:

Key Definition: **Righteousness** is thinking and doing
1) the **right thing**, 2) in the **right way**,
3) at the **right time**, 4) with the **right motivation**.

Jesus was sinless and righteous in all that He did. As He walked on Earth, people could see a perfect example of what God the Father and Creator had intended for humanity to be. Now Jesus is in Heaven and there is no human being on Earth who is perfectly righteous in all that they do.

We have often heard people say, "I would never become a Christian because they are all a bunch of hypocrites." Now while this may be true on some levels, the Holy Spirit is there proving them wrong; Jesus is the **ONLY** perfectly righteous person, and He is the One we are all called to follow. Now, through the work of the Spirit, Father-God is showing people that they are wrong when they look to any other source of "righteousness" other than Jesus. To be right—in a right relationship—with Father-God, we must all go through Jesus.

4.2.4 **The Spirit proves the World wrong concerning Judgment.**

Finally, Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit proves that the world is wrong in their view of judgment because "the Ruler of this World has been condemned." Part of the Satanic strategy in our current age is the lie that we can do whatever we want to,

we can follow *any* way of life we want to, and it will all turn out OK for everyone in the end. This is a lie and the Spirit is here to give witness that this is a lie.

Satan, the ruler of this World, who seeks to blind the minds of those who do not believe in Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 4:4) has been condemned. He has been exposed for the Liar, Murderer, and Destroyer he is. Because of this, the Holy Spirit is now at work in the World when the truth of Jesus is proclaimed showing that Satan's lies are lies.

Because of the Spirit's work in this area, everyone who hears the Truth is confronted with the reality that there will be a judgment for us all. As Paul says in Acts 17, "God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man He has designated by raising Him from the dead." People may try to deny this, but the Spirit is present telling them this is wrong.

We have discussed this because we believe it is important for you to see that the Spirit is at work in our World both *proving the World wrong* in its lies and also *illuminating the truth about Jesus*. Tomorrow, we will look at how the Spirit works to illuminate the truth about Jesus.

- ? 29 Could you explain what we have discussed to someone else?
 What are the three primary ways the Spirit is "proving the world wrong"?

WORDwork | Day 34.3 **How is the Holy Spirit at work “In Christ”?**

Today we want to take a brief look at some of the key things that the Holy Spirit does for all those who place their trust in Christ. In a later study, we go into more detail on these. For now, it is important that you see what God the Father and Son are doing in the World through the work of the Holy Spirit.

4.3.1 **The Holy Spirit brings New Birth for those who trust Christ.**

Titus 3:5 He [God] saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

When we turn from our old way of life to place our trust and confidence in Jesus as the New Way of Life, we show that we have been *reborn*—given new spiritual life — through the work of the Spirit. Because of this, we are entirely new creations, new people set on a new course with a new destiny.

4.3.2 **The Holy Spirit indwells those who trust Christ.**

John 14:16–18 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. 14:17 He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn’t see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because **He remains with you and will be in you.** 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; **I am coming to you.**

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? {ESV}

The Father and the Son send their Spirit to live within all those who trust Christ. This is called the indwelling of the Spirit and it makes everyone who is “in Christ” the Living Temple of God. Our bodies and spirits become the place where God shows his presence on the Earth. This is also the way God “pours His love out” in us:

Romans 5:5 ... God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Notice also in John 14:18 that Jesus says He would come to us when the Spirit comes. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit gives us the reality of Jesus' personal presence!

4.3.3 **The Holy Spirit baptizes and unites Christ's people into His Body—the Church.**

1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Baptism speaks mainly to the idea of *identification* and *union*. When the Spirit descended on Jesus at His water baptism, He was completely identified and associated with the new work that God the Father had begun in Israel through Him and would spread to the whole World. When we are baptized by/with the Spirit, we were *identified* and *united* with Christ and His people—His Body, as Paul says here. In this same way,

4.3.4 **The Holy Spirit seals all those who trust Christ.**

Ephesians 1:13–14 When you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. 1:14 He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession, to the praise of His glory.

When we believed in and trust Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to seal us, to mark us off as people who belong to God. In doing this, the Holy Spirit serves as the guarantee that we will wind up in our final destination—*blameless* in the Father and Son's glorious presence:

1 Corinthians 1:8–9 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1:9 God is faithful; you were called by Him into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

4.3.5 **The Holy Spirit empowers those who are in Christ for New Life.**

Ephesians 3:16-17 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...{NET}

One of the most awesome realities that is true of us as Christ's people is that *the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is the same Spirit who lives within us, empowering us to live a new kind of life!!!* Now, think on that for a minute: when you believe in Christ and trust Him, you have access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead empowering you to live a whole new kind of life—one shaped by Jesus' own life!

Now it is important to realize that the Spirit only does these things for those who place their trust and confidence in Christ. These are just some of the blessings that come to all of us who respond to the hope held out in the Good News of the Gospel, the Message of Truth, by placing our final confidence in Jesus alone.

? 30 Think about how the truths of the Spirit's work that we have discussed today can change the way you think about all of life.

WORDwork | Day 4

4.4 What is the Father doing in Christ through the Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:39 For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

In the present times, God the Father, in His goodness, is calling men and women from all nations to see the glory of the Son that is confirmed as truth by the work of the Holy Spirit. Father-God has sent His Son to save us from sin, death, and corruption and He is now calling many to Himself through the work of the Spirit.

The Truth about reality, about life, is being proclaimed in the Gospel—the “good news” that our Savior has come and has provided a whole new way of life for anyone who will place their ultimate confidence in Him. Of course, the message requires a response. God’s love given to us freely in Christ requires that we respond. The Gospel gives us *hope* and this hope should give birth to *faith*. When we place our faith in Christ, we are reborn and we are welcomed into God’s family.

When we place our trust and confidence (faith) in Jesus, the Spirit confirms that we do belong to God as His children, as His sons:

Romans 8:16–17 The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children, 8:17 and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ—seeing that we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Galatians 4:6 And because **you are sons**, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls “Abba! Father!” {NET}

There is no greater title that we can be given other than “Child of God” and “Son of God.” Jesus was God’s *One Unique* Son—there is no one else like Him. “In Christ,” we too are all beloved “sons”—we have been called and adopted and reborn into Father-God’s family. Even women are referred to as “sons” in the New Testament to show that they too receive a share in Christ’s inheritance. Women did not have the same privileges as men in the first century, but in Christ, these cultural differences do not apply. When we place our faith in Christ, we are welcomed into Father-God’s family as His beloved children.

In the present age the Father is also making sure that His children become the people he desires them to be:

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 5:24 He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.



Scan back over or reflect on this week's reading and ask yourself:

1. What have I learned that gave me new ideas and images?
2. How do these truths call me to change the way I am thinking?
3. How do these truths call me to trust Father-God more?

Session 5

Question 5: What Will Father-God Do To Complete His Plans?

- Core Truth:** History is moving toward a certain end, a sure conclusion that the Lord-God planned and is moving all things toward. A day will come when this world—now ruled by sin, death, and shame—will be overtaken by the Kingdom of the Beloved Son. When this Kingdom comes, all things will be set right and everyone will be put in their proper place.
- To Remember:** Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” [Revelation 11:15]
- Objective:** Father-God is working in Christ to redeem, heal, and restore us. He is also working toward a day when this will be true of all creation. This process of redemption is also a process of setting all things right, putting all things in their proper place. In the *ages* to come (eternity future) those who have loved God and His truth, goodness, and glory will live forever with Him. For those who have despised these things, God will give them exactly what they have desired: eternal existence apart from all that is true, good, and glorious.
- Prayer:** “Father, thank you for giving us the Truth in your Word so that we can know where we are heading and what awaits us in the future. Give me the sober awareness that what I do with my time on planet Earth now matters forever. In Jesus’ name, AMEN.”

WORDwork | Day 1**5.1 What is the Master Story of History to Come?**

As we look toward the end history there are three basic realities we will consider:

1. Jesus will return to establish His **Kingdom** on the Earth.
2. Every human being who has existed will stand before Jesus for **judgment** to place them in their proper eternal place.
3. A New Heavens and a New Earth will be created free of sin, death, and corruption where the people of the One True God will live with Him forever.

Read the following passages and answer the related questions.

1 John 2:15–17 Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. 2:16 For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world. 2:17 And the world with its lust [desires] is passing away, but the one who does God’s will remains forever.

? 31 What does John warn us NOT to do in verse 15? Why does he say this based on what he says in verse 17?

? 32 How are the “desires of the world” related to the “love of the Father” in these verses?

Revelation 11:15 The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever!

- ? 33 What do the voices in Heaven proclaim when the seventh angel blows his trumpet? What does this mean? What is the significance of this statement?

5.1.1 **This present World is passing away and will come to an end.**

In this session, we are beginning to touch on what the Bible reveals about the End Times, the Last Days, the Last Things. This subject of theology is called *eschatology* and it is one of the most complicated and controversial areas of Christian belief. It is also *one of the most important*. To get our bearings in life—to figure out reality—we have to know where we have come from (Past) and where we are heading (Future). The topics of Eschatology tell us where we are headed, what awaits us in the future.

When we turn to consider these issues, it is very easy to get bogged down in the details very quickly. What we want to do is look at the big pieces of the puzzle that help us put our lives in perspective in terms of the things that we have some level of certainty about. These are the things that we are convinced and confident about that help us answer the third big question: “Where are we heading?” and “How will it all end?”

First, in the 1 John passage we hear that this current World is passing away and it will come to an end. John uses the term “the world” to refer this present world system of traditions and cultures that are still enslaved to the lies and deception of the Adversary, the Devil and thus stands opposed to the truth, goodness, and beauty of the One-True-God and His Kingdom. This is why we are not to love the world or the things of the world.

John goes on to tell us what the “things of the world” are: the desires/lusts of the flesh, the desires/lust of the eyes and the arrogance/pride of life. These are all the desires/lusts that drive us to place ourselves at the “center of the universe” instead of placing Christ in the center. John warns us that anyone who is governed by these desires can be sure that the love of the Father is not in him or her. These things are all defined by the World not by the Father’s true desires. These worldly desires entice us to find our security, satisfaction, and significance in some source other than our relationship with our Heavenly Father in Christ through the Holy Spirit. John and the Bible warns us that these types of things are *idolatry*—worshipping something or someone other than the One True God.

The reason these things are contrary to our Father’s desires and love for us is that they are all passing away and will come to an end. The Kingdom that is

coming is one that is defined by love and goodness and service not pride and arrogance and selfishness. This brings us to our next point.

5.1.2 **The Kingdom of God is coming and will last forever.**

A day will come when this world will truly come to an end. Peter tells us:

2 Peter 3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.

There is a time surely coming when this present state of things will end. But that is not really *the end*. Peter goes on to say,

2 Peter 3:13 But based on His promise, we wait for the new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell.

After this world comes to an end, a New Heavens and a New Earth will be created by God in which *righteousness truly resides*. In other words, in that New Creation all things will be set right, all things will exist in line with all that is good and right and just. This New Creation will be the Eternal Kingdom that we hear about in the Revelation 11 passage that we read earlier.

In Revelation, the last book of the Bible, John is given glimpses of the Last Days. Part of what he sees is a series of seven angels who blow trumpets heralding the coming of the end. When the final trumpet sounds, we hear the declaration that the kingdom of this world has at last become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ, His Messiah, His King—our Lord Jesus. This day is coming. It cannot be stopped. The reality of this unstoppable future should shape the view of our lives now. Everything that our Father is doing now in Christ by His Spirit is preparing us for this day.

? 34 Has today's discussion given you a new perspective on any part of your life? Explain.

WORDwork | Day 2

5.2 What Will Happen on the Day of Judgment?

Acts 17:30-31 “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, 17:31 because He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”

? 35 What has God been overlooking so far? What does He now command all people to do?

? 36 Why does God give this command?

? 37 Who is this one who will judge the world?

5.2.1 God will judge the world according to His righteous standard.

We considered this passage briefly in one of our first sessions. This is taken from Paul’s speech before the Greeks and philosophers in Athens on Mars Hill. At the conclusion Paul makes it clear that there will be a day of judgment in which the Lord will evaluate the whole world “in righteousness.” This is the second time we have seen this term “righteousness” in the context of judgment and the last things. Let’s consider what it means for a minute.

Let’s define *righteousness* as doing 1] the *right thing*, 2] in the *right way*, 3] at the *right time*, 4] with the *right motives*. God is always righteousness because He always acts in this way which is in line with His truth, goodness, and glory. This is the *standard* He will use to judge the whole world. The things that we do here on planet earth in our lives, in the time that is given to us, matter.

5.2.2 The Lord Jesus will be the one who exercises God's judgment.

Paul goes on to tell us that God will judge the world through “a man whom he designated, having provided proof to everyone by raising Him from the dead.” This man is Jesus of course. In John, Jesus tells us,

John 5:22-23 The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, 5:23 so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Again we see that the Father's work in the world is centered on the Lord Jesus. The Father has given judgment over to the Son so that all people will honor Him. The Father has given judgment over to the Son also because He has lived as a human being (just like us) yet without sin. This qualifies Him to be completely righteous and just as our judge. It also enables Him to be sympathetic High Priest to us since He has been tempted as we have yet without sin:

Hebrews 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. 4:16 Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time..

What an incredible truth to realize that the One who is our judge is also the One who can sympathize with our weakness and is willing to give us help whenever we ask! We will have more to say about this a little later.

5.2.3 Every human being will give an account of their lives to Jesus.

Knowing that the Lord Jesus will evaluate our lives should motivate us to live in the present time in a way that is pleasing to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11 So then whether we are alive or away [in the presence of Jesus], we make it our ambition to please Him (God). 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be paid back according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or evil. 5:11 Therefore, because we know the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade people ... {NET}

Paul's life was motivated by the reality that a day would come when he would have to stand before the Lord Jesus and give an account of his life. Remember, Paul is the one who had spent the first part of his life persecuting Jesus' people. In fact, Paul refers to himself at one place as the “worst of all sinners” (see 1 Timothy

1:15). As we will see, this day of judgment was not something Paul was dreading, yet it was *a point that brought clarity and sobriety to his present life.*

Because Paul knew the truth about the coming day of judgment, he was motivated to make sure that everyone he met was aware of the reality that awaited them. When Paul says that he knew the “fear of the Lord,” we should understand that he does not mean a “smack” love type of fear that we discussed earlier. The fear that Paul speaks of here is what we might call “godly fear.” Think about it this way:

» **Ungodly fear** | is based on the false view that God is a distant, tyrant father who is out to get us if we don’t think and act perfectly.

» **Godly fear** | is based in our Father-Child relationship with God and is motivated by our desire to be pleasing to Him and not cause Him shame.

Like Paul, we should each be motivated by this “godly fear.” We are not afraid of God, the One who gave His unique son for us all, but *we want to be soberly aware of the reality that the way we live our lives matters and therefore will be evaluated by the One who has given us this life.*

? 38 What is your initial reaction to what you have read today?

? 39 Do you understand the difference in ungodly and godly fear?

WORDwork | Day 3**5.3 What are the Two Options for Eternity?**

When we began this study we said that it was important to realize that *every human being who has existed will exist forever*. We are now getting to some of the “meat” truths of the Bible and some things that are difficult for us to think about, but we must.

Just as there are only two types of people, spiritually speaking—those who are “alive in Christ” and those who are still “dead in Adam”—so also there are only two eternal options for everyone: either live in the presence of God (eternal life) forever or away from His presence (eternal death).

5.3.1 Those who are “in Christ” have eternal life now and forever.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus,...

In this session and in the next session we are considering what it means to place our faith and confidence in Christ as our Savior and King. In the context of standing before the judgment seat of Christ, the verse above should be one of great comfort. ***There is NOW no condemnation for those who are in Christ.*** We are going to talk more about being “in Christ” next week, for now just know that this means giving your life over to Him and being completely identified with Him because of your confidence in Him. When we do stand before Jesus to be judged, evaluated by Him, we will not be condemned.

Jesus himself assures us with these words:

John 5:24-27 “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. 5:25 “I assure you: An hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 5:26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to the Son to have life in Himself. 5:27 And He has granted Him the right to pass judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

Jesus tells us plainly that anyone who hears Him and believes, trusts the Father has eternal life, now, and will not be condemned. This truly is the “good news,” maybe even the best news that we hear in the Gospel. Notice also, that as

we believe, we have crossed out of death and into life. This comes to us now, in the here and now and not just in the hereafter.

It is important for you to understand that *eternal life* is not just “never ending existence” (quantity), it also speaks about a quality of life, and life that is satisfied by the deep personal relationship with Christ the Son and the Father:

John 17:1-3 ... “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You, 17:2 for You gave Him authority over all flesh; so He may give eternal life to all You have given Him. 17:3 **This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.**

Our lives, our identities are defined by our relationships. True Eternal life is defined by our relationship with the Only True God and Jesus Christ. If we are in right relationship with the Father through faith, confidence in His Son Jesus we have passed out of condemnation into life!

Another incredible blessing that comes to all those who are “in Christ” is the forgiveness of all our sins. Consider this:

Colossians 2:13-14 And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He [God The Father] made you alive with Him [Christ] and forgave us all our trespasses. 2:14 He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.

“In Christ” all of our sins are forgiven! When Jesus went to the Cross, He took our sin-debt upon himself. He paid the price (death, in all its forms) that our sins demanded. What is more He has destroyed our “certificate of debt,” taking it away by nailing it to the Cross. This certificate was the “IOU,” the bill of debt, that our sins had built up. Jesus has destroyed this bill and removed it from us. The result of this is that when we finally stand before Christ, He will never treat us according to any debt that our sins would have required. We have been released from this so that we might experience His grace.

5.3.2 **Those who physically die still “dead in Adam” will exist apart from God’s presence in eternity.**

In the John 5 passage that we just read, Jesus goes on to say this:

John 5:28-29 “... a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice 5:29 and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of judgment.

The resurrection is something that will occur in the last days in which Jesus will raise up the bodies of all those who have died and give them new bodies which are specifically designed to live in eternity. Those who are “in Christ” will truly live forever, but those who died “in Adam” will exist in a state of condemnation called the “Lake of Fire” (Revelation 20:15). This is a terrible truth that we have a hard time thinking about, but we must be soberly aware of this reality. As Paul has said, those who have done what is evil—rejecting the truth, goodness, and glory of God—will be assigned to this terrible place. The simple reality is there are only two types of people (*spiritually alive* or *spiritually dead*) on earth now, so also there are only two options for eternity.

? 40 What is your first reaction to the session today?
 How do these truths help you put things in perspective?

WORDwork | Day 4

5.4 How Do We Respond in Hope?

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures *we may have hope*. {NET}

We want to end this week's session by talking about hope. As Paul tells us above, the Scriptures were given to us to encourage us so that we may have hope. This week we have been considering some very heavy and somewhat difficult truths. But these truths are given to us so that we may hope. Since we have been thinking about the end of things, the end of our present life and the world to come, let's end by thinking on some of the most incredible truths that are reality for all those who are "in Christ."

5.4.1 God is Truly our Heavenly Father.

1 John 3:1-2 Look at how great a love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children. And we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know Him. 3:2 Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is.

As we are going to discuss in our next unit *Walking in the Truth*, in Christ, by faith, God accepts us as His beloved children! As His children, our Father has set some goals for us—that we be *conformed* to the image and likeness of Jesus, transformed into people who fully reflect His glory in all things. As John tells us above, this process will not be complete until we see Christ face to face, but it will happen. But how can we be sure this will happen? Consider this:

1 Corinthians 1:8-9 He [God The Father] will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1:9 God is faithful; you were called by Him into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we think about the Parent/Child relationship and the process of growing and maturing, we must understand that it is the *parent* who has the responsibility of raising and training the child to become a mature human being. The same is

true in our spiritual growth and maturing “in Christ.” God is truly our Heavenly Father and He is the one who takes responsibility for the growth and transformation of His children.

In this passage, Paul is addressing the Corinthian church, one of the most immature and sinful churches of the day. As Paul begins to speak to the issues they were facing, he is confident that the people in this church will be *blameless* on the Day of our Lord Jesus—the day of Judgment. How can Paul have this confidence? Because **God the Father is Faithful!!!** He is the one who raises His children to be who He desires them to be. Also, Jesus, with whom they have been called into fellowship (to share life with), is the One who has brought about the forgiveness and cleansing of their sins.

As Children we want to be faithful to our Father. We want to love Him with the same love that He gives us—genuine, divine love. But always we keep our hearts and minds captivated by the truth that His faithfulness to us is the foundation of our hope. *We will fail and be faithless at times and sin.* Yet our Heavenly Father will not abandon us. He will treat us as His children. He will do whatever is necessary to make sure that we arrive at our final destination: *blameless in His presence.*

5.4.2 **Father-God will Finish what He starts.**

Philippians 1:6 I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

God our Father works in Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to find us in our lostness, offer us new life in our spiritual deadness, and peace in our rebellion against Him. When we accept and receive His gifts by faith, freely given to us in Christ, we begin to experience His transforming work in our lives. Notice what Paul says above: God our Father who begins this work in us will also be the one who *perfects* or *completes* this work in us. We can have hope because God our Father will finish what He starts.

5.4.3 **We focus our Hope on Jesus.**

Read 1 John 3:1-2 that we just read again. Now add this last verse to it:

1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him [Jesus] purifies himself just as He [Jesus] is pure.

Key Definition: **Hope** is the confident expectation that life will turn out well because of who God is and what He has promised. Hope is built on the foundation of His past works, yet always looks forward to the future completion and perfection of all His promises.

We have heard about some of what God has done for us in the past in Christ. We hear about what He will do for us in Christ. Because we know these things, we have the confident expectation that because of His faithfulness our lives will turn out well, or better than well—glorious. Now in the present as we choose to place our confidence in Jesus we keep our hope focused forward on Him. As we keep this focus, we are *purified* as John says. **It is impossible to be enslaved by the corruption of sin when we are completely captivated by the glory of Jesus.** Let us set our focus on Jesus.

? 41 What are some practical ways that you can implement these truths into your daily life? In what ways can you keep your focus on Jesus?



Scan back over or reflect on this week's reading and ask yourself:

1. What have I learned that gave me new ideas and images?
2. How do these truths call me to change the way I am thinking?
3. How do these truths call me to trust Father-God more?

Session 6

Question 6: How Will You Respond?

- Core Truth:** God has initiated toward us in all that He has done for us in Christ. He has given us all we need in Christ through the work of the Spirit to have a living relationship with Him. Now, God desires to seek and save those who are lost and dead and alienated from Him.
- To Remember:** The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not want any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
[2 Peter 3:9]
- Objective:** The love, mercy, and grace of God revealed to us requires a response from us. Just as Adam (and Eve) had the power of *contrary choice*—the ability to say “no” to God’s truth, goodness, and beauty—so also do we. **It is our ability to say “no” to God that makes our “yes” so meaningful.** When we say “yes” to the Father’s offer of new life in Christ, we are saying “no” to our old way of life that was ruled by sin, death, and condemnation.
- Prayer:** “Father, give me the humility and the understanding to say ‘yes’ to you in all things. Enlighten the eyes of my heart so that I can truly see Your beauty and goodness and trust you above all others. In Jesus’ Name, AMEN.”

WORDwork | Day 1**6.1 What is the Gospel?**

Colossians 1:3-6 We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 1:4 since we heard about your **faith** in Christ Jesus and the **love** that you have for all the saints. 1:5 **Your faith and love have arisen from the hope laid up for you in heaven**, which you have heard about in the Message of Truth, the Gospel 1:6 that has come to you. Just as in the entire world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, so it has also been bearing fruit and growing among you from the first day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth. {NET}

? 42 In verses 4 and 5 above, which comes “first”—faith, hope or love?

? 43 How do we hear about the “hope laid up in heaven” for us?

? 44 What is the Gospel doing throughout the world?

? 45 What does the Gospel allow us to understand (see the end of v. 6)?

6.1.1 The Gospel gives birth to Hope, Faith, and Love

The term “Gospel” simply means “good news.” There is a lot we could say about this, for now simply know that the Gospel is the story, the Message of all that God the Father has done, is doing and will do for us in Christ through the work of His Spirit. As Paul says above, when the Gospel comes to us, *it first brings us hope*. This hope is tied to all that we have stored up for us in Heaven where Christ is. Notice that faith and love *arise* or *flow* from hope. Hope is both the first thing that Father-God “births” in us and is therefore also our first response to the Gospel.

When we realize that apart from God we were enslaved to sin, death, and shame we should be aware that we are in real trouble—not just “here and now” trouble but forever, eternal trouble. The Good News is that Father offers us goodness, life, and peace through Jesus and this message should give us hope.

Hope cannot stand alone. For Hope to develop fully, it must be accompanied by faith. Faith is placing our confidence in the source of our hope. Faith is being convinced that the one who is giving us our answers to life is trustworthy and worthy of following. This is a good place to give a basic definition for faith:

Key Definition: **Faith** is placing our ultimate confidence (trust) in God The Father, Son, and Spirit as they oversee and direct our lives. Faith brings assurance to our hope. Faith is the evidence that Father-God is working in Christ through the Holy Spirit in and through us. Faith makes room in our thoughts, desires, and emotions for *the ultimate virtue of love*.

6.1.2 **The Gospel is the Message of Truth.**

Notice also that Paul calls the Gospel The Message of Truth. The Gospel gives us the truth about life. It tells us what is *really real*. Once we know this truth, we can get in line with reality. The Gospel speaks about God’s works in the past with a view to what He will do in the future so that we can know our meaning and purpose in the present. This message of the Gospel is now the instrument that God is using to save fallen and rebellious humanity.

6.1.3 **The Gospel Reveals the Grace of God in Truth.**

Finally, notice in Colossians 1:6 that the Gospel gives us the truth that we need to understand the grace of God. We have not defined grace yet, so let’s do it now:

Key Definition: **Grace** is Father-God’s **undeserved** and **unearned favor** given to us freely in Christ that gives us access to His **unlimited power** in the Spirit.

Technically, God did not have to save any of us. But because of His Great love for us He does. Now He desires to call his rebellious creation to Himself, redeem us and transform us into people who truly share His goodness and glory.

6.1.4 **The Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation.**

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

The Gospel is the message that has God's power to bring about salvation. We cannot save ourselves; we have neither the power nor the wisdom. As we know by know, Father-God has provided our salvation through the work of Jesus. But notice that this salvation comes to those who *believe*—*those who place their trust and confidence in God through Christ*. The Gospel gives birth to hope, but hope is pursued in faith. We will say more about this as we go.

6.1.5 **The Gospel is the Message that is Saving us.**

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the Gospel that I *preached* to you, that you *received* and on which you *stand*, 15:2 and *by which you are being saved*, if you hold firmly to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.
{NET}

The Gospel is the message that saves us and is saving us. When the Gospel is preached, proclaimed, it calls for a *response*. Notice Paul says that the Corinthians had “received” the Gospel. These people had not just “believed” it the Gospel as a set of facts and information; they had *welcomed* the Good News as the door to the Way of New Life. They were now “standing” in the Gospel realizing that the Gospel is the Message by which they were *being saved*. We have not defined salvation yet, and this is a good place to do so:

Key Definition: **Salvation** is the process in which God the Father calls us to Himself in Christ and then transforms us to be like Christ through the work of the Spirit.

Salvation has a definite starting point (Justification—being set right with God by faith in Christ) and ending point (Glorification—being completely conformed to the likeness of Christ). In between these two points there is the process of being continually made more and more like Christ (**Sanctification**). The Gospel begins this process and sustains it until we see Jesus face to face.

The Gospel defines our past, present, and future in light of God's work for us. The Gospel takes the smaller story of our lives and draws it up into the Master Story of God's redeeming work in Creation.

WORDwork | Day 2

6.2 What Does the Gospel Do Within Us?

2 Corinthians 4:3-6* But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4:4 In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God... For God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

? 46 From whom is the truth of the Gospel hidden or “veiled”?

? 47 Why is the Gospel hidden from this group?

? 48 What does God do to counteract this “veiling”?

6.2.1 The Gospel brings LIGHT.

Make no mistake about it—we *are engaged in a war*. Satan, the god of this age, as Paul calls him in this passage is blinding the minds of all those who do not believe the Truth that is revealed in the Gospel so that they cannot see the glory of Jesus. The good news is that God intervenes.

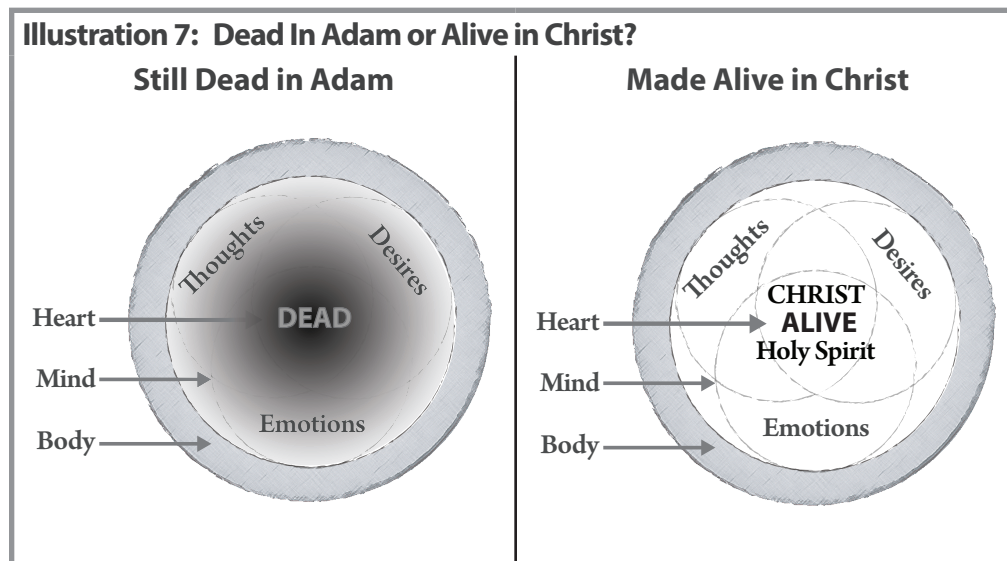
Notice how God takes this initiative toward us. He is the One “shined in our hearts to give us the light of the glorious knowledge of Himself in the face of Christ.” Some call this the act of *illumination*. God the Father working in Christ through the Spirit gives us “light” to see reality that is proclaimed to us in the powerful words of the Gospel.

Remember, in our spiritually dead, lost, and condemned state, our hearts and minds were darkened being cut off from the light of truth and reality. In Ephesians Paul says,

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2:2 in which you formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience, 2:3 among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest... {NET}

“In Adam” we had three “strikes” against us: 1) we were dead in our trespasses and sins, 2) we were held captive by our Adversary, the Devil (the Ruler of the Kingdom of the Air) and 3) we were enslaved to our own sinful desires. We were “children of wrath” which means we were people condemned because we had rejected God’s truth, goodness, and glory. *The first step in seeing the light of the Gospel is to believe and accept that this is true of you; this is where we all start.*

But God the Father intervenes, He finds us when the Gospel comes to us. Not only does the Gospel give us hope, it also has the power of God to “turn the lights” on for us so that we can see what is really real. Take a look at the circle diagrams now:



God the Father begins his work at the core reality of who we are, in our hearts. Paul tells us that this is where He “shines,” illuminates us so that we can see His glory in the face of Christ. Jesus is the “True Light.” He is the One who reveals the One True God to us truly.

John 1:9-10 The true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was created through Him, yet the world did not recognize Him.

6.2.2 The Gospel brings New LIFE.

When we *hear* the Gospel and *receive* its good news by faith our fellowship with God is restored and we are given *new life*—the eternal life of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Hear the way Jesus defined eternal life:

John 17:3 This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.

Eternal life comes from our personal knowledge of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This new life is also a certain way of life—life defined by God’s goodness and glory. God is the One who initiates toward us and “makes us alive” through our faith in Christ. Notice how Paul concludes Ephesians passage we just read:

Ephesians 2:4-7 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 2:5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 2:6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 2:7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. {ESV}

Even though we were dead and alienated from God, because of His great love for us, He has come to find us and give us the gift of new life in Christ. The life that is offered to us in Christ is an essential aspect of a key growth stage:

Key Growth Stage: Becoming **ALIVE**. Life is not just about being physically alive. More importantly, we need spiritual life—connection with Father-God in Christ through His Holy Spirit, the source of all life. Once we are AWARE of all that God has done for us to provide us with spiritual life, we have to decide what we will do with that knowledge.



Take a moment to be grateful for what Father-God has provided. You may want to pray, giving thanks for all that He has done for us in Christ4

WORDwork | Day 3**6.3 What is Father-God's Desire for Us?**

1 Timothy 2:4 [God our Savior] wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord does not delay His promise [the promise of His return], as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

The Bible makes it clear that Father-God desires for all of fallen humanity to come to Him, to receive the Gift He has given in His Son Jesus Christ. He desires to save the fallen family of Adam and to create for Himself a whole new type of humanity, truly displaying the goodness and glory of His love.

There are some people who think that they have to get their life cleaned up before they accept Christ. This is foolish from God's point of view. First, there is no way we can "clean up" our lives without first being made spiritually alive by God's grace through faith in Christ. Secondly, *the real issue in salvation is not whether we are "good" or "bad" but whether we are "alive" or "dead."*

6.4 Will You Say "Yes" to Father-God?

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, 1:13 who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

John makes it clear that your proper response to the Gospel involves your "receiving" Christ. So how do we "receive" someone that we have never met or seen? Notice what John says: *by believing in his name*. To believe in Jesus' name means to trust the whole person. This is more than just believing things *about* Jesus or simply giving mental assent to some creed or doctrine about Jesus. Salvation is not about believing or practicing "something." It is about believing, trusting, and receiving somebody—the Lord Jesus Christ. When we receive Christ, we become part of Father-God's eternal family; we receive the greatest name we could ever be given: "children of God"—His beloved sons and daughters!

As we said at the beginning of this study, there are only two types of people: those who are still spiritually “Dead in Adam,” and those who are now spiritually “Alive in Christ.” Jesus came so that you and I might have Life. Who needs Life? Dead people! God’s purpose in providing salvation through His Son’s death, resurrection, and ascension is not primarily concerned with enabling you to escape Hell and go to Heaven when you die—although that is a great benefit!! The Gospel is God’s Good News about restoring life to the lifeless in the “here and now” and not just the “hereafter”!

The single greatest issue that we must settle is how we will respond to the gracious gift of New Life in Christ, freely offered to us by God in the Gospel. There are only two options: *accept the gift*, or *reject the gift*. The moment we acknowledge our spiritual deadness and our sinful condition as the fallen heirs of Adam’s terrible legacy, we should turn in humble gratitude to Jesus and willingly welcome Him into our life by faith. At the moment you do this, a wonderful thing happens! Jesus Himself—a Person—not a creed or a ritual—but *Christ Himself comes to live in you*. Jesus indwelling your heart through the power of the Holy Spirit is how God gives you a new and “eternal kind” of life:

Ephesians 3:16-17 I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in the inner man through His Spirit, 3:17 and that the Messiah [Christ] may dwell in your hearts through faith. . . .

In the course of this study, some of you may have clearly understood the real content of the Gospel for the first time. Becoming a Christian (a follower of Christ) or “getting saved” is not about creeds or sacraments and it is not about an endless list of “do’s and don’ts.” Getting right with God is an issue of Life and Death. It is not an issue of believing something; it is an issue of trusting somebody—Jesus Christ!

None of us could ever be good enough to earn or deserve God’s grace. God is not asking us to clean up our act before He welcomes us into His presence. Getting “cleaned up” *is the result of what Jesus has done and is doing for us and not the result of what we do for God*.

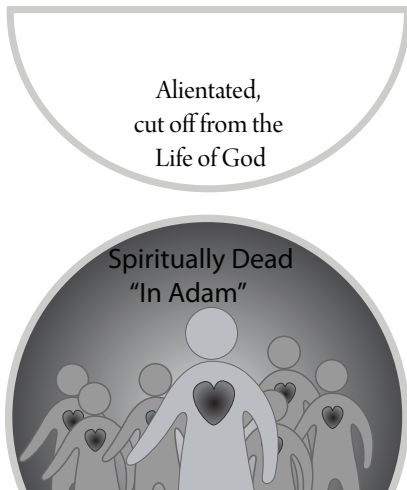
The Gospel is a Message that tells us what Jesus has done to make us acceptable to God, not what we must do by our own will and power to become acceptable. Remember, God is always near to us; in Him we move about and exist. God is always listening; if you don’t have a personal relationship with Him yet, all you have to do is say, “Yes, Father, I want to know you and Jesus whom you have sent to save me.”

On the next page we have a chart that represents all that we have been discussing and considering this week. Before you can make any real progress in your spiritual life, you need to know where you are. We hope that before you leave this last page that you will have settled the issue of your personal relationship with Father-God through your response to the gracious gift that is offered in His Son Jesus Christ through the work of His Holy Spirit.

John 10:10 [Jesus said,] “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I have come so that they** [everyone who belongs to Jesus] **may have life, and may have it abundantly.**” {ESV}

Illustration 8: The Spiritual “In Groups”

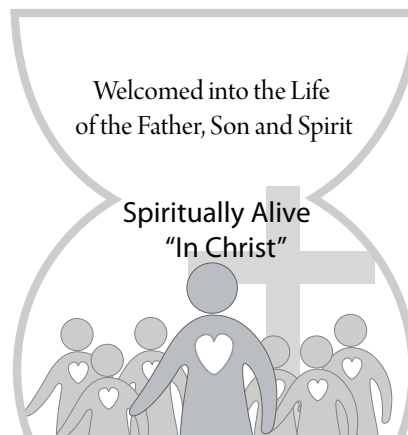
Still “Dead in Adam”



If you say “NO” to the Father’s gracious gift in Christ:

Remain Spiritually Dead
 Enslaved to the power of Sin
 Enslaved in the Kingdom of Darkness
 Hostile to God
 Lost in the Darkness of Sin
 Under Condemnation
 Destined for Eternal destruction

Now Eternally “Alive in Christ”



If you say “YES” to the Father’s gracious gift in Christ:

Spiritually Reborn—Eternally Alive
 Freed from the power of Sin
 Transferred to the Kingdom of Christ
 At Peace with God
 Found by Christ
 Forgiveness and Reconciled to God
 Destined for Christ’s Glorious Eternal Kingdom

WORDwork | Day 4

6.5 **How Should We Respond to the Gospel?**

Mark 1:14–17 ...Jesus went to Galilee, **preaching the good news of God:**

1:15 “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near.

Repent and believe in the good news!”

1:16 As He was passing along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, Simon’s brother. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen. 1:17 “**Follow Me,**” Jesus told them, “and I will make you fish for people!”

? 49 What does Jesus do in this passage?

? 50 How does He instruct people to respond to this message?
What does Jesus call Simon and Andrew to do?

Today we return to some foundational truths that we covered in the first study, *Recovering The Master Story*. This is the reliable pattern for transformation that we illustrated with the chart below:

Illustration 9: The Reliable Pattern of Transformation			
Hear >>>	Turn >>> (Repent)	Trust >>> (Believe)	Follow
We begin by hearing the Gospel - the good news of what Father-God is doing in Christ through the Holy Spirit.	We have to change the way we are thinking which changes the way we are living: <i>turning away</i> from any lies and false saviors.	We turn to Jesus as our Savior and Lord who has saved us, sustains us and leads us.	We follow Jesus with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as He leads us through the Presence and Power of His Spirit.

6.5.1 We Hear the Good News of the Gospel.

God the Father has sent the Gospel, the Good News, into the world to seek us out and save us. Jesus began His ministry by proclaiming the Gospel of God to the Nation of Israel: “The King is in your midst and the Kingdom is close at hand.”

Today, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the content of the Gospel has expanded, but the reality is the same. God the Father is working in the world in Christ through the Spirit to redeem Adam’s fallen descendants. The Gospel is a message that is to be *proclaimed* so that others may hear. Just “hearing” the Good News is not enough however; we are called to respond to it.

6.5.2 We are called to Repent and Believe the Gospel.

Anytime anyone hears the Truth, the Gospel, at that moment they have the opportunity to say “Yes” and receive God’s gracious gift of new life “in Christ” through faith. The Gospel only makes sense to those who realize and admit that they are in need of God’s salvation. Unless you are convinced that you are dead in your sins, held captive by the Devil, and living a life futile condemnation, the “good news” of the Gospel will probably sound like foolishness.

In the passage above, after He proclaims the Gospel, Jesus instructs the crowds to *repent* and *believe*. Repentance is the mental shift that takes place when we realize we are wrong and on the wrong path and need to change our thinking and the direction we are headed. Repentance means reorienting and changing the way you think about the One True God, yourself, and your place in the World based on the Truth of Gospel. Repentance involves *realizing* that you are on the way that leads to death and *turning* to Christ who is the Way of True Life. Once we turn from the old way, we *believe*, we place our ultimate confidence in Christ as our Savior.

Another great truth that is revealed in the Bible is that faith is actually empowered by the Message of the Gospel. Hear and consider this:

Romans 10:17 Now faith comes from what is heard,
and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ. {NET}

When the Gospel is spoken the Devil’s power to blind the mind is broken (see 2 Corinthians 4:4) and the light of truth penetrates to the darkened heart. The Gospel is the instrument that God the Father uses to initiate a personal relationship with us in Christ through the Spirit. Paul said that as he and others went about proclaiming the Gospel, they were acting as “ambassadors” or emissaries for Christ, calling people to turn to God:

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. **We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."**

When the Gospel comes to us, God Himself is making a personal appeal to us to return to Him. The Gospel calls for us to let go of our futile and worthless way of life to possess a whole new way of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Anyone who hears this message has the ability to say "yes" or "no" to the gift that the Father is offering.

6.5.3 **We are Called to Follow Jesus.**

Once we say "yes" to Father-God's gracious gift to us, we are also called to follow Christ for the rest of our lives here on Earth. Following Christ and learning from Him, our Master Teacher, is called *discipleship*. Notice in Mark 1:17 above that as Jesus calls his first students/disciples/apprentices (who were fishermen), He says that He would make them into "fishers of people." This means that just as Jesus had come to "seek and save" those who are lost, He would also entrust this mission to the people he trained as well.

This process of following Christ is something that is vitally important for you to realize. The reason is that salvation is not about getting a "ticket to heaven" so that we can go there when we die. Our Father loves and accepts us in whatever condition He finds us, but His love for us seeks to *transform* us into people who become more and more like Jesus so that we can share His goodness with others.

Key Realization: The Unrealized Reality of Discipleship: You are following someone and someone is following you. If you are a human being this principle is true whether you are aware of it or not. Our Lord Jesus wants us to follow Him so that we may be living examples of His truth, goodness, and beauty. He wants us to take what we learn from Him and invest it in the lives of others.

As we follow Jesus, we will discover that He has a unique role for each of us to play in His Kingdom. We will discover that He has shaped us and given us gifts to serve others in a unique and significant way. We will learn all that He has for us as we learn to keep company with Him in all things, following Him in all things.

This pattern of [Hear > Turn & Trust > Follow] is the pattern of life for all who place their faith in Christ. It is not just something we do one time; this is the shape of our life as we engage the process of spiritual growth and transformation.



Scan back over or reflect on this week's reading and ask yourself:

1. What have I learned that gave me new ideas and images?
2. How do these truths call me to change the way I am thinking?
3. How do these truths call me to trust Father-God more?

Session 7

Why is the Gospel “Christ+Nothing!”?

- Core Truth:** Jesus came to reveal the reality of the One True God to us. We were created by Jesus and for Jesus. We are redeemed by Jesus’ blood. He is returning to establish His Kingdom which will never end. Jesus is the First and the Last and everything in between. He alone is our Savior and He offers this salvation and new life freely, without cost.
- To Remember:** “For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, Himself human, 2:6 who gave Himself—a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.” [1 Timothy 2:5-6]
- Objective:** Throughout history, there have been many “additions” and “subtractions” made to the one true Gospel. In this session, we want to explore two of the “roots” of these false teachings so that you can discern these false gospels when they appear.
- Prayer:** “Father, help us to keep our focus clearly on Jesus—our Lord, our Savior, our King. Help us to see through the lies of all the deceptive teachings in our times so that we can find the wholeness we need and desire in You. For Jesus sake, AMEN.”

WORDwork | Day 1**7.1 Why is Jesus the Only Way?****7.1.1 There is Only One God and One Mediator.**

1 Timothy 2:1-4 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2:2 for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 2:3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, 2:4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, Himself human, 2:6 who gave Himself—a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.

? 51 What is the “first thing” that Paul urges in this passage?

? 52 Why does Paul request this? (at least two reasons)

? 53 What is the significance of what Paul says in 2:5? Is this in line with what popular culture would have us believe about God?

? 54 What do 2:5 and 6 reveal about Jesus?

As we considered in our last session, Father-God is looking to redeem His rebellious and fallen creation—particularly the human race. As we think about the truth claims of Christianity, we must come to the realization that we are not thinking about “a” way of truth and life, we are talking about the THE way of truth and life.

In the passage above, Paul urges us to pray for all people so that we who follow Christ might lead a quiet and peaceful life in godliness and dignity. The reason for this seems to be so that we will have opportunities to speak about Jesus and the truth. Father-God wants, desires for all to be saved and come to a knowledge of THE truth. This then leads us to understand the *unique* nature of Christianity.

Paul expresses this uniqueness in this passage by saying that there is *only* one God and *only* one mediator between the One true God—Jesus. A *mediator* or *intermediary* is someone who stands between two people and “bridges the gap” to heal and reconcile the relationship. Jesus does this for us; He is the only one who can do this for us. Remember, Jesus came to give His people *abundant life*—life that is characterized by Love and Joy:

John 15:9-11 “Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you; remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that *my joy may be in you*, and your joy may be complete.

Abundant life, freedom, love, joy—these are all things that flow out of the life that God working through Christ desires for us. These are the things that God has promised to those who know Him, love Him and follow Him. These things come only to those who know Jesus, the One who reconciles us to God.

We have already heard that eternal life is knowing the Only True God and Jesus Christ who was sent to us (John 17:3). As we think about these truths, we must deal with the reality that Christianity is making a very exclusive claim. Christianity is not just another “religion” among the other religions. Jesus is not just another “savior” among other saviors; He is the One and Only Savior. Yet this One and Only Savior welcomes any and all that come to Him hungry and thirsty for His life (see John 4:13-14, 7:37-39; Revelation 22:17)

Jesus is our *Way* to God the Father, but Jesus is also *the way* in which God the Father finds and calls us to Himself. The Way of Jesus cannot be reduced to impersonal “spiritual technology”—if you do this, then you will be blessed. . . if you do this, then God will do this. . . etc. This is always the “way” of the deceptive, empty, traditional, demonic philosophies that we will consider in our work this week.

The Way of Jesus is a personal way. We learn to follow Him as we read about Him in *the Written Word* and then keep company with Him each moment of the day as He lives *with* us and *in* us as *the Living Word*. The way of Jesus is not a

formula that we employ to solve our problems. The Way of Jesus is a personal relationship in which we follow the rhythm of hearing, repenting, believing, and following as we learn more *from* Him. Jesus is alive and keeping company with us—guiding, encouraging, correcting, healing, and calling us to keep our “eyes” focused on Him.

The Way of Jesus is not just a means to a destination. It is not just a way to “get to Heaven” when we die. *Jesus’ Way is the way of our life journey.* We are focused on our destination—being transformed and conformed to the likeness of Christ. But we are also living with Christ, rejoicing in every step along the journey, grateful for all that we have *in* Him. In this sense, the old saying “It is not just about reaching a destination, it is about the journey,” is right on point. *The Way of Jesus is the way of making our journey worthy of our destination.*

Colossians 3:1-4 Therefore, if [since] you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, 3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ (*who is your life*) appears, then you too will be revealed in glory with Him. {NET}

Jesus is our life! Jesus is our One and Only Savior. Because of this, we want to learn to focus on Him and to follow Him wherever He may lead. We want to learn how to say “no” to every distraction and false gospel that would have us look to man-made religion or idols.

WORDwork | Day 2

7.2 What are the “other gospels”?

Galatians 1:1-9 From Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor by human agency, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead) 2 and all the brothers with me, to the churches of Galatia. 3 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen.

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed ...
{ESV}

- ? 55 In verse 4, what has Jesus done for us? From what has he rescued us?
- ? 56 In verse 6, what is this assembly being tempted to do? Why is this a problem?
- ? 57 According to verse 7, what is the real problem?
- ? 58 What does Paul think about people who teach false gospels?

Since the very beginning, false teachers have tried to deceive with their false “gospels.” This is the problem that the churches in Galatia were facing. These assemblies were tempted to believe in and live according to another, false “gospel.” Paul, in correcting this situation makes it very clear that there is only One True Gospel and to reject it for other alternatives is to reject both the power and the joy that comes from receiving the Message of Truth in faith.

As you grow in faith, you will more than likely encounter false teachers who willing try to deceive. You will also encounter sincere, professing Christians who will insist there is more that you must do to become a Christian other than simply believing the Gospel and receiving Jesus. They will readily agree that you must believe the Gospel but then they will add something else that you must do. Some of these will be corrupt false teachers, others will be sincere, but biblically ignorant teachers. Whatever the case, you must aware that their teaching can steal the power and joy of the Gospel and send you into spiritual paralysis.

Because of the deadliness of these false gospels, Paul says that these false teachers who willfully try to deceive should be accursed. To willfully teach a false gospel is a severe error. God is not pleased when the truth of His Word is twisted into a message that brings bondage instead of liberation and anxiety instead of joy.

It is interesting to note that in Galatians Paul tells us the Peter once got caught up in some practices that were not in-line with the truth of the Gospel. When Paul began his ministry, Peter came to Antioch to check out Paul’s “Gentile Ministry.” While there Peter would eat with the Gentiles and not keep Kosher Law (eating only foods that were deemed clean in the Law of Moses). But then when James sent a group of Jewish brothers to see what all was going on, Peter withdrew from eating with the Gentiles and he along with Barnabas, influenced by the Jews, began to be hypocritical implying that to be a “good Christian” you had to keep Kosher Law (for the full story see Galatians 2:1-14).

Paul challenged them sternly about this hypocrisy:

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that their conduct (Peter and the others) was ***not in step with the truth of the gospel***, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” {ESV}

Because Peter was basically saying, “You have to eat the right kinds of food to be pleasing to God,” he was not walking “in step” or “in-line” with the truth of the Gospel. Consider what Paul says:

2 Timothy 1:9-10 He [Father-God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. 1:10 This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Let me say very simply and plainly that God the Father working in Christ by the power of the Spirit has DONE everything that is necessary for you to have a right relationship with Him. In Christ we have been filled and made complete. We want to live in a way that is pleasing to God the Father as beloved Children, but this comes only after we are fully convinced that we in a secure relationship with God in Christ. *We do not do good things to be saved; we do good because we have been saved.*

When people try to add to what we *must do* to be saved or to continue to be acceptable to God, they take something away from what Christ has accomplished. God is not pleased with such things. If He has said, “My Son has done everything necessary for you to be my child,” but then someone adds, “well that is true, but you must also _____ (fill in the blank),” this makes God a liar.

You have been made complete, or “filled-up” in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10; Ephesians 1:3-4). There are many false teachings in our times that would deceive you and entice you away from the simplicity of this truth. But as Paul advises us, we must be careful not to let anyone captivate us through such teaching.

WORDwork | Day 3**7.3 How do the “other gospels” work?**

Colossians 2:6-10 Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, 2:7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with gratitude. 2:8 Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ. 2:9 For the entire fullness of God’s nature dwells bodily in Christ, 2:10 and you have been filled by Him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

? 59 How, or in what manner, did we “receive” Christ Jesus? (Think back to our previous sessions)

? 60 “In whom” does Paul tell us to live our lives in verse 6?

? 61 How do we do this according to verse 7?

? 62 What are we warned against in verse 8?
What are the characteristics of this “philosophy”?

? 63 In verses 9 and 10 how are we related to Christ and what has He done for us or to us?

The One True Gospel focuses on Christ alone as THE Savior. In this passage, Paul tells us to “live our lives in Christ.” Remember, we are now “in Christ” and

Christ is living *in* us. Our lives should be completely shaped by our relationship with Him.

In the passage above, Paul tells us to keep on living our lives (“walking”) in Christ, firm in our faith (confident trust), overflowing with thankfulness or gratitude. He then immediately gives us the warning not to allow anyone to enslave us through empty, deceitful philosophy. Just as in Paul’s day, there are many false teachers and false teachings in our time. We must be very careful not to get ensnared by such things.

At the root of these false “ways” is a philosophy that Paul later describes as “man-made” or “self-made” religion (Colossians 2:23). These alternative “ways” are based in human traditions and demonic inspiration (the “elemental forces” in this passage are a reference to demonic powers) rather than the Truth that has been revealed to us in Jesus. We must be careful not to become captivated and enslaved to such teachings. Here Paul tells us several things about such philosophies:

1. They are **empty**, which means that although they promise “wisdom” they have no basis in reality.
2. They are **deceptive/deceitful** in that they lead us away from the Truth that is in Christ.
3. They are based in **human traditions** which means that they are “man-made religions” (see Colossians 2:20-23). These traditions almost always emphasize a negative view of our bodies and our desires.
4. They are based in the **elemental forces of the world** which means that they are demonic.
5. They are **not according to Christ**. This is the summary of all of these false approaches—they are not in line with the Gospel, the Truth of Jesus.

These philosophies ultimately present us with false gospels which are enslaving because they prey on our fears and leave us empty because they cannot deliver on what they promise. Only the One True Gospel can provide what we most desire because it alone has the power to do what it promises.

The Second-Century church father Tertullian said, “Just as Christ was crucified between two thieves, so this doctrine of justification [the True Gospel] is ever crucified between two opposite errors.” The two thieves of the joy and power of the Gospel are always *religion* (pride exhibited in trying to save our-

selves) and *irreligion* (presuming on God's love and mercy exhibited in doing whatever I want). Let's take a minute to think about what this means. Consider the following statements carefully:

The false gospel of Irreligion says:

"I am accepted in spite of what I think and do
because God accepts everybody."

The false gospel of Religion says:

"I think and act in certain ways
to be accepted by God."

The True Gospel of Christ says:

"I am accepted by God in Christ,
so I think and act in certain ways."

These false gospels lead to death because they ultimately strip God out of the picture as the source of life and power. These gospels produce habits and patterns of thinking that are enslaved to the point of *fear* or *distraction*. At the root of both of these false gospels is *idolatry*—looking to anyone other than Jesus Christ as our One and Only Savior.

Key Definition: **Idolatry** is seeking to find your security, life satisfaction, or significance in ANY source other than your relationship with Father-God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Idolatry seeks to find ways to manipulate the world or God so that "I" can be in control and not God.

The *mind-set*—the inter-working of thoughts, desires, and emotions—that is shaped and formed by the truth of the Gospel, however, is one that is *characterized by love*. Remember, perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). God has displayed His love toward fallen and sinful humanity regardless of what we do with it!!! It is only as we begin to understand the unconditional nature of God's love displayed in Christ that we begin to live in a way that is truly pleasing to God.

To help flesh out these basic ideas we have prepared a chart on the following page. Take some time to work through this chart and see if you can follow the main point.



Take some time to think of ways that you have been enslaved by either Religion or Idolatry. Based on what you know now, can you see how the One True Gospel exposes the lies of these false gospels?

Illustration 10: True Gospel vs. False Gospels

<i>Those who are “lost” trying to find THE Way</i>		<i>Those Set Free in Christ</i>
The Way of Religion	The Way of Irreligion	The Way of Jesus
<i>Adds to the Gospel</i> Gospel +	<i>Takes away from the Gospel</i> Gospel -	<i>Accepts the Gospel:</i> <i>In Christ, I am complete!</i>
<i>Truth without grace</i>	<i>Grace without truth</i>	<i>Jesus reveals Grace and Truth</i>
God is <i>only</i> holy and just.	God is only Loving.	God is Holy Love
Legalism: <i>We must all live up to the (my) standard!</i>	Relativism: <i>What might be right for you may not be right for me!</i>	Divine Righteousness: <i>Christ has done for us what we cannot do for ourselves.</i>
My Absolute Standards	No Standards at all	Jesus attained the standard for us!
I am accepted <i>because of</i> what I do.	I am accepted <i>in spite of</i> what I do.	I am accepted <i>in spite of</i> my sinful rebellion <i>because of</i> what Jesus has done for me.
I “love” God <i>because</i> I must. (He will get me if I don’t)	I “love” God because His love is free.	God’s self-sacrificial love empowers me to love as He loves.
Smack “love” motivated by <i>fear</i> .	Candy “love” motivated by <i>reward</i> .	Divine Holy Love
I am paralyzed by fear. <i>I must or else!!!</i>	I am distracted by everything. <i>Whatever dude!?!</i>	I am captivated by the truth, goodness, and beauty of Jesus. <i>Christ is my life!</i>
<i>I will avoid taking Jesus too seriously at all costs to keep control of my own life!</i>		<i>I joyously give my life to the One who gave His life for me!</i>
I am my own savior!	I am my own god!	Jesus is the Way, The Truth and The Life
Result: Despair or Pride (<i>I hate myself</i>) (<i>I love myself</i>)		Result: HOPE <i>I am more sinful than I first realized, but I am more loved and accepted than I ever hoped.</i>

WORDwork | Day 4**7.4 How Do I Continue on in THE Way?**

1 John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 5:12 **The one who has the Son has life.** The one who doesn't have the Son of God does not have life. 5:13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Jesus Christ is the “true light” (John 1:9) which has come into the World to set us free from the power and Dominion of Darkness (Colossians 1:13). If we respond to this light and truth by trusting in what God has revealed, the light that He places in our hearts begins to spread and grow, transforming who we are from the inside out. If we accept the Good News of Christ by faith, we also receive that type of life that He Himself possesses—eternal life.

Don't ever forget this simple truth: *Christ is always the Only Ultimate Savior and Hero of your story.* God did not send His One Unique Son to empower you to be the hero of your own story. Christ came so that we might look to Him in faith in our helplessness to see that all we need and desire comes from Him.

You must always remember that Christ's own faithfulness has accomplished what your faithlessness could not. God desires for you to put an end to your self-willed and self-empowered works and simply trust Christ who works through His Spirit to do *in* and *to* you what you cannot do in and of yourself. As He works *in* you, He will also work *through* you.

The two dangers that we have considered help us not only see what to avoid in faith and practice but clarify the one true Gospel. These two errors always lead to an abject form of slavery that never brings power, joy or freedom. The religious legalist destroys the idea of faith. The irreligious relativist destroys the idea of hope. They both destroy the possibility of living in and expressing divine love.

Paradoxically, only as we become completely captivated (enslaved) by the power of God in the Message of the True Gospel do we become truly free. This is the point that Jesus Himself makes and Paul repeats:

John 8:31-32 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples. 8:32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Romans 8:2 For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus *has set you free from the law of sin and death.* {NET}

Galatians 5:1 *For freedom Christ has set us free.* Stand firm, then, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery. {NET}

So how will we use our freedom in Christ? That is the topic of the next study unit of MilktoMeat entitled “Walking in the Truth.” In that study we will pick up right where we are ending here and take a look at two large topics: 1] The Reality of our New Identity and Position in Christ and 2] The Reality of Spiritual Warfare. Our Adversary’s greatest fear is that we begin to think and behave like Father-God’s beloved Children, living our lives wisely using His power. We need to know who we are and how we have been equipped to deal with our day-to-day battles. We have been set from the slavery of the Dominion of Darkness so that we may be captivated by the glory of the Kingdom of the Beloved Son.

Now that you have gone through this study, go back and review the major points of all that we have presented. Ask yourself these questions:



Can I share the “Master Story” with some else?



Can I ask the Six Basic Questions and give a basic answer for each using my Bible?



Can I defend the One True Gospel against the other false Gospels?

Every Bible student is a Bible teacher in training. Our prayer is that the Father will bring people into your life with whom you can share the things you have learned in this study. We hope this study will motivate you to push further into your own journey with Christ and that you will become His willing student, hungry to know Him more deeply and personally.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have finished the second workbook in MilktoMeat.

You are ready to continue in **Phase 2**

Walking In The Truth Part 1: Realizing Your New Identity in Christ

You can go to

www.tsfmemphis.org/milktomeat

to order this next workbook
and find out more about MilktoMeat.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If this study has been meaningful for you, or
if you have suggestions on how to make it better,

Send us a note at **connect@tsfmemphis.org**

— Notes —