

## Gospel-Powered Living in the Gospel – Session #1

### Orphans vs. Sons and Daughters.

#### The Fall of Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:1-7

*How does the Serpent convince Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit? What is the root cause of Adam and Eve's sin?*

#### Orphans or Children of God? (Sonship – pages 22-23)

*Underline the descriptions in the left-hand column that best describe your faith struggles. For those weaknesses that you find, the right column can serve as personal goals for this course.*

Orphans "I will not leave you as orphans ..." (John 14:18)	Children of God "But he has given us the Spirit of Sonship and by him we cry 'Abba, Father!'" (Romans 8:15)
Feel alone, lacking a vital connection with God. Full of self-concern.	You have a growing assurance that "God is really my loving heavenly Father."
Anxious over felt needs: relationships, money, health. "I'm all alone and nobody cares. I'm not a happy camper."	Trusts the Father and has a growing confidence in his loving care. Is being freed up from worry.
Lives on a succeed/fail basis. Needs to "look good" and "be right." Is performance oriented.	Learning to live in daily, conscious, partnership with God. Is not fearful.
Feel condemned, guilty, and unworthy before God and others.	Feels loved, forgiven, and totally accepted because Christ's merit really clothes you.
Have little faith, lots of fear, lots of faith in yourself: "I've got to fix it."	Has a daily <i>working trust</i> in God's sovereign plan for your life as loving, wise and best. Believes God is good.
Labors under a sense of unlimited obligation. Tries too hard to please. Burns out.	Prayer is the first resort: "I'm going to ask my Daddy first." Cries "Abba, Father!"
Rebellious. Resists authority. Heart is hard. Is not easily teachable.	Has strength to be submissive. Has a soft (broken and contrite) heart. You are teachable.
Defensive. Can't listen well. Bristles at the charge of being self-righteous (thus proving the point).	Open to criticism since you <i>consciously</i> stand in <i>Christ's</i> perfection, not your own. Is able to examine your unbelief.
Needs to be right, safe, secure. Unwilling to fail. Unable to tolerate criticism. Can only "handle" praise.	Able to take risks and even fail, since your righteousness is in Christ. Needs no "record" to boast in, protect, or defend.
Excessively self-confident or self-loathing. Discouraged, defeated. Lacks spiritual power.	Confident in Christ and encouraged because of the Holy Spirit's work in you.
Tends toward an "I can do it myself!" attitude. Is strong-willed, driven.	"I can do all things through <i>Christ</i> who gives me strength!"
Unbelieving effort. Rely on your abilities to get by in life.	You trust less in self and more in the Holy Spirit – a daily, conscious, reliance.
Tend to be ungrateful. Is complaining, bitter. Has a critical spirit. Tear down others.	You rely on the Holy Spirit to guide the tongue. Praises, edifies, gives thanks, encourages.
Tend to point out what is wrong. Is often dissatisfied about something.	Not blind to wrong, but you choose instead to focus on what is good and lovely.
Gossip (confess <i>other people's</i> sins). Need to criticize others to feel right. Has the "gift of discernment."	I am able to freely confess my own faults to others. I am eager to grow.
Tend to compare themselves with others – leading either to pride or depression.	Stand confidently in Christ. Your self-worth comes from Jesus' righteousness, not your own.
Feel powerless to defeat the flesh. Have no heart-victory	As you rest in Christ, you see more and more victory over

over pet sins, yet have lost your sense of being a “big sinner.”	the flesh. You see yourself as a “big sinner.”
Relatively prayerless. Prayer is a last resort. Pray sometimes in public, seldom in private.	Prayer is a vital part of the day, not confined to a quiet-time. You love to talk to the Father.
The Bible’s promises of spiritual power and joy mock you. “What has happened to all your joy?”	God’s promises of power and joy are beginning to describe you.
Boast. Point out your own accomplishments for fear that someone might overlook them.	Find that Jesus is more and more the subject of your conversation. You boast in your weaknesses.
Concerned about building a record of deeds that needs noticing and defending.	Christ’s righteousness is your “record” so you stand complete in him.
Wish people would see things your way. Need to be in <i>control</i> of situations and other people.	Becoming Christ controlled. Love others in the power of the Spirit, not in the strength of your sinful nature.
Looks for satisfaction in positions, possessions or pacifies (idols). Something other than Jesus makes you feel worthy, worthwhile or justified.	Christ is your meat and drink. God truly satisfies your soul. “And having him, I desire nothing on earth.”
Lacks passion to share the gospel, since your Christian life is not really good news. Tends to be motivated by obligation or duty, not love.	You have a desire to see the lost come to know Jesus the way you do. You share the gospel, even when you don’t have to.

### **The Difference Adoption Makes.**

Galatians 4:3-7

*What does God promise us in these verses?*

*How would your life change if you actually believed these promises? Examples?*

*How do these promises become real to us according to Paul?*

### **Adam and Eve’s Relationship.**

Genesis 3:8-13

*What does Adam do when God questions him? Why does he do it?*

*How do you think this affected their relationship going forward?*

*What would Adam have had to believe for him to handle his failure differently?*

### **Because I have to be right ...**

- I don’t listen (Why listen when I already have the answer?)
- I complain. (Other people have it wrong; God is wrong. I know what is best and what is right.)
- I defend myself. (Don’t you attack my reputation!)
- I attack and accuse. (I am right by being better than you.)
- I am harsh with others. (There’s nothing wrong with me, there’s something wrong with them.)
- I am critical. (God grades on a curve and I am ahead of the curve.)
- I gossip. (I am right because you are wrong.)

*Which do you see in Adam? Which do you see in yourself?*

### **The Great Exchange.**

Philippians 3:4-9. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

*What two kinds of righteousness (ways of being right) does Paul describe?*

*Why is the first kind of righteousness inadequate?*

*How do we get the second kind of righteousness?  
How would our lives change if we actually believe this truth?*

“It is like this: the earth does not produce rain, nor is it able by its own power or work to get it. The earth simply receives it as a gift of God from above. It is the same with “passive” righteousness. It is given to us by God without our deserving or working for it.” (Martin Luther)

**Homework.**

**The Tongue Assignment**

*For one week, do not:*

- Gossip
- Complain
- Criticize
- Blameshift (or make excuses)
- Defend Yourself
- Boast
- Deceive others

*Find a prayer partner to pray for your personal goals for this small group.*

*Pray Psalm 139:23-24 throughout the week.*

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

## Gospel-Powered Living in the Gospel – Session #2

### Getting worse to get better.

#### Why we couldn't keep the tongue assignment.

*Our hearts have been corrupted.*

Matthew 15:17-20 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

*What we commonly think of sin, are really symptoms of a much deeper problem. Sin are not the indiscretions that we do, sin describes the condition of my heart.*

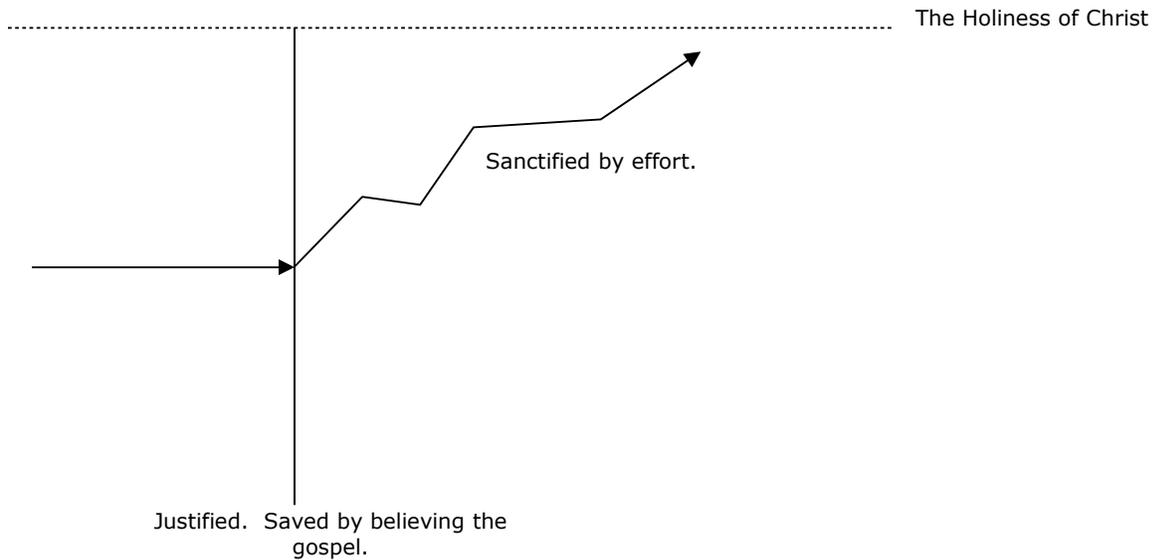
[Sin] is something much more akin to the psychological term *complex*: an organic network of compulsive attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God ... Sinful thoughts, words and deeds flow forth from this darkened heart automatically and compulsively, as water from a polluted stream. (Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 88.)

#### Some key terms: Justification and Sanctification

**Justification** is the one time act of God where he forgives your sin and declares you to be innocent and righteous in his sight. **Sanctification** is the process where we progressively reflect more and more the character and love of Jesus. **Justification** is past tense – "I was saved." **Sanctification** is present tense – "I am being saved."

Be of sin the double cure. Cleanse me from its guilt [justification] and its power [sanctification].  
(The Classic Hymn, "Rock of Ages")

**A faulty understanding of how we change.**



*Why doesn't this work? What are the pitfalls?*

*Why do you think Paul chose the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment to illustrate his point?*

*What does your testimony depend on in this scheme?*

Galatians 3:2-3 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

*So how do we change, how do we become more like Christ if it is impossible to attain this goal by human effort?*

**Small Group Discussion**

Snapshots from the Life of Paul

*Paul as a young man before he encounters Christ. Read Philippians 3:4-6*

*What is Paul's assessment of himself?*

*What does he think of Christ?*

*Paul in the middle of his life as an Apostle. Read 1 Corinthians 15:9-10*

*What is Paul's view of himself at this point in his life?*

*What does he think of Christ (God)?*

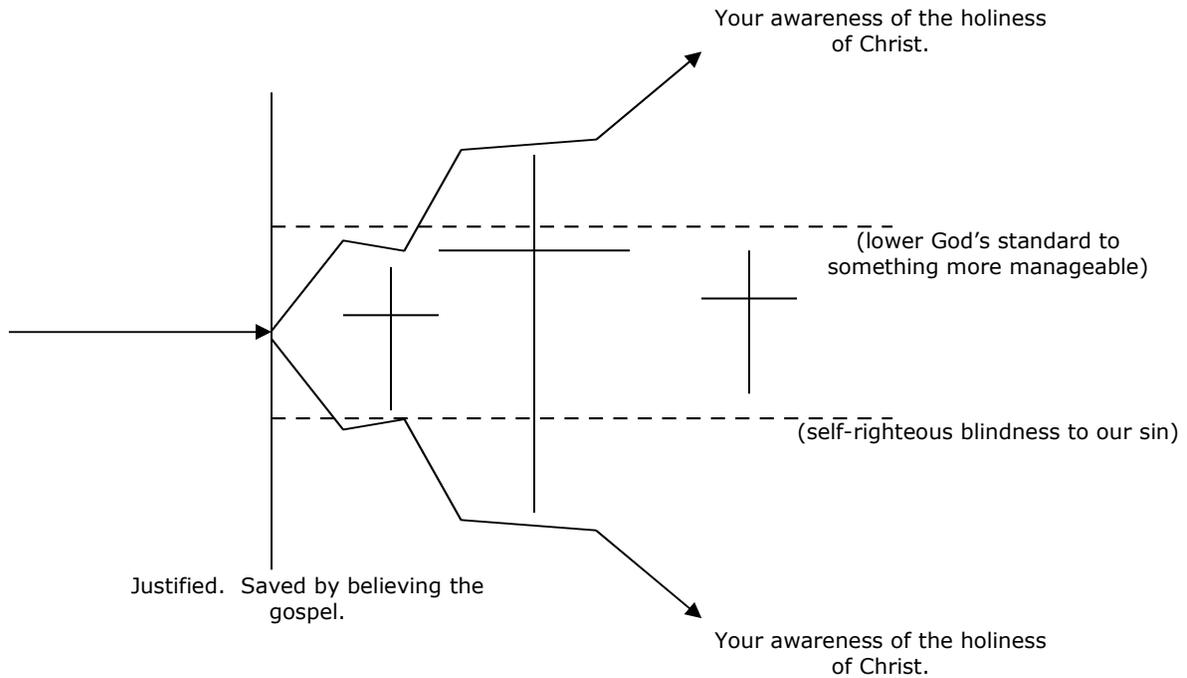
*Paul close to the end of his life. Read 1 Timothy 1:15-16*

*How does Paul see himself at the end of his life?*

*What does he think of Christ?*

*As Paul grows in his relationship with Christ, how does his view of himself change? How does his view of Christ change?*

**The Cross Chart.**



*What does a testimony look like with this understanding of sanctification (growing to become like Christ)?*

*What are potential pitfalls to this approach in growing in Christ?*

*Read Luke 7:36-47.*

Luke 7:47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

*The heart of God's law is boiled down to two simple commands. Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. Which person in the story loved God more? What does Jesus say is the key to loving him?*

Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells,  
 And the deeper the wells the brighter thy stars shine;  
 Let me find thy light in my darkness,  
 Thy life in my death,  
 Thy joy in my sorrow,  
 Thy grace in my sin,  
 Thy riches in my poverty  
 Thy glory in my valley. (The Valley of Vision – Puritan Prayer)

**Small Group Discussion:**

- What is one thing that struck you today about the gospel?
- How can we pray for each other?
- Group Prayer.

**Homework:**

Journal the following: Go back over your failures in the tongue assignment and journal what they reveal about your heart. Would you need to believe in order to change?

Ask someone who is close to you, "what is one thing you would change about me?"

## Session #3 – A Lifestyle of Repentance

### Small Group Discussion

Read. Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75.

*How do you think Jesus wanted his disciples to respond to his prediction?*

*Why did Peter's resolution to never to fall away, falls apart?*

*What is the root cause of his failure?*

### Repentance = Repentant Faith.

*What do these passages tell us about the relationship between repentance and faith?*

The opening words of Jesus' ministry.

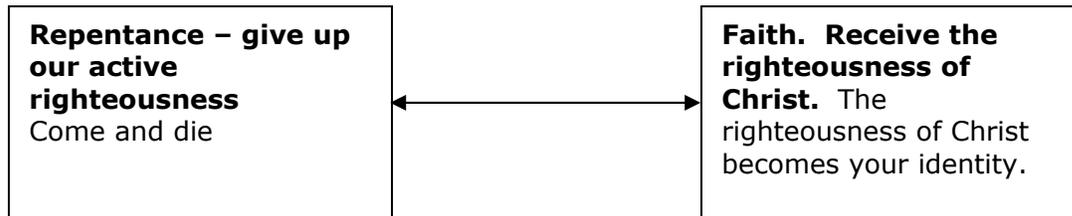
Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe** the good news!"

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

In the apostles ....

Acts 3:19 **Repent**, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Acts 16:31 They replied, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household."



### Small Group Discussion: What does it mean to repent?

Read Luke 15:11-32.

*Using the story of the prodigal son, come up with a definition of repentance.*

### Some thoughts on repentance.

"Repentance is greater than a decision to change behavior and then doing it. It is a change of the direction of our heart brought about by a broken, humble return to our God as he works in us."  
(Stu Batstone, Sonship 2005)

"Repentance always needs to be extended further. Repentance is turning from as much as you know of your sin to give as much as you know of yourself to as much as you know of your God. As

your knowledge grows through these three points, our practice of repentance must be enlarged.”  
(JI Packer)

**Repentance is turning from as much as you know about your sin ...**

- Our sin is unbelief.

Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

- Our sin is idolatry.

Jeremiah 2:13 "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Hosea 2:5 Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.'

**... to give as much as you of your yourself ...**

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

**... to as much as you know of your God.**

Luke 15:20 "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“Repentance is not modifying behavior it is the breaking and transforming of our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“Sin needs to be understood for what it reveals rather than for what we are to stop. If your attitude is to stop it, that is not enough. If you try to resolve your sin you have not defined it accurately. We misrepresent when we think about it simply as a category of immorality. We trivialize sin when we try to explain it ... Repentance is not a decision of the will to do the right thing. It’s an internal shift in our perceived source of life. Ultimately repentance is a humble, broken return to God, but there is a catch ... we are utterly unable to do it. ... Our job is to ask and keep asking this question. What is blocking me from the desperate hunger to change and the excited hope that it can happen?”

(Dan Allender, *The Wounded Heart*)

“Repentance is not asking for forgiveness, but asking for insight.”

(Stu Batstone)

**Examples of False Repentance (Sonship, 113)**

- Changing your outward behavior

- Groveling
- Beating yourself up
- Having a brilliant observation or insight about yourself or your sins
- Making promises or resolutions
- Engaging in self-pity
- Offering a sacrifice.

*Which of these most apply to you? Do you agree that these are all examples of false repentance? Do you question some of them? Why?*

**Small Groups Discussion:**

*How did your understanding of repentance change tonight?*

*Where do you need God to do a work of repentance in your life?*

*Pray for each other.*

**Homework:** Continue to pray Psalm 139:23-24.

Journal about the sins that God has revealed to you recently.

Ask yourself: What is blocking me from the desperate hunger to change and the excited hope that it can happen?

## Session #4 – A Lifestyle of Forgiveness

### Small Group discussion

The Story of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-ff)

- What does this story tell us about the heart of God?
- What does this story tell us about our own hearts?
- What does this story teach us about forgiveness?

*Include these facts with the discussion:*

100 denarii = 100 days wages (figure it out based on your income).

10,000 talents = The largest number and the largest unit of measure. If we had to compare it something it could be the total revenue of the Roman Empire for one year.

### What forgiveness is and what it is not.

- *Forgiveness is not forgetting what happened. Forgiveness is not minimizing the pain.*

*“We either make forgiveness too easy by forgiving big things too early and holding on to small things way too long.” (Ruth Ann Batstone, Sonship)*

- *Forgiveness costs us something. Forgiveness means counting the cost and relinquishing of your rights to make the person pay.*

*“Forgiveness is a **costly gift** that **cancel**s a **debt** owed in order to **give a taste** of the **character of God.**” Dan Allender*

*“Emotional pain is the currency of forgiveness.” Tim Keller.*

- *Forgiveness does not mean a lack of anger for sin*
- *Forgiveness does not require repentance by the offender, but repentance is not synonymous with reconciliation.*

Forgiveness is one sided. It is a unilateral decision to surrender your right for vengeance.

- *Forgiveness is an offer for reconciliation (it is not reconciliation itself). While forgiveness is one-sided, reconciliation requires repentance on both sides. (We will talk more about this later.)*

*Can you think of other examples where forgiveness should not include reconciliation?*

- *Forgiveness is not a one-time process.*
- *It is not possible to forgive yourself. Forgiveness must be received.*

### The Process of Forgiveness

- *Forgiveness is fundamentally derivative. There is a deep connection between our receiving God’s forgiveness and our ability to forgive others.*

Luke 11:4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

- *Repentance. The first step towards forgiveness is to recognize your own sinfulness and identify with the one who has harmed you. And this sounds outrageous.*

“Forgiveness flounders when I exclude my enemy from the community of humanity and exclude myself from the community of sinners.”

(Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*)

How is my heart like the one who offended me?

- *Worship – Faith.*
  - **God forgiveness and grace.** The enormity of God’s debt that he has forgiven us.
  - **God’s justice.** God is a perfect God of justice. He will ensure that every sin is fully paid for to the fullest extent of the law. Either Christ will bear that sin or the unrepentant person will pay it for eternity.

1Peter 2:23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

- **God’s sovereign power.** The sovereignty of God is foundation of Joseph’s forgiveness and reconciliation with his brothers.

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

- *We must count the cost. We must grieve what was lost and by faith surrender our right to collect.*
- *We work towards reconciliation. You may find a situation where all you can do is pray for the person’s repentance.*

### **Identifying someone that you have not yet forgiven.**

(by Ruth Ann Batstone)

- Is there someone you feel cold towards?
- Is there someone that you are habitually demanding or controlling of them?
- Is there someone you are actively trying to harm?
- Is there someone you are trying to ignore?
- Is there someone you gossip about?
- Is there someone that you root for them to fail?

### **Small Group Discussion**

- How has God challenged you in the area of forgiveness?
- How have you experienced forgiveness (either giving or receiving) in your life? What effect did it have on your life?
- How would you like your group to pray for you this week in the area of forgiveness?

## Homework.

*Journal the following (from Ruth Ann Batstone).*

1. Who is somebody that you need to forgive?
2. Pray and ask God to show you the enormity of his forgiveness and the unforgiveness of your own heart. Ask yourself: What has happened in the last 24 hours of my life that is part of my debt that Jesus paid?
3. How are you like the person you need to forgive?
4. How have you attempted to choke this person?
5. How might you be denying and minimizing the impact of the wrong that was done to you?
6. What do you need from God in the moment that you remember?
7. What will it look like to forgive this person? What will it feel like? How will you change? Where do you need the power of the Holy Spirit?
8. What must happen for reconciliation to occur? If protection is an issue ... what steps may you need to protect yourself from further harm?

## Session #5 Conflict and Reconciliation

### Reconciliation.

How is a relationship between a victim and an offender restored?

**Small Group Discussion:** Read Genesis 42-45 together as a group and answer the following questions:

- How do you feel about the way Joseph treated his brothers? Was he unforgiving?
- Why do you think Joseph took so long to reveal his true identity to his brothers? Should he have waited? Should he have revealed himself right away without putting his brothers through the wringer?
- Why do you think Joseph chose the particular moment that he did (Genesis 45:1-ff) to reveal himself to his brothers?

“At first sight, the rough handling of Joseph of his brothers has the look of vengefulness, but nothing could be further from the truth. Behind the harsh pose there is deep, almost uncontrollable affection seen in Joseph’s continual running out of the room to weep. And after the ordeal is over there is nothing but overwhelming kindness and tenderness. Joseph’s enigmatic treatment of them was a kinder, more searching test. Just how well judged was his policy can be seen in the growth of new attitudes in the brothers **as the alternating sun and frost broke them open to God.**”

(Derek Kidner’s Commentary on Genesis quoted by Tim Keller in his sermon on Joseph entitled “Discipline”)

### Godly Conflict.

How do you resolve conflict when there is no clear-cut victim and offender?

Is all conflict bad? If there is such a thing as godly conflict, what does it look like? What would gospel-centered conflict look like?

### Small Group Discussion:

Discuss in your group the following:

- What kinds of issues do you tend to get into conflict with people over?
- What kinds of people do you have conflict with?
- How do you respond the other person when you are mad at them? (e.g. lose temper, silent treatment, etc.)
- When you are in conflict do you normally apologize first or does the other person?
- Is it more godly to give in and apologize or is it more godly to stick to your guns?

### Large Group Discussion: Peacekeeping vs. Peacemaking

Two approaches to “peacekeeping”.

- **The Retreater** – A method of self-protection that avoids problems, denies them, enables, or “apologizes” (usually prematurely) just to make the problem go away. Conflict is always bad and is to be avoided at all costs.
- **The Subduer** – This person tends to crush the other person through intimidation, control, manipulation and/or guilt.

Aspect	Peacekeeping (Orphan Conflict)	Peacemaking (Adopted Son/Daughter Conflict)
Heart Foundation	Unbelief, self-righteousness	Repentant faith, forgiveness
Power Source	The sinful nature, fear	The Holy Spirit
Commitment	To avoid constructive conflict	To pursue constructive conflict

Direction	To bully, deny or avoid	To invite something far better
Feeling	Life is safe, less painful	Life is challenging, less certain
Goal	Self-protection, "peace"	God's glory, other person's good
Result	Alienation, broken relationships	Reconciliation, healed relationships

(Sonship Manual, 253)

**Peacekeeping**, whether it is the subduer or the retreator version, is an orphan's attempt to protect himself or herself. It is a refusal to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a refusal to hope that God can transform me and the other person.

### Peacemaking

- **Constructive Conflict begins with self-examination.** You must first see yourself as the greater sinner, before you approach the other person.

Luke 6:41-42 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 42 How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

- **Flows out of a gospel-centered heart.** Your fear must be conquered before you can risk yourself to see Christ formed in yourself and in the other person.

Romans 8:15-16 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

- **Motivated by love for the other person.** Paul's letter the Galatians is one of his sharpest, most conflict-filled letters of all his letters. Yet notice how he feels about the church that he is in conflict with.

Galatians 4:19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,

- **Done with a full awareness of the danger of falling into sin during the conflict.**

1 Timothy 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst.

### Small Group Discussion

- How did our time together challenge some of your conceptions of godly conflict?
- In what ways is God convicting you in the areas of conflict and reconciliation?
- How can you be in prayer for each other as you struggle to apply the gospel to the conflicts in your life?
- Group Prayer.

### Homework:

Journal about a current (or recent conflict in your life) using the following questions as a guide.

*Constructive Conflict begins with Self-Examination*

- Do you expect God to use other person to expose your own need for the gospel?
- Do you reject gossip and deal directly with the person involved?
- Are you listening well?
- Are you dealing with issues or personalities?
- Are you asking questions or accusing?
- Are you approachable and teachable?
- Are you committed to ongoing forgiveness during the course of your conversations?

*Flows out of a gospel-centered heart*

- Have you surrendered your desire to prove how right you are and how wrong the other person is?
- Are you demanding or do you look to the Holy Spirit to transform other people?
- Do you have a hopeful vision for what they can become?
- Do you desire God's glory to be seen in the lives of everyone involved in the conflict?

*Motivated by love for the other person.*

- Are you more interested in winning the argument or winning the person?
- Do you desire the other person's good?

*With a full awareness of the danger of falling into sin during the conflict.*

- In this particular conflict, what areas of sin are you vulnerable to?

Spend some time in prayer, confessing your sin in the conflict and asking God for the faith to trust him and to believe that reconciliation and transformation is possible.

## Session #6 – God’s Grace is bigger than us.

### Small Group Discussion #1: Abraham

Read Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:6-9, 14.

- What did Abraham do to deserve the blessings of God?
- What larger purpose will Abraham’s blessing serve?

Read Genesis 12:10-20; 17:1-18.

- What makes Abraham an unlike candidate for the role that God has chosen for him?
- Why do you think God chose him?

### Small Group Discussion #2: Paul

Read 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6.

*Remember that Paul is writing the church in Corinth, a church he has authority over and a church that supports his missionary efforts financially. With that in mind ...*

- What is startling about the details of his life that Paul shares with the Corinthians?
- What is the task that God has given Paul?
- How does Paul feel about the task that God has given him ...
  - In chapter 2:12-17?
  - In chapter 3:1-6?
  - Why is there a change in perspective between chapter 2 and 3?

## The Gospel is bigger than us

**John 20:21-22** Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

This is what the Gospel gives us!

- A New Status (forgiven, perfect, right, chosen, son/daughter, heir)
- A New Nature (regeneration (born again of the Holy Spirit)
- A New Kingdom and a New Mission to extend the reign of Jesus Christ on earth by making new followers of Jesus.

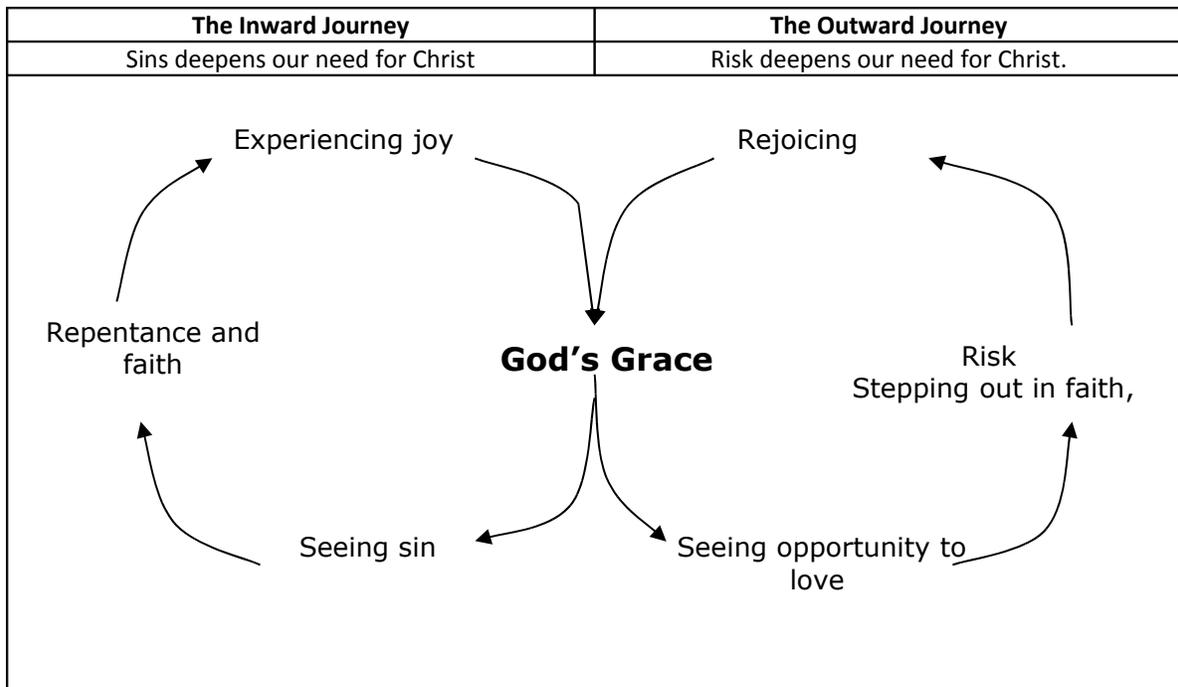
God’s grace has a higher purpose. It helps us overcome our issues with fear, guilt, identity and forgiveness **so that we can get out of ourselves and start living for others and for God’s kingdom.**

“The true gospel is kingdom centered and the ironic thing is that if we center ourselves on God’s mission and kingdom and less on our own fulfillment, we will be more fulfilled.” (Josiah Bancroft, *The Sonship Course, “the Propulsion of Grace”*)

“A man will kill himself if he finds no purpose for his life even though he is surrounded by an abundance of bread.” (Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*)

Matthew 6:31-33 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

## Life in the Deep End of the Pool.



“Align your purpose with God’s mission in the world and God in that situation delights in pouring out his power.” (Steve Childers, Sonship Week 2005)

**Small Group: Where do you begin?**

“God’s calling on your life is where the needs of the world and the desires of your heart intersect.” (Fredrick Buechner)

*Discussion Questions*

- Where has God broken your heart?
- What do you love?
- What would you do if you weren’t afraid of failing, or if finances were not an issue or you were unafraid for your safety?

*Prayer*

Pray for each member of the group that God would conquer their fears through the promises of the gospel so that they might be able to align their lives with the kingdom of God (that they may be able to love God, love their neighbor and make disciples of Jesus Christ in the unique way that God has gifted them).

Some helpful questions to direct your prayers:

- What about the gospel do they need to believe?
- What areas of their lives are they afraid to relinquish control?