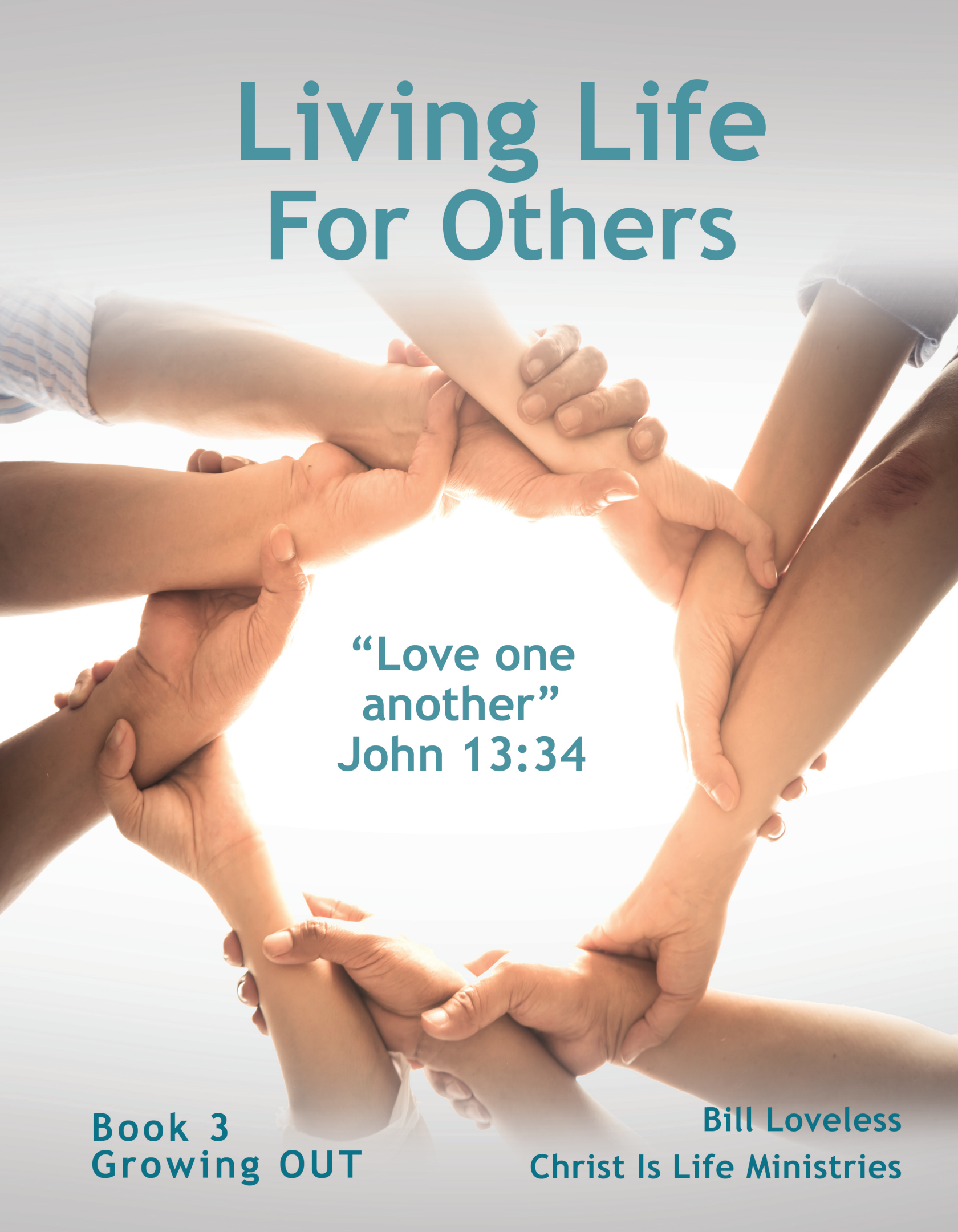


Living Life For Others



“Love one
another”
John 13:34

Book 3
Growing OUT

Bill Loveless
Christ Is Life Ministries

Living Life For Others

Book Three

“Growing Out”

Bill Loveless

Christ Is Life Ministries

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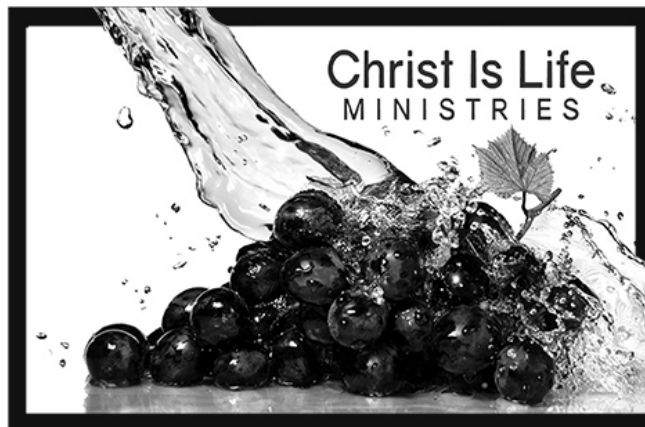
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Christ Is Life Ministries

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Growing Up – Growing Out – Growing Deep Series

This is Book Three of a four-part series designed to fulfill our calling as Christians:

“We are called to grow into Christ-likeness and experience our true identity in order to live life for others and experience a deep relationship with God.”

Growing UP

Book One - Growing Into Christ-Likeness

- What it means to grow up spiritually to become like Christ.
- What is Christ-likeness.
- The difference between living “A” Christian life versus living “THE” Christian life.
- What it looks like practically to grow into Christ-likeness.
- What are some of the hindrances to spiritual growth and how we overcome them.
- How growing into Christ-likeness transforms every area of our lives.

Book Two - Experiencing Your True Identity

- How God exchanged our old identity for a new identity.
- What our true identity is in Christ.
- God’s transformation process to experience our true identity.
- How living from our true identity impacts our lives and the lives of others.

Growing OUT

Book Three - Living Life For Others

- What the overflow of Christ-likeness looks like in living life for others.
- Looking past the externals and seeing the heart of another person.
- What freedom looks like to love others with Christ’s love.
- Ministry to others from the overflow of Christ-likeness.

Growing DEEP

Book Four - Experiencing A Deeper Relationship With God

- How God feels about you and why He created you.
- What intimacy with God and God with us looks like.
- Key truths concerning intimacy with God.
- Engaging God to experience a deeper relationship with Him.

The Layout of This Study

Thank you for choosing to study *Living Life For Others*. Before we begin, let's look at the layout of the study. The study contains six lessons, and each lesson has five daily readings (Day One, Day Two, etc.). If you are meeting weekly, this will give you seven days to complete the five daily readings. Throughout each lesson there will be **Questions**, **Scriptures for Meditation**, and an **Engaging God** section.

Questions

There are questions throughout the lesson and at the end of each lesson. They are primarily designed for you individually and to share with the group.

Meditation of Scripture

Throughout the study there will be several places where you will be asked to meditate on scriptures. If the idea of meditation is new to you, it means to engage the Spirit of God to give you personal revelation of a scripture(s). It involves being quiet before the Lord and allows Him to insert whatever thoughts He wants to share. Meditation is a crucial part of the transformation process.

Engaging God

This section is designed for you to ask the Holy Spirit to give you personal revelation, understanding, and application of what you have just read. This is especially crucial when you come to truths that contradict what you believe. (If we don't seek God to reveal His truth, then we will never move beyond the false beliefs that we may have.) Therefore, be sure and take the time to engage God as you go through the study.

Information - Revelation - Application - Transformation

God provided His word primarily for four reasons:

- **Information**: for you to know God intellectually from what His word says
- **Revelation**: for God to give you personal revelation of Himself through His word
- **Application**: for you to depend on God to apply truth from His word into your life
- **Transformation**: for you to be transformed into Christ-likeness as a result of information, revelation, and application gleaned from His word

Revelation

Since I will be using the word "revelation" throughout the study, I want to define what I mean when I use this word. "Revelation" simply means that God **supernaturally** takes His truth and makes it personal to you and to your life situations. Revelation takes you from intellectual understanding to spiritual understanding of God's truth.

Recommendation

Due to the depth of the content in each lesson, it is recommended that you take at least 12 weeks to go through the material. That would mean that you take the six lessons and divide them in half. This would give you more time to digest the content in a deeper way.

Living Life For Others

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Lesson One

The Overflow of Growing Up Your Six Square Feet

DAY ONE

Introduction

This study is designed for you to discover the answers to the following questions:

- What does the overflow of being transformed into Christ-likeness and living from our true identity look like in living life for others?
- How do we look past the externals (personality, looks, abilities, fleshly behaviors) and see the heart of another person?
- What do we need to be free from in order to be free to love others with the love of Christ?
- What hinders us from living for others?
- What does God want to accomplish through us in those who come into our six square feet today?

Throughout this study there will be reminders of what you learned in Books One and Two. Why is that necessary?

***Because being CONSTANTLY reminded of GOD’S truth is an
ESSENTIAL part of our ONGOING spiritual growth.***

Peter confirms this:

*“Therefore, I will always be ready **to remind you of these things**, even though you already know them, and have been **established in the truth** (reinforced, confirmed and strengthened by) which is present with you.” 2 Peter 1:12*

Our human tendency is to say, “I already know this.” However, in order to be transformed by God’s truth, we must continually be reminded of it. Therefore, as you go through this study, invite the Holy Spirit to take the words you are reading to confirm what you are reading is the truth and to seek Him to give you revelation and transformation. As you do, He will give you eyes to see the importance of and a growing willingness to live life for others.

In this lesson we will focus on the following topics:

- **Growing Out -living for others is an overflow of growing up spiritually.**
- **God has given each of us six square feet to live life for others.**
- **“Why me?” – Why is God calling on you to live life for others.**

Living For Others Is The Overflow of Growing UP

Introduction

The natural overflow of growing up into Christ-likeness and living from our true identity in Christ is that we will begin to live life for others (i.e., growing out). Let's look at three key results of growing out.

SELFLESS Living

*“When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and **felt compassion for them** and healed their sick.” Matthew 14:14*

We see countless times in the gospels about how selfless Jesus was towards everyone He encountered. Whether it was Mary Magdalene, the woman at the well, or Lazarus, we see Jesus as the embodiment of selflessness. Since Christ is being formed in us, then we too will grow out by becoming more selfless and others' focused. This process is what Jesus is describing in Matthew 16:25:

*“For whoever wishes to **save** (choose to walk in) **his (self) life** (the flesh) **will lose it** (not find life in Christ); but whoever **loses** (chooses not to walk in) **his (self) life for My sake will find it** (life in Christ).”*

Seeking to save your life means you will continue living for yourself and living from the fleshly self-life. Losing your life means you are seeking and depending on Christ as your life which leads you away from living for self and moves you towards living life for others. Another way of saying this is that we are being transformed from being “takers” into becoming “givers.”

Being Transformed From Being A TAKER To Becoming A GIVER

We were all born “takers.” Our focus before salvation was totally on ourselves (i.e., getting our needs met from others and being self-centered). As we are being transformed, the Spirit is replacing our self-centeredness with a heart to be a “giver.” Why? Because this is the heart of God since is the ultimate giver.

*“It is the Spirit who **gives life**; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” John 6:63*

We too are to become “givers of life.” What does that mean?

***As we live in dependence on God, THROUGH US He gives LIFE to others
(i.e., salvation, transformation, healing, freedom, etc.).***

God is the source for giving Life. By living from His Life, through you He gives Life to others. We have a choice. We are either trying to “take” life (find Life from people, wealth, power, etc.) or we find Life in Christ with the result that we will become “givers” of Life. Which life would you rather live?

Bearing MUCH Fruit

Part of giving Life is bearing fruit according to John 15:8:

*“My Father is **glorified** by this, that you **bear** much fruit, and so **prove** to be My disciples.”*

Remember from Book One, that as a spiritual branch (John 15:5) you contain all the Christ-like characteristics listed below. In this verse, “bearing much fruit” means that as you grow into Christ-likeness and your true identity, Christ’s love, peace, selflessness, etc., will be produced and expressed through you. The key truth to remember about bearing fruit is:

***The SPIRITUAL fruit that is being produced and expressed
THROUGH you is always for OTHERS.***

As you grow into spiritual maturity, your spiritual fruit will continue to ripen (i.e., you will become more loving, accepting, selfless, others’ focused, etc.) and you will become more spiritually attractive to those around you. In addition, according to John 15:8, living life for others glorifies God and is proof that we are Christ’s disciples. By way of reminder, let’s look at some of the Christ-like characteristics and then look closely at some of them that directly relate to living for others.

Key Christ-Like Characteristics That Are The OVERFLOW For Others

In Book One our focus was being transformed to experience Christ-likeness. By way of reminder, here is a list of some of the Christ-like characteristics:

Unconditional Love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance	Freedom
Patience	Strength	Peace	Forgiveness	Understanding
Security	Kindness	Wisdom	Discernment	Compassion
Christ-confidence	Adequacy	Humility	Boldness	Righteousness
Selflessness	Rest	Courage	Hope	Gentleness
Christ-control	Sacrificial	Power	Others’ focused	Joy

Although every one of these characteristics plays a part in our being others' focused, let's look at seven key Christ-like characteristics that directly focus on living life for others:

- **Unconditional love**: This will be the characteristic we most focus on because it means loving others with the same unconditional love with which God loves you.
- **Selflessness**: As we discussed, selflessness will transform our focus from ourselves to others.
- **Freedom**: As it applies to growing out, freedom means we are being transformed to be freer from our own wants and needs with the result we will focus more on others' wants and needs.
- **Sacrificial**: We will find ourselves seeking how to minister to and make selfless sacrifices for others.
- **Humility**: By its very definition, humility moves the focus from ourselves to others. In addition to love, it may be the most attractive fruit because we are all drawn to humble people.
- **Discernment**: Discernment is critical because as we grow in Christ's discernment, we will see more deeply into the hearts of others. This will result in more effective ministry to them.
- **Others' Focused**: Others' focused is like selflessness in that we will seek to be more focused on others than ourselves.

DAY TWO

"One Another"

Another way of saying living life for others is the phrase "one another." There are over 59 verses in the New Testament alone that focus on "one anothering." Here are a few of those verses:

*"Be devoted to **one another** in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor."*
Romans 12:10

*"Serve **one another** in love."* Galatians 5:13

*"In humility consider **others** better than yourselves."* Philippians 2:3

Exercise: Before you continue in this study, please take a few moments and go to the end of this lesson and slowly read through some of the "one another" verses. When you get through reading, please write down below what the Spirit revealed to you as you went down the list.

Now that we see that growing out is a result of growing up, let's look at the meaning of your six square feet when it comes to living life for others.

God Has Given Each of Us Six Square Feet

What Is Your "Six Square Feet?"

In order to live life for others, God has given each of us "six square feet." What does that mean? It is based on the strategy of how the Romans conquered the world. The strategy was to convince each Roman soldier that all he had to do was conquer his own six square feet and depend on his fellow soldiers to the right, to the left, in front of, and behind him to conquer their six square feet. If they all accomplished this, they would conquer all of their enemies. And history proved that out. In like manner, God has given each of us a "spiritual" six square feet. This is how we define it.

ANYONE the Lord brings into our lives so that THROUGH us He can ACCOMPLISH His divine WILL and PURPOSES.

Your six square feet includes those closest to you or a perfect stranger like the checker at your grocery store or a person on the phone from a foreign country struggling to speak English trying to help you with your credit card bill. Every person in your life, and those whom God brings into your life, make up your "six square feet."

Every One Who Comes Into Your Six Square Feet Is A DIVINE Opportunity

*"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity."
Colossians 4:5*

Look at Jesus' journey while on earth. Everyone who came into Jesus' life was a divine opportunity. This does not mean that all people responded positively – for one, the Pharisees actually hated Him. However, whomever He was with, He always saw them as a divine encounter. Therefore, remember this concerning those who come into your six square feet today:

With God there are NO accidents. Only DIVINE appointments.

God Has Prepared GOOD Works For You To Accomplish In Your Six Square Feet

It is important to know that God has prepared “good works” for each one of us. We see this in Ephesians 2:10:

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**”*

*“Instruct them to do good, **to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.**”*
1 Timothy 6:18

What is the definition of “good works?”

***ALL the ETERNAL works that God has prepared for you in ETERNITY PAST
and wants to accomplish THROUGH you and NO ONE else.***

Think about this for a moment. God values you so much that as you live dependent on Him, He will accomplish these eternal “good works” through you – works that He has prepared for you and no one else but you. Let these words sink into your heart for a moment: **“For you and no one else but you.”**

Why is that? Because of His great love for you and because of how much He values your life. We know God can do these works apart from us, but one of His greatest desires is for you and me to participate with Him in being His vessels of love, hope, encouragement, and Life to others. What an amazing divine privilege we have to be used by God in this way in another person’s life. We will see the result in the next section.

As Christ Lives Through You In Your Six Square Feet, He WILL Build His Church

Look at what Jesus says in Matthew 16:18:

“...I (Jesus) will build my church....”

What does it mean for Christ to build His church?

***Christ wants to GROW us up spiritually, TRANSFORM our lives
into His likeness, to EXPERIENCE our true identity, and experience
a DEEP, PERSONAL LOVE relationship with Him.***

We know the Lord can build His church without us, but He is giving you and me the amazing privilege of participating with Him to build His church through us. What will Christ's church look like as He builds it through you? We see the answer in Ephesians 4:15-16:

"...we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

Through you, Christ will help others grow more and more like Himself. He will create a whole and healthy body that is growing spiritually and full of love. One of God's greatest desires is to build His church through you.

Please take a moment to re-read this verse and as you do, remember these will be the results if you seek God to accomplish His works for you, through you, and no one else but you. Let's look at some examples of what God wants to accomplish in your six square feet.

DAY THREE

What Does God Want To Accomplish Through You In Your Six Square Feet?

Introduction

When Jesus first spoke these words in Luke 4:18, He was fulfilling a prophecy from Isaiah 61.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free." Luke 4:18

Jesus was speaking about what the Holy Spirit was going to do through Him while He lived on the earth. Now that you have Christ living in and through you, He wants to do the same things mentioned in this verse through you. Why? Because it is His life and truth wrapped in His power that will accomplish these things and more.

The good news and the freedom for us as Christians is that we are just the VESSELS. It is GOD'S words, spoken or expressed through us in LOVE, that have immense POWER.

Let's look at six examples of what He wants to accomplish through you to those who come into your six square feet.

1. SAVE Non-Christians Through You

*“for our **gospel** did not come to you in word only, but also in **power....**” 1 Thessalonians 1:5*

How many non-Christians do you think you will come in contact with today? Not all of them will be ready to hear the gospel, but there may be the “one” that the Spirit leads you to who is ready. If that person comes into your six square feet, then seek the Spirit to give you the words to say, the courage to say them, and the heart of love to say them with. Whether or not the person accepts Christ is not your responsibility. You have been faithful to share the good news of salvation.

Engaging God: “Holy Spirit, make me aware of anyone who comes into my six square feet that You want me to share the gospel with. Let Your courage and love so engulf me, that any fears I might have in sharing this lifesaving good news will be over-ridden.”

2. Reveal Christ As The SOURCE For Life

*“to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**” Colossians 1:27*

If someone is already a Christian, the most important foundational truth that person needs to hear is that Christ is his or her Source for Life. You understand because you know how transformational this truth is for you. The problem is that in evangelical America there are so few Christians that know about Life in Christ that it is crucial this truth be walk in and be proclaimed. Knowing and living out of this truth makes you an invaluable mouthpiece because there are so many Christians caught up in legalistic, performance-driven, God-help-me Christianity.

Therefore, as the Lord used a mouthpiece to set you free, He wants you to be His mouthpiece to let Him set those free who are captive to self-sufficient Christianity (i.e., “A” Christian life). There is no greater truth to share than this because we cannot live “THE” Christian life without it. Why? Because like you, others can be transformed into Christ-likeness according to 2 Corinthians 3:18.

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

We will talk about this in Lesson Six but one of the easiest ways to share Life in Christ is through testimony. You might share how the Lord has set or is setting you free from some fleshly behavior. Or you could share some Christ-like characteristic (love, acceptance, worth, etc.) that you are experiencing and how that is impacting you, your marriage, your parenting, or your other relationships. There is nothing like a personal testimony to open the door to share Life in Christ. Here is another key truth to remember.

YOUR transformation will BEAR WITNESS to others of the REALITY and POSSIBILITY that they TOO can experience the same transformation.

How would it make you feel if God used you to give revelation of Christ as Life to another Christian who was living in defeat and bondage?

Engaging God: “Thank you for what You have done to transform my life. Thank you for the freedom I am experiencing. Give me an opportunity today to share my story about how You are transforming my life.”

3. Set The Captives Free

*“and you will know the truth and the truth will set you **free**.”*

John 8:32

As you know, God does not only want to set us free from legalism and performance, He also wants to set us free from the flesh, our fleshly behaviors, and our sin strongholds. If you have walked long enough in a dependent relationship with Christ to experience some degree of freedom, isn't there something within you that says, “I want to see others being set free”? If so, this is what God is calling you to do. We see this in Luke 4:18:

*“...He has sent me to **tell the captives they are free....**”*

As you saw earlier, even though this is Jesus talking, He now lives in you and wants to set the captives free through you. Since you are surrounded by Christians who have been living in bondage to entrenched fleshly behaviors or sin strongholds, think about the vital part God is allowing you to play in setting the captives free.

Here is a true story to illustrate how God can use one person to set another person free. There was an unbeliever named Stephen who went to prison for sexually molesting a teenager. While in prison, a Christian, who periodically visited inmates to share the gospel, ended up sharing the gospel with Stephen and he accepted Christ. After his salvation, this same man who knew Christ as Life and our true identity in Christ, disciplined Stephen in these truths. As a result of being disciplined, the Lord set Stephen free from his sexual addiction. When he got out of prison, he started a ministry to college students. To date, he has disciplined hundreds of students who are being set free through him. All it took was one person who was willing and available and God did the rest.

Engaging God: “Thank You for the freedom I am experiencing as a result of what You are doing to set me free. I am seeking You to work through me to set others free.”

4. Comfort Hurting People

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and **God of all comfort**, who comforts us in all our affliction so that **we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.**”*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

One of the greatest privileges we have as Christians is to be used of the Lord to minister to a wounded or hurting person. We have all been, are, or will be wounded at some point. It is a result of living in fallen bodies, in a fallen world, surrounded by fallen people. As we grow in Christ, His love, grace, mercy, and compassion will be a natural overflow to others.

The good news is that God is not asking us to be counselors (unless that is your calling). What God is looking for are willing vessels through whom He can share a word of hope, comfort, encouragement, and healing. There may even be times the Lord doesn't want you to speak. He may tell you to just listen, or simply give someone a hug. Remember this key truth concerning comforting others:

As the Lord has worked His grace and comfort through YOUR struggles, He also wants you to SHARE with others how the Lord WORKED in your difficult times as a way of giving HOPE, COMFORT, and ENCOURAGEMENT to them.

We see this truth revealed in 2 Corinthians 1:4:

“who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

Engaging God: “Thank You for how You have worked through my personal struggles giving me hope, comfort, and encouragement. Give me opportunities to be a comfort to others.”

DAY FOUR

5 . Change Someone's Destiny

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind....”
Romans 12:2

Would you say God has changed or is changing your spiritual destiny now that you know Christ as Life and your true identity in Christ? If so, can you imagine what it might look like for the power of God through you to change one person's destiny? What if through you, He saved a marriage, reconciled a deeply wounded relationship, or moved someone to seek to love and be loved by God in deeper ways?

Engaging God: “Holy Spirit, in the same way You are changing my destiny, work through me to change someone else's destiny.”

6. Draw Others Into A Deep, Abiding LOVE Relationship With Him

*"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love."
John 15:9*

Let's sum up John 15:9 this way: Jesus says, "I love you with the same love that I, the Father, and the Holy Spirit have for each other." This is why He says, "abide in My love" because we can experience the same love the Trinity has for each other. As we abide in God's love, He pours out His love in our hearts according to Romans 5:5:

*"...hope does not disappoint, because the **love of God has been poured out within our hearts** through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*

As you abide in Him, His love will not only flow in you but will flow in you to others as well. This poured out love through you will draw others to Him. This is the essence and the ultimate objective of the Christian life. Take a moment and think about this statement:

You were CREATED out of love, to BE loved, and to LOVE.

Through God loving us, we in turn will love Him with the result that we will love others. We will unpack this much deeper in Book Four – *Experiencing A Deeper Relationship With God*. But for now, please know that more than anything else God wants to accomplish through you, it is to draw others through you to Himself so they can experience a deep, abiding love for Him. We will discuss this topic further in an upcoming lesson.

Engaging God: "Lord, thank You for pouring your love into me. I pray that Your love will flow through me and draw others to yourself."

Why Me?

Introduction

*"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'
Then I said, '**Here I am. Send me.**'" Isaiah 6:8*

God's desire as you read this verse is that your heart would be the same as Isaiah's when it comes to your living for others. However, you may struggle with this verse and be asking questions like, "Why me? Why would God use me?" These are valid questions because so many Christians don't know, don't see, or don't believe God could or would use them to transform the lives of other people. Therefore, let's look at four key truths that will help you understand the answer to this question.

Truth #1 - CAPABLE? Or “AVAILABLE?”

The number one reason why so many Christians don't, or believe they can't, live for others is because they feel they are not qualified enough, educated enough, or don't know the Bible well enough to be used by God. They feel inadequate or unworthy. Have you ever asked the question, “How could God possibly use me?” If so, here is a key truth to understand:

***God CAN and WILL use you because He is NOT calling those who
are CAPABLE to minister to others.***

Rather, He is calling out those who are AVAILABLE.

To confirm this truth, look at the 12 men that Jesus chose to teach, train, and walk with Him. What you don't see is 12 seminary-trained theologians or 12 religious leaders of their day. This was a ragtag group of fishermen, merchants, and one hated tax collector. The truth is that none of them was formally educated. There was nothing extraordinary about them; in fact, they were definitely not qualified, by the world's standards, to even be teachers, preachers, or evangelists.

Couldn't Jesus have picked a more capable group? One of the main reasons Jesus chose these 12 men is to show us that ministry is not about being qualified and capable. Rather, it is about being **willing** and **available**. We see this when Jesus called each of them to be His disciples and He never asked for their ministry resume. Why?

Because there is only ONE Person who is CAPABLE and that is God HIMSELF.

The problem in our Western culture is that we have been “brainwashed” into believing that unless you have been to seminary, Bible school, or received extensive Bible training, you are not qualified to be used of the Lord to spiritually impact others. Furthermore, many Christians use the excuse that ministry to others is the pastor's job, not theirs, because he did go to Bible school or seminary.

The truth is we are not and never will be capable. The good news is that the only One who is capable lives within us and all He is asking is this: “Are you available today for Me to work through you to make a spiritual difference in another person's life?”

If you struggle with feeling or believing you are not capable, this section hopefully persuaded you to some extent that God is only calling the available. God is calling you. Are you available?

Engaging God: “Father, I struggle with not feeling qualified to minister to others. Persuade me that You are the only One who is capable and that all You are asking of me is if I am available.”

Another key reason God wants to work through you is your value to Him.

DAY FIVE

Truth #2 - Your VALUE To God

Have you ever asked God this question, “How valuable am I to You?” If not, what do you imagine His answer would be if you asked? If we don’t know how God feels about us, the temptation is to think we have little or no value to God. If you struggle in this area, remember what He calls you in Ephesians 2:10:

*“For we are His **workmanship (masterpiece)**....”*

You are His workmanship. His masterpiece. How much do you value the greatest earthly treasure you have? Eternally more than that, God treasures and values you. So much so that He would have gone to the cross for you alone if you were the only person on the earth. However, you know it didn’t stop there because He put His very life in you (Galatians 2:20) and gave you a new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17) in order to live The life you cannot live and to transform you into Christ-likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18) so that you will live an abundant life (John 10:10) in Him.

Most importantly, in His great love for you, God created you and chose you to be loved by Himself. He uniquely created you for intimacy with Himself. He loves you, cherishes you, desires you, and seeks to be with you moment-by-moment regardless of your sins or your failures. He loves you unconditionally. There is nothing you can do, or not do, to change His deep, intimate love for you (Romans 8:38, 39).

We have a hard time believing these things because of how we see ourselves, especially if it is through a filter of inadequacy, unworthiness, or rejection. If you struggle with self-condemnation because of your sin, fleshly behaviors, or wounded emotions, it is very difficult to see your value to God. However, think about everything He has done in you and for you – all driven by His love for you and the eternal value you are to Him.

Meditate: Please take a few moments and get quiet in the presence of God and meditate on how valuable you are to God. Not because of what you bring to the table but because of what He has done in you and now wants to do through you.

If you struggle in this area, engage God to reveal your value to Him.

Engaging God: “Lord, I am struggling with seeing my value to You. Drop the scales of unworthiness, inadequacy, self-condemnation, etc., from my eyes and give me eyes to see my value to You. Thank You.”

Note: This also applies to those who think they are capable either because of their training or because of their human talents, IQ, and gifting. God can and will work through these things but none of them spiritually qualify us. As we make ourselves available to Him, He will work through us (using our training, abilities, etc.) in His power to accomplish His will and divine purposes. Here is a prayer you might consider praying.

Engaging God: “Lord, I am tempted to believe that I am capable because of my biblical training and knowledge, my gifting, or my abilities. Remind me that You will use those things, but they do not make me capable.”

Truth #3 - Your Value To The “ONE”

There is a man named Mike Wells, who was (he is with the Lord now) director of Abiding Life Ministries (www.abidinglife.com). He took the Christ-life truths all over the world. He typically went where few people would go and had amazing stories of how the Holy Spirit would work in the hearts of those he ministered to. However, there is one story that stands out more than all the rest.

When Mike would travel, he would minister in one part of the world for a few months and then he would come home to rest, to write, to counsel, and to prepare for his next trip. He had just gotten back from a trip to India and was exhausted. He was looking forward to some R&R to recharge his batteries. He hadn't been back home in Colorado very long before he got a phone call from a pastor who lived in the area where Mike had just come from and who Mike did not have a chance to visit. The pastor wanted Mike to come back to his church and teach a conference. The pastor promised him it would be a large conference.

Mike told him he was too exhausted to come but that he would pray about it. The Lord told him to go, but Mike was not too happy about going back halfway around the world for one conference. He was exhausted and the airfare was going to cost \$1671 for just this one trip. He was arguing with the Lord about going but the Lord won the argument and Mike went.

He arrived at the conference expecting a large group of people but much to his dismay, only two people showed up. The two people were the pastor and what Mike calls the “one.” The “one” was a woman who was born with some physical deformities and as a result she felt very rejected and unloved. Through Mike, God revealed how much He loved and valued this woman and how significant her life was to Him. Further, Mike told her that her life had such significance that the Lord brought him halfway around the world to minister to her. As Mike was sharing the truths of her true identity, the Lord set this lady free. She left rejoicing over her newfound freedom and the realization of how much God loved her. Needless to say, her destiny was changed forever.

When Mike got back on the plane to go home, the Lord spoke to him and said, “This is how much I value “one” person. I love her enough to take you halfway around the world to minister truth to her. I never want you to forget that any time I choose to minister through you, you are always going for the “one” whether there is one or one hundred in attendance.”

This radically changed Mike's attitude towards ministry because from that point on, He was always going for the “one” regardless of how many showed up. What does this mean for you and me? God wants you to see the value of the “one” or “ones” like He does with everyone He brings into your six square feet today. The good news is that you don't have to go halfway around the world to minister to the “one.” God will bring the “one(s)” into your six square feet today. All you have to do is be available.

Engaging God: “Holy Spirit, persuade me that there may be “one” you bring into my life today for You to encourage, give hope, speak truth, etc., through me. Please make it clear the “one” or “ones” You have for me today. Thank you.”

Truth #4 - We Are Called To Be DOERS of The Word

*“But prove yourselves **doers** of the word, and **not merely hearers** who delude themselves.”
James 1:22*

God has not called us only to be hearers of His word but to be “doers” of His word as well. What does it mean to be a “doer” of the word?

A “DOER” is one who **DEPENDS** on the Holy Spirit (as the Source) to accomplish HIS work, HIS will, and HIS purposes through us for others.

The key truth concerning being “doers of the word” is that the Holy Spirit, not us, is the Source “to do.” In our Christian culture, many are taught that we are to go out and “do” for the Lord. As we have discussed before, God does not need or want us “to do” anything for Him. Rather, He wants us to be constantly available for Him “to do” His word, His works, His will, and His purposes through us. We will talk more about this in a future lesson.

Engaging God: “Lord, I struggle with being a ‘doer’ of the word because _____. Remind me that being a ‘doer’ simply means I abide in You so that You can speak, give comfort, hope, etc., through me. Keep reminding me is it about my availability, not my capability.”

Conclusion

Have these four key truths helped you answer the question, “Why me?” If so, God will move you from:

***“Why me?” TO
“Here I am, send ME.”***

As we discussed earlier in the lesson, please read slowly through and think about the “one another” verses on the following page.

One Another Verses

How Not To Treat One Another

- Do not lie to one another. (Colossians 3:9)
- Stop passing judgment on one another. (Romans 14:13)
- Don't keep biting and devouring each other. (Galatians 5:15)
- Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:26)
- Do not slander one another. (James 4:11)
- Don't grumble against each other. (James 5:9)

How To Treat One Another

- Love one another. (John 13:34 This command occurs at least **16** times.)
- Be devoted to one another. (Romans 12:10)
- Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another. (Romans 12:16)
- Build up one another. (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Be like-minded towards one another. (Romans 15:5)
- Accept one another. (Romans 15:7)
- Admonish one another. (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)
- Greet one another. (Romans 16:16)
- Care for one another. (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- Serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)
- Bear one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:2)
- Forgive one another. (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
- Be patient with one another. (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
- Speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:15, 25)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another. (Ephesians 4:32)
- Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. (Ephesians 5:19)
- Submit to one another. (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)
- Confess your faults to one another. (James 5:16)
- Consider others better than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)
- Look to the interests of one another. (Philippians 2:4)
- Bear with one another. (Colossians 3:13)
- Teach one another. (Colossians 3:16)
- Comfort one another. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- Encourage one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Exhort one another. (Hebrews 3:13)
- Stir up [provoke, stimulate] one another to love and good works. (Hebrews 10:24)
- Show hospitality to one another. (1 Peter 4:9)
- Employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of one another. (1 Peter 4:10)
- Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another. (1 Peter 5:5)
- Pray for one another. (James 5:16)

Discussion Questions

1. What key truth(s) impacted you the most in this lesson? Why?

2. When you go through section titled **What Does God Want To Accomplish Through You In Your Six Square Feet?** Which one of those most impacted you, do you struggle with, or the ones you most want to experience. Why?

3. When you went through the “**Why Me?**” section, which one of those five reasons most impacted you, convicted you or persuaded you that God wants to work through you?

4. What were your thoughts/feelings about God giving you six square feet for Him to work through you?

5. Which of the “one another” verses most impacted you or convicted you? Why?

Lesson Two

Seeing Others Apart From and Through The Eyes of Jesus

DAY ONE

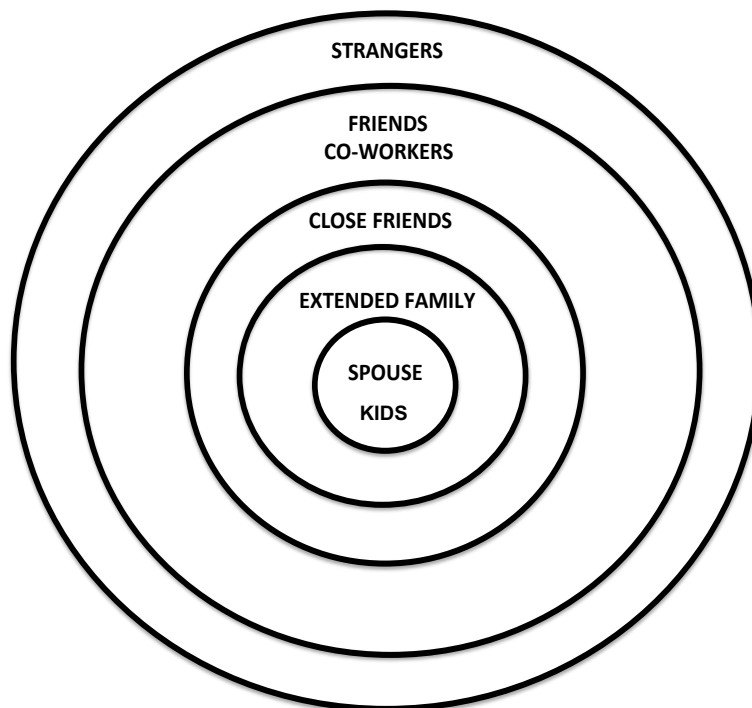
In this lesson, we will look at the following topics:

- How do we see others who come into our six square feet?
- In what ways do we see people apart from Christ?
- What are the results of seeing people apart from Christ?
- Seeing people in 3D.

How Do We Tend To See Those Who Come Into Our Six Square Feet

Categories of Relationships

In our six square feet, we will encounter different categories of relationships. As the diagram below illustrates, our relationships can range from those with people who are closest to us to those with people who are perfect strangers.



Four Ways We Tend To See Others

How do we typically see those who are a part of our six square feet? Especially those people you don't know. When it comes to others, Christians and non-Christians alike, we tend to look at people in one of four ways:

- We look past them as if they weren't there.
- We look at them but don't really see beyond what we see externally.
- We look at them through our own filter of beliefs, norms and standards.
- We see others with the eyes of Jesus.

The first three are the ways we see people apart from Christ while the last one is how we see others when we are abiding in Christ. Let's begin by learning what it means to see others apart from Christ.

Seeing Others Apart From Christ

1. Looking PAST People

We tend to look past many people, especially those we don't know. A good example of this would be your server at a restaurant or your checker at the grocery store. Our tendency is to look past them or to not even notice them.

2. Not Seeing Beyond What We See EXTERNALLY

There is a tendency to not see beyond a person's externals: personality, looks, etc. Examples might be your co-workers or people you attend church with that you know by name but know little or nothing about them. By focusing on the externals only, we can reach false conclusions and even make false judgments about people.

3. Looking At People Through Our Own FILTERS

When we look at or are getting to know people, we all have a filter or lens we see them through. Two key parts of our filter are our beliefs (i.e., spiritual, cultural, etc.) and our personal norms and standards. When we look at someone through our spiritual belief filter, we can have expectations of others to believe like we do. If they don't, we can choose to judge them or even correct them.

Through a cultural filter, we can look down on politicians who are for policies that we do not agree with or that do not measure up to our cultural norms and standards. Coming from our particular backgrounds produces filters for comparing ourselves with others.

What Are The Results of Seeing People Apart From Christ

In this section, we will look at the negative impact of seeing people apart from Christ who come into our six square feet apart from Christ. To begin with let's look at what we tend to do when we see people apart from Christ.

We Tend To Put People In BOXES

One of our tendencies, when we look at people apart from Christ, is to put people in what are called “relational” boxes. Those boxes can include such things as looks, personality, intellect, etc., that make up our relational boxes. Look at the diagram below to illustrate what we can put into our relational boxes.

“Relational” Box



Exercise: Think about a family member, a friend, or a co-worker of yours. Write down some of the characteristics you would put into your relational box.

From these boxes we create “relational” profiles. Look at the illustration below to see some of the characteristics of a relational profile.

“Relational” Profile



Exercise: Using your relational box, write down some of the characteristics you would put into your relational profile.

However, it doesn't stop there. Based on the profiles we build, we come to conclusions about people. Look at some examples of those conclusions below.

CONCLUSIONS



Exercise: Using your relational box, write down some of conclusions you have come to about a person.

Factual conclusions or observations (if they are true) are not bad in and of themselves. However, the key question when it comes to your conclusions about people is this:

“Where CAN your conclusions, APART from Christ, lead you?”

They typically lead you to one of three places.

DAY TWO

Three Places Our Conclusions Can Lead Us APART From Christ

Apart from Christ, our conclusions typically lead us to three places:

- **Comparing** ourselves with another person
- **Judging** others
- Setting **standards** or **expectations** for others

Let's look at the differences between the three.

1. COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OTHERS

What is meant by “comparing?”

***Evaluating yourself with another person that either leads to
SELF-CONDEMNATION or SELF-COMMENDATION.***

We all struggle to some degree with comparing ourselves with others. It can be a conscious comparison but because comparing ourselves can be so ingrained in us, our comparisons can be very subtle without our even being aware we are doing so. When we make comparisons, for the most part, we can't do it without grading ourselves (or others).

If we conclude we are smarter, more capable, or even more spiritual, we can go to the place of self-commendation by pridefully elevating ourselves above others. On the other hand, when comparing ourselves with others, we can conclude we are not as smart or as capable or as spiritual. The result: We feel inadequate or inferior which can lead to self-condemnation. Either way, making comparisons, apart from Christ, will typically lead us to fleshly responses.

In what ways are you tempted to compare yourself with others? When you do, do you tend to lean more often towards self-condemnation or self-commendation? Or something else?

Engaging God: Invite the Holy Spirit to expose the ways you may not be aware of in which you compare yourself with others.

2. JUDGING OTHERS

*“You **judge** according to **the flesh....**” John 8:15*

A second place we come to with our conclusions about others, apart from Christ, is judging others. Judging in the context of this study means:

***Coming to NEGATIVE conclusions about people which lead to
being CRITICAL of, and/or CONDEMNING them.***

Unfortunately, we all have a “fleshly” Pharisee living in us which says, “I have the right to judge everyone according to my standards or my conclusions.” We make judgments on such things as people’s beliefs, looks, race, personality, intellect, occupation, financial status, or even spiritual maturity (or lack thereof). When we allow the Pharisee in us to take over, we can become judge and jury concerning our judgments of others. We tend to judge them by our “fleshly measuring stick” for the following reasons:

- To elevate or think more highly of ourselves (i.e., pride)
- To feel more secure about ourselves
- To diminish our own inadequacies, and/or
- To feel like we are in control

Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit if any of these reasons are true of you.

When the Pharisee in us rears its ugly head, it leads us to fleshly responses like these:

- Self-righteousness
- Condescension towards others
- Minimizing or devaluing others
- Criticizing others
- Insensitivity towards others

Ask the Spirit if any of these apply to you. Are there any others that come to mind?

Here are some examples of fleshly responses:

- **Self-righteous judgments:** *“They wouldn’t be in this mess if they knew God’s word like I do. If they could only imitate my walk with the Lord, things would go easier for them. Thank God I am not as messed up as he/she is.”*
- **Condescending judgments:** *“I would have never done what they did. I can’t believe they couldn’t see this coming. It was obvious to me. If they had only listened to me.”*
- **Minimizing people’s motives, actions, or beliefs:** *“I can see how their child turned out the way he did based on the way they parent. I can’t believe he did that and he calls himself a Christian. Why can’t she just trust God with her fears and stop being so fearful.”*

- **Criticizing others:** *“How could you do such a thing? I told you this would happen, but you didn’t listen. Are you so blind you can’t see what you are doing is damaging your marriage?”*
- **Insensitive/lacking compassion:** *“They dug their own graves. This is what they get for making that decision. When are they ever going to learn.”*

As you read through these responses, could you identify with any of them?

Like comparisons, our judgments can be so subtle and come into our minds so quickly that we are not even conscious we are judging. For example, sitting in an airport, without even realizing it, we can make judgments about people’s looks, the way they dress, or their behavior. We are making fleshly judgments without really knowing anything more about a person than what we observe. The question is: What do you think God thinks about your judgments of people? Especially perfect strangers that you know nothing about?

The real key question concerning judging others is this: “Do we have any excuse for judging anyone?” Read the following passages to find out.

“Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.”

Romans 2:1

“Who are you to judge the servant of another.”

Romans 14:4a

Another toxic overflow of judging is believing that we have the right to inspect, evaluate, and draw conclusions about someone else’s spiritual fruit or lack thereof. We set ourselves up as self-righteous “fruit inspectors” determining if someone is producing enough fruit, the quality of the fruit, and how evident the fruit is in that person’s life. Based on our judgments, we can be critical and condescending towards others and feel very prideful about ourselves. People have even concluded that if they don’t see any spiritual fruit in a person’s spiritual life, that person isn’t even saved.

Note: None of us, if we are seeking to be spiritually transformed, want to think of ourselves overtly as being judgmental. However, as you read earlier, these judgments can be so subtle and come so quickly that without engaging the Holy Spirit to expose them, we will continue to make these judgments without ever being aware of them.

The question is, “Who is the one and only true judge?” James 4:12 gives us the answer:

“There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?”

Write down any other reasons why you may be tempted to judge others? When you judge others does it take you to self-righteousness, condescension towards others, minimizing or devaluing others, criticizing others, or being insensitive towards them? If so, please write those down.

Engaging God: Invite the Holy Spirit to expose the ways you may not be aware of in which you judge others.

DAY THREE

3. SETTING UNREALISTIC STANDARDS OR EXPECTATIONS FOR OTHERS

Our conclusions can also result in setting standards or expectations for others. Let's define the meaning of expectations:

Standards of BELIEFS or BEHAVIORS that others have that line up with YOURS.

When we set standards and expectations on what others should believe or live from, this creates unrealistic expectations. Unrealistic expectations are defined as:

Any expectation that is CONTRARY to or DOES NOT line up with God's TRUTH.

Let's look at some examples of unrealistic expectations concerning our spouses, kids, and other relationships.

Unrealistic Standards-Expectations For Our SPOUSES

I expect my spouse to:

- Make me fulfilled and happy.
- Love me unconditionally.
- Meet my standards for taking care of the finances.
- Conform to my beliefs about raising the children.

Unrealistic Standards-Expectations For Our KIDS

I expect my kids to:

- Love me no matter what.
- Change their fleshly behavior.
- Do what I say, not what I do.

Unrealistic Standards-Expectations For CLOSE FRIENDS

Close friends will:

- Never betray my trust.
- Always love me in spite of my fleshly behaviors.
- Always agree with what I believe.

Unrealistic Standards-Expectations For OTHERS

- My co-workers will work with the same integrity and work ethic that I do.
- The folks who I attend church with will believe exactly as I do.
- I expect others to listen to my spiritual advice and do what I tell them to do.

Do any of these unrealistic expectations apply to you?

We set “bars” of expectations that we expect others to jump over and when they don’t, we, in the flesh, believe we have the right to judge, reject, condemn, or even write someone off. Unmet unrealistic expectations can lead us to such fleshly behaviors as frustration, anger, unforgiveness, or self-righteousness. Like comparisons and judgments, unmet unrealistic expectations can be conscious or sub-conscious. Unless we seek the Holy Spirit to reveal them, we can continue to be blinded to them and how they are negatively impacting others.

If any of the unrealistic standards-expectations on the previous page are true of you, please write those down. What are some other unrealistic standards or expectations you have for your spouse, your kids, close friends, or others?

Engaging God: Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal/expose the unrealistic standards-expectations you set for others that you may not be aware of.

Results of Comparing, Judging, and Expectations

Let’s look at three results when we compare, judge, and set expectations for others. We know the first result based on what we have already discussed.

1. We Will Respond In The FLESH

As you just read, when we compare, judge others, and set expectations for others, our tendency is to respond in the flesh. Below are some examples of our fleshly behaviors that pertain to these three areas.

Frustrated	Angry	Controlling	Rejecting
Unloving	Critical	Guilt	Shaming
Manipulative	Unforgiving	Condescending	Judging
Uncaring	Insensitive	Vindictive	Jealous
People-pleasing	Self-righteous	Selfish	Abusive
Envious	Deceitful	Bitter	Blaming
Condemning	Resisting	Demanding	Retaliating
Affairs	Boasting	Uncompassionate	Offended

If we don't seek the Holy Spirit to expose our fleshly behaviors and transform us not to live from them, we will be in continual bondage to them and never be set free from our comparisons, judgments, and expectations.

Exercise: Write down the fleshly behaviors from the list above when:

You **compare** yourself with others?

You **judge** others?

You **set unrealistic standards-expectations** of others and they are not met?

2. We Will Develop "SPIRITUAL" Cataracts

When it comes to physical cataracts, we know they are a medical condition of the eye in which the natural lens of one or both eyes become progressively clouded resulting in blurred vision. If we continue comparing, judging, and setting expectations for others, we will develop what is called "spiritual" cataracts. Like physical cataracts, over time, spiritual cataracts will create a blurred or distorted view of everyone around us.

What will be the consequences of not engaging the Holy Spirit to remove our spiritual cataracts?

You will become more DEEPLY entrenched in your FLESHLY behaviors.

The last result is the most important.

3. We Will NEVER See People Through The Eyes of Christ

***Looking at others through your SPIRITUAL cataracts PREVENTS you
from EVER seeing people through the eyes of CHRIST.***

Just like condensation building up on your windshield obscures your vision, spiritual cataracts prevent you from seeing others as Christ sees them. Without the Holy Spirit removing your spiritual cataracts so that you can see others' hearts through the eyes of Jesus, you will continue to compare, judge, and set unrealistic expectations and live from the death of your fleshly behaviors.

What does it mean to see others through the eyes of Christ? We will explore the meaning in the next lesson. Before we do, let's conclude by looking at some final key truths.

Final Key Truths About Seeing Others Apart From Christ

Let's conclude this section with four key truths to remember concerning comparing, judging, and setting expectations for others.

Truth #1: To the extent we are self-focused, self-absorbed, and spiritually immature will determine the extent to which we compare, judge, and set unrealistic expectations for others.

Truth #2: Because we can automatically default to these three things, they can become so subtle we don't even stop and evaluate how we are doing them.

Truth #3: Similarly, as a result of our comparisons, judgments, and unrealistic expectations, we, like a car creating ruts when driving through mud, develop "soulical ruts" of fleshly thinking which lead to false conclusions about others. The result: We choose to stay in bondage to those false conclusions and the fleshly behaviors that result.

Truth #4: Apart from seeking the Holy Spirit to give us spiritual eyes to see others, we will continue to compare, judge, and set expectations for them.

While these three ways of looking at people may not necessarily be negative or sinful, are they what God intends for us as Christians? Or is there another way?

DAY FOUR

Seeing Others Through The Eyes of Jesus

The fourth way we can see people who come into our six square feet is to see them through the eyes of Jesus. This is God's desire. To better understand what this means, let's start by looking at the biblical meaning of the word "see."

"SEE"

Here are some of the various meanings of the word "see" in the Bible:

- To discover
- To understand
- To pay attention to
- To become acquainted with
- To discern or perceive
- To focus on

Please read through this list again and make it more personal by adding the word "people."
(Take your time and think about each definition.)

Think about your relationships. In what ways could it change how you see people in general if you could apply these definitions to those relationships?

Here is a biblical example of spiritual "seeing" by Jesus:

*"And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. **Seeing their faith**, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." Matthew 9:2*

Through His spiritual eyes, Jesus actually saw the faith of those who brought the paralytic to Him. We may say He could do that because He is God, but remember while on earth, Jesus was fully human (Philippians 2:6, 7) and had to depend on the Holy Spirit to give Him spiritual eyes to see beyond the externals.

The good news for us is this:

Since we have the FULL Godhead living in us, we have the same POTENTIAL to SEE others in the same way as JESUS did.

Think about it. With God living in us, we have the ability to see beyond the externals of people just like Jesus did while on the earth.

Engaging God: “Lord, give me Your eyes to see others.”

It Is A SUPERNATURAL Seeing

Even though “seeing” has a human connotation, the kind of “seeing” we are talking about is a supernatural, spiritual seeing. Here are two biblical examples of supernatural seeing.

The first example is in 2 Kings 6:17 when Elisha’s servant could not see the chariots of fire around the mountains until Elisha prayed the following prayer:

*“Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O LORD, I pray, **open his eyes that he may see.**’ And the **LORD opened the servant’s eyes and he saw**; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”*

Only until the Lord opened Elisha’s servant’s eyes could he see the chariots of fire on the mountains. In like manner, unless the Holy Spirit gives us supernatural eyes to see others, we will never have eyes to see beyond the externals.

Another example is in Job 42:5 when Job says this:

*“I have **heard** of You by the hearing of the ear; But **now my eye sees You.**”*

Leading up to this verse, Job has just gone through a physical and emotional hell in Chapters 1-37. However, I believe the worst part of his ordeal was in chapters 38-41 when God was admonishing Job for his pride which blinded him to the truth of who God is and what God can do. (Take a few minutes to read through these four chapters.)

It took these four chapters of God talking directly to Job for him to “see” what the Lord was trying to tell him. In the first part of Job 42:5, “hearing” means Job had an intellectual understanding of what the Lord was saying. The next word is “but” which meant that Job was about to turn a spiritual corner. At this point, the Lord supernaturally opened his eyes to “see” which meant that Job understood what the Lord was trying to tell him. It was a supernatural seeing/understanding.

As it applies to our study, let’s define supernatural sight this way:

***SUPERNATURAL sight is produced by the Holy Spirit in order for you to see
past the EXTERNALS of a person and see people
through the eyes of Jesus.***

What Did JESUS See When He Looked At People?

We see the answer in 1 Samuel 16:7:

*“The Lord doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the **Lord looks at the heart.**”*

Before we see what it means for Jesus to see our hearts, let’s look at the definition of the heart. In the Bible, the word “heart” can have different meanings. For this study, we will define the heart as follows:

The HEART is the same thing as our SOUL (Mind, Will, and Emotions).

Therefore, when Jesus looks at our heart, it means He is looking into our soul – what we are thinking, feeling, and the choices we are making. When Jesus looks at our heart, this is what He sees:

- Our needs
- Our woundedness
- Our pain
- Our fears
- Our desires
- Our beliefs
- Our motivation

It is worth repeating that since God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit live in us, we have the same ability to see others’ hearts as Jesus does. Let’s confirm this thought by looking at 1 Corinthians 2:14b-16:

*“...for **only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.** ¹⁵ Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others.*

¹⁶ For, ‘Who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?’

But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.”

Remember from the identity study that as part of your true identity, you have the mind of Christ. This means that you too, in Christ, can see past the externals of a person and see his/her heart.

Mike Mason, in his book, *Practicing The Presence of People*, shows us the importance of seeing the heart of others: *“Practicing the presence of people requires listening to the heart. It is from the heart that we relate to people. The heart, not the mind, is the binding agent.”*

Engaging God: Think about a friend or a relative that you have problems relating to. Begin asking the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to look past the externals of that person's flesh, irritating traits, etc., and begin seeing him/her through the eyes of Christ (i.e., his/her needs, pain, motivation, etc.).

DAY FIVE

Seeing People In 3D

Another way of describing seeing through the eyes of Jesus is what we will call seeing others in 3D. We can look at people in one dimension by only looking at the externals. However, in Christ, we have the ability to see those who come into our six square feet in 3D.

Definition

What does it mean to see people in 3D?

***Getting to know or knowing the **BACKGROUND**, the **BELIEFS**, the **MOTIVES**,
or the **STRUGGLES** behind what someone is thinking, feeling,
believing, or how they are behaving.***

Key Elements That Make Up Seeing People In 3D

Here are some of the key elements that make up seeing someone in 3D:

- **Family background:** Knowing someone's family background—did the person come from a loving, unloving, harsh, or abusive family?
- **Internal struggles:** We all are struggling internally so seeing someone in 3D is seeking to know what struggles they are facing.
- **Relationship struggles:** Since we all have relational struggles, seek to know and understand what people's struggles may be in their marriage, with their kids, friends, or family.
- **Spiritual struggles:** Like internal and relational struggles, we all are struggling with such things as our false beliefs, unbelief, flesh, or past woundedness that is still hampering our walk of faith.
- **Adverse circumstances:** Seek to know if someone is struggling with health, finances, or other adverse circumstances.

- **Church affiliation or biblical background:** Understanding people's church or biblical background can help you understand why they believe what they do about God or living the Christian life.

Note: It is important to note that seeing someone in 3D has everything to do with the depth of the relationship we have with that person and his/her willingness to share his/her heart with you. Unless we are given permission to do so, we have no right to pry into someone's personal life.

Why is it so critical to see others in 3D?

The Importance of Seeing People In 3D

Here are some key reasons why knowing people in 3D is so important:

1. We can see the EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE they may be carrying.

Going back to the six elements that make up seeing people in 3D, we will have eyes to see the baggage people are carrying around in their souls. Here are some examples of soulful baggage:

- a. **Family background:** If a person comes from a wounding background, he/she may have a tendency to wound others.
- b. **Internal struggles:** Internal struggles such as living from fear, insecurity, or inadequacy will create problems in close relationships.
- c. **Relational struggles:** Current or past relational struggles can negatively impact a person's ability to trust or forgive.
- d. **Spiritual struggles:** If people struggle with self-condemnation or not feeling they are meeting God's expectations, guilt and shame can result. Fleshly strongholds such as controlling, pornography, or a judgmental attitude will negatively impact how they relate to others.
- e. **Adverse circumstances:** Adverse circumstances such as divorce, past abandonment, health, or financial struggles, etc., can create a sense of abandonment, fear, or anxiety.
- f. **Church affiliation or biblical background:** This is crucial in understanding why people believe what they believe about God, others, and living the Christian life. This is especially true if they are living with false beliefs which are undermining their Christian walk.

Since we all live in a fallen world surrounded by fallen people, we are all carrying around emotional baggage of one kind or another. This baggage unfortunately negatively impacts our hearts personally and our relationships with others. Therefore, knowing and understanding someone else's baggage will help you for the following reasons.

As you think about those people you know, ask yourself, what emotional baggage may they be carrying around that may be causing them to act the way they act.

2. It helps you to know how to SPIRITUALLY NAVIGATE a relationship.

Without seeing people in 3D, it will be very difficult to navigate relationships. The definition of “navigate” means to very carefully travel over water or terrain in order to avoid running into obstacles. In the same way, spiritual navigation allows us to discern from the Holy Spirit how to walk with another person if we know his/her heart. Spiritual navigation also helps us avoid stepping on people’s toes.

Engaging God: Continually seek the Holy Spirit to be your wisdom and discernment in understanding what may be behind a person’s behavior or beliefs and seek His discernment in how to navigate the relationship.

3. It helps you to know how to SPIRITUALLY HELP another person.

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me **to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind.**” Luke 4:18*

This is Jesus proclaiming what He was called to do while on the earth. Is it possible that you have the same calling? Since Christ now lives in you, is it possible He can and will do these same things through you? The answer is, “Yes!”

Let’s look at a few practical examples of how seeing people in 3D will allow you to spiritually help another person:

- It gives you a deeper awareness of how you can encourage others, pray for them, or walk beside them.
- It gives you insight as to how and when to be sensitive and compassionate in areas where they struggle.
- When prompted by the Spirit, you can share biblical truth related to specific issues in their lives.
- Instead of judging, comparing, or setting expectations, you will give grace by seeking to spiritually build them up and by being set free of your unrealistic expectations.

Engaging God: Turn each of the four points into a prayer seeking the Lord to give you awareness, insight, when to speak truth, and how to spiritually build up a person.

We will talk more about this in a later lesson but the key in this section is to understand the absolute necessity of seeing people in 3D. Let’s end this section with a true story that brings together the truths we just learned.

True Story Example

There was a man named David who had a longtime friend who was hard to be around because of her discomfort around men. As nice as he tried to be to her, she always seemed a bit cold. David, not knowing her past baggage, started judging her. Here were some of his thoughts: “What is her problem? I am being gracious and kind to her but she always seems to be stiff-arming me.” This went on for some time until one day David found out more about her past.

He found out from another friend that she was molested by her father and several other men as a child. She was no doubt severely traumatized, as you can imagine. When David learned this background information, it became crystal clear why she was behaving the way she was around him. Knowing her past changed David’s heart immediately. He quickly went from judging her to experiencing a heart of compassion for her.

This is a perfect example of why we have to look beyond the exterior and see others in 3D.

In addition to the three reasons you just read, there is one more reason that is the most crucial reason why we need to see others in 3D. We will discuss that reason in the next chapter.

Discussion Questions

1. What key truth(s) impacted you the most in this lesson? Why?

2. What is the negative impact on us personally when we judge, compare or set unrealistic expectations for others?

3. Why do you think it is important to see people through the eyes of Jesus? What if we don't?

4. What was the most important reason you read for why we should see people in 3D?

5. Why do we need to see past people's externals and see their hearts?

Lesson Three

Why We Need To See People In 3D

DAY ONE

In this lesson, we will look at the following topics:

- The most important reason for seeing people in 3D
- With what kind of love are we to love others?
- Key truths about *agape* love

LOVE: The Most Important Reason For Seeing Others In 3D

The Two Greatest Commandments

The ultimate objective of seeing others who come into our six square feet through the eyes of Christ in 3D is summed up in the second of the two greatest commandments:

*"And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. **And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:37-40*

***The most important reason we are to see others through the eyes of Christ
is to LOVE them with the love of CHRIST.***

Jesus affirms this in the following verses:

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

*"By this everyone **will know** that you are my disciples, **if you love one another.**" John 13:35*

*"This is My commandment, that **you love one another, just as I have loved you.**" John 15:12*

We are to be disciples, followers, and messengers of Christ, but our greatest calling is to be "lovers." Lovers of God and lovers of others. Therefore, we will spend the rest of this chapter looking at what it means to love others who come into our six square feet as Christ has loved us.

The Only Reason We CAN Love Others With The Love of Christ

"We (are motivated to) love, because He first loved us...."

1 John 4:19

Our love comes from Christ but our motivation to love comes from God initiating His love towards us. Without God initiating love towards you and your receiving His love, you won't be motivated or able to love others. As we have talked about before, God is the initiator and we are the responders. In the case of His love, as He initiates His love towards us, we respond by receiving and walking in His love. That will, in turn, give us the desire and motivation to love others. Receiving God's love and giving it to others are inseparable.

***RECEIVING and LIVING FROM God's love is the ONLY reason we
are WILLING and MOTIVATED to love others.***

Why Is Loving Others Our HIGHEST Objective?

Let's look at four key truths to answer this question:

1. God's Highest PRIORITY Is On Love

Let's examine a few verses that reveal how great a priority God puts on our expressing His love:

"Love never fails.... And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is LOVE."

1 Corinthians 13:13

Think about this for a moment. Faith as we know is absolutely essential to live the Christian life. As is "hope" which means confident expectation that God is who He says He is and will do what He promises to do. As essential as the two qualities are, the highest priority is **love**.

When it comes to the Christ-like characteristics in Colossian 3:12-14a below, which is the greatest and most important?

"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Beyond all these things put on LOVE...."

Colossians 3:12-14a

These verses contain only a partial list of Christ-like characteristics Paul instructs us to "put on." However, the one characteristic that supersedes all the rest is **love**.

Engaging God: Seek the Holy Spirit in deeper ways to persuade you that as with God, your highest priority for others is to love.

DAY TWO

2. Loving Others Is The HEART From Which We Relate To Others

The following verses reveal this truth:

*"Let **all** that you **do** be done in **love**."
1 Corinthians 16:14*

The word "all" in the original Greek means "all, everything, and everyone". Everything the Holy Spirit wants to do through you must be done through a heart of love. It is the divine filter for all of God's works through us.

This is more clearly emphasized in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3:

*"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but **do not have LOVE**, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, **but do not have LOVE, I am nothing**. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, **but do not have LOVE, I gain nothing**."*

Paul is telling us three times in this verse that apart from doing all these things listed in these verses through a heart of love, they are futile. Paul is not minimizing the things listed. Rather, he is telling us that you can do all these things through either a heart of selfishness which brings glory to yourself, or through a heart of love which brings glory to God.

In every work we are called to do, we can do it through the filter of self (dead works) or through the filter of Christ's love (eternal works). We will talk more about divine works later in this study. For now, Paul is emphasizing a heart of love over a heart of self.

Engaging God: Seek the Lord to grow your heart of love for others.

3. The GOAL of Sharing Truth With Others

*"But the **goal of our instruction is LOVE** from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." 1 Timothy 1:5*

*"but **speaking the truth in LOVE**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." Ephesians 4:15*

Similar to having a heart of love for others, Paul specifically tells us in 1 Timothy 1:5 that the goal of all instruction (sharing God's truth) is to do it in love. He further emphasizes this in

Ephesians 4:15. Instruction can include teaching truth in a group or sharing truth one-on-one. The key is that no matter what the setting or the opportunity is to share truth, it should be done from love.

A lady once summed up 1 Timothy 1:5 this way: *“When love is felt, the message is heard.”* Don’t you find this statement to be true in your own life? If you feel loved by a person who is teaching from a pulpit or sharing with you one-on-one, don’t you find yourself being more responsive to that person. In like manner, as we have opportunities to share truth with others, we are to do it in love. We might sum this section up this way:

TRUTH spoken through LOVE results in RECEPTIVE hearers.

“When love is FELT, the message is HEARD.”

Engaging God: Seek God to cement into your heart the words, “When love is felt the message is heard.”

4. ALL of The Fruit of The Spirit Flows From LOVE

When it comes to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23, which fruit is listed first?

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control....”*

Look at the fruit of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 13:4 below:

“LOVE is patient, LOVE is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast.”

Paul is saying out of love flows patience and kindness which are two of the fruit listed in the previous Galatians’ passage. Does it stop with those or is it possible that all the fruit of the Spirit flows out of love? If you have never thought about this being true, please seek the Spirit to reveal to you the truth of this thought.

In summary, when you look at all the verses contained in these four truths, there is only one conclusion that we can come to.

***Love is the GOAL of our instruction and the HEART with which we are
to minister to others since God’s HIGHEST objective is
to TRANSFORM us to become LOVERS.***

Meditate: please take time to meditate on the verses in this section.

Engaging God: Seek the Holy Spirit to transform you to become a lover of others.

What Kind of Love Are We Talking About?

To better understand the kind of love God is calling us to in order to love others, let's look at three biblical words for love.

“Ahab” and “Philostorgos” Love

There are many words and meanings for the word “love” in the Bible. Let's look at three of the Greek New Testament words for love.

1. **“PHILOSTORGOS”:** This is the love we have for family. *Philostorgos* love creates strong bonds between father and mother and sons and daughters. The words “genuine affection” in Romans 12:10 is an example of *philostorgos* love:

*“Love each other with **genuine affection [philostorgos]**, and take delight in honoring each other.”*

2. **“PHILIA”:** This is a Greek word for the most general type of love in Scripture, encompassing the human love one has for fellow humans, and the care, respect, and compassion for people in need.

To better understand *philia* love, look at Matthew 10:37:

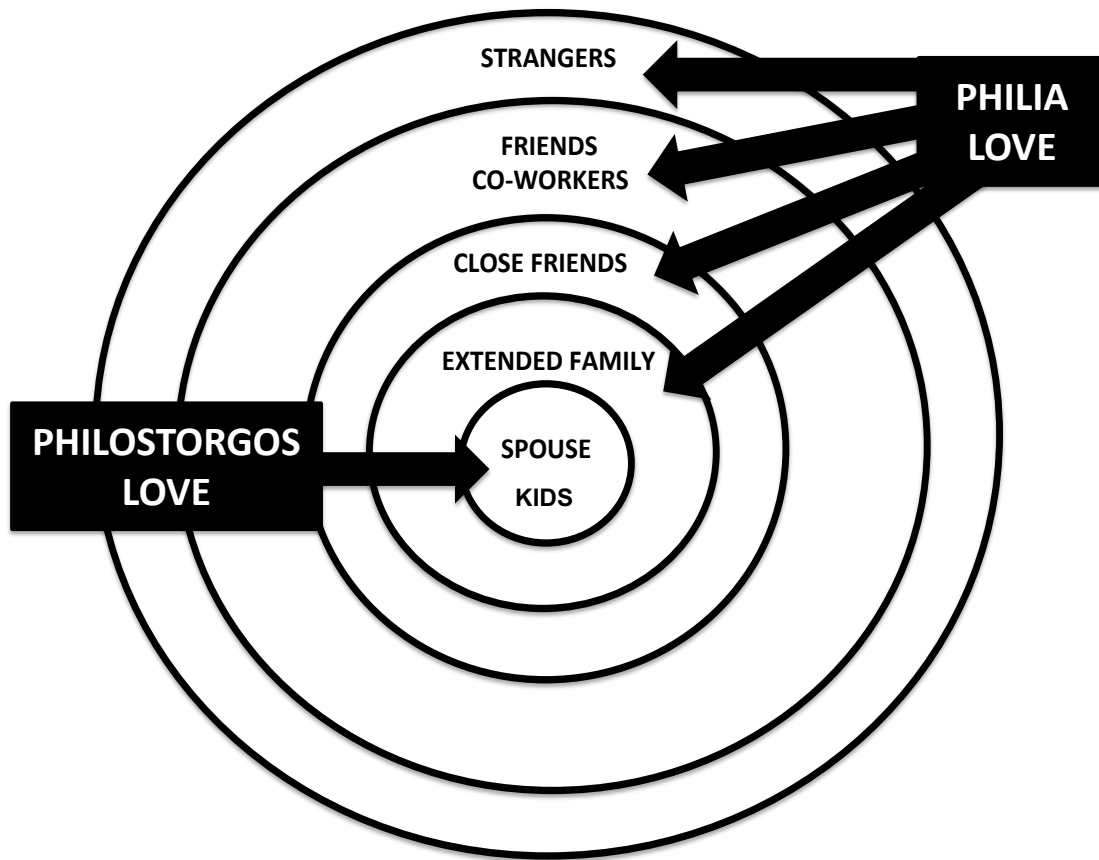
*“He who **[philia]** loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who **[philia]** loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”*

Let's apply these two different forms of love to the different levels of our relationships.

We Experience Different Levels of Relationships

We all have different levels of relationships. Look at the diagram below that illustrates this. In the inner circle is the most personal of relationships—between husband and wife and between parents and children. As you move out from that inner circle, you see that relationships become less personal.

Let's apply the two forms of love we discussed previously to the diagram. *Philostorgos* love is a human love for your spouse and family. *Philia* love is a human love that we have for every other relationship.



The key truth that we need to understand about these two forms of love is this:

Philostorgos and philia love are all HUMAN, SUBJECTIVE, and CONDITIONAL.

In other words, these forms of love will vary according to the depth of your relationships. Since both forms are human love, they will be subjective and conditional. Subjective in that you will love some more than others and conditional in that you will set expectations on how you should be loved.

DAY THREE

The Love With Which We Are To Love Others: AGAPE Love

“And a second is like it: You shall [agape] love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:39-40

When it comes to the second commandment, the “love” Matthew is talking about is *agape* love. This is a third form of love. It is the highest of all the types of love in the Bible. It is the Christ-like love from which we are to love others. What is the definition of *agape* love?

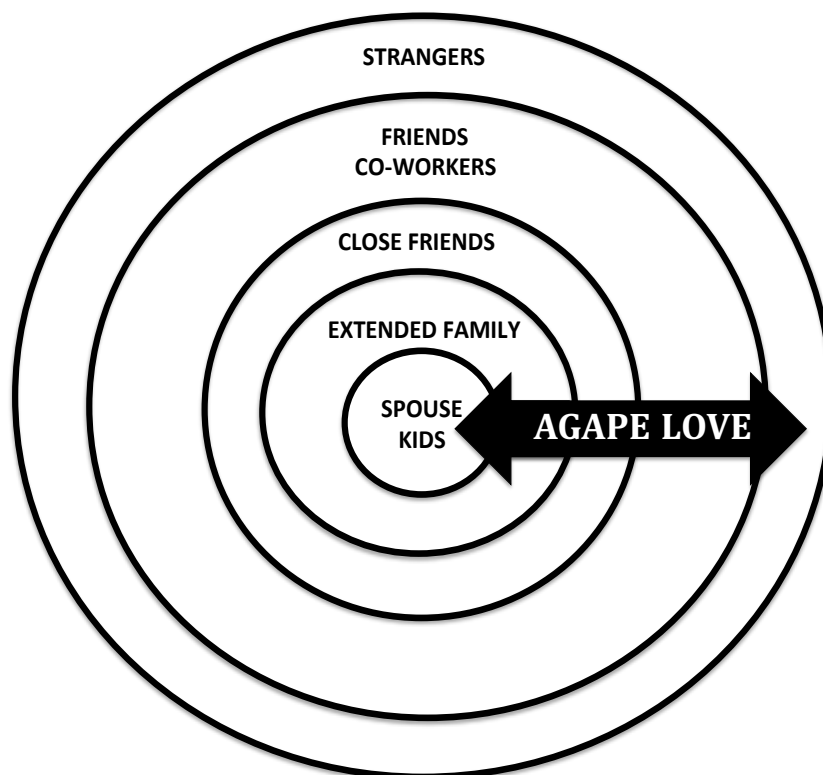
***Agape love is the DIVINE love that ONLY comes from God —
His immeasurable, incomparable love for mankind.***

Agape love is PERFECT, UNCONDITIONAL, SACRIFICIAL, and SELFLESS.

While we love people differently depending on whether we are exercising *philostorgos* or *philia* love, it is also different with *agape* love.

Loving others with AGAPE love means that REGARDLESS of the level of the relationship, you love everyone who comes into your six square feet EQUALLY.

Everyone from a perfect stranger to your closest relationships are all to be loved equally with *agape* love as the diagram below illustrates.



Think about it. When it came to *agape* love, did Jesus love the disciples or the little children more than the self-righteous Pharisees? The answer is “no” because *agape* love is perfect, unconditional, and does not play favorites. When it came to *agape* love, Jesus loved the Pharisees, the little children, and His disciples equally.

Note: Jesus expressed *agape* love in different ways towards the Pharisees and the children, but it was still *agape* love.

Key Truths About AGAPE Love

*“...and hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out within our hearts** through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:5*

In this section, let’s look at some key truths about *agape* love that apply to living life for others.

Truth #1 - Agape Love Loves (REGARDLESS)

Why? Because *agape* love has:

- No conditions
- No expectations
- No limitations
- No selfish motives

How freeing would it be to love others if you could love them using the list above?

Engaging God: Seek the Holy Spirit to look at your relationships and reveal to you the ones where you tend to love with conditions, expectations, or limitations. Seek the Lord to transform you so that you will love others with none of those things.

Step of faith: “I struggle loving _____ because _____ doesn’t love in the ways I desire to be loved. Holy Spirit, transform my heart so that I will be willing to love _____ with Your unconditional love.”

Agape love means loving the hard to love or unlovable people in your life such as:

- Those who have or are wounding you
- Those who continue to reject or malign you
- Those who have no interest whatsoever in your life
- An estranged family member
- An ex-spouse
- Your prodigal adult children
- Those who are always needy and constantly seeking you for something

Who are the unlovable people in your life?

Engaging God: Based on what you just finished reading, ask the Lord to show you those relationships where you have imposed conditions, expectations, limitations, or selfish motives on others, or where you are judging, criticizing, comparing, etc., others. Begin asking the Holy Spirit to set you free and transform your heart to love these people.

Step of Faith: “Holy Spirit, renew my mind to the truth and set me free to love others with Your love including the unlovable people in my life.”

DAY FOUR

Truth #2 - Agape Love Is The NO Excuse Form of Love

Similar to loving others with no conditions, expectations, etc., *agape* love prevents us from using fleshly excuses not to love others. Here is a story to bear this out. Some time ago, there was a man talking about his relationship with his siblings. He kept repeating that he couldn't truly love them or reconcile with them until they repented of all their wrongdoings towards him. This was the beginning of a number of excuses he was making to justify not loving them. Just like this man's flesh, our flesh can come up with many excuses not to love. Here are a few examples of some of those fleshly excuses:

- **Unforgiveness:** *“I can't love them until they fully repent and ask for forgiveness.”*
- **Unmet expectations:** *“Since they are not loving me the way I want to be loved, I don't have to love them in return.”*
- **Rejection:** *“I can't love them because of the many ways they have rejected me.”*
- **Woundedness:** *“I can't and won't love them because of how badly they have wounded me.”*

Are you using any of these excuses to not love others? This is why *agape* love is called the “no excuse” love.

***NO MATTER the FLESHLY excuses we come up with to NOT love others,
NONE of them will hold up because AGAPE love has NO excuses.***

Aren't you glad God loves you with the “no excuse” *agape* love? Should that not be our heart with which to love others?

Exercise: Write down any excuses you have for not loving others. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the excuses you might have that you are not aware of.

Engaging God: Seek the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth about your excuses and seek Him to set you free from them.

Step of Faith: “Holy Spirit, renew my mind to the truth that because I am an *agape* lover in Christ, I have no excuses to not love everyone. Reveal to me the excuses I am not consciously aware of that prevent me from loving others. Set me free from my fleshly excuses.”

Truth #3 - Agape Love = POWER

*“... for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of **POWER** and **LOVE** and self-control.”*
2 Timothy 1:7

Have you thought about the direct connection between *agape* love and power? The power we are talking about is the power that created the heavens and the earth and is holding the universe together. This is the magnitude of God’s power residing in you. As you love others with *agape* love, God releases this power through His love to:

- **PENETRATE** someone’s heart so they will hear God’s truth.
- **SOFTEN** someone’s heart so they will be responsive to the truth.
- **FREE** someone’s heart from the bondage of their flesh and fleshly behaviors.
- **UNLOCK** a person’s heart so they will share the deep things of their heart.
- **HEAL** someone’s heart from past or present woundedness.
- **TRANSFORM** someone’s heart into Christ-likeness.

Engaging God: If you have not thought about the power that flows through loving someone, take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to give you a greater depth of understanding that love can penetrate, soften, free, unlock, heal, and transform another person’s heart.

Here is a story to illustrate the power through love. There was a white pastor from another state who was invited to minister in an all-black church in a city where racial tensions ran very high. Because of being a racially charged city and the fact he had never ministered in a black church before created concern about how he might be received. He took his concerns to the Lord and the Spirit spoke these words to the minister, “Let Me love these saints through you and I will show you the power of My love.”

As the minister began speaking, he was constantly asking the Holy Spirit to love these people through him. What happened that night and for the next three days that he was ministering to them was the most powerful display of God’s power he had ever witnessed. He said the power of God’s love dropped all the cultural and prejudicial barriers. As those walls came down, God’s love was

flowing back and forth between the minister and the church attendees so deeply that they all became very close by the end of the conference. The result: Love was felt, the message was heard, and God's truth transformed lives.

This story is a powerful example to affirm the following key truth:

***As you depend on the Holy Spirit to express His AGAPE LOVE through
you to another, HE will release HIS POWER to accomplish
HIS PURPOSES in others' lives.***

We see this truth in Isaiah 55:11:

"So, will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

Have you ever thought about how God's love and power are bound together? In what ways might it change your willingness to love others if you believed what God's power can do (refer to list on the previous page) in another person through you?

Engaging God: Think about the six things listed on the previous page concerning what the power of God's love can do. Seek the Lord to give you a deeper understanding of His power expressed through His love and a greater willingness to love others.

Step of Faith: "Lord, open my spiritual eyes further to the truth that Your *agape* love is inseparably connected to Your power and with this understanding, give me a greater willingness to love others."

Truth #4 - Agape Love Frees You FROM...

"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Galatians 5:13

Here is a key truth when it comes to loving others:

You have to be free FROM something before you can be free TO love someone.

Think about this for minute. Can you do these things listed below and still love others at the same time?

- Judge
- Criticize
- Compare
- Take offense
- Set unrealistic expectations
- Hold onto the right not to forgive

The answer is obviously “no.” You can’t do any of these things and still love others. This is why it is so crucial to seek God to set you free from these and any other fleshly behaviors because as you are experiencing freedom from these things, you will be free TO love. Another way of saying this is:

<i>FREEDOM = A LOVING HEART</i>
--

Can you add anything to the list above that you need to be set free FROM in order to be free TO love others?

Meditate: on the truth that you have to be free FROM things like those in the list above in order to be free TO love others.

Engaging God: If any of the things in the list above apply to you, seek the Lord to set you free FROM them in order to be free TO love others.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I am seeking you to set me free FROM _____ in order to be free TO love others.”

DAY FIVE

Truth #5 - Agape Love Makes You UNREJECTABLE, UNOFFENDABLE, and IMPENETRABLE

If you remember from Books One and Two, we talked about your spiritual armor thickening as you grow in Christ. The “divine” thickening occurs as you increasingly believe and walk in the truth of who Christ is in you (Christ-likeness) and who you are in Christ (your true identity). Divine thickening also results from the love of Christ growing in you.

Every step of faith increases the love of Christ in you which will protect you from those who want to reject and offend you. Your love will grow to a point where when someone is rejecting or offending you, you will not only not be taking ownership of their rejection and offense but in that moment, you will be loving them with the love of Christ.

***How FREE would you be to love OTHERS if you believe you are
UNREJECTABLE, UNOFFENDABLE, and IMPENETRABLE?***

Take a minute to think about the above question.

Engaging God: Seek the Holy Spirit to continue thickening your spiritual armor.

Step of faith: “Lord, transform me to be more unrejectable, unoffendable, and impenetrable and when offended, give me the willingness to love and not offend in return.”

Truth #6 - Agape Love Is An UNSTOPPABLE Force

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 8:38, 39

Romans 8:38, 39 promises that nothing will separate you from God’s love. Paul is also telling us in this verse that nothing and no one is going to stop God from loving you. Similarly, no one can stop you from loving other people. Someone may resist your loving them, but they cannot stop Christ’s *agape* love from pouring through you to them. His love is truly an unstoppable force.

A Bible teacher once said that a friend of his called him periodically and said this, “I love you and there is nothing you can do about it.” Isn’t this a great example of the unstoppable love of God?

Think about this: God is continually telling you the same thing every moment.

How would it change your willingness to love those who you fear will reject your love when you realize there is nothing they can do to stop Christ’s love through you?

Meditate: on the truth that Christ’s love is unstoppable.

Engaging God: Seek God to persuade you in deeper ways that no one can stop you from loving others, especially those you believe might reject your love.

Truth #7 - Agape Love DRAWS People To Christ In You

“So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us...”

2 Corinthians 5:20

Why were people drawn to Jesus? Was it His looks, His personality, or was it the Father’s love through Him that drew people to Him? As Christ lived in dependence on the Father and the Holy Spirit, people were drawn to their love in and through Him. As we grow spiritually, the fruit of Christ’s love will ripen and become more attractive to others. Remember this key truth:

ALL we have to offer others is CHRIST’S LOVE in us.

Nothing in and of ourselves will draw others to Christ in us other than Christ’s love being expressed through us.

Meditate: on the truth that what will draw others to Christ in us is His love through us.

Step of faith: “Father, continue to grow me spiritually in order for Your love to grow in and through me and be attractive to others.”

Conclusion

Hopefully, this lesson has helped you understand why the most important reason for seeing people in 3D is loving them with *agape* love.

Discussion Questions

1. What key truth(s) impacted you the most in this lesson? Why?

2. Why should we make loving others our highest priority? What if we don't?

3. Under the topic **Why Is Loving Others Our HIGHEST Objective**, which one of those points most impacted you? Why?

4. What are your biggest struggles with loving others with *agape* love?

5. Which of the seven **Key Truths About AGAPE Love** most impacted you? Why?

Lesson Four

What Qualifies Us To Be Agape Lovers?

The Hindrance To Loving Others and Seeing Them In 3D

DAY ONE

In this lesson, we will look at the following topics:

- What qualifies us to be agape lovers?
- The hindrance to loving others and seeing them in 3D.
- Self-protection prevents us from growing spiritually.
- The truth behind why we protect ourselves.
- Agape love and liking, trusting, approval, and setting boundaries

What QUALIFIES Us To Be Agape Lovers?

The truth is that nothing in and of ourselves qualifies us to be *agape* lovers. A better question might be:

“What did God DO in us to QUALIFY us to become agape lovers?”

Let’s look at a five-part answer to this question. The first four parts are reminders from Books One and Two:

1. Christ Put His life In You To Be Your SOURCE To Love Others

Christ put His life (THE LIFE) in us to be the Source for living the Christian life.

“He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus,”
1 Corinthians 1:30 (RSV)

This is further emphasized in 1 John 4:19:

“We love, because He first loved us.”

This means that CHRIST, not us, is the SOURCE to love others through us.

2. Christ Put His Life In You So You Would Be A CONTAINER of All of Christ's Love

"For in Christ all the fullness of Deity lives in bodily form and you have been given fullness in Christ...." Colossians 2:9, 10a

Remember, you have the fullness of God living in you according to Colossians 2:9, 10. Therefore, practically speaking, you are a "container" of all of Christ's peace, joy, rest, forgiveness, etc. For the purpose of our study, it means you have the fullness of all of Christ's love in you. Why is this important?

***As a container you POSSESS all of Christ's
love and are POSSESSED by His love.***

3. God Gave You A NEW IDENTITY In Order To Become A LOVER

***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation [new identity]; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."
2 Corinthians 5:17***

Just as love is God's identity, it is our identity as well. This means in Christ, we are unconditional lovers according to 1 John 4:7:

"Beloved, let us (agape) love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves (because of his true identity) is born of God and knows God."

We love because when God gave us a new identity, He hard-wired us to be lovers.

Therefore, loving others is not only what you DO, it is who you ARE.

4. He Is Transforming You To Be A DISPENSER of His Love

God not only wants us to be containers, but His ultimate goal is for us to be "dispensers" of His love. Look at Romans 5:5:

"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been POURED OUT within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

As our Source, the Lord does not pour His love into us only for us to then bottle it up. We are to be vessels of love poured out for others.

We see this in 1 Thessalonians 3:12:

*“May the Lord make your love increase and **OVERFLOW** for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.”*

What kind of dispensers is God calling us to be? Early on as we are growing spiritually, we are “eye dropper” dispensers that give out small amounts of love. However, God is transforming us to become “loving” fire hydrants. We talked earlier about how love does not function independent of God’s power. Can you imagine God loving someone through you as a loving fire hydrant? Wouldn’t God’s love flowing through you wash them off the sidewalk? This is why we grow spiritually because God is transforming us from being “eye droppers” to becoming “fire hydrants.”

Quote From Dallas Willard

Let’s end this section with a quote by Dallas Willard, a noted author, from his paper, *Getting Love Right*:

“Our aim under love is not to be loving to this or that person, but to be a person possessed by love as an overall character of life. Love is not what you choose to do. It is what you choose to be.

“It is not about coming to the unlovable and trying to love them. Rather, come to them as a loving person. Even God doesn't just love, He is love. It is His identity.”¹

The HINDRANCE To Loving Others and Seeing Them In 3D

“THE” HINDRANCE = Not Growing Up Spiritually

There is one key hindrance that prevents us from loving others and seeing them in 3D.

***If we don’t continue to grow up SPIRITUALLY, we will
NEVER be able to love others with AGAPE love.***

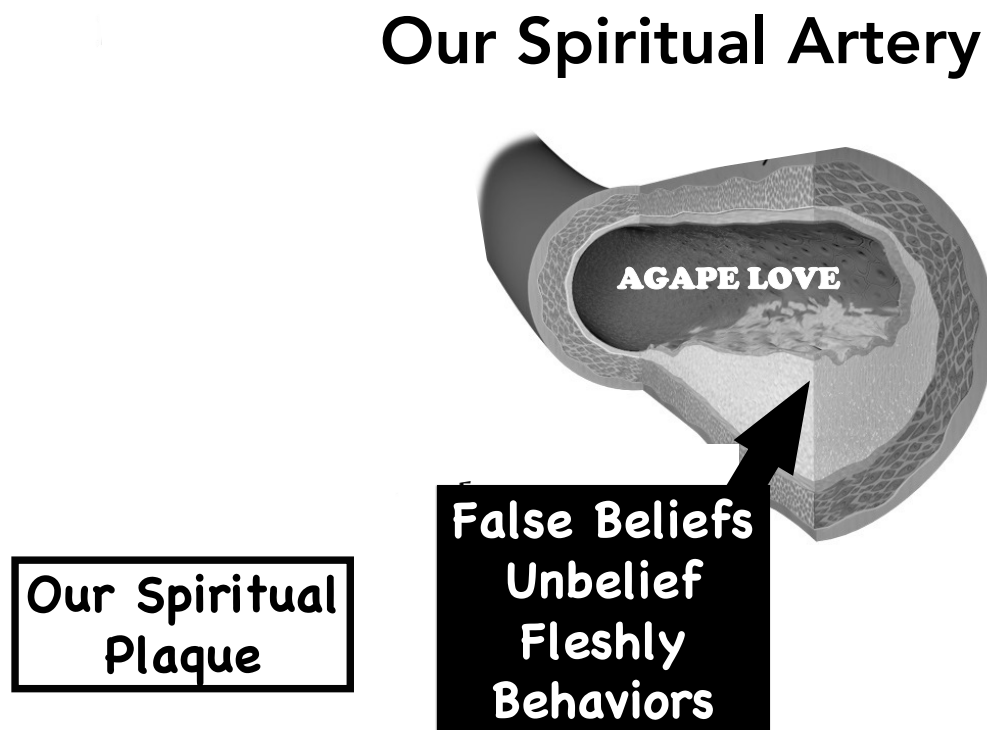
Wouldn’t you agree? We saw in the *Growing Into Christ-Likeness* curriculum how important it is to grow up spiritually and be transformed into the likeness of Christ. Let’s look at how this applies to hindering us from *agape* loving others.

Let’s illustrate this comparing a physical artery to what we will call our “spiritual artery.” As you know, in a physical artery, we have all the blood we need to live. However, over time we have a build-up of plaque which restricts the flow of blood.

¹ Dallas Willard, *Getting Love Right*, A paper presented by Dallas Willard at the American Association of Christian Counselors conference in Nashville, TN on September 15, 2007 (Amazon, Kindle edition).

In like manner, we have a spiritual artery that contains all the agape love we need in Christ to love others. Similar to a physical artery, if we don't grow up spiritually, we build up "spiritual plaque" on our spiritual artery. The "spiritual plaque" is made up of false beliefs, unbelief and fleshly behaviors. The result will be a blockage of the flow of agape love through us. We know that if physical plaque is not dealt with, it grows, cutting off more of the blood flow which could eventually kill us through a stroke or heart attack.

In the same way, if we don't grow up spiritually our spiritual plaque of false beliefs, unbelief and fleshly behaviors will continue to choke out our love for others and eventually hardens our heart towards others (and God). It is like a long, slow death that will eventually extinguish our desire and even our ability to love.



Let's look at some of the results of spiritual immaturity as it relates to loving others and seeing them in 3D.

DAY TWO

Result #1 - We Will CONTINUE Focusing On Ourselves

Instead of becoming more like Christ (i.e., selfless, loving, others' focused, caring), spiritual immaturity will keep us focused on ourselves while trying to get our needs met from others. This keeps us locked into being a "taker" and never being transformed into becoming a spiritual "giver" of *agape* love.

We, as Christians and even non-Christians, in our humanity, can have degrees of human loving, compassion, and caring for others depending on our human make up. However, even human love and compassion are limited by how much we are focused on and live for ourselves. Human caring and compassion are no substitute for the Christ-like love and compassion that only comes from Christ. Unlike human love, as we are growing spiritually, God's love for others will grow.

Result #2 - Our Spiritual Cataracts Will NEVER Be Removed (and Will Get Worse)

We talked about earlier that we develop spiritual cataracts of judging, comparing, and setting expectations of others. These cataracts distort how we see people and without spiritual growth, we will never be free to see them as Jesus sees them. Human cataracts, if not removed, can eventually blind us; so too, spiritual cataracts will continually blind us to the needs of others.

Result #3 - We Will Keep Taking OWNERSHIP of Other People's FLESH

We know that spiritual growth will thicken our spiritual armor but if we don't grow spiritually, our armor will remain paper thin. When others reject us, condemn us, or control us, their flesh will penetrate our armor and we will continue taking ownership of their flesh. As a result, we will react in the flesh which will prevent us from loving others.

Result #4 - We Will STAY In Bondage To Our FALSE BELIEFS

If we do not grow spiritually, we will never be set free from the bondage of our false beliefs about God and ourselves. Let's look at the results in each of these areas of false beliefs.

False Beliefs About GOD

"We love because He first loved us."

1 John 4:19

This is a key verse when it comes to loving others. It means that if we believe God is a loving God, we will be able to receive His love and in turn, will allow Him to love others through us. However, if we believe God is cold, distant, uncaring, rejecting, or uninterested, we will never see Him as a loving God. The result: We will not be able to receive His love or give His love to others.

We cannot GIVE God's love to others unless we RECEIVE His love.

"We love because He FIRST loved us."

False Beliefs About OURSELVES

If we don't see ourselves in our new identity, our positive and negative false beliefs will be a hindrance to seeing others in 3D. Let's look at some examples of both from the identity study.

Negative False Beliefs

- Unloved
- Inadequate
- Insecure
- Rejected
- Unworthy

If you don't grow spiritually with the result that you will continue to live out of these false beliefs, you will constantly be looking for love, adequacy, security, acceptance, and worth from others. As a result, you will continue being a taker which will hinder you from seeing a person in 3D or loving him/her.

Positive False Beliefs

- Self-confidence
- Self-sufficiency
- Self-assured

If you stay spiritually immature, you will be stuck in your positive false beliefs, rather than seeing others through the eyes of Jesus. The temptation may be to be judgmental, manipulative, controlling, or condescending. If you are not transformed to live from your true identity, then out of your positive false beliefs, you can come across as insensitive, non-compassionate, and unloving.

Result #5 - Your UNHEALED Woundedness Will Hinder You

*"He **heals** the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds."*

Psalm 147:3

This is a wonderful promise because the Holy Spirit can heal our wounded hearts no matter how deep the woundedness. However, if we don't allow the Holy Spirit to heal us, we will continue living out of our woundedness which in turn keeps our focus on ourselves. Unhealed woundedness can create a "victim" mentality or a "martyr" complex. Both create a demand for love, sympathy, compassion, etc., from others. Being a victim or martyr locks us into being takers and prevents us from being lovers.

Result #6 - Unforgiveness Will HARDEN Your Heart

We know that the only person in bondage due to unforgiveness is us, not the person we have not forgiven. Unforgiveness is like a prison cell that keeps us in bondage to anger and bitterness. Unforgiveness is also like cancer. It can move from stage one to stage four causing us to die (i.e., harden our hearts). If we don't seek the Holy Spirit to free us from our unforgiveness, much like human plaque hardens our arteries, we will harden our hearts not only to our offender, but to others, and even towards God as well. This hardening becomes toxic to those around us, preventing us from loving them.

The last result is one of the major obstacles to loving others.

DAY THREE

Result #7 - We Will Reinforce Our Walls of Self Protection

When it comes to loving others and seeing their hearts, one of the major hurdles we face is self-protection. Therefore, in this section, we will take a deep look at what is behind self-protection, the ways that we self-protect, and why we no longer have to self-protect. Let's start by looking at the definition of self-protection.

Defining Self-Protection

What is the definition of self-protection?

SELF-PROTECTION means constructing walls in your soul to try to PREVENT others from HURTING, WOUNDING, or REJECTING you (again).

No one escapes being a “self-protector” because it is one of the results of the Fall of Adam. We were all born self-protectors since we were all born “in Adam.” It was part of Adam’s DNA that we inherited. Adam and Eve were the first self-protectors after the Fall because they put on fig leaves to try to cover their nakedness. In like manner, we put on fig leaves of self-protection by building walls of self-protection to cover up and protect ourselves. A key truth when it comes to love and self-protection is this:

LOVE and SELF-PROTECTION are mutually exclusive because you CAN'T love and be self-protecting at the SAME time.

The question is: “Why do we self-protect?”

Why Do We Feel The Need To Protect Ourselves?

One of the key reasons why we feel we need to protect ourselves is **fear**. When it comes to self-protection, how do we define “fear?”

***Fear in this context is defined as SERIOUS concern about
how OTHERS might NEGATIVELY impact our lives.***

Fear and self-protection are like two sides of the same coin. Let's look at the different forms of fear that build our walls of self-protection:

- Fear of rejection
- Fear of being hurt (again)
- Fear of failure
- Fear of being exposed or found out
- Fear of losing control

When you look at this list, do any of these fears apply to you? What other fears would you add to this list?

If you have experienced any of these fears, would you agree that you tend to protect yourself so that you won't be rejected, hurt, be exposed (again), or lose control? As a strategy to avoid being hurt, we think we have to build walls of protection. Our fears are the bricks of the walls we are building. The very walls we think will protect us, in fact, imprison us.

These walls IMPRISON us because they PREVENT us from loving others.

Here is a true story example to illustrate this point. There was a minister who was on a retreat with other ministers. This minister was sitting there one night listening to a lecture when this thought came to his mind: "What if they find out who I really am?" This thought was quickly followed by a second thought: "I will be exposed." The final thought was: "If they find out who I really am, they will reject me."

The fears of exposure and rejection rose and rapidly consumed him. His walls of self-protection went up immediately and his plan was to do whatever it took the rest of the retreat not to be exposed. He shared that he had no capacity of caring for what these ministers were struggling with because he was too busy focusing out how he could protect himself from being exposed. Why is this true?

***Fear will ALWAYS block our desire to SEEK OUT and be
RESPONSIVE to others' needs.***

David Benner, in his book, *Surrender To Love*, said it this way: “Fear interferes with the impulse to love. Energy invested in maintaining safety and protection always depletes energy available for love of others.”

Self-Protection Can Be CONSCIOUS or HIDDEN

For most of us, self-protection is like breathing; we are not even consciously aware we are doing it. However, conscious self-protection creates the need for walls that we hide behind to protect and defend ourselves against other people. What are some of the ways we self-protect?

Ways That We Self-Protect

a. Avoidance

We try to avoid people or circumstances that might penetrate our self-protecting walls. If we can't avoid people like our spouses or our co-workers, we try to avoid conversations or situations with them where we might be hurt or exposed. If we can't avoid the conversations, we can try and deflect by changing subjects.

A tragic true story. There was a married couple who avoided talking about their first baby that was lost at childbirth. Instead of dealing with the immense pain of the loss, they built walls of self-protection against the pain that eventually destroyed their marriage.

Do you tend to avoid being hurt, rejected, exposed, etc.?

b. Withdrawal

Following on the heels of avoidance is withdrawal. We withdraw to ensure that no one can get close enough to hurt us. In addition to physically withdrawing, we can emotionally withdraw by shutting down our emotions. This is much like breakers in an electrical breaker box that we turn off so that we won't feel anything.

Do you struggle with wanting to withdraw emotionally or physically to protect yourself?

c. Being Critical and Judgmental

You have heard the expression that the best defense is a good offense. Some people self-protect by taking the offensive by becoming critical and judgmental of others. This will keep people at arm's length or even drive them away before they could hurt or reject you. It is a form of “doing it unto others before they could do it unto you.”

Do you tend to be critical or judgmental as a defense mechanism to protect yourself?

d. Manipulation

We are all guilty of some form of manipulation. Regarding self-protection, one of the reasons we manipulate others is to ensure that no one gets close enough to wound or expose us. Manipulation can be like a chess game in that we are always looking for ways to make sure other people don't get too close. Other manipulation techniques are silence, guilt, or flattery.

Do you find yourself manipulating others as a way to protect yourself?

DAY FOUR

e. Being In Control

Another leftover from our Adamic DNA is our unending desire to be in control. If we are honest with ourselves, we all, on some level, want and need to be in control. Ever since Adam and Eve gave into Satan's temptation that "you too can be like God" (Genesis 3:4), one of man's greatest needs is the need to be in control.

Being in control and being like God go hand in hand because every time we need to be in control, we are asking God to step aside so we can take over. When it comes to self-protection, we believe that if we can control ourselves, others, and our circumstances, then we will avoid being exposed, hurt, rejected, etc. Since control is one of the key reasons we self-protect, let's break down these three areas:

1. Controlling Others

We believe that if we can control those around us then they will not be able to hurt, reject, or expose us. One of the ways we do this is by having "safe" conversations. Safe conversations can include small talk about the weather, sports, or hobbies that deflect those you are talking with from saying something personal that might hurt or expose you.

We also try to control others by keeping them at arm's length. One technique for doing this is by being a people-pleaser. If you could successfully please people, then they would be more likely to accept you and less likely to reject you.

In what ways do you try and control others to keep them from getting too close?

2. Controlling Our Circumstances/Situations

We try to stay in control by avoiding circumstances or situations that might allow other people to get too close. For example, you might go to a large church so you can hide, avoid small group studies so you won't be exposed, or avoid counseling at all costs.

Do you struggle with trying to control your circumstances or situations to avoid being exposed?

3. Self-Control

We believe this method of controlling is the most effective because trying to control others and circumstances is much more difficult and unpredictable. To keep our thoughts, words, and emotions in check is crucial to staying in control and not letting anyone get near our heart. I see two types of self-controllers: overt and covert.

Overt self-controllers are easy to spot. They really have their guard up and are carefully choosing their words to protect themselves. Perfectionists are an example of overt self-controllers because they will try to do everything perfect to avoid being rejected or seen as inadequate.

Covert self-controllers are harder to spot because so often they have mastered the art of self-control. They have developed their masks so convincingly that you believe the mask is who they really are. In reality, they are using their masks to stay in control. I have seen covert self-controllers come across as sensitive and caring, but this is all designed to deflect you away from seeing what is really going on in their hearts.

Can you think of ways in which you try to stay in control in order not to be exposed?

Note: You may be saying that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit according to Galatians 5:23. However, since self cannot be in control of self, the fruit of self-control is self “in control” by the Holy Spirit.

What Is The TRUTH Behind Self-Protection?

The truth concerning self-protection lies in the truths of our true identity. Let’s look again at those truths and how they apply to self-protection.

Truth #1: The self you are protecting is your OLD (Crucified) SELF

Remember your old self was your old identity before you were saved. What happened to your old self according to Romans 6:6?

*“knowing this, **that our old self [the old identity I am trying to protect] was crucified with Him,**
in order that our body of sin might be done away with,
so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”*

Therefore, what we need to understand about our old self and self-protection is this:

***The self (OLD SELF) you are trying to protect was CRUCIFIED
with Christ on the cross.***

We saw this as well in the first part of Galatians 2:20:

“I [old self] am crucified with Christ and I (my old self) no longer lives...”

Based on these two verses, ask yourself this question: Why am I trying to protect something that has been crucified? Wouldn't you agree that a dead self does not need to be protected? However, this is just part of the good news.

Truth #2: You have a NEW self that needs no protecting

Do you remember the other half of knowing your true identity in Christ? In addition to crucifying your old self (identity), God gave you a new self (identity) according to 2 Corinthians 5:17:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation [new self]. The old [self] has passed away; behold, the new [self] has come.”

As a way of review, look at the following list of the characteristics of your true identity in Christ.

Unconditional love	Worthy	Humble
Righteous	Accepted	Patient
Forgiving	Christ-confident	Free
Secure	Discerning	Wise
Adequate	Thankful	Kind
Sacrificial	Compassionate	Selfless
Fearless	Victorious	Strong
Joyful	Peaceful	Good

Question: If you understood, believed, and walked in these characteristics, would you need to protect your new self?

Since your OLD self has been crucified and you now have a NEW IDENTITY (new self), you no longer have to PROTECT yourself.

Remember in Ephesians 2:10, God calls you a “masterpiece.” Let me ask you a question. Is there any need to protect yourself if you see yourself as God's masterpiece?

The truth is that your NEW SELF needs to be EXPRESSED, not protected.

God gave you a new, holy, righteous self that He wants to express to others through you because the expression of your new self is what He will use to draw others to Himself. Therefore, let us no longer try to protect something Christ crucified. Rather, let us be expressors of His love.

Truth #3: Living from your new identity, FREES you to love OTHERS

*“For **you were called to freedom**, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another**.” Galatians 5:13*

As you grow in your belief that you have a new identity, you will find yourself experiencing greater freedom from self that results in a greater freedom to love yourself and others.

Think about it for a moment. Since you have a new self that doesn't need protecting, shouldn't that free you up to love others? The answer is a resounding “yes!” As the Holy Spirit removes that self-protective plaque out of your spiritual artery, the love of Christ will naturally flow more freely through you. As a result, loving others will be effortless.

Engaging God: If you struggle in the area of self-protection, seek the Holy Spirit to persuade of the three truths we just looked at.

DAY FIVE

Agape Love - Liking, Trusting, Approval, and Boundaries

Before we leave the subject of *agape* love, there are three other areas we need to talk about in this section.

Agape Love And LIKING

Does loving someone with *agape* love mean I have to “like” them? The answer: not necessarily. According to scripture, we are to *agape* love everyone including people like Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, but we don't have to like his sinful, fleshly attitudes and behavior.

Think for a moment how this applies in your relationship with God. God will always love you, but He will never like your fleshly, sinful behavior. Why? Because His essence is love (1 John 4:8). He cannot help but love you. Nonetheless, He can, simultaneously, dislike your sinful behavior.

The good news is that God is capable of not only transforming us but transforming others through us to a place where we can come to like that person. Here is a true story example of what that looks like. There was a man (we will call him David) who did not like a Christian co-worker because he was pretty rough around the edges, boastful, and full of himself.

David was not only convicted to *agape* love his co-worker, but he felt led by the Spirit to pursue a relationship with him. As David began to pray for and love his co-worker, this man began telling

David more of his personal story including being raised by an unloving and abusive father. David realized that all of this man's unlikable traits resulted from his woundedness from his father.

Over time, the love of Christ through David so disarmed this person that the Lord opened his heart for David to minister to him and help him in his spiritual journey. They eventually became good friends. This is a powerful story that reminds us to always be open to what the Spirit may do in and through us to the unlikeable people in our lives. It also demonstrates the power of love to penetrate another person's heart.

Is it possible that there may be at least one person you do not like but may be the very person the Lord wants you to pursue with His love? If so, are you willing to seek him/her out?

Agape Love and TRUSTING

Human love and trust go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other. However, when it comes to *agape* love, you must have one even if you don't have the other. Why?

There are many LEGITIMATE reasons for NOT trusting someone, but there is NO excuse for not LOVING them with the love of CHRIST.

To explain, let's use an example of a married couple. Trust in marriage can be compromised in different ways. From affairs to finances, trust can be broken. The worst form of broken trust is having an affair. Even in this extreme case, it does not give the offended spouse the right not to *agape* love his/her spouse who committed the affair. If both parties are willing to rebuild the trust, the key to the rebuilding process is for the offended spouse to *agape* love his/her spouse rather than reject the spouse. Building on the foundation of *agape* love will greatly facilitate the trust being rebuilt. It won't be an easy or short process but through it, trust can be rebuilt.

In the same way, if someone you entrusted confidential information to betrayed that trust, that trust is broken. However, similar to the marriage example, loving the person who betrayed your trust will be the foundation for rebuilding it.

What if the other party does not want to work at rebuilding the trust? All you can do then is just continue to love and pray for that person. Therefore, let's sum up this section this way:

We must love EVERYONE with agape love, but TRUST will have to be EARNED and/or REBUILT.

Is it possible that there may be at least one person you know who has broken your trust? If you are unwilling, would you seek the Lord to give you the willingness to rebuild that trust? What

might be the results in that relationship if the trust was rebuilt because you chose to keep loving that person?

Step of faith: “Holy Spirit, my friend broke my trust in him. As hard as it may be, I am asking You to give me the willingness to continue loving him and pray that you will rebuild that trust.”

Agape Love and APPROVAL

Similar to loving and not necessarily liking someone, we are to love everyone even though we may not approve of their behavior. I think a good example of this is the LGBTQ movement. We are to *agape* love all those who call themselves lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, etc., even though we, as Christians, don’t approve of their sinful behavior because it is contrary to what God’s truth says. However, disapproval does not let us off the hook from loving others.

Here is a powerful true story to explain concerning a homosexual and a Christian couple. The homosexual was very anti-Christian. He participated in gay parades and while there, he would see Christians standing with signs that read “Turn or Burn.” As a result, he was deeply angry and offended because of their unloving attitudes. The result was a deep bitterness and hatred for Christians.

At one point, he became sick with a long-term illness (not HIV) that kept him bedridden for the most part. There was a Christian couple in his apartment complex who found out about his condition and started bringing him meals, running his errands, and taking care of his needs. They did not tell him they were Christians. They just kept performing these loving acts until one day he couldn’t help but ask, “Why are you so kind and loving?” They told him it was because of the love of Christ that compelled them. He knew that because of their beliefs, they did not approve of his behavior but were loving him anyway. The good news to this story is that he trusted Christ as a result of their unconditional love towards him.

***We may NOT approve of someone’s BEHAVIOR but
that is NO excuse for not loving them.***

If you struggle with not loving someone or a group of people you don’t approve of, would you be willing to seek the Holy Spirit to transform you to *agape* love that person or group of people?

Agape Love and Setting BOUNDARIES

We won’t go into any great depth about this issue, but, suffice it to say, there are certain abusive and toxic people that you need to draw healthy boundaries with in order to protect yourself against their flesh, especially those who have physically harmed you or have threatened to do so. While you can learn to love them with *agape* love, you must separate from them physically because of their potential to physically hurt you.

With other toxic people, such as those who constantly ridicule, demean, or criticize you, you also need to set up boundaries to protect yourself from verbal abuse. For them, it may take physical separation, or it may mean being honest with them and telling them they must stop the offensive behavior if they want to continue having a relationship with you.

However, just like with love and liking, trusting, and approving, your setting up healthy boundaries is not an excuse for not loving those unhealthy and toxic people. Another key point is this:

***As you spiritually grow up, your spiritual armor may THICKEN
to a point where you NO longer need to set BOUNDARIES.***

We have talked earlier about how, early on, our spiritual armor is the thickness of cellophane. As a result, the darts of rejection, abusive behavior by others, etc., can easily penetrate the cellophane. However, as we grow in Christ, our spiritual armor grows thick enough to repel these sinful and fleshly darts coming at us from others. The result: We may be able to remove some or all boundaries set for a particular person or persons.

The key point here is that your setting up boundaries may not be forever. As you grow spiritually, and your spiritual armor thickens and your confidence in Christ increases, you may not only be removing boundaries but you will find yourself needing fewer and fewer of them.

Discussion Questions

1. What key truth(s) impacted you the most in this lesson? Why?

2. Which of the four points in the **What Qualifies Us To Be Agape Lovers** most impacted you? Why?

3. Which of the first six results of spiritual immaturity that hinder our loving others most impacted you? Why??

4. What did you read in the self-protection section that was new revelation to you? Why?

5. Concerning the section, **Agape Love – Liking, Trusting, Approval, and Boundaries**, which of the four topics most impacted you? Why?

Lesson Five

Engaging God To See and Love Others Through Christ

DAY ONE

In this lesson, we will look at the following topics:

- **Key truths to understand when it comes to ministering to anyone who is a part of your six square feet.**
- **Engaging God to see and love others.**
- **What will be the results when you begin to see people with the eyes of Jesus?**

Key Truths To Understand When Ministering To Someone Who Comes Into Your Six Square Feet

Before we get into practical application of how we engage God concerning those who come into our six square feet, let's lay the foundation by looking at some key truths that we need to understand as we engage God.

1. We Are ALL Ministers

*"... Tychicus, the beloved brother and **faithful minister in the Lord**, will make everything known to you." Ephesians 6:21*

People tend to get hung up on the word "minister" because they equate it with the word "pastor." If we do that it can potentially create mental roadblocks such as "I am not a minister because I am not qualified to minister or I can't minister because I have not been to Bible school or seminary."

Here is the difference between a pastor and a minister. A pastor is one who is gifted and called to the office of pastor who is to be a shepherd to a specific church body. Whereas a "minister" is any Christian who is available to God for Him to work through to accomplish His divine purposes. Here is a key difference between a pastor and a minister.

God calls SPECIFIC people to be PASTORS.
However, God calls ALL of us to be MINISTERS.

You may have one or many encounters with people each day in person, by phone or by social media. All of these encounters are part of your six square feet. Let's look at some key truths that

are important to know in understanding how to minister to someone who comes into your six square feet.

2. PRAYER Is The Foundation For Ministering In Your Six Square Feet

*“The **effective prayer** of a righteous man can **accomplish much**.” James 5:16*

Prayer is the divine catalyst for all of what God wants to do through you today. As we go through each point below, you will see that prayer is necessary for everything God calls you to do. In these next points, we will talk about the prayers for spiritual awareness, sensitivity to the Spirit, cooperation with the Spirit and the Spirit’s timing.

3. Availability = ABIDING

*“If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you **also will abide in the Son and in the Father**.” 1 John 2:24*

The foundation for the Lord working through you is your abiding/dependent relationship with Him. Abiding is the key that opens the door for the Spirit to work through us. We see this in Revelation 3:20:

*“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; **if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me**.”*

Many times this verse is used as a salvation verse but it also has another meaning. Imagine Jesus standing and knocking at the door of your heart. If you are abiding in Him, you will hear His voice with the result you willingly open the door and allow Him to come and abide with you. Through this abiding relationship the Holy Spirit can work through you to build His church.

Abiding also equals availability. The more we grow in an abiding relationship with the Lord, the more available we will become to allow Him to do the good works He wants to accomplish through us. Another key to participating with the Lord in building His church is by being spiritually aware.

4. Spiritual WILLINGNESS

*“so that you **will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God**.” Colossians 1:10*

As you know, spiritual willingness (to live dependent on God) is the key to living the Christian life. Without it there can be no significant spiritual growth. Spiritual willingness to develop a holy habit of becoming sensitive to the Spirit concerning living life for others is no different. Seek the Spirit as many times as He comes to mind today and ask Him to grow your willingness.

Engaging God: “My desire is to become more spiritually aware and sensitive to You Holy Spirit. Grow my willingness to seek You and become more sensitive and aware of Your presence.”

5. Spiritually DETERMINED

*“For I (**spiritually**) **determined** to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” 1 Corinthians 2:2*

The spiritual cousin of willingness is spiritual determination. In this verse, Paul is testifying to his spiritual (rather than human) determination to know, believe and live from Christ as His Life. He was so experiencing the life of Christ and the Spirit’s transforming power, it led him to a spiritual determination to minister Christ to everyone who came into his six square feet.

As with willingness, seek the Lord to grow His determination in you in order to seek out others to speak truth to them, or encourage them in some way.

Engaging God: “Lord, I am seeking You to grow my spiritual determination to be available to You and be sensitive to Your leading with everyone who comes into my six square feet.”

6. Spiritual AWARENESS

*“....so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be **alert and sober**.”
1 Thessalonians 5:6*

What does it mean to be spiritually aware?

It is being in TUNE with the Holy Spirit so you will be AVAILABLE to Him for what He wants to ACCOMPLISH through you to another person.

When a group of soldiers go out on patrol, there is always what is called a “point man” at the front of the patrol. His job is to be alert for and listening for where the enemy might be located and be the first one to discover the enemy. In like manner, we are to be “spiritual” point men and women in that throughout the day, we are to be aware of the Holy Spirit’s presence and be alert and listening to what He wants to say and/or do through us with those who come into our six square feet.

As we live in spiritual awareness of the Spirit’s presence, He will give us His eyes to see where He is working and eyes to see the “ones” He wants us to connect with. Spiritual awareness is a “holy” habit that is developed over time. We can develop this holy habit through steps of faith like this.

Engaging God: “Today, Holy Spirit, grow in me an awareness of Your presence so I will be available to You for what you want to accomplish through me.”

Let’s look at an example we will use and build on for the rest of this section.

Example: Let's assume you are having lunch with a friend. Because of your spiritual awareness, you are sensing the Holy Spirit wants you to interact with your server. We will expand on this example in the next section.

DAY TWO

7. SENSITIVITY And COOPERATION To The Leading Of The Holy Spirit

Look at Acts 13:4

*"So, **being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went** down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus." Acts 13:4*

"They" in this verse refers to Paul and Barnabas. Through abiding in Christ, they were not only sensitive to the leading of the Spirit who directed them to go to Seleucia but they made a choice to go. This is called "spiritual" cooperation.

SPIRITUAL cooperation is being SENSITIVE to the direction of the Holy Spirit and then being willing to RESPOND to His leading.

Spiritual cooperation can be summed up in two words, "Yes, Lord." Without it, we have quenched what the Spirit wants to accomplish through us to those who come into our six square feet. Let's look at what spiritual cooperation looks like from our previous example.

You are at lunch with your friend and because of your spiritual awareness, you know the Spirit wants you to interact with your server. The first question is, are you willing to cooperate with the Spirit now that you know what He desires? Assuming you are, then getting direction from Him requires listening to Him which is what we will talk about in the next section. A step of faith that you might consider taking looks like this.

Engaging God: "Father, continue to give me a spiritual sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's direction and continue to transform me so that I will be willing to say, "Yes, Lord" when the Spirit directs."

8. LISTENING To The Holy Spirit

This is an area where people struggle because they have been taught that all God has to say to us has already been said in the Bible. How can that be true based on John 14:26?

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**" John 14:26*

How are you going to know what the Holy Spirit is teaching you or is bringing to your remembrance if He is not speaking to you? Look for a moment at the next two verses.

*"The **Holy Spirit** told me to go with them...." Acts 11:12*

*"I also **heard a voice** saying to me, 'Get up Peter'....." Acts 11:7*

In addition to the Spirit speaking to Peter in these two passages, we see evidence throughout the New Testament that the Holy Spirit still speaks to us today. The truth is that the Holy Spirit is talking to us non-stop.

Many Christians have said they DON'T hear from God because they are expecting an AUDIBLE voice but for the most part the Spirit speaks to us by INSERTING THOUGHTS into our minds.

Think about this for a moment. How many thoughts do you think the Spirit has put into your mind that you thought were yours but were really His? How do we know the difference?

The key to spiritual hearing is spiritual growth. As we grow in Christ, we cultivate "spiritual" ears to hear. It is a result of the process of growing more deeply and more personally with God. Hearing from God can be misunderstood because what we are hearing may not always be of God. While that is true, the more we grow spiritually, the more clearly we will hear the Spirit.

Continuing our previous example, as you tune in and are listening to the Spirit, He speaks to you by inserting these thoughts, "I want you to share the gospel with your server."

Here is a way to engage God to illustrate this point.

Engaging God: "Holy Spirit, give me ears to hear Your voice. Make it clear through my thoughts that it is You who is speaking to me and make it clear what You want me to share with others."

9. Drawing On Christ's DISCERNMENT

*"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all (**Christ-like**) discernment." Philippians 1:9*

As we know, we have all of Christ's discernment in us. Drawing on His discernment is critical to participating with the Spirit concerning who He brings into our six square feet. Let's define Christ-like discernment as it relates to living for others.

Discernment is DEPENDENCE on the Holy Spirit to determine WHAT to say or WHAT NOT to say to someone and to understand what is REALLY going on behind what a person is saying.

Spiritual discernment is crucial because as we encounter people we want to say and do what the Spirit directs. In our human wisdom and discernment, we may think we know what we should say or not say but the Spirit wants us to lean on His discernment because He knows fully the heart of another person and exactly what they need to hear. Therefore, our part is to lay aside our human discernment and seek the Spirit as to what to say and speak the words He puts into your mind.

Another key part of Christ-like discernment is that as a person is relating to you the Holy Spirit may tell you what is going on behind what they are saying. Remember, that if the person is a non-Christian or a Christian who does not know their true identity, they are wearing masks. Remember the masks are a way of self-protection so you won't know what is really going on behind what they are saying or not saying. As you cultivate sensitivity to the Spirit, He may choose to reveal to you what is going on behind the mask. We need to keep in mind that the Spirit will reveal these things to us if He chooses to do so.

As with being sensitive to the Spirit, experiencing Christ-like discernment grows as we grow spiritually. We see this in Hebrews 5:14:

*“But solid food is for **the mature**, who because of **practice (holy habit)** have their **senses trained to discern good and evil.**”*

As we continue to grow, the Holy Spirit is training our senses to discern His voice, will and purposes.

Let's go back to our previous example. You are aware of the Spirit's presence, you have heard His voice and you know the Spirit wants you to share the gospel with your server. Drawing on Christ's discernment, the Holy Spirit reveals to you that your server is going through some struggle. The Spirit instructs you to pray for this person.

When the server brings the food, you are led to ask, “We are about to pray over our food. How can we pray for you?” As a result of that request, the server shares that his mother is dying. The Spirit, knowing this person is not a Christian, leads you to ask your server this question. “Do you know where people go when they die?” He says no and then you ask “Would you like to know?” The Holy Spirit then opens the door for you to share the gospel.

As part of developing a “holy habit” of spiritual discernment, you might seek the Lord in praying a prayer similar to this one.

Engaging God: “Jesus, in every encounter today BE my discernment so that I will know what to say or not say. Continue to grow my sensitivity to Your voice and Your leading.”

DAY THREE

10. Sensitivity To God's TIMING

*"There is an **appointed time for everything**. And there is a **time for every event** under heaven."
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Being sensitive to God's timing is crucial. As Ecclesiastes says, "there is an appointed time for everything." How this applies to people in our six square is to know when to say or not say something. You may know exactly what to say to a person but the timing to say it is crucial.

Let's go back to our example to explain. When the server brings your food, the Spirit says, "Now, I want you to tell him that you are about to pray for your food and ask him if there is anything you can be praying for him." He shares that his mother is dying. You pray for him and his mother and as you are praying the Spirit then directs you that now is the time to ask this question, "Have you ever thought about where you go when you die?" He says "no" and the Spirit gives you permission to share the gospel.

Because we may not know where a person is spiritually, we must rely on God's timing before we speak. He knows precisely what and when that person needs to hear Him through you. This is crucial because we can make the mistake of sharing something the Holy Spirit wants us to share but if we miss His timing we can end up alienating the listener and closing his or her mind to the truth. A prayer along these lines might look like this.

Engaging God: "Holy Spirit, give me a sensitivity to your timing. Make it clear when You want to speak through me."

11. Speaking The Truth In Love

*"....**speaking the truth in LOVE**, we are to **grow up** in all aspects into Him
who is the head, even Christ." Ephesians 4:15*

No greater words could be spoken by Paul than the words "*speaking the truth in love*" because those five words makes it very clear that the filter through which all truth should be spoken is the filter of *agape* love. Remember what we learned in a previous lesson: "When love is felt, the message is heard."

To illustrate this truth, let's assume a person loves chocolate covered nuts. They like the nuts by themselves but when wrapped in chocolate, this makes them even more delicious. In the same way, when God's truth is wrapped in love, it can make the hearer more responsive to you and to God's truth. Why?

***Because what FLOWS from agape love is humility, selflessness,
forgiveness, compassion, mercy, grace, etc.***

Put yourself in the shoes of the hearer of truth. How receptive would you be to it, if you were experiencing the humility, compassion, or mercy of the one sharing truth with you. These are the characteristics of love that make it so attractive.

Also, remember what we learned about the power of love and what it can do:

- **PENETRATE** someone's heart so they will hear God's truth.
- **SOFTEN** someone's heart so they will be responsive to the truth.
- **FREE** someone's heart from the bondage of their flesh and fleshly behaviors.
- **UNLOCK** a person's heart so they will share the deep things of their heart.
- **HEAL** someone's heart from past or present woundedness.
- **TRANSFORM** someone's heart into Christ-likeness.

Therefore, when the Spirit prompts you to speak truth, seek Him to share the truth with an attitude of love.

Engaging God: "Thank you for this opportunity to share truth. I am asking You to wrap this truth in Your love so the hearer will receive and believe Your truth."

12. The Ministry of BEING

"and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." Ephesians 5:2

For most of us, we feel like if we are not speaking the truth that truth is not being expressed. However, I believe just as important and maybe more importantly than speaking the truth is expressing the truth non-verbally. For example, if Jesus walked into the room where you are now and you did not know it was Him, would you not be experiencing the fragrant aroma of His life? Wouldn't you be spiritually attracted to Him even if He never spoke a word?

That same Jesus lives in you. Supernaturally, He can express Himself through you to someone else without uttering a word. Why? Because as you live dependent on Him, His life and love are flowing through you whether you speak or not. He can express His love, compassion, and grace through you by simply being. Therefore, there will be times when the Lord does not want you to speak. He simply wants you to "be."

True Story Illustration

There was a man, named Bill, that was talking to a friend who was angry because of how Christians were not standing up to our culture with the truth and she felt helpless to do anything about the situation.

The whole time she was sharing, Bill was asking the Holy Spirit when to respond and how to respond. When she finished, the Lord inserted these thoughts into Bill's mind, "Now is the time to

share and this is what I want you to speak through you.” Here are the thoughts that the Spirit brought to Bill’s mind to speak:

“I understand where you are coming from and I agree that many in the church are not standing up for the truth like they should. However, I don’t want you to be controlled by what other Christians are not doing because if you are overcome with anger, it can sideline you concerning those who come into your six square feet. The truth is the Lord doesn’t want you to be on the defensive. He wants to impact everyone you come in contact with today with His truth. Therefore, in addition to praying for the Christians in this country, be proactive by focusing on how the Lord wants to work through you to give someone the willingness to share the truth. The key is not to let this issue rob you of your peace and joy in Christ and compromise your personal witness because God wants to change the church through you.”

As Bill was abiding in Christ and being sensitive and aware of the Holy Spirit’s presence, the Lord gave him the thoughts He wanted Bill to share.

Conclusion

These thoughts about participating with God may seem complicated. However, like riding a bike, early on you have to focus and concentrate on what you are doing. At some point though, walking in spiritual awareness and sensitivity to the Spirit will become as natural as riding a bike. Going back to the beginning of this section, as we abide, we will learn how to listen, discern and become sensitive to the leading of the Spirit and His timing in ministering to others.

DAY FOUR

Engaging God To Remove The Hindrances To Seeing and Loving Others

Now that we have seen some key truths when it comes to seeing and loving others through the eyes of Christ, let’s look at how we can engage God practically to love those who come into our six square feet and see them through the eyes of Christ.

1. As you look at those around you, ask the Holy Spirit to EXPOSE or REVEAL how you judge, compare, and set unrealistic expectations for them.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.” Psalm 139:23, 24

“Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.” Psalm 26:2

Begin looking at all your relationships and seek the Holy Spirit to reveal or expose your judgments, comparisons, and the unrealistic expectations you have set for others.

Engaging God: “Lord, I am asking You to reveal the judgments, comparisons, and unrealistic expectations I have of others.”

2. Seek the Lord to start REMOVING your soulical cataracts so you will no longer judge, compare, or set unrealistic expectations.

*Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, I pray, **open his eyes that he may see.**” And the LORD **opened the servant’s eyes and he saw;** and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” 2 Kings 6:17*

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”
Romans 12:2*

As we said, our spiritual cataracts are formed by judging, comparing, and setting unrealistic expectations. Therefore, seek the Lord to renew your mind in order to remove your spiritual cataracts and set you free from judging, comparing, and setting unrealistic expectations.

Engaging God: “Lord, like Elisha, open my eyes that I may see people with Your eyes. I am asking you to renew my mind to the truth that I am not to judge, compare, or set unrealistic expectations. Replace these with Your love.”

3. Seek the Lord to be your WILLINGNESS and DETERMINATION.

*“For I am **determined (Christ-like determination)** to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. “
1 Corinthians 2:2*

In this verse, Paul is referring to a spiritual-Christ-like determination rather than a human one. When it comes to seeing others through the eyes of Christ, it will not come easy. We will have to be willing and determined but not with our own willingness and determination. It is through drawing on Christ’s willingness and determination to move you away from judging people, self-protection, etc., and moving you to love them. Another way of saying this is you will need to be intentional.

***Being INTENTIONAL is a CONSCIOUS and DETERMINED CHOICE to
pursue God and to depend on Him to transform our hearts.***

We can’t be passive when it comes to any area of our spiritual transformation. Our part is to intentionally choose to pursue God to be transformed.

Example of a Step of Faith: “Lord, I am intentionally seeking You to be my willingness and determination to see others as You see them, to stop protecting myself, and to love others with *agape* love.”

4. When you catch yourself starting to COMPARE or JUDGE someone, engage the Holy Spirit to take that thought CAPTIVE and remind you of the truth.

*“We tear down arguments and every arrogant obstacle that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and **we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ.**” 2 Corinthians 10:4-5*

We know that comparing ourselves or judging certain people can create fleshly default thinking. Seek the Holy Spirit to take those thoughts captive when they come to mind and to renew your mind to the truth that you are called to love, not judge.

Engaging God: “I am being tempted to judge this person. I am asking You to take that thought captive. Renew my mind to the truth that you have called me to love, not judge.”

5. Continue to seek the Holy Spirit to PERSUADE you to believe that you are a NEW CREATION so that you can drop the walls of self-protection.

*“... and have **put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge** according to the image of the One who created him.” Colossians 3:10*

As your belief that you are a new creation grows, the less you will need to protect yourself. (Remember, the “self” you are protecting is dead.) Seek the Lord to continue persuading you that you are holy, righteous, loved, accepted, etc.

Engaging God: “Lord, I know that I am a new creation, but I need You to further persuade me that I am who you say I am and that I have Your eyes to see that there is no further need to protect a self that is dead.”

6. Seek the Lord to REPLACE the FEARS that drive your self-protection so that you can LOVE others.

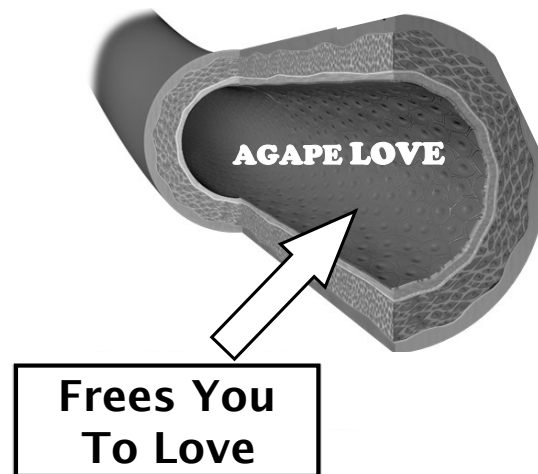
*“There is **no fear in love**; but **perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” 1 John 4:18*

Be intentional about seeking the Lord to replace your fears with His love. I call it “holy displacement.” Let me give you an example to explain. If you were to keep pouring clear water into a glass full of dirty water, what would happen? The clear water would eventually displace the dirty water. So, too, as we continue to draw on Christ’s *agape* love, His love will eventually displace your fears.

Engaging God: “Lord, I am asking you to replace my fears with Your *agape* love. Move me from fearing and self-protecting to loving others.”

As you engage God, He will be faithful to start removing the hindrances/spiritual plaque. Every step of faith will produce a greater freedom to love and a greater flow of Christ's love through you.

As The Holy Spirit Removes Your Spiritual Plaque



True Story Example

There was a Christian man (let's call him Jason) who walked every day through his neighborhood for exercise. In his neighborhood, there was a gay man who walked at the same time. From time to time, they would cross paths. Knowing the man was gay, Jason would walk past him and self-righteously judge him. One day, the Holy Spirit convicted Jason of his judgmental attitude and began persuading him to look beyond the externals and to begin seeing this man's heart with Christ's eyes.

As Jason continued to seek the Spirit to renew his mind and set him free, over time, he began looking past his struggle with this man and began to see that he needed love, compassion, and grace, not judgment. Over time, the Holy Spirit and the Lord set him free and replaced Jason's judgmental attitude with a heart of *agape* love for this man.

DAY FIVE

What Will Be The Results As You Begin To See People With The Eyes of Jesus and Love Them?

The Results of Loving Others and Seeing Them With The Eyes of Christ

We will look at eight results of seeing others with the eyes of Christ. Here are the first seven.

1. You will find yourself moving away from being judgmental, comparing, and setting unrealistic expectations for others based on the boxes you have built.

2. As your spiritual cataracts are being removed, you will progressively see people as worthy of *agape* love.
3. You will be taking your judging and comparing thoughts captive more often.
4. You will find yourself more frequently looking past the externals and seeing into the hearts of people.
5. As the Holy Spirit persuades you of your new identity, you will become more comfortable in your own skin and drop the walls of self-protection.
6. As the Holy Spirit is removing your spiritual plaque, there will be an increasing flow of Christ's love through your spiritual artery.

In addition, there will be two other very important results as you see others with the eyes of Christ.

You Will See God's VALUE of Each Person

When you are driving down the road and see a homeless person on the side of the road, what are your first thoughts? Do you feel love or compassion, or are you tempted to be condescending, critical, and judgmental? Or do you have feelings of guilt for not helping him/her?

Instead of the homeless person on the side of the road, what if it is the most unlikeable person in your life? Maybe your boss, an ex-spouse, your prickly mother-in-law, or a politician that you loathe? Is it a challenge for you to see and value that person the way God does? The answer to that question lies in the answer to this question: "How much do you think God values you?" Look at Psalm 139:14:

*"I will give thanks to You, for **I am fearfully and wonderfully made.** Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well."*

The word "fearfully" in this verse means to be astonished or in awe. Could this mean that God sees you and all those He has created as being awesome? Remember, He chose the "you" version of you He wanted out of 500 million possibilities at birth. He thinks you are wonderfully made because you are His creation.

What do you see when you look at a diamond? Do you see the brilliance, the rarity, and the immense value? This is how God sees and values you. His eternal desire is that with His eyes you will see others as He sees you.

Our biggest obstacle to seeing the value in others is not understanding, believing, and walking in our true identity. Our true value lies in the truth that we are new creations. The more we believe and see ourselves as loving, holy, righteous, complete, etc., new creations, the more we will see the value God places on others (Christian and non-Christian alike).

If we stay self-protectors, we will never see the value that God places on us or on others. Therefore, we must continue seeking the Lord to renew our minds and transform us to believe our true identity. Also, seek the Lord to continue to persuade you that not only do you have eternal, inestimable, and infinite value to Him, so does everyone else who comes into your six square feet today. As you do, the spiritual cataracts will be removed as well as the spiritual plaque, and you will begin to see the inestimable value that God has for others whether they are a close loved one or a perfect stranger.

True Story Example

There was a Christian man relating a story about a very unlikable, toxic person in his six square feet. This is what he said, “My flesh so wants to judge, be critical, and write off/cancel this person. Instead, I have continually asked this from the Lord:

‘Give me Your eyes to see the value this person has to You. Remind me, that like me, You chose this person to be born out of 500 million possibilities at conception. You went to the cross for them. You love them unconditionally. You created them for a personal, intimate relationship with You. And you want to touch them through me.’

“Initially it was very hard to even ask the question about this person’s value because of how toxic he was to me. But now, as I have sought the Lord to see how valuable this person is to Him, God is softening my heart by moving me away from focusing on their fleshly behavior and giving me eyes to see their infinite value to God. I find myself feeling a growing compassion for this person as God reveals to me their value to Him.”

Think about this:

There is a DIRECT correlation between how much YOU believe you are valued by God and how much you VALUE others.

Before we leave this topic, think about the value Jesus placed on others who came into His six square feet. How much did He value the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) or the Samaritan woman He met at the well who had been married five times and was living with a man who was not her husband (John 4:4-29)? Because of their failures and sins, wouldn’t it have been easier to avoid, write off, or judge these two? Yet Jesus did none of these things because of the eternal value He saw in each of these women.

The challenge is this: To “see” everyone who comes into your six square feet every day and ask the question, “How valuable is he or she to God?” As you do, pray, that over time, you will find yourself looking past their appearance, personality, sins, and failures, and see them through the same eyes Jesus sees you.

Engaging God: “Holy Spirit, I am trusting You to continue renewing my mind to my true identity so that I will have eyes to see not only my value to You but will have eyes to see the eternal value You have for every person who comes into my six square feet.”

You Will See The Spiritual POTENTIAL In Others

In like manner to seeing God’s value in others, He wants us to see the “spiritual” potential in others as well. Here is what is meant by “spiritual potential.”

***What God can accomplish in SAVING or TRANSFORMING a person
REGARDLESS of where they are NOW spiritually.
(This includes Christians and non-Christians.)***

God’s eternal desire is for everyone to be saved and then to be transformed into Christ-likeness. Because of His omniscience God sees the spiritual potential in every person regardless of where they are in their spiritual journey. If you are unsaved, He is continuously drawing you to Himself for salvation. If you are saved, He is continuously working in your heart to transform you because He knows the spiritual possibilities of where He wants to take you and where you want to be. We see evidence of this in some of the Biblical characters.

God saw the potential in Moses who felt totally inadequate to lead His people out of Egypt. He saw Abraham’s spiritual potential despite the terrible choice to sleep with Hagar. God even saw it with Gideon in spite of his putting out the fleece and being paralyzed with fear when he faced the Midianites.

When it came to Peter, can you imagine how many times Jesus was shaking His head when Peter would utter the craziest things or when he was showing off to the other disciples by walking on the water? Even in those moments, Jesus saw the spiritual possibilities in Peter that we can now see when we read Peter’s letters.

Think about your life for a moment. How did you feel about yourself looking back at some of your bad decisions or fleshly behaviors? Did you feel guilt, shame, or self-condemnation? What do you think God saw? He saw what you would look like if you would seek Him and allow Him to transform your life.

As a sculptor who chips away bits of stone until he finishes a beautiful sculpture, God, as the divine sculptor, is chipping away (transforming you) because He knows what you are becoming and will become. Another analogy is a diamond cutter who starts with a very rough stone and cuts and shapes it until it has luster and brilliance. God continually cuts and shapes our lives so we will be transformed into lovers of others.

Think back to the darkest time in your life. Maybe all you could see was darkness (i.e., hopelessness, despair, wanting to give up, etc.). However, what did God see? He saw through the

darkness and saw how the dark times of your life would be used to realize your spiritual potential. He wants us to have this same heart towards others as He does towards us.

Concerning the hindrances that we talked about earlier – if we respond to certain people with self-protection or unwillingness to love them because we are judging them, we disqualify ourselves from being used by the Lord to participate in seeing and participating in another person’s potential. You see, God wants to use us to be part of what He wants to do in another person’s spiritual life. He wants us to participate with Him in his or her transformation. But we cannot do that if we are judging or rejecting them, or we are living in self-protection.

Here is a true story to illustrate seeing the spiritual potential in others. There was a man named John who in his 20’s and 30’s and most of his 40’s, was not a very lovable person because of his past woundedness and the toxicity of his flesh (i.e., angry, controlling, demanding, and manipulating). Needless to say, he had some very serious spiritual plaque. The Lord brought an older man into His life as a mentor. One of John’s fears was that his mentor would reject him when he found out about all of this man’s past sins. However, instead of condemning the man, the mentor saw past John’s fleshly behaviors and sinful past and saw his spiritual potential.

Through his mentor, John felt loved by God for the first time. He couldn’t believe that as toxic as he was, his mentor continued to love him unconditionally. As the mentor was making spiritual investments in John, he had no idea at the time how those investments would pay off because John went on to have a vibrant and very fruitful ministry several years later. Can you imagine if the mentor had written John off because of his past. Based on this story, here is a question for you?

Do you SEE people where they are NOW or where they COULD BE if they knew Christ for salvation OR they started living from Christ as their SOURCE?

Aren’t you glad God looked past your sins, your flesh, etc., and saw your spiritual potential? In like manner, ask the Spirit to give you eyes to see the spiritual possibilities in others and be willing to be used of the Lord through loving and encouraging them to make their spiritual potential a reality. If you do, God will make eternal investments through you to others that will change their destiny forever.

In what ways might it change how you see/love people if you could see past their externals and see their spiritual potential?

Engaging God: “Lord, I struggle with seeing the spiritual potential in certain people. I am trusting You to give me the willingness to look past people’s sin and my judgments and see the same spiritual potential You see in me.”

Discussion Questions

1. What key truth(s) impacted you the most in this lesson? Why?

2. Which of the twelve foundational truths to minister to someone who comes into your six square feet most impacted you? Why?

3. Which one(s) of the nine examples of how to engage God practically to love others and see them through the eyes of Christ most impacted you? Why?

4. Which of the eight results in the last section most spoke to you? Why?

5. What were your thoughts as you read through the ministry of “being” section?

Lesson Six

Key Truths When Ministering To Hurting People

The Overflow of Living Life For Others

DAY ONE

In this lesson, we will look at the following topics:

- **Being a safe person when it comes to ministering to hurting people.**
- **Key points in living life for others.**
- **When it comes to our six square feet, we are a part of a great spiritual battle.**
- **Are you a casualty or a conqueror?**
- **The overflow of living life for others.**
- **How God feels when you choose to live life for others.**

Being A Safe Person When Ministering To Hurting People

We touched on this topic of being a safe person earlier when we were looking at the characteristics of *agape* love. However, let's take a deeper dive into what it means to be a "safe" person to hurting people whom the Lord brings into our six square feet. Think about it for a moment. Why would someone come to you in the first place if he or she didn't think you were safe. The key to being "safe" as we discussed earlier is being trustworthy. Based on this, let's define a "safe" person.

***A SAFE person is one you are able to TRUST on some level with your
MOST personal thoughts, beliefs, and struggles.***

We all have some deeply personal issues that at different times in our lives we need to share with others. This is why being part of the body of Christ is so important. Someone said, "We all need to be able to talk to someone who is like Jesus with skin on."

Since Christ is in you, you may be the one with "skin on" that God brings someone to. We know that God is our ultimate "go to" safe person. Because there is no one safer than God, He should be the one we turn to first. But as human beings, we sometimes need Christ-like believers with whom we can relate to as well. Therefore, let's look at some characteristics of a safe person.

1. Someone Who Is LOVING - Not Judging, Guilt, or Shaming

*“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only **do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.**” Galatians 5:13*

The number one characteristic people want to experience is someone who is loving and will not guilt, shame, or condemn them regardless of what they share. This can be a test especially with some struggle a person may be having that you don't struggle with, or you think a Christian shouldn't struggle with. These two things might tempt you to guilt, shame, or condemn that person.

For example, let's assume someone is sharing his or her struggle with an addiction to pornography with you. Let's also assume you have never struggled with pornography and you think a Christian should be strong enough to always overcome the temptation. When you hear this person sharing, you might be tempted to think fleshly thoughts of guilt, shame, or condemnation towards them. Even though you might not verbalize those fleshly thoughts, they will prevent you from loving that person.

2. Someone Who Expresses Christ's Compassion and Empathy

Whether you are naturally compassionate or not, what hurting people want to experience is Christ's compassion and empathy through you. Therefore, when you are meeting with someone who is struggling, you might consider praying this simple prayer, “Lord, flow Your compassion and empathy through me to them.” Whether or not you are feeling compassion flowing through you, doesn't change the truth that this is what is happening.

Here is a story to explain. There was a counselor who struggled experiencing human compassion because of his past abuse. Therefore, every time he was counseling someone, he prayed for the Lord to flow His compassion through him. Even though he was not feeling the Lord's compassion, in one counseling session the wife of the couple he was counseling told him this at the end of the session: “Thank you so much for being so compassionate with us.” Even though he was not experiencing the Lord's compassion, they were experiencing it through him.

3. Not Trying To FIX Someone

When hurting people come to us, out of concern and compassion we may feel a need to fix their problem or fix them. However, as you well know, the only One who can truly fix (transform) someone else is God. It is not your responsibility. All you can do is share truth and seek the Holy Spirit to transform that person.

4. Being A Good LISTENER

Some people are natural born listeners, and some are born talkers. When someone is coming to you and is struggling and needs help, encouragement, comfort, etc., it is crucial to totally focus on listening to him or her because sometimes that is all that is needed. Here is a true story to illustrate.

A pastor of a local church called his friend Bryan one afternoon and asked him to come to his office because he had a personal struggle he wanted to share. When Bryan got there, the pastor told him that he only had about forty minutes to meet. The pastor started in and it wasn't until three hours later that he finished talking about his struggle. He thanked Bryan for coming and for being such a great encouragement to him. However, all Bryan did during that whole three hours was listen. What he realized was that all the pastor needed was a human being he could verbalize his struggle to because the real conversation was between the pastor and the Holy Spirit.

In addition to just listening, as we discussed earlier, there is “spiritual listening” as well. By way of reminder:

SPIRITUAL listening is when you are NOT ONLY listening to what the PERSON is saying, you are also listening to the HOLY SPIRIT.

As you are listening to the person and the Holy Spirit, He will give you insight into what is behind what a person is saying, He will give you the right words to say and the right time to say them.

The good news is the more we grow spiritually, the “safer” we become. In addition to being safe, it is important that you be “all there.”

5. Being “All There”

Jim Elliot, a missionary who was martyred in Ecuador, famously said, “*Wherever you are, be all there.*” What words come to mind when you think about that phrase? Maybe words like “focused,” “engaged,” and “attentive.” How could this phrase apply to helping a hurting person? Have you ever been in a serious conversation with someone who was constantly checking the phone or was distracted by something else? Didn't it make you feel less important or undervalued?

What better example is there of being “all there” than Jesus. Can you imagine what it would be like to be in the presence of Jesus when He walked on the earth? Imagine Him calling you out of the crowd and you are standing in front of Him. Even though He is surrounded by several people, He does not look to the left or right. He is not distracted by the noise of the crowd. His attention is totally fixed on you. He is totally engaged, focused, and attentive. How would that make you feel? Loved, accepted, and important? Here is a story to illustrate being “all there.”

You may know Max Lucado, the pastor of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio who is also a well-known author. A couple was visiting Oak Hills Church one Sunday with some friends who are members there. When the service was over, this couple followed their friends out of the worship center into a huge hallway. The hallway was packed with hundreds of people. The couple was walking behind their friends down this very crowded hallway when suddenly, the friends took a hard right turn and began walking toward Max Lucado who was standing against the wall by himself.

Their friend introduced this couple to Max, and they spent the next three minutes talking with him. He asked about their personal lives and about the ministry they were involved in. During their time together, Max was totally focused on this couple. He was not looking past them to greet others. Nor was he distracted by all the crowd noise. He was talking to them as if there was no one else in the hallway and he had all the time in the world. In other words, he was “all there.”

As we grow spiritually we become safer because the overflow of spiritual growth will be the characteristics listed above.

Engaging God: Continually seek the Holy Spirit to make you a safe person for hurting people.

DAY TWO

Key Points In Living Life For Others

Before we end this study, let's look at some key points in living life for others.

1. POUR OUT What You Have

At some point in this study, you may have concluded that you don't know enough scripture or need more training to live for others. If that is where you are in your thinking, think about this. If God brings someone to you to speak truth, encourage, etc., and you only have a teaspoon of truth, that teaspoon is all that person needs. All God is asking you to do is to pour it out. Look at what Mary did with what she had.

*“While He (Jesus) was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman (Mary, Martha's sister) with **an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard**; and she broke the vial and **poured it over His head.**” Mark 14:3*

This is a powerful story because Mary brought an alabaster jar full of expensive perfume (estimated value at around \$10,000 today) and poured it all out on Jesus' head. She didn't keep any back for herself. The same is true for you. God doesn't want you to hold anything back because He is not waiting until you have all the answers or know all the scriptures. (Which, by the way, doesn't happen this side of heaven.) He is bringing someone to you today to speak the truth that you know or are experiencing. Remember that as you seek the Holy Spirit, He will bring thoughts, verses, and words to mind. Just like Mary, pour out all of what you have.

2. Being Used of God Is A PRIVILEGE

*“But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his **donkey rebuked him with a human voice.**” 2 Peter 2:16*

God doesn't need us because He spoke just fine through a burning bush, a rock, and a donkey. However, as we discussed earlier, God so loves you that He is calling you to join Him in building His church. Remember, He will bring someone to you that He would bring to no one else. He is

giving you the amazing privilege of working with Him so that you can witness the supernatural power of His hand. This is how much He loves you. If you could grasp how significant it is that God is giving you this amazing privilege, wouldn't that be worth getting out of bed every day and making yourself available to Him?

3. We Are Only Seed THROWERS

GOOD NEWS

You are not responsible for anyone understanding or choosing to walk in God's truth. All you are called to do is be a SEED THROWER (sharing God's truth).

God is simply calling you to share His truth with others. You are not responsible for whether or not they receive it. Let's tie this truth into the parable of the sower in Mark 4:3-8:

*"...the sower went out to sow. As he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and **the birds came and ate it up**. "Other seed fell on the **rocky ground** where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. "And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. "Other seed fell among **the thorns**, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. "Other seeds fell into the **good soil**...."*

You have no control over what kind of soil you are throwing the seed on. Some people will receive the truth and others will reject it.

You may be asking the question, "What if they reject the truth?" Remember, they are not rejecting you; they are rejecting the truth. As the old saying goes, "Don't shoot me. I am just the messenger."

Also remember this:

They rejected Jesus and He IS THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life.

So, you are in good company if someone rejects the truth. Jesus experienced the same thing. The good news is that as we keep growing up spiritually, we will become more unrejectable, unoffendable, and impenetrable to others' rejection. This in turn will allow us to feel the same way Jesus felt when people rejected Him. Because of His great love for people, He felt compassion and grief even when they rejected Him.

Here is a true story about how a visiting minister learned that he was just a seed thrower. This minister was substitute preaching for a pastor friend. The minister was preaching on living from Christ as the Source. As he was preaching, he noticed a man on the back row who, judging from

his pained facial expressions, seemed to grow increasingly irritated the more the minister talked about Christ as Life. He was getting so agitated that by the time the minister finished the closing prayer and looked up, he saw that the man was gone. The minister's first thought was, "God is going to get this guy because he wouldn't receive the truth."

However, in that moment the Holy Spirit brought these thoughts into his mind. "You don't have to get in the flesh because through you I have made an irrevocable and non-refundable deposit of truth into his heart. He can escape you, but he can't escape the truth because the deposits have been made." What the Spirit revealed in that moment changed forever this minister's perspective on sharing the truth. He is no longer concerned if someone rejects the truth or even gets angry. He realized in that moment that he is only a "seed thrower."

4. Your TESTIMONY Is A Powerful Weapon

It has been said that "One word of testimony is worth a 1000 words of teaching." The most powerful weapon you are ministering in your six square feet is your testimony. If you have walked long enough in your spiritual journey to experience some degree of victory, freedom, or transformation, there is nothing more powerful than you bearing witness to what the Holy Spirit has accomplished in your life. When you do, God's truth is more than words on a page; it is living and breathing through you as you share with others what God has supernaturally accomplished in your life. People may not agree with what you are sharing with them concerning God's truth, but here is a key truth when it comes to your testimony:

***People may contradict your THEOLOGY, but they
cannot contradict your TESTIMONY.***

Your story is yours and that cannot be contradicted. That makes your testimony a powerful tool in ministering to others.

Here is a true story example. There was a man named David who wrote a curriculum about living from Christ as Life. He made it available to a church who in turn made it available to the Sunday school teachers. One of the teachers who decided to use the curriculum started teaching it but realized that he did not agree with anything David had written. He wanted to meet with David and correct all of his wrong theology. When they met, the man, who was very agitated, talked for forty minutes straight. He was pointing out all the false theology in the curriculum. After forty minutes, David said this, "You can contradict my theology all day long, but you can't contradict my testimony because the truths in this curriculum have brought me from death to life spiritually, resurrected and transformed my marriage, and are transforming the lives of hundreds of people."

What a powerful response David gave to this man. This story should encourage you in that the most powerful weapon you have in sharing God's truth is your testimony.

DAY THREE

5. We WILL Make Mistakes

Early on in developing the “holy habit” of being sensitive to the Spirit’s leading, we will make mistakes. We may think we hear from the Spirit when it reality the thoughts came from our own mind or we may think we know God’s timing but we discover it wasn’t. Even though we will make mistakes, God is delighted that you are willing and available to come to Him for Him to work through you. Keep this key truth in mind:

God gets **EXCITED** whenever you **SEEK** to be available to Him for Him to work through you in the lives of others. He cares more about your **WILLING HEART** rather than whether or not you make mistakes.

Yes, God can and will get excited when you seek Him to work through you with people who come into your six square feet. One of His greatest joys is to work through the lives of His children to build His church, mistakes and all.

We Are Part of A Great Spiritual Battle

We have addressed in previous studies the great spiritual battle and our great adversary, Satan. We have seen his strategies in our personal lives to steal, kill, and destroy our personal walk with the Lord, but he has an even greater strategy to steal, kill, and destroy the church. Let’s look at how he plans on carrying out his strategy.

1. BLIND People To The Truth

God loves it when you make yourself available to Him for Him to work through you. On the other hand, Satan hates you for the same reason because he wants to keep non-Christians and Christians blinded to the truth according to 2 Corinthians 4:4:

“in whose case the **god of this world** has **blinded the minds of the unbelieving** so that they **might not see the light of the gospel** of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

As we have said before, the greatest threat to Satan is the truth. Why? Because the truth heals, transforms, and sets people free. Therefore, he wants to blind people to:

- To the truth of the gospel so they will not be saved
- To the truth that the Christian life is a Person rather than a checklist or spiritual “to do” list
- To the truth that the Christian life is a life of abiding in Christ as our Source to do the work in and through us rather than about performance-based or “God-help-me” Christianity

2. Try To ISOLATE Us

Have you ever had thoughts like, “Nobody has felt like I do, or I can’t share that because no one would understand.” Satan loves these thoughts because one of his main strategies is to keep feeding you thoughts like this so you will stay isolated and you won’t seek others to help, encourage, or speak truth in your life.

Many people feel ashamed or guilty for some things they have done and feel they can’t possibly share those things with others. These thoughts play right into Satan’s hands because if he can isolate you, he will reinforce your need to isolate yourself by inserting thoughts into your mind to further guilt, shame, or condemn you. Thoughts like “Nobody would understand. No one really cares. I will never be set free so why bother seeking help.” The more you stay in isolation, the more ineffective you will become in living for others.

3. Deceive You Into Believing You Are NOT Qualified

“he is a liar and the father of lies.”

John 8:44

God is calling you to be available, not to be capable. Satan, on the other hand, is going to do everything in his power to convince you that you are not capable or qualified to minister to anyone and everyone who comes into your six square feet. He may insert thoughts like:

- You don’t know the verses you need to help someone else.
- You are going to need a lot more training before you are qualified to minister to others.
- Look at how much of a hypocrite you are. Who are you trying to share the truth with others when you can’t even do it yourself.
- Why would God use someone like you. You and your life are (or has been) a mess.

Even as you read this list after all that has been said about being available rather than qualified or capable, Satan wants you to fall prey to his lies. The truth is that not one of us is qualified. We are all hypocrites, but that does not stop God from using us. Regardless of where you have come from or what you have done, God will always use willing and available vessels to set the captives free.

Remember: When Satan inserts thoughts into your mind, they are in first person.

4. Keep You Focused On The “What Ifs”

Another key strategy of Satan is to keep you focused on the “what ifs.” Here are some examples to explain:

- **What if** I don’t have all the right answers?
- **What if** I am rejected?
- **What if** I fail?
- **What if** I end up looking like a fool?

What drives all our “what ifs” is fear. You might insert the words “I fear” instead of “what if.” Wouldn’t you agree on some level that we all fear the negative outcomes of the “what ifs?” If we give in to our “what ifs” then we will choose to not engage in people’s lives. This is exactly where the enemy wants you to be because at that point, you become totally ineffective in God’s kingdom.

If someone does not receive the truth, then Satan is right there saying, “I told you this would happen. You really are a failure. Now you really made a mess of things. So, admit that you are a failure when it comes to ministering to others.”

5. Keep You From Growing Up Spiritually

Satan’s ultimate strategy is to keep you from growing up because you never get past focusing on yourself and your needs. He will try to persuade you that you are not, and will not, be anything but a “taker.” Therefore, whether it is temptation, doubt, condemnation, or shame, Satan has a whole arsenal to keep you from growing into spiritual adulthood which will render you useless in God’s plan to work through you.

Conclusion

Satan is working non-stop to destroy your witness because he knows all too well how effective you can become in speaking truth to Christians and non-Christians, and to our culture as a whole. If we don’t realize where he is working, then we will become casualties and not conquerors. However, we know Satan is nothing more than a toothless lion who has been defeated with the result that we are spiritual conquerors.

What Is The Overflow To You of Living Life For Others?

*“do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also **for the interests of others.**”*
Philippians 2:4

Even though this whole study is about others, it is important to know some of the results of how living life for others will personally impact your life. Let’s look at a few of these.

Your Fears Will DIMINISH and Your Spiritual Courage Will GROW

As you grow spiritually and reach out to people on a more consistent basis, you will discover that your fears about sharing truth with others will subside. One reason is:

<p><i>Your “WHAT IFS” will turn into “SO WHAT!”</i></p>
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Remember the “what ifs” from our previous section. As we live life for others, we will be set free from the “what ifs.” You will get to the place where “what if?” will be replaced by “so what.” What is the meaning of “so what?” “So what” means that the “what ifs” no longer have a grip on you, keeping you from being others’ focused. Here are some examples:

“So what” if:

- I am rejected because they are not rejecting me. They are rejecting the truth.
- It looks like I failed because they didn’t listen or respond positively to the truth. Whether or not someone receives or believes the truth does not make me a failure. I am a faithful seed thrower.
- I end up looking like a fool in their eyes. I only care how I look in God’s eyes because I know He is delighted in my being the willing vessel He worked through with this person.

“So what” means you are free from rejection, having all the right answers, and feeling like a fool. Doesn’t that sound like freedom to you? This is a place of great freedom because none of the “what ifs” will control you anymore.

We said earlier that most “what ifs” are driven by fear. 1 John 4:18 says:

*“There is no fear in love; but **perfect love (God Himself) casts out fear**, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”*

We know that perfect love is the makeup of God. Therefore, as you depend on Him, the fear of failure, rejection, or feeling out of control will be replaced by the love of Christ. Not only will these fears be replaced by the love of Christ, but His love will also free you to love others. You will grow to a place where your only fear is not being used by God to transform the hearts of His people and that is a healthy, holy fear.

DAY FOUR

There Will Be A GREATER Expression of Christ Through You

We see this part in 2 Corinthians 4:10:

*“always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the **life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.**”*

One of the definitions of the word “manifested” in the Greek is “*to make known that which was hidden.*” What Paul is saying is that Christ not only lives in us, but He also wants to manifest Himself or make Himself known to others through us. Early on in our journey, Christ is hidden because we are more focused on ourselves than focused on God and helping others.

However, as we grow in Christ, then our very lives will manifest or “make known” this amazing God who lives within us. Similar to a dimmer switch that is slowly being turned on, the light gets

brighter and brighter. In the same way, as we become more Christ-like, Christ becomes a greater and greater expression of Himself through us to others.

Dan Stone wrote in his book *The Rest of The Gospel* that it is Christ IN us, Christ THROUGH us and Christ AS us.” What does he mean when he says, “Christ AS us?”

***Christ AS you is Christ manifesting His Christ-likeness
(love, compassion, patience, hope, etc.)
through your UNIQUE PERSONALITY.***

As we learned about being partakers of the divine nature in the identity study, Christ as us does not mean we are becoming deity. Rather, Christ as you, is Christ’s love, hope, forgiveness, etc., flowing through your unique personality which will result in your being more spiritually attractive to others.

You Will Become More SPIRITUALLY Attractive

*“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, **will draw all men to Myself.**” John 12:32*

Since Christ lives in you, He will draw others to Himself through you. As you live more for others, the greater the expression of Christ will be through you and the more spiritually attractive you will become. This is what Paul means by “fragrant aroma.” What is it that you smell that makes what you are smelling irresistible? A pie or cake cooking in the oven, a rose, or someone’s perfume or cologne? As you grow in your desire “to be” for others, a supernatural aroma of Christ permeates the air and you become more attractive to those around you.

Your Heart Will Say: “Here I Am. Send ME.”

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘**Here I am. Send me.**’” Isaiah 6:8*

As you watch God supernaturally work through you and see His power heal, encourage, or transform lives, your passion to be used by God will grow. Your reluctance to live for others will diminish because you have a front row seat to God’s work in other people’s lives. You will find yourself seeking God for more opportunities to be a part of transforming people’s lives. (Watch out, it can get addictive.)

Agape Love For Others Will GROW

Paul tells us that as we continue to grow spiritually, there will be a greater overflow of God’s love for others.

*"I pray that **your love will overflow more and more**, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding." Philippians 1:9*

What does that overflow look like?

1. You will find your desire and willingness to be for others to grow.
2. You will be experiencing greater compassion for hurting people.
3. You will focus more on the needs of others than your own.
4. You will be seeking God more intentionally to be used of Him in the lives of others.

As you do, God will work through you to create a healthy, mature, and unified body.

The Body of Christ Will Become More MATURE and More UNIFIED

*Then we will **no longer be immature like children**. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, **we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ**, who is the head of his body, the church.*

*¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. **As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.***

Ephesians 4:14-16

As God works through you in others' lives, God is growing them up with the objective of creating a body of Christ that will be spiritually mature, spiritually healthy, and one that is overflowing with love. If we do not grow up and be used of the Lord to grow others up, then we will stay spiritual children which will create a divisive, ununified, and unhealthy body. Your willingness to not only grow but to live for others is vital for the body of Christ to grow, to be healthy, and to become lovers of others.

Your HEART/DESIRE For God Will Grow

God's ultimate objective as He works through you for others is this:

***As you EXPERIENCE God's supernatural works through you, you will
GROW in your LOVE and DESIRE for Him.***

God allows us to participate with Him as a confirmation of His love for us. We know He is the One who produces the work through us and we are to thank Him for that privilege. However, there is a much greater objective for His willingness to work through us and that is to win our love for Him. Think about it for a moment. Out of His love for you, He works through you so you will experience His love, and in return, have a greater desire to love Him.

Out of what God is doing in us and through us, He is producing in us the same love and desire for Him that David had. Look at David's desire and love for God in these verses:

*"You **satisfy** me more than the richest feast. I will praise you with songs of joy."*

Psalm 63:5

*"O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul **thirsts** for you; my whole body **longs** for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water." Psalm 63:1*

*"As the deer pants for the water brooks, **So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.**" Psalm 42:1-2*

As you grow up and grow out for others, God is creating a heart for Himself like He did with David. We will explore this more in depth in Book Four – *Experiencing A Deeper Relationship With God*. For now, just know that God's greatest desire is for you to love Him with the same love that He has for you.

*"We love **because** He first loved us."*

1 John 4:19

We will talk much more about this in Book Four – *Experiencing A Deeper Relationship With God*.

How Does God Feel About Your Willingness To Live Life For Others?

God Wants You To Experience The Divine "WOW" of Participating With Him

*"O LORD, I have heard of your renown, and I **stand in awe, O LORD, of your work.**"*

Habakkuk 3:2

The following is a testimony shared by someone relating what it was like to live life for others:

"I have witnessed the power of God work countless times in the hearts of non-Christians and Christians alike and I never get tired of watching God's power change hearts and destinies. Every time I witness the Holy Spirit accomplishing a work in someone's heart through me, I have the same feeling Moses must have had when God opened the Red Sea. Moses was confident in God's power to part the waters, but can you imagine the look on his face when it actually happened? I am not sure how you say 'Wow!' in Hebrew but I am sure Moses was 'wowed' to watch the sea part."

God's heart for you and me is the same as His heart is for this person. He wants all of us to live in the "wow" of His amazing power.

God DELIGHTS In Your Willingness To Be For Others

*“For the **Lord delights in you....**”*

Isaiah 62:4

“Delight” in this verse means “take pleasure in or be pleased with.” Can you imagine how God feels when you choose to live for others? Is it possible that every time you seek to live for others, God is elbowing the angels and saying, “That’s my boy!” or “That’s my girl!” Yes, God can get excited, especially when He has so transformed you that you intentionally seek out others to give hope, encouragement, and Life.

DAY FIVE

“Carpe Diem”

“Go....”

Matthew 28:19

You Only Have THIS Moment

*“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, **making the most of the opportunity.**”*

Colossians 4:5

“Carpe diem” is Latin for “seize the day.” It means to make the most of every moment. Think about this. Today will never come again. The opportunities God gives you in your six square feet may only happen today. Not tomorrow!

***It is important to see God’s works through us are like
“MANNA” which is good for today ONLY.***

How would it change our lives if we could grasp the significance of that? Would we not wake up every morning with a sense of anticipation of what God is going to do that day? Anticipation of who the Lord will bring into our six square feet and how He will work through us to accomplish His will, plans, and purposes for that person? As the Lord has brought people into your life that He worked through to transform you, He is now calling you to participate with Him in accomplishing amazing, supernatural works. When God calls you to step out and be His mouthpiece, will you say, “Here I am, send me” with Isaiah?

Therefore, let’s live today as if there is no tomorrow and live it from the same heart God has for others. You have an eternal opportunity to speak truth and experience God today that may never come again.

Why We Must Now, More Than Ever Before, Speak The Truth

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **accurately handling the word of truth.**” 2 Timothy 2:15*

There was a recent survey in the Christian Post taken by Probe Ministries that says that 70% of born-again Christians believe there is more than one way to heaven. For those born-again Christians under the age of 40, only 25% have a biblical worldview (i.e., the Bible is inerrant, Christ is the only way to salvation, salvation is by grace not works, etc.). Just these two statistics alone should be proof enough why we must be sharing the truth perhaps like at no other time in our history. These statistics should create a sense of urgency to speak truth every time the Spirit presents an opportunity. In addition to those who are biblically ignorant, many pastors are distorting, watering down, minimizing, and compromising God’s truth.

For example, there was an editorial by a woman who was against a new Texas law that prevents abortion taking place after the first six weeks of pregnancy. She says, “I am a Christian who values life, loves babies and children.” Then she goes on to quote the late Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: “It is essential to women’s equality with men that she be the decision maker (when it comes to abortion).” How can you possibly say you are a Christian who values life and support abortion at any point in the pregnancy? The Bible is very clear on this issue.

She reveals her ignorance of or her resistance to the truth by contradicting it. Unfortunately, there are becoming more Christians like this lady who don’t know the truth or choose not to believe the absoluteness of it. The truth is that there is not and cannot be any compromising, rationalizing, or minimizing when it comes to God’s absolute truth.

There are too many Christians like this lady who need to hear God’s truth. Therefore, when it comes to those who come into our six square feet, we should be asking the Spirit: “What truth does this person know or not know? What lies is this person still believing? What truth do You want to say through me to make a difference in this person’s life?”

CASUALTY? OR CONQUEROR?

When it comes to your six square feet, like on a battlefield, there will be casualties as well as conquerors. This applies to Christians as well when it comes to their six square feet. Let’s look at the difference between the two.

A CASUALTY

A spiritual “casualty” is any believer who is:

- Not growing spiritually
- Sitting in a spiritual La-Z-Boy of indifference and apathy
- In perpetual bondage to his or her sin and fleshly behaviors
- Unwilling to be used of the Lord in the lives of others
- Self-focused and self-absorbed to the point of not caring about anyone but self

- Feeling powerless due to not realizing, believing, or engaging the transforming power of the Holy Spirit who lives in the believer
- Locked into his or her false beliefs of being inadequate, helpless, or incapable of making a difference in another person's life

What is the result of being a casualty?

You will MISS OUT on the eternal works God wants to accomplish through you and NO lives will EVER be transformed through you.

A CONQUEROR

Romans 8:37 in the King James version says:

*"we are **more than conquerors**"*

What does it mean to be a conqueror?

Any Christian who BELIEVES and WALKS in the truth that no one (including Satan) or nothing can stop him/her who is WILLING, AVAILABLE, and DEPENDENT on God, to speak or express His life and His truth through him/her in love to EVERYONE who is in his/her six square feet.

As spiritual conquerors we:

- Continue to grow spiritually
- Have spiritual eyes to see past the externals of people and see their hearts
- Are sensitive to what the Spirit speaks and how He guides us with people who are in our six square feet
- Walk in the power of the Spirit for Him to transform the lives of those around us
- Value and love everyone who comes into our life
- Intentionally seek the Holy Spirit to do whatever He desires through us to encourage, exhort, and transform everyone who comes into our six square feet
- Grow in Christ-confidence that we are God's warriors through whom He will win the battle for the hearts and minds of His people

The truth is that as Christians living in this time in history, we cannot afford to be casualties. Now more than ever before, we must choose to be conquerors through Christ.

God Is Raising Up An ARMY

What we need to understand is that for most of us, Jesus isn't sending us out to foreign countries as missionaries. He is only asking us to let Him live through us in our own homes, with our family, in neighborhoods, in workplaces, etc. This is our six square feet. It's the ordinary people who walk into our lives every day that He wants to touch with His truth through us if we will only let Him.

Remember, by each Roman soldier conquering his six square feet the Romans conquered the world. In the same way, God wants to conquer the world by bringing all men to Himself. He is looking for spiritual recruits for His divine army who are willing and available to depend on Him to transform others through themselves. He is raising up an army of lovers whom He will use to conquer the world. All He is asking is for you to be available to Him to conquer your six square feet.

Conclusion: "One More Lord, Just One More"

There is a movie called "Hacksaw Ridge." The movie is about Desmond Doss who was the first conscientious objector in World War II to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. The short version of the story of his incredible bravery is that he was a medic in Okinawa. Since it was against his principles to kill anyone, he became a medic.

Hacksaw Ridge is located in Okinawa. It is a 100 foot cliff the Americans had to climb up to engage the Japanese. The Americans were repelled a number of times. The second time Doss and his men were pushed back down the ridge, he did not go down with the rest of his company. Rather, he stayed to get as many wounded men off that ridge as he could. In the midst of enemy fire, he would drag one wounded soldier after another and by using heaving ropes, would let the soldiers down this cliff one at a time.

In one scene of the movie, he was letting one of the wounded soldiers down the cliff and he was totally exhausted. Yet in spite of his exhaustion he cried out, "One more Lord, just one more." All in all, he got 75 wounded men off that ridge and as a result was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Shouldn't this be our heart when it comes to Christians who don't know Christ as Life, or need words of truth, healing, hope, and encouragement? „The answer is a resounding, "Yes! Therefore, let's make our collective spiritual battle cry concerning everyone who comes into our six square feet to be that of Desmond Doss:

"One more Lord, just one more."

Discussion Questions

1. What key truth(s) impacted you the most in this lesson? Why?

2. Which characteristic(s) concerning ministering to hurting people most spoke to you? Why?

3. What might be some of the consequences if we are not aware of the spiritual battle that is going on concerning Satan's strategies to destroy the church?

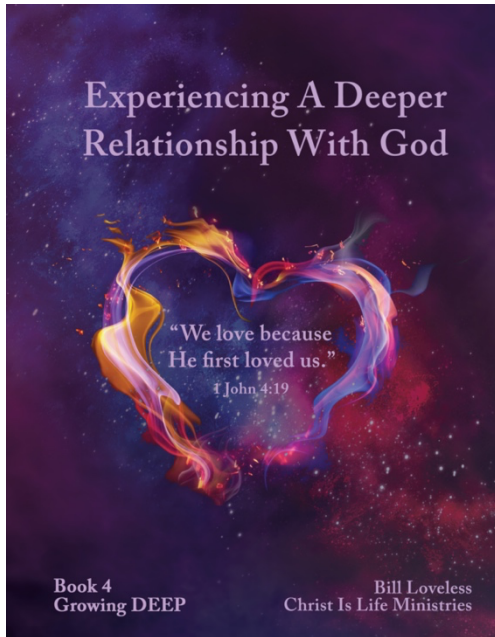
4. Which of the characteristics of the overflow of living life for others would you most like to experience? Why?

5. Why do you believe it is critical to "carpe diem" when it comes to living in your six square feet?

Where Do I Go From Here?

You have just finished Book Three of the four-part discipleship series called **Growing Up – Growing Out – Growing Deep**. We encourage you to continue on with **Book Four** of this series called *Experiencing A Deeper Relationship With God*.

The focus of this study is:



- How our concept of God impacts our relationship with Him.
- God's plan to restore a mutual, love relationship with man.
- What God is doing to persuade us of His love for us.
- How God really feels about us.
- What it looks like to be a man or woman after God's heart.
- How we experience a deeper relationship with God.

If you would like to download this study for free, please go to the **Discipleship** tab on our website (www.christislifeministries.com) or you can look under the **Store** section of our website and purchase a copy. We have many other curricula, discipleship booklets, and videos to offer as well. We hope you will take advantage of these materials.

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