

Crossings

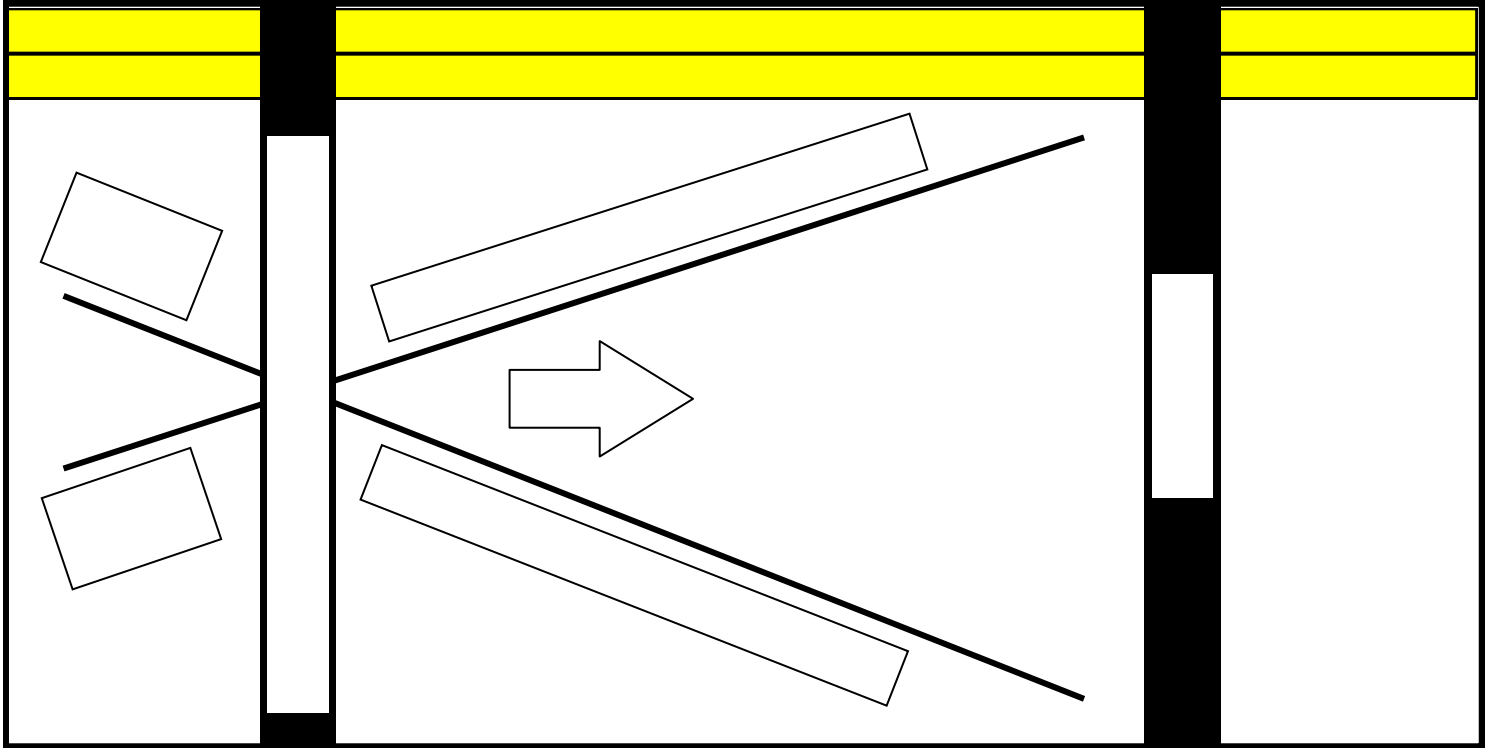
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Lesson 1

Introduction to Cross Chart



Introduction:

Crossing. The Christian life is all about a series of **Crossings**. The very act of repenting of our sins giving our life to Christ is one of **Crossing** over...from Death to Life...from Old Life to New Life. How was this salvation made possible? Jesus made a **Crossing**. He crossed from the comforts of fellowship with His Father in heaven, to reach down to save sinners like us. He made the ultimate sacrifice on the **Cross**. And how do we respond? We receive this Jesus and his **Crossing** on our behalf. We then **Cross** through our New Life's challenges with Him. And through it all, we look forward to the hope of **Crossing** into Ultimate Life—Life in Heaven with our Lord Jesus. To more fully understand this theme of **Crossing**, we will use the *Crossing Chart* as a model.

A 'model' is a visual description of a system of components that all connect to, relate to and/or depend on one another. In this study we will be looking systematically at God's relationship with man through the "The Crossing Chart" model. This 8 lesson study will be used to dissect this model and take a more in-depth look at each of its components. This is similar to how you might look at the human body by first looking at the skeleton, then muscles, organs, and finally skin. Our desire is that by the end of this study, like the human body, you might see how each component of the **Crossing Chart** works together with every other component to form this amazing truth called the Gospel.

Purpose...What is the Purpose of this Study:

- To illustrate the Christian life
- To develop a growing view of who God is
- To develop a growing view of who we are
- To understand and experience our need for Christ daily
 - To grow in our relationship with God

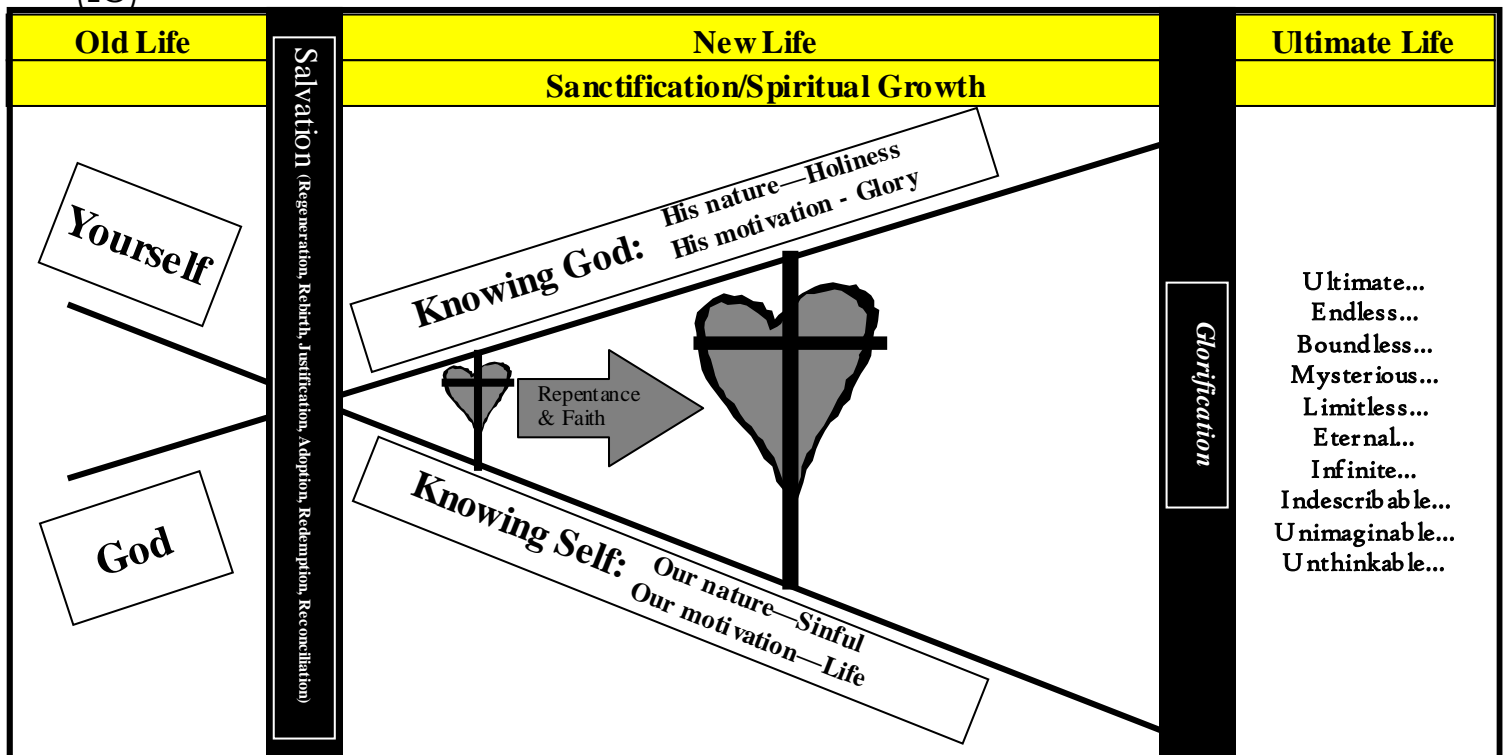
LG- BE PREPARED TO INTRODUCE AND OUTLINE THE PRACTICE OF SPENDING TAWG (How it is done, the fact that questions and space are provided, etc.) IN HELPING YOUR PARTICIPANTS EASE INTO THE HABIT OF SPENDING TIME WITH GOD. YOU COULD TAKE A PARTICULAR

DAY IN LESSON 2 AND GO THRU IT WITH YOUR GROUP (WITH THE OPTION OF USING APPENDIX A FROM THE BACK OF THE BOOK AS AN EXAMPLE).

LG – BE SURE TO LEAD YOUR GROUP THROUGH A SHORT SESSION OF GOAL MAKING. SUCH AS – “What do you want from this small group?” or “What are going to be some challenges?” HELP THEM VIEW THIS SMALL GROUP AS A DEEPER COMMITMENT AND IN DOING SO CREATE GREATER MOMENTUM AROUND THIS TIME.

LG – THIS IS WHERE THE LEADER MUST BE VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE CROSS CHART IN ORDER TO NOT ONLY ASSURE THE PROPER PLACEMENT OF COMPONENTS BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE OVERALL DIRECTION OF THE STUDY. THIS INCLUDES NOT ONLY WHERE A WORD GOES BUT THE MEANING BEHIND EACH COMPONENT ESPECIALLY.

(LG)



Cross Chart Components –

As a group read thru Ephesians 2 and fill in the blank Cross Chart above.

Old Life (Eph 2:1-2)

God (Eph 2:4)

Knowing God

Gospel (Eph 2:13)

Self (Eph 2:3)

Knowing Self

Our Response (Eph 2:8)

New Life (Eph 2:8-9)

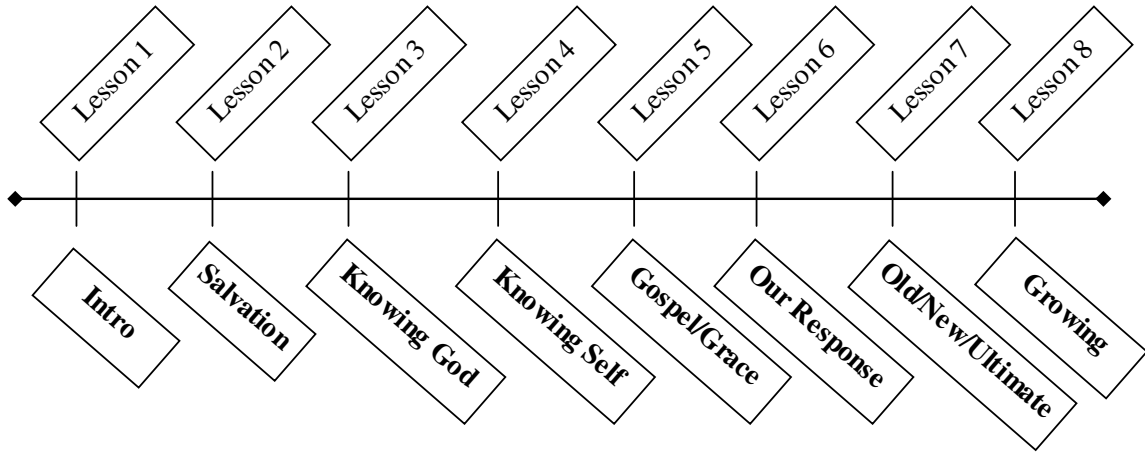
Glorification (Eph 2:7)

Salvation (Eph. 2:4-6)

Ultimate Life (Eph 2:7)

Sanctification (Eph. 2:22)

Road Map/Outline – Where are we going these next few weeks...



LG – USE THIS TIME TO INTRO THIS APPLICATION SECTION AND BEGIN TO HELP YOUR PARTICIPANTS THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT HOW THEY WILL APPLY EACH LESSON TO DIFFERENT FACETS OF THEIR LIVES (HEAD, HEART & HANDS).

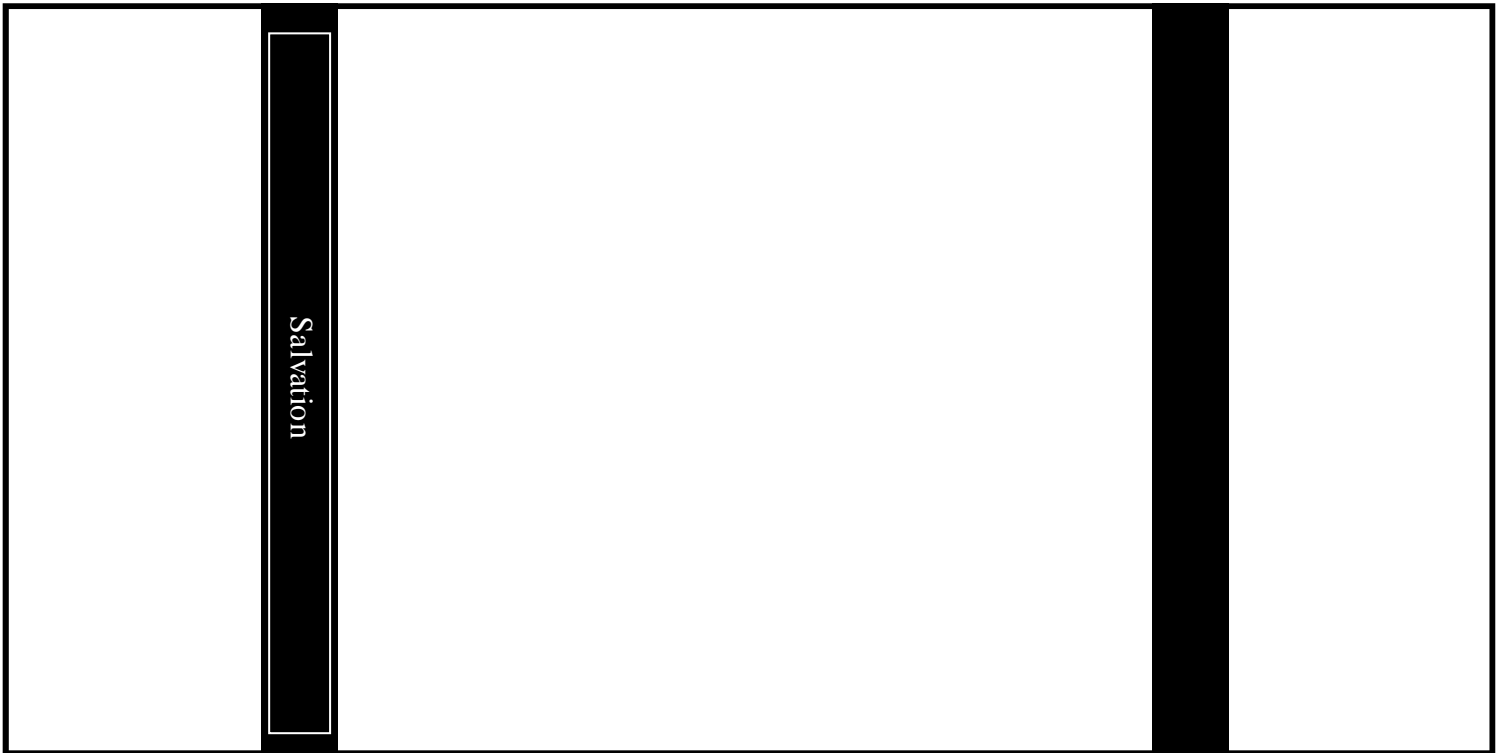
**With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:
Perspective (What we think)?**

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?

Lesson 2

Salvation



Introduction:

Salvation for the Christian is the introduction into NEW LIFE! It is the starting point in a journey of relating with God that will one day culminate into “fullness of joy” and “pleasures forever” in heaven (Psalm 16:11). Since salvation is such an important event it is critical that we fully grasp the gift that has been given to us. As we grow in our understanding of this gift we will be able to walk intimately with God for a lifetime.

Scripture Memory for the Week

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Day 1: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Pray and ask God to help you to know and experience your Salvation more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What "Old Things" does this verse refer to?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 2: Ephesians 2:8-9

Pray and ask God to help you to know and experience your Salvation more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Circle which one is true. Answer why below?

- Works=Salvation
- Faith + Works=Salvation
- Faith=Salvation
- Faith=Salvation + Works

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 3: Ephesians 2:19

Pray and ask God to help you to know and experience your Salvation more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What was formerly true of your spiritual status before salvation and what is presently true of your spiritual status as a result of salvation? (Refer to Eph 2:12 and 13)

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 4: Romans 1:16

Pray and ask God to help you to know and experience your Salvation more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What is the Gospel?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 5: I Peter 2:9-10

Pray and ask God to help you to know and experience your Salvation more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

You have been given salvation that you might “declare His praises”. Why does Salvation lead to “declaring His praises”?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(LG) USE THE INTRODUCTION BELOW AS THE "WARM UP", IT IS A GREAT TIME FOR DISCUSSION. WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO IS TO EXPOSE THE THOUGHTS OF YOUR PARTICIPANTS THAT YOU MIGHT PRESCRIBE THE GOSPEL APPROPRIATELY. IT'S IMPORTANT TO HEAR WHAT PEOPLE REALLY THINK AND BELIEVE ABOUT SALVATION BECAUSE IT WILL REVEAL MISBELIEF OR ERRORS IN THEIR THINKING.

Introduction:

What comes to your mind when you hear the word "saved" or "salvation"? What do you think the Bible means when it uses the term saved?

There are several words that are synonymous with Salvation. How would you describe these?

Redemption: (Romans 3:24, Eph 1:7) From one owner to another; (To buy back)

Justification: (Romans 4:5, 5:18) From guilt to acquittal; (To make one just)

Rebirth: (Titus 3:5, John 3:3) From old life to new life


Reconciliation: (2 Cor 5:18-19) From enemy to friend

Adoption: (John 1:12, Galatians 4:6-7) From one family to another

A. What are you saved from?

1. II Corinthians 5:17 speaks of a change for anyone who is "in Christ". What do you believe are the "Old Things" and the "New Things" mentioned in this verse?

2. Ephesians 2:1-7 presents a dramatic contrast between Old Life and New Life. According to these verses what was true of your former spiritual condition? What is true of your present spiritual condition?

Old Life		New Life
		

3. Is “becoming a Christian” and “receiving salvation” the same thing?

(LG) THIS IS THE INTRODUCTION TO THE “GIFTS OF THE GOSPEL”, FUTURE LESSONS AND STUDIES WILL LOOK AT THESE IN GREATER DEPTH. BE PREPARED HERE TO SUPPLY YOUR PARTICIPANTS WITH THE ANSWERS BELOW.

B. What are you saved to?

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|--------------------|
| 1. | Philippians 3:7-11 | New | F unction_____ |
| 2. | Galatians 5:1 | New | F reedom_____ |
| 3. | John 10:10 | New | F ulfillment_____ |
| 4. | Isaiah 1:18 | New | F orgiveness_____ |
| 5. | Ephesians 2:19-22 | New | F amily_____ |
| 6. | Isaiah 41:9-10 | New | F earlessness_____ |

(LG) PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO YOUR PARTICIPANTS RESPONSE FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

C. How are you saved?

*“Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us (leading us to faith and worship), we have to see it as something done by us (leading us to repentance). **Indeed, ‘only the man who is prepared to own his share in the guilt of the cross’, wrote Canon Peter Green, ‘may claim his share in its grace’.**”* -John Stott

1. Read Romans 10:9-10
How does someone receive the salvation offered through Jesus Christ?

Is there a difference between true belief and false belief?

After reading the above Stott quote, what is repentance and how does it relate to confession?

(LG) 2 TIMOTHY 2:19

Can you confess and not believe?

2. The word “saved” is a past tense form of the verb. Can someone know for sure that they have been saved, or can they only hope to be saved in the future?

(LG) 1 JOHN 5:13

List the things that can separate you from the love of Christ in Romans 8:35-39.

- D. What is the Holy Spirit's role in Salvation?
1. John 16:7-8 describes one of the roles of the Holy Spirit. What is the Holy Spirit's role when He comes? How does this relate to Salvation?
 2. Can a person receive salvation apart from the work of the Holy Spirit? Why or Why not? (LG) THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS. WHERE THERE IS NO CONVICTION THERE IS NO SALVATION SEE ALSO TITUS 3:5
 3. Ephesians 1:13-14 speaks about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the new believer in Christ. When is a person sealed by the Holy Spirit?

"How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose!...You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place...O Lord my God, my Light, my Wealth, and my Salvation." -Augustine

With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:

Perspective (What we think)?

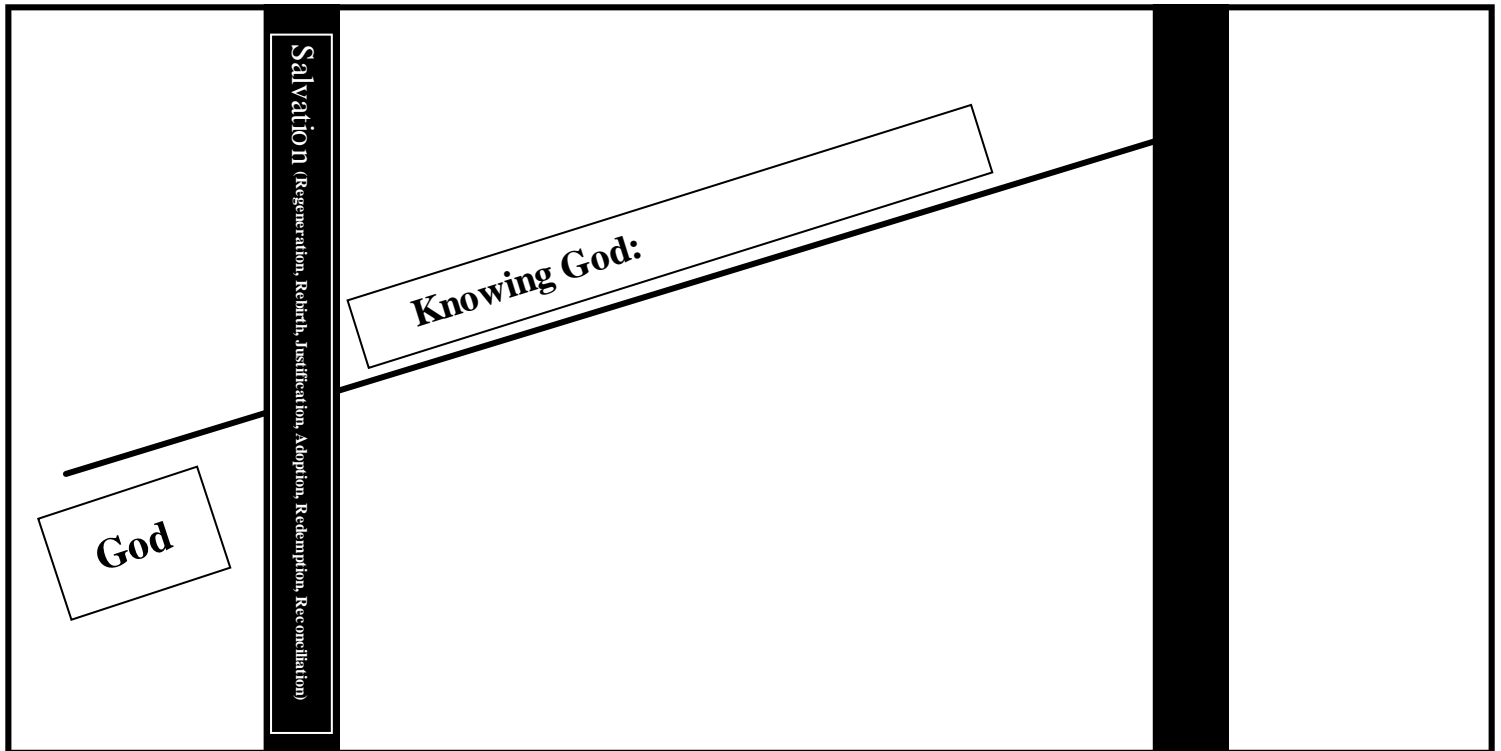
Take a few minutes to review this week's scripture memory verse.

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?

Lesson 3

Knowing God



Introduction:

Who is God? How does He describe Himself? Why does He do what He does? What is His nature? What is He motivated by? Can we really glorify God in brushing our teeth or in all that we do? This week we are going to look at some of the different aspects of God's character and how He wants us to view Him. We will also look at what **He** is passionate about and what He desires for **us** to be passionate about.

" . . . As it would be cruel to an Amazonian tribesman to fly him to London, put him down without explanation and leave him, as one who knew nothing of English or England, to fend for himself, so we are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it . . . "

--JI Packer Knowing God

Take a moment and Meditate on the following Hymn:



*Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!
-Excerpt from Hymn Holy, Holy, Holy*



Scripture Memory Verse:

**And they were calling to one another:
"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."**

Isaiah 6:3

Day 1: Isaiah 6:3

Pray and ask God to help you know and love God more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

How would you define "unholy"?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 2: Acts 17:24-25

Pray and ask God to help you know and love God more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

We talk about people serving God. What does it mean that God is **not** served by human hands?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 3: Psalm 103:11-13

Pray and ask God to help you know and love God more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What does it mean for God to remove our sin "as far as the east is from the west"?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 4: Isaiah 42:8

Pray and ask God to help you know and love God more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Define or describe "glory".

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 5: I Corinthians 10:31

Pray and ask God to help you know and love God more through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Identify one specific thing you will do today to the glory of God. How will you bring glory to God in this area?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Introduction:

Who is God?

Where do you get information to determine who God is?

In order to know who God is you must first look at His own thoughts about where He says your reference point should be. What value does 2 Timothy 3:16 give to the Bible?

A. GOD'S NATURE: HOLINESS

1. God is Free

Are there any areas where God needs help from man?

After reading Revelation 21:6 & Acts 17:24-25, how do these verses describe God as "free"?

2. God is Full

In what ways is God lacking?

Read Isaiah 6:3 and Exodus 3:14, then answer how do these verses describe God as "full"?

3. God is Forgiving

Does God hold grudges? How much does God forgive?

Exodus 34:6-7 & Psalm 103:11-13; How do these verses describe God as "forgiving"?

What aspects of God's character from the previous verses are most attractive to you? Why?

B. GOD'S MOTIVATION: GLORY

1. Why does God do what He does? Do you think there is a purpose or does God roll the dice, flip a coin? Does He do things spontaneously?

From the scriptures Habakkuk 2:14 and Isaiah 42:8 what do you think God is motivated by or passionate about?

2. What is glory? Or how do you glorify someone/something?

(LG) EXAMPLE OF FAVORITE TEAM OR FOOD. YOU GLORIFY IT BY TALKING ABOUT IT, YOU WANT OTHERS TO EXPERIENCE IT, YOU DON'T MISS A GAME OR A CHANCE TO EAT IT.

“God employs His sovereignty to display the great object of His delight, His glory, the beauty of His manifold perfections. He does all that He does to magnify the worth of His glory. He would be unrighteous if He valued anything more than what is supremely valuable, namely, Himself.” – John Piper, The Pleasures of God.

What do you find yourself “glorifying”, other than God?

3. In what ways do you think God brings Himself glory?

Job 42:2→ His plans

Isaiah 46:9-10→ His purposes

Acts 17:26-28→ His people

“. . . Toward all this, God is moving with infinite wisdom and perfect precision of action. No one can dissuade Him from His purposes; nothing can turn Him aside from His plans. Since He is omniscient, there can be no unforeseen circumstance, no accidents. As He is sovereign, there can be no countermanded orders, no breakdown in authority; and as He is omnipotent, there can be no want of power to achieve His chosen ends. God is sufficient unto Himself for all these things . . . ” --AW Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy

4. What do the following verses say about how we can glorify God?

I Corinthians 10:31-

Psalms 37:3-4-

Whether we are spending time with God in His word or whether we are singing praise to Him or whether we are going about our daily activities, God wants us to be glorifying Him in all we do!

5. In living to glorify God, would you say that you lean more towards (circle one):

Working for God or **Enjoying God**

What are areas and ways in which you see that you do not glorify God the way that He desires?

How will you seek God's help in this area this week?

**With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:
Perspective (What we think)?**

Take a few minutes to review this week's scripture memory verse.

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?

(LG) PRAY TOGETHER THAT GOD WOULD REVEAL MORE OF HIS GLORY TO EACH OF YOU, THAT HE WOULD ALSO HELP YOU TO LIVE FOR HIS GLORY AS A LIFESTYLE, AND THAT HE WOULD REVEAL MORE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO KNOW GOD.

Bonus Material:

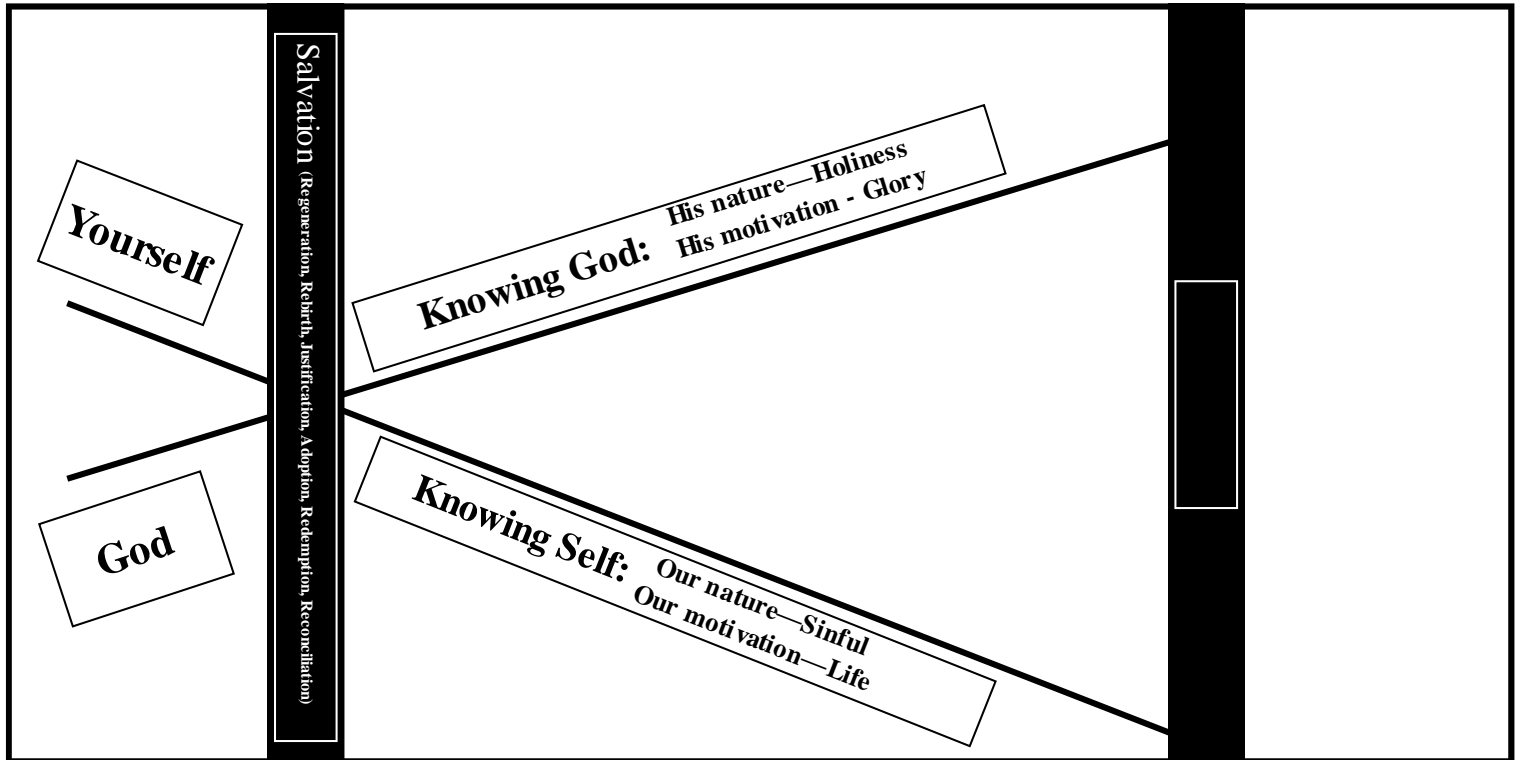
"The God of the Bible is not weak; He is strong. He is all-mighty. Nothing happens without His permission or apart from His purposes—even evil. Nothing disturbs or puzzles Him. His purposes are always accomplished."

—James Boice

Can a disobedient Christian or even a non-Christian bring glory to God?

Read Ex 9:13-16 about Pharaoh (a non-Christian), and how God used him to show His power and proclaim His name in all the earth.

Knowing Yourself



Introduction:

"... Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."- C.S. Lewis

Who are we? Why did God create us? Why do we do the things we do? How has sin affected what God has created us for? How does God view us? How should we view sin as we grow in Christ? Do you see your need for God's intervention in your life?

Scripture Memory Verse:

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. -1 John 3:1

Day One: Genesis 1:27

Pray and ask God to help you understand yourself and how He views you as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What does it mean to be made in God's image?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 2: 1 John 3:1

Pray and ask God to help you understand yourself and how He views you as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Why did God lavish his love on us? What are some things that are true about us that makes that reality so amazing?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 3: James 2:10

Pray and ask God to help you understand yourself and how He views you as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Why does God set such a strict standard? Why such rigid requirement?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 4: Romans 8:6

Pray and ask God to help you understand yourself and how He views you as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Why would a mind controlled by the sinful nature lead to death?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 5: Psalm 16:11

Pray and ask God to help you understand yourself and how He views you as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

How does this verse relate to the C.S. Lewis quote at the beginning of the lesson?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Introduction:

Are men born inherently good or bad?

A. OUR NATURE: MADE IN HIS IMAGE

Genesis 1:27, 31

"The proper understanding of everything in life begins with God. No one will ever understand the necessity of conversion who does not know why God created us. He created us "in His image" so that we would image forth His glory in the world. We were made to be prisms refracting the light of God's glory into all of life. Why God should want to give us a share in shining with His glory is a great mystery. Call it grace or mercy or love—it is an unspeakable wonder. Once we were not. Then we existed for the glory of God." --John Piper, Desiring God

What does this quote say that we were made for?

1. OUR NATURE: SINFUL

(LG) INTERACT WITH THE STUDENTS OVER WHAT HAPPENED IN GENESIS 3 IN THE GARDEN, AND WHY WAS THAT DISOBEDIENT?

- a. What happened in Genesis 3:11?
- b. According to Revelation 3:17 how do you think God would describe you?

2. WHAT IS SIN?

- a. How would you rate the following in regards to their sinfulness? (On a scale of 1 being not so bad, and 10 being terribly evil)
Drunkenness____
Sex before marriage____
Self-righteousness____
Pride____
Love of money____
Seeking approval by means of academic achievement ____
- b. Is sin always outward and visible?
- c. Take a look at these following passages to provide you with some more insight concerning sin.
James 2:10-

Romans 3:23-

Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28-

All sin is the same (In that it separates us from God). God is not concerned about our actions only but is concerned about our hearts as well.

(LG) ALL SIN IS NOT THE SAME IN ITS CONSEQUENCES AND WICKEDNESS. EXAMPLE: STEALING A PENCIL DOES NOT CARRY THE SAME CONSEQUENCES AS MURDER, BUT BOTH ARE ALIKE IN THAT THEY SEPARATE YOU FROM GOD.

- d. What are some sins that are currently present visibly and invisibly in your heart and life?

3. HOW DOES GOD VIEW US NOW THAT WE ARE SAVED?

- a. Do you struggle to see your need for God? Or do you struggle more to believe that God cares for you?

1 John 3:1, 9-10-

Romans 8:16-

- b. We were orphans and now we are children of God!

Do you see God as your Father, and you as His child?

What keeps you from seeing Him this way?

B. OUR MOTIVATION: LIFE

All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. They will never take the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves. –Blaise Pascal

What is Pascal trying to say here?

When you wake up in the morning and begin your day, what is it that gets you going?

1. How do verses like Jeremiah 2:13 and Proverbs 14:12 describe how man can often find himself on the wrong path?
2. Man is looking for life, but sin is a false promise of life that never delivers (false life giver) because it is seeking life apart from God.
3. What were you looking for life in before you were a Christian? What was your false life-giver(s)?
 - a. Is it ever a struggle to not go back to that same false life-giver?
 - b. Describe one instance where you have recently bought into an empty promise.
4. Where do all searches, **apart from Christ**, lead us when you think of the following words?
 - Fulfillment- empty
 - Freedom- slavery
 - Forgiveness- guilty
 - Function- purposeless
 - Fearlessness- fearful
 - Family- isolated / alienated from God and man

C. OUR NEW NATURE AND SIN

As we have said, now through Christ, we have become children of God. But, as we grow in our understanding of how holy and perfect God is we will see and recognize how sinful we really are (not just in our actions, but in our hearts).

(LG) THESE VERSES ARE IN ORDER FROM WHEN PAUL BECAME A CHRISTIAN TO NEAR HIS DEATH. READ THE ROMANS VERSES TOGETHER, BUT ONLY REFER TO THE OTHERS FOR THE SAKE OF TIME. TELL THE STUDENTS THEY CAN LOOK AT THE VERSES LATER.

This is a progression of Paul's relationship with God:

Acts 9: → Paul's life-change/conversion

1 Corinthians 15:9 → Paul refers to himself as the least of the apostles.

Ephesians 3:8 → Paul refers to himself as the least of God's people.

1 Tim 1:15 → Paul refers to himself as the worst of sinners.

(LG) THIS IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT PAUL DID NOT BECOME MORE SINFUL, BUT THAT HE BECAME MORE AWARE OF HIS SINFULNESS AND HIS NEED FOR THE GOSPEL.

Did Paul become more sinful as he walked with Christ?

Of course not, God's holiness and his need for grace became a great reality. A growing awareness of sin is a greater understanding of our heart in its natural state. The wonderful thing about this is that although we are desperately sinful, and God

is infinitely holy, He accepts us in Christ and views us as His children. This only serves to deepen our appreciation of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:

Perspective (What we think)?

Take a few minutes to review this week's scripture memory verse.

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?

Bonus Material:

Read in John 4 about the Samaritan woman looking for life and how Jesus points out her specific "cistern" or how she is fulfilling her thirst.

Does God only invite us to Himself when we are clean or "have it all together"? Isaiah 55:1-2

He sees that we give our selves to things that do not satisfy and He wants us to come to Him.

What are the things that you spend your labor on that does not satisfy?



COME THOU FOUNT Proverbs 10:22



*Come Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of Thy redeeming love.*

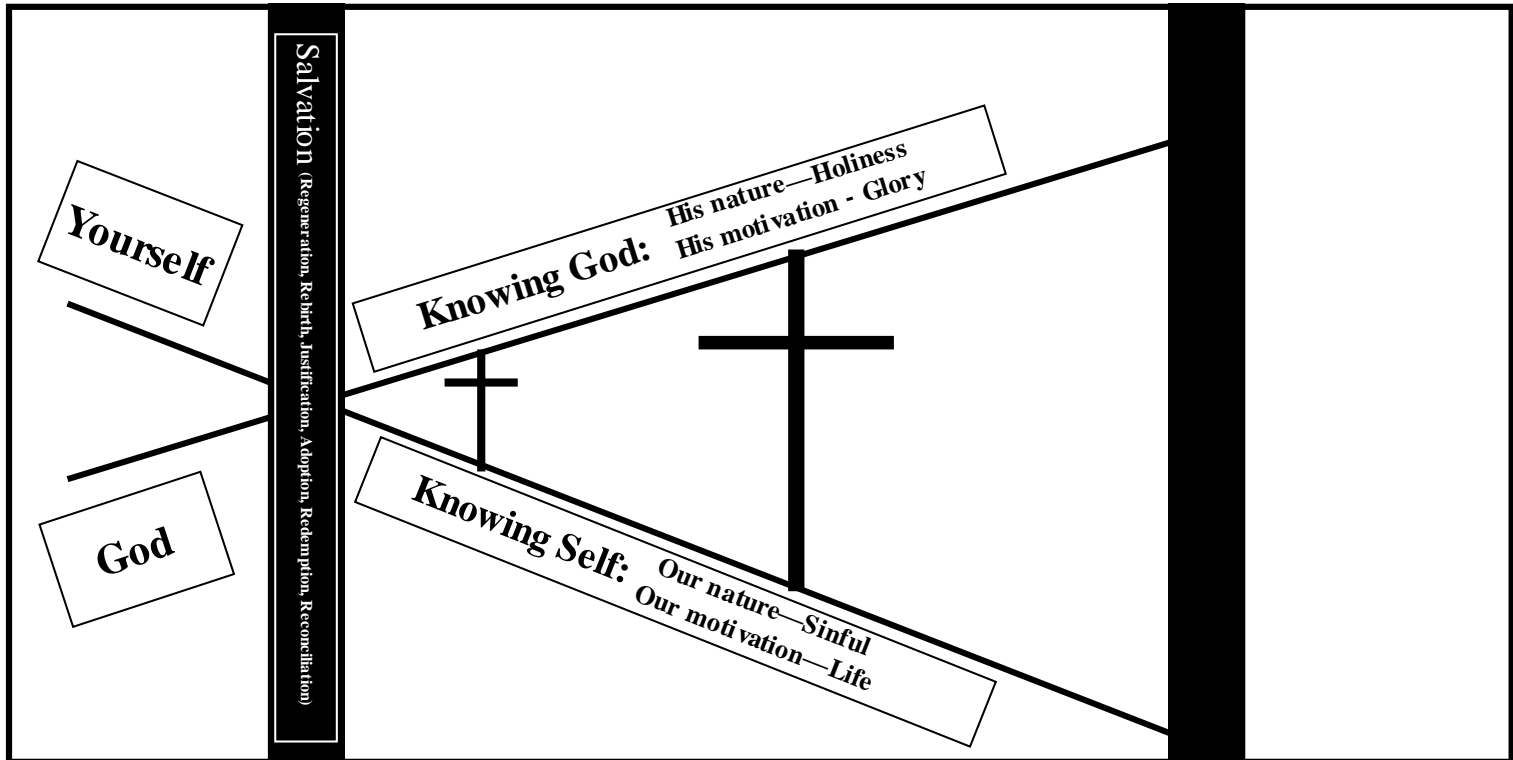
*Here I raise my "Ebenezer";
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;*

*He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.*

***Oh, to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, Oh, take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.***

*Here's my heart, Oh, take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.*

Gospel/ Grace



Introduction:

A growing **Knowledge of God** and **Knowledge of Yourself** leave you with a growing awareness of the massive gap, or disconnect, between you and God. This lesson is designed to demonstrate that God did something about this gap through Christ on the cross. Christ's death purchased for us our salvation making available to us the **Gifts of the Gospel**. This was not just a once off event at the point of our salvation, but God offers these gifts daily to His children that they would live in connection to Him through His Son.

Scripture Memory Verse

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. -Luke 9:23-24

Day 1: II Corinthians 8:9

Pray & ask God to help you understand & experience the Gospel in new ways as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

How does one become rich through the poverty of Jesus?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 2: II Timothy 2:1

Pray & ask God to help you understand & experience the Gospel in new ways as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

How can you be strong in God's grace?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 3: Galatians 2:20

Pray & ask God to help you understand & experience the Gospel in new ways as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Why did the fact that Christ gave himself for Paul change his life so dramatically? Why should it change ours so dramatically?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 4: Luke 9:23-24

Pray & ask God to help you understand & experience the Gospel in new ways as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What does it mean to take up your cross daily?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 5: Colossians 2:6-7

Pray & ask God to help you understand & experience the Gospel in new ways as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

If you are to continue in the same manner, what was the original manner you received him in?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Introduction:

"So long as we imagine it is we who have to look for God, we must often lose heart. But it is the other way about; He is looking for us. And so we can afford to recognize that very often we are not looking for God; far from it, we are in full flight from him, in high rebellion against him. And He knows that and has taken it into account. He has followed us into our own darkness; there where we thought finally to escape him, we run straight into his arms. So we do not have to erect a false piety for ourselves, to give us the hope of salvation. Our hope is in his determination to save us, and he will not give in."

-Simon Tugwell

A. His Pursuit

1. Ezekiel 36:26-27 describes God's pursuit through his promise.
 - a. How do you define covenant?

 - b. Who is performing all of the actions in this promise?

 - c. Additionally, see Philippians 1:6.

2. Romans 5:6-10 describes God's conquering love for us despite being enemies to Him. What assurance does this give us of his pursuit today?

3. In light of Titus 2:14 why did Jesus give himself for us to redeem us?

B. Our Rebellion

It is important for us to understand God's pursuit in the midst of our flight from him.

1. Since our hope is that Christ will give us life, or save us, what kind of warnings does the Bible give us against pursuing life or salvation in other things?

Deuteronomy 8:11-14

Jeremiah 2:11-13

Psalms 115:2-8

2. Read Romans 7:14-25. What is the conflict that is described here?
(LG) THE IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER HERE IS THAT IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF WHETHER WE ARE SINNING, BUT RATHER, ARE WE FIGHTING?

3. Do you think God is surprised by our sin?
(LG) AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION MUST BE MADE HERE, THAT THOUGH GOD MAY NOT BE SURPRISED, THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE IS NOT DISHONORED BY OUR SIN. OUR SIN WILL ALWAYS DISHONOR GOD, THOUGH IT WILL EVER SURPRISE HIM, THEREFORE, IT SHOULD LEAD US BACK TO THE CROSS WHICH IS WHERE THE PURSUIT WAS PAID IN FULL

C. Our Daily Need

A growing mark of maturity is that you know you need him more today than when you first began with Him

1. How does Matthew 9:12 illustrate the need based relationship between God and Man?

2. Sin breaks our fellowship, not our relationship, with God. (Remember Romans 8:35-39). And since we will sin until we are made absolutely perfect we then have the daily need to do what?
(LG) REPENT!

3. 1 Timothy 6:11-12 → What does it mean to fight the fight of faith daily?

4. In Lesson 2 we introduced the Gifts of the Gospel, in Lesson 4 we expounded on them further.
 - a. Of the Gifts listed below, which was most attractive to you and drew you to know Christ as your Savior?
Freedom
Function
Fulfillment
Fearlessness
Family
Forgiveness
 - b. Knowing your past, which one do you find yourself needing from the Lord this evening, this week, this month...?

With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:
Perspective (What we think)?

Take a few minutes to review this week's scripture memory verse.

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?

Bonus Material

I Need Thee

*I need Thee every hour
Most gracious Lord
No other voice but Thine
Can peace afford*

~Chorus~

*I need Thee, I need Thee
Every hour, every hour I need Thee
O bless me now my Savior
I come to Thee
O, I need Thee*

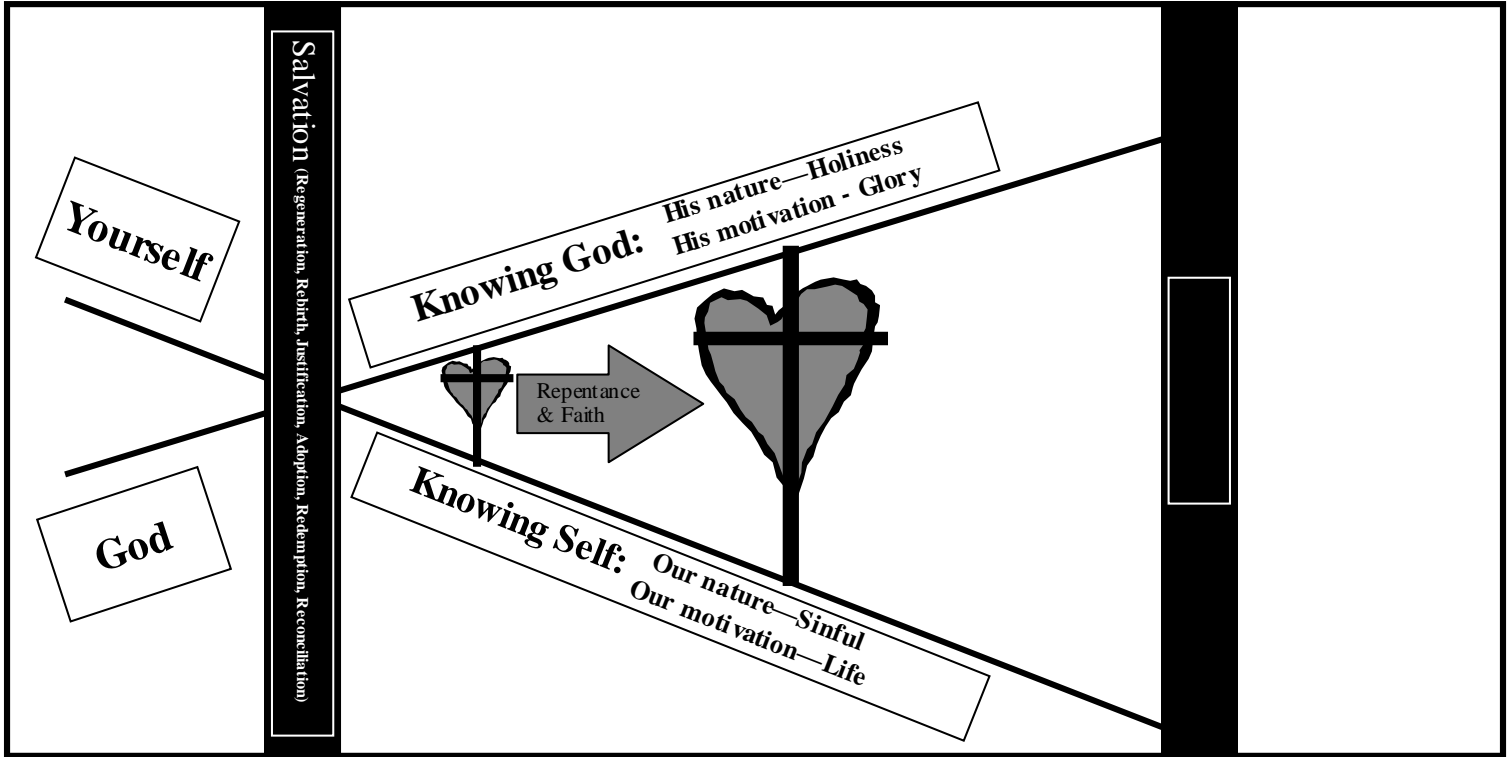
*I need Thee every hour
Teach me Thy will
And Thy rich promises
In me fulfill*

(Chorus)

*I need Thee every hour
Most Holy One
O make me Thine indeed
Thou blessed Son*

Lesson 6

Our Response to God's Grace



Introduction:

The Christian life is a continual experience of finding God to be more holy, more excellent, and more beautiful than we had ever realized. And at the same time, we are constantly realizing that our sin-sickness runs much deeper than we had ever realized. As we experience these realizations it becomes painfully obvious that the gap between God and ourselves is massive—and seemingly growing all the time! And yet as we see the divide between God and us appear to grow, our experience of God's grace to us (especially in Christ) gets larger and larger. This grace is always enough to cover our ever increasing awareness of the divide between God's holiness and our sinfulness. God's love continues to overflow to us in our weakness.

What are we to do about this? How should we respond? How do we react to our growing awareness that God has done amazing things for us?

Scripture Memory Verse:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” -Mark 12:30

Day 1: Mark 12:28-30

Pray and ask God to help you understand and respond in faith to the Gospel as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What does it mean to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 2: Mark 1:14-15

Pray and ask God to help you understand and respond in faith to the Gospel as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

If the proper response to the gospel is repentance and belief, what does that really mean?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 3: Psalm 63:3-4

Pray and ask God to help you understand and respond in faith to the Gospel as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Does the writer worship God because He has to or because He wants to? Why do you say this?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 4: Deuteronomy 30:6

Pray and ask God to help you understand and respond in faith to the Gospel as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Think of the term circumcise as “do surgery on”. Why do you think God has to “do surgery on” your heart for you to love him?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 5: Ezekiel 36:26-27

Pray and ask God to help you understand and respond in faith to the Gospel as you study His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Why do you think God has to **move us** to follow His decrees and keep his commandments?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

((LG) BIBLE STUDY LEADER READS THIS OPENING (BECAUSE THEY KNOW HOW TO EMPHASIZE IT TO GET THE MAGNITUDE ACROSS).

THIS SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION HAS SEVERAL PLACES WHERE "FILL IN THE BLANKS" ARE USED. YOU MAY NEED TO OFFER THE CORRECT ANSWER AS THESE ARE NOT ALWAYS APPARENT.

Introduction:

One day Jesus was asked, "Of all the commandments, which one is the most important?" How do you think Jesus answered this? What do you think he said?Whatever He says at this point will define what the Christian life is all about! It will tell us how we should respond to God's unbelievable grace to us. Our lives as Christians will be shaped by whatever Jesus says next....

A. Responding with your whole self

1. Turn to Mark 12:28-30.

MARK 12:28-30 ONE OF THE TEACHERS OF THE LAW CAME AND HEARD THEM DEBATING. NOTICING THAT JESUS HAD GIVEN THEM A GOOD ANSWER, HE ASKED HIM, "OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS, WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT?" 29 "THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE," ANSWERED JESUS, "IS THIS: 'HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE. 30 LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

a. What does it mean to love God with all of your **heart**?

(LG) WARM, EMOTIONAL FEELINGS OF LOVE FOR GOD

b. What does it mean to love God with all of your **soul**?

(LG) DEEP, RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL LOVE FOR GOD

c. What does it mean to love God with all of your **mind**?

(LG) MENTALLY KNOWING AND LOVING THE FACTS OF GOD'S GRACE

d. What does it mean to love God with all of your **strength**?

(LG) LOVING GOD WITH OUR PHYSICAL LIVES

2. Therefore, what does it mean to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength?

(LG) {
Not just heart – not just warm, emotional feelings of love for God
Not just soul – not just in a deep, religious, spiritual love for God
Not just mind – not just mentally knowing and loving the facts of God's grace
Not just strength – not just loving God with our physical lives

3. The response that God wants is the response of the whole life (heart, soul, mind, strength)

IV. Think about a marriage. Why is the response of the whole life necessary in marriage, as opposed to just one part of our lives?

(LG) DON'T JUST BRING YOUR MIND TO A WEDDING, DON'T JUST BRING YOUR PHYSICAL BODY, BRING YOUR HEART, SOUL, MIND AND STRENGTH.

B. A deeper look at your whole self.

1. The Bible actually uses many words to describe what our response to Christ should be.
 - a. love-- Mark 12:30 *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."*
 - b. faith-- Galatians 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*
 - c. worship--Ps 63:3-4 *"Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands."*
 - d. obedience – John 14:21 *"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."*
 - e. belief -- John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

(LG) ***THE MAIN POINT

2. In light of God's unbelievable grace to us in Christ, our only response is faith **in** God, love **for** God, and worship of God!

C. First things first

1. What must we first do before responding to God in this way?
2. If we are to respond to God with our whole life in the ways discussed above, we must first repent!
3. Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Repent of what?

Repent of other loves

Repent of idols

Repent of believing that we don't need God

Repent of looking for life apart from God

4. How does the idea of repentance relate back to our marriage illustration? (LG-WE MUST LET GO OF (REPENT OF) THE PURSUIT OF ALL OTHER POSSIBLE PARTNERS IN ORDER TO FULLY EMBRACE (HAVE FAITH IN) A WIFE OR HUSBAND!)

D. What responding brings you...

1. Responding to God's grace includes ___receiving___ and ___offering___ the ___gifts of the gospel___.
2. The Gospel Gifts:
 - a. ___fulfillment___ Psalm 16:11 *"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."*
 - b. ___freedom___ John 8:32 *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*
 - c. ___function___ Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*
 - d. ___fearlessness___ Philippians 4:7 *"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*
 - e. ___forgiveness___ Psalm 103:12 *"as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."*
 - f. ___family___ Ephesians 2:19 *"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household"*
3. What does it mean to receive the Gospel Gifts?
4. What does it mean to offer the Gospel Gifts?

E. Made possible by...

1. ****Even our response to God's grace is made possible by God's grace.**
Only the Holy Spirit can enable us to ___repent___, to ___love___, to ___worship___, to have ___faith___.
2. God gives us the gift of our ___faith___.
Ephesians 2:8-9 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast."*

3. God does surgery so we can ___love___ Him.
Deut 30:6 *"The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live."*
4. God moves us to ___obey___ Him.
Ezek 36:26-27 *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."*
5. God teaches us to ___say_"no"___ to ungodliness.
Titus 2:11-12 *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,"*

F. Conclusion:

What does our response of love for God, of faith in Him have to do with God's ultimate desire to bring glory to himself? If you're clever, you may be asking, "If God's glory is most important, why does Jesus say that the most important command is to love Him? Why didn't he say the most important thing is to glorify Him?"

Answer: You glorify what you love!

How do you glorify ice cream? You go for seconds! Why do you go for seconds? B/c you love it!

What do you glorify when you go to church? (If you are talking about Kaizer Chiefs victory right up until the service starts, you think about the Chiefs while the pastor is preaching, and you start talking about the Chiefs immediately after the service is over, you glorify the Chiefs at church! Why are you glorifying them? b/c you love them!)

(LG) THIS COULD ALSO BE A SPRINGBOK EXAMPLE OR TV SHOW, CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE.

What did Peter and John glorify?

Acts 4:18-20 *"Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

Why? THEY COULDN'T HELP IT, THEY LOVED JESUS

God's command to love him more than anything is actually a command to glorify him! Enjoy Him! Love him for the grace he has given you in Christ.

With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:

Perspective (What we think)?

Take a few minutes to review this week's scripture memory verse.

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?



BONUS MATERIAL:



Be Glorified

*Your Love has captured me
Your Grace has set me free
Your Life, the air I breathe
Be glorified in me*

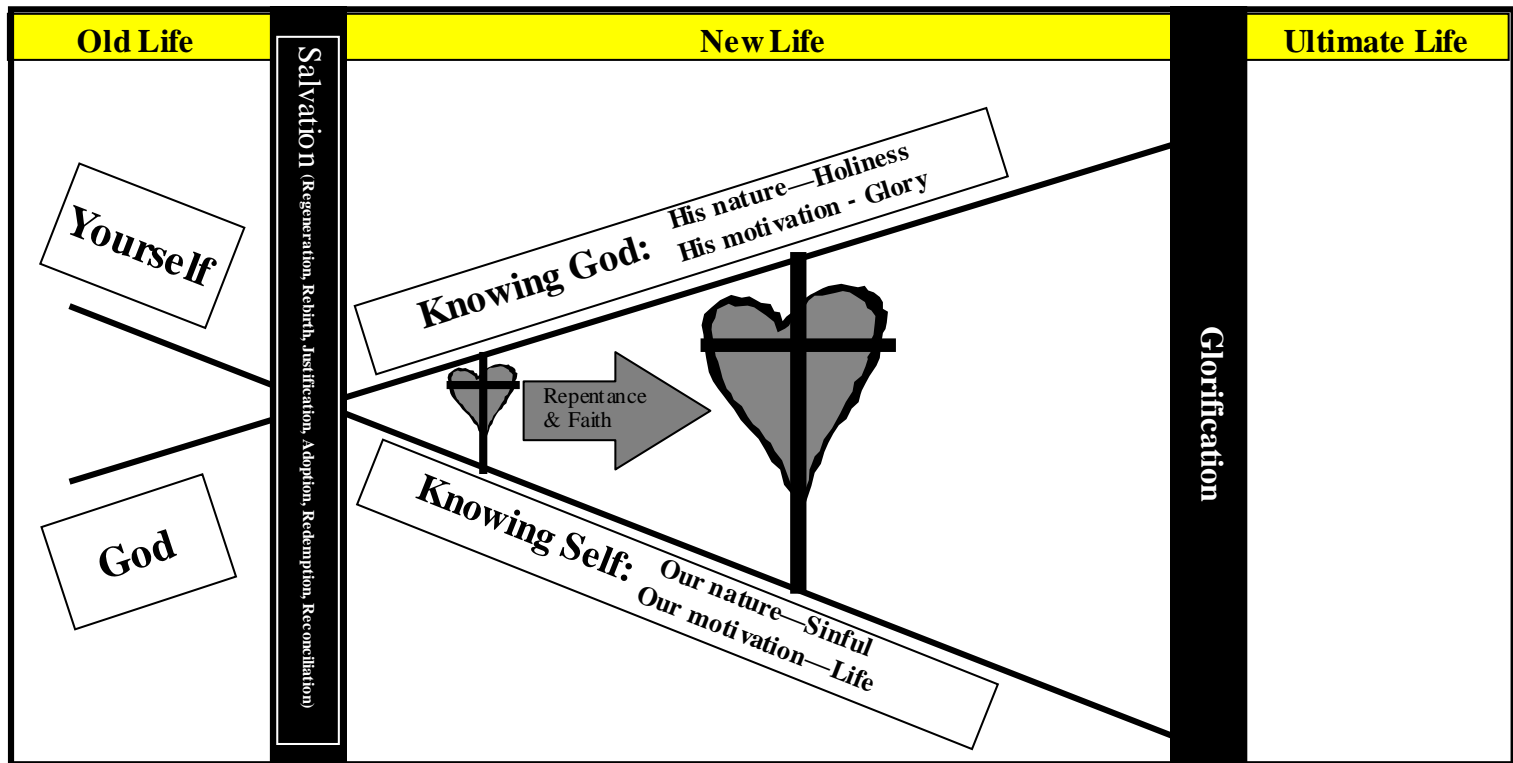
~Chorus~

*You set my feet to dancing
You set my heart on fire
In the presence of a thousand kings
You are my one desire
And I stand before You now
With trembling hands lifted high
Be glorified!
(Repeat)*

*Be glorified in me!
Be glorified in me!
Be glorified in me!
Be glorified!
(Repeat)*

Lesson 7

Old Life/ New Life/ Ultimate Life



Introduction:

If we stand back to take a larger look at the cross chart some major questions arise. What is your story of **crossing over** from “Old Life” to “New Life”? What is the decreasing nature of sin in the life of the Christian and the increasing response of love in the Christian. Finally, what is ultimate life and how should the prize of heaven call us into faith today?

Scripture Memory Verse:

See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.

-1 John 2:24-25

Day 1: I Tim 6:11-12

Pray and ask God to help you more fully understand your old, new, and ultimate life through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

How do you fight the fight of faith? What things in your life do you need to flee from?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 2: I John 2:24-25

Pray and ask God to help you more fully understand your old, new, and ultimate life through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What is eternal life and when does it begin?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 3: I John 3:9-10

Pray and ask God to help you more fully understand your old, new, and ultimate life through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

How does rebirth change the nature of the Christian in relation to sin?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 4: Ephesians 6:12

Pray and ask God to help you more fully understand your old, new, and ultimate life through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

How does knowing your enemy help you to endure the struggle against him?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 5: Phil 3:13-14

Pray and ask God to help you more fully understand your old, new, and ultimate life through His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Why do you think the end motivates Paul to press on?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Introduction:

Your testimony is your personal account of how you passed from Old Life into New Life. A helpful way to think through your story is to consider the following questions. Take a few moments and answer each question.

A. Preparing your Personal Testimony

1. What was your life like before Salvation (Old Life)?

2. What circumstances or events led you to make a decision to follow Christ?

3. How has your life changed as a result of knowing Christ? What is your New Life like?

B. Share your personal testimony with the other members of your group.

C. Sin and The Flesh, The World, The Devil

(LG) THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO ILLUSTRATE HOW THE CROSS OF CHRIST DIMINISHES THE POWER OF THESE ENEMIES. USE THE CHART BELOW TO HELP YOU ILLUSTRATE THIS TO THE MEMBERS IN YOUR GROUP (FILL IN THE CROSS CHART TOGETHER WITH THESE STATEMENTS ABOUT SIN, FLESH, ETC.)

All believers have 3 enemies – the flesh, the world, and the devil. These enemies work together to entice us to sin. What is the changing nature of these enemies and our sin in the three stages of the Cross Chart (Old, New, and Ultimate Life)?

	<u>Old Life</u>	<u>New Life</u>	<u>Ultimate Life</u>
<u>Nature of Sin</u>	Presence, Power, Penalty	Remaining Presence, Decreasing Power, No Penalty	No more sin
<u>Nature of Flesh</u>	Just Flesh: No possibility of obedience	Flesh and Spirit at War-Presence, Riot in your soul	No More Flesh to contend with
<u>Nature of World</u>	In the World and Of the World	In the World Not of the World	No World: New Heaven and New Earth
<u>Nature of Devil</u>	Under His immediate rule	We are sheep, under the Shepherd, he is roaring lion, Resist the Evil One	No access, ultimately defeated

Old Life	New Life	Ultimate Life

D. Ultimate Life

"If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world." -C.S. Lewis

1. Ultimate Life is the final destination for the Christian but it is far from the end of the journey. According to Ephesians 2:4-7 why did God show you mercy?

2. What does Psalm 16:11 say about the presence of God?
3. How does the prize of ultimate life motivate us to press on to know Christ in this life? (See Philippians 3:12-14)
4. How does I Cor 2:9 describe heaven...
5. Give several words to describe life in Heaven.
(LG) THE ULTIMATE TEN: AFTER EACH PERSON IN THE GROUP SHARES A FEW WORDS DESCRIBING LIFE IN HEAVEN. YOU CAN ADD THE ULTIMATE 10 TO THE LIST AND ACTUALLY CONNECT THE ULTIMATE 10 WORDS TO AS MANY OF THEIR DESCRIPTIVE WORDS AS POSSIBLE.

ULTIMATE... JOY, HAPPINESS, FULLNESS, FREEDOM, PLEASURE, ETC...
 ENDLESS...
 BOUNDLESS...
 MYSTERIOUS...
 LIMITLESS...
 ETERNAL...
 INFINITE...
 INDESCRIBABLE...
 UNIMAGINABLE...
 UNTHINKABLE...

"It will take an infinite number of ages for God to be done glorifying the wealth of his grace to us—which is to say he will never be done. And our joy will increase forever and ever. Boredom is absolutely excluded in the presence of an infinitely glorious God." - John Piper

With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:

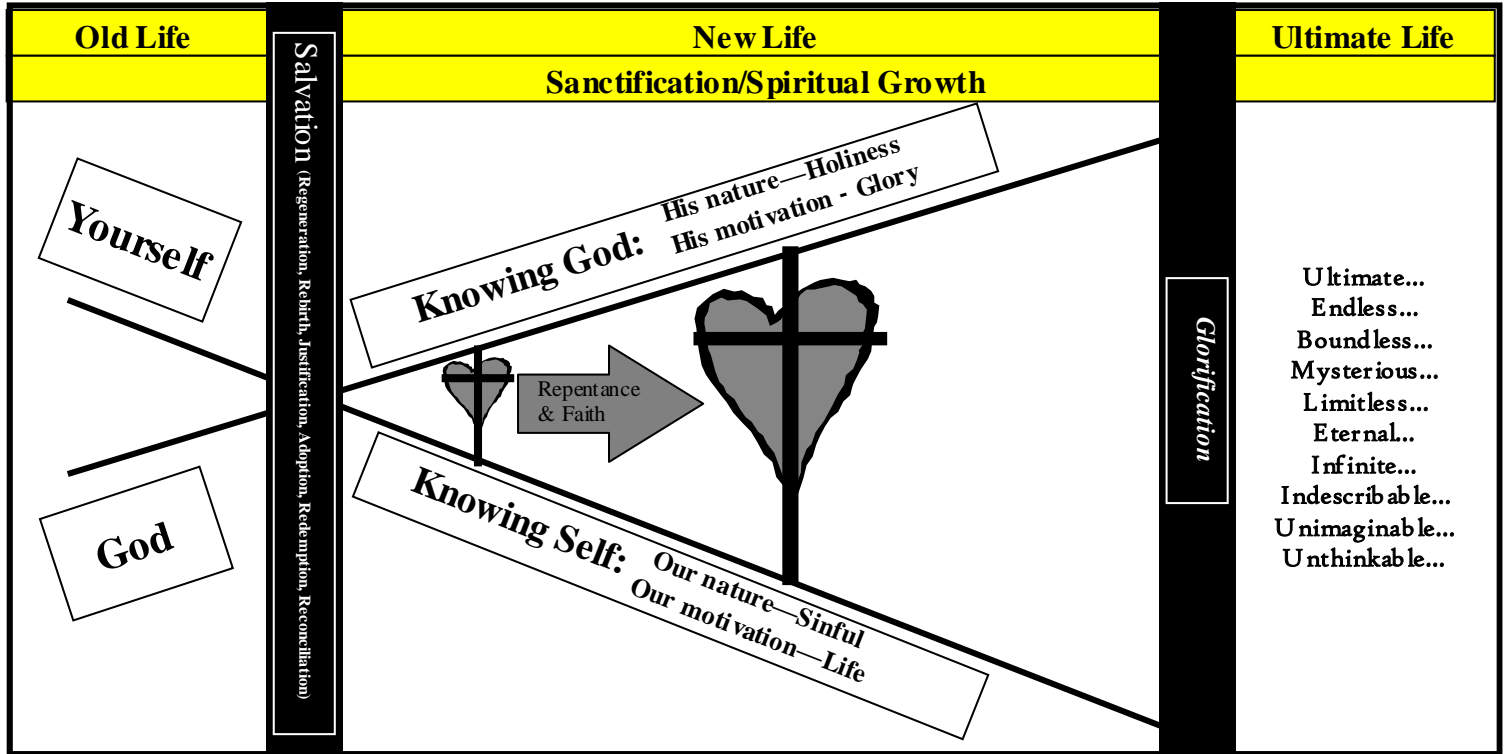
Perspective (What we think)?

Take a few minutes to review this week's scripture memory verse.

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?

Growing



Introduction:

What does it really mean to grow spiritually? Will we ever attain the level of spiritual maturity that we are looking for? Does spiritual growth just equal sinning less, or is there more to it than that. What does God's word really have to say about our growth in Christ?

Scripture Memory Verse:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." -- John 15:5

Day 1: John 15:5

Pray & ask God to help you grow spiritually as you encounter Him and His ways in His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Why do you suppose that Jesus says that apart from Him we can do nothing?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 2: 1 Peter 2:2

Pray & ask God to help you grow spiritually as you encounter Him and His ways in His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What is pure spiritual milk? How does that help someone grow?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 3: Psalm 5:3

Pray & ask God to help you grow spiritually as you encounter Him and His ways in His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What benefits might there be to laying our requests before God ***“in the morning”***?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 4: Hebrews 3:13

Pray & ask God to help you grow spiritually as you encounter Him and His ways in His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

Describe a situation in your life where you were hardened by sin's deceitfulness because of a lack of Christian encouragement.

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

Day 5: Romans 12:1-2

Pray & ask God to help you grow spiritually as you encounter Him and His ways in His word.

Write out the verse and circle five key words or phrases.

Define the key words or phrases.

In your own words summarize the passage.

What are some areas of your life where you can see that you have been transformed by the renewing of your mind?

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, and my practices?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(LG: MAIN POINTS:

- 1) SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS A LIFE-LONG PROCESS
- 2) SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS RELATIONAL
- 3) SPIRITUAL GROWTH MEANS MORE REPENTANCE AND FAITH, NOT LESS.)

(LG: GET THE PEOPLE TO FILL OUT THE QUIZ AND THEN LET THEM DISCUSS IT A LITTLE BIT. DON'T GIVE YOUR INPUT YET. BRING THEM BACK TO IT AT THE END OF THE STUDY IF THERE IS TIME. THE ANSWERS SHOULD BE CLEAR TO ALL BY THEN.)

Introduction:

Quiz: (Circle True or False)

- T F Spiritual maturity is a level that you can achieve.
- T F Doing spiritual activities like memorizing scripture, spending time alone with God, and sharing the gospel with others actually earns God's favor.
- T F Spiritual maturity is needing God less today than I did in the past. It is becoming a better person so that I have to repent less and less.

(LG: GIVE THE PEOPLE TIME TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION AND DISCUSS THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS AMONGST THEMSELVES.)

A. Spiritual Growth is a life-long process

1. Do you think there is a peak of spiritual maturity that we can reach as a Christian? Maybe when we are born again and decide to get serious? Or perhaps after two or three years of walking with God, or maybe after twenty years of being a real Christian?
2. How would you define Spiritual Growth? (or "Sanctification", as the Bible sometimes calls it.)
3. Look at Philippians 3:12-14
 - a. According to Philippians, spiritual growth is a life-long process.
 - b. Definition: Spiritual Growth is the life - long process of knowing God more, knowing our self more, receiving more of God's grace, and responding more in repentance , faith, and love.)

4. Discuss how this definition of spiritual growth is represented on the Cross Chart.

B. Spiritual Growth is relational

1. Read John 15:5. What is Jesus trying to teach us about spiritual growth from this verse? (LG: GIVE THEM TIME TO TALK ABOUT IT, THEN FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW.)

a. Spiritual growth is relational; it's not about performing religious duties.

2. Why do you think that Jesus uses the illustration about the vine and the branches to demonstrate this? What is the relationship that they have with each other?
3. If spiritual growth is about growing in a relationship with Christ, what are the practical things that we can do to remain in the "vine"?

Answer: the means of grace.

4. Definition: The means of grace are practical ways by which we come to know God better, know ourselves better, see God's grace more, and respond more in repentance and love and faith.

- a. What are some means of grace? (LG: GIVE THEM TIME TO ANSWER, THEN LOOK AT THE VERSES BELOW AND FILL IN THE BLANKS)

1. reading and studying God's word 1 Peter 2:2 "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,"
2. prayer Psalm 5:3 "In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."
3. fellowship Hebrews 3:13 "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."
4. evangelism 1 Corinthians 9:22-23 "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings."

5. obedience Romans 12:1-2 *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will."*
 6. We don't do any of these things to earn God's approval, but we do them as loving response to the approval we've already been given in Christ.
- b. What is the difference between an "End" and a "Means"?
(lg: an "end" is what you are trying to achieve. a "means" is how you go about achieving it.)
 - c. In light of this, why do you think these things are called the "means" of Grace?
(lg: because they are not the end, they are just the way we go about achieving that end)
 - d. What is the "end" that the means of grace help us to come to?
(LG: connection with Christ, growing relationship with Him, experiencing God's grace)
 - e. In the following verses, what error does Jesus say that the people were making regarding the ends and the means?

"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." -- John 5:39-40
(LG: they had changed the studying the Scriptures to an **end**, rather than just a **means** to the **end** of connecting with Jesus)
 - f. Look back to the Cross Chart. Where do the means of grace fit in?
(LG: they are the things that help us learn about God, our selves, God's grace, and they express our growing heart of love for Jesus.)

C. Spiritual Growth means more repentance and faith, not less.

1. Is the growing Christian life one of needing God less or needing God more?

2. As we see that spiritual growth is a relational process, and as we become more and more aware of the sinfulness of our hearts, it becomes clear that spiritual growth means seeing our ___need___ for God more today than ever before and ___repenting___ more and more of living our lives apart from Jesus.

Spiritual growth is not just sinning less (and therefore needing the gospel less), but actually needing the gospel to cover the depths of sin we continue to see in our hearts and lives.

3. How does the Cross Chart illustrate the idea that growing Christians need to repent and trust in Jesus more, not less?

(LG: if time permits, review the quiz)

4. What are some commitments that we must make now to be faithful to grow in our relationship with Christ?

With the Cross Chart in mind, how should this lesson impact us today in our:

Perspective (What we think)?

Take a few minutes to review this week's scripture memory verse.

Passion (What we love)?

Practice (What we do)?

Appendix A

Spending Time Alone With God (TAWG) is a vital part of every Christian's ongoing connection with Jesus. Although spending time alone with God can be done many different ways, learning about God through His Word is one critical part of communing with Christ. Below is a suggested way to spend time reflecting on God's Word and thinking about how it applies to your life. Following this model in a prayerful way can be a great experience in your walk with Christ.

Day 2 Galatians 2:20

Pray and ask God to help you know and love God more through His Word.

Write out the verse and circle 5 key words or phrases.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Define the key words /phrases.

Crucified - Death, dying Christ - Son of God, Savior

Life -My new purpose, Reason for living Loved and gave

Himself -His commitment/sacrifice for me

Faith -Trusting Him

Loved- God's reason for dying for me

In your own words, summarize the passage.

The way I live in union with Christ, dying to my old life, is to live by faith. He loves me so much, I can trust Him to give me the new life He promises me.

What does Paul mean when he says he has been crucified with Christ?

Maybe he means that because he has faith in Jesus, when Christ died, he died. It was like he was being crucified with Jesus. His sins were paid for.

How does this verse affect my perspectives, my passions, my practices?

1. I need to take time daily to study His word and pray so that I will live in union with Him.

2. Remember it takes faith to obey Him, believing He loves me and will give me what I need.

3. Ask Him to show me what He wants me to do with my life.